



# Page Turners

## Page Turners

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](mailto:PageTurnerHome@aol.com) ..... Editor: Joan Upton Hall

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Need a speaker? Check websites below for a writer near you.

### Meet our Staff: Authors whose pages you must turn!

M.D. Benoit	<a href="http://www.mdbenoit.com">http://www.mdbenoit.com</a>	Science Fiction Mystery, Alternate Reality
Mayra Calvani	<a href="http://www.mayracalvani.com">http://www.mayracalvani.com</a>	Horror Dark fantasy, Satire, YA, Children
David Ciambrone	<a href="http://www.davidciambrone.com">http://www.davidciambrone.com</a>	Mystery, Technical management, News column
Diane Fanning	<a href="http://www.dianefanning.com">http://www.dianefanning.com</a>	Mystery, True Crime, Suspense
Jackie Griffey	<a href="http://www.jackiegriffey.com">http://www.jackiegriffey.com</a>	Cozies, romantic suspense, horror, historical
Joan Upton Hall	<a href="http://www.joanuptonhall.com">http://www.joanuptonhall.com</a>	Fantasy, Paranormal, Travel/History, Editing advice
L.C. Hayden	<a href="http://lchayden.freeservers.com">http://lchayden.freeservers.com</a>	Mystery, Inspirational, Horror, Children
Gloria Oliver	<a href="http://www.gloriaoliver.com">http://www.gloriaoliver.com</a>	Spec Fic, Fantasy/SF/Horror, YA
Sylvia Dickey Smith	<a href="http://www.sylviadickeysmith.com">http://www.sylviadickeysmith.com</a>	Mystery suspense
Cheryl Swanson	<a href="http://www.cherylswanon.net">http://www.cherylswanon.net</a>	Contemporary thriller, self-help nonfiction
George Wilhite	<a href="http://www.drwrightgoeder.webs.com">www.drwrightgoeder.webs.com</a>	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.

**Original Request from a reader:** In your question suggestions, you mention “What pets [PT authors] have.” I’d like to know from each of you who will answer: What’s your favorite pet and what can you tell us about it? (I believe we can understand a lot about someone by the way they relate to animals.)

—Mandy

**Jackie Griffey responds:**

**Dear Mandy,**

We have three “in house” pets along with a lot of wild ones—bunnies, squirrels and who knows what passing by LOL. Baby Kitty is the old brindle cat (the name just stuck); Coco is black tinged with calico, a persian who is a “torti” cat (look it up on the net and broaden your education-LOL) that quickly went from tiny kitten to bigger than the old cat. Growls like a dog, is smart as a whip, but she BITES! We love her anyway. The one dog, far from being intimidated, is a fierce (four and a half pounds) watch dog Chihuahua who ignores the cats and adores my daughter. When one of the kittens play with something forbidden or one cat slaps at or runs after the other, Penney (the Chihuahua) “tells on them” by barking. They are funny to watch and precious to love and care for.

—Jackie Griffey

Next month: another author/staff member will talk about his/her pets.

**Have a first book or other “first” 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. Include a short blurb about you as a writer and your website if you have one.

## **AUTHOR OF THE MONTH: George Wilhite**

Writing genres: contemporary western, western, mystery, detective, speculative fiction

Website: [www.drwrightgooder.webs.com](http://www.drwrightgooder.webs.com)

### **Just Say No To Writer’s Block!**

One of the biggest problems that plagues writers—whatever level, from beginners to professional writers—is writer’s block. Over the years, I found a good way to combat writer’s block, but I didn’t even know it at the time. I just did it. Later, I found out that other writer’s including one of my favorites, Ernest Hemingway, knew all about this little trick—freewriting.

When I was a journalist, I had to crank out story after story EVERY DAY. There was no room for writer’s block. If I couldn’t produce copy, there was always some new journalism school graduate waiting in the wings to steal my job. If the Muses weren’t cooperating in my endeavors, I had to find a way to jump start my writing.

The first time I remember freewriting, even though I didn’t know that’s what it was called back then, was after a tour of the new city sewer plant and an interview with the sewer department supervisor. By the time I got back to the office, I had 20 pages of notes, and my head was swimming with details, specifications, and quotes. When I sat down to write the story, I didn’t know where to start.

