

Welcome to Part II of the Daily Journal of Harvey Stanbrough.

This document contains the complete text of the raw journals from July 1, 2015 through December 15, 2015 when I switched the Journal over to HEStanbrough.com.

You may now download a PDF document containing the complete text of the raw journals from October 19, 2014 through June 30, 2015 at [This Link](#).

You can find newer Journal entries at HEStanbrough.com, the permanent home of the Journal.

July 1, 2015

The Day

NOTE: I'm trying something today with this blog post. I'm sending it from my main website at HarveyStanbrough.com. If it goes only to those who are signed up specifically for this journal, then it's all good. If you are reading this and you are NOT signed up for this journal (formerly FrostProof808.com), please accept my apologies. Thanks.

Rolled out a little after 2. Wow. July just kind'a snuck up on me. Even as I was posting this note yesterday, I didn't equate 6/30 with the end of the month.

My goal for the month of June was to mimic the month of May in word count and get 80,000 words. I didn't. I fell short by about 14,000 words, but I'll take 66,000 and call it good. (grin)

I have to get labs done at 7:30 this morning for a doc appointment next week so I didn't want to start anything with the novel yet. So I continued working on websites a bit this morning, tweaking here and there. By the way, if any of you would like to talk about websites, themes, plugins etc. just email me. I'll help in any way I can.

So web stuff for the first two and a half hours of the day, and then I came here to do this. I'll finish what I'm gonna do here, and then go over to the main blog and write at least one post (maybe two or three) and schedule it for publication. I like to stay a little ahead over there so I don't have to worry about it.

Then I'll go do the labs and then back here to write.

Wound up working with the website again. Sigh. The day's nearly over for me so I'm gonna prep this for the test I mentioned in the opening sentence.

Topic of the Night: Writers' Conferences

I was invited to speak at the Missouri Writers' Guild conference in Kansas City next April. They want me to present in two breakout sessions (45 minutes each) and then teach a master's class on the final day. They're paying me pretty well plus airfare, hotel and food, so yeah, I'm going. (grin) It'll be kind of fun after not having presented at a big deal conference for so long.

At one time, I presented at 18 in a year. That was rough. Anyway, I say that so you understand where I'm coming from here. I've presented at a lot of conferences and I've always given attendees something of value. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case at all conferences or with all speakers.

Many speakers have no problem taking the fee and then dropping names for half their presentation time, telling attendees all about the famous people they've met.

Other speakers will do the same thing and then spend half the presentation time hyping their own books or other products.

Yet others simply don't know what they're talking about. Some people take a great deal of pleasure in teaching things they don't know. Perhaps it makes them feel better about themselves or something. I don't know. There are FAR more of this kind of presenter at conferences now than there used to be, probably because of the money crunch.

But my point here is just this: Before you attend a conference, do your research. Unless it's Breadloaf or the Iowa Writers' Conference or something like that. Do your homework. Look up the presenters. What have they accomplished, especially in the topic they're presenting?

Actually, the same goes for speakers at any gathering of writers. If you go and listen and buy into bad information, it's really difficult to dislodge that and replace it with valid information.

I think it was Mark Twain who once said it's much easier to fool people than it is to convince them that they've been fooled.

So hey, be careful out there.

The Writing

Weak start to the month. I'm not stuck or anything. Allowed my attention to be diverted by this new bright, shiny object. (grin) Back on the writing tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 1052

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420

Total fiction words for the month..... 1052
Total fiction words for the year..... 406398

[July 2, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2.

Well, first, very pleased to report all three of my blogs are now in one central location. In the upper right corner of my new website, you can now click a link to subscribe to the Story of the Week, The Daily Journal, and/or The Main Blog (Pro Writers category). When you subscribe, your email address will be added to whichever list(s).

If you're subscribed to The Main Blog, you will receive that post in your email every ten days (1, 11, 21 of each month). If you're subscribed to the Story of the Week, you will receive a freshly minted short story in your email every Monday. If you are subscribed to The Daily Journal, you will receive that post in your email every day just after 6 p.m.

Not a lot to the day today. Tweaked the website a bit more. Added a My Personas page and then a page for each persona. That was kind'a fun. I also put a new short story on the Harvey Stanbrough page and on the Eric Stringer page. So if you aren't subscribe to the story per week and you'd like to read a couple of really good short stories, stop by there.

I wrote a little bit, then had to a pretty good walk, then tweaked the site a bit more. Then I wrote a bit more. That's the whole secret to being a writer, as I think I talked about recently in a topic of the night. It isn't just writing all the time (nobody deserves that much Heaven). It's coming back and coming back and coming back.

Topic of the Night: Dean Wesley Smith is Insane

Of course, I mean that in only the best possible way. (grin)

Dean issued himself a new challenge. He's going to write a new original short story every day during the month of July. Even I am not that insane. But I am thinking of starting a pool to bet on when he'll break the streak. I might even tell him about the pool. Maybe that'll keep him going for 31 stories in 31 days. (grin)

Also, remember that his "day" is not like most people's day. His day begins at around 1 p.m. and goes until around 5 a.m. the next morning.

I urge you to [go take a look at his blog](#) today.

Also take a look at his topic of the night. It's about creating and using a Title Generator. Interesting stuff, especially if you can write a story off a title. I often do that with my short fiction.

The Writing

Decent day of writing today. I feel like I'm building up slowly or something. I could have hit at least another thousand words today. The story's really rolling. But when NYPD Blue came on, I psyched myself. I decided I'd turn on the TV and turn up the sound and just LISTEN to NYPD Blue but continue writing. Then I'd watch all five episodes on Sunday anyway.

Nope. It's just too good a show. When I turned it on, I stopped for just a moment, was drawn in by the hook, and spent the next 45 minutes (no commercials on Audience) watching an excellent show.

So I got just a little over 2000 today. No biggie.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 2486

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906

Total fiction words for the month..... 3538
Total fiction words for the year..... 408884

[July 3, 2015](#)

Happy 4th of July Independence Day to everyone. Hope it's an enjoyable one for you.

The Day

Slept 'til almost 3 this morning. Woohoo! But a little late to work.

Okay, first, a very brief announcement. Beginning with tomorrow's post (so July 4), this particular post will go out at 7 p.m. instead of 6 p.m. As it is right now, sometimes this post cuts into my real writing time. Can't have that.

I wrote the topic of the night for this post, then posted a similar one to the Pro Writers blog (the main blog, over 500 subscribers). That post will go out on the morning of July 5. You guys get the challenge first. (grin) See below.

I was hoping to walk this morning (that would be right now, 5 a.m.) but sporadic rain and a hellacious wind negated any possibility of that.

Now that I have most of this post written, I'm moving over to my writing computer to spend some quality time with Wes Crowley and friends.

As part of the day this morning I remembered that although I'd written the story of the week ("Saved"), I forgot to post the cover on the website on The Short Fiction page. Got that done and then, for some reason, I did a count. Sixteen rows of six book each, plus three: 99 short stories, 99 covers. Goodness.

The next short story I write will be my 100th short story, and the 71st story I've written since April 15, 2014. As of July 6 (Monday) in my own story-a-week challenge there will have been 66 weeks. In that time, I will have written and published 71 short stories. Not too shabby for an old guy. (grin)

Topic of the Night: Issuing a challenge

Okay, it's probably been way too long since I issued a challenge. I'm issuing it here first. I will also send it out on my Pro Writers blog (the main blog, over 500 subscribers) probably tomorrow.

This is only an effort to help some of you get to writing. The good thing about a challenge is that you may choose to accept it or not. Completely up to you.

This challenge comes in two forms:

1. Write one new short story every week. The story may be any length and any genre (other than graphic erotica), as long as it has a setting, characters, conflict and a satisfactory resolution. That last one's a biggie. If it's missing either conflict or resolution, it isn't a short story. It's maybe a vignette.

2. If you don't write short stories, then your challenge is to write at least 5,000 publishable new words every week. (This can be from a longer fiction work in progress [WIP] or in memoir or even creative nonfiction.) Or maybe you don't have a WIP. Here's the perfect opportunity to write that novel you've been wanting to write.

I will set up a website where those of you who accept the challenge may post your weekly story. (grin) Again, this is all up to you, but if you don't show your story to others, how can you prove you wrote it?

A few things up front:

1. You retain all rights (copyright) to your work. Seriously. I'm a writer too. I don't want to steal your stuff.
2. You may use a pen name on the site if you want. No problem. Just let me know what it is and I'll set up your account that way.
3. Nobody's going to critique your work. That isn't what this is for. This is only to get you to the keyboard, to get you writing. Birds fly. Fish swim Writers write. I probably will close comments on the website.
4. I can't guarantee you a particular number of readers, obviously. I do encourage you who participate to spread the word to your friends, family, etc. This will be a great opportunity to gain new readers for your work, and for the other writers on the site.
5. Of necessity, I reserve the right to remove any writing from the site at any time. I also reserve the right to close any account at any time.

So there you go.

If you want to accept the challenge, please leave a comment below or email me directly at harveystanbrough@gmail.com. (That's a lot of stuff. I recommend you click the link or copy/paste rather than trying to type it in.) Please let me know your desired pen name (the name under which your stories will be published on the site).

I will respond fairly quickly. If you haven't heard from me within a few hours, email me again.

Once I begin receiving the names of a few participants in this challenge, I'll set up the site and send out the URL, login information and brief instructions to all participants.

The Writing

My own writing went well today. GAWD I love this writing into the dark stuff. Bradbury said if you don't surprise yourself, how can you expect to surprise the reader. Absolutely true.

In the writing yesterday, the mayor revealed something to Wes that made me stop typing and sit back from the computer for a moment. It was incredible. And then today, Wes did the same thing. We even had an old friend from way back in Book 3 pop up here sixteen or seventeen years later.

Wonderful and absolutely the best fun you can have with your clothes on and without a fishing pole in your hand.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 3201

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107

Total fiction words for the month..... 6402

Total fiction words for the year..... 412085

[July 4, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 1.

Spent an hour or so just waking up, checking out a few websites. I shouldn't do that. Most often when I look at other websites that have anything to do at all with writing I am disappointed or flat out annoyed.

- JA Konrath is an avid supporter of Amazon Kindle Unlimited. For some reason, he apparently sees nothing wrong with supporting Amazon's drive toward a monopoly.
- Another famous guy constantly talks about being certain to hit plot points and rewriting etc. which is contrary to everything I teach. He (and his editor) do occasionally come out with some good stuff so I won't diss 'em too bad. Steven Pressfield and Shawn Coyne. Also a major shout-out to Jeffrey Simon, Steven and Shawn's web guy, who taught me out of the kindness of his heart how to send more than one blog from one URL. Thanks Jeff!
- CampNaNo (I heard) expects around 1600 words per day (they think that's a lot) and preach that writing sloppy is all right. Plus some of the completely irrational crap I read from some of the folks who participate just flat boggles my mind. (I do know there's also some good things coming from good people on NaNo and I know some of you probably swear by it and that's fine. I just can't handle all the negative stuff I hear people telling writers who don't know better than to listen.)
- And then there's ol' Chuck Wendig, who is a prolific professional writer and could do SO much good but still preaches rewriting and a bunch of other stuff that I believe is mega-bad advice. He also feels compelled to curse, purely gratuitously, in very annoying ways. I guess the fact that there's simply no reason for all the garbage language is what makes it so stinkin' annoying.

Every time I do browse the web like this (about once every other month or so) I feel so very frustrated for all the young writer minds out there that are being twisted out of shape by these successful people who are sitting back and flinging the smelly stuff far and wide. I absolutely abhor it.

Then I remember all over again why I'm so very glad I finally found Heinlein's Rules and Writing Off Into the Dark and the (most of the time) true common sense of people like Dean Wesley Smith and Kristine Kathryn Rush. Bless their hearts. And I don't mean that as a Texas epithet.

Turning to the writing 'puter now to write the next short story. This is number 100 overall and the 71st story I've written since April 15, 2014.

Okay, finished the short story in three average sessions. About another hour to create a cover, publish it to Amazon and Smashwords, and post it to my website. This is not only number 100, but it's also the first ever to be posted to the main site. Hope it works. (grin)

In the meantime, if you want an advance look, you can find it on my main site at HarveyStanbrough.com. Just click the Free Short Story of the Week tab.

Oh, re the challenge I issued yesterday, it's a GREAT way to hold yourself accountable. So jump on in.

Topic of the Night: No topic tonight. Sorry. Too tired.

The Writing

went very well today. Conceived of, wrote, and published "Death of a Persona," a dark but humorous jaunt through the imagination. My personas are characters in this one. Eric Stringer's personality really shines through. Read this one, and I think you'll see what I like about Eric. And why I had to let another persona

go.

I was going to write some with Wes too, but I decided to take the rest of the day to do nothing. My brain's tired. (grin)

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 3201

Writing of "Death of a Persona" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 3192 words. Total words to date..... 3192 done

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125

Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749

Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515

Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927

Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368

Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420

Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906

Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107

Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 9603

Total fiction words for the year..... 415286

[July 5, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30 but after being awake and dozing off and on for two full hours. So I'm starting the day with sand in my eyes. Ugh. Happens.

Worked on my Audio Lectures website over at <http://HEStanbrough.org> to make it responsive as well. I think that's all for websites until someone takes me up on the weekly challenge. Only took an hour. Kind of a fun diversion.

Over on Dean's website yesterday (July 4) was a bit on holidays. Interesting. It's my take as well. (A "holiday" is just another day, or the way I put it, sun comes up, sun goes down.) And then on July 5 there's a much more interesting piece on the importance of challenges and streaks. I'll talk more about that in the topic of the night, below.

Then I'll go to Wes Book 8 and write for awhile. Unsure what the rest of the day will hold, although I'll probably watch a few NYPD Blue episodes, and I'll probably watch at least some of the ladies World Cup soccer championship between the USA and Japan. If you enjoy watching soccer at all, this ladies team is really something to see, the way they constantly pressure the opponent. Extremely good team.

Topic of the Night: Challenges and Streaks as Goals

Everybody here already knows a dream is something that's wonderful to hope for but that is outside of your control. That is, it depends on other people, circumstances, and so on.

But a goal is something that is entirely within your control. It is something that you CAN attain.

You also know I'm a big believer in setting recurring goals, goals that re-set at regular intervals, like daily or weekly or monthly. Although a month is a long way to see at one time.

It's a lot better for me to say I'm going to write one short story per week instead of saying I'm going to write four or five short stories per month, or fifty-two short stories per year. If I took the longer view, I'd get down to the last few days of the month and find myself having to write four or five stories. Or I'd get down to October and realized I need fifty-two short stories before December 31. Ugh.

So I set short-term goals and let the longer terms take care of themselves.

I set a goal to write 3,000 words per day, plus one short story per week, plus (loosely) one novel per month. But if I hit my daily goal, the other two won't be a problem.

Challenging yourself is nothing more than setting a recurring goal. In fact, I think you can't challenge yourself without setting a goal.

And a streak is both an incentive and a goal. Like my short story a week challenge. I set it for a year. The year was over on April 6, 2015. But I'm still going because Streaks Have Power. Once you get a streak going, it's very hard to just stop. And it all goes into your personal literary canon, so what's the down side?

The Writing

Not a bad day writing today. For numbers, almost a repeat of yesterday. What was weird today is that it all happened in two very quick sessions. (grin) I guess my conscious mind is so tired that it just stepped aside while the subconscious was playing. I figure I keyed about 1200 words per hour today.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 3186

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1.....	4125 words. Total words to date.....	4125
Day 2.....	2624 words. Total words to date.....	6749
Day 3.....	2766 words. Total words to date.....	9515
Day 4.....	1412 words. Total words to date.....	10927
Day 5.....	3441 words. Total words to date.....	14368
Day 6.....	1052 words. Total words to date.....	15420
Day 7.....	2486 words. Total words to date.....	17906
Day 8.....	3201 words. Total words to date.....	21107
Day 9.....	3186 words. Total words to date.....	24293

Total fiction words for the month..... 12789

Total fiction words for the year..... 418472

[July 6, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30.

Had a good walk this morning up an arroyo. Four wheeler ATVs hadn't torn it up too badly, but neither was the sandy bottom quite as packed as I hoped it would be from the rain. Back on roads for awhile I guess.

Been just doing little or nothing most of the morning.

Topic of the Night: Quick, Somebody Stop Me

I hate misunderstandings. I despise them. I screwed up the challenge thing I was trying to do, so I'm withdrawing it, period.

I allowed myself to be turned sideways on the challenge I issued, so I'm pretty much calling it off. I didn't have any outright takers anyway, so not like it's a big deal.

One respondent whom I respect as a writer didn't want to post stories to a website because she'd rather publish them to Amazon and Smashwords.

I don't blame her. That's what I do with mine, but I do that PLUS posting them online. I leave the "free" one up on the site for a couple of weeks, and then I take it down. But it's also up (for sale) at Amazon and Smashwords, and it's there forever. (If you want to read some of my fiction free, visit HarveyStanbrough.com and click the Free Story of the Week tab.)

That's what I would have recommended to anyone who took me up on the challenge. Once a week you write a new short story. You post it to the site, but you also create a cover for it and publish it to Amazon and Smashwords. And then you take it down from the site a week later. Simple.

But this whole idea is just silly, really, from my point of view. To make it happen, I have to set up a new website (I don't mind) and tweak it. I have to teach any participants how to use it. I have to keep a list on hand of user accounts and passwords and take time to help users with various and sundry glitches. And really, I don't have time.

So I'm withdrawing the offer. Dumb idea in the first place.

But hey, if you're a writer, unless you routinely write 3,000 to 5,000 words per day without needing to resort to any kind of motivational "tricks" like challenging yourself, I strongly recommend you challenge yourself.

- Challenge yourself to write XXXX publishable words per day.
- Challenge yourself to write a new short story (or essay or chapter or whatever) every week.
- Challenge yourself, create a streak, and then keep the streak going. You don't have to believe me, but I'm telling you, it's magic if you want to become a prolific professional writer.

If you want to show off your work on a website (in addition to publishing it to Amazon and Smashwords) and if you already have a website, you're all set. I you'd like to do that but you don't have a website, maybe I can help you with that. Let me know.

So forget the original challenge, and forget the ridiculous "revised" challenge.

I get so fired up about what's working for me that sometimes I forget: what works for me isn't necessarily what will work for everyone else or what everyone else will want to try.

Okay, now I'm gonna write for awhile, finally. (grin)

The Writing

I dawdled. When I try to do something to help someone but I don't explain it so they can understand it I feel compelled to make it all better. My "challenge" fiasco apparently helped no one and let me rope myself into explaining it. And that's what I did, off and on, most of the afternoon. So I allowed my writing time to slip away.

Mea culpa.

The good thing about daily goals is they reset every day. Tomorrow, I have to write 3000 publishable words of fiction. I don't have to make up for what I messed up today. Woohoo!

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 1585

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878

Total fiction words for the month..... 14374

Total fiction words for the year..... 420057

[July 7, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2. Checked email, then did some things with an old friend's website. Cleaned it up a bit.

Had another good walk this morning. Just under 4.5 miles out along a rural road out here. I used to walk in town but I don't care for getting bit by all the "good" dogs out there who "wouldn't harm a fly, really." Right.

Checked Dean's blog. More on that in the topic of the night below.

I'm taking a day off my own writing today. I have a routine appointment with my doctor in a little over an hour, so just kind of killing time until then. After that, probably lunch (since I'll already be in town anyway) and then back here.

Okay, the trip to Benson is over. Back here I didn't do a lot. Just kind'a rested for awhile.

And no, none of that has anything to do with the doc appointment. All of that was fine. As I wrote in a poem one time, "It's time to reconnect some frazzled ends, / unbend a few warped planes, demagnetize / a short in my long circuit." (grin)

Wes threw me a curve a couple days ago, something huge and completely unexpected. I'm gonna give it a day and a night to ferment. Note: I'm NOT going to think about it and wonder what happens and all that. That isn't my job. I'm just giving my subconscious to decide what it wants to do, where it wants to go with this new plot twist.

(Yes, there is a plot. Per Ray Bradbury, plot is not something you carefully plan out. Plot is the tracks the characters leave as they run through the story.)

So back at it tomorrow.

Topic of the Night: The Value of Personal Challenges

Dean Wesley Smith started on July 1 with a new personal challenge: he would write a short story every day during the month of July. At the end of the month, he'll compile all of those stories and the accompanying blog posts in a book titled *The Stories of July*. I'm pulling for him.

Folks, here's a guy who has 40 years as a professional writer and well over 100 novels traditionally published. Yet he still sees value in setting goals and challenging himself specifically.

He has said in his blog for the past three days that if he hadn't challenged himself to write those stories, he wouldn't have written them. Even though he was exhausted toward the end of his day, he forced himself to write the story on each of those three days because he had challenged himself and he didn't want to fail in the challenge.

In that way, he gave power to the challenge, and in that way, he increased his body of work by three more stories.

If at the end of July he's written only 30 stories or only 28 or something, certainly he will have failed to success. But for my money, I think the earlier in a challenge you fail, the harder it would be to continue the challenge the next day.

Add to that the power of streaks. The more consecutive days he goes with a new story written each day, the harder it will be for him to allow that streak to end. At that point it becomes "Well, I've written a short story on each of 12 consecutive days, how can I just let the streak die today?"

And that's the power of streaks.

The Writing

Nada today.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 14374

Total fiction words for the year..... 420057

[July 8, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at a little after 1. Checked email and took care of some other housekeeping type matters.

Had another good walk this morning. I set out to do 6, but with various side trips to line up pics, I ended up with just under seven and a half miles. Great walk. And so far I can still move. (grin)

Went out about 4:15, was at the two mile mark (per the road signs) by sunrise. Got some pretty good pics. I switched back to my 105mm prime lens. All former Marines who take photos should use a 105mm. (Inside joke.) Anyway, after breakfast and a shower, I got a load of laundry started, then posted some pics to Facebook. [You can see them here](#).

Then over here to write on this for a little while. I'll write the topic of the night now, then go write my own stuff for awhile, then do whatever else and report it all here.

There is a [GREAT BLOG TOPIC](#) over at Dean's site. It's all about attitude. Go read it. I command you. (grin)

Okay, I did nothing the rest of the day but write, except that I allowed myself to be distracted by Facebook comments on the pics I posted there. Usually I'm pretty good about turning away from this (business) computer but not today for some reason.

And then I had what I thought was going to turn into an emergency with a long-time Marine Corps friend, but it wasn't. At this point, only three of us remain from the earliest days of our unit at Marine Corps Air Station in Yuma. That's just unreal to me. And when I emailed one of those guys today, the email bounced with "no such mailbox."

Freaked. Me. Out.

But I called and he's still around. Thank goodness. I'm gonna go see him in August and then probably swing up to Lake Havasu City and visit with the other one.

Topic of the Night: A Few More Notes on Goals

1. Just Start — Yes, I understand you have Xxxxx going on tomorrow (or next week or whatever) but no, that is not a legitimate reason to put off setting a goal or starting a challenge. Why? Because there will ALWAYS be one Xxxxx or another starting or stopping or going on. There will always be birthdays and vacations and movies you've been waiting forever to see and so on and so on. If you want to start a challenge, just start.

2. Missing Isn't the End of the World — If you miss your goal, what happens? Nothing. The same thing that happens when you achieve your goal for the day. Nothing. So don't sweat it. If you vow to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and you write only 1200 one day, nobody's gonna come beat you up. Your house won't suddenly be foreclosed. The bank won't suddenly come get your car. Nothing happens. So challenge yourself already. Set goals.

3. Adjust Your Goals as Necessary — If you challenge yourself (or set a goal) to write 3,000 words per day and you just can't make it and feel that you need to back that off to 2,500 or 2,000 or whatever, that's perfectly all right. Again, it's YOUR goal. It affects nobody but You. If you only write 1000 words per day (that's about an hour) five days per week that would still be 20,000 words per month. That's a 60,000 word novel in three months, and that's taking every weekend off and only working one hour a day.

4. Set Other Goals Too — I have to shed some fat. Beginning today, my goal is to walk at least 4 miles

per day. Every day. (It's just walking.) And yes, I'm going to keep a journal to motivate myself. Last year I lost from 205 down to 174 pounds.

Okay, this is a biggie. IF ANYONE OUT THERE would like to post your numbers on a website (similar to the way I do here), let me know and I'll set you up with an account on another website. Right now several other people have accounts but only a few are using the site. I'd be happy to let you in if you want in. It's a good way to get support from other professional writers and hold yourself accountable.

The Writing

Finally got back on the horse today. Not as much writing as I'd liked, but the story is flowing again.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 2178

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
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Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056

Total fiction words for the month..... 16552

Total fiction words for the year..... 422235

[July 9, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Checked email and went looking on Craigslist for a shell for my pickup. I don't really use it as a truck anymore to haul things that don't need protection from the weather, so....

Will spend the morning in Tucson for doctor and other things, including picking up that shell.

Another good walk this morning, though only a little over 4 miles. The 7.4 yesterday wore me out. (grin)

Took my camera with a different lens. Got some pretty good pics, but nothing to post today. What does this have to do with writing? I use the camera mostly for book cover pics and secondarily for art pics. Sometimes the pic gives me a story idea.

So I visited Dean's site again, and again he wrote a great topic. I urge you to check it out. Just because you hit your goal for the day doesn't mean you have to stop writing. You can move on to the next project or next goal.

Well, as it turns out, reporting the day today will be easy. Thanks to the proficiency of the medical profession, it was pretty much a total loss.

I showed up in Tucson at Pima Heart at 9:30 for a 10:15 appointment. I was to have an echo done on my

heart, have my pacemaker checked, and then visit with the doctor to receive the results of the echo.

I was in the back at 10:10. My echo took a little longer than usual but went fairly smoothly, and the pacemaker check went like butter. I was out of those two by 10:30 with assurances that “We’ll call you in a few minutes for the doctor.”

JUST UNDER THREE HOURS later I was called back and put in a room. About ten minutes after that, the doctor came in, told me everything was fine, and dismissed me.

I am not pleased.

From there we went to a late lunch at Jimmy John’s. (A high note.)

And from there we went to buy a used camper shell for my pickup. The price was fantastic, the guy helped me put it on the truck, and finally, finally, I got back here just in time to write this note and watch NYPD Blue.

So no new topic today, and no writing. I’m reposting yesterday’s topic in case anyone missed it.

Tomorrow morning EARLY I go camping. Probably will be gone through Sunday. I won’t post during that time but will catch everyone up on Monday’s post.

So thanks for your patience.

Topic of the Night: A Repeated Few Notes On Goals

1. Just Start — Yes, I understand you have Xxxxx going on tomorrow (or next week or whatever) but no, that is not a legitimate reason to put off setting a goal or starting a challenge. Why? Because there will ALWAYS be one Xxxxx or another starting or stopping or going on. There will always be birthdays and vacations and movies you’ve been waiting forever to see and so on and so on. If you want to start a challenge, just start.

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4. Set Other Goals Too (em) I have to shed some fat. Beginning today, my goal is to walk at least 4 miles per day. Every day. (It’s just walking.) And yes, I’m going to keep a journal to motivate myself. Last year I lost from 205 down to 174 pounds.

Okay, this is a biggie. IF ANYONE OUT THERE would like to post your numbers on a website (similar to the way I do here), let me know and I’ll set you up with an account on another website. Right now several other people have accounts but only a few are using the site. I’d be happy to let you in if you want in. It’s a good way to get support from other professional writers and hold yourself accountable.

The Writing

No writing today but I AM taking my writing 'puter with me on the camping trip. If I can't hammer out 3000 words a day while I'm out there then... well, I just don't know.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
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Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 16552

Total fiction words for the year..... 422235

[July 10, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Checked email and, from that, a few journal entries. Congrats to my friend Bonnie for a good start on a personal writing challenge. Also had an email from my buddy Dan, to let me know he's on his way down. We're headed for the Lower Gila Box on a camping trip this morning around 6.

And just then I realized I hadn't written the story of the week yet. (grin) So as soon as I finish this basic post, I'll get on that. I don't like to limit a story, so I probably won't finish it today. I'll write the opening and see where it goes.

I'm posting this mostly so I can pass along the topic of the night. I'll catch up on numbers etc. when I get back.

Topic of the Night: Just Start

Yesterday and the day before, "Just Start" was the first point of the topic of the night.

It would be EASY to allow my conscious mind to rationalize this opportunity away. My writing 'puter is turned off (I usually just put my computers into sleep mode so they're ready to go). My writing 'puter also is packed in its handy dandy travel bag.

So the conscious mind says to write, I'd have to get it out, turn it on, plug it in, etc. Wouldn't it be better to wait until we get to our campsite? Then, after things calm down, the day's hiking is finished, THEN maybe I can write.

See? That's the conscious mind trying to stop me from writing. It has all sorts of tricks. (Today it didn't work. grin)

And another conscious-mind ploy is already under way because I'm still writing this nonfiction blog post instead of writing my story of the week. (grin) Not Writing Fiction comes in many guises. You have to guard against it, or at least be aware of it, at all times.

And the easiest way to beat it is to Just Start. Which is where I'm going right now. (grin)

The Writing

Started the story of the week, to be finished on the road. (grin) Aren't challenges and streaks fun? This one is due to post Monday morning at 9 a.m.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 2238

Writing of "(as yet untitled)" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2238 words. Total words to date..... 2238

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
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Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18790

Total fiction words for the year..... 424473

[July 11, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out just before 4:30 (Arizona time) in New Mexico, north of Lordsburg. No checking email. No Internet. Just reality.

Great trip, but Dan and I experienced three days of excitement and adventure in about 8 hours.

Topic of the Night: Refilling the Well

I write from experience, as do most of us. Or at least near experience. I experience things, then put my characters in those situations, then extrapolate out from there. But to do that, I have to experience things. I have to refill the well occasionally. Yesterday, I topped off my well of experience.

PART I

We pulled into our camp about 45 feet away from a 500 foot drop into the Gila River, got out and began re-exploring and taking pics. I take photos for my book covers, but many also give me story ideas. Others are "art photos," suitable for framing and display, and I might someday offer those for sale.

Then it started sprinkling, then raining. We got in the cab of the pickup. It started raining harder, then hailing pea-sized hail. Soon that turned to dime-sized. That all lasted about an hour, then quit.

Cool. Back to exploring and taking photos, except this time there waterfalls all over the place. I think there were three or four to our south, two or three across the gorge to our west, and another one to the north. The widest (that I could tell) was probably 50 feet. The narrowest was a few feet. But all of them were grandiose. Remember, all of them were falling at least 500 feet.

Then an hour, maybe two later (I think... it might have been longer) Dan noticed a massive blue curtain to the west with a roiling off-white valance. I have never seen a wall of rain quite like that, and it looked like the precursor to a tornado, or maybe a batch of them.

Of course, being guys, we climbed a nearby rocky hill so we could see better. (grin)

When we'd seen all we wanted or needed to see, it was back to the pickup, and just in time.

The rain came. It was horizontal. I am not kidding. Then the hail came. It was dime-sized to quarter-sized, and much of it too was horizontal. The waterfalls I mentioned earlier were flowing hard, but after they plunged off the cliff, the wind caught them and tossed them up so they looked more like geysers. Again, I am not kidding.

The pickup (again, we were parked 45 feet from the edge of a 500 foot drop into the Gila) was jostling around hard from the wind. We seriously considered working our way down a "chimney" between two huge rocks to slip into a 1,000 year old pueblcito that had remained dry throughout.

But everything around the pueblcito was wet and slick, and very near the pueblcito, should you miss your grip on a juniper tree, was that same 500 foot drop with nothing to grab but slick rock and air. We stayed in the pickup. (grin)

With more storm fronts rolling in, we decided to head for Lordsburg. It was apparent we wouldn't be able to use our cots and sleeping bags, etc. Dan couldn't make use of his tarp to protect from the rain because the wind was, well, western wind.

PART II

Several miles down the road there's a large wash. The road ducks into it for about a quarter-mile, then out again. Only the wash was under fast-moving water.

So we "decided" (as if there was a choice) to make camp near a rancher's windmill and catch pen until the wash was not moving.

I slept sitting up in the cab (because I can) and Dan slept under the camper shell in the bed of the pickup. It rained and dropped lightning off and on pretty much all night. However, when I wandered down to the wash in the predawn light, it was damp but not flowing.

About an hour later we drove down a hill, across the wash, up onto relatively firm ground and out. There were other minor adventures, including inching past a motorhome that some moron had parked ON THE ROAD (this is a dirt road, one and a half lanes max) because apparently he didn't want to drive any farther in the mud.

But we were tired and hungry and wet and far from home (just like in the Marine Corps) so we didn't honk or shoot at him or anything when we went by. (The owner and whomever else was apparently asleep

in the back.)

Into Lordsburg at last, we dropped in to a restaurant for breakfast, then out to Shakespeare where a very kind gentleman named Rod allowed us in to take pictures even though they usually only allow people in during official tours. (We told him we're both writers and that our characters know Shakespeare better than we do. Truedat. One of Dan's characters named the place.)

Then Dan dropped south of I-10 to St. David and dropped me off. And here I am. Dan should be home about now, as I write this.

I'm not gonna write today. I'm gonna indulge my other side and enjoy the pics and videos. Tomorrow I'll write the story of the week and then get back to Book 8 of the West Crowley saga.

BY THE WAY if you're one of those who limit yourself to writing "only novels," I urge you to read the topic of the day on Dean's site [AT THIS LINK](#). It isn't today's post.

The Writing

No writing today.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of "(as yet untitled)" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 2238 words. Total words to date..... 2238

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

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Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056

Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18790

Total fiction words for the year..... 424473

[July 12, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out just before 3 a.m. Back to reality.

Still recovering from the camping trip. For a full day and the better part of a night, Dan and I were alternating between the low of being exhausted and the high of repeated adrenaline rushes. That sort of thing wore me out when I was 30. I'm a little older than that now. (grin)

So I messed around the house a bit, went for a walk, got some pics (posted a few on Facebook and I'm

posting one here), then did some things to improve the camper shell I bought the other day. Now I'm gonna take the rest of the day to do nothing. Talk with you again tomorrow.

Topic of the Night: Ending a Streak

This isn't really a topic. Being a little selfish here.

Today I decided to end the streak I began back on April 15, 2014. On that day, I published the first short story in a self-challenge. Following the lead of Dean Wesley Smith, I challenged myself to write at least one new short story every week for a year. I exceeded that goal by quite a bit, but it's still a bit sad to see a streak end.

Last week I published my 100th short story. It also was the 71st short story in a row that I wrote during the past 66 weeks.

I fully intended to write a new short story for this week too. In fact, I started one before I left on the camping trip.

Now I could have simply slapped an ending on it and called it finished, but that would not be in keeping with the spirit of the challenge. I started three other stories today as well. I wrote three more openings. Those openings might become something someday, but for now, they simply aren't working.

Writing Off Into the Dark is a freeing, Zen-like technique. It isn't something you can force. (If you force it you aren't writing into the dark.)

Over on the Free Short Story of the Week blog I'll continue to post a short story each week. For now, those will be stories I wrote before I began the challenge, stories that I haven't shared since the challenge began. If you enjoy magic realism or think you might, the first few will be from Gervasio Arrancado.

The Writing

I wrote more on the story that was going to be the short story of the week and then I wrote three new openings, none of which panned out. I wrote the words, but I can't feel certain they'll be published so I'm not going to count them. So no new publishable words of fiction for today.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

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Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 18790

Total fiction words for the year..... 424473

[July 13, 2015](#)

The Day

Rollled out about 2. For some reason, still recovering from the camping trip. I might not walk today, or keep it short.

Today again I messed around the house a bit, went for a walk and got some pics. I also posted a video of the place where Dan and I went camping. It's a calm video, between rainstorms, to show people why we go there.

Also posted a few pics from the trip. Then I ordered a couple of parts for the camper shell and bought some stuff for it. It's coming along slowly. No rush.

Back to writing with Wes off and on today. Like I said, I'm still recovering. Weird.

Topic of the Night: Write the Next Whatever

The best advice I've ever received or given is to Write the Next Sentence. If you keep doing that, your characters will lead you eventually to the end of whatever you happen to be writing.

I was following that advice one day when I realized there WAS no next sentence. A short time later (thankfully) I realized the scene was over. I was trying to move the character into a dead area that was unnecessary and boring. What I needed to do was write the next SCENE. And that's when I became a writer who writes scenes.

A scene is a character (or a few characters) dealing with one situation. To this day, I still can't "write a novel," but I can write a scene. I can write a bunch of scenes. I can write a novel.

If you're the kind of writer who writes scenes, that's good. If you aren't, or if you need a refresher, here 'tis.

1. To begin a scene, put your fingers on the keyboard and write whatever comes.
2. To get through the scene, write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, then write the next sentence. Don't think about where it's all going or even about the second or third sentence: Just write the next sentence.
3. When you're writing a scene, don't worry about how it connects to other scenes. Just focus on that scene.
4. When the scene ends, write whatever comes for the next scene (or for another scene), then write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, then write the next sentence.
5. Your character(s) will lead you to where you need to be.

The whole trick is to Keep the story moving forward.

The Writing

I prepped a couple more stories for the weekly free short story release, and I wrote some on Wes today. Feeling great about the book. Not moving fast right now, but moving toward where it's gonna move fast. It wouldn't surprise me if this one wrapped at about 20 days. Woohoo!

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 1730

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Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786

Total fiction words for the month..... 20520
Total fiction words for the year..... 426203

[July 14, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 2. Checked emails and comments on Facebook (posted some things about the trip). I did walk today, but keep it short at just over 3 miles.

Had a trip to Sierra Vista for two new tires and an oil change for the pickup. Ugh. But it was necessary with a long trip coming up.

Stopped in at the mall and talked very briefly with the Marine recruiter, a young veteran of the goings-on in Iraq. He was wounded. He was also stout, staunch, and upright. He is a protector. Many of the protected do not deserve his fine defense. I hope he never wakes up to feel that everything he and his friends have given was in vain. I hope he never feels his nation abandoned him.

Topic of the Night: Fiction as Escape

Certainly fiction is an escape for the reader. Maybe it's an escape for the writer too. Maybe it's a way to write what ought to be instead of what is.

I suspect Tim McCanlies, the screenwriter who wrote lines for Uncle Hub in the film *Secondhand Lions*, was thrilled to write what ought to be:

That people are basically good; that honor, courage, and virtue mean everything; that power and money, money and power mean nothing; that good always triumphs over evil; and that love, true love, never dies. ... Doesn't matter if it's true or not. A man should believe in those things because those are the things worth believing in.

Now the protagonist isn't perfect. He isn't all good. He or she is an ordinary human being who does extraordinary (and extraordinarily good) things.

And the antagonist isn't all bad, unless he's Hitler or Charles Manson or an insane religious freak who will behead women and children while the nation that holds itself up as the beacon of the world apologizes for him and strives not to "offend" him. But I digress.

You are fortunate, folks. If you are writers, you are fortunate. You get a chance to write what ought to be. You get a chance to escape the insanity for a little while, and write what ought to be.

Today's Writing

I wrote a bit here and a bit there, before my walk, after my walk, and after the trip to SV. Bits and pieces here and there. Kind'a had the air taken out of me when I talked with my young brother in arms.

Fiction words: 1083

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Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869

Total fiction words for the month..... 21603
Total fiction words for the year..... 427286

[July 15, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 2. Checked emails and other things.

Had another short walk today, right at 4 miles. Looking forward to a good walk tomorrow.

Sticking on one scene in Book 8 for some reason. Standard, average, typical day for me.

Topic of the Night: Eating an Elephant

There's an old joke. How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.

That's how you write a novel, too. One word, one sentence, one paragraph, one scene at a time.

I was looking over some old stuff, back when this journal was strictly private. Back in late October 2014, one of the new goals I set was to write "six novels in the next calendar year."

Well, that's when I expected to finish my first one by December 8. Then I was going to lay off until January 1, then start writing toward my goal.

As it turned out, I released the first novel on November 11 and the second one on December 7. Then I released the third one on December 27.

I was able to do that once I realized I can't write a "novel." The idea is overwhelming. But I can write a sentence, a paragraph, a scene. I can keep plugging away until the story is finished.

So this calendar year (thus far) I've written five novels and a novella. Those are in addition to the two "extra" novels I wasn't expecting to have finished last year.

But not one time was I able to sit down and wrap my head around an entire novel or even the novella. Each time I wrote a scene, then another scene, then another scene. I ran through the story with my characters, and I wrote down what they said and did. That's all.

And that ended up being eight novels and a novella, and counting. Oh, plus a short story every week. (grin)

So if you're ever overwhelmed at the idea of writing a novel, just remember you can't. Just write the scene. Don't worry about how it connects to anything else. Just write the scene. Then write another one. Then another. Your characters will lead you through.

Today's Writing

Not a lot to it. Finally knocked out the one scene and that's about it. Things will break loose soon.

Fiction words: 1784

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

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Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653

Total fiction words for the month..... 23387

Total fiction words for the year..... 429070

[July 16, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 3 (yay, slept in). Checked emails and other things.

Started today by writing a nuts and bolts post on dialogue for the Pro Writers series that posts every ten days. Guess I'll be running through my core seminars again (briefly) in the next several posts over there.

Had a good walk today. Planned to hit about 6 miles and wound up with 7.5.

I was planning to take most of today to finish finding parts I need for that used shell I bought for my pickup, but I decided to write all day today (wife's a work) and tomorrow. I'll plan to take Saturday to do all that other stuff. Not that I won't write Saturday, but writing will slip to Priority 2.

Just a normal non-writer day, really. Laundry, and a lot of other stuff. Normal stuff. Bland, boring normal stuff. I need to go camping again.

Anyway, then I finished off the day listening to The Four Tops sing “Baby, I Need Your Lovin’” (remember that?) and Aerosmith’s “Don’t Wanna Miss A Thing” and then Garth Brooks’ version of “It Don’t Matter to the Sun.” Why? No idea. Except I like perfection. Especially beautiful, emotional perfection. Up there with “Annie’s Song” by Denver or Lonestar’s “Amazed.” Whew.

Topic of the Night: Keeping Track of You

I was browsing back through EARLY installments of this journal for possible topics to update and share (Yes, I cannibalize my own work) when it struck me how far I’ve come as a write in only nine months. Seems very gestational, doesn’t it? (grin)

I started writing a short story each week way back in April, but I started Writing Seriously (novels, novellas and nonfiction plus the story of the week) last October. So for any realistic measurement I’ve been a real writer for only about nine months.

One of those entries was about a short story I wrote. I never dreamed I’d write a western, and it was a western. And toward the end of it, the characters told me they’d been buddies for a long time before they were enemies. They told me where everything started, and they asked me to write the story.

It became a novel called Leaving Amarillo. And then there was another one. Then another. Now I’m working on Book 8 in that saga.

And when I started, I wasn’t sure whether it would be a novel or just a novella. Even Dean Wesley Smith told me to be careful about setting a firm date to have it out.

But the point here is how wonderful it is to glance back over those entries since October 19, 2014 and see how much things (especially my perceptions) have changed. It’s nothing short of incredible.

So I encourage you to carve a little time out of your day each day to make a few notes on a journal. You can do it like I do this one, complete with a daily, monthly and yearly word count, or whatever. I guarantee you’ll enjoy looking back over it a few months down the line.

Today’s Writing

I wrote a little bit on Book 8 of the Wes Crowley saga, but I’m not gonna count it as a writing day. I got a lot of writing done, but very little fiction.

I wrote three blog posts for the “main” blog (Pro Writers category) and scheduled them. I’ll be on a modified vacation from July 25 through August 5 and don’t want to have to depend on OPI (Other People’s Internet). Opi is not a good boy. When everything else is clicking along famously, Opi will screw you every time.

