

# THE TEXAS INSTITUTE OF LETTERS

March, April, 2008, Newsletter

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## Deadline approaching to get special hotel rate for TIL's April 18-19 meeting in Dallas

To get the special TIL rate for rooms at the Park Cities Hilton Hotel reservations must be made by March 28. Members should request the Texas Institute of Letters rate—\$129 per night for a standard king or double queen guestroom based on single or double occupancy. A limited number of rooms are available on the Executive Club Floor at the rate of \$159 per night.

Reservations may be made 24 hours a day by calling 1-800-HILTONS.

This year's meeting will begin, as usual, with a Friday night reception. The site for this year's reception, the private library at the Harlan Crow home, is truly outstanding. It is open only on special occasions, and this likely will be the only chance for many members to view it.

The library is in a two-story addition to the Crow home on Preston Road in Highland Park. At one time the house was owned and resided in by Electra Waggoner (eccentric daughter of famed cattleman W.T. Waggoner; the Buick Electra and the town of Electra were named for her). The library contains priceless artifacts: Eisenhower's five-star helmet, Lincoln's desk, a silver tankard created by Paul Revere, and many others), historic documents (the deed to George Washington's Mt. Vernon estate and correspondence from all U.S. presidents), 3,500 manuscripts, 8,000 rare books, and paintings by America's greatest masters such as Gilbert Stuart, John Singleton Copley, Rembrandt Peale, Benjamin West, and Thomas Sully.

Be sure to indicate your attendance for the reception on your registration form reprinted in this newsletter. Plans are to have a bus take members from the Park Cities Hilton, where we'll be staying, to the Crow mansion and library just down Preston Road.

At the hotel on Saturday afternoon new member readings will be held, followed by a cocktail hour and the awards banquet.

## Here are the finalists for TIL's 2007 awards

Fran Vick has announced finalists for TIL's 2007 literary awards.

Prizes totaling \$21,700 will be awarded at the evening banquet on April 19 at the Park Cities Hilton.

Last year's top TIL fiction and non-fiction winners, Cormac McCarthy and Lawrence Wright, went on to win Pulitzer Prizes—McCarthy for *The Road* and Wright for *The Looming Tower*.

Several individuals in this year's competition are finalists in more than one category. Julie Savasky was a co-designer for all three of the finalists for the Fred Whitehead competition for best design of a book. Her partner in two of the projects was DJ Stout, and William Wittliff was her co-designer for the third.

Two other multiple nominees are John J. McLaughlin, whose novel, *Run in the Fam'ly*, is a finalist in both the Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Book of Fiction and the Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction, and Rick Bass, a finalist for separate entries in the O. Henry Award for Best Work of Magazine Journalism and the Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story.

The Lon Tinkle Award for excellence sustained throughout a career will be given to Southern Methodist University historian David Weber, prize-winning author of works about the American Southwest and Mexico. A cash prize of \$1,500 accompanies this award.

Finalists in all categories are as follows:

**Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Book of Fiction (\$6,000):** Gerald Duff, *Fire Ants* (New South Books); Russell Hardin, *Dmitir Esterhaats* (Wings Press); and John J. McLaughlin, *Run in the Fam'ly* (University of Tennessee Press).

**Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Non-fiction (\$5,000):** Paul F. Boller, *Presidential Diversions: Presidents at Play from George Washington to George W. Bush* (Harcourt); William Roger

Holman, *The Orphans' Nine Commandments* (Texas Christian University Press); and Robert Krueger and Kathleen Tobin Krueger, *From Bloodshed to Hope in Burundi* (University of Texas Press).

**TIL Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book (\$2,500):** Steve Bickerstaff, *Lines in the Sand: Congressional Redistricting in Texas and the Downfall of Tom DeLay* (University of Texas Press); Stuart Reid, *The Secret War for Texas* (Texas A&M University Press); and Jerry Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (Texas A&M University Press).

**Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry (\$1,200):** Robert Bonazzi, *Maestro of Solitude* (Wings Press); Jacqueline Kolosov, *Vago* (Lewis-Clark Press), and Cate Marvin, *Fragment of the Head of a Queen* (Sarabande Books).

**Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction (\$1,000):** Elizabeth Bruce, *And Silent Left the Place* (Washington Writers' Publishing House), and John J. McLaughlin, *Run in the Fam'ly* (University of Tennessee Press).