We’ve all heard or been told, “Start at the beginning,” so I did. I started with walking up to the sewer plant, meeting the supervisor, and starting through my 20 pages of notes in chronological order. It was extremely boring. Little did I know that I was doing freewriting, in my own funny little way. About

two pages in, I got to the part about the new piece of machinery that aerated the incoming, waste-laden water. It's purpose was to infuse air into the wastewater to help increase bacterial growth that broke down the waste and also to cut down on the stench. Suddenly, a phrase jumped out at me: S\*\*\* *STINKS*.

Then the dam burst. S\*\*\* *stinks*. *But not at the new city sewer plant where science and technology work together to keep the smell down as the plant cleans the waste from the incoming water and eventually produces clean, potable water to be reintroduced into nature.*

From then on, the story just fell into place. Writing two pages of, excuse the term but pun definitely intended, CRAP had worked like a cup of water does to prime an old-timey pitcher pump. It got me started. But what do you do with the two pages of ...uh...less-than-desirable writing? I held on to it. When I got to a place in the story where I needed to talk about meeting the supervisor, I already had that paragraph. When I needed to talk about the appearance of the plant as I walked up to it, I already had that paragraph.

Uncle Ernie knew all about this. I remember a story (true or not, I'm not sure) about Hemingway addressing a group of want-to-be writers on the secret of being a successful writer. After about a 15-minute introduction, Hemingway takes the podium, looks long and seriously at the assembled crowd, and said, "Go home and write." Then he sat down.

Somewhere else he gave this advice:

*Write one, simple, declarative sentence.*

The one I use to get my students writing is, "I had a dog." That's about as simple as it gets and it makes a declaration; it meets Hemingway's requirements to a T.

He knew that one sentence creates an image in your mind. And that an author won't be able to leave that one, simple sentence alone for long.

The key to freewriting, once you start adding to that simple sentence is to write for a minimum amount of time (mine is 15 minutes) WITHOUT STOPPING and disregarding spelling, punctuation, and grammar. If your brain thinks *Duh!* then write "Duh!" Write CRAP for 15 minutes. And then see if you can stop. Sometimes, maybe, but often you will keep right on writing. Editing, proofreading, grammar checking, fact checking, continuity, and Lord only knows what else all come later. First you have to get words on paper.

The late comedian George Carlin wrote a book called Brain Droppins. If that's not a title for freewriting, I don't know what is, but it works. The secret to writing is to write. So "Go home and write."

## **Book of the Month: *The Texas Rodeo Murder* by George Wilhite**

Readin', 'Ritin', and Rodeo. The Three R's are in full force in *The Texas Rodeo Murder*. A college professor of English and journalism, Ira Carter is also a former *Texas Rodeo* editor who still clowns rodeos on weekends and during the summer.

But when his former publisher is murdered while on the phone with Ira, the professor turns detective to find the murderer. Jam-packed with action from Central Texas to New Mexico to the Texas Hill Country, *The Texas Rodeo Murder*, combines an exciting tale of murder and revenge with a wealth of background rodeo information.

Nominated for a **Spur Award**, this novel was written by a former rodeo clown and bullfighter who just happened to also be an award-winning journalist. For a fun romp behind the chutes (and in front, too), check out *The Texas Rodeo Murder*.

Excerpt:

*"I didn't know if you were dead or alive or wounded or what."*

*The corner of her eye glistened again, and I felt that glow I'd felt the night before when she'd been so concerned about me. I reached out and took her hand in mine. I could feel it shaking just the tiniest bit.*

*“Chelsey, since Jake died, I’ve had to face some hard facts about myself. I guess I never really thought about dying like I do right now. This was so sudden and out of nowhere. You know, when I step out in the pen each night to do a show, I know there’s a chance it could be my last. I know that I might take a hooking or a stomping and die right out there in the dirt in the middle of the arena. But I know it’s out there. Death just walked in on Jake one sunshiny morning and took him off. He fought it, but it happened. There wasn’t anything he could do.”*

*I paused for a second and held her hand tighter.*

*“Kind of like me, he didn’t have a family to speak of. When he died, it made me start to thinking about my life and what I have. And what I don’t have. It made me think a lot about me and you. About a family. About the things you’re talking about. Once that’s over, I want to sit down and talk long and hard with you about the future. But right now, I’ve got something to do. Maybe by next week...”*

*She looked up at me with eyes sparkling, only partly from the tears, which did their best not to fall from her eyes.*

