

## Local author to sign copies of new book

Noted folklorist Laverne Harrell Clark will be on hand Saturday, Sept. 27, from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Book Nook on Main Street in Smithville signing copies of her latest work, *Keepers of the Earth* (\$14.95, Cinco Punto Press, El Paso). The novel, first to appear in the Hell Yes! Texas Women Series, illustrates Clark's capacity to weave her love for Texas land and lore into an intricate scheme. Clark will also read from the

new work to further evince this ability.

In *Keepers*, we are introduced to the Munday family, torn apart by their own particular brand of madness--love for their land and greed for oil money. The Munday's live in a fictitious Central Texas town on land they have partially leased to an oil drilling outfit. Soon, the drilling outfit uncovers a nest of coachwhip snakes much to the dismay of the Munday's lifelong neighbor,

Cefus Jenkins, an old black man who was, in his youth, taught the ways of a hoodoo conjurer. Believing that these snakes rule the underworld and convinced that disturbing them can cause havoc, he decides he must intervene by putting a stop to the carelessness of his neighbors and the men drilling their land.

*Keepers of the Earth* is Clark's first full length novel, but certainly not her first rendition of folklore. *They Sang for Horses* began the writer's examination of folklore and won her the prestigious Chicago Folklore Prize and second place in the 1968 National League of Pen Women's literary competition. Created originally as her thesis for graduate school, *They Sang for Horses* plaited scholarship and art to discuss the impact of the horse on Navajo and Apache folklore. The University of Colorado Press has picked up the title and will reprint it for its fourth time sometime next year. Clark has also created and edited *The Face of Poetry* and *Focus 101*, biographical observations and portraits of contemporary poets. Clark won the 1985 Julian Ocene Literature Prize for *Once Again on All Souls*, a short story featured in *The Deadly Swarm and Other Stories*.

The July issue of *Texas Monthly* praised *Keepers of the Earth* in its "Hot Books" column, calling it "a gem." Liberally illustrated with photographs taken by Clark of Central Texas scenes, *Keepers* maintains one of Clark's traditions: her photos now illustrate all six of her books. *The Deadly Swarm and Other Stores* features many Smithville shots.