

Updates from the **ANIMAL KINGDOM**

These two women are absolutely fabulous. [Purslane Hominy](#) and [Scarlett Magnolia](#) have what we call pizzazz and I always bask in their festive spirit. Check out this [VIDEO CLIP](#) of them in action.



Yes, ladies and gentleman. That is a CAKE on the left. [Turning Pages Bookstore](#) presented me with this wondrous delight, with a delicious layer of buttercream just beneath. Back to my diet again.



Dear Friends and Readers,

The big Natchez launch is behind us—and it was a smashing success with loads of fun. We had a room full of people and I heard some wonderful ghostly encounters from folks who'd traveled from around the Southeast (and one little reader from Branson, MO).

I can't begin to thank all the people who made this such a special event—Dean James, writing as Miranda James, read from his new book and talked with the audience and told a ghost story.

Priya Bhakta, my assistant, documented the events and made everyone feel so special and welcome.

My niece and great-niece, Jennifer and Jordan, hauled wine and goods in and out—and Jordan even sang a song for everyone.

My brother, David, drove all the way from the coast to participate. I feared the goblins would get him, but he managed to get through the weekend unscathed.

My delightful friend and artist and writer DeWitt Lobrano came and told his experiences with the energy from the other side, while also explaining a bit about departed people and danglers, terms he defined about those ghostly entities that lurk in such great abundance in the Natchez area.

And Alice! What would a trip be without Alice? David, Beverly Moon, and I tried to scare her with wild chanting and a knife, but she only rolled over in bed and told us to get out of her room! (But thank you, Beverly, for such fun!)

And Beverly, who showed us the wonderful Secluseval house in Fayette near Natchez. This is a dream property that is up for sale. I hope someone fantastic buys it and turns it into a writer's retreat.

Special thanks to Floyd Gardner, who recorded all the tall tales, and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for his patience. More news on the CDs later.

And [Turning Pages Bookstore](#)—and the staff and friends—did such a fine job of hosting the book launch. We had a whole lot of fun. The ghost tour was delightful (a bit hot for those of us in the back of the bus) but we had a few eerie encounters in old buildings and a cemetery.

It was a great signing with lots of laughter. [Purslane and Scarlett](#), who many of you might remember from Daddy's Girl Weekend, came dressed in antebellum garb completely with pantaloons (I did check!) and



I finally get to meet Kathy Bergold. Kathy has a crush on one of my characters in the *Sarah Booth Delaney* books: Harold Erkwell. Kathy also helped me out a ton during Ghost Story Hour by gathering the names of all the brave souls who shared chilling tales with us.



If I come across a sculpture of an angel, I get the urge to pose exactly like it in a photo. We stopped by the cemetery during the Ghost Tour. Our tour guide had spooky true stories during the ride around town.



Introducing Secluseval, built in 1840. This is a dream property that is up for sale. I hope someone exquisite purchases it and turns it into a writer's retreat.



Here we are! My brother David, my niece Jennifer, me, and my friend Beverly Moon. We stayed at Wensel House and feasted on a delicious breakfast the morning after. Hot grits, biscuits with 3 choices of jellies, scrambled eggs, sausage and bacon, pancakes with butter & maple syrup, fruit salad, piping hot coffee and freshly squeezed orange juice. Scrumptious.

they endured the extreme heat just to have fun and play with us.

Natchez is a lovely, lovely town with such interesting history. We learned a lot on the ghost tour. And if you happen to want a signed, first edition book, I'm sure you can call Turning Pages. I did sign some stock for them and so did Dean.

This is the end of June. The days are slipping by so fast. The heat is terrible. I am so sorry for those who have to work outside, and for the animals who have to endure this.

I headed to Birmingham yesterday for a 4 p.m. signing at Alabama Booksmith. Now I'll sign at noon today in Montgomery at [Capitol Books and News](#). On July 2, I will sign at [Page and Palette](#) at 2 p.m. with the wonderful Jeannie Holmes (my former student who is building a big name for herself in the urban fantasy market.) Her latest book is just about to come out. [BLOOD SECRETS](#) is the title and the fascinating Alexander Sabine returns in her role as federal investigator of paranormal events.

On July 16, Jeannie, Dean and I will sign at [Murder by the Book](#) in Houston at 4 p.m. We're calling it the gathering of the Mississippi Writers Mafia because we are all three from Mississippi. Alice, because she is a good friend and a good sport, is going to attend with us. I also hope she can do some research for her book on the JFK assassination.

I have some very sad news, but I ask you to please not email me about it because I am still way too upset. Each condolence only makes me cry—this will pass I know, but it is very raw now. I know you are all animal lovers, and I know you will send me much love and good thoughts. I lost Miss Scrapiron this month, and my beloved Zelda had a heart attack in May. This has been hard, hard double whammy that all of you who have animals know. Scrappy was 34. She lived a long life for a Thoroughbred, and I gave her the best life I could. Zelda was a terrible shock. She was only 11. This has been a hard year for me and so many of my friends who have lost family members, two-legged and four.

Thank you all for your good thoughts. If you would like to do something, please donate a spay or neuter to a veterinarian in your community so that someone who loves their pet but can't afford to get it altered might have that gift. Each animal we neuter reduces so much suffering down the road.

Now we'll report back on the signings coming up—and I hope to have lots of information about the new DG weekend for 2012 as Sarah Bewley, the magnificent organizer, finalizes plans. We have some exciting ideas—if we can only make them pan out!

Love,  
Carolyn

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