Also went through and prepped (very lightly rewrote, heavily reparagraphed) three more stories from Gervasio for stories of the week and got those pre-posted as well. Incredible how L O N G some of my paragraphs were back when I originally wrote those. Ugh. They read much better now. The poetry and humor is still there, but at a lot better pace.

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of Book 8 in the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420

Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 23387
Total fiction words for the year..... 429070

[July 17, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 2, so back to normal. Checked emails and other things, including Dean's blog for the past two days. I recommend reading his topic of the night [Here](#) and then [Here](#). Great stuff if you want to see why I say you should NOT get an agent, and why you should publish your work and then leave it published.

I also read a lot of the comments on Dean's posts. Interesting stuff, both for what people "get" and what they don't.

Started out the day around 4 a.m. (after all of the above) just writing with Wes. My intention for today is to write all day in a series of starts. Should work out well. We'll see.

I miss writing short stories. I miss the break that gave me from the Wes Crowley storyline and I miss the excitement of as-yet-unknown characters surprising me. I'm going to continue my hiatus from writing shorts for a while yet, but I'll be starting a new challenge for myself soon.

Now I could just write a short story as it occurs to me, and if a story idea occurs to me strongly enough, I'll do that. But I'm better motivated when I've attached my writing to a goal.

During one break in writing I designed and printed up some new business cards (see below). Very basic, just to get the information out there. Here's one, in case you're interested.

A yellow business card for Harvey Stanbrough. The name "HARVEY STANBROUGH" is at the top in large, bold, black letters. Below it, in smaller black text, is "adhering to Heinlien's Rules and writing off into the dark". A bulleted list follows: "• pro writers blog • daily journal • free story of the week", "• short fiction • collections • novels • poetry", and "• free instruction on Microsoft Word for writers • audio lectures on writing". At the bottom, the website "HarveyStanbrough.com" and email "harveystanbrough@gmail.com" are listed in black text.

HARVEY STANBROUGH
adhering to Heinlien's Rules and writing off into the dark

- pro writers blog • daily journal • free story of the week
- short fiction • collections • novels • poetry
- free instruction on Microsoft Word for writers
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Topic of the Night: Be Careful Where You Get Advice

I talk often about learning to quiet your conscious, critical mind when you write.

Some of you accomplish that, at least temporarily, and that's fine. I don't think anyone has found a way to permanently silence the critical mind. The trick is to remain on guard and to silence it each time it reappears. And it will reappear. It wants to stop you from writing as a way to protect you, remember? If you don't write, you can't publish, and if you don't publish, you aren't

opening yourself to criticism.

So you learn to silence or squelch the critical voice when you sit down to write.

You are determined, even, not to rewrite because finally you've understood that rewriting, more often than not, will destroy a perfectly good piece of writing. So far so good.

Then you finish a short story or a chapter in your novel or a scene in your memoir and, for some completely unfathomable reason, you share it with a critique group.

So let me get this straight. You have learned, finally, to trust your subconscious and quiet your own critical voice... and now you're going to subject your writing to someone ELSE'S critical voice?

Uh, no. Bad idea. Maybe baddest idea ever. Don't do that.

And if you DO decide to submit your stuff for critique, AT LEAST submit it to people who have a LOT more publications than you do in the same literary genre (i.e., short fiction, essay, novel, etc.) and/or in the same commercial genre (i.e., SF, western, romance, etc.).

My advice today is the same as it was way back in October. Find yourself a good first reader.

Preferably, this person will NOT be a writer and will therefore not be tempted to bring his or her own voice to the work.

Preferably, this person will be an avid reader of the type of work you write.

Then ask that person to tell you about

- any typos
- any inconsistencies (character wearing a grey jacket when he goes into a bank and a brown one when he comes out, and
- anything else at all that confuses the reader or stops the reading cold.

Then go back and fix those places IF YOU AGREE with your first reader. You don't have to do everything the first reader recommends.

If your first reader starts giving you writing advice, smile, say Thank You and find a new first reader.

Seriously.

Today's Writing

Started on Book 8 by cycling back through a scene that was bothering me.

My subconscious was nagging me, saying the scene wasn't complete, but I wasn't able to see earlier where it was lacking.

Today as I read back through it, the rest of the scene flowed out through my fingers with no prompting from me. I love it when that happens.

Note that this is NOT rewriting. Rewriting is something you do with your conscious, critical mind, counting the number of times you use a particular word or checking to make sure you alternated sentence structures just so or whatever. None of that will improve your work. I promise.

As I expected (and hoped), the writing ran well today in a series of starts. I'm still trying to train myself to write for about an hour (about a thousand words) and then take a break.

Getting pretty good at it. Now if I can just keep doing it that way. (grin) Still, with my overall goal of wanting this novel finished and out before July 25, I think it's not going to be a problem.

Fiction words: 4018

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
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Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... 4018 words. Total words to date..... 36671

Total fiction words for the month..... 27405

Total fiction words for the year..... 433088

[July 18, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 1:30. Checked emails and weather. I don't mind being up a little earlier this morning since I want to make headway on this novel but I also have to visit Sierra Vista today. If the place there doesn't have what I need that will turn into a trip to Tucson. Ugh. Hope not.

Started the day (after a waking up period) writing this post. Now, almost two hours after I got up, finally I'm turning to the writing computer.

Well the neighbor's dog went nuts outside, triggering an hour long series of time-wasting crap. I hate it when a bunch of erratic stuff takes over and is so jerky and staccato that it seems to take only ten minutes and then I look up and an hour of my life is gone. I mean, I started this whole getting up in the early morning thing specifically to give myself a few hours of quiet.

Anyway, all of that led me in a roundabout way to doing updates for the websites I run for other people. I'd scream, but I know it wouldn't do any good. (grin)

It's all right. Life happens, eh? I just need to breathe. I anticipated a few hours of writing time early today because I have to go to SV later, but I don't have to go to SV at a particular time. I'll just put off the trip a bit.

And if I have to I'll wait and go Monday.

No walk yesterday and no walk today.

Got to SV, found the parts I needed (the struts to hold up the shell "door" when I raise it) and a new lock. The lock didn't work so I modified it. Still didn't work but I can't return it 'cause I modified it. So I started looking through all my old keys. Turns out I found one that will work fine on the old lock, so I'm all set.

(grin)

Hardest item to locate is the weather-stripping-like hard foam rubber to seal the cap to the bed, but I've already come up with a solution for that so it's all good.

Got two more hours done on Book 8 and now I'm gonna take a little break, then finish the writing for the day.

Almost ran out of time. This is supposed to post at 5 p.m. so I have to get it out. Makes my word count a little light.

Topic of the Night: Following Your Passion

I posted something about this awhile back. I might make this a post over in the big blog too. That's the blog for those who think maybe perhaps they might want to consider pursuing the idea of thinking about becoming a professional fiction writer on the outside chance that eventually they are able to carve out ten minutes or so. To think about it. (grin) I'm kidding. Maybe.

That blog's also for all levels of writers: hobbyists, aspirants, and professional writers alike.

But no matter the level of your aspiration or achievement, you should follow your passion.

That provides you automatically with two goals.

- If your passion is writing, then write.
 - Note: If your passion is Something Else, then by all means do Something Else. Nobody's holding a gun to your head here. And if your passion is drama, drape one arm over your forehead and complain constantly what terrible drudgery writing is, but that you simply must do it because you are compelled by forces greater than yourself. (grin)
- And if you write, then write what you're passionate about. It doesn't have to be a particular genre. It can be a set of characters or a particular story line or an untenable situation or whatever.

The point is, it's easy to sell out to what you believe the market wants. It's also easy to stop writing and focus on selling what you've already written. And there are any number of other copouts.

What's difficult in any art form (including writing) is to follow your passion **DESPITE** what your family and friends and critique group members say, and **DESPITE** lagging sales, and even **DESPITE** your own critical voice.

When I started writing full time, if you'd said I was going to write a western **ANYthing** I'd have laughed in your face. No possible way would I write a western, despite my background.

But I wrote one story that turned out to be a western. Then I listened to the characters, who told me a story nobody else had written. I started writing it. Now it's in the eighth book and I'm expecting the whole story to fill nine or ten books. And although the story contains strong elements of romance and fantasy (magic realism) and suspense, at its heart it's a western.

I do not have a passion for writing westerns, but I do have a passion (am driven) to write Wes Crowley's story. So that's what I write. **DESPITE** the fact that the worst selling commercial genre for books is the western. (grin)

I also have a passion for writing Mario Puzo type characters, mobsters and the like. And little inner-city wannabe gangstas. And deep down inside I have an urge to write a detective series, maybe mixed in with

the mobster characters.

I guess vampire and werewolf stuff is really big right now and has been for awhile. Yet I know I probably will never write a vampire or werewolf story. It just isn't my thing. Even my magic realism is closer to reality than that stuff. (grin)

So as a writer, you have a decision to make: Follow your passion or follow the markets?

Today's Writing

No comment beyond what's above in the "Day" section. No time. (grin)

Fiction words: 3116

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
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Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... 4018 words. Total words to date..... 36671
Day 16... 3116 words. Total words to date..... 39787

Total fiction words for the month..... 30521

Total fiction words for the year..... 436204

[July 19, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30. Checked emails and weather. No rain, so maybe a walk a bit later.

Messed around waking up, then drove out a little early for a sunrise walk. Got some great perspective pics of the railroad tracks and maybe a couple good cover shots, but the walk was truncated when I kept encountering swarms of flying ants. Even got a video of them, little monsters. (grin)

Back at the house, while it was still cool I mounted the gas struts on the back lift door of the camper shell. So that works now. Yay.

Gave my 30 quart cooler to one of my sons last time he was out here and now I need one so pulled out a really old Coleman metal cooler. We'll see how long it keeps ice. If it works, I'll use it. If not, off to Wally World later.

Sat down to chill for a bit, then decided to mow the yard. Normal, everyday stuff. So all of the above plus some other life stuff, and it's after noon, and now I'm gonna turn to the writing 'puter.

Life doesn't stop when you're a cop or a waiter or a truck driver, and it doesn't stop when you're a writer. Only difference is that I have really flexible hours. (grin) With the day dwindling, I decided to make this a

day off. I'll get back to Wes tomorrow.

Topic of the Night: Heinlein's Rules, with an addendum, with two addenda

I've talked about Heinlein's Rules before, so this will be brief. This is taken from an article I posted in this journal back in October.

I added a Rule 6 to Heinlein's Rules. As a refresher, here they are, followed by a bit of discussion:

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must not rewrite.
4. You must publish (or submit).
5. You must keep your work published (or keep it in the mail, submitted).
6. If you try to follow these rules, you WILL fall off them at times.
 - o That's okay, and it's perfectly normal.
 - o To succeed as a writer, once you realize you've fallen off the rules, you MUST get right back on them again.

Did you get that Rule 6 with its two addenda? Listen, seriously, if you find you have real trouble following these rules, I strongly recommend you visit <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/lecture-series/> and sign up for his Lecture 1: Heinlein's Rules.

It costs \$75, it's composed of 15 videos, and it will be the best investment you've ever made in your writing. I promise.

One warning: During his lectures, Dean will tell you that Every Writer Is Different. It's his mantra. I suspect he developed it when he was dodging bullets at writers' conference all those years. It's a gentle way of saying, "Not everyone can be a professional writer. You ain't it."

But don't let it fool you. Don't accept the opportunity to cop out. Elsewhere he also says he doesn't know a single professional writer who isn't following Heinlein's Rules. If you can handle the truth, that's the truth.

Now, when he says that or something similar to describe the difference (for example) between his writing process (sprinting) and Kris' writing process (slow and steady), he means it.

But when he's saying something like "Following Heinlein's Rules works for me but every writer is different," he's giving you an easy way out if you aren't disciplined enough to enjoy having fun making up stuff for a living.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
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Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
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Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... 4018 words. Total words to date..... 36671
Day 16... 3116 words. Total words to date..... 39787
Day 17... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 30521
Total fiction words for the year..... 436204

[July 20, 2015](#)

The Day

Almost 3 when I rolled out this morning. Checked emails and weather. No rain, so I'll walk this morning.

Had a great walk. Only about 5.5 miles but at a good pace despite shooting a few pics. Got a couple cover pics so it's all good.

The guy below is a baby cotton tail and he was naturally curious. Hopped just off the trail, then stopped and looked while I took pictures. Might be a girl. I see she has a little green bouquet just above her left eye. (grin)



My old Coleman metal cooler is working fine. Just have to slap silicone on one minuscule leak. Woohoo! Older SERIOUSLY is better.

Hmm. Good thing once again I have really flexible hours. (grin)

Had an eye doctor appointment in Willcox (I don't do SV whenever I can help it), then hung around town for another hour buying some stuff I can't find within 30 miles of Good Ol' Benson who's running everybody out with their Stinkin' High Taxes.

Anyway, I wrote some this morning, but with the day dwindling (again) and with a massive storm sitting just southwest considering thinking about deciding whether it might possibly move into Saint David, I'm reporting early.

Topic of the Night: Writing Off Into the Dark, Part One

This is writing without an outline, without a plan, without allowing your conscious mind to "direct" every action of

every character and every word that comes out of your characters' mouth.

Look, if someone tells you how a novel ends, do you still want to read it? Most people would say No.

So if you know before you start writing what's going to happen, why do you want to write it? Isn't that boring? It is to me.

Bradbury once said (paraphrasing) How can a writer expect to surprise the reader if he doesn't surprise

himself?

And when asked about his process for writing *Dandelion Wine*, he said he wrote it like he wrote everything else. He got his coffee, he sat down at the typewriter, he put his fingers on the keys, and he wrote whatever came.

So writing off into the dark. Sit down at your writing computer, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write whatever comes.

Trust it. Trust your subconscious to tell the story. It's been doing that a lot longer than you've known the alphabet.

I once wrote that this technique is an offshoot of Heinlein's Rules. That isn't really true. You can write off into the dark even if you aren't following Heinlein's Rules. But they do go together very nicely.

If there were specific rules for writing off into the dark they would read like this (annotated with an explanation to save space):

1. **Sit down at your writing computer and Just Write.** (Just Write: Don't think about what you want to write. Don't outline. Don't strive for a plot; the characters will bring it with them. Don't plan and force the characters/story to conform to your plan. Don't do anything else. Let Go and Just Write.)
2. **When you get stuck, Just Write the Next Sentence.** Then Write the Next Sentence. Then Write the Next Sentence. (When you get stuck, Just Write the Next Sentence: If there is no next sentence, if nothing comes [Don't Think!], that scene is probably finished. Just write the next scene. Open it by writing whatever comes into you mind, then write the next sentence. Lather, rinse, repeat.)
3. **Run your spell checker.** (Remember, this is done in critical mind. It's imperative that while you're doing this, you don't start reading even small snippets of the story and "fixing" it. Like one little drink for an alcoholic or one cigarette for me, it will lead you to a lifetime of rewriting and polishing instead of submitting and publishing. And you WILL polish the good off your story.)
4. **Send to your first reader, then publish.** (If you have a first reader, when it comes back, fix whatever the first reader caught IF YOU AGREE. If you don't have a first reader, or if you don't have a good first reader, skip it and just publish.)
5. **Write the next story. Writers Write.** (Self-explanatory. Writers Write. Just Write.)

So there you go. Tomorrow's topic: Writing Off Into the Dark, Part Two (You do NOT want to miss this. And stop being stingy. Tell your friends!)

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 1678

Writing of *The Battle of Tres Caballos* (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878
Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056

Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... 4018 words. Total words to date..... 36671
Day 16... 3116 words. Total words to date..... 39787
Day 17... 1678 words. Total words to date..... 41469

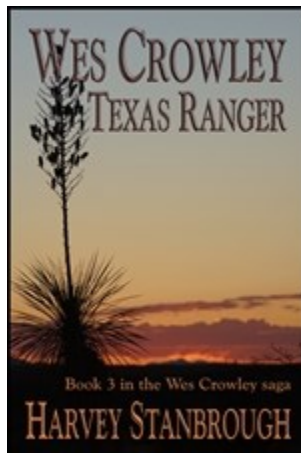
Total fiction words for the month..... 32199
Total fiction words for the year..... 437882

[July 21, 2015](#)

The Day

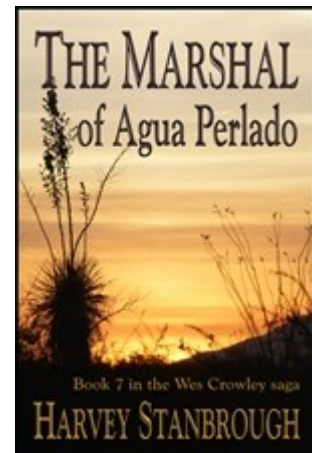
Rollled out about 2:30 after a rough night babysitting an ulcer. Definitely no walk today.

Books 3 and 7 of the Wes Crowley saga came in from CreateSpace today. I order three or four copies of each major title I put out just to have a few on hand. Here are the covers of those two:



I got some pretty good writing done today, but not fully up to speed. Took a lot more time off to just sit than anything else. Still, advanced the novel. And I'm getting closer to the point where I'll see the ending.

I did find out today that one of the lesser characters in the previous book is bigger than I first thought. And she's bigger because she has a personal vendetta against Wes. That was kind'a interesting. Not sure yet why she has a vendetta, but I hope they'll tell me in the next day or two. (grin)



So I did nothing today other than resting and writing, and all of the writing came in short bits here and there. It'll be better tomorrow.

Topic of the Night: Writing Off Into the Dark, Part Two To Direct or Not to Direct

In yesterday's post, I wrote that WOITD is writing without allowing your conscious mind to "direct" every action of every character and every word that comes out of your characters' mouths.

True dat.

So that means you have a choice.

Most of us have been taught that we're supposed to study and plot and do character studies and outlines and Control The Snot out of our characters. Wrong.

How would you like it if someone else were controlling everything you did, everything you said?

Well, your characters feel the same way.

In a good marriage or a good friendship, the parties run through life together. They simply enjoy each other's company and are there for each other. And as you go through life you get little snapshots and opinions of each other. Later, perhaps in memoir or when talking with another person, you convey your

memories of that time.

It's the same in a story. Exactly the same. Exactly.

The brave writer doesn't "direct" anything. The brave writer, like the brave friend or lover, runs through life with her characters, exploring and experiencing the same things they do AS THE CHARACTERS experience them. And the writer writes down what the characters say and do.

Notice: The writer doesn't DIRECT the characters to say and do certain things. The writer merely observes, AS she's running through the story with the characters, and writes down what they say and do.

If you do this, if you trust your subconscious and write off into the dark, your characters WILL surprise you, I promise.

Practically every day mine do or say things that I had no idea they were going to say or do. Many times, as I'm writing, I stop, sit back from the computer and laugh out loud. And when the characters take me completely by surprise, I know they'll do the same for the reader.

By the way, there have been some GREAT posts over at <http://deanwesleysmith.com> over the past few days on the business of writing. I hope you're following his blog.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 1805

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1.....	4125 words. Total words to date.....	4125
Day 2.....	2624 words. Total words to date.....	6749
Day 3.....	2766 words. Total words to date.....	9515
Day 4.....	1412 words. Total words to date.....	10927
Day 5.....	3441 words. Total words to date.....	14368
Day 6.....	1052 words. Total words to date.....	15420
Day 7.....	2486 words. Total words to date.....	17906
Day 8.....	3201 words. Total words to date.....	21107
Day 9.....	3186 words. Total words to date.....	24293
Day 10...	1585 words. Total words to date.....	25878
Day 11...	2178 words. Total words to date.....	28056
Day 12...	1730 words. Total words to date.....	29786
Day 13...	1083 words. Total words to date.....	30869
Day 14...	1784 words. Total words to date.....	32653
Day 15...	4018 words. Total words to date.....	36671
Day 16...	3116 words. Total words to date.....	39787
Day 17...	1678 words. Total words to date.....	41469
Day 18...	1805 words. Total words to date.....	43274

Total fiction words for the month..... 34004

Total fiction words for the year..... 439687

[July 22, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 2:30. No walk again today and maybe no writing. I have to be in Sierra Vista to visit my mechanic at 9 a.m. We'll see how the day unfolds from there.

I could have written earlier, but I didn't. Well, I did write, but nothing good. During my waking up time, a

comment on Facebook set me off. I spent the next three hours writing some nonfiction spurred by the comment. Ugh.

Sometimes I'm an idiot. What I have to say would have no effect on the comment writer. It would make no difference whatsoever, and it serves only to further frustrate me. So three completely wasted hours there. I can't believe some of the choices I make sometimes regarding how I spend my time.

And I won't start writing on Wes now because I don't want to get deep into a scene and have to interrupt it for my little side trip to SV this morning. It's looking more and more like I'll miss my original goal of having this book done and out before July 25. Might have to finish it on the road. But that's all right. I allowed too many other things to take priority too many times.

Great post over at <http://deanwesleysmith.com>. He talks about yet another benefit of writing into the dark. Good read.

Sure enough, the gaskets that my truck needed even frustrated the mechanic. He started at about 9 this morning and had to re-do things until around noon when my wife came to pick me up. I'll go get her at her work at 5, then back to SV (actually Whetstone, just north of Huachuca City) to get the truck.

Valve cover gaskets now look more like O rings than gaskets, for anyone out there who used to replace your own. We used to buy one set of valve cover gaskets and save the box. Then the next set we cut out of the box the first set came in. Cereal boxes worked too.

I decided to call this a day off writing. Too much other going on.

Topic of the Night: Setting Priorities

Very briefly, you set your own priorities. You make choices, conscious or otherwise, in practically every moment.

Become aware of those choices. Own them.

If they aren't what you want, or if the results aren't what you want, begin changing how you assign priorities.

Basically,

- you can be a plumber or cop or housewife who Also Writes when other things and people allow you to, or
- you can BE a writer who also does other life things.

I am a writer who does other things, either when I choose to or when life happens. Today it was mostly life happens and partly kickin' back. (grin)

What to take from this: It's all up to you.

Today's Writing

No writing today. Zero.

Fiction words: XXXX

This really is kind'a strange. I have only 18 writing days on this novel, so not bad, but that's over 31 calendar days. For me that's a long time. I don't think I've taken off that many days before while writing a novel. Anyway, this one is closing down on the end so I think the writing will go pretty fast from here on out.

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
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Day 19... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 34004

Total fiction words for the year..... 439687

[July 23, 2015](#)

The Day

Rollled out about 3. Checked email and did some website maintenance and updates.

Turned a quick 3 mile walk.

Went out to the shed and loaded a bunch of my youngest son's stuff into the pickup for the trip north. Really looking forward to the road trip.

Sam Turner from SSA and RWA sent me a very interesting survey comparing readers' choices in 2015 vs. 2013. There's a lot of good information there if you want to improve your marketing efforts.

The main page for the survey results is here: <http://blog.marieforce.com/the-results-are-in-2015-reader-survey/>.

The results in table format are here: <https://marieforce.com/images/docs/2015ReaderSurveyChart.pdf>.

You'll see a couple other links on the main page as well.

Great post again over at <http://deanwesleysmith.com>. This guy's hitting on all cylinders right now, and I for one am glad to see it. He and I are the same age. What he's doing with his writing right now is nothing short of incredible. Today he talks about multiple cash flows in this new world of publishing. Well worth a visit.

Once again I didn't get any writing done. I'm getting things (the truck, my personal belongings, "trip stuff" etc.) ready for the trip so I'm kind of scatter brained right now.

When I think I might sit and write a bit, I think of some small something I need for the trip. Thing is, I'm one of those who does everything as it occurs to me. If I didn't, some of it would fall through the cracks.

So I'm living kind of a stuttering, stammering lifestyle right now filled with starts.

Is this an example of my conscious mind stopping me from writing?

Unequivocally, Nope. I love the story and I want to get it finished so I can do the cover and move on to the next one. No stoppages or slowdowns or confusion. I'm just wired about this trip.

As an aside, I keep thinking I should have just stayed here. The initial plan was to send Mom to Indiana to see her boys while I stay here and hold down the fort. But we eventually decided on Plan Two, which was me going as well, but driving instead of flying. I don't fly, and I won't until the nation regains its senses and puts personal safety above politically correct speech and searches.

So we're driving. The only massive downside is that I have to leave my youngest daughter here and I don't like it. But being here in familiar surroundings will be better for her, so I'm forcing myself to do it. (grin)

Nervous dad and the whole bit. Here's a little pic of my baby girl, asking me nicely to put down Mr. Camera before she goes all Siamese on my backside. (grin)



Not really. She's the sweetest baby kit I've ever known. Actually, I woke her up while she was napping in the late afternoon sun. Probably that look on her face is *You're gonna put some stupid caption with this an' show it to people aren't you?*



And yes, I am. Did.

Okay, since I started this travesty, here's how she usually looks. (grin)

Topic of the Night: No topic tonight. I'm pooped.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

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Day 19... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 34004

Total fiction words for the year..... 439687

[July 24, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out about 3. Checked email and did some other waking-up stuff.

Good rain last night so no walk today. Not sure I can even get out of my driveway. (grin)

No matter how the writing turns out today, more than likely I'll be going on hiatus from this blog for a few days. I might post and I might not. I'll be driving about 11 hours per day, so I don't need the unnecessary added pressure of hoping I can get this out before 5 p.m. each day, especially when I won't be able to write while I'm driving.

Now I understand I could just pre-post a "placeholder" post or something like that, but that just seems kind'a silly. I DO have a streak going with this, but using an occasional placeholder post seems like cheating to me. Plus I wasn't really trying to get a streak going with this. It just kind'a worked out that way.

I started this back in mid-October to give other writers and would-be writers a glimpse at my life since I've started writing fiction full time as a profession. I guess taking an occasional hiatus is part of the writing life too, right? (grin)

I have posts pre-published and ready to go on my other two blogs, the Pro Writers series and the Free Short Story of the Week, so those will continue. But this is a daily post of what I did that day, and probably all I'm gonna be doing is driving and sleeping.

If I see anything interesting that has to do with writing or the writing life along the way I'll certainly report it. In fact, I might well take a few notes at the end of each day and then report those when I have time.

Topic of the Night: Starting and Restarting

First, if you're an aspiring writer and you haven't started that novel or short story, it's time. And by "started" I don't mean you thought about it or researched it or told all your friends you were gonna do it. By "started" I mean you sat down at the keyboard and actually put words on the page.

If you haven't started yet, and if you're having trouble with that, chances are you're the victim of an unreasonable fear.

If you write something and it's great, absolutely nothing will happen. And if you write something and it sucks canal water from all 50 states, well, nothing will happen then either. So sit down and Just Write.

To get better, you have to practice. And to practice, you have to start.

So you're ready and willing, and the question now is, What do I do next?

Sit down at the keyboard, put your fingers on the keys, and type whatever comes. Just type whatever comes.

You're not writing a story or a novel. You're just writing a sentence.

Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Keep doing that, and before you know it, you will have written a scene.

Once you write that first sentence, DON'T stop and critique it. DON'T stop and edit it. DON'T wonder how it's gonna fit with whatever's coming in the future.

Just write the next sentence.

If you want to start, that's how you start.

And if you need to restart, that's pretty much how you restart too.

More than likely I won't be writing for awhile. Probably at least three days, and maybe the whole ten days.

And of course, I'm nearing the end of a WIP, unless I finish it today, which is doubtful. So I'll be restarting when I get back.

For restarting, the best method I've found is to cycle back and read some of what I've written. With some stories I might start at the beginning and read all the way through, allowing myself to touch the manuscript here and there.

Caution: if you do this, DON'T look for "too many" instances of a particular word or "too many" uses of a particular sentence structure. Your subconscious knew what it wanted when it wrote that segment the first time. But if you happen on "moss" and know "lichen" is closer to what you were wanting to convey, by all means change it. So when I say I'll allow myself to touch the manuscript as I read through it, that's what I mean.

With this story I'll probably cycle back about five pages, maybe ten, and read from there. Then when I get to the end of what I've written, I'll just write the next sentence, then write the next sentence. In other words I'll give it all over to the higher power: my subconscious: and let it do what it does best. (grin)

By the way, another good blog post over at <http://deanwesleysmith.com> today. A weird analogy that didn't really work for me, but I got his point. I think you will too.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: 2713

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

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Total fiction words for the month..... 36717

Total fiction words for the year..... 442400

NO POSTS FOR JULY 25, 26, 28 – 31, AND AUGUST 1 – 3.

[July 27, 2015](#)

Hey folks, just a note to update everyone and hope you're hangin' in there.

Arrived at our destination today. I was thinking (wrongly, not at all unusual for me) that we'd be on the road three days, then here three days, then on the road again three days. Kind of a weird symmetry in that.

But no.

Actually, not counting today, we'll be here four full days. The current intention is to head back early on Saturday morning. So there's that.

Not sure how much writing I'll get done while I'm on the road at all. I truly am jonesing to 1) finish The Battle of Tres Caballos and 2) get started on either another novel in a different world or Book 9 of the Crowley saga. And I've also been jonesing lately to write more short fiction.

I have a feeling if I am able to carve out some writing time while I'm on the road it will be for short stories.

This is all very weird for me. I spent years traveling around the country speaking at writers' conferences and conventions. But at those places, I was alone and not visiting relatives or friends. All of that translates that whenever I wasn't entertaining new friends in the local bar, I was up in my room WRITING.

Whole different deal here. So we'll see.

Not sure even when I'll post again, so until then, please keep writing and enjoying yourself. Just have fun!

Harvey

Oh! Over at [Dean's website](#), he's putting up some good stuff recently. So go look already.

[August 4, 2015](#)

The Day

After roughly 6 months of driving around the country, I'm back. Okay, it was only 11 days, inclusive, but I drove on both the first and last day, so "inclusive" is also true. Ugh. And yes, it seems like every bit of six months.

ANYway, I'm back. Cleaning up email, running updates, issuing a refund to a guy who bought my computer and changed his mind, etc.

Today, I am happy to report, will be the last day of the worst streak I've ever endured: eleven straight days without writing so much as a word of fiction. I would literally rather be beaten than go through that again. Well, I WON'T go through that again, not voluntarily.

If you haven't visited [Dean's website](#) lately, I urge you to do so, and read back over the past several days for the Topic of the Night.

The Writing

First, I finished up the month of July with only 36717 words. Absolutely terrible, but it will get better. After all, the monthly goal resets every month. (grin)

Tomorrow morning, I will begin writing the climax and the ending. To do that, I will read back over maybe the last ten pages or so. Then I'll put my fingers on the keys and type whatever comes.

I expect to finish the book within a few days, and then I'll be on to something new. Or Book 9. Much depends on Wes.

To set a restarting point, below I've put in the numbers thus far for The Battle of Tres Caballos.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

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Day 20... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0000
Total fiction words for the year..... 442400

[August 5, 2015](#)

The Day

Back on schedule, rolled out about 2:45. Actually, staying on schedule wasn't difficult. Although every other state in the vicinity (north/south) was intelligent enough to stay on Central Time, Indiana's legislature voted several years ago to put most of the state on Eastern Time (Doh!).

But it worked out well for me personally. I went to bed around 10 p.m. local time (7 my time) and got up around 5 or 6 a.m. local time (2 or 3 my time), so no real adjustment. (grin)

High hopes yesterday to get back to writing today, and I will, but as I write this it's mid-morning. Before sunup I spent time with my beautiful little daughter and did some waking up things, then updated several websites, cleaned up my inbox, etc. I also began doing some research that I might need for a novel someday.

With first light, I opened the back of my pickup and camper shell and began unloading the stuff we brought back from Indiana. Seems to me it's roughly twice what we hauled up there to our boys, but that might just be me and my grouch levels after the eleven day trip. Probably that's it.

So unloading finished, put most of it away (at least temporarily) I did some more research on the same topic. A little while later I noticed the yard needed to be mowed. Like many in Arizona, I do not have a "lawn," but I do have an extensive yard. Out came the mower, overfilled it with gasoline per usual, started it and away I went. Now that's finished.

It's always struck me as ironic that I'm living in southeast Arizona, loving the "wild" look of it, and mowing the yard. If the place was mine, I'd do the whole thing over in rock. Large rock. Massive rock. One big huge massive gargantuan rock with a house on top. That's what I'd do.

Okay, gonna chill a bit, then get a shower, then see what comes and hope it's the story. Back in a bit.

Well after the shower, remembered I had to replenish groceries here in the house, so went shopping, then back here for lunch. Still exhausted from the trip. I might end up taking a nap today. If I do it'll be the first since about first grade. (grin)

No nap, but I decided this has to be another non-writing day. Just too tired. Cleaning up from the trip, plus the trip itself took a toll. Onward to tomorrow.

Topic of the Night: Life Happens, or Letting Life Happen

There's nothing we can do about it anyway, and sometimes life just happens and we have to let it.

That's the case with me for the last eleven days and now today. I could have written while I was gone. I could have just carved out some time and written. The people I was around (most of them) would have understood and a few would even have envied me. They probably wouldn't even have interrupted me with noise or otherwise.

But I didn't write. I didn't even try to carve out the time because I didn't want to run the risk of being interrupted. When I'm writing, I want to write. I don't want the TV to come on. I don't want someone in the next room to laugh at something cute or stupid someone else did or said. I don't want the house to be on fire and someone to come rushing into the room to order me out, as if the burning house is more important than the fact that I'm right in the middle of a scene.

When I'm writing, I want to write. If I don't feel I can guarantee that, then I'd rather just not write until it's time.

I think that's what I did again today, albeit subconsciously. As much as I wanted to write, my subconscious knew better. It shut down. And just before it shut down, it sent me a series of commands on all frequencies:

Rest up from the trip. Unload the truck. Do that research you need to do. Check the oil. Clean off the weird red mark some moron in Hatch scrawled on your passenger window. Do some more research. Mow the yard. No, the whole yard. Put away the stuff from the truck. Stare at your story if you want, but I'm tellin' you, you ain't writin' today.

Okay, go write the daily journal if it'll make you feel better.

And here I am. So still no Day 20 of writing. Tomorrow probably. Tomorrow almost certainly.

See you then.

Today's Writing

Fiction words: XXXX

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Day 20... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 0000

Total fiction words for the year..... 442400

[August 6, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2. Not really sure why. Still tired and unmotivated.

Anyway, after a few hours of doing basically nothing, I went for a walk. That was good to the tune of just under 6 miles, so at least I got my blood pumping again. Yay. I guess.

Got back, made breakfast for myself and ate. Sat here to waste a little more time and then start this journal entry. Now to the shower, and then to the writing computer. Even if I do nothing but open it and stare, I'll do that for at least a few hours today. Ever get unmotivated? Not fun.

Anyway....

Topic of the Night: Pre-Partum Depression

Very short topic tonight. I've known since about a week before my trip (which started almost two weeks ago) that the current novel is going to end soon. I think that's part of my problem. I think I don't want it to end.

Yes, the story will continue in the next book, and yes, writing that one will be a great deal of fun. But I still hate seeing this one end. Ugh. Worst part of the writing process for me personally is coming to the end.

And I still don't understand those who actually celebrate finishing a story or a novel. I mean, if writing is fun, as it should be, why celebrate being done with it?

For me that would be like celebrating the end of a session of wild lovemaking. "Woohoo! It's over! Get the champagne!"

Uhhh, no. I just wanna grab a nap to sleep off the glow and then start the next one. And by "the next one," you know, I mean the next story or book.

Today's Writing

Not a lot, but some. I'm in the middle of the final big battle scene now, so when I finish that and then the ending (the climax and the ending are not the same thing) I will have finished this one. Ugh.

So anyway, moving again with my writing. Probably no more foot dragging starting tomorrow.

Fiction words: 1541

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Day 19... 2713 words. Total words to date..... 45987
Day 20... 1541 words. Total words to date..... 47528

Total fiction words for the month..... 1541
Total fiction words for the year..... 443941

[August 7, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:40. Not quite as tired this morning.

Spent a short while doing emails, etc. to wake up, then turned to the writing computer. Did a short session of around 700 words, then took a walk. Only went just under 4 miles, but it was over rocky, sloping terrain so it was a good workout. Also took time to get a lot of pictures as well as a few videos. Still learning the video feature on my camera so I play with it now and then.

Downloading pics now (and writing this journal entry).

Fixed and ate breakfast, showered, checked and answered email, then read Dean's blog post. Interesting.

Topic of the Night: Climax Versus Ending

In yesterday's post I mentioned that all I have left to write on this book is the final big climax and the ending, and I mentioned that those are not the same thing.

No matter the story you're telling, no matter the length, the climax is just the climax. It isn't the ending. If you write the climax and then skip a blank line and write The End, you'll lose readers in droves for future books. What happened as the result of the climax? That is the ending.

The easiest example to use (as is often the case) is from a film. In Star Wars (the last of the original ones), the final big climactic scene was the one that culminated with the explosion of the Death Star and the connotation that the Empire was finished. I won't even begin to discuss how improbable it was that the Empire actually lost to a rag-tag band of misfits. US Revolutionary War anyone?

But that wasn't the ending. For the ending, the writer skipped ahead a few weeks and showed the big red carpet, with the princess (or queen, whatever) hanging medals on everyone within reach, including a big tawny carpet. Remember? That was the ending.

In another favorite film, the final in the original Lonesome Dove series, again the writer skipped ahead from the climax to have a nervous reporter say to Captain Call that he was a man of vision. At that point, Call mumbled "Yeah, one hell of a vision" sarcastically and stared off into space as the director paraded all his dead friends past him.

The climax is the climax. The ending is the part that lets the viewer (films) and the reader (books) know

it's okay to get up and find something else to do. The story is over.

Finally, in a story like the one I'm currently writing (remember, I'm on the eighth book in the same story), the ending serves to let the reader know it's all right to find something else to do for now, but it also entices the reader to want to read the next book in the story.

And I hope to reach that point today, or maybe tomorrow.

We'll see.

Today's Writing

Okay. Good day of writing today.

After the initial session of around 700 this morning, I had three more good sessions, each about an hour long. So the big climax is done. Now I have only the denouement (ending) to wrap it up and lead into the next book. That should fall into place tomorrow.

Fiction words: 3503

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Day 17...	1678 words. Total words to date.....	41469
Day 18...	1805 words. Total words to date.....	43274
Day 19...	2713 words. Total words to date.....	45987
Day 20...	1541 words. Total words to date.....	47528
Day 21...	3503 words. Total words to date.....	51031

Total fiction words for the month..... 5044

Total fiction words for the year..... 447444

[August 8, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Like yesterday, I spent a short time on email and games to wake up. Then I turned to the writing computer and did a very short session of around 400 words to finish the big battle scene from yesterday. This is an extremely emotional scene. Whew.

No walk this morning as I wasn't feeling well. Nothing serious, just blah.

Finally decided to hit Walmart early in the day to stock up on groceries. Got back by about 8:30, put stuff away, then fixed and ate breakfast. Checked and answered email again, then turned to the writing computer again and powered through to the end in two sessions, each of which was about an hour.

Some very interesting things happened in the last few thousand words. MAN I love my characters! They're never shy about throwing me a curve. Keeps it interesting. (As Ray Bradbury said, if you don't surprise yourself as a writer, how can you expect to surprise your readers?)

Then I came to write this post and finally remembered to check [Dean's blog post](#). Again, interesting. Today he started an instruction book for writers called "How to Write Fiction Sales Copy." If you want to learn how to write blurbs, etc. (sales copy), I advise you to tune in to his blog for awhile and read the posts.

Anyway, I ran the spell-checker (that's my second draft) and then created a cover. (That's it over there on the right.) After that I published the book to Smashwords and Amazon for pre-orders. It will release officially on 1 October. If you'd care for a preview, please visit <http://harveystanbrough.com/the-battle-of-tres-caballos>. I think you'll enjoy the excerpt there. (grin)

Topic of the Night: Another Challenge Coming

When I went to Smashwords and Amazon today to publish The Battle of Tres Caballos, the process seemed very stiff and stilted. That was my fault, not the fault of the sites.

When I was writing a short story every week (and creating a cover and publishing it and combining the latest 5 or 10 stories in a collection and creating a cover and publishing it) I was a very busy camper. (grin) I was publishing something at least once a week, so I got in practice.

Now I'm rusty. I'm also old and cratchety (old and cratchety enough that I really like the word "cratchety"), so I'm rustier than I'd have been at say 60 or whatever.

So I think another self-challenge is on the horizon. I would LOVE for you (all of you or any of you) to join me in that challenge if you want, but more than likely I won't ask. I mean, if you wanna do it (or even a modified version of it), take a hint from Nike and Just Do It.

Okay, sorry for the abbreviated topic, but I'm pooped.

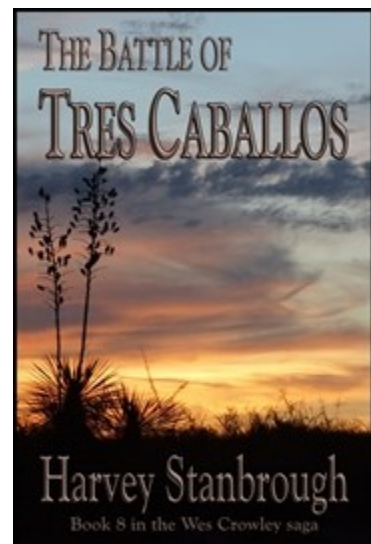
Today's Writing

Great day of writing today. The characters surprised me two or three times during the climax and ANOTHER two or three times during the ending. Incredible fun.

Fiction words: 2405

Writing of The Battle of Tres Caballos (Book 8)

Day 1..... 4125 words. Total words to date..... 4125
Day 2..... 2624 words. Total words to date..... 6749
Day 3..... 2766 words. Total words to date..... 9515
Day 4..... 1412 words. Total words to date..... 10927
Day 5..... 3441 words. Total words to date..... 14368
Day 6..... 1052 words. Total words to date..... 15420
Day 7..... 2486 words. Total words to date..... 17906
Day 8..... 3201 words. Total words to date..... 21107
Day 9..... 3186 words. Total words to date..... 24293
Day 10... 1585 words. Total words to date..... 25878



Day 11... 2178 words. Total words to date..... 28056
Day 12... 1730 words. Total words to date..... 29786
Day 13... 1083 words. Total words to date..... 30869
Day 14... 1784 words. Total words to date..... 32653
Day 15... 4018 words. Total words to date..... 36671
Day 16... 3116 words. Total words to date..... 39787
Day 17... 1678 words. Total words to date..... 41469
Day 18... 1805 words. Total words to date..... 43274
Day 19... 2713 words. Total words to date..... 45987
Day 20... 1541 words. Total words to date..... 47528
Day 21... 3503 words. Total words to date..... 51031
Day 22... 2405 words. Total words to date..... 53436 (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 7449
Total fiction words for the year..... 449849

[August 9, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out right at 2:30. Turned on the coffee water (I use Kava, which is instant but no acid), then went into the office.

I opened the writing computer first thing and wrote an opening sentence that was slapping me around as I was waking up. I won't count those words unless I work on that potential story later today. Then email etc. then to this journal entry.

I might take a day off today. I want to think about my upcoming challenge. What it's going to be. How often it will reset.

Wrote the Topic of the Night (below) and then took a walk along a broad wash near St. David. Wanted to see whether the recent rains had solidified the sandy bottom and it had. So that will be good for walks until the four wheelers tear the snot out of it again.

Yeah, I know not everyone likes to walk, but I don't know why they can't reuse the same tracks coming out that they used going in. When they tear up the entire bottom, it makes for very difficult walking or hiking.

