



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

May 2009

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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.freeservers.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.cherylswanon.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 PT,

My short story, “Harvest Time,” won a prize hundreds of miles from home, but when I saw the judge’s name on the certificate, I was amazed to see it was someone in my own writers’ organization here in Central Texas. First thing I thought of was a line from *Casablanca*. Rick said, “Of all the gin joints in all the world, she had to come in mine.” Who would have thought I’d run into **Joan Hall** in **Midland** (far West Texas)?

I told my husband Bob, if I entered a contest in some little town in Wyoming, I’d bet you’d be a judge!

Thanks—June Venable, Georgetown, TX

Editor’s note: June’s story was a winner, hands down—and I had no idea the story was hers. As for all the contests I judge, her supposition would be likely. One of the most recent ones I judged was in Oklahoma.

Ed. – Joan Upton Hall

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: **Sylvia Dickey Smith**

Lives in: Georgetown, Texas

Writing genres: Mystery and historical fiction

Sylvia’s roots grow deep in the swamps and bayous of **Orange, Texas**, the home of Cajuns, Cowboys, Pirates and Paleo-Indians.

She and her family lived on the Caribbean island of Trinidad, W.I. for six years where she developed a love for the Caribbean culture. After returning to the U.S. at midlife, and while rearing four children, she enrolled as a freshman at the University of Texas at El Paso, and earned a B.A. in Sociology and a M.Ed in Educational Psychology. Afterwards, she founded her own business conducting management effectiveness training, individual and marriage counseling, and assertiveness training for women. Sylvia now lives in Texas with her husband, Bill, a retired Army Colonel.

She draws from her training and experience, plus a keen eye for human behavior, as she develops characters in her novels and short stories. Her Sidra Smart mysteries are *DANCE ON HIS GRAVE*, May, 2007, *DEADLY SINS DEADLY SECRETS* (named one of the top 50 novels for 2008), November 2007, and *DEAD WRECKONING*, April 1, 2009.

She serves as president of **Sisters in Crime, Heart of Texas chapter**; Vice President for **San Gabriel Writers League of Georgetown**; and is a member of **Bayou Writers Group of Lake Charles, LA**; **Golden Triangle Writers League, Beaumont, Texas**; and the **Writers League of Texas**. She is a sought-after judge for writing competitions, and helped found the **Georgetown Public Library’s Writers College** where she teaches regularly.

Editor’s Note: See “Get ‘em While They’re Hot” section about Sylvia’s latest endeavor.

Book of the Month: *Dead Wreckoning*

third in the Sidra Smart mysteries by **Sylvia Dickey Smith**

Dead Wreckoning is set in a small Texas town where everyone knows everything about the other—or at least think they do—until an old woman named Boo Murphy heads into the swamp behind her house and spies a brass-bowed pirate schooner sitting eight feet up out of the water. She recalls tales of her ancestor, Mary Anne Radcliff, granddaughter of the infamous 1700s pirate, Anne Bonny, and who sailed with privateer Jean Lafitte. Cleaning litter from the pirate schooner, Boo mindlessly tosses a discarded bottle into the bottom of her flat-bottomed boat along with a pile of other trash, and soon forgets about it. The next day she takes her cousin Sasha out to see the schooner, but all they find is Sasha's husband, Zeke, dead.

Boo Murphy is soon charged with murder and a codger named Durwood who is smitten by Boo, coaxes Sid to represent his love interest, soon expected to be charged with the murder of Zeke Harris. Intrigued by the old woman's lack of sophistication and folksy ways, Sid falls under her spell, but with one minor hesitation. Boo is as poor as a mouse kicked out of church. And Sid, ink still wet on her license, needs money to survive and rebuild her office burned down during the last case she worked.

An unlikely, and at times, unholy alliance forms between Boo Murphy and Sid's meddling, outlandish dressing Aunt Annie when an accident forces Boo to move into Aunt Annie's Civil War era, ghost active house with Sid and her aunt.

Then, a local prostitute approaches Sid with information regarding suspected illegal activity by Léger. Painful as it is, the more clues Sid uncovers, the more she must admit to herself that Boo's case is somehow connected to the illegal activity of George Léger.

