



Page Turners

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This newsletter will also appear at: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/pageturner.htm> with authors' photos

The authors' cooperative, Page Turners, welcomes you to this free, monthly newsletter. We encourage you to forward it to others you think would enjoy it, print it to share with friends, and invite them to subscribe by emailing us. You may unsubscribe at any time.

Contact: PageTurnerHome@aol.com Editor: Joan Upton Hall

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Meet our Staff: Authors whose pages you must turn!

M.D. Benoit <http://www.mdbenoit.com> Science Fiction Mystery, Alternate Reality
 Mayra Calvani <http://www.mayracalvani.com> Horror Dark fantasy, Satire, YA, Children
 David Ciambrone <http://www.davidciambrone.com> Mystery, Technical management, News column
 Diane Fanning <http://www.dianefanning.com> Mystery, True Crime, Suspense
 Jackie Griffey <http://www.jackiegriffey.com> Cozies, romantic suspense, horror, historical
 J.C. Hall <http://www.jc-hall.com> Fantasy, Nonfiction
 Joan Upton Hall <http://www.joanuptonhall.com> Fantasy, Paranormal, Travel/History, Editing advice
 L.C. Hayden <http://lchayden.freemove.com> Mystery, Inspirational, Horror, Children
 Gloria Oliver <http://www.gloriaoliver.com> Spec Fic, Fantasy/SF/Horror, YA
 Sylvia Dickey Smith <http://www.sylviadickeysmith.com> Mystery suspense
 Cheryl Swanson <http://www.cherylswanson.net> Contemporary thriller, self-help nonfiction
 George Wilhite (website under construction) Mystery/Detective, Western, Speculative, Noir, Nonfiction

MAIL BAG – READERS WRITE

Have questions you'd like to ask any of these authors? Comments about their books? Their favorite desserts? What pets they have?

Write to Page Turners at the email address shown in the masthead.

Be sure to state which author you are addressing.

Dear Joan,

Please pass along the news that we are changing our name to **Houston Writers Guild** (previously called **Fort Bend Writers**) to better reflect our membership. Also the name of the newsletter (previously called **Footprints**) will from now on be **ScribblePad**.

Roger Paulding, President

Editor's note: Thanks for the information, Roger, and keep on offering those great contests and workshops.

Have a new publication to announce? Tell us about it. Here's all you need to do:

1. Mention PageTurners newsletter (something specific you like about it would be nice — but isn't required).
2. Announce the title of your book (or whatever), a short blurb about it, and where it can be purchased.
3. A short blurb about you as a writer and your website if you have one.

Con Report

(Been to a writers' conference recently? Tell us about it.)

AUTHOR OF THE MONTH: **Gloria Oliver**

Lives near: Dallas, Texas

Writing genres: Spec Fic, Fantasy/SF/Horror, YA

I was born in Puerto Rico in 1964. Puerto Rico is a Commonwealth of the United States set in the crisp blue Caribbean Sea. It's a small island, about 50 miles wide and 100 miles long. It's in the tropics, so while I had seen snow on TV, I never actually got to experience any until we moved to the continental US in my teen years. (First time I experienced true cold for the first time, too. Brrr!)

I spent time in Ohio, Texas, New Hampshire, then back to Texas again where I've been ever since.

I started writing in my teens just to get a couple of ideas out of my head where they wouldn't bother me anymore. But I didn't really get into it full time until after I was married and met a wonderful group of people doing an Amateur Press Association on a Japanese cartoon called **Gatchaman (Battle of the Planets** in the US.) Not only did the people in this APA talk about the show, they also wrote stories about the characters. Once again I was bitten by an idea and attempted to put it to paper. It was pretty abysmal, but thanks to the enthusiasm and encouragement of one of the members (Yes, Wendy, this is all you fault!) I kept at it. Between the members' comments and Wendy's never ending patience, I slowly honed the craft. (Weirdly enough there are some things about writing you don't notice or can't learn unless you are just doing it!)

Thanks to an idea sparked by my husband, I wrote my second novel. Since then, I've sold a few short stories and been included in a number of anthologies. Zumaya also accepted two other manuscripts—**Willing Sacrifice** and **Price of Mercy**, which should see release in 2010. I even have another book with Hard Shell Word Factory called **Cross-eyed Dragon Troubles**.

Now I continue to learn all sorts of things about marketing and sales! A lot more work than writing books, let me tell you! Whee!

