The Weekly Man presents:

The Coffee Shop Writing Workshop
Introduction to the Workshop and Mindless Writing

The focus of this workshop will be on writing in coffee shops. There will be some general discussion on writing technique and creative writing but most of this will be in the Resources section at the end of the workshop. The main focus will be on writing fiction, but the principles apply to pretty much all writing, both fiction and non-fiction.

Coffee shop writing is what it says: It’s writing in a coffee shop. Any kind of writing…fiction, non-fiction, essays, blog posts, poetry…writing.

What coffee shop writing is not: Cruising the internet, posting a recipe on Facebook, talking to someone for an hour about that novel you’re going to write someday, reading (unless it’s related to whatever you’re writing)…sitting and staring at your blank page or screen.

What is the difference between a coffee shop, café and coffee house? Generally a coffee shop specializes in coffee, though some light food may be offered. Cafes are generally equally weighted in coffee and food and coffee houses sell coffee, booze and food. The definitions are cause for an eternal war between good and evil.

This is an interesting article and one of hundreds of definitions you’ll find on the web: https://startmycoffeeshop.com/whats-the-difference-between-a-coffee-shop-and-a-cafe

Mindless Writing.

The single biggest block to getting started on the first line or paragraph of a novel is the expectation that the first line will be the greatest thing you’ve ever written and that it has to be perfect, that everything you’ll be writing will flow out of that first line or paragraph.

The truth: the longer you spend trying to make the first line perfect, the less likely it is that you’ll ever finish what you started to write. You may never even finish the first sentence.
The only way to write consistently and regularly is to write without elevated expectations of yourself, without editing, and without your imagined reading audience looking over your shoulder at everything you write. To do this, you need to write mindlessly.

Do this every morning for 5 to 15 minutes. Pick something to write about. It could be a dream you just had, it could be a conversation you heard, it could be something you read in the news or heard on the radio, it could be an object in your room, it could be symptoms you’re feeling from a cold. Just pick a subject and start writing.

Here are the tricky parts—you pick a time to start writing and you stick with it, whether you have something to write about or not. You may start off by writing “I have nothing to write about” over and over until something else comes into your mind.

Once you start writing, you can’t stop. It doesn’t matter if you run out of things to say, you keep writing, putting whatever words come into your head onto the paper. If you find yourself wandering away from your topic, go with it. Just keep writing down whatever comes into your head.

When the 15 minutes are up, stop writing. You’ve made a deal with your subconscious. Keep it. You’re building a sense of trust between your conscious mind and your subconscious…opening a portal into the wellspring of your creativity so that your creativity can emerge freely, without judgment or criticism.

In short:

1. Pick a time period (beginning and end)
2. Pick a subject
3. Write continuously, without stopping
4. Write for the time period you agreed on and then stop whether you’re finished or not

**EXERCISE**

Think of a word off the top of your head…the first one that comes to mind. Write it down at the top of your page, think about it for a moment or two and then start writing. Once you start, don’t stop until the 15 minutes are up.

**The Benefits of Mindless Writing**

Mindless writing is exploratory and spontaneous. You relax and expect nothing of yourself other than to put words on paper for a specific period of time—you let the words flow out of your subconscious without stifling them by editorializing, evaluating or judging. Editing and reviewing can be done later. Here are just a few of the benefits:

- Opens your creative mind for the rest of the day
- Helps to break down the hold of that inner judge
- Helps to release your creative potential and subconscious thoughts
- Overcomes writers’ block
- Helps to develop your personal writing voice
- You can apply it to your novel writing later. It prepares you to actually write when it’s time to write, as opposed to just sitting there waiting for inspiration to strike you with a million volts of creative juice

Do this exercise every day. You can do it in the morning before you go to work or class. It’ll set your mind to creative mode for the rest of the day. You can do it at the coffee shop before you start writing; in fact, it might be a good idea to do only this for a few weeks to get yourself into a good coffee shop writing mood that will carry into your other writing projects.

**Facebook**

This workshop has a Facebook page. You may have questions, thoughts, problems and insights about writing in coffee shops and about this workshop. Just go to the Facebook page and ask, expound and explore. I might not always be there to answer questions, but you’ll find others of like-minded coffee shop writers to hang out with.