**O. Henry Award for Best Work of Magazine Journalism (\$1,000):** Jessica Apple, "Happy Anniversary," *Financial Times*; Rick Bass, "The Lives of the Browns," *Southern Review*; and Cynthia Leal Massey, "Is UT Holding Our Heritage Hostage?" *Scene in SA Monthly*.

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

Todd Bensman, "Breaching America," *San Antonio Express-News*; Ralph Blumenthal, "In East Texas, Residents Take On a Lake-Eating Monster," *New York Times*; and Ron Rozelle, series of personal columns in *Brazosport Facts*.

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

Julie Savasky and DJ Stout, *Reflections of a Man: The Photographs of Stanley Marcus*, (Cairn Press); Julie Savasky and DJ Stout, *Longhorn Football: An Illustrated History* (University of Texas Press); and William Wittliff and Julie Savasky, *A Book of Photographs from Lonesome Dove* (University of Texas Press).

**Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story (\$750):** Kerry Nefille Bakken, "Careless," *Arts & Letters Journal of Contemporary Culture*, Spring 2007; Rick Bass, "The Elephant," *Tin House*, Summer 2007; and Bret Anthony Johnston, "Republican," *Ploughshares*, Fall 2007.

**Friends of the Austin Public Library Award for Best Children's Book (\$500):** Arturo O. Martinez, *Pedrito's World* (Texas Tech University Press); and Roxie Munro, *Rodeo* (Bright Sky).

**Friends of the Austin Public Library Award for Best Young Adult Book (\$500):** Weezie Kerr Mackey, *Throwing Like a Girl* (Marshall Cavendish); Naomi Shihab Nye, *I'll Ask You Three Times, Are You OK?, Tales of Driving and Being Driven* (Greenwillow Books, imprint of Harper/Collins Publishers); and Brian Yankysy, *Wonders of the World* (Flux, Llewellyn Worldwide, Ltd.).

No award will be given this year in the John Bloom Humor Award for the Funniest Texas Book. The Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation of a Book will be given in 2009 for books published in 2007 and 2008.

## Time to pay dues for 2008

Dues, \$50 per member, may be sent to our treasurer, James Hoggard, Dept. of English, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX 76308. You may also pay for your April 19 banquet tickets in Dallas with the same check. Each ticket is \$50.

## Bill Davis assumes TIL presidency at April meeting

Meet our distinguished incoming president, Bill Davis (well, to be precise, William Virgil Davis), professor of English and writer-in-residence at Baylor University, who takes office with our April annual meeting in Dallas.

Bill, a native of Canton, Ohio, with a PhD from The Ohio University, is a prolific poet and writer whose specialty is 20<sup>th</sup> century American and British literature. His most recent book, *R. S. Thomas: Poetry and Theology* was published last year by Baylor University Press. He has done considerable work

as well on the poet Robert Bly, having published *Critical Essays on Robert Bly* (Macmillan Library Reference, 1992), and *Robert Bly: The Poet and His Critics* (Boydell & Brewer Ltd., 1994).

Bill has several volumes of his own poetry, including *One Way to Reconstruct the Scene* (Yale University Press, 1980), which won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award; *The Dark Hours* (Calliope Press, 1984), which won the Calliope Press Chapbook Prize, and *Winter Light* (1990).

In addition, he has published essays on R.S. Thomas in *British Writers*, Supplement XII, *Religion Past and Present: Encyclopedia of Theology and Religion* (both the German and English editions—the entry was originally written in German), and *Welsh Writing in English*. His poems have appeared in *Prairie Schooner*, *P N Review*, *The Hampden-Sydney Poetry Review*, *The Evansville Review*, *Lake Effect*,

## Faithful member LaVerne Harrell Clark dies

Members will be saddened to learn that LaVerne Harrell Clark of Smithville, Texas, novelist, short story writer, folklorist, historian, biographer, and faithful member of the Texas Institute of letters, died on February 24 from complications of severe sleep apnea and congestive heart failure. She is survived by her husband, L.D. Clark, also a prolific writer and TIL member.

## News of members and others:

Earlier this month (March) our TIL president, **Fran Vick**, also became president of the Texas State Historical Society. Such an honor—president at the same time of the two of the state's most prestigious learned societies. Surely no one in the state's history has shared that honor with Fran. It'll only be for a short while, for Fran concludes her two-year term as TIL president at our April annual meeting. Speaking of Fran, her new book, *Petra's Legacy: The South Texas Ranching Empire of Petra Vela and Mifflin Kenedy*, co-written with Jane Monday, won the \$2,000 Cora Horton Tullis Memorial Prize for the best book on Texas history in 2007. It was awarded at the TSHA meeting in Corpus Christi.