And what do I do in my spare time? (I have some?) I read (very important if you want to write), I write (yeah, this one too), go to the movies, read Japanese manga (comics), watch Japanese anime, and attempt to destress from work.

Book of the Month: Cross-eyed Dragon Troubles **by Gloria Oliver**

Quick Line: "Harry Potter meets Dragon Riders of Pern"

Excerpt:

By the time Talia reached the trees, Kel was removing his helmet and critically studying the dragon's predicament. Clarence's neck was twisted up and over his back; the dragon watched Talia as she came close.

"Are you both all right?" she asked them.

Kel glanced back in surprise, but quickly looked away, his cheeks flushed. "I'm fine. I'm just a little winded."

"I'm in good health as well, except for this bit of trouble of course." Clarence sent an annoyed glance at the trees pinning him where he'd fallen.

"He's stuck?" She was already pretty sure of the answer.

Kel sighed. "Afraid so."

"Do you need any help?" she asked. "Just tell me what you want me to do. If you prefer, I'm sure I can round up at least a few people to come over and give you a hand."

Kel slowly shook his head. "It's all right. Thanks anyway." His voice lowered to where she almost couldn't hear it. "This is all part of my punishment."

She frowned, not understanding what he meant. "Punishment?"

Kel cocked his head in Clarence's direction. In a flash, she understood. None of this was an accident—Clarence had landed there deliberately, hoping to make Kel pay for all he went through in the past month. She shook her head, not wanting to believe this, but what the dragon said next took any doubts right out of her head.

Yes, thank you for your offer, but Kel will be able to deal with this on his own.

She blinked several times as she mentally stumbled for something to say. "I see."

Url for more info and Sample Chapters - <http://www.gloriaoliver.com/crossed.html>

Book Cover Blurb:

Talia didn't want to be apprenticed, not even to the prestigious Dragon Knight's Guild. She is taken to the school by a cross-eyed dragon and his partner, Kel. A dizzying, madcap ride leaves her less than eager to be a knight, but soon she finds out the guild has need of many types of people. Running into the dragon and squire again and again, she comes to realize the unlikely pair are outsiders in their own school—participants of the dragon-human pairing ritual, which in the end didn't work quite as intended. They are stubborn loners who are determined to overcome the obstacles in their path and make a true pair. Or are they?

As Talia's first year at the guild evolves, she must deal with the quirks of the Administrator, her lessons, the odd rules of the school, the students, the mystery of Clarence and Kel, and somewhere in there, possibly decide what it is she wants for her own future.

The First Chapters Club

By M.D. Benoit

It's not a tale of money, revenge, and it's not modeled after the story of three women intent on plucking their husbands dry. But the First Chapters Club could lead you to laughter, tears, passion, fear, discovery, love, travel, murder, adventure, ogres, fairies, evil, aliens, evil aliens, zombies, samurais, and much, much more.

Zumaya Publications has assembled a collection of seven first chapters (so far) from its catalogue, in addition to one short story and the full text of my first novel, *Metered Space*. The company offers them for free at Scribd (<http://www.scribd.com/zumayabooks>). You can read them online or download them in .pdf or text format to read on your own computer or reading device.

Scribd's website states that "Scribd is the place where you publish, discover and discuss original writings and documents. More than 50 million people each month are finding or sharing fun, functional or fantastical writings and documents on Scribd.com and tens of thousands of other websites that have embedded Scribd's document reader."

Zumaya Publications (<http://zumayapublications.com>) has chosen this method to get readers to know some of its exciting writers –and entice you to want to read more, of course! What better way to find something new and exciting to read, including **Mayra Calvani's** brand new novel, *Sunstruck*. Go try it. It's free.

Editor's note: You'll see other Zumaya-published authors there as well, with more coming out all the time.

A Guide for Book Discussion Groups

David Ciambone

The following is a set of guidelines for use during book discussions at a book club. It is a start for the users to build upon. Feel free to add or subtract as you feel the need. The following is based on a discussion by a number of writers and readers and parts of various articles. I wish I could credit all the participants but I don't have names. But whoever you are, thanks for the contribution.