Soon a side trip to Sierra Vista for some cat stuff and probably to look around for awhile. Then back here for whatever awaits.

No writing today. I'm just gonna blow off the rest of the day and start fresh tomorrow on something.

Topic of the Night: One of Heinlein's Rules Revisited

Just as a quick reference, the rules are

1. You must write.
2. You must finish what you write.
3. You must refrain from rewriting.
4. You must put your work on the market (publish it or submit it for publication) so readers (or editors/publishers) can buy it.
5. You must leave it on the market (leave it published or resubmit rejected manuscripts) so readers can continue to buy it (or so different editors/publishers have a chance to buy it).

Dean Wesley Smith has often said his biggest failure in following Heinlein's Rules, especially in his early

days, was Rule 4.

Most would-be writers have trouble with 1 or 2 or 3. They're still inundated with all the myths they've been taught (writing is hard, it's work, it's drudgery, etc.) so it becomes much easier to talk about writing than to actually write. They've also never been taught to push down the fear of rejection surging within them.

So instead of finishing what they're writing, they start a new piece, then another and another. If they don't finish a work in progress, they can't send it off and risk suffering rejection.

Or they do finish. But the same fear of rejection, coupled this time with the myth (and LIE) that they must rewrite, keeps them rewriting and editing and polishing. Because again, if they're rewriting, they aren't finished and they can't send off their work and risk rejection.

I understand how would-be writers can fall victim to those first three rules. Considering all the (ahem) *crap* we're taught almost constantly about writing, it's absolutely amazing that anything has been published EVER.

But I never quite understood how a writer could be tripped up by Rule 4.

Now Dean has said repeatedly that what tripped him up on Rule 4 was the same fear. If he didn't submit his work, he wouldn't risk rejection.

But he also said he enjoyed WRITING. He enjoyed the storytelling. He has been a writing-into-the-dark type ever since he found Heinlein's Rules and another SF writer told him to "Dare to be bad." And ever since the wisdom of those concepts sank in, writing has been much more important to him than publishing what he wrote. To some degree, even in today's brave new world of publishing, he's still that way.

And I finally understand it.

Yesterday, I finished *The Battle of Tres Caballos*. It was the eighth book in the Wes Crowley saga. But as I finished it, spell checked it and published it for pre-publication orders to Smashwords and Amazon, I realized I wasn't worried so much about when it will come out. Or even whether it will come out.

Now, don't get me wrong. I WILL release it in both ebook and paper, but my priorities have shifted. I used to long for others to read and enjoy what I had written. Now I just want to write. I'll release this one mostly because there is a small cadre of readers who enjoy the series and want to know what Wes is up to next.

But I have to be honest here. I'm not suffering under any delusions of grandeur. I'm not buying for a second that my novels or stories are "important" to anyone other than myself.

When I was a child, I read or heard somewhere that if you want to gauge your true importance, fill a pail about 3/4 full with water. Then stick your fist in the pail. Note the water level.

Then take your fist out of the pail and notice how little the water level changed. There you go.

That's how much my stories would be missed if I stopped putting them out there.

The good thing is, that's a completely freeing concept. When I write, it's strictly so I can enjoy running through a story with the characters. Believe me, it doesn't get any better than that.

Today's Writing

No writing today.

Fiction words: XXXX

Writing of XXXXX ()

Day 1..... XXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 7449

Total fiction words for the year..... 449849

[August 10, 2015](#)

The Day

This post is longer than usual, but you wanna read it, I promise. (grin)

Rollled out late this morning at 3:30. Weird. right at 2:30. Things are different when I get up later than usual, especially a whole hour later than usual. Messes up part of the routine.

Barely had time to wake up before I had to let the pets out. Then I started getting ready for my walk, so no writing early.

Good walk, although short at just under 4 miles. Then I had a shower and breakfast and came here to open the journal entry.

Still thinking about my personal goals (writing and otherwise) and putting things away after painting my office and squaring away things from the trip in addition to getting back into writing. There are also some big changes coming up in my life, so that's on my mind some too.

Nothing's easy, eh? Then again, if it were easy, how boring would that be?

Topic of the Night: Walking and Writing

No, they aren't in any way the same thing, but they are the same process.

In walking you just put one foot in front of the other. Those steps become a tenth of a mile, then two-tenths and so on. And those tenths become a mile, then two, and so on.

Moreover, walking doesn't require conscious thought. Your nervous system and your muscles know what to do. They, aided by the gyroscope that is (I guess) your middle ear, act in concert to propel you, usually in the direction you want to go.

In fact, walking is endlessly more pleasurable if you DON'T give it conscious thought. I've gotten considerably stronger, improved my breathing and lost more weight more quickly when I was "just walking" than when I walked "as a workout," "trying" to improve my health. Seriously.

Letting go and Just Walking is easy. Just let your subconscious take over and do its thing while you enjoy the view.

When I just walk for the pure pleasure of it, I call it "touring." It isn't a workout. I'm simply enjoying the rhythm of walking.

I'm also noticing in greater detail whatever scents are on the air and whatever sights are (slowly) passing by to either side. If I see something interesting, I stop and investigate. If I see a great photo, I stop and take it.

And when I walk like that, I go a lot farther with a lot less stress than when I "try" to work out by walking. In fact, "just walking" is so stress free that if I begin to feel fatigued I think, *Wait a minute. It's just walking. There's no rush, no hurry.*

Plus there's no rule that says I can't sit down for a few minutes before I get up and continue.

Okay, so what about writing?

Well, let's draw some parallels. In writing you just put one word in front of the other. Those words become phrases and clauses and sentences. Those become paragraphs and scenes and stories or chapters. Those become a book, either a novel, a novella or a collection. Cool, eh?

Moreover, writing doesn't require conscious thought. Your conscious mind has absorbed all it needs to know to write a story at your current skill level. That knowledge has seeped into your subconscious, and your subconscious has been telling stories since long before you learned how to form the letters of the alphabet.

In fact, writing is endlessly more pleasurable if you DON'T give it conscious thought. I've written considerably better stories, improved my writing rhythms and storytelling skills a lot more quickly when I was "just writing" than when I was writing as a workout, "trying" to perfect my skills. Seriously.

Letting go and Just Writing is easy. Just let your subconscious take over and do its thing while you enjoy moving through the story with your characters.

When I just write for the pure pleasure of it, I call it "playing." It isn't work. I'm simply enjoying the settings and the characters and their reactions to the setting and the situation. In other words, I'm enjoying the rhythms of writing.

My characters cause me to notice in greater detail whatever scents and sounds are on the air and whatever sights are passing by to either side. If they see something interesting, they investigate and I write it down. When they show me a great scene, I write it.

And when I write like that, the writing goes a lot smoother with a lot less stress than when I "try" to write with my conscious mind. In fact, "just writing" is so stress free that if I begin to feel fatigued I think, *Wait a minute. My characters and I are just telling a story. There's no rush, no hurry.*

Plus there's no rule that says I can't take a break for a few minutes. My characters know I'm not as young as most of them are. They don't mind.

Imagine the stress involved if I tried to force my characters to say and do certain things. Ugh. How can that possibly be any fun at all? Well, it can't.

Today's Writing

With all the stuff going on that I talked about under "The Day" above, I did finally get some writing done. When I sat down at my writing 'puter I was still thinking about setting some new goals and so on. But one phrase kept slipping into my head: Book Nine.

My subconscious wants to continue Wes' story, so for at least part of my writing, that's what I'm gonna do.

'Cause seriously, only a complete and utter moron ignores the subconscious when it's time to tell a story. (grin) And I am a moron, but I'm not so good as to consider myself "complete and utter."

So I wrote two short sessions on Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga. Not bad at all given all the background stuff I have to do at the beginning of each book. And this one is bringing back two big characters from earlier in the series. (grin)

Anyway, all of that led me to set a goal.

I started what turned out to be Book One of the saga on October 25, 2014. My goal is to have finished Books 9 and 10 in the saga on or before October 24, 2015.

I also realized recently that when I was writing a new short story every week, that process invigorated my writing in other ways as well. So I'm starting that self-challenge again, and it's perfect timing. Today is Monday. Before next Monday I will have written and published a new short story. This is in addition to whatever I get finished on Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga.

Should any of you want to join me in this challenge, let me know. I'll do anything I can to help, except writing them for you. (grin)

Fiction words: 1511

Writing of As Yet Untitled (Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 1111 words. Total words to date..... 1511

Total fiction words for the month..... 8960

Total fiction words for the year..... 451360

[August 11, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out closer to 2:30 this morning. Still tired from the trip, I think.

Well, I woke up in the mood to "take some air," as we used to say, and I set out to go for 6 miles.

But just as I reached the two mile mark, I realized the large, severe storm I'd been watching to the south was closing on me. Just so you know, I DID look at that lying weather radar before I set out. Nothing threatening on it.

So anyway, I called it a half-walk at two miles and headed for the pickup, two miles back the way I'd come.

Now I'll cut this tale short. Once it got wound up, the rain was ice cold, horizontal and stinging. Had about a mile and a half of that, though it finally settled down for the final two tenths of a mile or so.

I was drenched pretty much to the bone and exhausted. Then again, it was an experience very few people have had. So there's that.

Overall it was like watching your great-grandmother take a bath. It was really wet, but otherwise it wasn't all that interesting. (grin)

Back to the house, a shower, a hot breakfast, then writing this. Now to chill for a few, then to the writing 'puter.

Other things ate up part of the day, plus I'm really dragging. The storm took it out of me today.

And I checked my story of the week and found I didn't have one posted for next week yet. So I did that. Just finished. Now I'll turn to the writing 'puter to play with Wes and the guys for awhile.

Not getting much in the way of comments on the stories, so I might cut that story of the week stuff off. A little less to do, more time to write.

Topic of the Night: No topic tonight. Except seriously, if you aren't going to Dean's site, he's running a great series over there on how to write sales copy for fiction (cover blurbs, descriptions, etc.).

BUT DON'T take everything he says for gospel. Just visit the site and glean what you can, what's useful to you.

Today's Writing

Worked a little on Book 9, but not a lot.

Fiction words: 1009

Writing of As Yet Untitled (Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 1511 words. Total words to date..... 1511

Day 2..... 1009 words. Total words to date..... 2520

Total fiction words for the month..... 9569

Total fiction words for the year..... 451969

[August 12, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3 again this morning.

No walking today, that's for sure. Tomorrow morning should be a good walk again if it isn't raining.

Spent the better part of the morning rearranging my office. I got rid of some stuff and placed some stuff where I want it. The rest I just stored in the corner of my office until I'm in the mood to go through it. At any rate, it's all out of the living room, where it's been ever since my wife painted my office. Ugh.

Checked out Dean's site. He's still posting a new chapter every day on his next nonfiction book, How to Write Fiction Sales Copy. Invaluable stuff, and he's posting it free. Later he'll take down the posts and sell the book, so get it now if you want it.

I turned to the writing 'puter a couple times during the morning, but there was nothing there. I think Wes wants a breather, so I'm gonna back off him for awhile. I'll return to the saga later if Wes chooses to share anymore of his life story with me. If not, well, then the saga will have ended with Book 8, The Battle of Tres Caballos. Either way is fine. We'll see.

I'm not overly concerned. Since I started the first novel on October 25, 2014, I've written eight books in that series, totaling 323,478 words. During that same span of time, I also wrote another novel and a novella, totaling 79,199 words. And the short stories I wrote (only since October 25) total 131,377 words. So that ain't too shabby. Since October 25, 2014, I've written 534,054 words of published fiction.

Over a half-million words since I wrote the first word on my first novel. I'm a happy camper. (grin)

Plus I compiled and published thirteen collections of short fiction. And designed 60 or thereabouts book

covers. (grin)

I've been a very busy boy for the past almost ten months. (grin) But I don't know, maybe now I'm gonna slow down a little. Or maybe not. Shrug.

Remember, I practice Writing Off Into the Dark. I never want to direct my characters, force them to say and do things. I want to have fun. I want to run through the story WITH them. I want to simply be there when they say or do things, when things happen to them, so I can write those things on the page.

So for now, I'm going to enjoy writing short stories, get caught up on publishing a few collections, and maybe wander off into another novel in another genre.

Or if Wes decides he's ready to continue, we'll continue.

For now, I'm going to chuck what I've already written on Book 8. It's only less than three hours' work, and it isn't wasted. It brought me to the point of knowing it wasn't the right opening.

Topic of the Night: Knowing When to Hang On, When to Let Go

Remember Kenny Rogers? He was a singer, initially with The First Edition where he "slipped on a cloud and fell eight miles high" and then "tore [his] mind on a jagged sky." And all of that led him to say he had "just stopped in to see what condition [his] condition was in."

But later he was a solo country-western singer and then starred as The Gambler. And in a combination of those roles, he once sang, "You got to know when to hold 'em [and] when to fold 'em."

Yeah, I know that's a long way to go to set up a topic of the night, but I like nostalgia.

Anyway, regarding Kenny's advice, that's all well and good, but HAVING to know when to hold 'em is one thing. But knowing HOW to know when to hold 'em is something else entirely.

I mean, it's a good idea to know HOW to know whether to hold 'em, fold 'em, or just chuck the whole shebang into the river and start over.

This is an important concept in writing.

So how do I know when to let go of a novel or story or series and when to hang on?

Simple. If I feel like I'm having to "think" my way through it, I back away. Period. The conscious mind never did anything good for literature. I take a break (from a few minutes to an hour or more) and then come back.

I put my fingers on the keyboard. If nothing comes, I let it go. I fold 'em.

If words come, any words, I hang on for the ride and let the characters lead me through the story.

After you learn to trust your subconscious, it's precisely that simple and it's precisely that easy.

Today's Writing

No writing today. I'm taking the rest of today off, period. Fresh start tomorrow with all possibilities open to me.

Fiction words: XXXX

Total fiction words for the month..... 9569

Total fiction words for the year..... 451969

[August 13, 2015](#)

The Day

If you read this earlier, I've edited it.

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning.

Had a fairly good walk, mostly asphalt, with some heart and lung-pumping hills. Only a little over 4.5 miles, but the hills made it a good workout too.

Had a trip to Sierra Vista for groceries and cat stuff and a new coffee maker. It was early afternoon before I got back and haven't written a word of fiction today. That's all right.

Checked out Dean's site. I recommend it. <http://deanwesleysmith.com>

NOTE: In Addition To the new chapter every day on his next nonfiction book, *How to Write Fiction Sales Copy*, he's also posting his daily blog. It is very similar to this one, but better. You'll find the daily blog post just below the new chapter. So when you get there, scroll down if you haven't been. Really good stuff, complete with a separate topic of the night. Today's topic was "Massive Deadlines," in which he talks more about this wonderful new world of publishing.

Go. Read. Learn stuff.

Topic of the Night: Shutting Down

Before I edited it, this topic was "Shutting Down, Perhaps." I've decided to remove the possibility and make it a fact.

Last night here I talked about knowing when to hang on and when to let go. I was talking about a particular piece of writing.

But that goes to things like blog posts also.

I've been posting to this particular blog (The Journal) ALMOST every day since October 19, 2014. To date, that's 171,275 nonfiction words.

Well, 171,275 nonfiction words is a bunch of words. Seriously. And that's only on THIS blog. It doesn't take into account my regular blog post, which comes out every ten days and most often contains around a thousand words per post.

Thing is, for this blog (The Journal) I currently have only 30 subscribers. Not good, considering the effort I put into this thing every day. (grin)

Of those 30 subscribers, most of the time not quite half (13) even open the post to read it. That means slightly over half of the subscribers are seeing the email in their inbox and deleting it without even opening it. Talk about a vote of no confidence. (grin)

One of the main reasons I started this was to share my personal journey as a prolific professional fiction writer. I hoped it would help motivate others to write. But apparently now, over half of the subscribers aren't interested, so why bother detailing my daily journey as a writer? (shrug)

Another reason was to keep myself accountable and watch my own publications grow. I've done that. And frankly, I can keep the numbers myself without posting them to a daily blog. I think I'm gonna ask my friend Dawn to help me create a spreadsheet like hers (or maybe just copy hers myself). (grin)

So I'm shutting down this Daily Journal blog. Yeah, I was just considering shutting it down, but I'm gonna do it.

In a few cases, at least, I know it has served its intended purpose, motivating other writers. If you're one of those, I'm happy for you. If you aren't, well, sorry I failed you.

Okay, so if you are reading this and you are NOT signed up for my main blog (Pro-Writers Blog)—and if you want to stay in touch—I urge you to sign up. For your convenience, you can simply click this link: <http://eepurl.com/pQT6f>. Then follow the directions.

This will be the final edition of this blog, The Journal. Maybe I'll see you over at the other blog. Until then, take care.

Today's Writing: Nothing today except this blog post.

Total fiction words for the month..... 9569
Total fiction words for the year..... 451969

NO POSTS FOR AUGUST 14 – 18

[August 19, 2015](#)

The Day

Well I'm back. I decided to fire up this journal again.

When I shut down this blog 11 days ago, I wrote, “over half of the subscribers aren't interested, so why bother detailing my daily journey as a writer?”

What a stupid question. And the answer is “Um, well, because I was doing it more to hold myself accountable than for any other reason. And the half who ARE interested make it worthwhile.” So my apologies to those of you who were/are interested.

When I shut it down I even wrote that I could “keep the numbers myself.”

Yeah, well, I could, maybe, but I didn't. And I won't. I know me, and that's something I won't do.

Anyway, since then I realized that stopping this journal was stopping part of my writing ritual, and that's just insane. More on that in the Topic of the Night below.

Recent History

I haven't written any new fiction to speak of since August 8 when I finished The Battle of Tres Caballos. I piddled around, wrote about 2500 words on Book 9, then tossed it. I also started two short stories, then tossed both of those openings as well.

Of course, today is only August 19. That's a break of only 11 days, inclusive. But that 11 days seems like a

world-ending eternity. Especially coming, as it does, so soon after ANOTHER break of 11 days that spanned my trip to Indiana. What is it with me and 11-day breaks? Ugh.

So here we go. I'll read back over a few of my journal posts and absorb some of my own advice. Then I'll read back over some other stuff to get the feeling of writing again. Then I'll set a few goals (at least a couple of those will automatically re-set) and start writing again.

Okay, so I rolled out a little after 3 this morning. Did little or nothing the first few hours of the day, except thinking. I did a lot of that.

No walk today. Ate a good breakfast, then came here to put down a few of those thoughts.

Topic of the Night: Enduring the Perfect Storm

I just endured (and barely survived) my own personal perfect storm. All within a fairly short time period,

- For some inane reason I intentionally ended a streak of writing a short story every week. That streak had lasted for 66 weeks and 71 short stories; then
- I finished the eighth novel in a saga; and then
- I stopped publishing this journal, which was holding me accountable to others and myself.

Each of those is an inertia killer.

Each of those sends the wrong message to the subconscious. And as you know, the care and feeding of the subconscious is all-important to a guy who writes off into the dark.

By ending the short story streak, I effectively discarded a goal that re-set itself every week. No goal = no incentive. Discarding that goal also helped dilute the importance of meeting my daily goal of writing 3000 new publishable words of fiction per day.

By finishing the novel and not immediately starting the next one (or even a short story since I no longer "have" to write a story every week) I also at least dampened any inertia I had built up.

And by ceasing publication of this journal I was no longer holding myself accountable.

So no real goals, no writing inertia and no accountability— Seriously? No wonder my subconscious decided to take a vacation for awhile. It was probably out looking for a real writer. (grin)

Gotta change all of that. I've already fired up the journal again. Now I'll set new goals and get back to having fun telling stories.

Okay, I almost forgot I had to drive into Benson to do routine blood tests for my doctor. I'm back, so I'll finish this now. It's just after 10:30 in the morning at this point.

So here are my new goals:

At least 3000 words of new publishable fiction per day— Same goal, reestablished, reaffirmed.

At least one new story every week— I'm taking up the story a week personal challenge again. Besides helping with discipline, it's a great deal of fun. As I mentioned earlier, if anyone would care to join me, just email me to let me know. Either way, I look forward to it. I'll post the new story (or one of them) each week on the website under the Free Short Story of the Week tab.

Finish two more novels before October 25— I'm only setting this as a goal because October 24th will be one year from the date I started writing my very first novel. If I can pull this off, I will have written 11 novels and a novella during that twelve months. This is NOT a major goal. Just something interesting to keep me on track, and there's absolutely no reason I can't do it.

I'm (re)starting Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga today. I won't be using anything I wrote from the earlier opening. I was gonna start tomorrow morning, but that's just my old conscious mind trying to drop a cloud over everything.

Okay, so on to the writing. I'll fill in the blanks below later.

Today's Writing

Finally got my priorities straight as I detailed above.

Before I began writing I did some preliminary stuff. Came up with twenty-two new character names (all Mexican males and one newlywed female) and assigned six new jobs. All of that took a little over an hour.

Then between noon(ish) and about 3:40 (as I write this) I had three good writing sessions during which I knocked out the word count you see below. Can't tell you how good it feels to be back on track. Is there a better job in the entire universe? I don't think so.

Fiction Words: 3213

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12782

Total fiction words for the year..... 455182

[August 20, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2:30 this morning. I started this journal entry over a cup of French vanilla cappucino. Yeah, it's a weakness. Nice to have every now and then.

Okay, now it's 4 a.m. (after I wrote the Topic of the Night below) so time to release the babies (a hyper nervous chihuahua and two lady cats who relish the savory flavor of rare chihuahua meat, he thinks) so they can run and play. Let the day begin. (grin)

I already know I'm going for a walk this morning, so I'll piddle around until then. I'll leave about 5 a.m. When I get back I'll shower and change clothes, then write. Sure feels good to be back in the saddle alongside Wes.

Got back from a good 4 mile walk in a sandy bottomed arroyo (good workout). After a shower and changing clothes, I realized I had to run (well, drive) to the grocery store. So I got that done, then came back here, put on the first of two loads of laundry I want to get done today.

Then finally I turned to the writing 'puter. Trudging today, but it's still great to be back. To steal a line from a bumper sticker about fishing, even the worst day of writing is better than the best day at work. (grin)

Topic of the Night: Productivity as a Writer

I've received several comments recently from writers who feel disappointed in themselves when they can't "keep up" with me in their own writing. I do understand because I'd like very much to write at what Dean Smith calls "Pulp Speed."

Pulp Speed is at least one million words of publishable fiction in a year. Chances are I'll never pull that off. But if I don't, that's all right.

The point behind me posting my numbers is NOT to challenge you to keep up with me. Believe me, compared to some writers out there (and to ALL the old pulp writers) I'm slow.

But I post my numbers here only to show you that even though I set goals, I sometimes fail to reach them. And That's All Right.

I want you to understand that failing to reach a goal is not necessarily a bad thing. I want you to know it's entirely possible to "fail to success."

My own long-term goal on January 1 of this year was to reach 1,095,000 words by December 31. I won't make it. In fact I won't get anywhere near it.

But if I hit 600,000 or 700,000 words by then, I'll take it. I will have failed, but I will have failed to success.

Here are the numbers:

My daily writing goal is 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day.

If I hit that goal exactly, and if I do that for 365 days in a row, I will have written 1,095,000 words in a year. Over a million words.

But I don't. My average (arithmetic mean) before this horrible month of August was around 2500 words per day. And even if I hit 2500 words per day every day for 365 days in a row, I'd still fall short of my million words at 912,500 words.

Amazing the difference 500 words a day (a half hour per day) can make, isn't it?

But I also realize a lot of you have jobs or careers or other interests, so let's talk about your own personal reality.

If you want to increase your productivity as a writer, do this:

- Step One. Figure out how much writing time you have per day. The best way to do that is keep a journal. Break your waking-hours day into quarter-hour or half-hour increments, then write down what you were doing during each increment. (If you were watching a football game for example, that knocks out several increments in a row.) Keep your journal for at least three days. A week is better. Don't cheat. Nobody's gonna see it but you. This should show you when you can carve out time to write.
- Step Two. Figure out how many publishable words you can write in an hour. Hint: Don't "think" your way through every phrase and sentence. That isn't how good writing happens. Bradbury himself once said nothing good in literature ever came from conscious thought. Instead, sit down at the keyboard, put your fingers on the keys, and Just Write What Comes. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Don't worry about where it's all going. Just Write.

Note: I write about 1000 words per hour. That probably sounds like a lot, but it's only 17 words per

minute. That leaves a lot of time for staring off into space, don't you think? (grin) Seriously, if you aren't writing 700+ words per hour, check in with yourself. What are you doing during that hour?

- Step Three. When you know how often you can write and how many words per hours you can get on the page, don't let your conscious mind (fear) make excuses for you. Sit down and write. I'll do a topic on fear another time.
- Step Four. (I recently re-learned this one the hard way.) Set Goals. And be dogged in your determination to achieve them. I'll write more about goal setting in another topic soon, but for now, here are a few tips:
 - Be specific. Don't say you'll write a novel. That's like saying you'll eat an elephant. It's an overwhelming thought. Instead say you'll write 1,000 words (about one hour) per day. Every day.
 - Set goals that automatically re-set. If you say you'll write 1000 words every day, that goal re-sets every morning when you get out of bed. If you miss a day or fall short one day, the next day you still have to write only 1000 words to hit your goal.
 - Tell people about your goals. This will help you hold yourself accountable. Tell your writing group or friends. Don't tell people who will downplay what you're doing or who will not support you.
 - Set up a streak. How many days in a row can you write 1000 words per day? The longer you go, the more power the streak has and the less likely you are to break it. Streaks feed goals and goals feed streaks. Try it. You'll like it.

If you decide to write two days per week or five days per week, you can still set up a streak. How many weeks can you go without missing your assigned days?

Share your results with me in the comments section if you want. I'll always be supportive. Yes, even if you write 4000 words per day and shoot past me like I'm stapled to a tree. (grin)

Now let's look at numbers.

If you write 1,000 (one hour) words per day, and you write only five days per week, that's still 5,000 words per week. That's 20,000 words per month, 60,000 words per quarter, and 260,000 words per year.

If you choose to take off two weeks for vacation every year, that's still 250,000 words per year.

But what if you can only write a half-hour per day, five days per week?

Run the numbers. That's 500 words per day, 2500 words per week, 10,000 words per month. It's 30,000 words per quarter, and 130,000 words per year unless you take that two week vacation. Then it's "only" 125,000 words.

Finally, realize that if you miss your goal, absolutely nothing will happen. It will simply re-set and you can go for it again.

So there you go. If you need help with any of this, please let me know. I'd be more than happy to help. I'm not kidding.

Today's Writing

It's perfect that I picked Productivity as the Topic of the Night above. And it's perfect that I mentioned that failing to meet goals is all right.

Today, like yesterday, my daily goal was to write 3,000 publishable words of fiction. I failed miserably.

Now, I'm in that stage of the novel in which I have to nitpick my way through it, making sure I get the names right, making sure I include enough backstory so the novel stands alone, but also adding enough new stuff to keep the story moving for those who have read the entire saga from the beginning. It's a rough balance to walk.

So that's my excuse, and it's a valid one. Still, I know me. And I know there's no reason I couldn't have done that (very slow writing) AND still met my goal.

I just didn't. (shrug)

But that's all right. The novel is still farther along today than it was when I got up this morning.

And tomorrow morning around 2 or 3 a.m. I'm gonna roll outta the rack and have a brand spanking new daily goal: 3,000 words. And that's what keeps me going. (grin)

Fiction Words: 1046

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 13828

Total fiction words for the year..... 456228

[August 21, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 2 this morning. Checked email and saw that several revised/rebranded covers and Book 8 of the series were ready for proofing. So I got my coffee and started that process. Finished an hour or so later. Still amazes me that I have eight books out in that saga. Who'd'a thunk it?

Last night I figured I wouldn't walk today. I would use my early morning hours to get a jump start on this novel. I would finish the slug work I mentioned yesterday and get into it. Okay, so that means no walk, no interruptions. Just writing, punctuated with occasional breaks.

Here begins the section on The Best Laid Plans.

Not going to walk today, I made an early breakfast (hash browns, eggs, sausage and dry rye toast). And one extra cup of coffee.

I'd already let the ladies outside. No sooner was my breakfast on the plate, cut up and all mushed together, than coyotes started howling. Coyotes have a really odd sense of humor, and impeccable timing.

Roughly an instant later, my little girl siamese was standing at the door separating the kitchen from the dining room asking politely to come inside until the coyotes stopped being rude. Good girl.

I let her in, then put my breakfast plate on the cabinet and covered it with a pan lid. I grabbed a flashlight, slipped on my flip-flops and went looking for the other girl, who is blacker than night and not easy to find even with a flashlight.

I circled the house twice. Yes, inside a fence, but the fence surrounds about a third of an acre and is filled with natural desert brush. You know that passage in the bible about wailing and gnashing of teeth? Yeah.

It was like that.

Halfway through the third circuit I finally found her. In the dining room. At the door. Waiting to come in. Acting as if she'd been right there all along. Okay, good girl. Whatever.

Ate my cold breakfast, played two games of spider solitaire (the game should be outlawed), then answered some more email. And here I am, at 6:30 a.m., doing this and about to turn to the writing 'puter for the first time. I'll write the topic of the night later.

I'm going to try to keep better tabs on my writing/break habits. This is probably not innately interesting, but I'm hoping it will help me take a break every hour or so. Those of you who have been following this for awhile know I've been working on the concept of taking a break every hour or so for awhile now.

By the way, I received a nice acceptance email for a short story I sent to The Scribe, the magazine of the St. Louis Writers Guild. The magazine is free and has a lot of neat stuff in it. If you'd like a copy, [visit Smashwords](#) and download it in PDF, .mobi (Kindle) or .epub (all other readers).

By the way, the story in this issue is the very first short story I wrote by completely trusting my subconscious and writing off into the dark. If you read it, be sure to read the About the Author blurb afterward too. I think you'll get a kick out of it.

Oof. MAJOR lightning strike on my position. Literally the loudest, sharpest sound I've ever heard. Not exaggerating. Man, that'll get your ticker pumping. And no rain.

Took a break to hit the PO, then back here for lunch and a few minutes doing nothing, then back to the novel.

Topic of the Night: Writing Off Into the Dark

Very briefly, when you do this, you're simply trusting your subconscious to tell the story. Believe me, it knows MUCH better than you do what needs to go into the story. Just trust it. And yes, saying that is much simpler than doing it. But once you learn to trust it, You Will See Miracles in your characters, settings, stories.

All of this was prompted by a comment from Bonnie, who complained that the killer in her WIP was not the person she thought it should be.

In my response, I reminded her to just write the next sentence, then write the next sentence, etc. and eventually the situation and the characters would reveal to her who the killer actually is.

And since it will be a surprise to her, it will also be a surprise to the reader. True dat.

Bradbury even once said if you can't surprise yourself as a writer, how in the world do you expect to surprise the reader.

So again, learn to trust your subconscious. Nothing good in literature ever came out of the conscious mind.

Sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and just write the next sentence. And above all else, have fun. (grin)

I encourage you to read the exchange between Bonnie and me in the comments on yesterday's post.

Today's Writing

Wrote at several different times today for various lengths of time. Also did a lot of reading for various reasons. Came up with the name of an important horse, for example. That took close to an hour.

His name is Vuelo, by the way, which means Flight. He comes from the sacred cliffs (los acantilados sagrados) so it's a good name for him. But it took awhile to get there. So that's how much of the writing day went, which translates to another day with a short word count.

I took several short breaks during the day, so no fatigue from writing. But I did drag myself down with "necessary" things I had to do for the story.

This is going to be great fun for me when I break through the opening several pages. Looking forward to that.

Fiction Words: 1858

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 15686

Total fiction words for the year..... 458086

[August 22, 2015](#)

The Day

Ray Bradbury's birthday. Ray Bradbury is the guy who knew at 12 years old what it took me 62 years to learn. Glad I didn't wait until I was 63. Blessings, Mr. Bradbury. And thank you so much.

Rolled out at 3 this morning. Checked email, got my coffee and had to go run off a bunch of coyotes. Ugh. No walk again today. Just writing again today.

Listen, if you're publishing your own stuff through your own publishing company, check out <https://draft2digital.com/>.

I wrote a new short story today. When I went to publish it to Smashwords, for the first time EVER (153 books) my story didn't convert to any format at Smashwords. I nuked it, tried again, and it still didn't convert, which tells me it pretty much has to be their problem. So I sent them an email to that effect.

Then I popped over to D2D. I'd heard about it before, but hadn't tried it. All within about a half-hour, I signed up for an account, uploaded my book and cover, and it was published in PDF, .mobi (Kindle) and .epub (everything else). It was just that quick.

And the quality is incredible.

In my opinion, you still need to do some basic formatting (or have it done) but the service itself is great. D2D does not have their own online store, but they do distribute to Apple iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Inktera, Scribd, Tolino, and Oyster. These are all individual bookstores, and some of them have subsidiaries. I'm going with D2D from now on for these venues.

I'll also continue to publish with Amazon KDP (but not Select, not exclusively) and with Smashwords mostly for their online store.

Now for a break, then back to writing.

Topic of the Night: Write What Scares You

Stephen King advises writers to “write what scares you.” Sounds right to me.

Bear in mind, this isn't just for horror writers. The good writer will evoke emotions from the reader. The stronger the better.

Now when I say write what scares you, I don't mean the “they're only zombies so I know it isn't real” kind of scary.

I mean you're tied up so you can't intervene, your eyelids are sliced off so you can't close your eyes, and you're forced to watch as an intruder uses garden shears to lop off the leg, just above the ankle, of a two year old child.

The intruder looks at you, sneers, then turns back to the baby again.

The child, wide eyed, screaming, automatically reaches down to grab the stump and— Oh! Oh no! No! *Snip!* Her little hand and arm are gone halfway to the elbow.

Wider eyes. Wider mouth. Louder screams.

Just when you thought louder screams weren't possible.

Notice that you don't have to “imagine” the child's eyes stretched wide in disbelieving horror. You can see them, can't you? And you don't have to imagine the screams either, do you?

And I'm just messin' around here, givin' you a f'rinstance.

Now, y'know those coyotes I mentioned before? I have nightmares sometimes about a song dog carrying off my baby girl. Seriously, nightmares. Obviously, that's something that scares me.

So following King's advice, I wrote a very similar scene in a short story called “A Natural Study of the Scream.”

Now I'm just enough of a scientist that I actually noticed, writing that scene in that story created an odd, almost paradoxical sensation. First, it was easy to write. I would have thought it would be difficult to put on paper, but it wasn't. It was easy. The writing almost raced away without me.

But it also left me trembling, physically. I was upset to the point that I had to pour a couple fingers of Jameson's to sooth it away. That was the first drink of alcohol I'd had in a very long time.

Writing that scene in that story was an experience. One I both dread and will most definitely repeat.

Because that's good writing.

Today's Writing

Wrote for a while on Book 9, still struggling with tight stuff and otherwise getting started.

Left that for awhile and wrote the first new story of my challenge. I took a brief break, came back, sat down and wrote Pete & Repeat. Then I skipped a couple lines and just started writing whatever came through my fingertips. MAN that feels good!

It will publish under the Free Short Story of the Week tab on Monday morning. Felt good to create a new story and a new cover. And the story was FUN. Read it. You'll like it. No garden shears or anything. (grin)

Feeling a little under the weather and a lot of things up in the air right now. Hard to get settled in. I got a little done on the novel, but not a lot. It's coming. Stay tuned. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2685

Writing of "Pete & Repeat" (story of the week)

Day 1..... 1662 words. Total words to date..... 1662 words (done)

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words

Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18371

Total fiction words for the year..... 460771

[August 23, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out at 3 this morning. Still feeling a little under the weather – ulcer stuff – and then padding through the living room, I was hit by a wood scorpion. Fortunately he caught me on the outside of the left heel and apparently hit a callus.

Either that or I've developed a tolerance for things that sting. Fire and intense pain for about a half-minute, then a very small, dull and subsiding ache for another five minutes, then nothing. I am SO lucky.

Sadly, the scorpion did not fare as well once I found my sandals and a flashlight.

Still, kudos to the little dude for being willing to attack something that's like a b'jillion times his size. I'll never quite understand why they get that really quizzical look on their face just after you smash 'em. Like "How in the world did you do that?"

Anyway, as befitting a tough little dude, I gave him the closest thing I could arrange to burial at sea.

Checked email, got my coffee and started in combining two spreadsheets. One contained info on all my electronic publications, and the other was print only. Took close to an hour, but I got new columns added to the larger one and the info transferred over. Now it's all in one place. More on keeping records in the Topic of the Night.

No walk again today. Just administrative stuff and writing.

Okay, it's now 10:30 a.m. I've finished switching over the spreadsheet information and I've moved all

eight of the books in The Wes Crowley Saga over to D2D. Gonna take a break, then come back to write a little bit.

Wrote a little, but a necessary trip to the store popped up.

Hoping to get a walk in the morning. Try to twist myself back into a more normal (for me) routine.

Topic of the Night: Keeping Records

My Fiction spreadsheet includes columns for the Title and Author (since I occasionally still write under various personas), which Collection each short story is in, Word count, ebook Price, Ebook ISBN 13, and the Publication Date.

Then I have URL columns for my new distributor, Draft2Digital, and a URL column for each major bookstore. That currently includes Kobo, Inktera, Oyster, Scribd, Tolino, Apple, B&N, Amazon and Smashwords (both distributor and bookstore).

I reach a few other major outlets through Smashwords (Baker & Taylor Blio, txtr, Library Direct, Baker-Taylor Axis360, OverDrive, Flipkart), but I don't have individual URLs for those. As D2D adds each one, I'll add a column.

If you're wondering, I keep the URLs in case a reader emails wanting to know where to find a certain book or story. It's nice to have the information handy. This happens a lot more often than you might think.

On the other side of all those URL/venue columns I added the new information: the print edition ISBN 13 (Yes, you have to have a different ISBN for print and ebook), number of pages, print price, and the URL for the CreateSpace eStore. (You can't buy ebooks there. CreateSpace has its own print book store, but it's not brick and mortar. It's only on line.)

If this seems like a lot of extra work, after the initial setup, it really isn't. I view it as a necessary part of being my own publisher. From the time I publish a book or story, it takes about five minutes (if that) to enter all the information on my spreadsheet.

And just so you know, I don't know a lot about spreadsheets in general or about Microsoft Excel in specific. But I've figured out enough to keep a good record of my publications. The point is, if I can do it, you can too (if you want to).

Today's Writing

Honestly, the way the day started, first with the unusual dance with a scorpion and then all the admin/publisher stuff I did, I wasn't expecting to get a lot of writing done and I didn't. But I'll take it.

It's great to hit goals, but the main thing is to keep the story moving forward. I've been doing that on this one in fits and starts. Forward a bit, back, forward a bit more, back. Nope, that isn't the opening. That scene comes somewhere AFTER the opening.

Okay, write a new opening. Ah, that's better. I've written three openings for this book in five days. (grin) But I'll get through all the fits and starts soon (I do this on pretty much every novel) and the thing will start flowing. Sure looking forward to that. (grin)

Hang around. It'll happen.

Fiction Words: 1187

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words
Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 19558
Total fiction words for the year..... 461958

[August 24, 2015](#)

The Day

Got up closer to 3:30 this morning. Still dragging a bit.

Checked email, got my coffee and went to check out Dean's site. I haven't been there for a few days. It's almost better that way because when I go late, I read the comments too. Sometimes there's some good stuff there.

Reading Dean's stuff took an hour, almost exactly. Worthwhile, though. I found out in the comments section that we both use the same word counts to describe certain story types. Sort of vindication for me.

Here they are:

Mine and Dean's: To 10,000 words is a short story, to 25,000 words is a novella, to 40,000 is a short novel, and above that is a novel.

In case you're wondering, I also define fewer than 100 words as flash fiction, fewer than 2,000 words as a short-short story, fewer than 7,000 words as a regular short story, and up to 10,000 words as a long short story (or novellette).

Of course, those are my own definitions for my own use in categorizing and pricing my work.

No matter how you categorize your own work, it's cool that we who are not ignorant of this wonderful new world of publishing no longer have to bow before traditional publishing and their mandatory word/page counts and price points. (grin)

I added my novella, A Little Time, to my new distributor over at Draft2Digital.

Ate lunch, and back to writing for a bit. Sort of.

Oh, by the way, I'm doing a new promo thing. I've set the price of Book 1 of the Wes Crowley saga at FREE on Smashwords. You can download ANY electronic format there and it costs you nothing. If you've been wondering about this story that's pushed me through eight books and into the ninth, I urge you to go check it out. [You can get it here.](#)

(For Kindle, download .mobi. For other e-readers, download .epub. You can also download PDF. If you read it and like it, consider leaving a review.)

Topic of the Night: The Conscious Mind and the Fear of Rejection

I said awhile back I'd make this a topic of the night. It's probably overdue for many of you. If so, don't feel bad. A year ago it was overdue for me. And the thing is, even after you beat the fear back, it can show up

again and again. It's an ongoing battle.

First, the role of your conscious mind—

Your conscious mind exists to gather information and to protect you. That's it. Nothing else.

In its role as a gatherer of information, it's excellent. Then the information that makes sense to you and is useful to you is absorbed by your subconscious mind. After that happens, it's yours, permanently. (This is why you don't have to "remember" how to form a capital letter A every time you sit down to write, or to put a period at the end of a declarative sentence.)

In its role to protect you, though, your conscious mind is a pain in whatever part of the anatomy you'd care to denigrate.

Your conscious mind is what keeps you, a writer, from actually putting words on the page. It's protecting you. If you only talk about writing but never actually put words on a page, you never have to worry about anyone rejecting your work.

I deal with this problem pretty much every day to one degree or another. Even after all the stuff I've written.

Many would-be writers say they'd really like to write but they can't because

- they don't have time
- they don't have a quiet place
- they don't have the right equipment
- they have to do something for someone
- and so on.

And many more finally actually sit down to write and then, just as they put their fingers on the keyboard, they

- have to feed the cat (dog)
- have to make coffee
- have to check email (Facebook, other social media)
- have to do the dishes from the night before
- and so on.

The thing is, it's much easier to "intend" to write than it is to write.

It's much easier to do research or look for cover art or take a trip to your favorite writer's haunts to absorb his/her "spirit" than it is to sit down and actually write.

In other words, it's easier to let the fear win.

Not everyone has the problems I listed above. Some would-be writers don't write because they already KNOW

- their writing won't be any good anyway
- they can't possibly write as much as Harvey does (or Dean does or someone else does)
- the story they want to write has already been done (so have ALL of them)
- the sun came up

- the wind's blowing
- and so on.

Yeah, I know those last couple were ludicrous, but so were the rest of them. Really.

Now, the best way I've found to get over the fear comes in two parts:

Part One: Ahere to Heinlein's Rules. [Find them here](#) or click the new link on the Free Downloads page. I copied a three-part presentation into one document, so this is Heinlein's Rules, annotated.

Part Two: Set realistic goals.

And that will be the topic of the night for tomorrow. Or maybe the next day.

Today's Writing

No new writing today. The day just got away from me. That's why the daily goal resets. (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
 Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
 Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words
 Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
 Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
 Day 6..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 19558

Total fiction words for the year..... 461958

[August 25, 2015](#)

The Day

Thanks to storms disrupting the clock at the head of my bed, I rolled out at 1:30 this morning, but thinking it was 2:45. So much for battery backups in the clock. (I never use an alarm, but have the clock there so I can see what time it is when I get up.)

Despite the alleged battery backup, when it turns off, the clock reverts to midnight and starts keeping time from there. So the best it can do is tell you how long it's been working since the last time the power went off.

Wow. Remember back when stuff actually worked as advertised?