For years Walter Prescott Webb's treatment of the Texas Rangers stood tall, discouraging other authors from challenging this eminent historian. No longer. First came **Robert Utley's** acclaimed two-volume history—*Lone Star Justice* (2002) and *Lone Star Lawmen* (2007).

Now comes **Mike Cox**. For several years now Mike has been working on his own extensive history of the Texas Rangers, and the first volume of his intended two-volume effort is now out. It's the *Texas Rangers: Wearing the Cinco Peso, 1821-1900* (Forge Books). Mike reports that some 80 percent of the first press run has already been sold, and pre-publication reviews from *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and the *San Antonio Express-News* have been very favorable. He'll be talking about his book at a signing at the Westlake Barnes & Noble in Austin at 7:30 p.m., March 27.

**Reginald Gibbons'** new book of poems, *Creatures of a Day*, was published in spring 2008 by Louisiana State University Press, and his translations of Sophocles, *Selected Poems: Odes and Fragments*, will be published in 2008 by Princeton University Press. Gibbons is professor of English and classics and director of the Center for the Writing Arts at Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

Three TIL members—**Tom Dodge**, **Ben Fountain**, and **Isabel Nathaniel** were on a panel to discuss the National Book Critics "Good Reads" as well as listing their own personal favorites. Michael Merschel, assistant arts editor/books of the *Dallas Morning News*, moderated the discussion at Barnes & Noble's Northwest Highway store in Dallas. A fourth member of the panel was Walton Muyumba of the University of North Texas.

**A.G. Mojtabai's** new novel *All That Road Going* will be published in May by Triquarterly Books/Northwestern University Press. A recent story of hers, "Signs and Wonders," was published in the journal *Image* in the fall issue of 2007. She's at work now on her tenth book.

The 4th Annual Mayborn Literary Nonfiction Writers Conference of the Southwest, July 18-20, 2008 at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas includes many of the nation's foremost literary nonfiction writers, including keynote speakers N. Scott Momaday, Bob Shacochis and Candice Millard. The conference will also include an essay/article competition that offers \$12,000 in cash prizes and a chance to be included in Ten Spurs, the conference's literary journal published jointly by Hearst Newspapers and the Mayborn Graduate School of Journalism at UNT. The conference's manuscript competition includes a 1st place prize of \$3,000 and a provisional publishing

contract with UNT Press. For complete details about the conference visit the Mayborn web site at: <http://themayborn.unt.edu>

Kudos of the highest order to **Michael Adams**, whose 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the Dobie Paisano Program at the Paisano Ranch on Saturday, March 8, was a terrific success. Among the honored guests were former Paisano fellows, including the first one, **Billy Porterfield**.

This very month **Elizabeth (Betty) Adcock** saw publication of her sixth collection of poems, *Slantwise*, published by the LSU Press as the L.E. Phillabaum Award volume for 2008, given by the press as the outstanding poetry volume of the year. Her collection of poems, *The Difficult Wheel*, won TIL's 1995 poetry prize.

**Bill Minutaglio** will have a new book released as part of the Southwestern Writers Collection series, published by the University of Texas Press. The book is tentatively titled *In Search of The Blues: A Writer's Journey to the Soul of Black Texas*. Other authors published in the Southwestern Writers Collection series include John Graves, Bud Shrake, Bill Broyles and Stephen Harrigan.

Please send information for the newsletter to **Darwin Payne, 9021 Gunnison Dr., Dallas, TX 75231**. e-mail: [dpayne@smu.edu](mailto:dpayne@smu.edu). TIL website: <http://texasinstituteofletters.org>

### 2008 TIL Dues and Annual Meeting

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

	TIL Dues	\$50.00
	Contribution to Paisano Fund	\$ _____
	Contribution to Fred Whitehead Memorial Endowment Fund	\$ _____
	<b>TOTAL AMOUNT</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

You also may pay for your April 19 annual meeting banquet tickets with the same check.

I will attend the banquet with \_\_\_ guests at \$50 each. Amt. Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Banquet reservations must be made by April 12.)

Please indicate whether you will attend the Friday night, April 18, reception at the Crow Library.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, I will attend with \_\_\_ guest(s).

\_\_\_\_\_ No, I will not be there.

Make check payable to Texas Institute of Letters and send to:

James Hoggard, Dept. of English, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX 76308