- After you read the book, how did you feel?
- Did you enjoy the book? Why or why not?
- If you picked up one idea that is central to the book, what would you say it is?
- What problems or issues are raised?
- How realistic were the main characters?
- Would you have made the same or similar decisions in their place?
- Were there characters you identified with? If so, how?
- Did you feel you were experiencing the time and place in which the book was set?
- Is the story's time period critical to the story and why?
- How would it have been different if placed in a different time and location?
- Did the plot pull you in?
- How did the story make you feel?
- What emotions did the story evoke?
- Did you learn anything from the story?
- Did the book end the way you expected?
- If you could change anything about the book, what would it be?
- Describe what you liked and disliked about the author's style.
- Would you read another book by this author?

GET 'EM WHILE THEY'RE HOT (Other Releases & Successes)

News, News, & More News by: Mayra Calvani

I am the new Latino Books Examiner for **Examiner.com**. I'll be featuring Hispanic authors and books on my column. If you're a Latino author with a book out, drop me a line at mayra.calvani@gmail.com, <http://www.examiner.com/x-6309-Latino-Books-Examiner>

My nonfiction book, *The Slippery Art of Book Reviewing* (co-authored with **Anne K. Edwards**) has been nominated for a **Foreword Best Book of the Year Awards**. Visit <http://www.slipperybookreview.wordpress.com>

My parody/satire, *Sunstruck*, has just been released by **Zumaya Publications**. Visit <http://www.sunstruckthenovel.blogspot.com>.

I also have a fun blog where my golden retriever, **Amigo**, interviews authors' pets: <http://www.petsandauthors.blogspot.com>

April 1st Release – No Foolin' by: Sylvia Dickey Smith

April Fools Day is no trick—my brand new website launched this day! I'd love for you to check it out at <http://www.sylviadickeysmith.com> and subscribe to the newsletter so I can keep you informed on the latest in the Sidra Smart adventures. I promise not to flood your inbox with trivia or blatant self promotion. You can easily opt-out if it gets to be too much.

Also please note that my BRAND NEW book *DEAD WRECKONING* launched April 1st and is available at any online or brick and mortar bookstore. If you purchase a copy online, I'd love it if you would write a quick, short review and post it on Amazon.com or Barnesandnoble.com

If you haven't been following Sid's adventures, I invite you to start by reading the first two. You can find the them listed on my website.

For the Love of Libraries

If you have a local library project to announce that promotes reading and/or writing, let us know.

Book Sellin', Searchin' & Signin' Shenanigans

(Or: A funny thing happened on the way...)

Snowbird from Hawaii?!

by Cheryl Swanson

(Early March) Aloha! We're freezing out here in Kauai. I'm taking my kiddo and husband and heading for Phoenix to warm up.

Who would have thought....?

Nobody else sent in their odd antice this time. Heavens! I hope we aren't all getting stuffy!!!

FUN STUFF, CONTESTS & OFFERS

Let's Talk

by L.C. Hayden

One of the most important things to me as a writer is keeping in touch with my readers. You can catch glimpses of me in the newsletters and through my website, but unless I hear from you, I can't communicate with you. So, if you have the chance, I'd love for you to contact me. You can do so by visiting my website at <http://lchayden.com> and signing the guest book or by directly emailing me at lchauthor@yahoo.com. I'd love to hear from you.

As you may know, I live in El Paso, TX., so if you're ever in the area, please feel free to contact me. I usually do a monthly writing workshop at the University of Texas at El Paso. In April I'll be doing two: one on character development (April 7 and 9) and another on writing dialog (April 28 and 30.) If nothing else, drop by my workshops.

What's Cookin'?

by: Sylvia Dickey Smith

Along with my new book release, I am launching a recipe contest, the winners of which will be included in book four, due out in 2010. My private eye, Sid's sidekick, Aunt Annie, thinks she's the best cook on the planet and at the back of book three, a few of her recipes are featured. She's southern, and lives in Cajun country, so she cooks it all. Meanwhile, Sidra has found a pickle recipe she is dying to make, thereby giving Annie a little competition!

How about a little competition from readers too?

Send your favorite recipe entry (originals preferred) to be entered into the contest. You can submit more than one entry, and the top five will be selected for inclusion in the book, but only the winning recipe will win a free, autographed, copy of book four. Email your entries to sylvia@sylviadickeysmith.com.

Sometimes when we write books, and we reassess later, we must cut one of our favorite scenes, for any number of reasons. Such happened to me with *DEAD WRECKONING*. Because I love this first chapter so much, and had so much fun writing it, I am offering it to folks who may want to read it before they read the book—newly released.

If you would like to receive a free copy—yes, I said FREE copy of this first scene, send me an email (address listed above), request it, and I will forward a copy of it to you by return email.