*“I can wait, however long it takes. You scare me right now. I can handle your rodeoing. I can handle knowing that you might take a hooking in the pen and not come out. I can handle that. I can even handle whatever there was in the past that has kept us from talking like this before. But when I saw you again last night, there was a look in your eye, way beyond anything I’ve ever seen before. I don’t know what it is you’ve got to do this week, but I can handle it, too. It’s just that I felt I had to say these things, before it’s too late. In case you didn’t know. In case you were waiting for me to say them.”*

*I couldn’t tear my eyes away from hers. We’d been friends, and more, for a long time. Right then, I felt like I was cheating her—making her wait for something that I thought we both wanted but that might never happen. There were still ghosts from my past. I’d come to grips with most of them, but one remained that kept me from being able to make the commitment that both she and I wanted. I needed time to exorcise the ghost that kept us apart. But first I had to find Jake’s killer.*

*“Give me this week and I’ll be able to answer some of your questions—for sure the most important one. I think you know that I love you, but I do have some things to settle before I’d feel free to act on that. I wouldn’t hurt you for the world, and I don’t want to guild your hopes up, then crash them. I think Jake’s death has made me decide to quit waiting around. I don’t even know exactly what it is I’ve been waiting for—a sigh from God or what—but I think it may be time to move on. Just give me this week.*

*Her eyes never left mine.*

*“You’ve got a week, cowboy. But when that week’s up, you damn well better take me dancing.”*

*She let go of my hand and took a last sip of coffee.*

*“Right now, though, you’ve got a date with an X-ray machine.”*

## **GET ‘EM WHILE THEY’RE HOT** (Other Releases & Successes)

### **Coming Soon** by Diane Fanning

**May 1:** The release date for the third **Lucinda Pierce** novel, *Mistaken Identity*. I think it is the best book in the series thus far. In addition to a provocative plot, it explores the depth of childhood emotional scars and the costs of irresponsible parenting.

**March 10:** I’ll be on Susan Murphy-Milano’s talk radio show at 3PM Central talking about the domestic violence cases I’ve written about in my books. Susan is a violence expert and a defender of victims’ rights. Tune in to **The Susan Murphy-Milano Show:**

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/susanmurphymilano>

**March 9 & March 30:** I'll be posting a piece on the cooperative blog, **Women in Crime Ink**. Don't know what I'll write yet but hope you drop in to check it out.

<http://womenincrimeink.blogspot.com>

**Every week**, I post a fresh blog about my books, crime, or my writing life on **Writing is a Crime**. Check it out: <http://www.dianefanning.blogspot.com>

## **For Your Reading Pleasure—However You Want it** by L.C. Hayden

You can rent or buy an audio version of *Why Casey Had To Die*: [www.booksinmotion.com](http://www.booksinmotion.com) CD or MP3 versions

**April 16** announces the release of my next **Harry Bronson** novel and I've been busy trying to get the promo stuff done for that. Reviews are coming in and everyone's loving it. Yay!

Also coming **April**: *When Death Intervenes*. <http://lchayden.com> and [www.booksbyhayden.com](http://www.booksbyhayden.com)

## **Signed on with a New Publisher** by Sylvia Dickey Smith

I'm delighted to announce I recently signed a contract with **Crickhollow Books** to publish her latest novel, a historical fiction. *A War Of Her Own* (working title) is slated for release late this summer or early fall. The book is set in Orange, Texas during WWII.

In this story Bea Meade starts with a strike against her even before she's born. Now twenty, married and the mother of a four-month old baby, instead of a good night's sleep, Bea spends her nights feeling alone in a half-empty womb, a womb both a graveyard and a birthing chamber. Her most critical need, however, is for her husband to come home with his paycheck so she can pay the rent. Instead, he comes with a tale of unfaithfulness and of a woman pregnant with his child.

## **BOOK SELLIN', SEARCHIN' & SIGNIN' SHENANIGANS** (Or: A funny thing happened on the way...)

## **What I'm Working On and What's Driving Me Crazy!** by L.C. Hayden

After waiting for three years for *Bell Shaped Flowers*, a young adult inspirational mystery, to be released, it finally happened late January of this year. I was beginning to think it was a figment of my imagination. I'm super glad it's finally out. But since it came unexpectedly, I wasn't prepared. My publisher kept telling me it would come out next week and I finally stopped believing it. When it did, I hadn't done my flyers, bookmarks, or any of the pre-release promo stuff. So I've been working to catch up.