Here’s the link: https://www.facebook.com/pg/The-Coffee-Shop-Writing-Workshop-105788991076681/about/?ref=page_internal
About Writing in Coffee Shops

Rules of Etiquette
Always keep in mind that the coffee shop is a business and that the tables are there for customers with the understanding that each customer should occupy a table for a reasonable amount of time. If it’s not busy, it doesn’t really matter. If it’s a place that’s busy then the rule of thumb seems to be 1 coffee equals 1 hour. Any longer, and you should buy more coffee (discounted in most places) and maybe some food. The good thing about the 1 to 2 hour rule is that it fits the definition of how much writing you should do each day (assuming you have other main interests or time-consuming activities like work and school). And don’t take a four-seat table if you’re alone. This article at Mashable is worth reading: https://mashable.com/2011/07/13/coffee-shop-etiquette

Why Write in a Coffee Shop?
Some people can’t stand the silence of writing alone. I can’t. I need noise and movement that I can ignore while I’m writing. When it gets too quiet, my mind closes down on the creative front. There’s a certain mood a coffee shop offers that encourages creativity for some people…like you.

After building a coffee shop routine, you’ll begin to associate the coffee shop with your writing. It will become your place of work. When you sit down at your table with a steaming cup of java, you’ll automatically be in writing mode because that’s what you do in the coffee shop. There may be days when nothing comes. This is a good time to do some mindless writing about coffee cups and stir sticks until the words start to flow.

The Caffeine Angle
To caffeine or not? It’s evening and a cup of coffee consumed after 5 PM can keep you up well into the night. This is a personal choice. I’ve met people who can sleep five minutes after drinking an espresso. I hate them. Don’t be embarrassed if you have to order a de-caf. No one’s going to point at you and laugh. At least not much. And there’s always herbal tea.

How About You?
Why do you write in a coffee shop? Visit the Facebook page and share your views.
Selecting a Coffee Shop for Your Writing

Finding the Right Place to Write

Every coffee shop is different. Some are loud, some are quiet, some serve great coffee, some serve swill, some will put you into a writing groove, some will make you want to eat the porcelain cups.

Finding the right coffee shop isn’t always an easy matter. You need a place that suits you with all your habits, ways and needs. You might be one of those people who can write anywhere…just bring on the coffee. You might find a place that turns your creative flow into a tsunami of creation, or you might end up in a place what wraps a cellophane bag around your brain. Finding the right coffee shop may take time. I suggest you experiment with a few until you find one or more that meets your needs. More than one is best in case your favorite is closed for maintenance or some other crazy reason.

Here’s a checklist of things to look for. You don’t have to meet all the criteria, but try for as much of it as possible in two or three coffee shops. And try each place a few times (except the ones you definitely don’t like right off the bat).

Mood/Atmosphere

If you want relaxing, look for a quiet place with little or no music and a quiet crowd. You’ll usually find a place like this off the beaten track and away from commercial areas. If you want some background noise and a sense of human movement, look for a place that’s generally busy with a quick turnover in customers over the day and evening. Buy a coffee and sit in the coffee shop for 15 or 20 minutes and focus all your attention on the atmosphere around you. Is it positive or negative? Do you feel like writing or do you feel like leaving? Ask yourself if you could actually do some writing here. Make some notes about the place…what you like and what you don’t like.

The People

Wring in a coffee shop on a daily basis will give you plenty of opportunities to smile while you imagine looking into someone’s eyes as you strangle them to death. Here’s the problem: An increasing majority of people in the 21st Century are self-centered and completely oblivious of the needs of other people and they’ll be coming to a coffee shop near you. They’ll get on their phones and talk loud enough for everyone in 50 feet to hear every single meaningless word they say. They’ll crowd you out with their tables and friends and try to
push you into so little space that you’ll leave as they laugh all around you. They’ll chew gum with open mouths and the force of a thousand slugs being crushed under a toothy tire. And they’ll do it a few feet from your ears.

Before you commit to a coffee shop, get to know the clientele. Are they like the people I just mentioned? Or…do they take their calls outside or in the hall of a mall…or do they talk quietly? Are the people considerate for the most part? It’s been my experience that some places attract considerate customers and some attract assholes. If possible, scout your coffee shops at different times during the day to find out what it’s like with a morning, noon and evening crowd. Which of these times is best for you?