Desperate for more information, Sid borrows Boo Murphy's pirogue and heads out to the swamp where she has her own encounter with the *ghost ship* and the voluptuous swashbuckling beauty at the bow, a cutlass in her left hand and a flintlock pistol in her right. Sid realizes what she sees is a ghost ship, and figures it is the same one viewed by Boo Murphy. But if it is a ghost ship, it couldn't contain a hardcopy document on it. Could it?

A few days later, after things have quieted down, Sid visits Boo, determined to learn more about the priceless document for which men fought and died. She and Boo go to Boo's pirogue and find a bottle Boo believed to be litter she'd picked up the first day she'd seen the pirate schooner. Underneath the well-preserved cork, lay the original letter Jean Lafitte swore he received from the British, asking him to fight with the British against Andrew Jackson during the American Revolution. A document worth killing for.

"Deliciously entertaining, laugh-out-loud funny and fraught with disaster after hilarious disaster, Sylvia Dickey Smith's novel, DEAD WRECKONING, is engaging, fast-paced and filled with unforgettable characters. This is one book that won't be collecting dust on your nightstand!"

—*Deborah LeBlanc, Bestselling author of WATER WITCH*

In Honor of Mystery Month: The Beginnings of Mysteries David Ciambrone

Mystery and crime stories are among the most popular forms of fiction today, and the popularity of the genre is no mystery to millions of readers worldwide.

The fascination with mystery and crime can be traced back to Ancient Greece, where playwrights like Sophocles and Euripides enthralled the local citizenry with their plays combining mystery and drama. In first-century B.C. Rome, Cicero argued passionately in court in defense of accused criminals, captivating Romans with his speeches.

While courtroom dramas still enthrall readers, mysteries have taken many other forms, including cozies, locked-room puzzles, and detective pulp novels. You'll see that the Ancient Greeks and Romans

weren't so different from modern-day mystery fans. Mystery and crime stories as we know them today did not emerge until the mid-nineteenth century when Edgar Allan Poe introduced mystery fiction's first fictional detective, Auguste C. Dupin, in his 1841 story, "**The Murders in the Rue Morgue.**" The acknowledged father of the mystery story, Poe continued Dupin's exploits in novels such as *The Mystery of Marie Roget* (1842) and *The Purloined Letter* (1845).

"**The Murders in the Rue Morgue**" is the most famous example of a mystery style known as the locked room, in which a murder victim is found inside an apparently sealed enclosure and the detective's challenge is to discover the murderer's *modus operandi*. Poe was one of the first to shift the focus of mystery stories from the aesthetics of the situation to a more intellectual reality, moving the story from "a focus on the superficial trappings of eerie setting and shocking event to a study of the criminal's mind."

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

Debut as Radio Talk Show Host by: Sylvia Dickey Smith

Sylvia Dickey Smith announces a brand new internet talk show called, *Murder, She Writes*, beginning **May 4, 2009**. On the show, Sylvia will be interviewing women mystery authors and the occasional man who writes mysteries with a female protagonist.

Her programs will air every Monday evening at 5:00 PM Central Time zone. The address is: <http://blogtalkradio.com/MysterySheWrites>

Set your reminder calendar and tune in regularly.

Love Mysteries? Have We Got a Conference for You **"Hard Boiled Heroes and Cozy Cats."** by: Sylvia Dickey Smith

PageTurners will be well-represented at the annual **Mystery Writers of America** – Southwest Conference in **Dallas, Texas, June 19-21**. In keeping with mystery, the conference is called "**Hard Boiled Heroes and Cozy Cats.**"

I'll be moderating a panel called, "**Revise It Again, Sam**": Rewriting and revision: what it is, what it isn't, and how to avoid so much tinkering that you muddle your meaning. Plus, how you can trash your first draft without slashing your wrists. These topics and your questions will be discussed by this distinguished panel, which I will be moderating: **David Ciambrone, Joan Upton Hall, and Earl Staggs.**

These authors will be presenting more workshops, and so will **L.C. Hayden.**

Other presenters Include: **Karen MacInerney, Rosemary Clement Moore, Wendy Watson, Deborah LeBlanc, June Shaw, and A. Lee Martinez.**

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...)

Remembering My First Hardcover by L.C. Hayden

I clearly remember my first hard cover, *Why Casey Had to Die*. How did it make me feel? Truthfully? I was as nervous as an alien watching *Men in Black*. My inquiring mind wondered if there would be enough people who were willing to pay the price of a hardcover. So those of you who already purchased it as a hardcover or as a large print edition, or if you plan to purchase it, God bless you.

