
The Texas Institute of Letters

July/August 2007 Newsletter

Judges announced for literary awards

The Texas Institute of Letters has issued its call for entries for the best works published in 2007 in twelve categories.

Prizes totaling \$22,000 will be awarded by the organization at its 2008 annual meeting.

Entries must be sent directly to the judges at the addresses listed below.

Entries must be accompanied by a statement of the entrant's eligibility: birth in Texas or two years consecutive residence in the state at some time. A work whose subject matter substantially concerns Texas is also eligible.

Categories and judges are as follows:

Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Non-fiction (\$5,000):

Felix Almaraz, chair, 323 Inspiration Dr., San Antonio, TX 78228

Kerry Grombacker, 812 N. Carrollton Ave., New Orleans, LA 70119

Robert Weddle, 1181 County Road 1535, Bonham, TX 75418.

Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction (\$6,000) and Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction (\$1,000):

Robert Flynn, chair, 101 Cliffside Dr., San Antonio, TX 78231

David Searcy, 5606 Boca Raton Dr., Dallas, TX 75230

Cindy Bonner, 1802 N. Vine St., Victoria, TX 78746.

TIL Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book (\$2,500):

Andres Tijerina, chair, Austin Community College, Pinnacle Campus, 7748 Hwy. 290 W., Austin, TX 78736-3202

Ron Tyler, 5536 Collinwood Ave., Fort Worth, TX 76107.

Pete Gunter, 225 Jagoe, Denton, TX 76201

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They're old friends, reunited at TIL's April reception at the Hall of State in Dallas. Carolyn Osborne, former TIL president, and Kent Biffle, 2007 inductee, were high school pals back at Gatesville, Texas, who lived less than a block apart. Carolyn was a popular cheerleader; Kent played linebacker on the football team and clarinet in the band.

Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry (\$1,000):

Wendy Barker, chair, 302 Fawn Dr., San Antonio, TX 78231-1519

Willard Spigelman, English Dept., Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275

Chris Ellery, 2661 Yale Ave, San Angelo, TX 76904.

Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation of a Book (\$1,000): This award will not be given until 2009 for books published in 2007 and 2008.

Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story (\$750):

Neal Barret Jr., 2102 Toulouse Dr., Austin, TX 78748

Kate Lehrer, 3556 Macomb NW, Washington, D.C. 20016

Charles (Chip) Dameron, 4853 Lakeway Dr., Brownsville, TX 78520.

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TIL website: <http://texasinstituteofletters.org/>

TIL literary judges named for works published in 2007

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O. Henry Award for Best Work of Magazine Journalism (\$1,000):

Mike Cox, chair, 3301 Big Bend Dr., Austin, TX 78731

A.W. (Bill) Gray, 9654 Fallbrook Dr., Dallas, TX 75243

Bill Sloan, 3603 Urban Ave, Dallas, TX 75227.

Friends of the Austin Public Library Award for Best Children's Book (\$500) and for Best Young Adult Book (\$500):

Prudence Mackintosh, chair, 3312 Beverly Dr., Dallas, TX 75205

Paula Marks, 104 Vireo Dr., Buda, TX 78610

Tim Tingle, 4417 Morningside Way, Canyon Lake, TX 78133.

Fred Whitehead Award for Best Design of a Trade Book (\$750):

Carol Dawson, chair, 4010 Crescent Dr., Austin, TX 78722

Tom Dodge, 302 Stiles Dr., Midlothian, TX 76065

Jim Hornfischer, 2528 Tanglewood Tr., Austin, TX 78703

John Bloom Humor Award for the Funniest Texas Book (\$1,000) (for books published in 2006 and 2007):

Tom Pilkington, chair, Tarleton State University, P.O. Box T-0300, Stephenville, TX 76402

John Taliaferro, 1113 Elm St., Austin, TX 78703

Fritz Lanham, P.O. Box 801182, Houston, TX 77280.

Stanley Walker Award for Best Work of Newspaper Journalism Appearing in Newspaper or Sunday Supplement (\$1,000):

Dick J. Reavis, chair, 3606 Clark Ave., Raleigh, NC 27607

Send news, e-mail addresses, directory changes to TIL secretary

Keep your fellow TIL members informed as to your whereabouts and your activities.

Send news of your activities and also directory corrections to Darwin Payne, TIL secretary, dpayne@smu.edu, or 9021 Gunnison Dr., Dallas, TX 75231.