Anyway, it's all good. I have an appointment with the eye doc this morning at 9:20 in Safford, so leaving here about 7:30 to head that way. My eyes will be dilated and all that, so I'm not sure when I'll be able to write again today. So it's good that I'm up a little early.

I've had my coffee, checked email and all that, so now I'm gonna make a run at the novel.

Read back over some of what I'd already written and allowed myself to touch it here and there (in creative mind) and ended a session with a grand total of 943 words. Woohoo. Still, at least the novel's moving forward. Well, inching forward.

I was distracted by a notification regarding an update on one of the websites I manage. That got me

started in update mode and I spent the next two hours making sure all the updates were done. Sigh.

Then one more major disruption cropped up, so I'm setting the novel aside at least until after my appointment. I have to get ready to leave soon, so I'm gonna skip down and write the Topic of the Night now.

Then we'll see what happens with writing when I get back and my pupils get back to their normal size.

UPDATE: Okay, all is well with the eyes for the next year when they'll talk with me about Cadillacs or something like that. I'm scheduled for a hearing test too. Anyway, back in Dear Old Saint David and my pupils are still HUGE. Okay, plus I'm basically just feeling lazy.

So I'm gonna call today a day. Hey, life happens. So no more writing for today other than the little I got done and reported earlier. Got a couple great ideas for stories while I was up there this morning though. So all in all, a great day.

Topic of the Night: Setting Realistic Writing Goals

It's important to set goals with your writing. I mean, if you're serious, if you really want to write, nothing else will help quite as much getting you there as setting good, realistic goals.

And by realistic, I mean something you know you can achieve.

Most people who set goals in other activities will tell you that a good goal should make you reach. That isn't necessarily true in setting writing goals.

So what are the hallmarks of a good writing goal?

- It should be reasonable.
- It should automatically reset each day (or each week or each month).

What do I mean by reasonable? If you write 1,000 publishable words of fiction per hour and are able to write two hours per day but only five days per week, a reasonable daily goal would be 2,000 words per day. A reasonable weekly goal should be 10,000 words per week. If you want to fudge a bit, make it 1,500 words per day and 7,500 words per week. (That extra half hour per day makes a huge difference, doesn't it?)

Why should a good writing goal automatically reset at a specific time?

Because "reset" means "goes back to zero." Neither abundance nor lack is carried forward.

If your goal is to write 2,000 words per day and you write 2,438 words today, that's wonderful. But beginning tomorrow morning, you still have to write 2,000 words. (grin)

If your goal is to write 2,000 words per day and you write only 18 words today, that's okay because beginning tomorrow morning you still have to write 2,000 words.

But since writing 2,000 words per day is well within your capability, isn't the goal too easy?

No. Because life happens. People happen. Distractions happen.

There will be days when you won't be able to write for two hours.

There will be days when, even though you have the time set aside, you'll find that your subconscious is on

hiatus. On those days, nothing will come.

And there will be days when you are beset by fear and allow your conscious mind to stop you from writing. Because again, if you don't finish, you can't submit or publish your work and risk rejection.

Or your fear will cause you to rewrite "just this once." Because rewriting is better than actually finishing and risking rejection.

What's best of all about good, realistic writing goals is that they're personal to you. Trust me, nobody else cares, except maybe a few people who support you and want to see you succeed.

If you achieve or exceed your goal, Nothing Happens except that your work is that much further along.

But if you fail to achieve your goal, guess what? Nothing Happens then either and the goal resets the next morning or the next week.

But of course, you won't bother setting goals if you don't intend to achieve them.

And there's one other tool that's a great motivator for meeting goals: The Streak.

And that will be the topic of the night for tomorrow.

I'm going to post this now. Then when I get home from my appointment, if I'm able to write anymore, etc. I'll modify it before it actually posts through MailChimp.

So if you're reading it on my site before 5 p.m., you might want to check back in a while.

Today's Writing

Just a little. Less than I wanted, but more than I had when I started the day. That's why the daily goal resets. (grin)

Fiction Words: X943

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words

Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words

Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words

Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20501

Total fiction words for the year..... 462901

[August 26, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2 this morning. Coffee and emails to wake up, and then a shocker from the Smashwords blog.

Mark Coker has decided to end his association with Flipkart, the small ebook retailer in India. That effectively hands Amazon a monopoly in distributing ebooks on that continent.

Although I understand why he's doing it, I don't like that even in the title of his post he seems to blame

Amazon. Regardless of the circumstances, this was still his own decision. He didn't have to completely abandon the continent to Amazon. [You can read the blog post here.](#)

This is terrible news for indie authors. Competition is ALWAYS better. Your ebooks are an investment. Make them available in as many markets as you can.

Seriously, DON'T go exclusive with any one retailer. If you do, you're only feeding the beast that will eventually enslave and/or devour you. Amazon has already started paying KDP Select authors less than other retailers pay them. Don't give ANYONE leverage or control over your work.

I was planning to do a little early morning writing and even get in a walk today. Uhh, no. In light of this news I've decided to switch all of my major publication (novels, novella, short story collections) from Smashwords to Draft2Digital for distribution. So I'll be doing that today.

D2D will now handle distribution of my titles to all the major booksellers, including Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Apple, Inktera, Oyster, Scribd, and Tolino. Smashwords will still distribute those only to library outlets and something called OverDrive. (I've garnered a total of 4 sales through these outlets since September 2011 so I'm not overly worried about it.)

Why do I suspect this will supplant writing new original fiction for the day? Because it entails moving nineteen publications, all but one of which are collections. I've also decided I'm going to rebrand each collection under my own name (except the two magic realism collections).

Rebranding means revising the cover or creating a new one. Either way, the rebranding part will take only about ten minutes per title.

But I also have to create new front and back matter. (This is NOT a requirement of D2D. It's my own requirement of myself because I want my books to look good.) I also have to reformat each book, double check to make sure the new copied/pasted front and backmatter on each one reads right, etc., then upload each title to D2D.

So I'm expecting to be working on this through most or all of today, and probably more on another day. Or two. (grin) That's all right. It's an investment. Once it's done, it's done.

Okay, my novels and novella were already over there. Today I put up nine of my collections. all of the ten-story collections plus a few others. I also rebranded 14 covers. No more Eric or Nick on collections.

Well, with only most of the day over, I thought I might write for awhile. But I went and talked with Wes a bit and even he agreed that my brain's too tired to ride with him today.

I'll do the topic of the night, and then I'm gonna call it an early day.

Topic of the Night: Be Organized

With what I wrote above about switching my books over to Draft2Digital, you can see the importance of being organized.

In the folder for each book, I had the cover (the raw product so it was easy to change for those I rebranded) as well as several sizes of the old finished cover. I kept the old finished covers as well as one size (2000 x 3000 pixels) of the new covers. I'll make a smaller version soon so I can replace some of the ones on my website too.

I also had a Smashwords edition version of each book, plus a "general" version in each folder. Opening the general version and using Save-As made it a relative breeze to format a new version for D2D with the new

front and back matter I came up with for my D2D books.

Now again, THEY DON'T REQUIRE any particular format, but I like my work to look good and I like it all to look similar from one book to another. So I made all of the books I shipped to them look the same.

In the folder for each book I also thought I had a "promo" document. That's just a simple text document that contains the title of the work, the short and long descriptions, and the Internet search terms. Having that little text document made it easy to just copy/paste the information for each book.

Of course, that was missing from a few folders. Huge difference. When I had that little document, it saved about a half-hour over the time I had to spend on one book when I didn't have it.

You get the idea.

Now maybe you think you won't ever need this level of organization.

Back when I started with Smashwords, I thought they were the be-all, end-all of ebook distribution. Now, four years later, I'm switching everything over to a new distributor, and in the future I might have to again.

So I'm just sayin', when time is at a premium, it's better to do the Boy Scout thing and Be Prepared.

If you have any questions about any of this, I'd be happy to answer them for you. Please ask in the comments section so others can see the Q & A.

Today's Writing

No fiction writing today.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words
Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20501

Total fiction words for the year..... 462901

[August 27, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2 this morning again.

The hits just keep on comin'. First, I don't feel well. Had a short, unsuccessful walk punctuated by the fear that a high-velocity rainstorm was going to notice me and come my way.

Back to the house, and pretty much blah ever since.

Second, what I wrote in your Topic of the Night below.

I won't be doing any writing today, other than this stuff and revisiting a magic realism story I (Gervasio) wrote a long time ago. It's called "Carmen, Whose Face Was Cracked" and it's a beautiful story in the ethereal sense.

I'll post it as the story of the week for this week. So it will be up on Sunday at the site and posted by MailChimp on Monday morning.

Oh, if you're in the mood to listen to advice from me, I recommend you check Dean's blog (DeanWesleySmith.com) over the next several days. He's gearing up to put up, as a series of FREE freakin' blog posts, a nonfiction book he's writing on Heinlein's Rules. I spent \$75 on the video lectures, and it was literally the best \$75 investment I've ever made. EVER. Go, get it free.

Topic of the Night: DO NOT GO EXCLUSIVE, ESPECIALLY TO AMAZON KDP SELECT OR AMAZON "SCOUT"

Don't do it. Just don't.

Tell you what. If you want to give someone all rights to your books in exchange for half the royalties, give them to me. Sign a contract giving me all electronic rights and I'll be sure you get half the royalties.

Of course, I don't have to do ANYthing except put your books out there on the market and wait for my 50% to roll in. And that's just find and dandy with you, right?

Sounds nuts, doesn't it? And at least you know me.

But that's exactly what Amazon is asking you to do now.

You sign over the rights to your book for FIVE YEARS and they'll give you a pissy, paltry "advance" of \$1500 and then FIFTY percent of the royalties.

I'm not kidding.

Don't do that. Don't. It's stupid. And you can't feign ignorance, 'cause I just told you about it.

Okay, here's what happened: A writer friend turned me on to Amazon's new Scout program and asked what I thought.

In this Scout program thing, according to the writer, Amazon requires the author to "turn over all electronic rights for a period of five years. And then -"

What's that? Sorry, I stopped listening.

Listen. To. Me.

Don't. Be. Stupid.

ANY time ANY entity REQUIRES (or even asks or even suggests or even hints that) you, the author, turn over ALL RIGHTS (electronic or otherwise), the only "turn" you should do is turn on your heel and walk away.

Don't even grace them with an answer.

Seriously, such a ludicrous offer doesn't deserve a response.

And if you DO choose to respond, the word you're looking for is NO.

Personally, I would use a two-word phrase. The second half of that phrase would be either a resounding NO or an equally loud "YOU." The first half of it would consist of the acronym for unlawful carnal knowledge, which is what anyone who asks you to turn over all rights to a piece of work is trying to force upon you.

Understand?

Exclusivity is BAD. Exclusivity in which the book store (and that's all Amazon is, a book store) OWNS YOUR RIGHTS is roughly a thousand times worse.

Don't email telling me Amazon is a publisher. They aren't. And they aren't a distributor. They're a book store. Nothing more.

And their stupid Scout program? Listen. If it wasn't good for THEM, they wouldn't be doing it. Duh.

All of my books and short stories are available on Amazon (a book store).

They're also available worldwide through Smashwords, Barnes & Noble, Kobo, Apple, Inktera, Oyster, Scribd, Tolino, Baker & Taylor Blio, txtr, Library Direct, Baker-Taylor Axis360, OverDrive and Flipkart until a couple days ago. And they're also available through subsidiaries of many of those companies. And I'm always looking for new sales venues to add.

DON'T GO EXCLUSIVE.

There. Forewarned is forearmed. Now go do whatever you want. Just PLEASE don't tell me about it.

Today's Writing

No fiction writing today.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
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Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20501

Total fiction words for the year..... 462901

[August 28, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out a little early this morning at about 1:30.

After waking up with coffee and email, I thought about yesterday's post. I was a little harsh maybe.

For years I've seen writers, even retired, very successful business people, allow various companies to take advantage of them.

I despise those companies, and I don't mind being vocal about it.

But the thing is, many writers bring these things on themselves. They're intelligent people, by and large. They don't have to be ignorant. And I "get" that it's easier to just trust some faceless corporation to do the right thing than it is to check them out, or even think too hard about what they're offering.

But you really need to do that anyway. Seriously. We are not living in the same world in which many of us grew up. Anyway, these thoughts led me to the Topic of the Night below.

So from about 2 until about 7:30, I formatted and uploaded eight more collections (all 5-story) to D2D, as well as those three large anthologies I published awhile back that were the results of contests, and the short story, "Coralín." So all caught up on what I wanted to move over to D2D.

Now I have to update the print covers for the collections I previously published under Stringer's or Porter's name (personas).

And Smashwords still has the same books for distribution to a few places that D2D doesn't go, so I probably need to update the files for them too. Not in a massive hurry for that though.

Hmmm. In fact, I might just "unpublish" the titles from Smashwords altogether. It's a LOT of work to change the cover and the front and back matter, and the thing is, I've garnered a total of FOUR sales from all the remaining Smashwords venues (Baker & Taylor Blio, txtr, Library Direct, Baker-Taylor Axis360, and OverDrive) over the past four years.

Yeah, think I'll just unpublish them, pull them from Smashwords completely. That's only the collections that were previously attributed to one of my personas other than Gervasio. I'll go do that right now.

All of my new short stories, novels and collections will go to both D2D and Smashwords.

Okay, I got all that done (about an hour) and then went for a walk. Though I'd be smart and go after the sun was well up, but it got hotter quicker than I thought it would. Outsmarted myself. Only turned about three miles. Guess I'll go back to walking earlier for awhile.

I won't be doing any writing today, other than this stuff and revisiting a magic realism story I (Gervasio) wrote a long time ago. It's called "Carmen, Whose Face Was Cracked" and it's a beautiful story in the ethereal sense. I'll post it as the story of the week for this week. So it will be up on Sunday at the site and posted by MailChimp on Monday morning.

Topic of the Night: Amazon KDP Select and "Scout" Redux

You know, all I can do is tell you what I think is right.

If you go with a program like Amazon Scout, you're keeping your work from a lot of readers who don't use Amazon.

You're also locking up your work for at least 5 years. Amazon's guarantee to you is if you don't make at least \$25,000 in royalties over that five years, you can pull your book from the program. Now that sounds like a nice, big number, but seriously, can any of you live on \$5,000 per year? I can't.

And like I said yesterday, if it wasn't a good deal for Amazon, they wouldn't be doing it. For every person

who DOES make \$25,000 over five years, Amazon ALSO makes \$25,000 over that same five years, multiplied by the number of people who sign up for this program. Shrug.

It just isn't fair. It isn't a good deal for any author.

Look at it like this. Say you own a rental property. Would you sign over the deed to that property to someone else and then pay them 50% of your income from that property to rent it out for you? Yeah, I didn't think so.

This is EXACTLY the same thing. Exactly.

Your writing, every story, every book, is an investment. Your copyright is property.

Don't give your property away and then split your earnings 50/50 with the new owner. That's just insane.

Tell you what. If you're thinking of going with Amazon Scout, you might as well go with a traditional publisher and give the TP both print and ebook rights. At least with the TP you can negotiate a more realistic royalty rate on ebook sales than the paltry 50% Amazon wants to pay, and TP probably would give you a larger advance too. AND they probably would tie up your book for only two or three years (again, it's negotiable). Just sayin'.

And those who know me know that I NEVER recommend going with a traditional publisher. Never. But compared to Amazon Scout, TP is a better alternative.

One final note: If that \$1500 advance looks attractive to you, remember that it's only an advance. They don't pay royalties until your book "earns out" the advance. And if it doesn't earn out the advance? They come back to you to recoup that advance. That's right. You could easily end up paying it back.

And now I'll write what I should have written in the first place last night. Then I wouldn't have had to write the rest of this. Here it is. Ready?

If You Choose To Go With Them, Read The Contract. And have a lawyer read it.

Okay, so that's all I'm gonna say on the topic. Please feel free to prove me wrong. But don't expect me to join you.

Today's Writing

I pecked around a little bit, but no fiction writing today.

I think my numbers are so low for August that I subconsciously decided to take care of a lot of admin stuff instead of worrying about writing. So I did the switchover from Smashwords to D2D, I've kept up this blog and my other main blog, and some other non-fiction writing stuff.

Also, although I stand ZERO practical chance of getting anywhere near my 1,000,000 word goal for the year, I'm past 450,000 published words of fiction right now since January 1 of this year, and that ain't bad.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

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Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 20501
Total fiction words for the year..... 462901

August 29, 2015

The Day

Rolled out a little late at quarter to 3.

Wow. I hope all of you who are reading this are having a lot better month with your writing than I am so far. With the month mostly gone, it isn't likely to improve much either.

No walk today. Not a lot else either, except I switched my internet browser from Firefox over to Opera. I'm more than happy with it. For one thing, whenever Adobe Flash would kick in to run any video (weather, etc.) it ate tons of memory. My computer sounded like a military fighter jet warming up to take off, and it slowed to a crawl. It was so bad that sometimes I used the Alt/Ctrl Delete trick to bring up the Task Manager and shut down the Adobe Flash process.

Now it doesn't do that because Flash works differently with Opera. Cool.

I've been slipping badly on meeting my daily goal of 3,000 words per day. Probably I will adjust that one beginning in September.

But I still have a good weekly goal of one new short story per week. This coming Monday, I'm posting a story I reworked, but that doesn't excuse me from the goal of writing a new one this week (before Monday). So probably I'll do that today. Or tomorrow. (grin)

One good thing about writing short stories is that they're usually finished in one day. Another good thing is that they can lead to a novella or novel. They're also great fun because I can give a character a problem and drop him or her into a setting and I'm off and running. Then I just write the opening (300 to 500 words). If the opening works, I keep writing. If it doesn't, I chuck it and start over or start something new.

But it's pure writing into the dark, just like writing a one-off stand-alone novel. I don't have to worry about timelines or about various characters cropping up from the past and so on.

Anyway, I don't want to allow myself to fail on this short story per week challenge. I want to hold out for as long as I can. The last time I did this, I had a streak that ran for 66 straight weeks (I think that's the right number) and included 70 short stories. I want to try to beat that this time.

But the thing about writing goals is this: If you fail to hit a goal, so what. Nobody dies, the electric company doesn't turn off the power, and the goal resets. In other words, you have absolutely nothing to lose and the world to gain.

Topic of the Night: Rehashing Stuff

I was going to write about "The Value of Streaks," but when I was looking back for info, I realize I talked about setting goals just back in July, from around the 6th or 7th up through about the 10th. In fact, I wrote about setting goals, recurring goals, and the power of streaks. If you're interested, click The Journal tab on the website and scroll back.

And my apologies for repeating myself on this stuff so often. I didn't realize. When I don't have something to talk about, I'll avoid doing a Topic.

Okay, so I'm off this now and working on my own stuff the rest of the day.

Well, as it turns out, that was two hours ago. I remembered I needed to at least rinse off my pickup (tossed cold coffee out the window and it streaked the door), and I ended up washing both the car and the pickup.

Everybody needs a hobby. I guess mine is being stupid in the heat when I could be inside, writing in the (relative) cool. (grin)

So after I cool down a bit and get a shower, I'll write for awhile.

Today's Writing

Got a little done on Wes' story. And it was fun because it completely surprised me. And I'm still feeling lazy, so I guess I'll write the short story tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1084

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
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Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words
Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21585

Total fiction words for the year..... 463985

[August 30, 2015](#)

The Day

Rolled out right at 2 this morning. Good to feel back on schedule.

Spent more time this morning on email than usual but for a good reason. I woke to Dr. Mardy Groethe's weekly newsletter in my inbox. Dr. Mardy is a verbivore. He is the author of I Never Metaphor I Didn't Like, Oxymoronica, and several other books in the same general vein.

Each week his newsletter contains an interesting "puzzler" regarding a famous literary figure. Dr. Mardy provides a brief history and several quotes about the person, and at the end of the newsletter he reveals the person's name.

After the puzzler hints and before the revelation, he provides "This Week's Theme." Then he offers up a bit of introductory prose and then a collection (usually a dozen) of his own favorite quotes on the topic.

And that's what I like best about his newsletter. The listing of quotes he provides is a never-ending source of story titles and story ideas. And if you title and/or write a story based on part of a quote, the quote becomes a ready-made epigraph if you want one. (grin)

I will write the story of the week today, and I will write it based on a title derived from a quotation taken from this week's newsletter.

And to slightly adjust my personal challenge, each new short story I write for the foreseeable future will be based on a quote from Dr. Mardy's newsletter. That should be a blast. (grin)

You can find Dr. Mardy's website at <http://www.drmardy.com>. To sign up for his newsletter, send a blank email to drmardy-on@mail-list.com. Again, I highly recommend it.

No topic tonight other than the above.

Good walk today. Only about 3.5 miles but new ground through a new wash. And not too sandy so no slogging, or not much. Cool.

Started the story of the week. Then my new Internet browser (Opera) crashed on me three times in an hour. So I'm looking again. Spent the last couple hours doing that, so back to writing for a bit now. I want to see how this story ends. (grin)

As it turns out, I'm not gonna find out how it ends today. Like I said the other day, the good thing about a recurring goal is that it resets if you miss it.

Today's Writing

Well, I won't finish the new short story I started today. No biggie. I'll just start my new streak next week, or the next. I'll get back on track.

I DID get a good opening written, and it's a great title that I borrowed from a quote by Herodotus (5th c. B.C.). So I'll run with that later.

But for now I'm not gonna worry about it. Talk with you all tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1056

Writing of "A Hiding Place for Weary Men" (short story, but not of the week)

Day 1..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 1056 words

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words

Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words

Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words

Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words

Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words

Day 8..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22641

Total fiction words for the year..... 465041

21585

Total fiction words for the year..... 463985

August 31, 2015

The end of a month. A horrible month. Whew. Glad to see this one end.

The Day

Rollled out a little before 3. I was up late (for me) last night working with web browsers. I'll tell you the rest in the Topic below.

A personal note — I've received a few emails recently from some of you expressing concern for what's going on. Really, nothing. Just life. (grin) But I'm doing a mostly daily journal here, and I'm trying to be as transparent as I can in revealing my own life as a professional writer. That's mostly to let you see what's possible, but also that normal (or abnormal) everyday life continues to happen.

To that end, I want to let you see the rough days as well as the smooth ones, the days when I struggle to put together a sentence as well as the days when everything's flowing and I hit 1200 words in an hour. So I do appreciate the concern, but really, everything's fine. If you know me, you know I slip into grouch mode pretty easily, and when I'm in grouch mode, my two year old inner child isn't far behind. (grin)

Administrative note — I could have finished the short story I started yesterday in time to start a streak. I could have finished it this morning and created a cover and posted it before 9 a.m. when MailChimp sends out the story of the week to all the subscribers. (I had the story of the week covered with an older one that I reworked a bit but I still set the deadline for my challenge week at 9 a.m. on Monday morning.)

One of the reasons I didn't bother was because I've been sending this daily journal post. It includes my daily numbers and it goes out at 5 p.m. every day. I couldn't finish the story before that deadline.

So I need to work out my deadlines so they coincide. I'll do that before I start my story-a-week challenge again. Since my workday begins at 2 or so in the morning and ends at 5 in the early evening, probably I'll shift the story-a-week deadline to 6 p.m. on Monday instead of 9 a.m. on Monday.

We'll see. Anyway, it's now 6:30 a.m. I have a new browser I'm happy with thus far (see the Topic below) and am ready to start the rest of my day. No fiction writing today. The month is over. Today I'll take care of some more administrative stuff, like adding a couple blog posts over on the other blog to get a little bit ahead.

Now it's almost noon. I've added four articles to the other blog post so I'm caught up through October 1.

Topic of the Morning: Internet Browsers

I've used Firefox for years. The problem is, I'm a complete two year old when it comes to putting up with things that annoy me and that probably have a solution. The keyword here is probably.

I will spend hours, even days, searching for a solution to an annoyance when I know the solution "probably" exists.

The problem with Firefox was this: When I tried to view a video or even open a website that has photos or videos on it (for example, news feeds or weather radar) in Firefox, my computer would slow to a crawl. It also sounded like a fighter jet warming up on the runway.

You know the sound. When the pilot is increasing the engine speed while keeping his foot firmly planted on the brake until the engines are spinning fast enough to punch him into the sky. Well, something like that. You know.

Anyway, Firefox invoked Adobe Flash, which ran as a separate process and ate up tons of memory,

thereby taxing the processor and slowing the computer to roughly the speed of an abacus in the hands of an untrained chimp.

As all humans do in all human endeavors in which Conflict is trump, I finally sought change only when the aggravation of putting up with my current browser finally outweighed the inconvenience of finding a new one, moving all my bookmarks, reinserting all my saved passwords, and all that stuff.

And of course, the need to switch browsers brought up another problem. Which browser?

Now fixing this problem should be as easy as looking at browser comparisons or reading reviews. But it isn't. Not unless you look at several comparisons from various sources and look for common notes among them.

Ditto for reviews. You have to compare several reviews and study them to discern the kernels of unbiased truth hidden in the bought-and-paid-for-and-therefore-biased text.

And finally, you have to download the new browser, transfer all your stuff (or at least find out how difficult it is to transfer all your stuff) and then use it and wait to see what happens.

Relatively speaking, I got lucky.

Yesterday (?) or the day before, I compared notes (per my griping above) and settled on Opera. I downloaded it, transferred everything (to Opera's credit, the transfer was easy) and began using it.

I liked the user interface and enjoyed the ease with which I was able to get around in the browser. Everything was fine for a few hours.

Then it crashed.

The browser was still there, and open. My windows (email, harveystanbrough.com and a couple others) were still on the screen. But in each window, the content — ALL of the content — was replaced with black.

I closed Opera and restarted it, and everything was fine. My tabs all came back. No problem. Probably just a glitch, so no worries.

Then it crashed. Same thing, a half-hour later. Okay, so not just a glitch. Sigh. Well minor-league-curseword-that-begins-with-D.

So I started reading again, comparing notes.

Just in case you're doing this search yourself, here are the two best comparison sites I found:

<http://www.topattack.com/list/best-internet-browsers-review/4> and

<http://internet-browser-review.toptenreviews.com/>.

I found a few programs that seemed like good candidates to become my next browser. I downloaded and installed Internet Explorer 11 and was immediately IMMEDIATELY sorry. It's far too bossy for my tastes, and it isn't NEARLY as fast as the two comparison sites above claim it is. Plus it uses a ton of memory, again, as opposed to what a lot of reviews and the two comparison sites above say.

I quickly grew tired of the "big" browsers. I had tried IE twice and hated it both times. Firefox was out,

and Google Chrome seemed overly flippant in their lack of desire to allow the end user (me) to set things up for my own convenience. And Opera... well, I liked Opera a lot except that it apparently is a crash machine.

So I read in-depth reviews about three other browsers: Pale Moon (based on the Firefox engine but sleeker and faster), Torch (based on the Chromium engine, like Google Chrome, it allows for a LOT more personalization and is not as high-handed) and Sea Monkey (based on the Firefox engine but just as fast as Firefox while allegedly using a LOT less memory).

I finally installed Pale Moon, but the first time I visited a news site that had a few pictures on it and links to videos (not even videos, just LINKS to videos), it acted like Firefox. Someone turned the ignition key in an F-16 cockpit and the computer slowed to a crawl. Now I have to admit the crawl was considerably faster than the Firefox crawl, but a crawl is a crawl.

Thing is, I can't abide a crawling browser. Let me explain.

In my world, I don't really notice 1/60th of a minute as it ticks past, but I can get a lot done in, say, 15 seconds. So in my world, a minute has four 15-second segments that I'm intuitively aware of. In my world, an hour has 240 of those. It doesn't just have 60 minutes, but 240 quarter-minutes. That's a lot of quarter-minutes. And during that time, I can accomplish a lot IF my browser isn't crawling along, sapping my strength and my patience.

So the search continued.

This morning, fresh out of bed, I grabbed a cuppa coffee, turned on Pale Moon, opened a new tab and began comparing browsers.

I swear, I thought I heard my computer say in a soft, almost menacing voice, "What are you doing, Harvey?" (see 2001: A Space Odyssey)

And yes, I responded. Aloud. I said, "Nothing. Nothing, ProBook 6460b. Everything's fine."

Then I downloaded the installation files for Sea Monkey (<http://www.seamonkey-project.org/>) and Torch (<http://www.torchbrowser.com/>).

Torch downloaded first, so I installed it first. TADA! It's working great.

If it continues to work well, that will be the end of my search. If it doesn't, well, I still have the installation files for Sea Monkey set aside, so we'll see.

If you have any questions about any of this, please ask in the comments section below.

Also, be aware I'm also gonna make this one of my upcoming posts over on the bigger blog. So if you're signed up over there too, you'll see this again before too long. Probably late September.

TOMORROW BEGINS A NEW MONTH! GO FORTH AND WRITE!

Today's Writing

Well, I just don't have any writing in me today. Well, fiction writing anyway. I probably hit around 3,000 words today of nonfiction and silliness. In fact, there are almost 1700 words in this post alone.

Okay, but I just noticed I didn't add my total from yesterday (1056) to the daily total. I added it to the

monthly and annual, but not to the daily, so I'm correcting that today.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
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Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words
Day 8..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 11410 words
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 22641

Total fiction words for the year..... 465041

September 1, 2015

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2. It's September 1, a shiny brand-new month. New possibilities, newly re-set goals.

Thank goodness.

Coffee and email to wake up. No walk today. Had a violent storm come through here yesterday. That and this little bug that's taken hold of me recently will keep me from walking today. I'll walk tomorrow for sure. A good long one.

Well, back to writing today. It is September 1. No real significance there except that this month I will rededicate myself to writing. I will also see my 755th full moon sometime this month, and the first thing has about as much significance to anything important as the second.

As I alluded to in yesterday's post (I think) things move so fast in my life. I mean even second to second. Or maybe it's just that I'm noticing the seconds more. I've been too distracted recently, with the violent weather and whatever it pitches into the air and a minor nagging illness and all that. I can imagine my drill instructor (Sgt. McGrew, my favorite) saying, "Well, get UNdistracted, y'moron." And he's right.

So I'm beginning to focus on writing again because it's important to me

I felt bad for awhile last night as I considered that my monthly total was only 22641 for this month. That's very low for me. I'm usually up in the 60,000 to 80,000 per month range.

Then I got to thinking about it. If I wrote 22641 every month for a year, that would be 271,692 published words of fiction in a year. One of my writing heroes and a very prolific SF writer named Jack Williamson once lamented that try as he might, he never wrote much more than 100,000 words in a year.

So I'll take it.

And as I keep saying, today is September 1.

Topic of the Morning: No topic today. I'm pooped.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: 1590

Writing of "Paper Hearts" (began as "A Hiding Place for Weary Men" — short story of the week)

Day 1..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 1056 words

Day 2..... 1590 words. Total words to date..... 2646 words done

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words

Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words

Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words

Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words

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Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words

Day 8..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 11410 words

Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 1590

Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

September 2, 2015

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3.

Still have a bug but it's not a major deal. Just very slight headaches that come and go accompanied by (also very slight) chills/fever and nausea. Just blah, y'know?

I did get out for a walk. I decided to do hills, into and out of a wash off Sybil Road. I hoped to shove whatever this is on through my system, but that doesn't work like it did when I was thirty. (grin) I went only about 2 miles, and I felt worse after it was over. So I guess I won't be trying that again.

Looked at pics from the walk this morning, posted a few to Facebook. They're not bad if you like that kind of stuff. You can see them here. The first one looks kind'a like Granny's wig.

By the way, I strongly recommend you check out DeanWesleySmith.com today. Great stuff on his challenge for the rest of this year.

Oh, a quick announcement. I probably won't post anything on this for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I hope to be in the Lower Gila Box Wilderness north of Lordsburg seeing some amazing stuff.

Topic of the Morning: Writing and Selling Short Fiction

Could I do a seminar on this? Yes. I could do a daylong seminar on this. It would depend on interest. If you're interested, let me know by email please at harveystanbrough@gmail.com.

Recently, some folks who are signed up for my free story of the week have asked why I'm not selling my short stories instead of putting them on the website free. A professional writer friend of mine asked the same question in a slightly different context a few weeks ago.

Think about that for a moment. Why in the world would I limit the audience for my short stories to

around 70 subscribers? The answer is, I Don't.

Yes, if you subscribe (see the Story of the Week link in the header on the website), you will receive a brand new short story free in your email once a week. It costs you nothing and you can read it as many times as you want for the next week or so.

But I ALSO publish each story, usually the same day I write it. I publish it to Amazon, the Smashwords store, Apple, Barnes & Noble, Inktera, Kobo, Oyster, Scribd and Tolino. Through those markets, my stories, collections and novels are available in over 100 nations worldwide within a few days of publication.

To give you an idea of the process, I wrote the next short story of the week yesterday. It's called "Paper Hearts." As soon as I finished it, I did the format, created a cover, and published it to my Free Short Story of the Week blog. It will go live on my website on the morning of Monday, September 7. It will go out in email to subscribers on the afternoon of the same day.

So I published it to my website yesterday and set a future release date. But I also published it for sale to Draft2Digital, a distributor who sends it to Apple, Barnes & Noble, Inktera, Kobo, Oyster, Scribd and Tolino. Then I published it to Smashwords, but only for sale in their online store. (You can buy titles at Smashwords.com in any ebook format.) Then I published it to Amazon.

If you want to see it, I recommend you subscribe to my Free Short Story of the Week and wait until Monday to read it. Or just come back to my website on Monday and click the Free Short Story of the Week tab.

But if you're really in a rush and you have more money than patience, you're more than welcome to visit your favorite ebook store anytime and buy it. It only costs \$2.99. That includes tax, even if you live in Europe and have that horrible VAT thing going on.

Not only do I sell each individual short story that I write, I also do this:

When I've written five short stories, I combine them in a short collection and sell it for \$4.99. So my readers can buy my stories one at a time for \$2.99 (five stories would cost just under \$15) or they can get five stories in a short collection for \$4.99.

So when I've written TEN short stories, guess what? Instead of buying one or both of the 5-story collections for \$4.99 each, my readers can opt to buy one 10-story collection for \$5.99 to \$7.99. Can you say Good Deal?

From a writer and indie publisher standpoint, each story gives me multiple streams of revenue, too. When I've written ten short stories, I get thirteen publications: ten individual stories, two 5-story collections, and one 10-story collection.

That gives me three separate streams of revenue for each short story. Thirty streams of revenue for ten stories. Times the number of venues in which my stories are for sale.

And each of those is for sale at every venue listed above PLUS at those venues' subsidiaries. Most of the "big" vendors have a few to several subsidiaries to whom they further distribute the books. Cool, eh?

Finally, I also publish each 5-story and 10-story collection as a paperback. Do I get a lot of sales in paperback? No.

But when the reader finds my collection or novel online and sees the paperback price (usually around

\$15.99) right alongside the ebook price (usually around \$5.99) it makes the ebook price look really good. See? Which of course it is.

Today's Writing

Yeah right. I messed around a bit but not enough to mention. I'm kind'a taking the day off today. Might be a few days like that until I get over this stuff. Sure will be glad to get back up to speed.

Now, that being said, I'm not overly worried about it. I mean, yes, I would MUCH rather be writing fiction because it's SO much stinkin' fun when it flows like it should. But the words will still be there when I come out of this crap. So there's that.

In the meantime, all of you can write your little fingers to the bone. (grin)

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

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I'm gonna leave up the number for ol' Wes while my subconscious continues to turn the story over. If it doesn't perk up and get with it pretty soon though, I'll send Wes out behind the barn to think about what he's done while I'm writing some other stuff.

Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

September 3, 2015

Rolled out a little before 2 this morning.

I've done practically nothing this morning other than tend to the babies (two kits and a chihuahua), visit Facebook etc.

The bug seems to be going away finally. Woohoo! I walked as a kind of test to see what I could do. Made almost 6 miles out a wash and back. Admittedly the sand was moist from all the rain so well-packed and good walking. Only slogged in a few places. Really nice. So I think I'm over whatever creeping crud has held sway over me for the past several days. I should be able to get back to my fiction writing soon.

The rest of today I'm going to devote to nonfiction. So another planned day of no fiction writing. See today's Topic for more information.

Topic of the Morning: The Unintentional Streak — Possible?

Yep.

I didn't intend to create a streak with this blog, but I think maybe I have.

Yesterday I announced that this blog probably wouldn't be here for the next few days because I'll be out in the boonies with my bud, Michael Badouin. That's pronounced Bad One, I'm sure, especially since it's a pseudonym and we can pronounce our pseudonyms any old way we want.

Although he might say it's pronounced bad - oo - WIN. To which I would say poTAYto poTAHto when what I actually meant was poTAYto APple. Anyway....

I also mentioned before that streaks have power. They have a life of their own. Turns out that's true even for unintentional streaks.

Even though I wasn't trying to create a streak with this blog, It Wants To Continue even while I'm gone. The thought of leaving a few days blank is just annoying.

So I'm going to at least create a topic for Friday, Saturday and Sunday and then pre-post them. That will give you something of interest (maybe) to read and it will keep my unintentional streak going.

I could just post "placeholder" posts with no real significant content, but when I visit Dean's blog and see one of those, I feel kind of cheated.

And I realize these will be sort of placeholder posts, but at least there will be something there for your money, right?

Besides, my friend Tyron Love just subscribed, and I can't let him start off with a few blank days in a row, can I? Can I? Of course not.

So you may expect to see this blog in your mailbox toward the close of each day for the foreseeable future.

Does anyone else out there enjoy the taste of jalapeno slices when they're slurped off a toad's head?

Never mind. I just was overcome with a sudden urge to write a series of words that probably have never been written before.

Michael would understand.

Today's Writing

No fiction writing today.

I'm devoting Thursday to writing the topics for the next few days for this blog so I can pre-post them. That and putting together more blog posts for the Pro Writers blog.

Fiction Words: XXXX

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Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

September 4, 2015

Playing around in Gila National Wilderness or someplace just as wild. No entry today about the day.

Topic of the Morning: Write What You Know — Seriously?

Uh, no. Bad advice. Maybe the baddest advice ever, and I mean that in the old sense of "baddest," before we started dumbing down the language. I mean "worst."

It's bad advice because the connotation is that you should write ONLY what you know.

So what? You're supposed to write what you DON'T know?

Yes. Of course. You should also write what you know, but not ONLY what you know.

If everyone wrote only what they know, there would be very little science fiction, zero science fantasy (or other fantasy, for that matter), very little mystery, very little suspense, and so on.

Can you write a police procedural if you've never been a cop? Of course.

Can you write a spy/thriller if you've never worked for the CIA? Yep.

Can you write a romance novel if you've never been involved with a "shuddering, heaving breast" or a guy with flowing hair, broad shoulders, a thick chest with just the right amount of hair on it and trim, athletic hips? Yep.

If you couldn't, novels wouldn't exist.

All you need is Interest. If you're Interested in writing Science Fiction, create a character, give him a problem, and drop him into a setting. What happens first? Shrug. I don't know. He's your character. All I know is he has to solve the problem. (This might not be "the" problem of the story. Just a problem to get the character/situation started.)

If you're interested in writing Mystery, create a character, give him a problem, and drop him into a setting. In this case, it's a good idea if the problem is the body the character just found. (grin)

If you're interested in writing Romance, create a character (or two), give him a problem, and drop him into a setting.

Beginning to notice a trend here?

All you need to begin a story (of any length) is a character with a problem in a setting. That's it. By and large, the setting determines the genre. Most characters and most problems can be cherry picked from one setting and dropped into another. And you'll write an entirely different story in an entirely different genre.

If you don't believe me, try it.

And what do I mean by "setting"? For purposes of this Topic, the setting is where the character suddenly realizes he has a problem. The smaller and more focused the setting, the better.

More on setting tomorrow while I'm not here. (grin)

For now, create a character, give him a problem, and drop him into a setting. Then write an opening. The opening will be around 300 to 500 words, probably. Be sure to include the character's sense of the setting (sight, smell, taste, feel, sound) and have him solve the problem or get underway solving it.

If the opening takes off (most of the time it will take off), just write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence. Then write the next sentence until the character leads you to the end of your new short story, novella, or novel.

If the opening sags out and dies, so what? Toss it. Then either write it again from scratch (if you like the idea) or create a character, give him a problem, drop him into a setting and write another opening. (grin)

Okay, tomorrow, a lot more on setting.

Today's Writing

No fiction writing today. If today is Friday, Saturday or Sunday (September 4, 5 or 6) I'm out in the boonies somewhere refilling my well of experience.

Fiction Words: XXXX

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Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

September 5, 2015

Playing around in Gila National Wilderness or someplace just as wild. No entry today about the day.

Topic: Setting and How to Write It

Okay, to start a story (of any length) you have to begin. You have to write an opening.

In order to write an opening, you have to create a character, give him a problem and drop him into a setting. But what do I mean by "setting"?

First, here I'm talking about the setting of the opening. The character(s) might move through several settings during the course of the story. Those settings will vary depending on what's happening at the moment. And where it's happening. And sometimes why.

But in the opening, you're trying to get and keep the reader's attention, and the setting has everything to do with that.

I mentioned yesterday that you should include the character's sense of the setting in the opening. That means including all five senses if possible. (For example, if the character's blind or in a completely dark room, probably the sense of Sight won't be involved.)

The character's perception and opinion of the setting will not only paint a picture for the reader, but also will tell him a lot about the character. So it's important. Any description of the setting should pass through the perceptions of the character.

But let's get down to the setting itself. First, it should be as focused as possible.

If your character is on Earth or the moon or a strange planet, that's pretty vague. If he's on the the South American continent, that's a little more focused, but still far too general to draw the reader in. If he's in the Amazon rain forest, that's a little better.

But what about this:

Dr. Steven Zimmer slipped into the brush just in time. He crouched among the broad leaves and sweet, heady scent of a passion flower vine. The Amazon was flowing a few yards behind him. Several yards ahead of him, a few local males were engaged in some sort of ritual.

And his stupid camera was miles away in the stupid base camp. Wherever that was. He frowned.

But lost or not, he was still a scientist. He leaned slightly forward. His brow tightened against the whispering of the Amazon as he strained to listen.

The language was nothing more than a series of clicks and clacks. Even if he could hear it plainly, he wouldn't have a clue what they were saying. The thought brought a grin to his face.

But the grin fled when a hand gripped his shoulder.

Then again, if your character's down at the docks, that's too vague, isn't it? (Yeah, we probably need to know what city/country but not until the story moves away from the docks.) If he's in a warehouse, that's better. If he's in a particular part of the warehouse, that's a lot better.'

But what about this:

The night was dark, the air heavy. A foghorn sounded in the bay and was driven flat in the pattering rain. In the distance, somewhere back in the middle of the city, sirens wailed.

Carrying bolt cutters, Detective Steven Zimmer approached the warehouse door. A thin rivulet of rain trickled off the right front brim of his fedora.

He brought up the bolt cutters, but paused. He could barely make out the padlock. It was the same corroded non-color as the corrugated steel walls.

Maybe he could just cut the hasp. He leaned closer. The musty wood frame was so damp he probably could just pry the hasp out of it.

But the hasp had already been cut. He looked at it for a moment, then put one palm against the edge of the door. Carefully, he pushed. It slid a few feet to the right with only the slightest grinding in the runner.

The scent of old grease reached his nose as he crouched, placing the bolt cutters on the tarmac. When he straightened again, his .45 caliber Kimber Tactical II was in his right hand.

He took a deep breath. Backup would be good. But you can't call for backup when you're working a case on the sly.

He gentled his index finger along the cool metal of the trigger well, then slipped in through the door.

Get the point?