**Sisters in Crime** asked me to edit/compile/write the next edition of **Breaking And Entering**, a booklet aimed for aspiring authors and authors whose careers are stagnant. That sure is keeping me busy!

Then there are taxes to do, the budget needs to be done at the end of the month. I'm teaching creative writing to the seniors through the El Paso Community College and the University of Texas has asked me to do monthly workshops for them. Eeeks!

Plus my son and his wife had a beautiful baby girl and they have asked me to babysit full time when she returns back to work. Yay!

So what's driving me crazy???? You tell me!

## **All in a Day's Work** by Diane Fanning

**On February 27**, the Aussies are coming to my house. It's a bit thrilling to know a film crew flew all the way from the Land Down Under to sit in my living room and ask questions. They are with **Beyond Productions**, the company that produces the **Deadly Women** series for **Investigation Discovery**. I was on three episodes during this current season and they want me for three more for next season.

**The first week of March**, I'll be in Knoxville, Tennessee, looking into the life of **Raynella Dossett Leath**. Raynella was convicted the last week in January for the murder of her second husband, **David Leath**. She told law enforcement that her husband shot himself to death but now a jury has pointed the finger of guilt at her.

When prosecutors connected her to that death, they started looking at the death of her first husband, Knox County prosecutor **Ed Dossett**. Ed's demise was initially determined to be an accidental death by cattle stampede. (Sounds like something that might happen in Texas, doesn't it?) Now, they've charged her with that murder, too. Ed had terminal cancer and was using morphine. The state believes that Raynella gave Ed an overdose of the drug and put him out in the cattle yard for the livestock to trample.

And that's not the only fascinating story in Raynella's past. I'm looking forward to digging up all the facts.

It should be an exciting week. I'm meeting an old friend from my previous line of work and having lunch with a producer from **Jupiter Productions**, the creators of **Snapped**.

## **FUN STUFF, CONTESTS & OFFERS**

### **Have I Got a Deal for You!** by L. C. Hayden

Contest: Go to my website, sign the guest book and tell me why you'd like to win a copy of ***Bell Shaped Flowers***. I'll draw a name from all of the entries and send you a copy. Easy, eh? While you're there, check out the info on the book.

Wanted: Reviewers and Reading Club Members

If you're a reviewer and are in a reading club, contact me for a copy of the book. Also, my website has a set of discussion questions your reading group can use. (Uh, let me explain: I will get those questions up real soon. That's another thing I've been meaning to do!)

## Gloria Oliver on the Hotseat

(as last month's Featured Author of the Month)

Q: "Where did you come up with the idea for **Willing Sacrifice**?"

A: If I recall correctly (it's been a while and my memory is not what it used to be) different pieces for this book came to me at different times. Normally when I get an idea for a book, I write it down somewhere and then shove it to the back of my mind so I can start building scenes and concepts for it.

For this one, I started playing around with the concept of 'truth'. Truth tends to depend on who is telling it and what information is available. There are times when what seems to be the truth, really isn't. But we accept it because of who told us or because we don't know all there is to know.

In Fantasy, a standard prop is the 'prophecy' gambit. Where characters are told there is a destiny they must fulfill. Looking at this and thinking of truth, I decided to place it on its ear and have some fun. What if someone knew of a prophecy and decided to twist it just enough so they could use it for their own gain? What if the hero/heroine fully embraced their destiny (not the norm) yet ran into the problem of finding out later that what she thought was the truth wasn't actually the truth at all?

And off I went! And so *Willing Sacrifice* was born!

<http://www.gloriaoliver.com/willing.html> and <http://tinyurl.com/GOWilling>

## READERS ASK AUTHORS

### **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.

**George Wilhite** is our Featured Author for this month, so check out his 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](mailto:PageTurnerHome@aol.com) or to the author directly through his or her website shown on Page 1.

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

## FOR YOU READERS WHO ALSO WRITE

### I'm Not SAD but I Have it

by M. D. Benoit

Writers will often use the weather to create a mood. We all know the "It was a dark and stormy night..." line that has become such a cliché. The sun breaking through the clouds can signal hope and happiness, a moonrise on the water, romance. A storm can be the harbinger of violence; weather can itself become one of the characters of a novel.