The Staff
Baristas: they can be angels, they can be demons. More important than the coffee the barista hands you is the way the barista hands you the coffee. I’ve had cups of coffee shoved in my direction. This is not the way I want to be treated, especially given the price I pay for the coffee. This is my place to write. I want it to be full of positive vibrations and a sense that my needs are being supported in this place. If the staff treats you like shit, leave. Don’t go back.

The staff should be friendly and accommodating. They should place your coffee on the counter as close to you as possible. They should smile while they’re dealing with the public. That would be you. You deserve a smile.

If you frequent the place, you should know their names and they should know yours. They should know what you want the moment you step through the door.

And they should know how to make coffee. One of the worst experiences I can imagine is feeling the excitement of diving into the great writing I was doing the night before, getting all set to continue, taking a sip of coffee and tasting…sludge. Coffee that’s lost its coffee-ness by sitting too long or being made wrong in the first place will distract with angry taste buds.

Last note on the staff: If they treat you well, tip them. Remember, these are people who generally work for minimum pay because they’re expected to receive tips.

The Coffee
I won’t say much here…just that, if you love coffee, you’ll want good coffee. If you don’t mind what you’re drinking as you write, it’s not an issue.

If coffee keeps you awake at night, you should drink de-caf or green tea in the evening. I know a writer who drank one or two espresso coffees each evening when he wrote, even though it kept him up all night. He wouldn’t drink de-caf because he felt that would be cheating. Adjust your coffee drinking habits to your lifestyle and needs, and don’t worry about cheating.

The Coffee Shop
We’ve covered mood and atmosphere and the staff, but there are other things that can make or break your coffee shop experience. For instance, I ordered double espresso once and it was served up in a cardboard cup that was too big. I almost poured it onto the counter and walked out. There’s a certain amount of image and imagery surrounding the drinking of espresso coffee and none of it comes in a cardboard cup.

Light
Look for lots of window space if you don’t want to feel crowded. Look for cozy and secluded if you need that feeling of being away from everything in the real world as you write. Some shops are well-lighted, some are dark. Try writing in both to see which fans your creativity the most.

Customers
Check out the other customers. Do their noise levels distract you? Consider this: Two people sitting two tables in front of you having a conversation isn’t going to bother you (unless they’re very loud). It’s just part of the experience and why you’re there. However…consider someone sitting two tables away, facing you and talking on their cell phone or, even worse, someone with headphones on and talking to someone online though a microphone…while they’re pointed straight at you. I had to stop writing in one coffee shop because it was taken over by gamers.

Seating
Is there lots of seating? Getting your gear together and heading out to your favorite coffee shop can be a bummer when you’re standing there, steaming cup of coffee in hand, and there’s not a single empty table. This is heartbreaking. I always check for spots before I buy a coffee. If I see just one spot available, I put my coat and backpack at that table. If there’s nothing, then I go elsewhere. This is why it’s good to have more than one spot to write.
Fixtures
Make sure the fixtures are to your liking. Some places are furnished with uncomfortable plastic chairs that seem to be designed to give you back ache...they are...they’re designed to get you out of there as quickly as possible to make way for the next paying customer. Keep in mind the number of hours your butt is going to be parked in those chairs. This is one of the things that make mall food courts and fast food places like McDonalds and Tim Hortons less than ideal places to write.

Check out the tables. I wrote for a while in a place where the tables were wobbly. It drove me nuts. I had to put napkins under one of the legs to make it even with the other, but the wobbling would be back within minutes. The tables should be steady and a comfortable height for writing and word processing. If the tables are too high or too low, you’re not going to find your comfort zone. You also don’t want one of those tiny round tables that are just big enough for two cups of coffee and one or two elbows. If it’s just a laptop or notebook and a cup of coffee, this might work. Anything else...and you’re going to feel cramped and start dropping things.

Ambience
What’s the ambience like? This kind of fits in with mood/atmosphere, but I’d like to keep them separate in terms of the first being set by the people and ambience being set by the place itself and what the owners have done to make it that way. For instance, the walls might be barren or have a few ads for coffee brands...or...they might be full of abstract paintings or black and white photographs of moody scenes.

Is the overall feeling beat, artistic, academic, business, social? Pick one (or more) that suits your mood and self-vision.