Note that the setting in the second example was external to the warehouse. Still, it was focused down. Everything took place within a man-sized area just outside the warehouse door.

In the first example, the setting was actually larger, encompassing a few yards behind the POV character to several yards ahead of him. In it, as in the second example, the focus was created through the character's physical senses.

Today's Writing

No writing today, probably. I'm out in the boonies somewhere refilling my well of experience.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

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Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

September 6, 2015

No doubt on our way back from playing around in Gila National Wilderness or someplace just as wild. No

entry today about the day. Just some musing, as you see below.

Few things are more enjoyable than writing a brand new story.

As I've been telling anyone who will listen, just give a character a problem, drop him into a setting, put your fingers on the keyboard and go for it. It's an absolute blast.

I've already pre-posted Thursday, Friday and Saturday's posts. IF I've written anything during the weekend and IF I'm back early enough on Sunday, I'll update this before it goes "live" at about 5 p.m.

Over the next day or two (meaning Monday or Tuesday) or however long it takes, I'll update you on the trip. I like to share things like that, especially as they affect (or might affect) my/your writing. So I hope you'll look forward to that.

For now, though, just in case I'm not back early enough on Sunday, or just in case whatever else keeps me from posting, I'm going to write one more Topic and add it below. 'Cause from what I've heard it's always wise to be prepared.

(Oh goodness. I almost wrote

"or just in case I come over a ridge while wearing my Infidel ball cap and run headlong into 13 members of a radical terrorist group that shall remain nameless because, after all, it's just their culture, who are forcing unnatural perversions on a pitiful little creature who also shall remain unidentified but who bears a remarkable resemblance to [ahem] a goat, and in that eventuality, even though I take out the first dozen because I'm just an untenably violent person, somehow or other I don't see that one silly little sword-wielding scamp sneaking up behind me with beheading on his mind and, well, just in case of something like that I'm gonna write one more Topic and add it below. 'Cause it's always wise to be prepared."

But I didn't. Whew. As the little guy in MIB III says, That was a close one.)

Topic of the Day: Using the Persona

Everyone who's familiar with my work already knows I have used personas to great advantage as alter-egos. They were/are writer friends of mine who write things I am/was unable to write.

I stopped using two of them when Eric Stringer (it is strongly suspected) killed Nick Porter. Nick wrote mostly mainstream, serious stuff. It was relatively easy for me to take over that writing myself.

Some time after Nick was killed, Eric simply didn't show up for work one day. It is rumored that he moved to a far-far-faraway land where he occasionally writes short stories under the pen name Harvey Stanbrough. Quite the jokester, our Eric. Anyway, Eric, at one time, was my borderline psychotic persona. Since he left, I have decided to "let my little light shine" in that regard. Stay tuned.

Okay, but here I'm going to talk about using the persona as a recurring character. I think that that would be valuable.

For one thing, writing your passion (note, I didn't say writing ABOUT your passion) would be a lot easier if you did so through a persona.

The best known example of a writer using a persona to (ahem) distance himself from responsibility for his writing was Samuel Clemens. In his books, Clemens made social commentary that would rankle politicians and pundits alike. To distance himself somewhat, he allowed Mark Twain to write those books.

And in one case, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, arguably his strongest advocacy for social reform, he handed off the job to Mr. Twain, who in turn handed off the task to an innocent named Huckleberry Finn.

Now say I get a strong sentiment in my head. Just as an example, let's use the (very) thinly veiled rhetoric in the paragraph I almost wrote (but didn't) just before I started this Topic of the Day.

I can't write stuff like that. Seriously. I might offend someone. Whatever.

But my characters can do or say anything they like. After all, they're doing the talking. I'm just writing it all down. It's like Don't kill the messenger, right?

Wow, and I could have characters for all kinds of different genres.

I could have a hard-nosed detective, say somebody like Steven Zimmer, who goes around solving crimes. Plus he obviously is All Man enough to even take on cases that are not sanctioned by the local police department so you just KNOW he's gonna break a few rules. And that's always fun, right?

I could let Cranston Longdink III sink his family's "old wealth" into a porn empire specifically for an untapped market roughly halfway around the world. The ensuing stories would be about the procurement of goats and what happens to the goats after they're procured. (Of course, no underage goats would be used in the stories.) This might well spin off into documentaries concerning goat trafficking, national and international treaties on goat trafficking, and the link between goat trafficking and "medicinal" poppy production in certain parts of the world. Coincidence? I don't think so. Film at 11.

I could have Rip Sternaman barge into hostage situations all over the world, muscles bulging, and call the bad guys names that are SO fitting for bad guys before he breaks every bone in their arms and then ties them together (by the arms) for transport to wherever he's gonna take them.

I could have Dexter Murfee Nettleson, he with the radiant smile, walk happily into The Morning Store each morning to begin the day with a cup of sunshine sweetened with butterfly spit and stirred with the pinky finger of an eighty-three year old virgin.

You get the idea.

Of course, these are books that EVERYBODY would buy but that nobody would talk about or admit to buying, except possibly the ones starring ol' Dexter.

Anyway, regardless of what you think personally about these particular examples, you're writers, so give the topic some thought. Value? No value? Seriously, I think if you write your passion through your characters, you can let 'er rip.

And if we're all very lucky, maybe I'll get back on Sunday early enough to replace this with something else. (grin) But if not, just look at all the trash you will never have to write because I just wrote it.

Today's Writing

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words
Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words
Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words
Day 8..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 11410 words
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

I'm gonna leave up the numbers for ol' Wes while my subconscious continues to turn the story over. If it

doesn't perk up and get with it pretty soon though, I'll send Wes out behind the barn to think about what he's done while I'm writing some other stuff.

Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

The Journal, Monday, 9/7: Reading

As you can see from the title of this post, beginning today I'm offering a slightly different format. I'm including at least a hint at the Topic of the Post in the title. When I don't include a topic for that day, I'll try to slip something in there to give you an idea of what the post is about.

I'm also going to be removing older posts from the website. They take up unnecessary space, and there's no need for that. I'll leave some of them up in case anyone wants to scroll back. Maybe a week's worth or something. But if you enjoy a particular topic or something like that, be sure to save it for yourself.

Rolled out around 3:30 this morning. The trip to the Lower Gila Box was very good, but more exhausting than I realized. We both (Michael = Dan, and I) got a lot of good pics. I thought a few of mine would slide up into the excellent category, but when I opened them on my computer last night, they just weren't all that. I'll post a few of them on Facebook later. Probably. Maybe.

Haven't done much this morning but catch up on reading online news and newsletters, emails, etc. Later today I hope to read more in a book of Bradbury interviews. More about that in the topic below. I'm also going to mow the yard in a while, and I plan to put together a few daylong seminars. So no fiction writing today.

No walk today either. Maybe even for the next couple of days. My buddy and I walked only perhaps 3 miles per day on Friday and Saturday, and another mile or so on Sunday before we left to come home. But a great deal of that walking was on some pretty steep slopes. And it seemed we were always climbing, never descending. Weird how that works. (grin)

Okay, so rather than boring you with minute by minute details, I'll just say generally today will be some nonfiction writing, some reading, some exploring a new sales venue I found (I'll report on it later if it works out), some work out in the yard, and a lot of sitting under a fan trying not to move so I won't burst into flames.

Talk with you again mañana.

Topic of the Post: Reading

Of some significance, while we were camping in New Mexico, I caught up on a bit of reading. Specifically I read parts of a book called *Conversations with Ray Bradbury*. Edited by Steven L. Aggelis, this is a compilation of Interviews with Bradbury, whom I consider to be the best short story writer—and maybe the best storyteller—of all time.

I strongly recommend this book.

The title is not yet available as an ebook (darn it), but I got a mint-condition paperback copy for 99 cents plus \$3.99 (or thereabouts) shipping. If you're interested, just look for the title at Amazon or Barnes & Noble, then pick which copy you want. I think you won't be disappointed.

In many ways, the writing advice imbedded in Bradbury's responses validates my own beliefs about good writing practices, including writing into the dark, reading your work aloud and many others.

But I have also learned a few things (in less than a few hours' reading time) that might have taken me years to learn if I hadn't picked up this book.

Bradbury's process is slightly expanded over my own and over what I teach. He does write strictly from his subconscious (writing into the dark). But instead of sending his work off to a first reader, he then reads over his own work, reading aloud, looking carefully to trim anything that is unnecessary to the work.

He isn't looking to rewrite anything. He isn't looking at sentence structures. He's looking only to trim the fat.

The, I believe, he submits the work or publishes it. (I say "I believe" because in one interview, when pressed, he told the interviewer he makes at least seven passes at his work, cutting more each time. I seriously doubt that is true. I suspect it's something he feeds writers who need to feel that their own "rewriting" process is valid.)

The point is, remain open to learning. The more open-minded you remain, the more information you can take in, assess, and choose to retain or discard. And the more your skills as a storyteller and writer will improve.

Today's Writing

As I mentioned above, no fiction writing again today. Just kind'a getting used to being back. Also I put together three daylong seminars I'm planning to offer to the good folks in the greater Phoenix area and also over in Tucson. We'll see whether anyone's interested. Here they are just in case you're interested:

Writing Off Into the Dark (daylong writing intensive) — Major subtopics include Heinlein's Rules, Productivity, Writing Myths, The Difference Between Short and Long Fiction, How to Practice Writing, The Difference Between Rewriting and Revising (Cycling Back), and a lot more.

Writing the Character Driven Story (good for any length story, daylong writing intensive) — Major subtopics include Where to Get Story Ideas, How to Write from Inspiration, The Importance of Setting and How to Write It, How to Write an Opening, How to Select a Genre, The Five Senses Exercise, and two more in-class and take-home exercises.

Smart Self-Publishing (daylong seminar on the publishing side of writing) — Major subtopics include Why Self-Publishing Instead of "Traditional" Publishing, The Difference Between Self-Publishing and Subsidy Publishing, Copyright Explained (It Costs Nothing), ISBN and LCCN Explained (Don't Buy Your Own), Set Yourself Up as an Indie Publisher, Epublishing and Print Publishing, Getting Paid as a Self-Publisher, Your Book Available Worldwide in a Matter of Days, Price Your Ebooks and Print Books Competitively, The Importance of the Book Cover, Where to Find Cover Art, and a handout listing specific URLs and recommendations for formatting, print layout and cover design.

So there y'go. If you'd like to have any of these seminars in your area, email me at HarveyStanbrough@gmail.com or leave a comment below.
Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of Book 9 of the Wes Crowley saga

Day 1..... 3213 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words
Day 2..... 1046 words. Total words to date..... 4259 words
Day 3..... 1858 words. Total words to date..... 6117 words
Day 4..... 1023 words. Total words to date..... 7140 words
Day 5..... 1587 words. Total words to date..... 8327 words
Day 6..... X943 words. Total words to date..... 9270 words

Day 7..... 1084 words. Total words to date..... 10354 words
Day 8..... 1056 words. Total words to date..... 11410 words
Day 9..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

I'm gonna leave up the number for ol' Wes while my subconscious continues to turn the story over. If it doesn't perk up and get with it pretty soon though, I'll send Wes out behind the barn to think about what he's done while I'm writing some other stuff.

Total fiction words for the month..... 1590
Total fiction words for the year..... 466631

The Journal, Tuesday, 9/8: Challenges

Rolled out a little before 2 this morning. I think I'm almost caught up on my rest. Still, not much in the mood to write, although I'd better GET in the mood as the clock is ticking for the next short story. (grin)

Again I didn't do much this morning but catch up on more of my preferred reading. Later I also opened all the pics (over 400) from the Gila trip. I separated out the ones my partner wanted to see and put them in a special folder to share. (As soon as they're synced in my Dropbox, Dan, I'll send you a link.)

Went for a walk, though it was more to take more pics than anything else. Still, turned over just less than four miles. Also managed to take 168 pics. All that in about 2 hours.

Did a little more yard work after I got back from the walk.

Topic of the Post: Challenges

I was reading Dean's blog post a little while ago. He set a mega-challenge for himself. To meet the challenge, he has to write three novels in September, two in October, three in November and two in December. That's ten novels in four months. He's thinking around 40,000 to 60,000 words each.

He's getting a slow start on the first month. He needed to write a novel every 10 days during September, and today, on the 8th, he's written only about 15,000 words. But he isn't worried.

For one thing, writing "only" two novels during October and December gives him a little catch-up room if he needs it. For another — and this is the biggie — if he "fails" in his challenge and writes "only" 7 novels or 8 or 9 instead of the 10 novels he plans to write, won't that just be terrible? (grin)

The real value in a challenge is teaching the writer that Failing To Success is a good thing.

I said something similar a few posts back. Even if I stopped writing right now and didn't write anymore fiction for the rest of the year, I would still end the year with over 466,000 words of publishable fiction. And all but 11,410 words of that is actual PUBLISHED fiction. This year.

So even if I just stopped right now, I would have "failed" to success.

But that wouldn't be any fun, now would it? (grin)

A New Challenge

Back in July, Dean set himself another challenge. He challenged himself to write 31 short stories in 31 days. He then published them individually as short stories, but he also will publish them in a collection titled *The Stories of July* (or something like that).

Now seven days of September are already history, but I really need to jumpstart my writing. I need to get my writing blood pumping again. So I'm setting a new goal, publicly. As Andy Griffith would say, "Right chere, right now." (grin)

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. Not really that big a deal. It just means that I'll have to write two stories on seven of the remaining twenty-three days. (grin)

Now, just so everything's above board, to satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, not flash fiction (6 to 99 words) or short-shorts (100 to 2,000 words). So they all have to run over 2,000 words. I don't dictate to my characters how long stories have to be, so I might write some of those shorter ones too, but if I do they don't count toward the challenge.

Stay tuned. This should be a blast.

Today's Writing

Okay, first a note about the Wes Crowley saga. I've set the most recent novel aside for the time being. From what I can tell, it doesn't feel like being written right now, so that's that. I still feel as if there are at least two more novels in the story, but we'll just have to wait and see.

I think this is the right thing to do. Book 9 was rough from the beginning, and it isn't supposed to be like that. On that one thus far, I wrote only 11410 words in 8 days. That's an average (arithmetic mean) of only 1426 words per day. On a novel full of characters that I love. That isn't me.

So it's off to the races on the challenge. I hope maybe some of you will join me.

Well, a slow start on the "race." (grin) Only 721 words on a brand new story. Absolutely no worries. I expect to finish this one in an hour or two in the morning, then write a second one. Who knows? Maybe I'll even knock out a third one tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 0721

Writing of "Untitled about Mavis Harshbarger" (short story)

Day 1..... 0721 words. Total words to date..... 0721 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total challenge stories for the month..... 0 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 0721

Total fiction words for the month..... 2311 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 467352

The Journal, Wednesday, 9/9: Retraining

One more fairly major change to this blog. I've changed it so the full post appears in your email. You'll still have the option of reading the whole thing in your browser where it looks a lot better. And of course I'll continue to hope you will refer this to others, but you can also just read the whole thing in your email now.

This won't help those who don't bother to even open the email, but for those of you who do, maybe this will make things a little easier.

Rolled out a little before 2 again this morning. Checked email and other stuff while waking up.

Unfortunately, I was distracted so failed to write during the first two hours of the day.

Sometimes email or Facebook or an article in one of the newsletters I get distracts me too much. I might need to go straight to writing, then go to emails and all of that after two or three writing sessions (so around 5 or 6 a.m.) Maybe I'll try that for a day or two. I mention this only in case you might also have this problem occasionally.

So today I allowed myself to be distracted, then wrote this blog post and now it's almost time for my walk.

Becoming a professional writer takes some retraining, and some of it is ongoing. Like you, I'm learning as I go. Much more on all this in the Topic below.

I'll go out to walk about 6. Then back here to write.

Good walk. Left my camera in the pickup and just walked. Planned on 6 miles, but at mile 3 I decided to go for 8. Then about halfway to that I realized I was being stupid and cut it off. Ended up with 7.4 miles at just over 18 minutes per mile. Not bad for an old guy. Turns out I could have made 8. I'll put that in the bank for another time.

Topic of the Post: Retraining

Well, all of that was a good lead-in to the topic of retraining.

If you want to become a professional writer, or if you want to become a more prolific professional writer, chances are you need to change a few habits. That's the retraining I'm talking about.

This is something nobody else can do for you. It's a lonely, internal endeavor.

Others can give you motivation, tools and suggestions that you can use in your retraining, but that's as far as they can walk with you along this very private path.

What keyed my own retraining way back in early 2014 was reading Dean Wesley Smith's very short book, *How to Write a Novel in Ten Days*. He ghosted a complete 70,000 word novel, under contract, in ten days. He blogged about the experience as he did it, then published those blog posts as a book.

When I first started retraining myself to be a writer, I adjusted my personal day to replace a few hours that to me were wasted. I replace those with hours during which I could work. That's why I go to bed at 7 or so.

The time from 7 to 11 p.m. holds little value to me. I would do nothing but sit on the couch and stare at the TV, slowly numbing my mind. So I sleep during those hours.

From 2 to 6 a.m., it's quiet and I can work, so I substitute those hours for the ones I cut.

Those hours, that schedule, is pretty much all I have left of my original retraining. But what I do during that time has slipped severely. So here I am, having to retrain myself again. In case they'll help you in your own endeavors, here are the main points of my own retraining:

- I'll keep the hours I have now, but I'll use the early hours (2 to 6 a.m.) for writing.
- In all writings, I will strive to give my subconscious free reign and Write Off Into the Dark.
- I will adhere to Heinlein's Rules.
- I'll get off the break-every-hour schedule. Dean does this so I thought I'd try it. It doesn't work for me. As often as not, forcing myself to take a break after an hour or so kills the story I'm

working on. I'll continue to take breaks when I'm tired, even if only to get up and move around a bit, but I won't limit those to a particular time frame or word count.

- I'll spend no more than a half-hour on wake-up time. During that time I'll consider my progress and make necessary adjustments in my current challenge. Might also use the time to revisit goals, etc.
- As part of my retraining, tomorrow morning (and on the mornings that follow) I will write for at least two hours before my walk (fiction only).
- I'll continue to walk on most days. Gotta do it, and I like it anyway.

And I'll continue to post this blog as a journal for myself and in the hopes my mistakes will help someone else.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Still stuck in a slow start on the challenge. Every story is different. In this one, I'm working to add a lot of depth through the characters' physical senses, so I'm doing a lot of cycling back. It's similar in a way to rewriting, except you do it as you go and it's all done in creative voice (from the subconscious). In other words I'm not making any conscious decisions regarding word choice or sentence structure or anything like that.

I finished this one, but at times it was rough going. Not smooth and not as much fun as it should have been. The fun was more in the dialogue exchange among the characters and in weaving the setting into that through the senses of the characters.

I won't do a second one today, that's for sure. As I said, I allowed myself to be distracted, and that slowed me down a lot.

Tomorrow morning I'll get up with a new story idea and go for it.

Fiction Words: 1762

Writing of "Finding Harold Harshbarger" (short story)

Day 1..... 0721 words. Total words to date..... 0721 words

Day 2..... 1762 words. Total words to date..... 2483 words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 1 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 2483

Total fiction words for the month..... 4073 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 469114

The Journal, Thursday, 9/10: Life Happens

Checked email first thing this morning per usual. I received a request to write a foreword for an anthology being published by Creative Writing Institute. I've told them I'll do it.

Rolled out a little after 2 this morning. By 3 a.m. I was writing. Yay! The retraining is in progress.

I wrote awhile with a couple breaks, then went to walk a local arroyo about 6. Again left my camera in the pickup and just walked. Finished with 5.8 miles and got back here around 9.

Then I remembered a drab but beautiful little flower that appeared in the background of a pic I took a few days ago. So on the spur of the moment, I decided to drive out that road, find the flowering plant, find that flower and capture it. Got it and was back within another hour. It's a road I walk on a lot out here so I know it pretty well. I pinpointed the flowering plant I wanted by looking at the pic I took before that one and the pic I took after it. (grin)

When I got back I had a stack of emails waiting, many from the folks for whom I will write the foreword, so I responded to those, spent a little time on Facebook posting pics, then got a shower. Now it's noon (where does the time go?) and I'm turning to my writing 'puter.

Hey, life happens. When it does, you roll with it, then start writing. No matter what happens, if you're a writer, you write.

Right now in my retraining, I'm focusing on writing first thing in the morning. Got that done this morning, so success there. Tomorrow I'll do the same thing. When that becomes habit, I'll begin expanding the hours and calming down the rest of the day.

But for today, good enough.

Topic of the Post: No topic tonight beyond the above

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Usually, when I write a short story it all comes flooding out in a few to several hours in one day. Maybe two or three times in my life have I taken longer than one day to write a short story. And then I took two days to write "Finding Harold Harshbarger." And now, apparently, I'm going to take two days to write my current WIP, a short story about a mob accountant who turned state's witness and is in witness protection.

That's okay. Even though I'm not officially throwing in the towel on the challenge for this month, I'm not suffering under any illusions that I'll actually pull it off at this point. I'll leave it in place as a personal incentive, but probably I'll use the rest of this month to retrain myself and get my writing pump going again.

As I wrote above, for today, good enough. At least my daily word count is climbing back up to respectable levels.

Fiction Words: 2327

Writing of "Untitled about mob accountant" (short story)

Day 1..... 2327 words. Total words to date..... 2327 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 1 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 4810

Total fiction words for the month..... 6400 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 471441

The Journal, Friday, 9/11: Going On the Cheap

Up right at 2 this morning. Again, by 3 a.m. I was writing. That'll work. The retraining continues. I'm noticing I seem to have less self-discipline the older I get. Is that how it's supposed to work?

No walking today. With over 7 miles two days ago and almost 6 miles yesterday, I'm taking a day off from walking.

Okay, got a lot of writing done today as well as a cover for "Finding Harold." It will be the story of the week for next Monday.

That's really about all that happened today. Since the topic is so long, I'll curtail the rest of this.

Topic of the Post: Going on the Cheap

Don't do it. There. End of lecture.

If you're a writer and if you're serious about your work and if you want others to take you seriously, invest in your product (your writing, your cover, your book).

You can invest the time to educate yourself and the money in professional programs so you can create your own eformatting and print layout and ebook and print covers OR you can invest money in paying professionals to do those things for you.

What brought this up?

I recently was privy to see a complete and utter piece of literary garbage that was (from the front matter of the book) "printed with the Espresso Book Machine at The University of Arizona Main Library." I kid you not.

I can't say whether the author believes his book has now been published by the U of A (it hasn't) or what. Maybe he uses the service because it's free. I don't know. What the "Espresso Book Machine" turned out was so terrible, I won't even do the few minutes' research to find out what it costs, whether it's free, or anything else about it.

What I will tell you is this: Garbage in, garbage out. Even if your writing is excellent, if the formatting of the document you feed into the machine looks like garbage, what you get back will look like garbage.

Here's my brief review. Remember, this is all formatting stuff, stuff that could EASILY be fixed if the person who formatted it had only cared enough about his final product to take his time.

The Table of Contents - The title of this page (Table of Contents) was in the same font, same size, and same attribute (normal, not bold, etc.) as the listing below it. Capitalization of titles varied within the TOC and from TOC to actual story. The TOC itself was hokey. First was the title of the story, then a space, then the word page (yes, lowercase) and then a span of pages, for example 3-16.

Overall Layout of the Book - The inside front cover (apparently) was the only title page. The title was at the top, the author's name was near the bottom, and a page number was at the center bottom. (The title page should not be numbered.) There was no publishing information on the title page. (Usually the publishing company name is displayed there.)

The next page is the copyright page. It stated the year of copyright, but failed to mention in whose name the book is copyrighted. Skip a line and insert a dedication. Skip another line and insert permission for teachers to reprint parts for classroom use. Skip one more line and add a simple disclaimer. Then skip a few lines and insert a brief paragraph blaming the Espresso Book Machine for this travesty, although that isn't how they put it. Oh, and lest we forget, the copyright page is numbered page 2.

Page 3 is the previously discussed TOC, and the first story begins on page 4, a recto. Later in the book, some stories began on the verso (left page of an open book, as they should) and some on the recto (right page of an open book).

Finally, on most pages the text begins at the top of the page, but on some it begins one or two lines down.

Title of the Stories - The titles of the stories were the same font, font size and font attribute as the body of the stories. (Usually the title is at least bold attribute and/or a larger font size.)

As I mentioned in the section on the TOC above, the titles of the stories varied with regards to capitalization. The position of the titles at the top of the page also varied. Some were left justified and some were centered. Apparently no standard was applied.

The Body of the Stories - The body of the first story was double-spaced with no extra spacing between paragraphs and with the first line of paragraphs indented. It would have been perfect if it were single-spaced. (Remember, this is for a print book.) Hyphenation obviously was not turned on. As a result the text is broken with rivers of wide white space running diagonally through the text. All of that is from page 4 (beginning of the story) through the first full paragraph on page 8. After that there was an extra space between that paragraph and the next. Then it returned to no spacing after paragraphs until page 13, where the anomaly happened again. Then it continued normally again until page 17 where the anomaly occurred twice in a row. The story ended suddenly without any sort of signifier such as "The End" or a series of asterisks or "Go Away."

The second story was formatted differently. This one was left justified, single spaced, with a space after each paragraph, and without first-line indents. Great for a blog post. Not so much for a story in a collection.

The third story was formatted the same as the second, except in some places it looked as if there was no space between two paragraphs.

The next several stories were formatted the same as the second and third, with no first-line indent, block paragraphs, left justified, and a space between paragraphs. Except sometimes there were two spaces between paragraphs.

This truly was an ugly, ugly book.

Now, to be fair, the Espresso Book Machine is ONLY a machine. It was not at fault for this piece of garbage. Whoever formatted the Word file for the author was at fault. The author should fire whoever laid out this travesty, immediately and with prejudice.

Do you understand? If you put out a piece of garbage like this, it won't matter how good the writing is because the reader won't get that far.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge.

Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Finished the Harold Nickel story, then got a good start on another one, so I'm happy.

Fiction Words: 3858

Writing of "Harold Nickel's Last Dime" (short story)

Day 1..... 2327 words. Total words to date..... 2327 words

Day 2..... 2002 words. Total words to date..... 4329 words (done)

Writing of "The Old Jenkins Place" (short story)

Day 1..... 1856 words. Total words to date..... 1856 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 2 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 8668

Total fiction words for the month..... 10258 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 475299

September 12, 2015

Up a little before 2 this morning. Writing before 3:30. A little delay this morning because I was (and am) tending to my kitten.

Yesterday, something outside scared her badly. She raced in, then through the house looking for a place to hide. For some reason she didn't hide in her safe place under the bed. Instead she ran back into the kitchen, up on the counter, then up on the cabinets. The tops of those are nearly eight feet off the floor.

She was stuck there because there was no room to turn around. I ran back into my office to get a small chair so I could get her down, but by the time I got back she had already jumped to the tile floor. In the process she hurt her left hip. Now she's having trouble even jumping from the floor up to my desk.

So I'm kind of watching over her this morning, babying her and so on.

I don't think she broke anything, but either way she has to take some time to heal. But she's very much a free spirit so I have to watch to make sure she doesn't jump from too high up and keep irritating the injury.

For example, her food bowl is in a broad window alcove next to my desk, so it's about 30" off the floor. After she eats, she wants to jump straight to the hard floor, so I watch and redirect her to go off the front of my desk onto a chair, and then from there to the floor.

So I guess that'll be the next few days.

This falls into the Life Happens category, and in this case, it takes precedence over everything else.

No walking again today. I don't want to be out playing in the desert when my little girl decides to do something she isn't up to right now.

After I filed this post yesterday I put together a cover for "Harold Nickel's Last Dime." In addition to writing today, I hope to get the formatting done on the two stories I've finished and on the one I will finish today.

Oh, just in case you're wondering, I'm sticking to my one story a week goal too. Each story I post as the free story of the week was written during that week.

Update: Finished the last story, "Exotic," at about 4:30. The cover fell into place and I published it to D2D. The numbers are below. Makes me feel like a real writer again.

Topic of the Post: Writing When You Can

Sometimes, like today, life intervenes in your writing time. In most cases, though, it doesn't keep you from writing. Most of the time it merely adjusts the times that you write and the length of time during which you are able to write.

Some people (I am one of them) are fortunate in that they can slip into and out of the Alpha state of consciousness at will. Most people can, actually, though most people aren't aware they have this ability.

But they do. Let me prove it. When you were in school taking a test, were you ever stuck for an answer even though it was right on the tip of your mind? Did you put your pencil to your lips and roll your eyes upward, as if the answers were written on the ceiling?

Yep, most of us did that. And most of the time, the answer "came to us," just as we knew it would. I'll bet you do the same thing when you're writing and you suddenly find yourself stuck for a particular word. You roll your eyes up or you stare off into space for a moment. And often as not, the word comes to you.

The physical act of rolling your eyes up triggers Alpha and accesses the subconscious. The physical act of

staring off into space slows the electrical activity in the mind to Alpha rates as well.

And that's why this technique works. Because we are accessing our subconscious mind by dropping into Alpha for a moment.

Okay, so why is the ability to slip into Alpha at will important? Because Alpha is the beginning stage of what we call the subconscious. And the subconscious is MUCH better at telling stories than the conscious, critical mind.

So writing when you can — Most people, writers included, have more time available to them than they know. Most of the writing I get done today will be in ten minute to half-hour increments. If you write about a thousand words per hour (that's only 17 words per minute), you can write about 170 words in ten minutes or 250 in a quarter-hour. Do that several times during the day (when you can) and the words will build up into the thousands. And the story will get finished.

So don't worry about it. When you have a few minutes, sit down at the computer (where your story is already up on the screen) and just have fun. Immerse yourself for a few minutes or a half-hour or an hour in the sheer joy of running through the scene with your characters, writing down what they say and do.

Which is where I'm going right now.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Writing around the kitten was a challenge in itself, but one I gladly performed. I'd have been pleased with any amount of writing today, so it all turned out really well. Super well. And all of it was writing in small increments. I hope in another day or two she'll be back to her version of normal and we can both get back to our usual roles.

Fiction Words: 4531

Writing of "The Old Jenkins Place" (short story)

Day 1..... 1856 words. Total words to date..... 1856 words

Day 2..... 1357 words. Total words to date..... 3213 words (done)

Writing of "Exotic" (short story)

Day 1..... 3174 words. Total words to date..... 3174 words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 4 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 13199

Total fiction words for the month..... 14789 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 479830

The Journal, Sunday, 9/13: Writing When You Can

Up right at 3 this morning. The writing and tending to the kitten took their toll so I slept longer than usual, but she seems to be doing much better this morning. She spent a lot of time yesterday and last night resting and healing.

It's odd how much she can put up with and how stoic she is about it. Humans could learn a great deal from little wonders like my girl. I've learned tons from her, not that all of it stuck.

I'll get a little slower start to writing this morning, but I'm probably not gonna walk today so that adds a couple hours back in.

Stinkin' coyotes are screaming this morning. Whoever first named those things "song dogs" must have been tone deaf. Or drunk. Or just a moron. Or maybe he was one of those guys who rubbed his palms together a lot while drooling through a smile and watching children being ripped apart by wild dogs. Ugh.

I did get to watch a little of the LSU @ Mississippi State game before I sacked out. Man, it's like those LSU guys are from another planet. Geaux Tigers! I was also pleased to see this morning that Arizona and Oklahoma both won their games. And I guess Arizona put over 40 points on the scoreboard for two weeks in a row now.

Didn't drop by Dean's site yesterday so I did that as part of my waking up ritual this morning. Great post. I recommend it. All about the value of having the right writing group. If you just go to his site instead of clicking on this link, you'll have to scroll down when you get there.

I wrote the topic below, and now, as a thin line of pre-predawn blue draws across the eastern horizon, I'm turning to my writing 'puter. Back later with zults and results.

I wrote for awhile on "Desecration," a new story. Then I went outside for a little while, then came back in and created a new cover for the story. Then I remembered I needed to upload the four new covers I did earlier to my Short Fiction page on my website. There are now 107 covers on that page, including the cover for the story I'm writing today. (grin)

Finished "Desecration" and published it to D2D. That distributor provides an incredible experience. From the time I click Add New Book to the time I click Publish, it takes about 3 minutes.

Compare that to Amazon where the site seems to load FOREVER. And the process, when it's uninterrupted, takes around 20 minutes. Ugh. Smashwords falls somewhere between those two, but I'm not using Smashwords anymore. It isn't worth the effort. More on that in the topic tomorrow.

Topic of the Post: Revising Goals and Challenges

Some days you eat the bear, and some days the bear eats you. And that's fine, as long as you aren't dealing with, you know, an actual bear.

We set goals and challenges for a specific purpose. My purpose most often is to spur myself to greater heights with my writing. When the goal or challenge begins to falter in that purpose, it's time to draw back and take another look at it.

Can you do that? Of course. There are three overall truisms about goals and challenges:

If you achieve your goal, nothing happens except maybe you feel good for a little while.

If you DON'T achieve your goal, also nothing happens. Except maybe you say "Darn it" and try again when the goal resets.

But if you change your goal for whatever reason, something DOES happen. You are invigorated. You have given new life to your endeavor, and you have given yourself the little push you need to continue.

A few days ago, I wrote that I'm not fooling myself into believing I can actually meet my goal of writing 30 short stories during the month of September. For the record, that's 25 more short stories of at least 2,000 words each over the next 18 days (starting today). The problem is that "story" is not a set value.

If a "story" was exactly 2,000 words, I would know I have to write 50,000 words in the next 18 days. Is that doable? Absolutely. That's less than my former daily goal of 3000 words per day.

But a story isn't exactly 2,000 words. For example, the five I've written for the challenge thus far were 2485, 3213, 4329, 3174 and 2191 words. So I'm just sayin', there's not a real good chance I'm going to meet this goal and accomplish this challenge.

Still, I'm not quite ready to throw in the towel yet. To meet the goal and accomplish the challenge I have to write one story every day for the rest of the month PLUS seven stories. So for one week, I have to write two stories per day.

I finished my story for today AND created the cover and published it before noon. So I could easily write another story today, though I might not 'cause I might wimp out and watch football. (grin) Life happens, right? At least once a week.

But CAN I write two stories per day? Yep. As long as I think of them as "stories" instead of thinking of the number of words in them. It's almost impossible to write 10,000 words in a day. It isn't nearly as difficult to write two stories, both of which happen to be around 5,000 words long. (grin)

Now I do have a backup plan just in case I don't reach my goal, and if I have to invoke it, I'll even pay an appropriate penalty. But I'll tell you about that if I don't get 30 stories out on or before September 30.

Man, this is a lot of writing, isn't it? But will it hurt me in any way, shape or form?

Uhhh NO.

At the end of this period of insanity I will have a LOT more short stories in my personal canon and (MUCH more importantly) I will have jumpstarted my writing habit again.

You just can't put a price on that.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

A pretty good day. I wrote "Desecration" and got a good start on "The Day They Came" which feels like it's going to be science fiction. I should be able to finish it tomorrow and then write another one to go with it.

Fingers crossed. I need some two-story days. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3628

Writing of “Desecration” (short story)

Day 1..... 2191 words. Total words to date..... 2191 words (done)

Writing of “The Day They Came” (short story)

Day 1..... 1437 words. Total words to date..... 1437 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don’t have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that’s going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I’m successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 5 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 16827

Total fiction words for the month..... 18417 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 483458

The Journal, Monday, 9/14: Farewell, Smashwords, and Why

Up right a little before 2 this morning. Email responses and playing catch up with a little reading filled the first half-hour of the day. I didn't drop by Dean's site a second time yesterday so I did that as part of my waking up ritual this morning.

By the way, if you haven't heard of Storybundle.com, check it out. I don't buy every bundle that comes out, but every now and then they have one I can't refuse. Basically, you pay what you want for a LOT of great reading.

The URL for the current bundle is <http://storybundle.com/disasters>. Once you sign up, they'll send you announcements of other bundles. And free stuff. Like right now, a free issue of Lightspeed Magazine. (grin)

Guess I'll write the topic now. Then I'll write fiction for awhile, and then a walk (finally, after a few days off).

Took longer to write the topic than I thought it would. Finally to writing.

I screwed up. I relented and let the little girl out this morning while it was still dark. Again, something scared the stuffing out of her. When I let her in she began racing through the house like she did two days ago.

This time I corraled her quickly, brought her into my office and shut the door. But then I had to spend some time alternately catching her, petting her, telling her everything's all right. I shut the blinds on my two open windows so she couldn't see outside and that helped a lot. (Sure wish we could adjust our vision so we could see like they do at times.)

Still it took a good half-hour to calm her enough so I could open my office door without fear of her climbing to the top of the cabinets and inadvertently harming herself again. Now she's lying on a Navajo rug just outside my open office door so I can see her and she can see me. Three times she walked over here and rubbed against my legs while I'm typing. Just making sure I'm still here.

I understand. Fear is one of the very few universal emotions, something we all share on this little blue rock. And anyone who believes the other creatures on this planet are not "self-aware" is really stuck in the collective human 'holier-than-everything' attitude.

Back to my story for a bit before my walk.

Had a good walk of just over 5 miles, then back here to read Dean's post where I found exciting news. It was so good I threw together a special post over on my main blog and sent it out earlier today. See News Flash below.

Now back to my writing.

News Flash

Turns out ebooks are NOT declining as reported by traditional publishing's "big 5." Turns out, INDIE published ebooks are taking a lot larger market share. Ebook sales actually are INCREASING. Great news in this wonderful new world of publishing.

See for yourself at [Author Earnings Report](#). Seriously, if you're a writer, you want to read and understand this.

I urge you also to visit the website of [Dean Wesley Smith](#) where he provides a brief discussion of this. Very interesting stuff.

Topic of the Post: Farewell, Smashwords, and Why

Yesterday I started the topic of the post with "Some days you eat the bear, and some days the bear eats you." That's true for today's post as well.

Back in 2011, during the first year of the "gold rush" of electronic publishing, I signed up for a Smashwords account. Today, I have 143 books (nonfiction, novels, short stories and collections) published with them.

When I finished a work, whatever it was, first I published it to Smashwords. I allowed them to distribute it for me to 12 of 13 sales venues (all but Amazon). Then I published it to Amazon.

Enter Draft2Digital <http://draft2digital.com>, a sleek new company that does what Smashwords does but MUCH more quickly and efficiently. They distribute to the same "big six" that Smashwords distributes to (Apple, B&N, Kobo, Inktera, Oyster, and Scribd) plus Tolino, a growing ebook store in Germany that was created specifically to rival Amazon.

Yesterday, I published a short story to D2D and Amazon, but for the first time, did NOT publish it to Smashwords. Why? Because then I'd have to clunk my way through the "opt out" radio buttons thirteen times so Smashwords would not distribute it (because D2D is distributing it).

Now admittedly, if I HAD done all that, the story would still be available in the Smashwords store, and I'm always advising writers to sell in as many markets as possible. But the thing is, having to spend a half-hour clunking around on Smashwords' site just so a short story will be in their store... well, it simply isn't worth the time.

Another thing, through the Smashwords online store I've sold mostly nonfiction. And most of that I've sold when I've created coupons for it, and then advertised the coupons. Again, it's a lot of effort for very few sales.

I'm not lazy when it comes to expending necessary effort, but any time I spend uploading etc. is part of my investment in my writing. Since it's part of the investment, I have to consider what return the effort will yield.

Here are a few stark numbers:

- At Amazon.com it takes me about 15 minutes from clicking Create New Title to clicking Publish IF the process is uninterrupted by Amazon's ridiculous page-loading times and jumping around. Probably the average time is 20 to 25 minutes. However, Amazon is currently my best venue, so the frustration, while annoying, is worthwhile.
- At Smashwords.com it takes me about 10 minutes to go from entering the title of my book to clicking Publish at the bottom of the form.
 - But then I have to go to their ISBN Manager to assign an ISBN for distribution to some of the big six as well as several tiny library venues (where I've never sold a book).
 - Then I have to go to their Channel Manager. There I have to find my book (there are three pages) and then click thirteen "opt out" radio buttons one at a time so Smashwords will not distribute to anyone except the Smashwords.com online store.
 - Even after I've done all that, even though I've opted out of distribution to every place that requires an ISBN, I continue to see a message saying I need to assign an ISBN to my books. Very, very clunky system. I skip over the ISBN Manager since I no longer use them for distribution, but using the Channel Manager easily adds another 10 minutes and roughly half a ton of frustration to the process. Not worth it.
- And D2D. Ahh, D2D. At Draft2Digital.com it takes me about 3 minutes from Add New Book to Publish. On the final page I check the stores to which I want them to distribute my work (so seven checkmarks), verify that the work is either mine or that I have the rights to publish it, and I'm done. They assign an ISBN for the venues that require it, but I don't have to do anything with that.

D2D does for me what Smashwords does but in a lot less time and with absolutely zero frustration. Score!

So for me, it's bye-bye to Smashwords. I might put my major publications (novels, collections) up in their store, but frankly I doubt it. I really REALLY don't like having to "opt out" 13 times per publication.

Now I'm a fair guy, so I will be addressing this issue with Mark Coker soon. Well, relatively soon. I probably won't do so until I've moved my major nonfiction books over to D2D. Anyway, I'll keep you updated, but I think he's pretty entrenched in the way he does things.

So it's like this. Five years ago, he and his company were on the cutting edge of ebook publishing and distribution. Today they're eating dust from every other major player.

If you have any questions about any of this, I'd be happy to try to answer them for you. Please ask in the comments section below.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Well enough, I guess, but I was on this particular story much longer than I wanted to be. A lot of cycling back on this one as it kept twisting and turning. A lot of fun though. I hoped to finish this one today and write another, but I'll have to save that for another day.

Fiction Words: 2511

Writing of "The Day They Came" (short story)

Day 1..... 1437 words. Total words to date..... 1437 words

Day 2..... 2511 words. Total words to date..... 3948 words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 6 (Goal is 30)
Total challenge words for the month..... 19338
Total fiction words for the month..... 20928 (1590 on Wes)
Total fiction words for the year..... 485969

September 15, 2015

Up right at 2 this morning at my little girl's insistence. It's all good. She's a good baby.

I'm being lazy this morning. It took me over an hour to email a response to a lady who runs a nonprofit. Stuff about how to do things on her WordPress website. Yep, I still haven't learned. Well, they either take the advice or they don't. It isn't like I'm getting royalties. Yawn.

I saw a video (posted it on my Facebook this morning) in which a guy hung out on a street corner. To passersby, he offered, absolutely free, either a large bar of Hershey's chocolate or a silver ingot worth \$150. In every case, they could take either one. In every case, they chose the chocolate. Oh yes, yes. I know those people. Sigh.

I also heard a classic this morning from a respondent (and I am paraphrasing the dialogue here): "Y'know, I offered this incredibly helpful product of mine absolutely free to 1,000 people and not one of them took me up on it. Guess I need to offer it to a lot larger group."

Yeah, okay. That'll work. Seriously? Shrug. Everybody needs a hobby.

No walk today at all. Just being and writing.

Okay, listen closely. Here, come closer. I gotta whisper so my subconscious doesn't hear me. Ready?

My short stories do not want me to meet my goal and accomplish my challenge this month. I swear they're against me.

Here I am needing to write two per day, and the stories are coming out longer and longer. I won't be able to write two a day when each story is 4000 words or thereabouts, despite what I said a few days ago when I was feeling very cavalier about the whole thing.

Ugh. So I'm just gonna do what I always do at a time like this: remember to have fun. Writing isn't work. It's fun. If it was work, I'd find something else to do. I know I would, 'cause I've seen me do it. So I'm gonna have fun and enjoy the characters and what they say and do. The goal and the challenge are secondary. The characters and the fun come first.