But regardless of sales, writing the book proved to be a blast. First, it's set in Safford, Arizona, the city closest to the state park where Rich and I hosted at Danksworth Ponds, part of Roper Lake State Park.

In case you're not familiar with hosting, this is how it works. Choose the state, city, or national park you'd like to host. Contact the head ranger and once he approves it, voila, you're hosting. The duties you'll perform vary from park to park.

Both Rich and I wanted something physical, so we cleared a path, maintained the ponds, cleaned out the reeds off the stream, painted the bridges, and did a variety of other similar things. Other hosts would rather collect entry fees, work behind the counter, or perform one of several other duties. In exchange for the services, the park allows the hosts to stay free in their RV and provides free hook-ups. Cool, huh?

It's been a while since we've hosted, but it sure was nice reliving the memories as I wrote about the Safford area. One of these days, I'd like to host again.

Editor's note: This "roughing-it" experience story, my friends, is from the same lady who regularly serves as a guest-author on cruise ships! See "Author Sightings" on the last page. She's about to be doing it again.

FUN STUFF, CONTESTS & OFFERS

Free Copy of an Unpublished Story

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.sylviadickeysmit.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.

(Offer good until judges get all they can handle)

Readers Ask Authors

Gloria Oliver on the HOT SEAT

(as last issue's Featured Author)

Reader asks: I love the anthology title on your website, *Four Bubbas of the Apocalypse*. What's the idea behind that, and how did you get involved in it?

Gloria Oliver answers: *The Four Bubbas of the Apocalypse* is the third book in a series of anthologies created by the twisted and funny mind of **Selina Rosen** at **Yard Dog Press**. The main premise is that through an accident at a bio lab (a piece of infected gum got stuck on a scientist shoe), the Yuppie 25 virus was released out to the world. The virus was lethal except to two types of people. Yuppies who spent a lot of time in front of computer screens, due to the CRT rays, get turned into zombies and are called Yumbies. Bubbas, proved immune to the virus due to their large intakes of BBQ sauce.

Each of the anthologies is set in this post apocalyptic world and each has a theme. The volume of the *Four Bubbas of the Apocalypse* are all stories that have one or more of the following: Halitosis, Flatulence, Incest, or Ned - the Bubba version of the Four Horsemen.

I was also fortunate enough to have a story accepted for the 5th incarnation called “**Houston: We've got Bubbas.**” The theme for that one is...wait for it...Bubbas in Space!

As to how I got involved in these zany projects? I met Selina and other Yard Doggies at **Dallas Literary/Sci-Fi Conventions**. They were such an awesome group of peeps, I just had to have something with them. You've not had fun at a con until you see one of **Yard Dog's Road Shows** (reading accompanied by interpretive dance—must be seen to be believed!) or one of their short little comedic plays. Last convention they did a murder mystery involving Disney Characters—those guys are a total blast! If you'd care to learn more about the books and fun folks at Yard Dog, you can visit their site at www.yarddogpress.com.

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.

Sylvia Dickey Smith is our Featured Author for this month, so check out her website and 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

Spread Your Trademark with Columns and Articles by Joan Upton Hall

Making your name the proverbial household word to potential readers is no small feat, but it's vitally important. Picture this scenario: In a bookstore, Ima Customer has narrowed her choices to three or four books. All factors are equal except that only one of the authors' names has a familiar ring to her, even though she can't recall whether that familiarity is positive or negative. Which one will she pick? Most likely, the “known” name. Let's say it's yours, and she enjoys the book. That means your name, as the author, will insert itself into her memory bank, and she'll buy your next book too.

For that reason, it behooves us writers to think of our names as trademarks, worth remembering. In my case, the name, “Joan Hall,” like “Jane Doe,” is about as memorable as melted ice cream. Therefore, it behooves *me* to insert my maiden name, “Upton,” as a hook to hang a reader's attention on. My point is that your trademark will work better if it's easy to remember.

Once selected, it helps to get that trademark before the public as often as possible—preferably in a positive way. Let's face it, if you're new, you need to search for ways to keep your name in the reader's mind. Expecting readers to wait for your next book stretches the recognition factor considerably. In the meantime, what can you do to keep your name familiar.

