

The Texas Institute of Letters
Paisano

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Newsletter, February 2003

LON TINKLE AWARD WINNER.

Our 2003 Lon Tinkle award winner for distinguished achievement is Shelby Hearon, who received a B.A. from the University of Texas and lived for many years in Central Texas. Her first novel, *Armadillo in the Grass*, was published by Knopf in 1967. Since then, she has written numerous novels, including *The Second Dune* (1973), *Hannah's House* (1975), *A Prince of a Fellow* (1978), *Painted Dresses* (1981), *500 Scorpions* (1986), *Owning Jolene* (1989), *Hug Dancing* (1991), *Life Estates* (1994), and *Footprints* (1996). Her most recent novel is *Ella in Bloom*. Her works are distinguished by their humor, warmth, and compassion, as she finds meaning in the mundane details of daily life and the complexities of marriage. *New York Newsday* wrote: "What Jane Austen is to courtship, Shelby Hearon is to marriage."

Shelby has received a number of grants, fellowships, and literary awards, including two Texas Institute of Letters Fiction awards, in 1973 for *The Second Dune* and in 1978 for *A Prince of a Fellow*. She now lives in Vermont with her husband William Halpern, a physiologist, and will be returning to Texas to receive the Tinkle Award.

ANNUAL RECEPTION AND BANQUET.

Hearon will be honored, new members will be introduced, and other yearly awards will be announced at our annual banquet held this year on Saturday, March 29 in Galveston. We will meet at the Hotel Galvez, a Wyndham Historic Hotel, known as the "Queen of the Gulf" since 1911. The induction of new members will be held at 3 p.m. at the Galvez's Parlor Room, when each new member will read a short selection from his or her work. Reservations for the TIL rooms are \$99 per night for city view rooms, \$119 for ocean view; the deadline for these is February 28, so make your reservations now. The Hotel Galvez address is 2024 Seawall Boulevard, Galveston, Texas 77550; Phone: 409-765-7721. The hotel's reservation number is 1-800-wyndham (996-3426) or www.wyndham.com/hotels/GLSHG/main.wnt .

Members and guests are also invited to a reception for TIL on Friday night, March 28, from 6-8 p.m. The Institute for the Medical Humanities at the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston will host the event, featuring wine, beer and light hors d'oeuvres at the home and studio of Medical Institute member Eric Avery, an artist, printmaker, and psychiatrist on the southwest corner of 12th and Postoffice Streets.

The banquet cost is \$50 per person. You may invite as many guests as you wish. Please send your check and ballot (see form attached) by March 10 to our treasurer, Jim Hoggard; we have enclosed an envelope for this purpose. If you have not already done so, please be sure to include your annual membership dues of \$50 for 2003. (Should the envelope get misplaced, Jim's address is Department of English, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX 76308).

NEWS OF MEMBERS.

William V. Davis of Waco has recently received a number of recognitions. He has been awarded the Fellowship in Poetry by the Texas Writers' League and the James Sims Prize in American Literature by the Conference on Christianity and Literature. He has also become Centennial Professor of English at Baylor, where he has been Writer-in-Residence since 1979. Bill continues to publish poems, stories, essays, etc. in a wide variety of periodicals, including, most recently, Denver Quarterly, The Gettysburg Review, New Orleans Review, and The Chariton Review.

John Graves and Sandra Cisneros are among the 13 Texas artists and art patrons who will receive a Texas Medal of the Arts in Austin on March 25.

Beverly Lowry's new book, *Her Dream of Dreams*, on Madam C. J. Walker is due out this spring. Beverly teaches at George Mason University.

Clay Reynolds' sixth novel, *The Tentmaker* (Berkley-Penguin 2002) has been greeted with rave reviews. His next novel, an academic satire, *Ars Poetica*, is scheduled for early spring publication with Texas Review Press; it was the winner of the 2002 George Garrett manuscript award. Another new novel, *Threading the Needle*, is in production with Texas Tech University Press and is slated for a late spring/early summer release. This rock 'n' roll, drag-race ghost story will be part of the Sandhill Chronicles series being issued by TTUP.

Fran Vick has provided information on a fairly new Texas press with which she has been working, Bright Sky Press, of Albany, Texas, with Rue Judd at the helm. Fran notes, "It is a really marvelous press. We are lucky to have Rue here. She has been publishing for years in Washington, D.C. and moved to Albany with her husband Ardon Judd, who is the nephew of Watt Matthews of Lombshead. So Washington's loss is our gain." Fran has edited the following titles for Bright Sky: *For 500 Years: The Shackelford County Courthouse* by Shirley Caldwell, Bob Green and Reilly Nail; *Chance Encounters* by A. C. Greene, *Cattle Brands: Ironclad Signatures* by Jane Pattie, with a foreword by Elmer Kelton; and *War Horse: A U. S. Remount Story* by Phil Livingston and Ed Roberts.

Bright Sky Press also publishes children's books, with two by TIL members forthcoming: Mocha the Clinical Cat by Jane Roberts Wood and Horned Toad Corners by Joyce Roach. Fran reports that the catalog "also carries such notables as omnibus volumes by Anne Tyler and Dean Koontz and a marvelous array of cookbooks as diverse as Barbecue Biscuits & Beans by Bill Cauble and Cliff Teinert and Brennan's of Houston in Your Kitchen by Chef Carl Walker."

In addition to her children's novel mentioned above, a new novel by Jane Roberts Wood, Roseborough, will be in bookstores in early May. Jane also reports that the A.C. Greene and Judy Green Foundation is sponsoring the adaptation of one of her stories into a play.

THANKS TO TOM.

Tom Pilkington was inadvertently left off our list of TIL Council members in the last newsletter. Tom has served faithfully in this capacity for the last four years and is now rotating off the Council. Our thanks for a job well done.

HELPING PAISANO.

Please consider giving something for Paisano fellowships when you send in your banquet money or dues, or simply send a donation. James Hoggard, former president of TIL and current treasurer, explains why this is a good and necessary action:

"The Paisano fellowships are likely the most important mission of the TIL. In fact, a fair number of decades ago, the idea of the fellowships brought meaning and purpose to the sagging energies of our organization. Those fellowships, which are now ongoing, honor the past and usher in the promise of the future. Year after year a number of TIL members have been faithful and generous in their support of the funding. What other members may not realize, however, is that, while we have a sizable endowment now, we have also increased the two stipends (two \$12,000 fellowships a year), and we need ongoing support to sustain those amounts. I hope the fine writers who give texture and presence and meaning to the tradition of The Texas Institute of Letters will assume responsibility for guiding the future by making, even modest, contributions to the Paisano fund. One ought to consider doing this yearly."

To read about Paisano and its significance, go to a recent feature article on the University of Texas web site-- <http://www.utexas.edu/features/archive/2003/paisano.html> .

DATES TO REMEMBER.

Feb. 28

Deadline to make reservations at Hotel Galvez for annual TIL meeting Mar. 28-29

March 10

Deadline for ballots and banquet reservations to reach Jim Hoggard, TIL treasurer

March 28

6 – 8 p.m

TIL reception at the home and studio of Eric Avery, southwest corner of 12th and Postoffice Streets, Galveston

March 29

3 p.m

New member readings in Hotel Galvez Parlor Room
March 29
7 p.m.
Annual TIL Banquet, Hotel Galvez

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