Music
Make sure it’s not a music bar. I’ve seen this a few times. A place presents itself as a coffee shop and then starts bringing in bands and novice musicians playing their first live crowd. Coffee shop music is kept low and non-invasive, along the lines of a single singer and guitar player...two at the most. I’ve heard heavy metal being played in coffee shops.

Internet
Make sure there’s a good connection...one that doesn’t conk out when there’s more than three people using it. You’ll need this for research. I use it to send my evening’s writing to myself in an email, which creates a great day-by-day proof that you did the writing.

Food
Do they offer food? If they do, what’s it like? I’m sure some of the sandwiches I purchased at one shop were at least a week old. Generally, the food will be light...like pastries and sandwiches.

These are some of the things you should take into consideration in your search to find the perfect coffee shop(s). It might take time but you’ll be spending a lot of time there, so make it a place that boosts your urge to write, not sour it.

EXERCISE
Make a list of the things that exemplify the ideal coffee shop for you. This is where you should be writing in. Take your list to a few coffee shops and check off the things you find on your list. It may not be close to you; you may have to drive, walk, bike, take a bus, teleport...just pick the coffee shop that’s closest to your ideal and as close to home as possible.

How About You?
Got some ideas of your own about selecting the right coffee shop? Go to the Facebook page and share them.
Preparation and Routine

Physical Preparation
Bring stuff you need. Bring writing implements such as paper and pen or a laptop. I know a man who’s written dozens of short stories on his cell phone. If you bring a pen, make sure you bring more than one and that they all have ink. Bring a sharpener if you use pencils.

Bring headphones just in case there will be a table of noisy people (a rarity in your chosen place, but a possibility).

Bring things like aspirin or anti-acid tablets. You shouldn’t have to leave after half an hour because you have a headache.

Dress appropriately. Don’t under dress and freeze your ass off. Don’t over dress and drown in sweat.

If you bring your work on a flash drive, make sure you bring the flash drive and that it has your most recent work. I generally mail the evening’s work to myself when I’m finished writing, which gives me access to it anywhere in the world at any time. If I can’t get an internet connection, I’m very happy that I backed everything up online and on the flash drive.

If you’re taking your cell phone (some leave it at home), make sure it’s fully charged and that the ringer is not annoyingly loud.

Mental Preparation
We’ll get into this in more depth in the next section. The most important thing to remember here is to let everything else in your life slip away. Your one concern is writing. For the next hour or two, nothing else is important.

The more often you write in a coffee shop, the easier it will become. Once you’ve established that this is the place to write, the more likely you’ll automatically get into writing and work mode as soon as you feel that coffee cup in your hands.

Your Writing Routine
This is how I do it. You might want to fiddle around with this until you work out a routine that works for you.
Relax
Sip some coffee and re-read whatever you wrote the previous day. Make some minor changes but save major things for when the piece is finished. I’ve seen some people close their eyes for a few minutes or practice some other form of relaxation…I saw a woman with her feet behind her head, doing yoga before she wrote…in the coffee shop.

Keep this in mind: It doesn’t matter what you write. It’s first draft and no one else will see it. You’ll have all the time you need to re-write it and make it perfect.

Focus/Visualize
Make some notes about what you’re going to write just to get your mind in gear. I usually make a few notes on who’s in the scene, what the main action is and how it ends. I might even make a note about the imagery and symbolism. This should be mindless writing and it should never take more than two or three minutes.

Write
Put the notes aside and write mindlessly and quickly, don’t stop to correct or revise, write for an hour or so. The key is to not stop, at least not long enough to stop the flow of the story-telling. It’s almost impossible to let a spelling error go after you’ve seen it…or a grammar mistake that will eat at you as you write. Go ahead and fix that small stuff (but not when you’re doing your mindless writing exercises), but stay away from the big stuff. If you spend half an hour writing and re-writing something then you’re getting into too much detail and not enough story-telling. Save the big revisions for when you’ve finished your first draft.

Reflect/Review
Read over what you’ve written and make minor changes, remember: major revisions come when the first draft is finished.

Re-write
I don’t do this, but some people do. You might squirm at the thought of looking at first draft work the following night. You want to look at something that’s at least half decent. First draft work is rarely half decent. It sucks and it’s awful. But it provides a stairway to good writing. The problem with re-writing is that it takes time and it focuses on too many details. At this point, just get the story first and then make it read well. But then, it’s your writing…do what works best for you.

