

PRESS RELEASE

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Claudette Cohen Wins 2013 Doris Betts Fiction Prize

Claudette Cohen of Carolina Beach is the winner of the 2013 Doris Betts Fiction Prize competition for her story "The Mayor of Biscoe." Cohen will receive a prize of \$250 from the North Carolina Writers' Network, and her story will be published in the 2014 issue of the *North Carolina Literary Review*.

Ninety-nine stories were submitted to this year's competition. *NCLR* Fiction Editor Liza Wieland selected Cohen's story from 18 finalists, because, she says, "I admire the visceral, complex language in the story, the unflinchingly honest voice of the narrator, and the writer's ability to tell us truths about human experience, truths that are very nearly beyond words." Wieland also noted "Sakura" by Annie Frazier, "Mara's Baby" by Donald Marple, and "Of Lions and Sparrows" by Seth Peavey for honorable mention.

Cohen is from Carolina Beach and has lived in North Carolina for most of her life. "The Mayor of Biscoe" has also won first place at the Southern Writers Symposium, where it started a dialogue with combat veteran and writer Jerry Bradley. This collaboration resulted in the founding of the Veterans Writing Collective at Methodist University in Fayetteville. In addition, "The Mayor of Biscoe" has won first honorable mention in the Elizabeth Simpson Smith Short Story Contest, was among six finalists for the North Carolina Humanities Council's Linda Flowers Award in 2011 to 2012, and has been made into a screenplay. Cohen continues to promote such programs as ArtReach: Project America in her home state. A new short story of hers is soon to appear in the University of South Carolina Press anthology, *Phantom Manners: Contemporary Southern Gothic Fiction by Women*.

The annual Doris Betts Fiction Prize honors the late novelist and short story writer Doris Betts, and is sponsored by the nonprofit North Carolina Writers' Network, the state's oldest and largest literary arts services organization devoted to writers at all stages of development. For additional information, visit www.ncwriters.org.

Published since 1992 by East Carolina University and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the *North Carolina Literary Review* has won numerous awards and citations. *NCLR* Fiction Editor Liza Wieland is the author of three novels and three collections of short stories.

A two-year subscription to *NCLR* will include the 2013 issue, featuring the winner from the 2012 Betts competition, as well as the 2014 issue, featuring Cohen's winning story from this year's competition. Go to <http://www.NCLR.ecu.edu/subscriptions/> for subscription information, and subscribe by June 1 to avoid postage charges.

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