I hope that's how you look at your writing too. Remind yourself to have fun. Run and play with your friends.

Anyway, I posted the story I finished yesterday as next Monday's story of the week. It's the first SF I've written in awhile, and I even like it.

This morning I wrote for awhile on a new one, then got a shower and ate a little breakfast, then came back to writing. Then I played with my kitten for awhile (she's sleeping in the window now) and came back to writing again.

As I'm writing this, I'm also eating lunch, and then I'll go back to writing.

Currently in my challenge, I've written 6 stories out of 30. Today is the 15th. That leaves me 16 days (including today) to write 24 short stories. That means I have to write one short story every day, and on 8 days I have to write two. Yeah, well... we'll see. (grin)

Well, I guess the number's gonna stay at 6 for another day. If so, beginning tomorrow I have to write one new story every day plus two stories on nine days. Hmmm.

Topic of the Post: No topic today beyond what I wrote above about having fun.

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Well, the trend continues. And this one might actually be the beginning of a novella or novel. I honestly don't know. I only know it feels like the end is nowhere in sight, so this one might be around for awhile even as I write other short stories past it. At least I'm havin' fun. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3405

Writing of "The Singeing of Norval Babineaux" (short story or something)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don't have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that's going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I'm successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 6 (Goal is 30)

Total challenge words for the month..... 22743

Total fiction words for the month..... 24333 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 489374

September 16, 2015

Well, rolled out a little before 2 this morning. I was wide awake when I got up, but I've been tired most of the day.

My hobby is photography. I started it mostly so I could take my own cover shots for my books. I have a decent DSLR (Sony SLT A65) and some limited knowledge how to take good pics. Like writing, it takes practice more than anything else.

But I have very limited technical knowledge re the mechanical inner workings. Recently the image sensor in my camera got some dust on it, and of course those show up in the pics.

I don't like to doctor pictures after I take them, so I had to find a way to clean the camera without damaging it.

Finally this morning I took a couple hours to find the right manual online. Downloaded it, read the instructions, cleaned the image sensor (first automatically, then tested it, then manually) and the next shot I took was clean. Score!

No walk today again. Just being and writing and overcoming the sense that I want to go to sleep for awhile.

Anyway, after cleaning the camera and writing this and the topic below, I moved over to the writing computer to spend some more time with Norval Babineaux.

Topic of the Post: Challenges

Yesterday I got flippant and said my short stories don't want me to meet my goal. That was my way of saying the stories are in command. Which is another way of saying my subconscious is in command.

Now that's great for word count goals, but not necessarily so much for the goal of writing a complete short story (or two) every day or the current challenge of completing 30 short stories by the end of this month. But although goals and challenges are wonderful motivators, the key to writing both well and prolifically is to have fun. That was kind of my point yesterday. Sorry for the flippancy and any confusion.

Anyway, back to challenges. Do any of you have any ongoing challenges? Have you set any recurring writing goals? If so, have you broadcast it to others whom you know will support your efforts?

I hope it's all of the above. If not, I urge you to give it a shot. For one thing, it's a great deal of fun. For another, I won't be quite so alone in my insanity. (grin)

If you need an additional motivation, Ray Bradbury himself advised those who would be writers to write at least a thousand words a day, every day. Of course, a lot of times you'll go over that amount. There's always a story or a chapter or a scene to finish.

Anyway, as I wrote in a response to a comment yesterday, my current challenge is more tongue in cheek at this point than realistic for me. That doesn't mean some of you couldn't do it. Beginning today and in the next 15 days I would have to write 24 short stories. So that's one short story every day plus an extra short story on nine days. Possible? Yes. Probable or even plausible (for me)? Nuh uh.

Still, I'll leave it in place until I come up with something better. Which is probably going to be in the next few days.(grin)

My Current Challenge and Goal

Before October 1, I will write at least 30 new short stories, one for each day in September. To satisfy the challenge, these have to be actual short stories, meaning they have to be over 2,000 words. If I write anything shorter than that, it will count on my numbers but not toward the challenge. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Well, not as much as I'd liked. I'm just worn to a frazzle tired so I'm stopping a bit early. I have time for about another 1500 words, but I don't have the brain for it.

Fiction Words: 2509

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (not sure what this is gonna be)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of “Curious Shapes” (short story)

Day 1..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 1022 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

One thing about these stories — I just have to write them. I don’t have to rush to slap a cover on them and publish them. All of that’s going to come later, although I will pick one each week to be the story for that week. At the end of the month if I’m successful in my challenge I should have 40 publications: 30 individual stories, six 5-story collections, three 10-story collections, and maybe one book titled The Stories of September.

Total challenge stories for the month..... 6 (Goal is 30)
Total challenge words for the month..... 25252
Total fiction words for the month..... 26842 (1590 on Wes)
Total fiction words for the year..... 491883

September 17, 2015

When asked what advice he would give new writers, Ray Bradbury said, “Write at least a thousand words a day for ten years. Write at least a short story every week of your life, or its equivalent in essay form, play form or the novel. ... Habit is everything. Learning one’s craft is locked into habit.” So there you go.

Got a good night’s sleep last night despite the idiot dog across the way doing his bark-at-nothing thing at regular intervals. Rolled out right at 3 to begin the day.

Slipping a bit in my ongoing retraining, so I’m retooling again. I always check email first thing while I’m waking up, read news stories, etc. But recently I’ve been responding to lengthy emails from a person who asks a lot of questions.

Now I’m not blaming the person for asking, so don’t get me wrong. I could always just say something like “Sorry, I don’t have time for this.” But I’m trying to help, trying to share my own knowledge and experience, so I don’t mind. And if you know me at all, you know I usually go overboard with my answers to be sure I answer the question thoroughly. So totally my fault.

This morning I received an email like that with nine numbered questions. To save a little time scrolling up and down I opened a Notepad document, listed 1-9 down the side, then wrote my responses.

It still ate an hour and a half out of my day. Granted it was almost a thousand words (I checked only for purposes of this post), and that many words of nonfiction from the conscious mind in an hour and a half is pretty much blazing speed, at least for me. But I allowed my response to eat about 1500 words worth of my fiction-writing time. And I’ll lose more time too. Time that I can’t afford to lose.

The problem is that once I’m working in my conscious, critical mind, it takes awhile to get back into the free-flowing subconscious creative mind.

So I’m tweaking my retraining schedule again. Beginning tomorrow morning, I’ll still check email, read news items etc. to wake up as always. I’ll even respond to some email, but long stuff or stuff that I feel requires a long response will have to wait until the end of my day.

Oh, beginning tomorrow also, this post will go out later in the evening. I’ll try 6 for awhile. If that doesn’t give me enough leeway, I’ll raise it to 7.

Now about the conscious mind. One of the primary functions of the conscious mind is to protect you. If you’re about to lean your hand on the hot burner of a stove, the conscious mind is what causes you to feel the heat and jerk your hand away. The conscious mind is what causes you to sense the edge of a cliff is

near and back off. (The subconscious mind would say, “Go ahead! Might be a trip!”)

For a writer, the conscious mind invokes every writing myth you ever heard in an attempt to stop you from writing. (If you don’t finish what you’re writing, you can’t submit it or publish it and you won’t be “hurt” by rejection or criticism. This is why we don’t mind outlining or plotting or thinking about writing or just rewriting and “polishing” ad nauseam.)

And the critical conscious mind is wily in that regard. Notice, I recently (only a few days ago) had retrained myself to take no more than a half-hour of waking-up time before turning to the writing computer. Enter this correspondent, and suddenly I’m taking an hour and a half to two hours. Nicely played, conscious mind. (grin) But I’m putting a stop to it.

So how do you beat the conscious, critical mind? You take a personal oath to adhere to Heinlein’s Rules. Then when you realize you’ve fallen off, you wag your finger at your conscious mind, set it back in the corner where it’s supposed to be, and get back on Heinlein’s Rules.

You must write.

You must finish what you write.

You must not rewrite.

You must publish what you write so people can buy it.

You must keep it published so more people can buy it.

I’ve been falling down on Rule 2 lately. Why? Because my conscious mind keeps wanting to know where the story is going in advance. So I have to clear that away, start another story, write an opening and see where it goes.

I have to stop “thinking” and Just Write the Next Sentence. Now I’m putting all this here so you can see that if you have to battle this stuff, you aren’t alone. I battle it too.

Okay, so I wrote that response to my correspondent, and that siphoned me into using my conscious, critical mind. Since I was drowning in the CCM anyway, I came here to write this. And now four hours of the day are gone.

Now I’m gonna take a bit of time to adjust my head. Maybe I’ll read a little more Bradbury or something (it motivates me), and then it’s to the writing computer. I’ll see you again this afternoon when it’s time to post this.

By the way, I’m officially calling time of death on my 30-short-stories-by-September-30 challenge.

Did some reading and a few other things, and now, a full six hours after I got out of bed, I’m finally starting my fiction writing. That is completely unsatisfactory. Sometimes there are valid reasons not to write. Today is not of those days.

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals remain to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. I probably will announce a new challenge soon. I do still want to stay in my retraining though, and writing short stories is the best way to do that right now. Stay tuned.

Topic of the Post: Nothing beyond what I wrote above.

Today’s Writing

Well, nothing like I wanted. Frankly, the fact that I started this post with that particular Bradbury quote is the only thing that made me write fiction today. I couldn’t break free of all the crap in my head. I’ll have it back tomorrow, I guess. I did write that foreword that was requested (1285 words) plus that long email earlier (1000) plus this (over 1200), so over 3000 words of non fiction. But very little fiction. Like I said, I’ll be back on it tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1458

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (not sure what this is gonna be)
Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words
Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words
Day 3..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Writing of "Curious Shapes" (short story)
Day 1..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 1022 words
Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Writing of "Nick Mansione" (short story)
Day 1..... 1458 words. Total words to date..... 1458 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 28300 (1590 on Wes)
Total fiction words for the year..... 493341

September 18, 2015

Well, as you can see, I decided to skip straight to 7 p.m. with this blog.

In the ongoing email nonsense, stupid me, I did it again. I rolled out at 2:30, fired up to write. I got my coffee, checked email. Then I spent over an hour responding to one. Ugh. That's okay. It's the last one.

And this was completely my fault. I can't control what others ask. I can control only my response. Okay, now I can check that re-re-re-realization off my to-do list.

Hey folks, if you wanna share jokes, pictures, or other sillinesses with me, that's all well and good. I need a break like everybody else.

But if you ask me a series of serious questions only to set me up for "sparring" via email because you think it's fun? No. Don't do that. I will wish bad things for you.

I don't do light banter and sparring for fun about writing. I will give you my own proven best advice. You take it, you don't, no worries. But ask because you seriously want to learn, and at least consider what I send back.

Don't do it just as a juvenile exercise in verbal sparring. That's just annoying.

Of course, if you would do that in the first place, you wouldn't be signed up for my blog(s).

Listen, if any of you have not yet read *Killing the Sacred Cows of Publishing* and *Killing the Sacred Cows of Indie Publishing*, I strongly advise you to do so. You can find both of them free, every chapter, at <http://deanwesleysmith.com/killing-the-sacred-cows-of-publishing/>. Eventually he'll take them down, so I hope you'll go read them when you can. You could even save them into a Word document or something so you can look at them from time to time.

Well, as I said, I'm tweaking my retraining schedule again. No walking again today. Writing. Only writing and little breaks.

Yesterday I called time of death on my 30-short-stories-by-September-30 challenge. That was stupid. I still have time, and it's still possible if I stop being a moron and misusing my time. So it's back on. Yeah, I know. Indecisive. Hey, I'm showing you all of it, not just the good stuff.

Again Dean showed me exactly what I needed to hear at exactly the right time in his Topic today. He's talking about his own challenge to write ten books in the last four months of this year. It took him 17 days to write the first one, so he's behind a bit. He wrote, "So what am I going to do now that the first book of the ten took longer to write than expected? Write the next book, that's what. It is a very long time between

now and the end of the year.”

See? Isn't that perfect?

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals remain to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. I still also intend to write 30 short stories before October 1. I have a ways to go on that one. (grin) Stay tuned.

Topic of the Post: Priorities and Choices

As you know (ad nauseam) I encourage those who would be writers to consciously set priorities. And you do set your own priorities, period.

Yes, I know other people and situations are affected, but barring absolute emergencies (the house is on fire, etc.) you still set your own priorities. If you make playing golf once a week your priority, then that's what you do.

Then once your priorities are set, you still have choices to make.

Let's say playing golf is your number one priority on Sunday. But on Friday, a good friend calls and asks you to bring your pickup and your trailer and help him move across town.

Well then you have a choice to make. Choices are up to you too. Do you say Sorry, but this is my golf day, or do you say, Sure, I'll be right over? Up to you.

What brought this up? I said to a recent correspondent that if someone decides they WANT to write, after that it's a matter of sitting down and writing. The correspondent maintains that some people really want to write, but they don't because they have no choice.

Sorry. That's pure, unadulterated bull cookies.

It's all a matter of Priorities and Choices.

Writing is something a guy really wants to do. He goes so far as to carve out time to do so, say one hour per day for five days per week.

But when the time rolls around for him to write, he chooses to mow the yard instead. Or he chooses to accompany his wife to the grocery. Or he chooses to watch a sporting event. Or he chooses to help his friend move across town.

Then later when his writer friends ask how his writing is coming, he says, “Oh, I didn't write anything this week. I had to [fill in the blank]. I really had no choice. But I'll get it next week.

No, he won't.

The point is, it's always something.

Sorry, but I'm just not buying it. Been there, lived it, succumbed to and overcame all the writer's fears, and I'm still here.

If you couldn't tell, “I had no choice” is way up there on my list of detested complaints. If you want to do something, do it. If you don't, don't. Shrug. Seriously, with very few exceptions it really is that simple.

(Oh goodness. I'd really like to finish this story right now, but the house is on fire and the door to my office is getting hotter as I speak. Maybe I ought'a go out the window, with my writing computer, of course.)

Okay, enough of this. I've been up almost 3 hours. To the stories.

Today's Writing

Today I learned two things. One, writing really is easy when you remember to trust your subconscious. (Doh!)

That is, it's really easy when you just sit down, put your fingers on the keyboard, and write whatever comes. Don't try to figure out what's gonna happen next, etc. Let the story tell you, through your fingers, what DID happen next. (This is Writing Off Into the Dark).

And two, I learned that the story I'm writing about Norval Babineaux is NOT a literary short story about the Cajun culture set in Louisiana. In fact, one'a my characters, a woman named Marie Babineaux, put her hands on her hips, jutted out her chin, and said, "Hey you. This here ain't no simple little Cajun thing, no. This here is one'a them complex deals. This here is mo' complex than a fi'ty cent sale at the Dollah Sto' when you ain't got nothin' but fo'ty-nine pennies. You see what I'm sayin'?" Then she snapped her fingers in front of my nose. "Hey, hey! Earth to Harvey. Get on the stick, Dude. I gotta get outta here an' get in the stores. No more'a this sittin' aroun', you."

It is a science fiction novella or novel that BEGINS in Louisiana and spreads around the world. It might be the first book of a saga or series. Holy cow. And I thought my next longer work would be either the 9th book of the Wes Crowley saga or the first book in a detective series. Go figure. What wonderful fun!

Fiction Words: 4139

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (umm, novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words

Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words

Writing of "Curious Shapes" (short story)

Day 1..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 1022 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Writing of "Nick Mansione" (short story)

Day 1..... 1458 words. Total words to date..... 1458 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 32439 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 497480

Tomorrow I break a half-million words for the year! Woohoo!

September 19, 2015

Rolled out at 2:30 again, fired up to write. I got my coffee, checked email, and an aphorism sprang to mind. I wrote that one in a "Quotations" text document I keep, and it birthed another one. That happened several more times, along with the necessary revisions, and then I went to another file I've kept for years: definitions.

I spent some time there, writing a few new definitions and transferring some older ones to my list of quotations. Before I was finished, two and a half hours had passed. So I was writing within a half hour of getting out of bed, but not on the novel. Yet. (grin)

Then I came here. More in the topic below on aphorisms. Hope you enjoy it.

Had a necessary trip to Sierra Vista today (about three hours). I planned to write for awhile first, but we went sooner than I expected. Got back, pulled up the novel, wrote about a hundred words, and

remembered My Team (LSU) might be playing today.

Looked them up online. Sure enough, Auburn at LSU was on, halfway through the 3rd quarter. The score was lopsided. Well, there was only a quarter and a half left, so I went to watch it. (grin)

Hey, priorities right? The novel is going really smoothly right now. I'll have a bit of time to write after the game, and I'll write for a few hours in the morning before I go to Tucson.

By the way, I'll be at the SSA Forum tomorrow at around 10 a.m. That's at the Tucson City Center InnSuites Resort, 475 N. Granada. Primarily I'll be there to visit and to announce four new all day seminars. Hope to see some of you there.

Okay, went back to the game for a bit, and LSU beat Auburn 45 – 21. Geaux Tigers. (grin)

Now to the novel for awhile. Then I'll come back and post my numbers.

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals remain to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. I still also intend to write 30 short stories before October 1. I have a ways to go on that one. (grin) Stay tuned.

Topic of the Post: Fun with Aphorisms

"Aphorism" is defined by dictionary.com as "a short pithy saying expressing a general truth." My aphorisms sometimes come out as definitions (ala Ambrose Bierce) and are most often satirical. Here are a dozen of mine. Remember, these are tongue in cheek:

- apology, n. A device intended to soothe wounds and thereby put a victim off his guard; a precursor to the next offense.
- arrogance, n. ignorance advertised.
- common sense, n. A myth. What's common to some is obviously a luxury to most.
- human, n. 1. The most conceited animal on earth, unjustifiably so.
- intellectual, n. 1. One who will drive a Hummer six blocks to a Save the Ozone rally. 2. A closet tuna-eater.
- intolerance, n. Proof of an atrophied mind and a lazy disposition.
- kindness, n. An imagined effect created by hopeful expectation. The word itself never issues forth from one whose lips the word has crossed, except to convey superiority.
- opinion, n. Offered as it is from a single point of view, a meaningless group of words to anyone but the author.
- patience, n. A pliable substance that wears thin when it's most needed.
- protestor, n. 1. One who exercises the right to dissent, provided him by a patriot, against whom he most often dissents. 2. One who, lacking a cause, will create a posterboard sign decrying the lack of causes and picket the nearest conservative.
- question, n. Because it stirs thought, the only truly important grouping of words in any language.
- victim, n. In our society, the person held responsible for the crime perpetuated against him.

And a few straight aphorisms:

- Failure is only practice for success.
- The right to free speech does not include the right to an audience.
- The one thing I cannot tolerate is intolerance.

How about you? Do you write aphorisms? It's a fun exercise and a great way to keep the brain pan lubricated.

Today's Writing

Didn't write as much today on the novel as I expected to. I could have written more this early a.m. I could have written for the hour or so that I was watching LSU football.

No biggie. Sometimes I allow things to interfere. I know I'll be gone much of tomorrow, so I'll hit it early and hard before I leave in the morning. (By the time I leave for Tucson, I will have been up 6 or 7 hours.)

So I screwed around today a little too much. Because of that I missed going over the half-million mark for the year. (grin) Bad, bad Harvey.

Fiction Words: 1516

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (umm, novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words

Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words

Day 4..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 10547 words

Writing of "Curious Shapes" (short story)

Day 1..... 1022 words. Total words to date..... 1022 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Writing of "Nick Mansione" (short story)

Day 1..... 1458 words. Total words to date..... 1458 words

Day 2..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 33955 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... 498996

Well, I'll go over the half-million mark tomorrow then. Easily. (grin)

September 20, 2015

Rolled out around 1:30. Answered some emails, then came here to write this, then to the novel. I'm going to Tucson this morning, so I want to get some done on the novel before I go.

Probably you've noticed I'm not doing more on short stories right now. I will, but the challenge is definitely kaput since the novel popped up. Just the way it is. The story of the week for tomorrow is already pre-posted. So sometime after tomorrow I'll write the story for next Monday (28th).

I can leave a novel to write a short story, then return to the novel. I can do that. But I can't leave a novel to write a bunch of short stories and then come back to the novel with the same fire. And novels sell better than short stories, plus I want to see what happens in the novel, so there y'go.

Leaving for Tucson around 9:15, so in the shower by 8:30, so I can write and do whatever else from the time I finish this until around 8. The extra half-hour gives me time to leave a jagged edge on the story to prep for when I come back.

Leaving a jagged edge is some of the simplest and best writing advice I ever received. I got it from SF writer CJ Cherryh when I heard her speak at Eastern NM University in Portales, NM.

Simply put, it means don't stop writing at a clear, clean break. For example, before you stop writing for the day, you might put your character in the shower.

When you come back to the story later, you'll have to get the character out of the shower before you can write anything else, and that will get you back into the flow. Or maybe the character being in the shower when you come back will send through your fingers a scene that results from the character having been in the shower.

Perhaps you'll open with a scene in a restaurant (he showered to get ready to go to the restaurant) or a business meeting or whatever.

I'm sure you get the idea.

Okay, it's not quite 3 a.m., so on to the novel for awhile. Then I'll come back and post my numbers, all

before 8:30. If I get a chance to write more after I get back, then I'll change the numbers and this post. If not, it will be good to go.

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals are to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

After a good session on the novel, I added a few more posts (pre-posted) to my other blog, then came back to the novel. When I left for Tucson, I had written 2942 words in two long sessions.

Weird missing my daily goal by only 58 words, but not that big a deal, right? I got involved in some other stuff after Tucson and didn't get back to writing today. However, tomorrow is a new 3000-word daily goal.

Also kind of a great feeling knowing I'm well over a half-million words so far on the year. (grin)

I'm removing the short stories I was reporting on earlier. I'll put them back when I write on them again. Much as I enjoy writing short stories, I have to admit it feels really good to be working on another novel. Kind of in a race with myself. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2942

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words

Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words

Day 4..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 10547 words

Day 5..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 13489 words (2942 before Tucson)

Total fiction words for the month..... 36897 (1590 on Wes)

Total fiction words for the year..... **501938** (Woohoo!)

In case anyone's wondering (I was), I've also written 155,419 words on this blog. That doesn't count emails or my "main" blog that comes out every ten days. So total word count of published fiction and this blog since 1 January 2015 is 657,357 words. (grin)

I tagged DWS in this because if it weren't for him, I would never have achieved this. So just in case you get a ping back or something. Thanks, Dean.

The Journal, Monday, 9/21: Streaks

Rolled out around 2:30. Answered some emails, then just messed around awhile with Facebook and watching the weather come north.

My short story of the week, *The Day They Came*, will post today. I hope you'll enjoy it if you're in an SF frame of mind. For me, that's the signal that I need to write a short story to post next Monday.

Okay, I'm gonna talk about streaks again. Why? Because they're important. They're important because they're powerful, unless you're stupid enough to strip them of their power for some silly reason.

I had a great streak going. I wrote and posted at least one short story per week for 69 weeks. In all, I wrote 71 stories during that time. Quite a streak. Even DWS said it was one of the longer ones he'd heard of.

Then I stopped. The streak ended with "Death of a Persona." No excuse. It isn't like I wasn't able to keep it going. For some stupid reason I just decided to end it.

I kept posting one story a week in the interim (some of my magic realism stuff), and on Monday, August 10 I started a new challenge and a new streak with "Pete and Repeat." No, that isn't right. I just checked. The week after I wrote and published "Pete and Repeat," I posted another older one, another MR story.

So my new streak began the following week, September 7, with "Paper Hearts." So next Monday will be the fourth week in a row that I've written and published a new short story in this new streak.

Hey, it's all good. Y'gotta start somewhere. Anyone wanna join me?

My short-term goal with this one is to write and publish at least one new short story for 70 weeks in a row, surpassing my previous streak. My long-term goal is to take Bradbury up on a dare: write and publish at least one new short story every week for the rest of my life. And yes, I hope I hit the short-term goal a LOT sooner than I hit the long-term one. (grin)

Plus sometime in the future I want to duplicate DWS' feat by writing one short story every day for a month. (grin)

Okay, when you get about two minutes, maybe three, check out this very well done cartoon strip on Dreaming vs. Doing. I think you'll enjoy it. <http://zenpencils.com/comic/161-shonda-rhimes-a-screenwriters-advice/>

Slowing down again for some reason today. With all the drizzle, I thought this would be a great day for writing. Yet at this point (10:30) I've written just over 1000 new words.

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals are to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

Well, after a slow start, the novel surged forward. I also found two new POV characters. What else can I say? This is the most fun I think I've ever had. (grin)

Fiction Words: 4261

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words

Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words

Day 4..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 10547 words

Day 5..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 13489 words

Day 6..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 17750 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 41158

Total fiction words for the year..... 506199

The Journal, Tuesday, 9/22: Writing Fast

Rolled out just before 3. Answered some emails, then just messed around awhile (again) with Facebook. I'm gonna have to stay off Facebook, by which I mean take it in very limited doses.

Yesterday as a writer who was currently, you know, writing, I wondered aloud in a Facebook post how many other writers were writing on their own WIPs at the same time. If they were, I asked them to click Like or comment if they wanted to.

A few did. That was great. It was what I was looking for.

Then a woman who is a Realtor posted that she was writing contracts. Does that count? Hahaha. That wasn't too bad. Later she took some 7-question test on Facebook and it told her she was an "author." So she came back to post that. See? I'm an author. Hahaha. Wonderful! Great fun, right?

Ummm no. Not for me. Now, is that all right? Or does it make me some sort of antisocial old grouch? Either way, I'm good with it.

I mean, say a Realtor had posted to Facebook that she was currently writing a contract and wondered how many other Realtors in the area were doing the same thing at that moment. And say I happened across that post. I can promise you, it wouldn't even have occurred to me to write "Hey, I showed a friend a

house as we were driving by it last week. Does that count? Hahaha.”

But I understand some folks are just bent in that particular direction. It’s fine. Whatever. I was nice enough, I guess. I just clicked Like on her comment and left it at that.

Okay (deep breath), time for the weather report. We’re supposed to have more rain from some tropical storm down in Baja today but I’m not seeing anything on radar. Except the stuff that pops up pretty much every day around Hermosillo.

So around 6 I got out of here for a walk. I logged 5 miles and was sleet-rained-on only the last tenth of a mile. I’ll take it. (grin)

Wait. I used my feet and legs to perambulate down the road. I guess that would make me a part-time marathoner. (grin)

No, really, c’mon, I’m over it. Seriously. Besides, I’m gonna go gas up my car later today, which is good, ’cause I always wanted to be a mechanic. (grin)

Okay, I think I’m finished now.

No wonder I enjoy writing so much. My manuscript is chock full of people who are intelligent, not afraid to take chances, and even enjoy my company. And they’re as serious as I am.

Yesterday all three of my blogs were sent out. My “main” blog posted because it was the 21st. My free short story of the week posted because it was a Monday, and then of course this one goes out every day.

Yesterday also I talked about streaks. If any of you are doing goals/challenges/streaks I’d really like to hear about it. Use the comments section below to brag a little. Tell the rest of us what’s possible.

Still trying to think of a good way to combine this blog with the main blog. But I have a little voice way in the back of my head too that says not to do that. I mean, specifically, not to advertise my numbers or my writing process to the world. Of course, most of those who read my blogs are writers or would-be writers.

Unfortunately, most writers are among those who have bought into the myth that writing “fast” means writing poorly. In actuality, as some of you know, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Judging from comments of others (readers) I have never written better than after I gave it all over to my subconscious and started writing off into the dark. That just means writing without planning, outlining, plotting, etc.

How fast someone writes has nothing to do with quality. Nothing.

In fact, “writing fast” is actually a misnomer. Most writers who Just Write do so at a rate of about 850 to 1000 publishable words of fiction per hour. (1000 words per hour is only 17 words per minute.)

Even if a writer spends only ONE HOUR per day writing, and even if he writes only five days per week, and if he takes two weeks off completely per year (vacation), he still will have written 250,000 words in a year and be considered a “fast” writer. (One thousand words per day multiplied times five days per week equals 5,000 words multiplied times fifty weeks equals 250,000 words. That’s five 50,000 word novels.)

And that’s if you spend only one hour per day doing your job. (grin)

Imagine what you could turn out if you spent four hours per day doing your job. Can you imagine any other job in the world in which you can spend considerably less than eight hours per day and yet be considered prolific?

At a writers’ meeting a couple days ago, the president of the group said to me (being convivial) “Three thousand words before you came in this morning. That’s really impressive.”

I appreciated it, but really? I mean, if I call myself a “writer,” shouldn’t I spend time doing my job?

Okay, I’m just gonna go ahead and go there for a moment. What if I spent eight hours per day doing my job five days per week like most people do? That would be 8000 words per day and 40,000 words per week.

Even if I took a two-week vacation every year, I would turn out TWO MILLION WORDS PER YEAR.

Using the same 50,000 words as the basis for a novel, that would be FORTY novels. Now THAT would be prolific.

But even then I wouldn't be a "fast" writer. I'd just be a writer with a work ethic.

I recommend you read the Topic of the Night in DWS' blog at <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/the-voice-starts/>. Very interesting for anyone who thinks of writing (correctly) as a business.

My Current Goals and Challenge

My goals are to write 3,000 words of publishable fiction per day and at least one short story per week. Stay tuned.

Today's Writing

No real writing today. I mean, I wrote some but I'm not even gonna count it. Completely blew off my daily goal. I think after a few days of not walking, my walk kind of threw me off my rhythm this morning.

I had a good title for a short story in mind, so I wrote an opening. It didn't work out. I went back to the novel, but didn't quite get into the right frame of mind for it, so I knew enough to just stay hands-off.

This turned into a non-writing day. I'd much rather have a 'day on,' but some days just do what they want. So after a couple of really good days, the numbers will remain where they are until tomorrow.

And tomorrow will be challenging. I have to take my truck to SV for repair in the morning. So I need to hit the 'puter running in the morning on the novel at least. Maybe I can get a few thousand done before I have to go over there. We'll see.

Fiction Words: XXXX

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words
Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words
Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words
Day 4..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 10547 words
Day 5..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 13489 words
Day 6..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 17750 words
Day 7..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 41158

Total fiction words for the year..... 506199

The Journal, Wednesday, 9/23: A BIG Author Earnings Report

Rollled out just before 3 again, a little late this morning. I was hoping to get up around 1 so I could get a lot done before I have to go to SV but that wasn't in the cards. I'll just have to spread the writing out.

Answered some emails, then Facebook stuff.

From a comment by Dean on his blog from yesterday: "There is a huge difference between writing for one reader (those who submit to traditional publishing) and writing for thousands (those who go indie). A real change in mindset."

And from [his post today](#), "Every beginning writer and many middle-stage writers work to fit into a box, to be like everyone else, to polish their stories and novels until they look like everyone else's stores." Good stuff.

So a little over two hours have passed this morning and I haven't written a word of fiction.

Finally got started writing at 5:30. I hoped to get at least one good session done before I left for SV around 8.

It worked out better than that. First I cycled back a bit to update a couple of points and to get myself back into the flow of the story. Then I wrote about 1100 words before 6:30. I took a break for a shower and to get dressed, then wrote another 1000 words before I had to leave. That's perfect. It makes the trip to SV basically a long break. (grin)

Well, it's noon. The trip took longer than expected because some things came up on the other end. My mechanic also operates a towing service, so I went with him on a couple calls. Got back to his place, he installed my new part, then realized a second part also was broken. So I'll go back Monday. In the meantime, the truck works. It just limps a little. (grin)

By the way, Author Earnings just released a new report that ALL writers should see. Especially if you're locked into traditional publishing or if you're on the fence.

The previous report I mentioned here talks about market share in ebooks from traditional publishing vs. indie publishing. So it was kind of abstract.

But this report shows ***the actual distribution of income to individual authors*** who choose to publish traditionally vs. independently. This probably will surprise you. And if you're an indie publisher, it will surprise you in a very good way.

<http://authorearnings.com/report/individual-author-earnings-tracked-across-7-quarters-feb-2014-sept-2015/>. I encourage you to follow this link and sign up to get your own reports as they come out.

Adding to My Challenge

Sort of, I guess, but not really. There are 99 days left in 2015. If I hit my daily goal of 3000 publishable words of fiction per day for all 99 days, that will be an additional 297,000 words. That would give me well over 800,000 words of published fiction on the year. So be it. My new short-term goal is to hit at least 800,000 words for this year. (To hit that exact number I need 290762 more words, or 2936 words per day. Here we go! (grin)

Today's Writing

Kind of lethargic after I got back from SV. Over 2,000 words before 8 a.m. The rest came after noon and before 4 p.m. when NYPD Blue comes on. Oh well. Still it was at least a so-so day. I hit the goal and looking forward to tomorrow. And sometime in the next few days I have to write and publish a short story. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3039

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words
Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words
Day 3..... 4139 words. Total words to date..... 9031 words
Day 4..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 10547 words
Day 5..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 13489 words
Day 6..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 17750 words
Day 7..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 20789 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 44197

Total fiction words for the year..... 509238

The Journal, Thursday, 9/24: Conjoined Stories

Rolled out early, a few minutes after 1. One of my sons dropped by on his way from California to New Mexico (return trip). We visited for an hour or so before I went to bed. He was up and back on the road at around 3. Enjoyed seeing him but any visit messes up the routine a bit.

I was going to walk later this morning, but I'm not feeling well. Nothing serious. Just blah. Sometimes I have a day that just feels like a do-nothing day. This might be one of those. Then again, I never know how it will turn out if I just put my fingers on the keyboard.

It's now a few hours later. Very odd day with the writing. I write a little, go do something else. Write a little more, go do something else. Whatever I accomplish today will be done in increments of 15 minutes to a half hour.

The story's going fairly well, flowing and all that, but weird. Something's wrong. That quiet little creative voice in the back of my mind is telling me so. Hmm. I think maybe that's why everything's coming in bits and starts this morning.

Well, until that little voice lets me in on the secret, guess I'll just keep at it. (grin)

Ah! I figured it out. I had heard of this, but I'd never had it happen to me, at least that I can remember. I was writing two stories at one time.

The story about "Norval Babineaux" is going to be a short story or maybe a novella at most. But at about 5,000 words in, the characters in that story handed me another story that's going to be a novel, only they aren't in it. How weird is that?

When I'd written around a thousand words today, the separation between the short story and the novel suddenly became apparent. So I cut the short story out of the novel and adjusted the total for the novel.

That's reflected in the numbers below.

It was fairly easy to separate the two because once the larger story took off (on the third day) all but 339 words were on the novel. (grin) Man I hate math. Well, math that doesn't have a dollar sign in front of it. I hope this never happens again.

Okay, so if you're following this stuff at all, in the chart below, Day 6 for the novel is today. Day 4 for the shorter work will be whenever I work on it again.

Today's Writing

All my writing today was on the novel. After I separated the smaller story out of the larger one, the writing went a lot faster. I'm pleased. (grin)

Fiction Words: 2600 (on the nose... weirder and weirder)

Writing of "Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words

Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words

Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words

Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words

Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words

Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words

Writing of "Norval Babineaux" (short story)

Day 1..... 3405 words. Total words to date..... 3405 words

Day 2..... 1487 words. Total words to date..... 4892 words

Day 3..... 0339 words. Total words to date..... 5231 words

Day 4..... XXXX words. Total words to date..... XXXX words

Total fiction words for the month..... 46797

Total fiction words for the year..... 511838

The Journal, Friday, 9/25: Make Bookstores Know Your Print Books Exist

Rolled out early again, about half past 1. My little cat needed me to get up for some reason I still don't understand. She woke me about 12:30 and I laid there for an hour before she finally nagged me out of bed. (grin)

Did much of nothing the first couple hours again. I'd like very much to change that. For now I guess it'll be what it'll be. At the end of the day if I'm making headway on the novel (or whatever writing) then I guess it's all good.

Nothing to do today but write as far as I know. I have noticed I'm getting more relaxed about writing awhile and then doing other things. I don't think of them as breaks, really, but I guess that's how they function.

Took an intentional break to read Dean's post. It's a good one. In the topic he talks about getting your indie published paper books into bookstores, how to [make sure bookstores know your book exists](#) so they'll buy it. Yeah, the topic of my post is to send you to Dean's post to read his topic. It's important. Go. Read.

Hmm. Just realized tomorrow is Saturday. I like college football, specifically involving LSU (and other teams in the SEC), Arizona, Texas, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. Tomorrow, LSU plays at 9 a.m., OSU vs. Texas OR Tennessee vs. Florida at 12:30 p.m. and Arizona vs. UCLA at 5 p.m. Bet I get a lot of writing done before 9 a.m. tomorrow. (grin)

Today's Writing

I had a pretty good writing day today. At about 1:30 I went over my daily goal. Since tomorrow might be a short day, depending on what I get done before 9 a.m., I thought I'd press onward.

Lesson 1: Why did I press onward? Goals and challenges aside, being a professional fiction writer is a game of averages. For example, I've had three days out of seven when I did very little on the book, but my average (arithmetic mean) over the whole 7 days is well over my daily goal.

Lesson 2: Never be afraid to cut what your Creative Voice (not your conscious, critical mind) is telling you needs to be cut. This book began really taking off after I hacked off the dead weight that was the first 5,000 words or so because it was a different story. But notice that I didn't "figure that out" with my conscious mind. I listened to that quiet little voice deep inside that told me something wasn't right.

I still have to write a short story, create a cover, and publish it before Monday at 6 p.m. (grin)

Fiction Words: 4634

Writing of "Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words

Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words

Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words

Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words

Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words

Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words

Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 51431

Total fiction words for the year..... 516472

The Journal, Saturday, 9/26: No topic, sort of

I slept in this morning until almost 3. Sure felt good. (grin)

Then I got up.

Not a great day around the Stanbrough camp. I won't bore you with the annoying, frustrating, aggravating details. Just not a good day.

I almost made the topic of this post "writing for therapy," but that would've been a hoax. Or politically correct. I get confused.

I do know nowadays when you tell an outright, bold-face lie it's most often referred to as either a "hoax" or "politically correct." Well, unless you happen to be a politician. Then it's called a "strategy shift."

Anyway, I couldn't title it "writing for therapy" because I don't personally believe in writing as a useful tool for therapy. Not real writing. And not real therapy.

Yeah, I can see writing an ex-hubby or ex-wife's name on a weird little straw doll and then setting fire to it before hurling it over a thousand foot cliff. I mean, I don't really think it would have the effect you're hoping for in the real world, but it couldn't hurt, right?

But that isn't writing. That's verbal vindictiveness. It's murder without a possibility of a conviction. 'Cause you just murdered the straw doll, see, and not the real person. Well, you know, IF you can call a nasty ex-husband or ex-wife a "real person." Up to you, I guess.

(For the official record, I did NOT hear from my ex today. I mean my ex had absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with what I viewed as a generally crappy day. So there's one bright side.)

Okay, but back to writing for therapy. Then there's that whole weird thing too where you're advised to write the victim of your passion a note or a letter, but then instead of mailing it, you flush it down the toilet. Or burn it. Or stomp on it and then flush it or burn it.

Okay, seriously, that's just silly. If I'm gonna go to all that effort, I'm gonna mail it. See what I mean?

Besides, if I did that and then tried to flush it, guess whose toilet would get plugged up? And you know who AIN'T gonna stop by to help me clean up the mess? The ex or the ex.

And seriously, if you decide to try that one, write an actual letter on actual paper. This doesn't work in any way, shape or form with emails. Plus it could get expensive.

But maybe there is one way for a writer to write for therapy.

Say you sneak away from your life for awhile. Say you put your fingers on your keyboard. Say you begin moving your fingers so that all of a sudden you're out of your crappy day. You're running and laughing and screaming and yelling and otherwise generally having a freakin' ball with your characters.

Now THAT'S writing for therapy. But that isn't really writing, is it? Nope. It's playing with your friends. And playing with your friends is ALWAYS good therapy.

Today's Writing

As opposed to pretty much everything else, the writing went well. Two good sessions before about 7:30 a.m. I wrote the rest considerably later. I'll take it.

Fiction Words: 3149

Writing of "The Coming of Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words

Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words

Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words

Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words

Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words

Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words

Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words

Day 8..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 25941 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 54580

Total fiction words for the year..... 519621

The Journal, Sunday, 9/27: Keep Coming Back

Rolled out right at 2, anxious to get back to the novel.

Every now and then I check up on my lists and purge them. On this weak little list, I had only 31 subscribers. Of those, six had never opened the email when they received it. This blog has been running from my main site since July 1, pretty much every day. I think that's a long enough time to indicate interest. So I unsubscribed those six folks. Ten to one I won't hear from them (because they won't realize it), and that's fine. (grin)

When your writing stalls, it's hard to come back. That's your conscious mind trying to keep you from writing. Believing you have to succumb to that is pure, unadulterated bullcookies. You don't. You just don't.

Once again today it felt early like I might not get any writing done. At all.

But I kept going back. I kept putting my fingers on the keyboard. I read about the previous two paragraphs, and then I wrote whatever came.

That's the key to the whole thing. No matter the situation, if you're writing fiction, Keep Coming Back and Write the Next Sentence. And don't question it. If you doubt the sentence you write, that's your conscious mind butting in. Just write the next sentence, whatever it is. Then write the next sentence, write the next sentence, write the next sentence.

Wonderful fun. I wish the same for my friend Alison and for all of you.

Today's Writing

I wrote. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3641

Writing of "The Coming of Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words

Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words

Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words

Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words

Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words

Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words

Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words

Day 8..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 25941 words

Day 9..... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 29582 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 58221

Total fiction words for the year..... 523262

The Journal, Monday, 9/28: How I Write

Rollled out a little after 3, having stepped outside to watch some of the lunar eclipse last night.

More than likely I won't get a lot of writing done today, at least on the novel. I do have to write the short story of the week. It posts tonight at 6 p.m. But I also have to take my pickup to Sierra Vista again to finish the repair I started last week. Life happens.

I don't really want to pry my head out of my novel right now, so I think I'll publish an excerpt from the novel as the short story. It'll work well. You'll see. (grin) Well, if you read it.

I also want to increase the visibility of my books to brick and mortar stores, so I'll be opening a publisher website over the next several days to do that. This is something I picked up on while reading over some of the comments on a recent DWS post. Invaluable stuff.

Okay, a bit on how I write. This was prompted by a subscriber who mentioned that he enjoys the posts but that it simply isn't the way he writes.

I want to say up front, that is absolutely fine. As DWS says, every writer is different. Every writer's process is different. But I can't write about other writers' processes in this blog. So do your own thing, no biggie.

What I've learned about writing since early 2014 is nothing short of incredible. I can't talk with other writers about writing and NOT mention this stuff. It has proven invaluable (and I'm not exaggerating) to me. Dean suggests keeping it secret because so few will "get it," but I just can't do that. So here goes.

For my part (as I've said before), I write this Journal for three reasons: as a personal diary for myself, to share what I know, and to let others know what is possible. By "what is possible" I mean following Heinlein's Rules and writing off into the dark can make writing a great deal of fun while vastly increasing your productivity and the quality of your stories.

Do I wish that for you? Yes. Absolutely. Do I fret over whether you're even willing to try it? No. Not because I don't care, but because I have my own stuff to worry about, just as you do.

If you'll forgive a religious allusion here, I'm kind of Saul turned Paul in this deal. Remember, I used to buy into all the myths. Hell, I used to teach them. Vehemently.

I used to believe (now get this) that I could produce an original work in my own unique voice by editing and rewriting and polishing until what I had written looked like everything else in the publisher's slush pile. I still wonder, how in the world did I NOT see the paradox in that?