Stop Writing
Don’t write beyond what you can handle. I never spend more than two hours writing, especially considering that I may have to get up for work the next day. If you’re staying until midnight every night and working a full-time job, you’re going to be a prime candidate for burnout.

Final Draft
Eventually, you’re going to finish the first draft of your novel. This is when you get into the real job of writing. This is the beginning of the revision process. We won’t get into that here. For the process I recommend, click here: https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/revision.pdf

EXERCISE
Do the mindless writing exercise using the word BANANA. Write for 15 minutes and put it aside without reading it. Come back to it the next day and re-read it and make some revisions. Come back to it again a week later and re-read and revise. Read it the next day and compare it with the first try.

This exercise will show you how abysmally bad writing can be crafted into something good, something that will make you say (with a smile), “Yep, don’t think I’m going to jump off that bridge today.”

How About You?
How do you gear up to write in a coffee shop? Share those ideas with others on the Facebook page and see what they do.
How to Develop an Idea in a Coffee Shop

We all have ideas, some of them great, some not so great. Some get out there and make a difference in people’s lives. Most don’t. Most ideas are never developed, generally because we just see part of it and not the whole. It might be a single line of dialog or a visual image deep in our heads or an idea we’ve had for a novel or play that’s been stuck in our heads for years.

I know people who have been talking about the same novel they’re going to write for decades. They talk for about five minutes, which works out to one or two pages of writing. I see them again in a few years and they’re talking about the same thing and they still have only one or two pages of writing.

The germ of an idea is never enough. You need an idea that’s more like a seed, something that will grow and take on form, direction and life. You do this with the story dump. The story dump is like a box into which you throw any and all ideas you have and, when it fills up, you empty it and put things together so that they make sense.

I use a hard-back notebook and pens. I can carry these around with me everywhere I go, and they never run out of batteries. But, you can use a laptop, cell phone or whatever device that fits your comfort zone.

Begin by writing down all the ideas you have so far for your novel. Get this down as quickly as possible. If new ideas come to mind, make a quick note but don’t develop anything. When you have everything written down, go through your notes and start asking questions. How does so-and-so manage to get into a job he’s obviously not qualified for? Who murdered Little Joe and why? Why did Janice do this? Was she thinking when she did it? What research will I need to back this up?

As you develop each of your ideas, more ideas will come. As you answer questions, more questions will come. Writing a story dump is like rolling a snowball down a hill. As it rolls down, it get larger and larger. The more you write in your story dump, the more you’ll have to write about.
Take your story dump to dental appointments, social events…everywhere. When you run out of things to write, do back through your notes and read them. New ideas will come. Do backstories for your characters. See the link in the resource section for backstories. Sit two of your characters down in a confined space and write up a conversation for them.

Basically, the story dump is just that…a place where you dump everything that comes out of your head. Write about the characters, the plot, the settings, the mood, the themes, the story structure, everything you can think of about a specific scene, dream sequences, snippets of conversation, anecdotes, observations, topics to research, relevant news items…everything.

Go into as much detail as you want, but don’t feel obliged to push yourself to do things like write perfect conversations. At this point, you’re just getting whatever comes off the top of your head, writing quickly and mindlessly and having fun. The detailed writing comes later, after you’ve committed to the story. At this point, you’re just trying to decide if you’re really that committed to spend months or years on this idea. You’re trying to determine if you really have enough to write this story, or if this story is compelling or interesting enough that anybody would want to read it.

The best way to do a story dump is to ask questions and then answer them and let the answers go wherever they will.

After you’ve become familiar with the general idea of the story, start asking yourself what scenes you’ll need and write mindlessly about the scenes. Come back to them later and develop them more. The more scenes you write, the more scenes they’ll inspire.

If you can’t help yourself, and you ramble on for several paragraphs, then go ahead. Be random. Let your mind relax and just write what comes into your head. After a month or so, you’ll know if you have a good idea and if it’s something you can commit to for the duration.

If it isn’t, then come up with another idea and story dump it. The beauty of a story dump is that it allows you to size up your idea and decide if you can really stick with it before you spend several months writing a story that you’re never going to finish.

