

Monday, June 09, 2008

Craig Harms's interview



I am a little late getting Craig Harms interview and I apologize for that to Craig and you all. Life happens and gets in the way. I am trying to finish a book that is due at the end of the month and get ready for a conference in Springfield, MO this upcoming weekend. I will be teaching a class on pacing. There will be a booksigning at the Borders in Springfield (only one) on Friday, June 13th from 4-6 pm. If you are in the area, please stop by and say hi.

Congratulations, Kristi. You are the winner of Tina Forkner's book, Ruby Among Us.

Craig is giving away a copy of Day Omega. If you want to be entered in the contest that will end next Sunday evening, please leave a comment with your email address in it (I have to have that to enter you in the contest) or email me at margaretdaley@gmail.com.

Also I will be posting an interview from Nancy Farrier on Thursday and announcing another book drawing (for her Heartsong, Picture This). Again if you want to be entered in her drawing, leave a comment with your email address in it (I have to have that to enter you in the contest) or email me at margaretdaley@gmail.com.

Craig Harms's Interview:

1. What made you start writing? I guess I was lucky in that I found what I liked doing and was fairly good at even at a young age. My skills were honed over the decades by being blessed with mentors who helped me develop a love for words, who instilled confidence in my ability, and who taught me the technical aspects of writing. And I've had the chance to write professionally throughout my varied careers in advertising, program research in network television, comedy, radio, and my current job, which is producing web and blog content/print material for a New York-based art gallery.

2. How long have you been writing? When did you sell your first book? I've written since I can remember getting a grip on those humungous red pencils in kindergarten. Seriously, I've written since I can remember, usually humor/satire in the vein of James Thurber and Mark Twain when I was a lad in self-imposed exile inside my room. I guess I always knew I had a knack for putting words together for the effect I was trying to achieve on the reader—usually to make them laugh. My first book was just published last February.

3. How do you handle rejections? I'll admit I don't handle rejection very well. Whenever I set my mind to something, I do it to the best of my ability and then when "they" pick someone else over me, I'm disappointed that they decided to settle for second best. Fortunately, in the book business, I've never gotten the dreaded rejection letter. Yes, you read that correctly—the first publisher I submitted my first MS to signed a contract with me. A miracle or being at the right place at the right time? A lot of both!

4. Why do you write? My goal in every writing project is to leave the reader with some sort of message neatly woven (hopefully) in a nice little package. I also enjoy writing because, unlike real life, it gives me the chance to have a bit of control over characters, their actions, reactions, and fates. Fiction takes flight over the often tedious, disappointing, and difficulty of real life.

5. What would you be doing with your free time if you weren't writing?

Probably be teaching "parrot kindergarten". You see, my wife Sue and I have two African grey parrots, and they are as smart and emotionally equal to four to five year old humans. When I was going to school for my Master's degree, I'd take a 3 o'clock break and we'd have "music time" when we would all sing and dance to our favorites like Mick Jagger and Johnny Cash, learn basic colors and new phrases, or just hang out together as one flock. These birds need intellectual and bonding stimulation or they'd go crazy (like us!)

6. What are you working on right now?

I've got two WIP's in the creative cauldron. One is a time-traveling tale about a quantum physicist who goes back to the week of Jesus' crucifixion with help from Satan to thwart God's promise of John 3:16; the second deals with twelve men around the world who each find an ancient necklace from the tribes of Israel and the gargantuan task they are asked to perform. Both stories are barely in double-digits page wise, but hope to keep plugging away getting them researched, plotted out, and into book length.

7. Do you put yourself into your books/characters?

Aren't most characters based subjectively on the writer's own experiences, background, or traits, at least subconsciously? That is another reason why I like to write—because I can let someone else do my bidding for me. In other words, my motivations, messages and ideas I want to communicate to the reader are done so by using a fictional character as the conduit. For instance, Sam Dimas, the protag in my end-times thriller just out, is extremely cynical, among other personality traits. When he goes off on one of his tangents, it's really my often distrustful, contemptuous, or pessimistic interpretation of society.

8. Tell us about the book you have out right now.

The novel I mentioned above is called Day Omega, and deals with the seven-year countdown until Christ's final return. To give you an indication of the story, the tagline is from 2 Timothy 3:1 – "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come". It starts with the Rapture of the Church and deals with what lengths people might go to survive the coming apocalypse. Of course, it is merely speculative, but I do use Bible quotes at the beginning of each chapter that

adds some realistic possible scenarios.

Day Omega also deals with the manipulations of a one-world government and the lies and agendas spun through the propaganda machine. It's also a warning to be prepared, for we never know when our Lord will come and take us away!

9. Do you have any advice for other writers?

Getting the first few pages or chapters from the brain to the page is the easiest part. You're enthused, have a subject and plot you're positive is "sure fire, can't miss", and ready to put in the work. But after awhile, the words may not come as easily, so you put it off for a day, which may grow into a week . . . a month. How many unfinished works lay in desk drawers or cardboard boxes?

Start, but stay dedicated and write regularly. Even if the words don't come today, twice as many may be laid out tomorrow. There are many peaks and valleys in writing, editing, and rewriting. Stay focused and they will level out considerably. Learn about the craft of writing and find mentors who will gladly help you along until you see that last, satisfying punctuation mark in print!

10. How important is faith in your books?

Incredibly. As I mention in Day Omega's preface, it is dedicated to Jamey, my nine-year old stepson who died in 1994. Before, I was an agnostic at best, but that little boy with the big heart worked on me to dedicate my heart to Jesus. Then he went up. Sue and I could not have survived the horrible ordeal were it not for faith. God has a way of making things right, although it's in His time not ours. He's there when you feel your grasp on that last thin, frayed rope is about to slip, and will catch you in the fall.

11. What themes do you like to write about?

Writing is writing and I like versatility. I had a non-religious short story published with a horror theme. I like to write satire, spoofs, and comedy. I currently write art-inspired pieces. Fiction is fun in that you can let your hair down and imagination run wild—no rules, no bosses, no deadlines!

12. What is your favorite book you've written and why?

Day Omega, natch. My first attempt at a long form—and published. What was cool about it, is that I did not intentionally start to write a novel. After Jamey went up, I began to scratch out a story in long hand, just as a way to keep a bit of sanity. But slowly, ever so slowly, the characters and story took shape, so I kept going. Ten years later, my baby was nestled comfortably between two covers!

13. What is your writing schedule like?

I write every day, whether in my journal, at work, on a blog, or on the current WIP. And because I'm the "trained professional", I'm called upon quite a bit to help others spruce up their written communiqués. Oh well, use it or lose it!

On a final note, I would like to invite everyone who lives in or near Quincy, Illinois to a book

signing at the Mustard Seed inside the Quincy Mall this Saturday, June 7th from noon till 2:00. All book sales will be donated to Camp Callahan's "Sponsor a Child" program. Camp Callahan provides an outdoors experience for physically or mentally challenged children and adults, as well as providing them with lasting memories. See what it's about at www.campcallahan.com. And check out my website at www.dayomega.com.

Thanks, Margaret, for the fifteen minutes of fame.

Posted by Margaret Daley at [7:51 AM](#) [4 comments](#) 