Kent Biffle, 511 Carriage Trail, Rockwall, TX 75087

Glenn Dromgoole, 1833 S. 11th St., Abilene, TX 79602.

And here are the rules

Entries must be sent directly to each judge at the addresses listed below for the competition entered. **(Do NOT send entries to the TIL address.)** The words "For TIL Award" should appear on the outside of the container or envelope.

A writer may have only one work entered in a category. No work may be submitted in more than one category. Different works by the same author may be submitted in different categories. All works must have been first published during 2007. Clear photographic reproductions of the publication are acceptable for articles but not for books.

Each entry should be accompanied by a statement of the entrant's eligibility: birth in Texas or two years consecutive residence in the state at some time. A work whose subject matter substantially concerns Texas is also eligible.

Those competing for the translation award(not to be awarded until 2009 for books published in 2007 and 2008) should send the committee chair a copy of the original, published book-length text unless the published translation submitted is presented in a bilingual format.

Each entry should include the entrant's address, email address, and phone number.

Winners and finalists will be notified in late February or early March 2008. Winners will be announced at the spring banquet. Banquet announcements and newspaper articles cover the winners; no other notification will be sent. The TIL reserves the right to withhold an award if the committee and the president consider that to be appropriate.

Don't forget, thanks especially to C.W. Smith, TIL has a new website address.

<http://texasinstituteofletters.org/>

Seale analyzes entries for 2006 Catarulla Short Story Award

Jan Seale, who chaired the 2006 committee for the Kay Catarulla Short Story Award, did an interesting study of the stories submitted. Here's what she found:

There were 22 stories submitted, 15 from male authors, seven from female. The longest story was 9600 words and the shortest 1200.

Seventeen of the protagonists were male, with a majority being young men coming of age or running away from what they found, while of the five female protagonists, there were a party girl, a runaway wife, two caregivers, and a tourist.

The people in the stories were fairly settled, with only four drinking binges and a couple of drug trips. Adultery was not a major theme, although there were a number of other major husband/wife issues, like illness, social or cultural differences, divorce, and suicide. Plenty of old parents, crotchety and eccentric, required care.

Prominent in seven of the stories was a twosome of male friends or siblings. These were traveling, partying, working together, reminiscing about Korea or Vietnam, or struggling with family relationships.

Animals roamed through the stories. In the winning story, Mark Wisniewski's "Prisoners of War," a turtle farm was center stage, and two other plots depended on calves and cats. Raccoons, dogs, goats, fish, snowy egrets, and herons prowled about in others.

A number of stories were set in Austin, while others spun themselves out in New York, Houston, the

Midwest, New Mexico, or Greece. Most of the scenes occurred in cities or midsize towns, with only three distinctly rural settings.

The majority of points of view were first person, with one wonderful first person *plural* ingeniously acting as chorus.

Themes predominating were loneliness, being misunderstood, dysfunctional and separated families, and caregiving. Mostly, "things" were just too overwhelming for people to feel passionate or act decisively. They simply muddled through, with sometimes a glimmer of hope at the end. Laugh-out-loud treats for the reader were few.

Titles tended toward brevity, with nine stories headed by one to four words.

Of the magazines publishing the stories, two of the three winners were published in *Glimmer Train*. Claiming three stories was *North American Review*, with *Shenandoah* having two. The others derived from *McSweeney's Quarterly*, *Southwest Review*, *Idaho Review*, *Crate*, *Langdon Review*, *Barrelhouse*, *Southern Review*, *Open Windows 2006*, *Callahoo*, *New Yorker*, *Three Penny Review*, *Passages North*, *Antioch Review*, *New England Review*, and *The Atlantic*.

Of the 22 authors, 12 are currently living in Texas. The combined "Texas experience" among all the authors was 304 years.

News of members and others

Dates have been set for the annual Texas Book Festival. Mark your calendars for November 3 and 4. Website is www.texasbookfestival.org.

Our president, **Fran Vick**—well, to be formal, **Frances Brannen Vick**—combined with Jane Clements Monday for a new book, *Petra's Legacy: The South Texas Ranching Empire of Petra Vela and Mifflin Kenedy*. Publisher is Texas A&M University Press. As the catalogue description says, besides being a biography of Petra and the story of the famous Kenedy ranch, the book relates the history of

South Texas through a woman's perspective.