On the other hand, you might begin story dumping an idea and a better idea might come out of it. This is why you should treat the dump as a huge mindless writing exercise. Don’t think too deeply at this point. Don’t commit to anything. Let your thoughts wander all over the place. Nothing you do at this point is wrong. Don’t make it a brain buster. You can linger over something for a minute or two, thinking about how a character might respond to something, or what details would be necessary to make a setting real, but don’t get caught up in this. The idea is to be writing. If you can’t think of anything to write about, look back further into your previous notes and start writing more about them. The more you add to the story dump, the more you’ll release thoughts and ideas about your previous notes.

Keep writing. Tell yourself, “If I stop writing, a ten thousand pound weight will drop out of the sky and land on my beer.”

NOTE: Make labels in the margins of your story dump. If you have a character description on page one using Sarah G, then wherever you describe her in the following pages, label them Sarah G. You might even want to put extra notes like Sarah G – conversation with X, or Sarah G – on catwalk. (HINT: You might want to write in a heading as you finish each session of writing in your story dump.)

EXERCISE

Using the four scene elements below, write a story dump. Write down anything that comes to mind…even if you begin to digress.

Character: Adam’s dog died this afternoon.
Setting: Queen Street was deserted.
Mood: Something wasn’t quite right.
Plot: The victim’s throat had been cut from ear to ear.

When the Idea Box Is Full
This is going to be different for everyone. At some point, you have to stop story dumping and start arranging all those disparate ideas into something coherent, something that is plotted. Sorry…not going to get into that in this workshop. It’s just not that closely tied into the coffee shop thing. However, I have some links for you. You can use a storyboard to order and plot your writing or you can use a treatment. I’ve written five novels using the storyboard method. Learn more about it here: https://biffmitchell.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/storyboarding.pdf. I designed this workshop using a treatment. See the treatment here: https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/treatment-template.pdf

How About You?
Any questions? Ask away on the Facebook page.
What to Write

I’ve written five novels in coffee shops. I’ve written dozens of short stories in coffee shops. I’ve written a few poems in coffee shops. I’ve written a few hundred articles and blog posts in coffee shops. Coffee shops are great places to write.

However, you may not know what you want to write; you just want to write…in a coffee shop. And that’s cool.

This is where mindless writing comes in as *deus ex machina* to save your writing urge at the last minute. If you really want to write in a coffee shop just because the beautiful idea of it somehow attracts you, then do it…just for the hell of it.

Go to your coffee shop, sit down with a steaming cup of coffee and think of something that happened during the day. It might have been an argument with your spouse, or something that happened at work. It might be something you saw in the news that caught your interest. It might be a thought you had sometime that day.

Whatever you have on your mind that can be written on a piece of paper, entered on your laptop or phone…anything. Write about it. Mindlessly. In a coffee shop. Then you’ll be a coffee shop writer.

BTW, someone once asked me if you can call yourself a writer if you’ve never been published. The answer: If you’re writing, you’re a writer.
If you publish (or post) what you’re written at the coffee shop while you’re still there, you need to do some serious self-editing (unless you carry an editor around in your pocket). This isn’t as much a big deal if you’re posting to a personal blog as it is when you post to a professional site either for money or as part of your extra curricular work…and, if you have any pride at all, you’ll want even your personal blog or website to carry the best writing possible.

Getting someone to edit your work (unless you have an editor in your pocket) is likely not going to happen if you’ll be publishing your work the same evening or day. You’ll have to do this yourself. It may not be a professional editing job, but sending something out with no editing at all shows a lack of respect for your own creation, so how can you expect anyone else to respect it or even read it?

Stumbling through paragraph after paragraph of spelling mistakes, typos and senseless sentences isn’t my idea of enjoyable reading. If there’s more than two mistakes in the first paragraph, I stop reading. You don’t have to be a grammar expert to do basic editing…you just have to take a short break before publishing and then carefully read (don’t skim) what you’ve written.

And get this…you’re a writer, so you should be able to read intelligently. Look for sentences that may have been corrupted when you re-wrote something as you were writing. Look for fine-tuning points like: did you use it’s when it should have been its; did you write your when it should have been you’re? These are mistakes that undermine your credibility as a writer and mark you as an amateur.

Pay attention to your spell check…both ways. Sometimes the spellcheck will find things you missed and sometimes you’ll find things that the spell check got entirely wrong, especially when it comes to sentence construction.