I read somewhere that insanity is defined as doing something exactly the same way over and over and over again while hoping for a different result. You know, for what it's worth.

So I don't do that. I allow my own unique voice to shine through, which means I resign my control-freak role as General Manager of the Universe and trust my subconscious to tell the story. And then I call myself a writer so I actually am trying to develop a work ethic as a writer.

If I were a mechanic, I would spend time every day working on cars. If I were a doctor, I would spend time every day practicing medicine. If I were a plumber, I would spend time every day fixing plumbing problems. I'm a writer. Why shouldn't I spend some hours every day practicing my craft? You know, writing?

The truth is this: Writing "fast" doesn't mean lower quality. It just means spending more time in the chair putting new publishable words on the page. It means writing at a blazing speed of about 17 words per minute, and it means getting it right the first time.

For some, it's too scary to even try, though they won't say that. Instead they'll say something like "Well, I have a life," meaning they don't have time to do their job. How long would you get away with that if you were a cop or a plumber or a carpenter? "Sorry, Boss, I can't put in the time today. I have a life." And there are any number of other excuses. And that's fine.

As an aside, I mentioned Heinlein's Rules to a woman in Prescott a while ago. You know how long it takes to read them. She wouldn't even look. "No need," she said. "I don't write science fiction."

I just said "Okay." I mean, what can I say in the face of that kind of intentional ignorance?

This is the way I write. This is my process, but I didn't come up with it. It's how Bradbury wrote. It's how pretty much all of the pulp writers wrote. It's how DWS and Kristine Kathryn Rusch and JA Konrath and a bunch of others write. I want to be a long-term professional fiction writer who writes across all genres, so I follow the lead of long-term professional fiction writers who write across all genres. Shrug.

As I wrote earlier, I DO wish for others the same freedom, joy, productivity and increased quality that I've found in my own writing. But how you write is up to you. I don't dwell on it. As Ben Johnson said in a movie awhile back, "Not my department." (grin)

Today's Writing

Wrote a little over 1200 words before heading for SV. That was on the short story of the week, "There's No Fool." But the short story is excerpted exactly from the novel, so I'm not counting the short story words separately. (grin)

Then when I got back I created a cover and published the story to my website and D2D. Then I wrote a bit more in one quick session, then posted this and called it a day. I'll add the story to my Short Fiction page after I post this.

Fiction Words: 1900 (weird)

Writing of "The Coming of Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words
Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words
Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words
Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words
Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words
Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words
Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words
Day 8..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 25941 words
Day 9..... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 29582 words
Day 10... 1900 words. Total words to date..... 31482 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 60121

Total fiction words for the year..... 525162

The Journal, Tuesday, 9/29: Collections, Box Sets and Other Non-Writing Stuff

Well, I didn't get up this morning. Wide awake, I looked at the clock and thought it said 1:45 a.m. That's close enough to 2 to start a normal day (for me) so I got up. But in actuality, it was 11:45 p.m. last night. Two hours earlier.

Still, I was awake, so I figured I might as well make the best of it. I worked on my new publisher website for a couple hours. That was my waking up time, only it lulled me. (grin) So around 1:30 I went back to bed for about an hour and a half.

Got up again at 3, did a little more on the website, read/researched a couple other publisher websites, and signed up to sell my ebooks via OmniLit (<http://www.omnilit.com>), a new (to me) online ebook vendor. Again, if you have your books available only in Amazon, you are SO missing out.

Finally, a couple hours after getting up the second time, I closed the websites to get them off the screen, and turned to my writing 'puter and the Stark novel.

Nope. Didn't happen. I felt like it's been forever since I had a good walk, so I grabbed my camera and headed out. Had a short walk (just over 2 miles) but got some great pics. Came back and put a few on [Facebook](#).

Then I made and ate breakfast, then got a shower, then came back here and did some preliminary work re collections. I didn't realize how many uncollected short stories I have floating around.

Then to write this and what you see below (everything except Today's Writing and the numbers) and now, finally, just after noon, I'm turning to my writing 'puter. Barely time to get my 3000 words for the day before I take off an hour for NYPD Blue. Pretty sure this is the last week of the show.

Oh, this notice is actually a day late, but I hope you'll drop by and read the topic ([Writing A Bunch of Words](#)) on Dean's post from yesterday. I recommend this for those of you who want to increase your productivity but can't quite get that from me. In this post, Dean shows you how he wrote 6300 words in 7.5 hours. Chances are, it isn't what you think. He also gets a tad snarky, his word, not mine. (grin)

Okay, although I very much enjoy working on my own websites, I also dread it. When I get my teeth into a project, I want to keep going until it's finished.

Working on a website is a very different kind of creativity than writing. For one thing, I have a final result in mind when I start. I also am even more anxious to see the finished website than the finished novel. And I work quickly so I can finish a website in MUCH less time than it takes to write a novel. For those reasons and more, it would be SO easy to take off a couple days and just get the Publisher website up and running.

But today is also the next to the last day of the month. I'd love to go out with 70,000 words this month, but I don't think that's gonna happen. Still, I'd like to make a run at it. And if I take today off, there is no possible way I'm gonna finish the month in style.

So one more part of my retraining rears its ugly head. I need to write when I can (writing must remain my number one priority) and do everything else when I'm not writing. That includes working on that website. And that means part of my retraining is to make myself able to turn my back on it when it's time to write some more.

Another number two priority is putting together some collections. I just realized this morning I have twenty uncollected short stories. There also is still one 5-story Stringer collection that has not been combined into a 10-story collection yet, plus a single Stringer story that has not been collected. Nick Porter has two uncollected individual stories, and then I have twenty.

So I have to think of a way of putting all those together in various batches. The individual stories I probably will bunch with my own with a nod to the original pseudonym. But I still have to put the collections together, format them, create covers and publish them.

And I enjoy doing all of that, but it isn't writing, and I enjoy writing more than all of that put together. Hence the priorities. (grin) But it'll get done. Before too long. I just have to write when I can write and work the rest of the time.

Oh, and then BookBub popped up with a link to [8 Tips on Creating Single Author Box Sets](#). So now I'm thinking in that direction too. Oh well. A guy's gotta have a hobby.

Today's Writing

Poor writing day today, though I did get a lot of other things done and started, as I alluded to above. I expect a much stronger writing day tomorrow. Stay tuned.

Fiction Words: 1476

Writing of "The Coming of Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words
Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words
Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words
Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words
Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words
Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words
Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words
Day 8..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 25941 words
Day 9..... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 29582 words
Day 10... 1900 words. Total words to date..... 31482 words
Day 11... 1476 words. Total words to date..... 32958 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 61597

Total fiction words for the year..... 526638

The Journal, Wednesday, 9/30: On Being Organized and a Major Change

Rollled out a little before 3. I had forgotten how much "little work" would be necessary to create a new publisher website. This morning I created folders for covers. I filled one with covers that are 150 x 225 pixels, another for 180 x 270 pixels, and another for 300 x 450 pixels.

That and sorting them took three hours, but it's necessary when you have to upload covers for 9 novels, 20 short story collections, 15 nonfiction books, 5 poetry collections, and 110 short stories. Of course, it's a good problem to have and I'm not complaining. (grin)

Anyway, now when it comes time, I can upload all the covers of each size to the new website at once. And that will save me a huge chunk of time.

If I hadn't done this, I'd have to open the individual folder for the novel, collection or story, upload the cover in each of three sizes, then go to the next individual folder. To repeat that 159 times would take considerably more than three hours. (grin)

After I get the new publisher website up and running, I'll put together a few more collections. With twenty plus uncollected stories, that should be six collections (four each with 5 stories and two with 10 stories). Then I'll start thinking about box sets. It's all about opening several revenue streams for each story.

The writing today will be a big push to advance this novel and to close out the month. With my dismal showing the last couple days, I won't make 70,000 words of fiction for the month but I should easily clear 65,000. I'll take it. (grin)

Good post over at Dean's blog today on a new scam traditional publishers are pulling on their authors.

No walk today. I'll continue working on the website until around 8 or 8:30, and then start writing for the day.

After I wrote much of this blog post, I had some time left before my writing time begins. For awhile now I've been wanting to design a spreadsheet that will enable me to see daily and monthly details as well as annual trends in my writing. So I started messing around with that.

I tried three different structures before I hit on one that does what I want in a compact space. (BTW Dawn, I did this without looking at yours. I want to compare them after the fact to see how similar they are. (grin)

Anyway, it worked. And you know what that means, right?

Because it worked, this blog is going away. Only four of you were not subscribed to my Pro Writers blog, so I transferred you over. You won't have to do anything. And then probably I'll start posting to that blog once a week or so instead of every ten days.

So there y'go. After posting here almost every day since October 19, 2014, and after 210,525 words of what we're all agreeing is nonfiction (grin), I'm shuttin' 'er down. Thanks for hangin' in with me all this time. See you on the flip side.

Today's Writing

Good enough day of writing today. It is what it is, and tomorrow is a new month.

Fiction Words: 3538

Writing of "The Coming of Simon Stark" (SF novel)

Day 1..... 3800 words. Total words to date..... 3800 words
Day 2..... 1516 words. Total words to date..... 5316 words
Day 3..... 2942 words. Total words to date..... 8258 words
Day 4..... 4261 words. Total words to date..... 12519 words
Day 5..... 3039 words. Total words to date..... 15558 words
Day 6..... 2600 words. Total words to date..... 18158 words
Day 7..... 4634 words. Total words to date..... 22792 words
Day 8..... 3149 words. Total words to date..... 25941 words
Day 9..... 3641 words. Total words to date..... 29582 words
Day 10... 1900 words. Total words to date..... 31482 words
Day 11... 1476 words. Total words to date..... 32958 words
Day 12... 3538 words. Total words to date..... 36496 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 65135

Total fiction words for the year..... 530176

SWITCHING OVER NOW TO NOTEPAD DOC DAILY JOURNAL

October 1, 2015

Rolled out right at 3. It's a relief, albeit an odd relief, not to be sharing this daily journal anymore.

It's a huge relief knowing I don't have to add to this every day, that I can even just let it go.

From this point forward, I'll insert here what is significant to my writing process (meaning what I think I might want to look back over and learn from someday) and omit the rest.

Got approval from OmniLit to publish through them, so I'll start that process in the next day or two.

Oct 2. Up at 2:30. Started writing at 4. Hope to finish a short story today and advance the Stark novel.

Later today during breaks I'll push some stuff to OmniLit.

Nothing to OmniLit yet. I'm going to wait until I finish the publisher website.

No real advance of the Stark novel so not counting it at all. Tomorrow early, when I get up, I'm going to start at the beginning and read through. I think I took a wrong turn somewhere and am dragging it out with too much detail. The reader needs the result, not all the detail. This is a bad guy with a good woman, but he's still a bad guy, an alien wanting to rule over Earth.

Oct 3. Football today. Re writing, I've saved the file as Simon Stark 2 and begun rewriting the entire thing, albeit in creative voice. Basically I cycled back to the beginning, then began reading and allowing myself to touch it where my subconscious wanted to touch it. This will take probably a few days, but the story will be much tighter.

Oct 4. Still cycling through the novel. During this process, I'm counting net new words written. Not counting those I delete or overwrite.

Oct 5. Finished cycling through and added a bit more to the story. My word count is starting to rise again now that I'm writing instead of improving. :-)

Oct 6. Up late (8:30) last night with JustHost so up late this morning (3:30) to start work. Answered a long email by Debbie Jaquez (DA RILEY). Saved it in Writer Things folder for future use.

Oct 11. Wow. Oct 11 already. A third of the month gone. Up late 'til after 8 last night, but up at 2:30 this morning at Bit's insistence. It's okay. She's my girl and it's so fleeting. Determined to jump into the novel this morning (Stark). Yesterday I only finished a short (Sordid) and posted/published it, but when I got in here, I remembered I hadn't read Dean's blog for a few days. So I did that, then skipped over to read Kris' blog post on Author Earnings as well. Good stuff. Stuff probably 99% of aspiring writers need to know. Also did a little more work on the Publisher website this morning. I have to get that up and running, so I think I'll work on that this morning and see what shakes out for my writing. Stopped working on the site for now (about 6:30). I remember I can migrate my personal site to the publisher site, so i'm gonna try

that. It should be done by 7:30, and I'll check it later this morning. Right now I have to write on the novel for awhile. Didn't write a word on the novel. Spent ALL DAY screwing with the new site, my host, etc. Finally erased all files and started over. Not a good day.

Oct 12. Rolled out at 3. Screwed around writing what will become three or four (or more) blog posts on all the BS that's so prevalent out there concerning traditional publishing. Going walking when the sun gets up, so at 5 I turned to the new publisher website to clean it up a bit more. I'll dedicate the rest of the day to writing after I get back from my walk.

Oct 13. Finished the Stark novel today at 26 calendar days, 23 writing days, averaging 2600 wpd on writing days. Gotta get up to 3,000 wpd and stay there. 60,262 words written, 56,851 in final version. Back to short stories tomorrow. I want to write next Monday's short story before I start anything else.

Oct 14. Piddled around from 1:30 when 'Bit got me up until 5:30 (now) working on this. To a short story now. Okay, great day of writing. Finished "Ink," 5269 words for the next story of the week.

Oct 15. Did nothing. Felt blah so just did nothing.

Oct 16. Published the Stark novel to Smashwords, D2D and Amazon. Going to push through and finish the publisher website today.

Oct 19. "Finish the publisher website" I wrote back on Oct 16. Ha! That's still gonna be awhile. I hope to have it up and running on its own steam by December 1. Want to get back to writing too. I think once I realized I had over 750,000 for the year that began on Oct 19, 2014, I gave up and cruised through yesterday. I didn't write another word really after I finished the Stark novel. I'm not too happy with it, either. It feels disjointed, etc. I'll wait to see what others say about it. It's only my second novel that isn't in the Wes Crowley series, so I'm placing too much importance on it. Once again, I need to Just Start the Next Story. Anyway, today I wanted to write, was going to write, had a great but short walk, then piddled all day. I just didn't feel like writing. I did the thing where I sat at the keyboard and tapped out some words, but didn't really get into it. So I finally decided I just won't worry about writing for the rest of today.

Oct 21. New plan, new goal. 3000 words per day, 1 new story per week, and 1 new file (collection or novel) uploaded to Xinxii until they're all up. It should build quickly without sucking up all of my time.

Oct 20. I've written well over a million words since Oct 19 last year through Oct 18 this year. Including only The Journal and fiction, I wrote 961,154 words. The fiction part of that was 750,466, and I didn't write the last four days of that year. :-) Weird. I think once I hit 750,000 I kind of "shut down." Then yesterday I wrote 1969 words on a new mob story and thus far today I've written just under a thousand on a camping horror story. I probably will work on both of those today.

Oct 22. Wrote Barbecue today, a weird horror vengeance type of thing. Over 4800 words so that works.

Oct 25. Wrote "Family" today, just over 3800 words. A great surge. Began working on the new publisher website, StoneThread Publishing.

Oct 31. Well, I let everything go except the publisher website. Finished the month with 43,697 words. Good enough. Tomorrow's a new month.

Nov 1. Oof. Added a "For Readers" page to STP this morning and created a Reader Price List. No reason not to sell direct to readers. I want to find a way to start a subscription. A recurring monthly donation would glean the reader everything I've written and everything to come, as it comes. I have a futuristic story idea. I have to get it (or something) written for the short story of the week, which posts tomorrow.

SWITCHING BACK NOW TO THE WORD DAILY JOURNAL

NO JOURNAL FROM NOV 2 THROUGH NOV 24

Private: Guide to The Daily Journal

October 10, 2015

Hi Folks, Welcome to The Daily Journal. This is a blog I started in another venue on October 19, 2014. I stopped posting to it on September 30, 2015.

UPDATE: Because I enjoy actually reporting my writing numbers, I'm going to start posting to this category again in the next few days. Reporting my numbers helps me hold myself accountable. When I don't, I tend to get lax and allow other things to take up my time.

I don't plan to send these posts to a list like I did before. But I will post my numbers plus perhaps a few notes on what's working for me at the time and any new short- and long-term writing goals. I hope you'll stop back for a visit. Maybe this will help show you what is possible when you simply sit down at the keyboard and write.

Okay, back to the Guide:

In this venue, under this tab, there are 77 posts not counting this one. If you want to be a professional fiction writer, or if you just want to pick up some tips, I advise you to read through them. Most of them include a Topic of the Day (or Night). But you might want to skim over those that don't. Often there are jewels of information in the first part of the post.

Finally, toward the bottom of each post is a tally for whatever I was writing at the time. You might want to check those out just to show yourself what is possible. Or not. Up to you.



I hope you'll also check out my [Audio Lectures](#) and my fiction and nonfiction books. Enjoy your stay, and be sure to let me know if I can help.

Best,

Harvey

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Eformatting](#), [Writer Resources](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [epublishing](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 11/25

November 25, 2015

Well, I'm back. Finally. And I won't leave again unless it's feet first. I promise.

Listen, if you'd rather not receive this, please don't just unsubscribe. Please email me at HarveyStanbrough@gmail.com and I'll remove your name from this list myself. It makes a difference over at MailChimp. Thanks.

When I wrote here last, I was writing fiction pretty much every day, in addition to writing this (daily) blog as well as my main Pro Writers blog, creating the publisher website, creating book covers, promo docs, and everything else.

Then I decided to cut this Journal to save some time. But in so doing, I cut my accountability. And apparently that's something I still need.

I thought recording my numbers on a spreadsheet would suffice. In fact, I recorded my numbers on that spreadsheet from the first day of September straight through until November 23.

But the numbers were dismal. Not surprisingly (in hindsight), I fell off Heinlein's Rules, specifically Rules 1 and 2. Not good for a guy who boasts he is an adherent to those rules.

In September, I wrote 65,135 words, a decent month, though nothing to brag about. In October, I wrote pretty regularly right up until I cleared the 750,000 word mark that began on October 19, 2014. Then, no longer having a "place to report" (this Journal), I stopped.

For October, up until I hit 750,466 words for that one-year period, I wrote 35,073 words. For the rest of October (from Oct 15 through Oct 31) I wrote on only two days for a total of 8624 words. (For comparison, had I met my daily goal of 3,000 per day, that would have been 51,000 words.)

And the self-imposed slump wasn't over. During the month of November, I wrote fiction only on the 2nd (3330 words) and the 23rd (5142 words) for a monthly total thus far of 8472 words. Ugh.

So since October 14th, when I reached the 750,466 word mark, I have written a grand total of 17,096 words. And yes, that's better than nothing. But the potential during those 41 days (at my goal of 3,000 per day) was 123,000 words.

Okay, so the point of all this is that I need the public accountability. So The Journal is back.

Probably I won't write as many "topic" things here as I did before. Probably I'll just record the daily round, any changes in goals, and my numbers.

Goals

- My daily goal is to write 4,000 new publishable words of fiction per day. (On the few days that I did write during my self-imposed slump, the totals were well over 4,000 words on four of the five days.)
- The weekly goal is to write one new short story per week. However, I'm no longer posting the newest story live every week. When I finish a new one, it goes into the queue to be posted.

- My goal for 2015 is to hit 148,000 words in the next 37 days (taking off December 25). If I hit that it will bring me to 721873 words for the year. That's considerably less than I wrote from October 19, 2014 through October 18, 2015, but I'll take it.
- My goal for 2016 is to hit one million words of original fiction. That's easily doable even if I miss my goal of writing 4,000 words per day every day. So we'll see.

Okay, onward and upward.

The Day

So today I rolled out at 3, messed around for a half-hour or so with email and Spider solitaire (the devil's own temptation, that game).

Then I added 10 photos from my Saved file at Bigstock into my cart for downloading when my download day resets at about 11 a.m. (I'm currently in a subscription plan in which I can download ten images per day for a month. Not easy to keep up with it, but doing so means my cover images cost only 33 cents each.) Only two days left on that.

Then, between trips to let cats in or out, I did a little website work on the two websites and then came here to write this. It's currently 7 a.m.

Going now to restart this "campaign" at MailChimp, so this will go out at 6 p.m. Arizona time.

Today's Writing

Well, I set out to write a short story based on Wes' travels in Mexico. About 1200 words in, I realized it didn't want to be a short story. It was the new opening for the ninth novel in the Wes Crowley saga. So first, as painful as it was, I found my old files regarding the ninth book and deleted them. Period.

Ugh. Then I went back to the opening and wrote a couple more sessions, ending up with the word count that you see below for today. I didn't get quite as many new words done today as I wanted to, but I did get reinvigorated. To be sure I'm firing on all cylinders from the start tomorrow morning, I cut off the writing and read back through a few of the other novels in the saga to get some names and a timeline right.

This is going to be a painful book to write (emotional, not difficult) but I know it's right. So part of me dreads it and part of me can't wait. Okay, that's more than I expected to write on this post, so I'll put up the numbers and talk with you again tomorrow.

By the way, thanks for being there.

Fiction Words: 3887

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 12359
Total fiction words for the year..... 586232

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Announcements](#), [Heinlein's Rules](#) 6 Comments

[The Journal, Thursday \(Thanksgiving\), 11/26](#) [November 26, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Thanksgiving. Who knew? Still, a pretty standard day around here except for football and great cooking smells emanating through the house as I write.

For the second day in a row after I set a new daily goal of 4,000 words, I'm gonna miss it. This one, though, I'll kind'a forgive myself. Very difficult to concentrate on anything while part of my brain is thinking of the feast to come later.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 2. Same usual wake-up process of emails and cleaning up other small bits of stuff that don't fit anywhere else (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.). I probably easily write a couple of thousand words per day of nonfiction (Facebook, emails, etc.) but I don't count that. I just bear it in mind to make me feel more accomplished than I actually am. (grin)

On my second cup of coffee I did a little more research back through the earlier Wes Crowley novels to be sure I had the right "bad guy" for this one. Named a few accomplices for him, made a few notes about their history, their acquaintances, and so forth. Then finally I wrote a session early today.

Took a break, then back for another early session of writing. Took another break and an early shower just to feel better. During all of this I've been herding cats, explaining patiently to them why they can't go out yet (it was raining), then letting them out, letting them in, all that stuff.

Way back when I first started this novel series, Wes and Mac handed it to me out of a short story I'd written. I heard them talking with me just as plainly as I hear someone in my office talking to me.

I pretty much flashed through eight novels, but on the ninth book in the series I bogged down. Bad. Hopelessly mired.

But yesterday morning early, Wes sauntered into my office and sat down. He crossed his right ankle over his left knee, being careful not to scuff the front of my maple desk. He tipped his hat back a bit, then said, "Harvey, there ain't no rush in ridin' away from a life."

That was a variation on a sentence from an earlier book. I don't even remember which one. But it was exactly what I needed.

"I understand," I said. "And thanks, Wes."

He grinned, got up, and nodded at me. He said, "Well," and then he walked out.

And I got hot on the keyboard.

Today's Writing

Now today is Thanksgiving, so I can't sit here and write quite as much as I'd like. Still, armed with what my friend Wes gave me, I wrote a really good opening yesterday.

Today, I managed three sessions. And I also know this thing will just continue to flow when I come back to it tomorrow morning early. So no worries on the fairly light day today.

Fiction Words: 3092

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 15451

Total fiction words for the year..... 589324

Categories [The Daily Journal](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 11/27](#)

[November 27, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Okay, so for various reasons I didn't get to the novel until almost 10 this morning. Ugh.

Still, I don't usually hit the sack until around 7 or 8, so I should be able to carve 4 or 5 hours of writing time out of that 9 or 10 remaining hours. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 3.

Reading [DWS' blog](#) and the comments. Pretty good topics for the past several days, but also came across something Dean wrote in response to a comment:

[A] number of indie writers now are doing mass market-sized papers. And trade sized. The trade are priced high enough to work in extended distribution, the mass market size are just selling through the authors' own sites and on Amazon.

I like it. This might be a way to capture those in-between readers. There are readers out there who want paperbacks but can't or won't pay the higher price for the trade paperbacks. That's okay. One of the big reasons we do trade paperbacks in the first place is so the comparison will be there. When a reader sees a \$15.99 trade paperback sitting alongside a \$5.99 ebook, they're encouraged to try the ebook.

But if they're really hooked on paper, they probably won't. Then again, they might well buy the less expensive mass-market paperback. Again, the trade paperback is right there beside it for \$15.99. And the ebook is there at \$5.99. And right between them is the mass-market paperback, a little smaller than the trade paperback but still in paper, and it's only \$8.99 or \$9.99.

I have a feeling that the target audience that would buy mass-market paperbacks is about the same size as the audience that will opt for ebooks. Because of their price, I suspect trade paperbacks are the smallest sellers. So naturally, I'm gonna try this. And naturally, I'll let you know how it goes.

Probably I'll try it with three novels at first, and if I see a good trend with those, then I'll do it with all my novels.

Okay, and all of that led me to spend a few hours looking for book printing services and prices in China and India. If the thought has crossed your mind as well, I'll save you some time: neither was much less expensive than CreateSpace, especially when you add shipping and handling and the inconvenience of waiting weeks instead of days for your books.

Today's Writing

Well, I missed my daily goal again, but only by less than 700 words. Not a major thing. The book is moving right along. I'm just not giving it quite as much time as it deserves right now. I hope to remedy that soon.

But probably not tomorrow. There's football and I'm only human. (grin)

Fiction Words: 3365

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words

Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18816

Total fiction words for the year..... 592689

PS: Well, if you read this far, you win! I just read Dean's blog for today and came back to add this. Yes, it's that important. [Please scroll down to the topic of the night and read it.](#) And read the first few comments. Well worth the time. (grin)

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Applying the Craft](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 11/28](#) [November 28, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Not really much going on today, as you'll see below. I almost let my head back into this one for a little while. You know the drill. Feeling like I needed to "figure out" something or other. Ugh.

Anyway, it turned out it was two of my characters (from different parts/times in the story) vying for my attention. (More on this below.)

Once I remembered there was nothing for me to "figure out," that all I needed to do was put my fingers on the keyboard and write, all the conscious mind nonsense went away.

The Day

Rolled out a little after 3, and after the usual wake-up routine I went straight to the novel.

I'm a little under the weather, so I've written in several short sessions today, punctuated by herding cats and other necessities of life.

And now I'm gonna post this a little early, then go sit on the couch, watch football and probably nap. (grin) Talk with you all tomorrow.

Today's Writing

Missed the daily goal again, but I don't mind at all given how I've felt all day. I could very easily have just not written today. In fact, if I hadn't revived this journal, I probably wouldn't have written a word of fiction.

So the book is still moving along, although today was something I've never experienced before.

I was writing along in the early reaches when one of the major characters (a major bad guy who was a very minor bad guy in an earlier book in the series) jerked my arm and dragged me into the future. He wanted to show me that scene — well, *those* scenes — and waiting was not an option.

While I was doing that, another character dragged me back to what I was writing earlier. I went back and forth like that over about 8 short sessions. So yeah, my characters are a little spoiled that way. It was exciting but exhausting and not something I would recommend.

I don't mind being unstuck in the time of my novel when I'm cycling back, but while I'm actively writing, it's almost more annoying than fun. Almost.

Again today I didn't give the novel quite as much time as it deserves, but given the circumstances, I'll take it.

Fiction Words: 3077

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words
Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words
Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 21893
Total fiction words for the year..... 595766

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Applying the Craft](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 11/29 **November 29, 2015**

Hi Folks,

Well, four good days in a row thus far. Before today. Missed my daily goal of 4,000 words per day on all four days, so not excellent, but good. With over 3,000 words per day on those days, that's failing to success. Maybe I'll tip 4,000 today.

I've found that several times in the (now) five days I've been writing this novel I've had to remind myself that it isn't important. It can be any length. It can go wherever it wants to go and end however it wants to end. The day I finish this one, I'll sit down and start another one. In other words, it's not a major, difference making, earth shaking Event. It's Just A Story.

(Yeah, I can hear the gasps. But seriously, a story, regardless of length, should be no more important in and of itself to a writer than the rebuild of an individual carburetor is to a mechanic or than a set of cabinets is to a carpenter.)

A man I consider a dear friend recently wrote to say he hopes I didn't really delete the roughly 11,000 words I had written earlier on Wes Crowley #9. Perhaps I could simply save it with a different file name and use it later in another story.

But no. For this particular story, I deleted it. What I had already written had left me hopelessly stalled. That was my subconscious crossing its arms and saying, “Nope. We aren’t writing that.”

I started again five days ago, and yesterday I had 13,421 words.

More gasps. Still, that’s 11,000 “wasted” words, right?

Wrong. Those 11,000 words took me to the place where I knew the story wasn’t working. So I tossed them aside and started over. To go back to the carpenter simile, words for a writer are like nails for a carpenter. If one bends or otherwise doesn’t work, you chunk it and get another one.

When I write first to entertain myself, oddly enough a lot of other people like the story too. And if they don’t like it, what happens? Nothing. That’s how important it is.

Its only importance lies in the joy and fun it brings me when my characters say or do something I never would have thought of. (grin) To paraphrase Bradbury, if my characters can surprise me, they will certainly surprise the reader. And the joy of reading (and writing) lies in being surprised.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3, with allergies firing on all cylinders. So one new pill added to the regimen this morning. Hey, that’s my generation. If it hurts, throw a pill at it. (grin)

Anyway, a little longer wake-up period this morning. Writing this novel, I just feel good. Not rushed, not confused, not hectic. Just calm and easy and happy that I finally chose this job.

Today’s Writing

Great day of writing. Still not excellent, but a lot better than good. Everything flowed, there was minimal cycling back, and I put it all down in five slightly shorter than normal sessions of about 45 minutes each.

And for the first time on this novel, I hit my daily goal.

Now I’m gonna post a little early and watch the Cardinals whip San Francisco. Then I’m gonna try to extend my day and watch the Broncos (sans Peyton Manning) whip the New England Cheatriots.

Fiction Words: 4486

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words

Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words

Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 26379

Total fiction words for the year..... 600252

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) 5 Comments

The Journal, Monday, 11/30

[November 30, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Last day of the month. I'm hoping for a really good day to close this one out and give me some momentum going into the last month of the year. But it'll be what it'll be, and I'm not overly worried about it. The novel's moving along smoothly and that's all that matters.

I'm also going to work walking back into my schedule. I always get lax when the weather turns colder, and I use "Oh, I'm in maintenance mode" to justify walking shorter distances and walking much less often. But it's a cop out.

Okay, so out the door for a walk finally around 11. Back by 12 with just under two miles. Not pleasant. Up and back in a large (about 50 yards wide) arroyo that I used to walk a lot. Floods from the recent monsoons have rocks strewn everywhere, and that's all right.

But also apparently a group of Lummoxes moved through, accompanied by Chretins and the ever popular trous de cul. (If you don't have French, [Click Here](#). If it isn't already there, type in trous de cul, then translate from French to English).

The evidence? Old TVs and computer monitors used for target practice and left, along with the brass, spent shotshells, and ammo cartons. Creeps. Wish I knew where they exist so I could dump all their crap back in their yard. Then again, probably nobody could tell because of all the other shattered TVs, computer monitors, etc. lying around. I'd bet money right now there are dirty diapers out in the yard too. And some of 'em probably belonged to children.

The Day

Stayed up late last night to watch the Broncos beat the previously undefeated Patriots. Great game that came down to overtime, which the Patriots almost always win. Anyway, totally worth the lost sleep. So this morning I rolled out at 3:30. (grin)

The wake-up period took a little longer again as I expected it would. Too cold to let the ladies (cats) out this morning early, although they think I very obviously am simply being mean. They also can't understand why I allowed it to get so cold on the other side of the door.

Still, it's Arizona cold (around 27), not COLD cold, like Indiana or Dallas in an ice storm or 4 or something. But I don't care. I'm keeping them inside. They're cats. They'll bug me only so long, and then they'll curl up for a nap and I can write.

Still looking forward to writing more on this novel every day. I think there's no better feeling in the world.

Oh, by the way, I found something you might find useful. Called "the BBC of the book world," Publishing Perspectives is a trade journal for international publishing news and opinion. (If you've published an ebook, unless you published it only to PDF and sent it only to your friends, you are published internationally.) They have a free email edition to "bring the latest need-to-know information directly to your inbox, Monday through Friday." To check it out, [Click Here](#).

For any of you who don't read comments on these things, Gary Vineyard mentioned in a comment yesterday that he enjoys reading about the real life stuff that surrounds the writing. He mentioned Working Days: The Journals of the Grapes of Wrath. I ordered a copy from Amazon. (Paperback. A Steinbeck book in electronic format just ain't right.) And I'm gonna try to work in more of what I actually do around here. You know, on days when I actually do stuff. Thanks Gary.

Today's Writing

Started later than I had hoped. Had other things to deal with. Then I was hungry so I made a couple eggs and some hash browns and toast. Then to writing, finally. I hope to get a couple of good sessions before the walk, partly to let the breakfast settle, and I did.

Okay, I got a few more sessions than I'd hoped for, but they also were shorter than I'd hoped for. So all in all it kind of evened out, but I didn't have as good a day as I'd hoped for overall. Still, I'll take it.

Ended up with 30,118 for the month, which isn't bad given that I actually wrote only 8 days this month. Of course, that was my own stupid fault. Man I hope I never do that again. Ugh.

So anyway, I've said here before that averages are what matters when it comes to productivity. My average (mean) daily production for this month is just over 1000 words per day. But divided only by the number of days I wrote, the mean is over 3600 words per day. Either way, I'll take it.

By the way, I'm not tied to the numbers themselves either. The numbers are merely a concrete tool I can use to set and achieve goals without fudging. I mean, "story" and "novel" are not set values. Four thousand words per day is a set value, and I either hit it or I miss it. Either way, it resets to zero the next morning.

So I need set values in order to drive myself. And I've pretty well proven that if I don't drive myself, I pretty much kick myself out of the Writers' Club. The numbers also enable me to watch for trends in my writing, which appeals to both my sense of stubbornness (I only wrote

HOW MUCH last December? Well hold my beer and watch this!) and my sense of Getting Stuff Done.

Fiction Words: 3739

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words
Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words
Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words
Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words
Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 30118
Total fiction words for the year..... 603991

The Journal, Monday, 12/1

December 1, 2015

Hi Folks,

Well, first day of the month. I was hoping for a really good day to start the month. It was good enough I guess, but various minor problems and one “incident” sucked up a lot of my time today. Well, and a little other writing.

The novel is still going great, very smoothly moving from scene to scene. That makes it even more annoying when I can’t give it the time I want to give it. Tomorrow will be better in that regard, good lord, cats and children willing. I intend to spend at least 5 hours in the novel tomorrow.

The Day

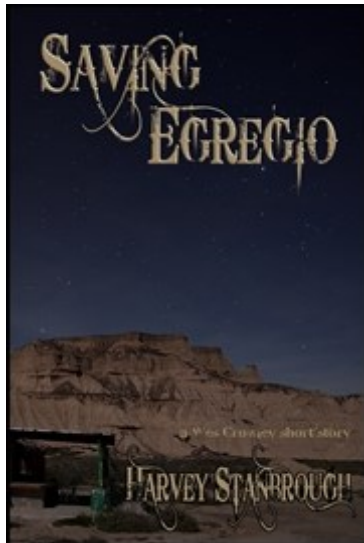
Pretty good night’s rest last night and I rolled out right at 3 this morning.

For some reason I thought it was 2 until I staggered into the kitchen, barked my shin on an errant cabinet door, cursed (quietly, people are trying to sleep) and caught the clock with my little flashlight. Three, right on the money. Score!

I can’t complain too much about lost hours today, really. A huge chunk of that was Just Me.

Yesterday, while fact checking names and dates and who was dead or still alive at a certain time in an earlier Crowley book, I ran across a scene that struck me as a really good stand-alone story. Those of you who are signed up for the free story of the week will see it on Monday, February 1.

If you Just Can't Wait it's available through all the standard bookslingers rat nayow (as they say in Texas).



So after an abbreviated wake-up period (halfway through my first mugga), I devoted about an hour this morning to adding almost 600 words to that story to flesh it out and give it legs. Then another couple hours for the cover (that's it on the left) and publishing it to D2D, Smashwords, and Amazon.

Oh, the title is Saving Egregio. So there's three hours right there, gone from the novel.

Then I hit another walk, but only about two miles. I'm gonna have to stay out of washes for awhile. I need to walk roads until I get my wind built up again. There are places an arroyo will run downhill for a mile and the slope is so gentle you don't even realize it. Until you turn around to head back. You notice it then.

And then I devoted about three hours to back and forth emails with one of my children about a problem she's having. Didn't settle anything, but that wasn't the purpose. You dads out there know what I mean. She didn't want the problem shot or sloughed off a pirogue into a wetland fulla dem swamp donkey or dumped in a gaseous mine way out in the desert. So no "solving" was called for. It was just one of those deals where a good dad will do that "be there" thing.

Now I'm still strivin' for that good-dad title, so you see my predicament. And the thing is, when I'm hangin' with Wes an' the boys, I can't "be" anywhere recognizable to modern America. So I set things aside for awhile. Fortunately, I was hangin' with Paco Messina and Frank Freeman and a few other Comanchero types. They thought it was hilarious that I had to bow out of the book for awhile. I think *they* think I keep an eye on 'em for Crowley.

This was another morning when I couldn't let the babies out early. It was 24 degrees and they were plenty miffed about it, let me tell you. Neither one of them curled up for a nap for a good ten, fifteen minutes. I seriously considered ordering in some liquid nitrogen. I would dunk about the last half-inch of a tail in there, see, and then I'd flick it with my finger, snapping it off. Then I'd say "Now, see what can happen? See? That's why I'm not letting you outside."

Oh, note to self. Write something featuring liquid nitrogen and dunked parts. Do NOT make it chick lit, 'cause ewwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww.

Finally, my almost regular note on [Dean Wesley Smith](#). You guys need to check it out beginning tomorrow. Seriously. He's going to write a book on Heinlein's Rules, and he's going to post it chapter by chapter on his blog starting in the next day or two. There are only five rules, but he will go into a TON of other stuff if I know Dean. And some of it will set off that little bell in your head. This one is not to be missed.

Today's Writing

Well, I seem to have explained everything pretty well above, so I'll just move into the numbers.

Oh, I noticed I hadn't updated the totals on the right for the past few days so I went back and did that.

Fiction Words: 2064

Writing of **The Scent of Acacia** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1.....	3887 words.	Total words to date.....	3887 words
Day 2.....	3092 words.	Total words to date.....	6979 words
Day 3.....	3365 words.	Total words to date.....	10344 words
Day 4.....	3077 words.	Total words to date.....	13421 words
Day 5.....	4486 words.	Total words to date.....	17907 words
Day 6.....	3739 words.	Total words to date.....	21646 words
Day 7.....	1471 words.	Total words to date.....	23117 words

Writing of "**Saving Egregio**" (Wes Crowley short story)

Day 1..... 0593 words. Total words to date..... 3397 words (Done—I'm counting only the 593 new words in the totals)

Total fiction words for the month..... 2064

Total fiction words for the year..... 606055

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark2 Comments](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 12/2

[December 2, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Hey, if you want to see some excellent but very emotional writing, visit [Sarandipity Travels](#). Sara is a beloved friend who is walking a difficult path. She is one of the best photographers I've ever had the pleasure of knowing, and she is an absolutely excellent writer.

The Day

Again I rolled out right at 3 this morning. Again it was too cold (27, now down to 24) to let the babies out. They seem to be settling down more quickly though.

Overnight sometime I had a brainstorm regarding the publishing website.

I started putting it together halfway through my first mug of coffee, and about four hours later it's finished. There's a new look to the home page, including a new slider. I also created an About Us page for those browsers who are interested in such stuff. It's basically just a summary of the site, though, plus an invitation to subscribe and a teaser regarding what's coming.

So I lost a few hours at the top of the day, but well worth the time. I still have nine and a half practical hours from which I should be able to carve out five or so for writing. So we'll see.

UPDATE: No! Bad Harvey! It was NOT worth my quiet time from 3 to 6.

During that time I'm alone. The world is quiet.

During that time the neighbor's dog isn't Barking At Nothing. My girls aren't running in and out and in and out and in and out. Delivery guys in large, very noisy vans aren't pulling through the circular drive between my house and the neighbors' house repeatedly (seriously, six trucks, six times, not one single stinkin' delivery) because they're too stupid to check a road map. Dorky guys aren't dragging (yes, dragging, not carrying) aluminum ladders along the gravel driveway so they can get on my roof to retrieve their stupid bird-stuff-covered satellite dish; etc. ad nauseam. If I'd know that guy was gonna make that much noise I'd have just shot it down for him. I'm helpful that way. I mean DAYum.

Know what you can get accomplished in nine and a half hours of that kind'a crap? Pretty much nada.

No walk today. That's for sure.

Today's Writing

Well, as I alluded to above, today it was one thing after another after another.

As it turned out, the "few hours" I devoted to the publishing website at the beginning of the day when the rest of the world was asleep was NOT worth it. I should have spent that time writing. I can do non-writing stuff — even creative non-writing stuff — During The Hectic Hours. And I could have put down more words in the quiet hours this morning than I ended up with for the whole day. How's that for preloading tomorrow with a New Plan?

Anyway, every writing session was interrupted at least twice. Of course I was able to come back and get back into it, but each time I had to cycle back, touch this, touch that, etc. Overall, it was a very annoying day. And then of course the frustration builds too.

I got two good scenes finished. That's pretty much it. I am officially disgruntled. Seriously, I'd scare a postal worker right now. Even a postal postal worker.

Fiction Words: 2843

Writing of **The Scent of Acacia** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words
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Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words
Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words
Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 21646 words
Day 7..... 1471 words. Total words to date..... 23117 words
Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 4907

Total fiction words for the year..... 608898

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)[Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Wednesday, 12/3

[December 3, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Well, again, overnight I had a thought regarding the publishing website. So another early morning of poking about . But only during my waking up period, so some good done and no harm. Still a little more to do on this latest innovation but time to write now.

The Day

Got up late right at 4 this morning. Again it was too cold to let the babies out. But I did. I left the door so they could grab it and drag it open. They were back inside in about five minutes trying to walk without putting their little feet on the floor. The Liquid Nitrogen Effect, I call that. And they're settling in as I write this.

Did the publisher website thing I talked about above, then came here to begin this post.

Probably I'll walk later today. I'll need a break anyway. How far I walk will depend on how much I can get done on the story before the weather warms up enough to walk. If I get a few thousand words done before then, I'll take a longer walk.

Received my copy of *Working Days*. I look forward to delving into it tomorrow during breaks. The only thing that excites me more than writing is learning how other writers whom I admire write what I'm writing, whether it's fiction or nonfiction.

In my fiction, I take a lot of clues from Bradbury, O. Henry and Hemingway. In my poetry, Nemerov and a few others. And it's probably obvious to anyone who follows this blog and DWS' blog that I emulate his quite a bit. Soon I hope to be able to apply here what I learn from Steinbeck's journals.

By the way, if you are a fan of Hemingway or Bradbury, I recommend a couple of books there too. **Travels with Myself and Another: A Memoir** by Martha Gelhorn, and **Conversations with Ray Bradbury** edited by Steven L. Aggelis. The ebook worked for me with the former. The latter is available only in paperback.

While double checking the accuracy of the titles above at amazon.com, I also ordered **Odd Type Writers: From Joyce and Dickens to Wharton and Welty, the Obsessive Habits and Quirky Techniques of Great Authors** by Celia Blue Johnson. (Hell of a title, eh? Glad I didn't have to do the cover for that one.)