Win a FREE 7-day Caribbean Cruise for Two!

(ongoing contest good until June)

Register with each purchase of a book by either **Sylvia Dickey Smith** or **Joan Upton Hall**.

Simply send proof of purchase (such as an Amazon.com invoice or book store receipt) stating the book title, and we'll fill out an entry card with: Your name, Address, City/State/Zip, and Phone and Email address.

Email either author: jmuHall@aol.com or sds@suddenlink.net

Please state: "Caribbean Cruise Sweepstakes" in subject line of email.

Drawings done on: **June 1 & December 1 (Winner for last June was Marion Stwalley)**

Choices of Sylvia's books at: <http://www.sylviadickeysmyth.com>

Choices of Joan's books at: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/books.htm>. To order from this site, click either the **Amazon link** or **Barnes&Noble link** to pull up Joan's books at the online store.

Novel Spin-Off - Short Story Contest

Promote yourself. Show your talent!

Offered by: **Joan Upton Hall**

Early bird advantage: Freelance editor, Joan Hall, will give a full professional edit to the first 15 story entries that follow the rules, plus any other stories that grab her interest.

- **Finalists:** The best 5 stories will be published on my website along with the authors' bios (further chance for readers to know you!). The link to these stories & bios will be published for an international audience in **PageTurner** newsletter, as well as other places to be determined, and authors will be encouraged to send friends and relatives to that link. (Author photos optional)

- **The Winner:** The winning author's name will be used for a character in my next book (or winner may name a character) and will be noted in the book's Acknowledgement page.

- **Deadline:** June 1, 2009, but selection will start early, so please enter soon.

Go to this link: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/books.htm> and click "Add your own story" to see rules, how to enter, and the advantages of entering.

Readers Ask Authors

J.C. Hall on the HOT SEAT

(as last issue's Featured Author)

Reader asks: There are no dragons in your novels, even though they're fantasy. Surely there's a dragon in your next novel, the one called *The Reclining Dragon*?

J.C. Hall answers: Actually, **The Reclining Dragon** is the name of a mountain range in my characters' world of Rogrovia, so-named because the undulating peaks resemble the humps of a dragon's back. However, in *One To Break And One To Mend*, the third and last instalment of my **Silver Lakes trilogy**, **Corryn** discovers an egg which eventually hatches into a baby dragon. So, there you go. A dragon at long last. J

HOT SEAT

People are always asking us, "Where did you come up with (such-and-such character, idea, place, etc.)?" Okay, so here's YOUR chance to find out. Each month, we'll put the previous month's Author of the Month on the hot seat to come up with a short answer.

Gloria Olliver is our Featured Author for this month, so check out one of her books and ask away.

Of all questions received, we'll draw one. Please send your questions by the middle of next month.

Send your question (**and a sentence or two about yourself if you desire**) to:

PageTurnerHome@aol.com or to the author directly through her website shown on Page 1.

If your question is chosen, we'll credit you.

FOR YOU READERS WHO ALSO WRITE

A Writerly Walk by JoAn W. Martin

If you think you want to be a writer, the experts say, "write, write, write." The other half of writing is read, read, read. I would like to propose a third "half" to becoming a writer. When you feel exhausted with reading and writing, take a writerly walk and expect to be surprised.

A writerly walk means walking alone, no one to talk to, no headphones in your ears. A writerly walk is a conscious effort to sharpen your sensory perceptions: look, listen, smell, touch, taste. Breathe deeply through your nose, hold it for ten seconds, breathe out through your mouth. All this inhaling/exhaling puts oxygen in your brain, releasing creative endorphins.

Sometimes a story problem, writer's block, can be worked out while walking. But some of the most fruitful of my writerly walks are:

* Happen upon a how-to: I heard acorns crunching under my feet. How could acorns be recycled short of raising pigs? I gathered a variety of sizes and loaded my pockets. I could drill a hole through the acorns and write a craft story detailing how to use a pinecone for the body, acorns for a head, arms, and feet. My grandchildren will love making pinecone people.

* Encounter holiday stories: No matter what the season, I watched for decorations in the neighborhood yards. One large flowerbed had bales of hay decorated with pumpkins and chrysanthemums. Plywood cut-outs of turkeys were carrying protest signs encouraging us to celebrate Thanksgiving by eating beef, chicken, fish, or Chinese noodles. What a great story! Turkeys go on strike!