But if we writers use the weather as a mood creator, how does real weather affect the process of writing? A bright sunny day, or a dreary, rainy one, may affect the mood or productivity; who doesn't get the blues after several grey days or feel buoyed by a clear summer morning?

Weather does affect people, some more than others. In about 15% of the population, around September, the “winter blues” come a-calling. They are a mild form of depression, linked to shorter days and dwindling daylight. In 2-3% of people, this form of depression is more incapacitating. Labeled SAD, or Seasonal Affective Disorder, it can be quite debilitating to a writer because of two the most common symptoms: an inability to concentrate and increased sleepiness. Fog on the brain is a difficult state for a writer.

SAD tends to begin in people in their thirties and is more common in northern countries where winter days are shorter. It is also more prevalent in urban dwellers –presumably because they spend more time inside. The culprit seems to be melatonin, a sleep-related hormone, which increases its production in the dark.

What are the symptoms of SAD? They may include:

- change in appetite, in particular a craving for sweet or starchy foods
- weight gain
- decreased energy
- fatigue
- tendency to oversleep
- difficulty concentrating
- irritability
- avoidance of social situations
- feelings of anxiety and despair

If people have these symptoms for two or more winters, they are considered to have SAD.

What can be done about it? Several kinds of treatment have been tried with some success. The most common is **phototherapy**, or bright light therapy. It involves sitting in front of a high-intensity fluorescent light source that is meant to simulate daylight (2,500 to 10,000 lux, a unit of illumination) at a distance of one to two feet for 30-40 minutes in the morning. This seems to help balance certain brain chemicals and reset body rhythms. The light is expensive (around \$250-\$500) but gives very good results. Another form of treatment is **antidepressants**, for those with severe cases of SAD. **Exercise**, especially outdoors and done daily, has been known to help, as well as **alternative therapies** such as St-John’s wort, which may help with depression. A newer, additional therapy is now becoming extremely popular: it’s **Vitamin D**, dubbed the “sunshine pill” (<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/161618.php>).

As a writer living in Canada, I can vouch for how debilitating SAD can be, since our days begin to shorten in August and days seem to be made of night until April. I personally found that a combination of exercise, vitamin D and occasional light therapy (in the darkest month, December) have helped tremendously. If you realize that you’re always depressed in winter, but that you’re usually fine in summer, you probably have SAD ([http://mindbodyfitness.suite101.com/article.cfm/how\\_to\\_spot\\_seasonal\\_affective\\_disorder\\_symptoms](http://mindbodyfitness.suite101.com/article.cfm/how_to_spot_seasonal_affective_disorder_symptoms)). Go see your doctor.

**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](mailto:PageTurnerHome@aol.com) or [jmuHall@aol.com](mailto:jmuHall@aol.com) with subject line: “PT submission”

## **HEADS UP FOR AUTHOR SIGHTINGS**

**March through early April, 2010- If you're in the area, stop and see us!**

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

### **David Ciambrone** (continuing classes for Library Writers' College)

March 30, speaking to Cimarron Hills Ladies Book Club, discussing *San Gabriel's Secret*.

April; 3, Houston Book Festival

April 6, starting a evening mystery writing class at the Temple, TX Public Library

April 17th, Hill Country Book Festival

April 22, Speaking at the Taylor, TX library book festival

April 24th and 25th--Speaking at the Weatherford College (Weatherford, TX) Book and Jazz festival

### **L.C. Hayden**

March 2 & 4, 6-9 PM: Workshop at U. T. El Paso: How to Keep the Readers Turning the Pages.

March 20, 10-6: Poppy Festival at El Paso Museum of Archeology

March 30, April 1, 6-8 PM: Workshop at U. T. El Paso: How to Make Your Writing Sparkle

### **Diane Fanning**

March 10: I'll be on Susan Murphy-Milano's talk radio show at 3PM Central talking about the domestic violence cases I've written about in my books. Susan is a violence expert and a defender of victims' rights. Tune in to **The Susan Murphy-Milano Show**:

<http://www.blogtalkradio.com/susanmurphymilano>

### **Joan Upton Hall**

March 25, Thursdays: starting a (4-week) evening Short Story writing class at the Temple, TX Public Library

April 16-18: Nebraska Writer's Guild Spring Conference; 2 workshops: "Ready, Set, Publish – Top Three Self-Editing Strategies" and "Help! Is there a Book Doctor in the House?"