The Texas State Historical Association has issued a second edition of **Laura Wilson's** *Walt Matthews of Lamshead* with a new afterword by Laura. The original award-winning edition was published in 1989. Matthews was then 90 years old, the ninth and last child of pioneering parents who established their ranch in 1858. Matthews had spent practically his entire life on that ranch except for four years at Princeton. He died in 1997.

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More news of members and others

The State House Press McWhiney Foundation offers two recent books by TIL members **Stephen L. Hardin** and **Judy Alter**. Stephen's book is *Texian Macabre: A Melancholy Tale of a Hanging in Early Houston*, set in the days of the Republic of Texas. Judy's book is a biography for children, *Audie Murphy: War Hero and Movie Star*.

Back in May 2003 **Skip Hollandsworth's** article, "O Sister, Where Art Thou?" appeared in the *Texas Monthly*. It was about eight women in the Goree prison unit who formed an all-female country and Western act in the 1940s. Now Skip's article has been optioned for a possible movie by Jennifer Aniston (remember her? *Friends*?) and her producing partner, Kristin Hahn. According to *Dallas Morning News* writer Alan Pepard, by way of the *Hollywood Reporter*, the article will be converted into a musical. Skip meets such interesting people—Jennifer Aniston, Farrah Fawcett, Candy Barr, and Anna Nicole Smith to name just a handful.

In the last issue there was an article about the separation of the Texas State Historical Association and the University of Texas at Austin. UT will continue to maintain TSHA's Handbook of Texas Online service and it will continue to work with the TSHA on the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

You may have read the essay by Morris Dickstein in the June 17, 2007, issue of the *New York Times Book Review*, but your editor couldn't resist clipping it ("The Inner Lives of Men") for mention in this column. It was a profile of John Williams, an East Texas native who became an accomplished if unappreciated writer who founded the creative writing program at the University of Denver and taught in it for more than three decades. Williams died in 1994. His book, *Stoner*, was said to be a "perfect novel, so well told and beautifully written, so deeply moving, that it takes your breath away." *Stoner* and another of his books, *Butcher's Crossing*, have been reprinted recently by *New York Review of Books*.

Don Carleton has edited a memoir of former Texas governor Ross Sterling that was published by the UT Press this spring. It's *Ross Sterling, Texan: A Memoir by the Founder of Humble Oil and Refining Company*. An interesting story behind it—the book was written in the late 1940s by Ed Kilman, but it was such a piece of hagiography that it was never published. Still, it had great material obtained from interviews with Sterling himself. So, our own Don has put it into proper form so that it becomes a valuable piece of Texas history.

Carlton Stowers is back home in Cedar Hill after a productive year at the *Abilene Reporter News*. While in Abilene he wrote an eight-part series on the unsolved homicide of a former television news reporter entitled "The Murder of Jennifer Servo." It won first place awards from the Associated Press Managing Editors Association in the Best Feature Series category, the Houston Press Club's Lone Star Award for Best Investigative Reporting, and the State Bar Association's Texas Gavel Award for Excellence in Legal Reporting.

A new book by **Naomi Shihab Nye** with a provocative title will appear in September 2007 under the imprint of Greenwillow/HarperCollins. All right, here's the title: *I'll Ask You Three Times, Are You OK? Tales of Driving and Being Driven*.

David J. Weber, history professor at SMU, was elected to fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the only SMU faculty member to receive the honor. He's spending the 2007-2008 year as the Frederick W. And Carrie S. Beinecke Senior Fellow at the Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders, and the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Greg Garrett, English professor at Baylor, has published two non-fiction books recently. The most recent, appearing this year, was *The Gospel According to Hollywood* (Westminster John Knox), a study of spiritual themes in American films. It received a starred review in *Publishers Weekly's* Religion BookLine. Earlier he published *Crossing Myself* (Navpress), a memoir about his own battle with chronic depression.

In May, his short story, "The Hands of Christ," was presented as a part of the Texas Bound series at the Dallas Museum of Art. Presently, Greg is working on a book about his experience as a chaplain at Brackenridge Hospital in Austin. And, busy guy, he is studying theology at the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Southwest in Austin.

The first annual short story contest, in honor of **Elmer Kelton**, has been announced by the *Concho River Review* in conjunction with the Angelo State University Writers Conference. Writers are asked to submit original unpublished works of no more than 4,500 words. The winner will receive \$250, publication in CRR, and a reading slot at the ASU Writers Conference. Entry fee is \$10 and the deadline is Oct. 15, 2007. Guidelines at http://www.angelo.edu/faculty/jwegner/crrhomepage/short_story_contest.htm.