* Develop a scene: I tried to slip up on the turtles sunning themselves on the bank of the drainage ditch. Rarely do I see them, just hear the splash as they escape me. Trucks rumbling by didn't faze them, but they felt the footsteps of an intruder to their woodland paradise. I needed a scene in my current novel of the girl sitting on the bank of a creek. I'll let her watch a turtle to delay having to face the next conflict in the story.

* Spot a setting: Walking in the shade of a magnolia tree, past an empty lot, I noticed a cracked sidewalk leading up to concrete steps. The sweet fragrance of honeysuckle took me back to my childhood, sipping the honey from the blossoms. When I walked around, I realized a small house stood at this site, now totally covered with weeds. I can almost hear a rocking chair squeaking and a man's voice singing "Amazing Grace." What happened to the house? Where are the people who used to live here? Could this be the setting for my next historical mystery?

* Reveal local history: A neighbor stopped me to chat and mentioned the new bridge going up over the ship channel. She said her father sold burritos fifty years ago to shipyard workers crossing on the

ferry. I made an appointment to come back and interview her for a historical feature detailing transportation progress in the last fifty years.

* Notice hidden structures: My focus today on my writerly walk was riveted on the tallest tree in the biggest yard. Through the autumn leaves, I spotted a treehouse. Steps are still nailed to the tree trunk, but only three boards and one side of the railing are intact. My children's novel-in-progress needs a chapter about two boys building a treehouse, arguing about every nail. What materials would they need? How many times would they bang their thumbs in the process?

Think-times can be utilized anytime: starting the laundry, making beds, vacuuming, washing the dishes. But doing chores can be distracting and valuable for procrastination. Walking is more productive.

As I visualized the treehouse, I turned toward home, dying to get to my computer. My shoulders didn't cramp anymore and my mind teemed with ideas.

About JoAn Martin (returning as a guest columnist)

After teaching in the public school system for 22 years, JoAn W. Martin retired, but continued to serve as a reading/writing consultant for Houston area schools. She taught several years in the Alpha Gifted and Talented program of Clear Creek School District. She also served as an adjunct instructor in the School of Education at University of Houston at Clear Lake.

She has published three novels for teens and her adult novel will be published in June '09. For information about JoAn's historically informative presentations at schools, contact her at 281 427-2713, jobook@mindspring.com or <http://www.joanmartin.com>.

Have an article about writing or book groups? If it would interest our readers, we'll be happy to print it. We can't pay at this time, but it will serve as a published clip with your byline. Reprints accepted with notice of first publication. Submission guidelines:

1. Send as an attached Word document.
2. Up to 800 words (If editor condenses it, you will have a chance to approve before printing)
3. A short blurb about you as a writer and your website if you have one.
4. Email to: PageTurnerHome@aol.com or jmuHall@aol.com with subject line: "PT submission"

How-to Advice a Couple of Clicks Away **ONGOING COLUMNS for WRITERS:**

Ask the Book Doctor: Freelance editor, **Joan Upton Hall**, answers writers' questions. Past issues, first published in various newsletters, also appear on her own: <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/bb.htm> (scroll down and click the link for "Ask Doc" Q&A's).

HEADS UP FOR AUTHOR SIGHTINGS

April through early May- If you're in the area, stop and see us!
(For private appearances, such as small book clubs, check with author)

Diane Fanning – four booksigning events in April in connection with the release of the second **Lucinda Pierce** novel, **PUNISH THE DEED**.

Apr. 4, Sat., 4:30 pm, Houston: Saturday, Murder by the Book, 2342 Bissonnet Street

Apr. 18, Sat., 1-4 pm, Williamsburg, Virginia: Barnes & Noble, 5101 Main Street.

Apr. 21, Tues. noon, Boerne, TX: Lunch with the Author, will be served at 11:30. Diane's talk will begin at Noon.

Apr. 25, Sat., 1-3 pm, San Antonio, TX: at the brand new Barnes & Noble, 15900 La Cantera Parkway.

L.C. Hayden

Apr. 7 & 9, El Paso, TX: workshop: Character Development, at **University of Texas at El Paso**

Apr. 28 & 30, El Paso, TX: workshop: Writing Dialogue, at **University of Texas at El Paso**

Joan Upton Hall

Apr. 30-May 2, weekend, Norman, OK: annual OWFI Conference, at Embassy Suites on Conference Drive.