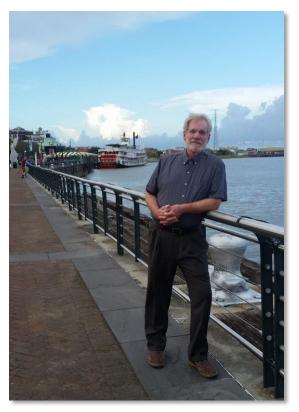# AUTHOR NEWSLETTER

Herb Hughes

Winter/Spring, 2022

WHY READ?

Why take the time to read books when you could be active and on the go and getting things done? Wouldn't that be better? Well… Not necessarily.

Researchers at Yale University studied 3,635 people over the age of 50 and found that those who read thirty minutes every day lived an average of 23 MONTHS LONGER than non-readers or magazine readers. That's almost TWO EXTRA YEARS!

Why is that? Reading fiction is pure escape, an adventure to another world where others might live or die in a dangerous situation while you are safe and comfortable in your easy chair. It typically relieves stress and lowers blood pressure. It carries a depth not found in television shows or movies by allowing you to use your imagination to "see" the worlds the author has created for you. A movie presents a story to you, while a book soaks deep into your thoughts so that you actually "live" the story the characters experience.

The benefits of reading include, but are not limited to:
1. Learning - increases your knowledge about people and the world we live in (Whenever anybody asks Elon Musk, the founder of SpaceX, how he learned to build rockets, he says, "I read books.")
2. Keeps your brain exercised (Joseph Addison, a 17th century English writer, wrote, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body.")
3. Helps keep you focused
4. Improves your memory
5. Entertainment!
6. Connects us to humanity and creates empathy
7. Improves our communication skills
8. Stress goes out the window (Research has proven that just 30 minutes of reading can lower your blood pressure, heart rate, and feelings of psychological distress. Another study compared reading to taking a walk, having a cup of tea or coffee, and playing video games. The study found that even six minutes of reading can be enough to reduce stress levels by more than two-thirds.)
9. Improves mental health
10. Helps you live longer!

This quick sketch is a custom bookcase I plan to build next winter. It's a tree with branches that serve as bookshelves. At the top, the tree morphs into rolling ocean waves that span over a sliding glass door and connects to a similar bookcase on the other side. Once the shelves are complete, I'll include a photograph in my newsletter.

Research has confirmed that reading stimulates a complex network of circuits and signals in the brain. As you improve your reading ability, these networks become stronger and more sophisticated.

In another study, researchers measured how reading a novel affects our brains. The study's participants read the novel "Pompeii" by Robert Harris. As tension in the story developed, more areas of the brain were activated. The best part? The scans showed that brain connectivity increased while reading and for days afterward, demonstrating the enormous benefits of reading books every day.

Bottom line, our brains have a "use it or lose it" policy, just like our muscles. In other words, if we don't exercise our minds regularly, our cognitive abilities may decline. However, when we read every day, we can keep them strong and healthy! (And I have several novels I can suggest as a starting point. ☺)

[CREDIT: Most of the information in this article was synthesized from an article by Dee Marley, CEO of The Historical Fiction Company.]

POUNDING THE KEYS – INFALL & THE CRYSTAL SHELL

[Pounding The Keys is a regular feature about my current novel in progress.]

Publishing a regular newsletter has a way of forcing you to admit to your productivity shortcomings. Yes, I have been as wishy-washy as Charles Schultz's cartoon character, Charlie Brown, over the past months. (Actually, I know a real-life Charlie Brown. He's a friend and a great guy. He's not wishy-washy at all. In fact, my bouncing around on my writing goals over the last year makes him look like the epitome of single-minded determination.)

What's happened? I've flip-flopped again. I've returned to working on Infall. The Crystal Shell has been placed on the back burner. But the absolute truth (since it's already obvious to those who read this newsletter) is that I have been woefully non-productive with my fiction writing during this time. (But note that I continue to read every day. I don't let anything get in the way of my reading!)

I am in the process of redoing my house, all of it, and have spent far more time with lumber and trim and sheetrock and paint than I have with my laptop and the characters in my novels.

So, for a change, I'm not going to make a commitment to finish a particular book by a particular month. There is too much work on my house that must be completed in the near future. I will commit to continue my writing as time allows. I've got way too many novels swirling around in my head. I need to get them out so they'll quit bothering me! ☺

JUST FOR FUN

[Writer's jokes. Something to help you smile.]

A writer was prosecuted for a short story he wrote
They gave him a long sentence.

As a lumberjack starts his chainsaw he hears the tree begin to cry. "Please don't cut me down!" The tree pleads, "I'll do anything!" The lumberjack says, "Fine! If you can solve this impossible riddle that has fooled some of the greatest minds from doctors, writers to philosophers, I'll spare you."
The tree was stumped.

What happened to the Professional Writer who had bowel surgery?
He ended up with a semi-colon.

Thank you for reading my newsletter,
Herb Hughes

PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ALONG TO FRIENDS AND FAMILY and ask them to do the same. Also, if you have read one or more of my novels, please consider leaving a review on Amazon and/or Goodreads. Thank you.

If you would like to receive my newsletters, please send your name and email address to: herbhughes1994@att.net. Please add this address to your safe senders list to avoid the Junk Mail folder.

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