One name-recognition strategy is to write columns and articles. Helen Ginger does it with this blog/newsletter, and almost everybody knows Helen. I do it by self-syndicating a monthly column, called “Demystifying Writers' Demons,” to numerous writer newsletters. It's free to editors for the asking (contact jmuHall@aol.com), and it provides a helpful service to a large

number of writers and readers. I have begun doing likewise with another column called “Ask the Book Doctor.” For each issue, I footnote pertinent biographical facts that give me credibility and give a link to my book page (<http://www.JoanUptonHall.com/books.htm>).

To gain recognition as a nonfiction writer and attract attention to my nonfiction books, I do a monthly travel column called “Tank of Gas and a Whim” for the *Williamson County Sun*. To reach a wider audience, I have also written magazine articles, blatantly pushing those nonfiction books in publications as diverse as *Texas Highways* and *American Jails*. Have you acquired some specialized knowledge while writing your book that you could use to write an article for a magazine?

While gathering research for your book, fiction or non, you are likely to discover special interest groups. Do any of them have newsletters or magazines to which you could contribute? Possibly there is a service or entertainment column you might write for your local paper or a special interest newsletter or magazine. (Don’t forget e-publications.) Such a column could keep your name before the public.

Another thing about special interest groups is that members are usually hungry for books on their particular subject. Having written a series about a modern day King Arthur, I have discovered the pleasure of conversing online with a group who read widely on the subject, both popular and scholarly. Not only do I learn a great deal, but they tune in on what I write and have chosen Book One of my series for one of their monthly selections. It will definitely be one of the simpler books they read, but think of the publicity this brings to my book.

Fiction books may present a whole different set of challenges. Mystery writer, David Ciambrone, has carried his character’s interest in quilting to a loyal following of like-minded groups. Similarly, many writers center a column or blog around food of their novel’s settings. Might you collect recipes relevant to your setting from reader fans?

An experience of my own, however, might save you some trouble. Having read Book One of my urban fantasy series *Excalibur Regained*, one book club, who always include dinner with their gatherings, suggested that by Book Two, I provide one recipe for the favorite food of each of my major characters. You can imagine how short that turned out to be. It was more time-consuming than I expected, but at least, I now have these mini-cookbooks to give to anyone who buys the two books that are now out for the series.

To promote my novels, I manage to work in references as examples in workshops, presentations, and the e-newsletter I edit called “PageTurners” (<http://www.JoanUptonHall.com/pageturner.htm>). Unfortunately, I’m still looking for a column idea (sigh). Any suggestions?

Editor’s note: This article was first published in *Straight from Hel* by **Helen Ginger**.

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

May through early June- If you're in the area, stop and see us!

(For private appearances, such as small book clubs, check with author)

Notice: Several of these celebrate **Mystery Month** & include other authors.

Dave Ciambrone

May 1, Fri., 4 PM: Georgetown, TX Library, Meet the Author series.

May 30, Sat., 1:30 to 3:30 PM: Katy Books (2450 Fry Rd.) Houston, TX.

Dave Ciambrone, Joan Upton Hall, Sylvia Dickey Smith with Micqui Miller,

May 16, Sat., 3 - 4:30 PM: "Using Local Resources in Mystery Writing," panel at Hill Country Bookstore (719 S. Main St.), Georgetown, TX

Dave Ciambrone, Diane Fanning, Sylvia Dickey Smith, George Wilhite with

Karen MacInerney, Susan Rogers, Val Taylor

May 19, 7 PM: Book People Store (603 N. Lamar Blvd., Austin, TX. "Panel- How to Write a Mystery"

L. C. Hayden

May 7, Thurs., 7 p.m: Georgetown Library, (402 W. 8th St.) Georgetown, TX 78626 "Writing Dynamic Dialog"

May 8, Fri., 6:30-9 p.m. & May 9, Sat., 9:30-11:30 a.m.: Barnes & Noble Westlake (#P860 701 S. Capital of Texas Highway) Austin 78746 - "How to Write a Mystery"

May 28-June 9, Author-in-Residence, Princess Cruise Lines, Grand Mediterranean Cruise.

Gloria Oliver

May 16, Sat., 4 PM: Richardson Library's Home Grown Writers Open House and Book Signing at Richardson, TX. (Info at <http://www.cor.net/LibraryMain.aspx?id=4970>)

Joan Upton Hall

May 2-3, weekend, Norman, OK: annual OWFI Conference, at Embassy Suites on Conference Drive (Joan was a contest judge).