Note that I ordered this primarily out of a tongue-in-cheek curiosity. I suspect many of the "quirky techniques" are bogus, things that FICTION WRITERS (professional liars) told overly snoopy fans and wannabe writers to give them something to play with. Like Hemingway always writing drunk in his underwear while standing up. (grin)

Okay, spent a little more time playing here than I meant to. So for now, to the writing.

Did some cycling back, kind'a glued to a couple of scenes for some reason. They're fine. I just need to leave them alone now.

Got out for a short walk (a little under two miles). It was 45 here and no wind. Of course, after I got out there on the road, the wind picked up to a steady 7-8 mph. (When I turned around and walked with it, its force was blunted by about half and I was walking at about 3 mph so....)

Anyway, pancakes and syrup and ham slices for lunch, and back to the novel. Which is suddenly dragging. Hmmm.

Today's Writing: A Lesson

You've all heard me preach Writing Off Into the Dark. I've been doing that on short stories since April of 2014, and I've been doing it on novels since October of 2014. Briefly, it consists of shoving the conscious mind back into whatever box and allowing your subconscious to tell the story.

Every book writes differently.

In this particular novel, which is writing differently even from every other book in this series, I'm writing off into the dark in spurts. I get a thousand words here, eight hundred words there. Those words race all-out to advance the novel.

Then my conscious mind horns in.

Used to, it would horn in with "Well, what's the character gonna do next? What's gonna happen next? If you don't know, you can't write it, Moron."

Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, and I was able fairly easily to shut down that voice. But the conscious, critical mind doesn't stop trying.

In this book it's back with a vengeance in a different voice. I speed through a thousand or fifteen hundred or two thousand words and the conscious mind pops up. "Wait. Doesn't that scene sound like it should be connected to that scene you wrote two days ago back in Abilene? Maybe you'd better just scroll back and take a quick look."

See? It ISN'T trying to stop me. It's trying to alert me to a connection I might have missed.

Only the subconscious mind doesn't miss connections. It adds them when it's good and ready, but it doesn't miss them. You Have to Trust the Process.

So in this book, the conscious, critical voice is all about connections. Thing is, I've been wrestling with it for three days now, and I only recognized it a few minutes ago. And now my writing day is almost over.

That's okay. At least I recognized it. When you recognize a new form of critical voice, you can shove it aside and get on with the writing. Understand? And until you do, it'll keep popping up, annoying the mucus out of you.

Every book is different. This book writes in scenes. Probably some of those scenes will be disconnected until the book ends. But the thing is, NOW is not the time to worry about that. Now is the time to advance the story. Period.

Probably (unless everything miraculously comes together) I'll go back after The End (first time ever in a novel) and either connect the scenes or toss them. I suspect some of them are like the "loops" Dean talks about occasionally. Fun to write and in the flow and all that, but they don't really advance the story. They begin, loop around, and close back on themselves. And they get cut and tossed on the floor where they writhe around for a few minutes and expire. Or they get cut and adapted and become short stories.

Okay, so a lousy day from an advancing-the-novel perspective, but finding a loose pin that might have derailed me is gold. No complaints.

Oh, and sorry about the length on this one. I guess it was necessary.

Fiction Words: 1782

Writing of **The Scent of Acacia** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words
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Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 21646 words
Day 7..... 1471 words. Total words to date..... 23117 words
Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words
Day 9..... 1782 words. Total words to date..... 27742 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 6689

Total fiction words for the year..... 610680

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Applying the Craft](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Friday, 12/4

[December 4, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Received a comment via email yesterday. Just in case I confused anyone else, I wanted to share it. Here's the essence of the question followed by my response. I've added a little to the response, but the writer will see it here. If you have a comment, whenever possible please post it in the Comments section below.

Q: Harvey, Are you saying that sometimes the subconscious (writing into the dark) misleads us?

A: Not at all. The subconscious mind never misleads us. On the other hand, the conscious, critical mind constantly puts up barriers in an attempt to save us from ourselves. (If we don't finish writing we can't publish, and if we don't publish we can't be harmed by rejection.)

One of those barriers is the conscious, critical mind trying to convince us that the subconscious is misleading us. How's that for coming full circle? (grin)

The conscious, critical mind will continue to try to take over. We just have to keep watching for it.

Also, yesterday I whipped off a few names of writers whose work has heavily influenced my own. By that I mean I studied their work with the intention of learning how they accomplished dragging me down into their writing. Another major influence (slip him in between Hemingway and Bradbury) was/is James Lee Burke. Others were Kate Chopin, Shirley Jackson, Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Isabel Allende and Kristine Kathryn Rusch. (Haven't studied hers a lot yet but her writing blows me away.) By the way, she posts a free short story every week [at her website](#)



too. Well worth a visit.

And I misspelled a name in yesterday's post. Travels with Me and Another is by Martha Gellhorn.

Be careful with facts that matter. It's fiction, right? So it's okay to make stuff up. But in my WIP, much of which takes place in the Mexican state of Guerrero, I got all four directions completely wrong. We (well, I) think of the Pacific coastline as running generally north and south. And in some places it does.

But in Guerrero, most of it runs from west to east. So the relatively narrow "northern border" of Guerrero is actually the western border. I just spent close to an hour replacing north with west, east with north, south with east and west with south. Selectively, of course. Otherwise in the scenes in Amarillo and Abilene I'd have had the sun setting in the south, and that hardly ever happens. I fully expect some readers to call me on having the Pacific Ocean south of Guerrero, but I don't mind. Because that's where it is.

The Day

Rolled out at 3 this morning. Finally warm enough to let the babies out so I wasn't under cattack for the first two hours of the day. So straight to the writing.

No walk today.

Haven't delved into Working Days yet. I'll read a bit tonight, then more tomorrow.

Did a little more cycling back today, but nothing like yesterday.

Today's Writing

I have a feeling it's going to be a sprint to the end of the novel now. I mean it'll probably be a series of sprints over a few days, but I feel like the end is coming. In a way I'm sorry, but in a way I'm happy because I have some other writing (a novel and two different short story series) that I will write under a pen name (not a persona) in a different genre.

Looking forward to that.

Good writing day today, though not excellent.

Fiction Words: 3315

Writing of The Scent of Acacia (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words
Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words
Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words
Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words
Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words
Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 21646 words
Day 7..... 1471 words. Total words to date..... 23117 words
Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words
Day 9..... 1782 words. Total words to date..... 27742 words
Day 10... 3315 words. Total words to date..... 31057 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 10004

Total fiction words for the year..... 613995

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Kristine Kathryn Rusch](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Saturday, 12/5

[December 5, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

I seriously considered taking a day off writing today. I was going to do some reading instead. But my fingers and my mind keep leaning toward my writing computer, so writing it is.

Last night I skimmed the 30 pages of introductory material in Working Days, which I've now learned is actually the book inside which Steinbeck's daily journal is allegedly secreted. I hope to find the journal itself sometime later today during a break from writing. (grin)

Didn't find time to look today. The search continues in a day or two.

Last night also I read half of a book by Algis Budrys titled **Writing to the Point**. Folks, this thing is excellent. Seriously. You can get it as part of a bundle right now (until December 27) at <https://storybundle.com/nano>. (On this book, I recommend from the beginning up through Chapter 6. After that, skip to Writing SF and Fantasy at the end. It has to do with more than SF&F.)

Seriously, go there. Check it out. In the same "basic" bundle (only about \$15) you can get Rusch's **Discoverability** and Zuckerman's bible, **Writing the Blockbuster Novel**. Plus three

other titles. If you go for the bigger bundle, for \$25 you get a whole bunch of others, including some from DWS.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning. Outside it's a regular heat wave at 37 degrees.

Probably no walk today but we'll see. (I was right. No walk.)

Today's Writing

Well, I had a breakthrough with the novel today, but not the kind you might expect.

Yesterday I wrote that I thought it was going to be a sprint to the end of the novel. Wishful thinking, maybe.

Every time I've put my fingers on the keyboard for the past few days, something didn't feel right. This wasn't my conscious mind. This was that quiet little nagging voice inside. You know the one.

Usually when I feel like that it's because I took a wrong turn somewhere. Everything I wrote after that was just compounding the wrong turn.

So this morning, I made myself start at the beginning of the story and just read.

Sure enough, about halfway through the current document, I found the wrong turn. It so obvious didn't fit that it was ludicrous. I had allowed my conscious mind in. I was trying to force something into the novel that is unnecessary. So everything after that point was suspect.

So as I write this I'm still reading, keeping what is in line with the story, and cutting the unnecessary stuff. (I am putting it in a separate file so I can keep track of the word count.) When something new needs to be written, I write it. When that segment is finished, I go back to reading, etc. Once I get it pared back down to the story, I'll fire on toward the ending. Yes, it will be that close.

Excellent writing day today, when you consider these are new words on top of all the cutting and reading.

Fiction Words: 4196

Writing of **The Scent of Acacias** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words

Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words

Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words
Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 21646 words
Day 7..... 1471 words. Total words to date..... 23117 words
Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words
Day 9..... 1782 words. Total words to date..... 27742 words
Day 10... 3315 words. Total words to date..... 31057 words
Day 11... 4196 words. Total words to date..... 35253 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 14200
Total fiction words for the year..... 618191

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Sunday, 12/6

[December 6, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Well, today is actually a day off for me, such as it is. I did begin reading in my WIP where I left off yesterday. I made a little headway but I had a rough night last night so I didn't get far.

Here's the link again for the bundle of writing books just in case you are considering it but haven't acted yet: <https://storybundle.com/nano>.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3, but I probably should have gone back to bed. Ugh.

Anyway, looking forward to sitting on the couch and watching football this afternoon. Since I was sitting up with my stomach last night anyway, I did watch one of the better college games I've seen in awhile, the Big 10 championship. It came down to the final 30 seconds when Michigan State beat undefeated Iowa for the crown.

Today it will be my Arizona Cardinals vs. the Rams, then the Broncos vs. the Chargers, and then the last hour of the Panthers vs. the Saints.

Definitely no walk today.

Today's Writing

I can't overemphasize the importance of the breakthrough on the novel yesterday. I'm calm again about the novel and I know it will flow to the ending now.

I needed that confidence today since I'm under the weather. That confidence is what enabled me not to screw with the story beyond my capabilities today. I know it'll still be there tomorrow, and that it will still flow well when I get back to it in earnest.

So for today, I started out calling it a day off. Then I did what I was comfortable doing and no more. But I'm still gonna count it as a writing day below.

Should be back full strength tomorrow.

Fiction Words: 1290

Writing of **The Scent of Acacia** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1.....	3887 words.	Total words to date.....	3887 words
Day 2.....	3092 words.	Total words to date.....	6979 words
Day 3.....	3365 words.	Total words to date.....	10344 words
Day 4.....	3077 words.	Total words to date.....	13421 words
Day 5.....	4486 words.	Total words to date.....	17907 words
Day 6.....	3739 words.	Total words to date.....	21646 words
Day 7.....	1471 words.	Total words to date.....	23117 words
Day 8.....	2843 words.	Total words to date.....	25960 words
Day 9.....	1782 words.	Total words to date.....	27742 words
Day 10...	3315 words.	Total words to date.....	31057 words
Day 11...	4196 words.	Total words to date.....	35253 words
Day 12...	1290 words.	Total words to date.....	36543 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 15490

Total fiction words for the year..... 619481

Categories [The Daily Journal](#)[Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Monday, 12/7

[December 7, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Feeling a lot better today. Hit the sack early last night. Fired up to continue my journey through The Scent of Acacias.

The Day

Rolled out right at 1:30, very early. Spent a couple hours relaxing my way into the day. Sipping coffee (18 ounce mug) and messing around on the computer.

I spent about a half-hour putting new words in the novel but my subconscious kept nagging me. Finally I stopped, opened the dashboard on my website, and double checked my upcoming posts on the main blog. Good thing I did.

I revised the post that's due for Dec 11, and while I was there I wrote a new post and got it scheduled for Dec 21, so I'm a little bit ahead on that front. I'll write some more and prepost them after I finish this novel.

I think I need to figure out how to start keeping tabs on nonfiction stuff that I write too. After all, that's part of my life and my output as a professional writer. I'll work on that later today while on a break from writing. (Um, nope. I'll work on that tomorrow or the next day. I'm so "in" the novel right now I don't wanna do anything else.)

Anyway, the little subconscious voice is satisfied for now, so back to the novel to play.

Wrote a couple of sessions, then out for a walk. A little over 2 miles, a little over an hour away from the desk.

And while I was out, the novel became clear. I was going in the right direction all along. It just happens to be a place I don't want to go. Have you ever had part of a story that will affect you so strongly that you just don't want to write it?

Thing is, it will affect the reader that strongly too. So here we go.

Today's Writing

I spent another hour or so working through some earlier stuff, piecing here and there. But part of my stop/start hesitation in going through that process was due, I think, to knowing the final climactic scene and not wanting to get there. Does that make sense? As I said, it is a massively emotional scene.

So I skipped ahead and wrote it. First time I've ever done that.

Just now, as I write this (2:37 p.m.) I spent an hour writing the big climactic scene. And frankly, I can barely breathe. Nothing I've ever written has affected me like this before. Oof.

So break time, and when I come back maybe I'll be able to write the bit of the novel that's left before the big climax. And then I'll have to add a resolution. I don't know yet what that will be, but I know it won't be longer than a couple hundred words.

Nope. Wrote couple more sessions of new words, and switched some stuff around, restored some stuff I cut the other day. Still gonna be a day or two to get all the bits and pieces where they belong. But that's okay. Now it's after 5 and I can only say I wish I could go longer on it today.

Fiction Words: 3224

Writing of **The Scent of Acacias** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

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Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words
Day 9..... 1782 words. Total words to date..... 27742 words
Day 10... 3315 words. Total words to date..... 31057 words
Day 11... 4196 words. Total words to date..... 35253 words
Day 12... 1290 words. Total words to date..... 36543 words
Day 13... 3224 words. Total words to date..... 39767 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 18714
Total fiction words for the year..... 622705

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#) [Leave a comment](#)

The Journal, Tuesday, 12/8

[December 8, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

I'm kind'a hoping today will be the last day on this novel. We'll see. If it isn't today, it will be tomorrow. You know, barring fire, flood, etc. Unless I'm able to get my laptop out.

For one thing, I'd like very much to have it out in time for Christmas shoppers. I also hope to have a boxed set out by then, and at least one of my distributors (D2D) wants items turned in by December 14th to be sure they're "live" by Christmas.

Of course, once it's published it's "out there" forever if you want it to be. And I do. Still, I'd rather the sales would start sooner than later.

The Day

Rolled out just after 4 this morning. Guess I needed some sleep. Not a lot else to say about the day. I wrote, moved this here, that there, wrote some more, walked around the yard for 15-20 minutes, wrote some more, grabbed some chips. You know. Normal stuff.

Today's Writing

Wow. I mean, wow. When I sat down this morning I wasn't certain whether I'd finish today or tomorrow. I had left myself a note on the manuscript to write one interim scene about a particular event that I had somehow forgotten earlier. So that was my jumpstart into the storyline today.

I wrote that scene (a little over 900 words) and a transition scene (a little over 500 words) that popped up as necessary.

Wrote three more sessions, including two endings. (grin)

I also adapted another short story. This one is from Book 3, Wes Crowley Texas Ranger. Parts of The Scent of Acacias refer back to this scene, so probably not a bad bet to make it a short story in its own right. Only took 87 new words too.

Overall, a pretty good day of writing for me.

Fiction Words: 3217

Writing of **"Wes Crowley and the Bank Robbers"** (short story)

Day 1..... 0087 words. Total words to date..... 0087 words (done)

Writing of **The Scent of Acacias** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1..... 3887 words. Total words to date..... 3887 words

Day 2..... 3092 words. Total words to date..... 6979 words

Day 3..... 3365 words. Total words to date..... 10344 words

Day 4..... 3077 words. Total words to date..... 13421 words

Day 5..... 4486 words. Total words to date..... 17907 words

Day 6..... 3739 words. Total words to date..... 21646 words

Day 7..... 1471 words. Total words to date..... 23117 words

Day 8..... 2843 words. Total words to date..... 25960 words

Day 9..... 1782 words. Total words to date..... 27742 words

Day 10... 3315 words. Total words to date..... 31057 words

Day 11... 4196 words. Total words to date..... 35253 words

Day 12... 1290 words. Total words to date..... 36543 words

Day 13... 3224 words. Total words to date..... 39767 words

Day 14... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 42907 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 21951

Total fiction words for the year..... 625942

Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)[Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Wednesday, 12/9](#)

[December 9, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Okay. I thought the novel was done, but I just wasn't happy with the ending. I knew it wasn't "right" but I wasn't sure why.

So I scrapped some stuff (not a lot), wrote some new stuff, and now it's good.

By the way, ALL of this that I've been doing for the past 21 months is because I am an adherent of Heinlein's Rules. If you want to hike up your productivity as a writer (write more and write better), follow Heinlein's Rules. More on this toward the end of this post.

Turned out the novel needed one more scene as well, and a completely different resolution. So this one took 15 days instead of 14 days. I'm not complaining. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 this morning. My subconscious already was firing on all cylinders. It had worked out the right ending and resolution for the novel as I slept. Excellent.

For those of you who like "process," at least for an individual novel, over the course of this novel, I initially cut (threw away, deleted) 11,410 words. It just wasn't right. Will some of that someday end up in another novel or short stories? Maybe. I threw it away, but it still came out of my head. So it can come out again. And it wasn't "wasted" because it got me, eventually, to where I am today on this book.

Then I started over. I typed the title, hit the Enter key a couple times, typed the first word and kept going.

I took a few wrong turns along the way, and later recognized only a couple of those were truly wrong turns. I sometimes had trouble shutting out my conscious, critical mind. But that's all right too. It's all a learning process. It's a series of lessons.

In the end (or "when the smoke cleared," since this was a western), I wrote 44,998 words of new fiction. (That does not include the 11,410 words I threw out at the beginning.)

Of those 44,998 words, I deleted some scenes that seemed to me separate of the actual storyline of this novel. So the final novel that's going to publication later today is 40,365 words. There you go. The full accounting. (grin) This is the most extra words I've ever written. The fewest extra words were 14.

When I finished the novel and the spell check, I came here to do this. Now it's almost 9 a.m. I'm going to prepare a cover, do the formatting, and get this puppy Out There. I plan to write a short story later today, and at least part of tomorrow I hope to spend putting together a boxed set of the nine novels in the Wes Crowley saga. This was the final novel in that series.

Okay, now it's almost 12:30. I've done all of the above plus published **The Scent of Acacias** to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. I also created a new page for it on [StoneThread Publishing](#) and updated the Wes Crowley Saga page there. I think that's all I have to do for now. Oh, I also recorded it on my Fiction spreadsheet.

I don't remember whether I've talked about that before. I believe in keeping good records. Not doing so can bite you in the whatsit down the line.

In the first section of my fiction spreadsheet, it has the title and author of each work, which collection it's in (for short stories), the publication date, word count, ebook price, page count, and print price. In the next section it has the buy link (URL for the book page) for Smashwords, Amazon, Apple, Kobo, B&N and CreateSpace. (The books are available in over 1400 separate venues now, but those are the biggies.) In the third section it has the ISBNs for D2D, Pronoun (not going yet), Smashwords, XinXii and CreateSpace. This gives me a ready tool I can use to tell anyone at any time where they can purchase the title from the retailer of their choice. I use it more often than you might think.

By the way, I just glanced at Dean's site. The introduction to his Heinlein's Rules lecture is at <http://www.deanwesleysmith.com/heinleins-rules-introduction/>. I recommend following him for awhile even if you don't follow him all the time. He also has another good post there today called Learning is Attitude.

Today's Writing

Less than halfway through my first mugga coffee, I started writing. That was about 3:30 a.m.

Now, less than 4 hours later, I hit three short sessions (and two short breaks and one long break) for a total of 2091 new words. And the novel is finished. And the ending and resolution are exactly right.

And I meant to do more today (as I mentioned earlier), but I just didn't. I'm gonna post this, and then I'm gonna prep a cover and publish the short story I put together yesterday.

Fiction Words: 2091

Writing of **The Scent of Acacias** (Book 9 in the Wes Crowley saga)

Day 1.....	3887 words.	Total words to date.....	3887 words
Day 2.....	3092 words.	Total words to date.....	6979 words
Day 3.....	3365 words.	Total words to date.....	10344 words
Day 4.....	3077 words.	Total words to date.....	13421 words
Day 5.....	4486 words.	Total words to date.....	17907 words
Day 6.....	3739 words.	Total words to date.....	21646 words
Day 7.....	1471 words.	Total words to date.....	23117 words
Day 8.....	2843 words.	Total words to date.....	25960 words
Day 9.....	1782 words.	Total words to date.....	27742 words

Day 10... 3315 words. Total words to date..... 31057 words
Day 11... 4196 words. Total words to date..... 35253 words
Day 12... 1290 words. Total words to date..... 36543 words
Day 13... 3224 words. Total words to date..... 39767 words
Day 14... 3140 words. Total words to date..... 42907 words
Day 15... 2091 words. Total words to date..... 44998 words (NOW it's done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 24043
Total fiction words for the year..... 628035

Categories [The Daily Journal](#)[Leave a comment](#)

[The Journal, Thursday, 12/10](#) [December 10, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Okay, I had a bit of a rough night last night, but the lag isn't too bad. So my goal for today is to write two separate short stories. If I can do that, I should shoot straight past my daily publishable-words writing goal.

This is my way of jumpstarting myself back into writing after finishing the novel. Helps me avoid the post-writeum depression.

I've mentioned before that I don't celebrate finishing a novel. For one thing, that would be like a mechanic celebrating putting an engine back together after an overhaul. Plus it means I'm leaving behind some people and situations I enjoyed, so what's to celebrate?

On the other hand, I do celebrate a great scene coming together or a great ending and resolution falling into place, as it did yesterday. That's like the same mechanic feeling satisfied that during the overhaul he increased the horsepower by 20 percent. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out just after 3 this morning, mostly awake, so I must have gotten more sleep than I thought.

Little girl cat (my youngest daughter) helped with that. She stayed in bed last night until about 2:30 when she came strolling in and jumped up on the couch beside me. She groomed for a moment, then curled up in the crook of my elbow and went back to sleep. Good girl. She was my alarm. Then she hit Snooze. Plus she was reunited with Dad. Made me smile. And we call *them* simple creatures.

So just after 3 I made my first mugful, let her go play, and completed my commute to my office (about 20 feet from the couch, 70 if you add-in the diversion for coffee).

Then I started writing this. Now I'm gonna turn to the writing 'puter and write something over there. Back in a bit. Oh, it's almost exactly 4:30.

Today's Writing

Well, by 10 a.m. I had the first short story finished. Three sessions and two breaks. During the breaks I read Dean's stuff (he has the first two chapters of Heinlein's Rules up) and spent about 10 minutes on Facebook with a favorite niece. I also signed up for one of his Classic online workshops.

The Classic workshops are the ones that used to take 6 weeks and he would assign and grade homework, etc. Then he'd leave the lessons up for a couple weeks, then close them off again. He calls these Classic because he stopped carrying them live but he still offers them (sans feedback on homework, which never was personal anyway) for half the price.

It's a good value at \$150 vs. \$300. When I get through the current course, I'll let you know what I thought of it. Oh, also, once you pay for the course, you can go back to it whenever you want. So like I said, it's a good value.

About 10:30 I decided to work on the drudge stuff for two stories (the one I wrote today and the one I adapted a couple days ago). Okay, so for each of those I created a promo document (title, description, keywords), formatted it (once for Smashwords, once for D2D and Amazon), created a cover and published it to Smashwords, D2D, Amazon and my website on the Free Story of the



Week. I'm up to February 15 now with stories of the week. Oh, then I updated my Short Story page on my website. Finished all that by 1, then took 20 minutes or so to walk out in the yard. Then back here to record what I've been doing, then a shower.

Now it's almost 2 p.m. I was turning to write another story, but I'm still tired from the coughing bouts last night. So instead of playing with another story right now, I'm gonna clean up a few things, publish this, and then do some reading. I'll start writing again tomorrow.

Oh, I did figure out how to add my nonfiction writing into my totals. So you'll see a daily and monthly total beginning today, and an annual total beginning next year, same as with the fiction. Nonfiction includes this blog (the parts that are unique each day) and the Pro-Writers blog. I don't include emails and all that nonsense. And of course it will be approximate, but probably not off by more than a couple hundred words per year or so.

Fiction Words: 2556 (I'll take it)
Nonfiction Words: 766

Writing of "Dr. Zimmer in the Amazon" (short story)

Day 1..... 2556 words. Total words to date..... 2556 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 26598
Total fiction words for the year..... 630589

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7203
Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49305 (since September 1)

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Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [Short Fiction](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Friday, 12/11](#) [December 11, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Still under the weather a bit today but definitely on the mend. It feels good knowing by this time tomorrow I ought'a be back to my normal level of unhealthiness. (grin)

The Day

Rolled out a little before 3 this morning. Sometime overnight my subconscious set up an alarm reminding me to get the "boxed set" of the Wes Crowley novels out for that one guy who might want it for Christmas. (grin)

So in the midst of my first mugga coffee, I started copying/pasting and formatting. Then spell checking, reparagraphing here and there, revising my use of ellipses and em dashes, etc. Basically I brought the entire series up to my current skill level as a writer. Amazing how much stuff I've learned since I wrote the first word of that series back on October 19, 2014.

And no, I don't usually go back over old stuff. I did so this time only because I was putting the whole thing in one book. And I didn't change words (except a few errors I found). Only paragraphing really, for readability and pacing. Over 800 pages, just under 415,000 words. Cool.



Created a promo document and a new cover for the overall series (that's it over there on the left) and then resized all nine novel covers and inserted them in the book as well, one at the beginning of each novel. Isn't Coralín pretty?

So that's all I did from about 3:30 right up through 10:30. That was almost an hour ago. Then I published the thing to D2D, Smashwords and Amazon. Then I came here to write this, and now I'm gonna break for a bit, maybe visit Dean's site (new Heinlein's Rules stuff over there) before getting to the writing computer.

Sometime in the next few days I'll do some research to see whether I can find a place that produces the boxed-set boxes. If so, and if they aren't terribly expensive, and if I don't have to order a b'jillion of them at one time, I hope to sell this creature through StoneThread Publishing in paper as a boxed set too. Failing that, I might have it put in one Lahahaha HONG volume.

Oops. On break since I wrote the above, and forgot to put the new cover on the publisher's site and create a new page for that one. So off to do that now, THEN to the writing 'puter. [Here's the book page](#) if you wanna look at it.

Okay, got the updates done, then had to go find my little girl cat. Now that everything and everyone is where it/they're supposed to be, maybe I can play for awhile.

Today's Writing

I just want you guys to know, turning out a lot of words doesn't mean I sit here and write all day. What it takes is getting to the writing computer, and then writing.

Case in point, at 10:30 this morning I made my first attempt to get to the writing computer. I finally got there shortly before 2 p.m. Hey, stuff happens. And when it happens around here, it seems to always come off the blades of a fan. (grin)

Had three frantic sessions crammed in between other stuff. That's all right. Had a blast while I was writing. And it's a funny story, depending on which way your sense of humor is warped.

Now I'm gonna post this (almost 5 p.m.) and put down some numbers.

Fiction Words: 2913

Nonfiction Words: 602

Writing of "Makilak Crismazizzle" (short story)

Day 1..... 2913 words. Total words to date..... 2913 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 29511

Total fiction words for the year..... 633502

Total nonfiction words for the month... 7805

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 49907 (since September 1)

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Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [Dean Wesley Smith](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Humor](#), [Short Fiction](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Saturday, 12/12](#) [December 12, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

This was mostly a non-writing day. I wasn't really planning it to be a day off, but that's how it turned out. So about 2:30 p.m., I called it.

Suffice it to say I really need to start getting two to three hours of writing done while the world is quiet in the early morning hours. Then no matter what happens the rest of the day, at least I got something done.

The Day

Woke up around 1 to rain pounding on the roof. Dozed off and on until I finally crawled out a little before 3.

The rain had stopped so I let the little girl out to play. Got my coffee, checked email, kicked around on Facebook. All of that was about a half-hour. In all that time I never checked the weather site.

Then I heard something that sounded like a train. I thought it was raining again, hard, but it didn't sound quite like that. Worried about the baby, so I got my ball cap and sandals and

flashlight and went out looking. HUGE wind and sleet/snow. Found her, got her in, then started to publish the story I wrote yesterday.

Well, I read over it first since I was dead tired when I wrote it. It wasn't bad, but I added almost 500 words and adjusted the character's voice to one of my favorite "attitude" accents. So I updated it below. I had hoped to write a lot more today. Uhhh, no. But that's all right. Writing is a game of averages.

Also updated a page on the publisher site with buy links and did some other little stuff there. Then I came here.

With the little girl in and wanting out, I type a little (nonfiction stuff, website stuff), and a cat passes between me and the keyboard. I type a little more, and a cat passes between me and the keyboard. It's a cycle, like the tides. (grin)

So that was the first couple hours.



Okay, I created a promo document and a cover for the new story. I like the cover, so I'm putting it over there on the left again. Got the thing published to my current three distributors.

Then I sent an email to Smashwords asking them to please update the Channel Manager on their site so it has a bulk option. I have over 180 titles on their site. Every time they add a new market that I'm already selling to through a different distributor, I have to go line by line through four pages of entries, stop at each title, scroll to the side, then click a radio button that says Opt Out. (The other distributors all have options to opt in or out in bulk.) So we'll see how that goes.

Got the story and cover published also to the Short Story page on my website and pre-posted as

the free short story of the week for February 22.



For the short story page, that makes

119 short stories. Who knew 119 would not be a prime number? But it's 17 rows of 7 pics. Go figure.

I ate a quick breakfast at my desk around 6:30, then started skimming pictures. A few days ago I was tasked with going through some of my landscape photos to select several to have printed and send to the kids for Christmas gifts.

My photos are not organized. Which is like saying at 2 p.m. on any August day in Yuma it will be a little warm. In my Photos folder I have 140 subfolders, each with anywhere from 100 to 800 or more pics inside.

I started picking pics at 7 a.m. and by 7:30 I had a few picked out, with a few more to find. Then the best-laid plans of a man (me) were overruled by the best laid plans of a mouse (I call him Jonas). I had to go capture Jonas, transport him outside and drop him over the fence. Amazing how agile those little things are.

I wound up moving a dining room table, a treadmill, an antique wash stand, a gun case we inherited from Indiana, and various and sundry other smaller items. All this time I was packin' heat in the form of a 3w x5l x3d thin-cardboard box, a stiff front cover from an old small Marine Corps logbook (to cover the box once the mouse was trapped inside) and a small but bright flashlight (to find the mouse by the glare of his beady little eyes). All of that in two hands. Oh, it was a great deal of fun.

So the Jonas Games started right at 7:30 and ended right at 8:30 with me depositing him over the back fence. He scurried off with never so much as a by your leave or adios or anything else.

Then I went back to selecting photos. It was a pretty quick and much less selective process from there on out. But it still took until 9 a.m. to be done with it.

That was over five hours ago. Ugh. I don't hover well, folks. I hover sort'a like a rock. Let me explain.

Please understand, I realize I'm probably wrong from the outset on this— I'm a guy, after all—but I tend to make up my mind about what I'm going to do, and then I get up and do it. Or I make up my mind that I'm NOT going to do something, and then I move on. It's a simple, easy, stress-free, hover-free way to live.

I'm not good with hovering. I am not the guy who would ever put together a committee to study the feasibility of meeting to determine whether we should meet to consider locking the doors and turning out the lights when the meeting is over. No sir. I'm more the kind of guy that people like me would hire to stroll past that meeting room and toss in a live beehive just to add a little color to those poor souls' drab existence. Or a CS (teargas) grenade. Whatever.

To slap you with a cliché, life's too short to spend it hovering. Do or don't do. And for goodness' sake, if you ever DO want to hover, go hover someplace where there's a pool table and some

friends with beer money and call me. Well, I guess that wouldn't really be hovering, would it? That's a decision. And a pretty good one.

Okay, so for the last five hours I've been caught up in a vacuum. So I've been doing things that require concentration but not unbroken suspension of the beta state of consciousness. So no fiction writing.

I worked on the slides for the neat little slide show on the home page of the publisher site. I created each slide myself a couple weeks ago. I re-created five of them today, saved them, resized them, uploaded them, deleted the old ones they were replacing, then put them in place in the slider. Then I experimented with various transition effects and settled on a boring but effective fade thing.

Finally I put a "quick, let's just get to it already" menu at the top of that home page as well. I don't like having to go on a quest to find my way off a splash page, so I figure nobody else does either. So now, in addition to the four photos and three other "picture" links on the home page, there's also a quick menu at the top.

Okay, interspersed with all the stuff I documented above, I kept coming back here in 10- and 15-minute spurts to add to this post.

Around 12:45 I had a quick bite of lunch. As happens on days that I actually get some writing done, at 1 p.m. I thought about putting my fingers on the keyboard and writing whatever comes. But some days fingers just naturally want to curl into the fetal position. Or maybe that's the jugular-clutching position. So no fiction writing today, other than the little bit you see below.

Today's Writing

Added not quite 500 words to the story I mostly wrote yesterday, then did all the stuff you see above, then came here to add this at about 3. I'm gonna post this, then go sit on the couch and sulk while I watch what's left of the Army-Navy game.

Okay, so at least I got the 483 words, albeit almost inadvertently. Still, better than rolling a zero.

Fiction Words: 483

Nonfiction Words: 1386

Writing of "Makilak Crismazizzle" (short story)

Day 1..... 2913 words. Total words to date..... 2913 words

Day 2..... 0483 words. Total words to date..... 3396 words (done)

Total fiction words for the month..... 29994

Total fiction words for the year..... 633985

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9191

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51293 (since September 1)

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Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [Frustration](#), [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Life Happens](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Sunday, 12/13](#)

[December 13, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Today is the first day of me going back to writing earlier instead of allowing my quiet time to be taken up with other nonsense.

I'm allowing myself a half-hour to an hour and a half administrative time. During that time I'll check and respond to emails, update my Fiction spreadsheet and tend to other administrative matters.

I'll also take care of the kitten and come here to begin the Journal entry for the day.

Today I'm going to try something I haven't tried in awhile. I'm anxious to get back into writing something longer than a short story. So in a few minutes I'm going to open my file on Norval Babineaux. (The Advent of Simon Stark novel sprang from it earlier.) I like the characters and the setting, so I'm going to go back to it. I'll read through it first, then put my fingers on the keyboard and just write whatever comes.

Below you'll see a "brought forward" number of words (not new words) and then new words written after that each day. If it works out the way I expect it will, it will turn into a novel or novella.

The Day

Rolled out a little before 2. Email, coffee, the kitten and here to write the above. This morning my admin time took a little over two hours. It included updating my Fiction spreadsheet with new buy links (D2D sends me an email when a title is available at a new vendor) and selecting a few professional pics to share with a friend for a cover she's trying to put on her latest title.

Okay, almost 4 a.m. so now to Norval Babineaux.

I started reading through Babineaux, allowing myself to touch it here and there as I moved through it. All of this was in creative voice, just reading and adding what sprang to mind naturally. I wasn't looking for how many times I used the word "that" or any of that nonsense.

About halfway through the reading I took a mandated break to conduct a catch and release on a mouse that my little girl cornered in the living room. Didn't have to move furniture, etc. and this one took all of five minutes from spotting him to dropping him over the back fence. It's that time of year, but I really wish they'd find somewhere else to go.

Read through some more, added maybe another hundred words and took a break to fill an order for The Wes Crowley Saga direct from StoneThread Publishing. Cool. He got a better price than he would have anywhere else, and the author (I) got a bigger slice of the pie. Win win.

In case you're wondering, here are the figures:

The author gets 85% of the retail price for direct sales at ST Publishing.

The author gets 82% of the retail price for sales at Smashwords.

The author gets 68% of the retail price for sales at B&N, Kobo, Apple etc. BUT

The author gets only 35% of the retail price for sales at Amazon. (Go figure.)

Took a break from 8:30 to about 9 a.m. to do some other little stuff, and I'm going back to the story now. Gonna hit it until about noon. That'll get me through what I wrote originally and maybe plus a little. Then I'm gonna watch football, probably for the rest of the day. I might get back to ol' Norval today, but probably not.

Today's Writing

Okay, I did a few reading sessions, each time adding maybe 10 to maybe 20 words.

Then three decent new sessions for the totals you see below. Not bad for a (voluntarily) abbreviated day.

Fiction Words: 3059

Nonfiction Words: 650

Writing of Norval Babineaux (Words brought forward 5231)

Day 1..... 3059 words. Total words to date..... 8290 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 33053

Total fiction words for the year..... 637044

Total nonfiction words for the month... 9841

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 51943 (since September 1)

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Categories [The Daily Journal](#) Tags [Harvey Stanbrough](#), [Professional Writer Series](#), [The Writing Life](#), [Writing](#), [Writing Into the Dark](#)

[The Journal, Monday, 12/14](#)

[December 14, 2015](#)

Hi Folks,

Well, on the second day of my new system of writing during my quiet time, I messed it up. (grin)

On the up side, I limited my waking up time to about ten minutes. On the down side, I spent the next two and a half hours on admin stuff, prepping *The Scent of Acacias* for layout for print. Sigh. I forgot I hadn't done that yet.

I already have folks wanting boxed sets of the trade paperbacks. Hard to sell those when I don't have them prepped yet. (grin)

I need to name my writing computer. Maybe I'll call him Hal as a nod to 2001: A Space Odyssey. I've always found it disrespectful that Picard barks "Computer" to preface a request to the ship, yet he recognizes the android/robot Data as a viable life form.

The Day

Rolled out right at 3 after a rough night, the first part of which I spent sitting up on the couch. I keep saying I'm gonna get a recliner, but if I do that I might not ever get anything done again. (grin) Little girl cat came in and got me around 11, so I picked her up and we both went to bed. She's such a good kit. She takes care of me as much as I take care of her. Give that girl opposable thumbs, there's nothing she couldn't do.

So email and the first mugga coffee, then the stuff above and then here to start this journal entry. And now it's almost 5:30 and I'm turning for the first time to my old buddy Hal.

Today's Writing

Well, Hal and I did all right. We did a little more reconstructive surgery, but mostly just writing off into the dark. I love that. Especially when I have talkative characters, a tense situation, and a desire on the part of one of the "good" characters not to defuse the situation but to nuke the bad guys.

Okay, the scene I'm talking about was a five year old girl and a six year old girl facing down five older kids. So no nukes, but some serious attitude adjustments. Great fun.

Today I worked through three "normal" sessions of about an hour and two shorter ones.

I think I have one more wound to close tomorrow (maybe two), and will do a lot of writing into the dark to cover the patch. After that it's onward and outward to the end.

Y'know, I enjoy these characters so much, I hope they do something I can turn into a true series. (Not a saga, one long story, like the Wes Crowley thing, but an actual series.)

Fiction Words: 3436

Nonfiction Words: 492

Writing of Norval Babineaux

(Words brought forward 5231)

Day 1..... 3059 words. Total words to date..... 8290 words

Day 2..... 3486 words. Total words to date..... 11726 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 36489

Total fiction words for the year..... 640480

Total nonfiction words for the month... 10333

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 52435 (since September 1)

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The Journal, Tuesday, 12/15

December 15, 2015

Hi Folks,

Back on track for writing during my quiet time. In fact, during the wake-up, I wrote an article, basically, to rebuff a HuffPo article in which the author got pretty much everything wrong. As my response was not really long, I'm including it in this post.

For reference, the full Huffington Post article is here:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/janet-tavakoli/apple-taxes-authors-patie_b_8711882.html

I hate it when such obviously slanted stuff is offered (and bought, unfortunately, by many writers) as fact. Here's my rebuttal.

The first sentence of Ms. Tavakoli's article is an outright falsehood. The rest of the article is misleading at best. No doubt this is the result of either extremely shoddy research or an intentional and very steep slant.

Let me set the record straight from personal experience. I have been selling my works through Apple since 2011. I don't have an account with Apple, nor do I own any iProducts.

Originally I sold to them through a distributor called Smashwords. I still could but when a new distributor with a much cleaner user interface came online (Draft2Digital, or D2D) I began using them instead to distribute my work to several major venues.

Today, I submit my work (184 short stories, novels and nonfiction books to date) through Smashwords, D2D, Xinxii (only long works) and Amazon. As a result, my titles appear within a week in over 400 sales venues and 1200 libraries worldwide.

Ms. Tavakoli's article is at least in the ballpark where she talks about venue shares of sales, but she completely omitted several major players, including Kobo, B&N, Baker & Taylor, OmniLit, Overdrive, Tolino (Germany), Rakuten (Japan) and Gardners (UK) as well as the subscription services, such as Scribd and 24symbols.

My sales personally are about 50% Amazon, 20% StoneThreadPublishing.com (the reader gets a big discount) and 10% Apple with the rest distributed among the others.

I encourage writers to indie publish. It isn't difficult, and it's far better than giving a large share of YOUR royalties to people you will never meet who do absolutely nothing to earn it. I also encourage indie publishers to do their own research and avoid such obviously hard-slanted articles as Ms. Tavakoli's HuffPo piece. Or email me. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Got the notice from CreateSpace that Book 9 of the Crowley series is ready to proof, so I'll do that later today and then order a few copies of several books so I have sets available.

Later today sometime I also have to write some nonfiction for my other blog.

The Day

Rolled out right at 2. Too cold to let the baby out yet so she's snoozin' somewhere. The first hour went by quickly with email that included the stuff above plus responding quickly to some Facebook stuff. Then here to start this. Now to make my second mugga stuff.

I spent another half-hour putting together a list of things I have to get done today. When more than two or three nonfiction things pile up on me and they're necessary, I make a temporary Do Today list and leave it on my desktop. I won't think about those things while I'm writing because I have them listed for viewing later.

Off to play with Hal.

Got two good sessions on Babineaux with a break in between before 6:30. Now I'm gonna proof The Scent of Acacias, then order books. I'll mark that off my list, then go back to Babineaux.

Okay, proofed Scent, ordered enough copies of various books to be able to mail out 4 full sets of the series at a moment's notice, then dealt with some stuff on Facebook. I guess that's not too bad for 2 hours gone. Back to Babineaux.

To knock another item off my list I searched high and low for a clock (free or premium) I could download for a website client. She wants something with an ocean theme. They just don't exist. Sorry Ronny.

There were a few other things I didn't get done on my nonfiction to-do list, but I'll move them to tomorrow. Except writing a blog post or two for the Pro-Writers Series. So I'm gonna close down the fiction writing now and go do that.

Back to Babineaux in the morning.

Oh, and Heinlein's Rules Chapter 4 is up over at [Dean's place](#).

By the way, I don't like that this little journal eats up the main page every day. So probably I'm gonna switch this back to a different website. You shouldn't notice any difference unless you read it on the website. And even then you won't notice much. Also, service should be uninterrupted.

Today's Writing

Three good sessions, not a lot of interruptions. Still not the stellar day I'm looking for but not bad either. The novel keeps moving forward so I'm good with that.

Fiction Words: 3056

Nonfiction Words: 1563

Writing of Norval Babineaux

(Words brought forward 5231)

Day 1..... 3059 words. Total words to date..... 8290 words

Day 2..... 3436 words. Total words to date..... 11726 words

Day 3..... 3056 words. Total words to date..... 14782 words

Total fiction words for the month..... 39545

Total fiction words for the year..... 643536

Total nonfiction words for the month... 11895

Total nonfiction words for the year..... 53998 (since September 1)

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Effective December 16, 2015, the Daily Journal has moved to a dedicated website at <http://HEStanbrough.com>.