Ideally, you won’t publish a piece the same day you write it. The best scenario is to schedule your writing so that you know what you’re going to write over a period of a week or more and you write each piece a day or two before publication. This isn’t always possible. I spent a month in 2014 taking a picture each day and writing something inspired by the image. Sometimes I finished minutes before the deadline and had to publish without editing. In this case, I re-read the piece the day after and made edits. It’s best to do this as early in the day as possible given that most people read blogs later in the day. For heavy duty editing and revision, check out the PDF on the resources page.
Free Resources

The resources listed here are a mixture of ebooks and PDF mini-workshops derived from a workshop I taught through the University of New Brunswick called Writing Hurts Like Hell. Most of these documents are slanted toward fiction writing, but the concepts can be incorporated into non-fiction writing to give it a bit more originality.

A very abbreviated Plan for Writing a Novel
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/writeanovel.pdf

How to Handle Violence and Humour in Your Writing

This is the template for using the treatment method to develop your novel or non-fiction project. I used it to develop this workshop. :)
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/treatment-template.pdf

How to Write Sex and Foul Language

The Revision Process
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/revision.pdf

How to Explore Character Through Backstory
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/backstory.pdf

How to Develop Believable Characters.
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/characters.pdf
How to Write Realistic Dialog and How to Come Up with a Title for Your Work

I last update this about a decade ago, but some of the information is still useful. If you know nothing about marketing, this is a good place to start.
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/emarketing-tools-for-writers.pdf

This is a workshop I gave at the 2011 Maritime Writers' Workshop. It's dated, but still has some useful information.
https://theweeklymancom.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/get-published.pdf

How to Create a Storyboard
https://biffmitchell.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/storyboarding.pdf

Understanding People Through Motivation
https://biffmitchell.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/motivation.pdf

Searching for Peace: The Strange Adventures of Biff and the Fox. This isn’t really a resource, but every word of it was written in a coffee shop.
https://biffmitchell.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/searching-for-peace-1.pdf

Why Would Anyone Want to Become a Writer (in two parts). Again, not a really a resource, but loosely pertinent. Notes from my blog on the madness of being a writer.
Part 1: https://wordpress.com/view/biffmitchell.wordpress.com
Part 2: https://wordpress.com/view/biffmitchell.wordpress.com

On Describing Writers. OK…not really a resource, but sort of related…and humorous.
https://wordpress.com/post/biffmitchell.wordpress.com/1804

A Writer's Real Job. I’d say this is an initial resource if you want to be a writer. Sort of.
https://wordpress.com/post/biffmitchell.wordpress.com/1478

Can Anyone Write a Novel? If you have any doubts, read this.
https://wordpress.com/post/biffmitchell.wordpress.com/1345

Coffee Shops and Espresso (or Coffee Shops and the Single Writer)
https://wordpress.com/post/biffmitchell.wordpress.com/1468
The Weekly Man was written over a period of several years. I took a break to study photography and, for a while, I lost interest in it because the improbability of the story was so great that I assumed no one would read it. They would just point at me and laugh.

But after a careful examination of the world around me, I thought, Geez, look how improbable all this is...but people are still living it.

The base theme of The Weekly Man is our ability to believe anything we want to believe no matter how convincing actual truth and reality are. If we’re not programmed to see it...we don’t see it. We accept the illusion and live with it no matter deeply we intuit the lie.

The novel was rejected by over 200 agents. I imagine many stopped reading when the saw the typo on the first page. I would. One of them requested to read it and then rejected it because there were too many characters and she found this confusing. I’m predicting that she will never read War and Peace.

The thing is...I think it’s a pretty damn good story.

In January of 2019, I was in a conversation with a friend about things to do on coffee breaks. One thought led to another and I thought, I should write a novel that people can read on their coffee breaks. It should be exactly enough each day for five or ten minutes of reading.

After pondering what kind of novel it should be for about three minutes and twenty-one seconds, it occurred to me that I already had the novel written and all I had to do was break into the seventy-two coffee break slices of reading.

And thus was born The Weekly Man: The World’s First Free Daily Serialized Coffee Break Novel. And every word of it was written in a coffee shop. You can read it free at https://theweeklyman.com.

I’m Biff Mitchell. I’m bald and I write in coffee shops and take pictures of ice formations. I have a website at www.biffmitchell.com.