



As the Author Learns

Bits & bites about publishing & writing from

J L Wilson

*Author of mysteries, time travel, romances, & other books
that defy categorizing*

What's Happening?

It's been a crazy year, hasn't it? That sort of sums it up, for me (and for the rest of the world).

On August 10, my world was turned upside down. We had an inland hurricane -- a derecho. We had no warning. There was a forecast for showers that day. At 1:00 in the afternoon, the storm swept through my town. We had 145MPH winds sustained for an hour.

When it was over, there was no power and trees were down everywhere. It's hard to explain to anyone how devastating this was. I live 5 miles from my office and it took me an hour to get home through flooded streets, tree-littered streets, and streets with live power lines down. When I reached my neighborhood, I couldn't find a way into our street. Trees were uprooted and across the road.

When I finally did get home, I found 3 oak trees blocking my driveway. My husband met me at the road and we climbed over the debris to our house. Two trees were on top of the house. We couldn't see the house for the debris. We had no power and would soon have no water, because we're on a community well and the pump quit working.

It took six days for our power to come back on and water to be restored. We were lucky. A crew of workers came to town from Texas and cleared all the trees in our neighborhood. We had 32 trees cut down. That's in addition to the ones that fell down or snapped off. We lost 75% of the trees on our woodland acreage. At last count, 56 trees were down.

The tree guys took the debris to the curb where the county hired crews to remove it (we are outside the city limits). Crews have removed 550,000 cubic yards of debris to date (a pickup can hold about two cubic yards). That's just from the county roads. That doesn't count all the debris that's been removed from the city.

My husband and I spent most of August clearing debris and assessing what was left. The damage from the tree and the bulldozers that had to come in to remove the trees had torn up all of our gardens. What was once shady was now in full sun. To top it off, we had a severe drought in August. We had debris piled at the street for crews to pick up. In some places, it was 8 and 10 feet high, with massive tree trunks. Then we had rain. 10" of rain in a week.

What was once dry was now mud. The county has done one more pass through the roads and they will do one more then the crews will leave. So everyone is trying to finish what they can before snow sets in.

City crews are still removing trees from city streets. They're about 80% done *with the first pass*. And they're working around the clock. The storm killed 70% of the trees in the 3rd largest city in Iowa. People were without power for weeks. Some people still don't have Internet service. It's been two months and people who are trying to work from home and home-school their kids are using hotspots in the conference center because power lines were snapped.

I'll bet you didn't hear much about it, did you? Somehow, here in Flyover Land, stories just don't get much time on national news.

Well, the county is recovering, slowly but surely. Our house has a new roof which will serve the new owners well. Yes, we're moving. The task of re-landscaping our property is too much for us. We've found a new home and we'll be moving in December. And we have an offer on our house, and hope to close on that sale a day or two after we move to the new place.

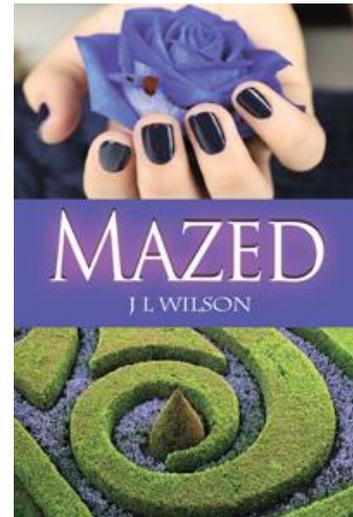
How's that for a topsy-turvy summer?

In Other News

During all of this, I had 6 books release. Talk about being busy. *Mazed* released in August, just about the time the storm hit. And I released the Adventures in Retirement series, which I'm pleased to say has sold very well.

Links to all my books in their various formats are at

<https://books2read.com/ap/xKkz7Z/J-L-Wilson>. I decided to use that website because it's easier to keep things updated.



What's Next?

This is normally when I'd be taking off to have a casino outing with my friends, but the stupid pandemic has made that a no-go this year. But I am meeting up with them! We're going to gather at a friend's house and have a casino-themed weekend where we'll brainstorm books and get caught up with what's happening in everyone's lives.

I sure hope life settles down and I get a chance to get some writing done! My Little Mermaid book (*Beached*) is with my editor and before the storm hit, I was working on my Rapunzel book (*Heir*). I would love to get back to that story and try to write it by the end of the year.

Oh, and NaNoWriMo (National Novel Writing Month) will be starting in November, so I'll be writing a book then. Writing every day.

I also want to get going on covers for my Big Series, which I want to publish next year. And covers for the Celestial Service books, and the final threesome in my series. That should keep me busy in between packing, moving, and unpacking, right?