

# Texas Institute of Letters

October/November/December 2009

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## **Annual meeting approaching; judges reading entries for 2009 literary contests; it's time to pay our dues**

Yes, so much important news for our Texas Institute of Letters members.

\*Mark your calendars and make reservations for our annual spring meeting, this time in Austin on April 30-May 1 at the Austin Radisson Hotel.

\*Our judges are busy judging the entries in our various contests which offer the state's highest monetary awards for literary achievement.

\*And, it's time to pay our \$50 annual dues for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Let's look at these one at a time.

### **Annual Spring Meeting**

As usual, at our annual spring meeting banquet we'll announce and hand out checks totaling \$21,450 to the winners of twelve separate categories for our 2009 literary contests.

But the weekend will start with a Friday reception (5 to 7 p.m.) at Carolyn and Joe Osborn's lovely place, 3612 Windsor Road. (This address is correct. See the directions at the end of this newsletter.)

On Saturday afternoon at the hotel we'll have an opportunity to meet our new members and hear them read from their works.

Saturday evening we'll have a cocktail hour at the hotel followed by the banquet and awards presentations.

Make your reservations for the banquet directly with our treasurer, Jim Hoggard, on the form that is on the last page of this newsletter. (And send him your check!)

Our president, William V. Davis, has arranged for special rates at the hotel, but to take advantage of that you must make your reservation BEFORE April 7. Otherwise, higher rates kick in. The hotel is well situated next to the river (well, lake) in downtown Austin. Rates will be \$130 per night plus tax until April 7. Be sure to mention the TIL special rate when you make your reservation. You can do it by telephone or on-line. For reservations call 1-800-395-7046 or 512 478-9611. Or go to the website: [http://www.radisson.com/hotels/us/tx/austin/42?s\\_cid=se.ggl.RAD\\_kw014755](http://www.radisson.com/hotels/us/tx/austin/42?s_cid=se.ggl.RAD_kw014755).

### **Literary Contests—Authors Urged to Hurry Up with Their Entries**

This is the way things usually work, but at the moment it seems that authors and publishers are waiting until the last weeks before submitting their entries. TIL members who have published works during the past year are urged to send in their entries as quickly as possible to the judges of the appropriate contests. The deadline for submissions is Jan. 9, 2010, for books or other works published in 2009. Also, please remind other authors and publishers to send in their entries. Details with names and addresses of the judges are in the previous newsletter, available online at [texasinstituteofletters.org](http://texasinstituteofletters.org).

### **Dues Are Payable Now**

Our treasurer, Jim Hoggard, reminds us that it's time to submit your \$50 dues, which actually—although it's seldom mentioned so precisely here--are for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. There is a form on the last page for submitting your dues, and it also has space for your spring banquet reservations.

## News of Members and Others . . .

**Marion Winik** has settled into her new home in Baltimore (moved from PA in 2/09) and welcomes visiting Texans to track her down. She is teaching creative nonfiction in the UB MFA program and revising a novel about teenage golfers, as well as writing the monthly "Answer Lady" advice column for *Ladies Home Journal*. Her new, improved website, marionwinik.com, is a good way to keep up and make contact. The literary scene, Marion says, is "great here, cool readings every week, very open and accessible and full of both young and older energy!"

**C.W. Smith's** story, "Costume Jewelry," appeared in the recent issue of *descant*. Another is forthcoming in the *Southwest Review*. His 1983 novel *Vestal Virgin Room* was just reoptioned for the fourth time ("is the fourth time the charm?" he asks) and he just finished the third draft of a new novel titled *Steplings*. "Would love to have an agent," he says.

**Richard Lowe**, UNT: Presently editing Confederate General John G. Walker's *History of the War in the Trans-Mississippi*. Richard talked on an aspect of the Vicksburg campaign at the conference on "Vicksburg: The Fatal Fulcrum" on November 21 at Buffalo Gap Historic Village.

The feature movie, "Invicta," written and directed by Bastrop TIL member **Carolyn Banks**, is now available in limited release from the web site [www.invictamovie.com/](http://www.invictamovie.com/). The logline for the movie is "Love and greed and fire ants mix it up in rural Texas." Banks calls the movie's genre "'horror tra-la,' a blend of giggles and screams and genuine human feeling."

**Willard Spiegelman** has made about thirty appearances over the course of the last six months regarding his book of essays, *Seven Pleasures: Essays on Ordinary Happiness*, which Farrar Straus Giroux published in May. These have included TV and radio spots, book store appearances in New York, New Haven, Providence, Cambridge and Lenox (MA), Dallas and Marfa (TX), plus university lectures in PA, New England, and Houston, as well as at the Texas Book Fair in Austin in October. And, well, other events in Dallas and elsewhere.

**Bill Sloan's** Korean War book, *The Darkest Summer: Pusan and Inchon 1950, The Battles That Saved South Korea—and the Marines—From Extinction* (Simon & Schuster) is just out and has received several rave reviews. Bill has previously done three books on World War II, and he has just completed a proposal for a new military history.

**Chitra Divakaruni's** young adult fantasy novel *Shadowland* came out earlier this year. It is the last of a trilogy that began with *The Conch Bearer*, a Bluebonnet List book. She is currently busy reading TIL award entries, in between teaching creative writing at the U of Houston.

What we hear from **Mike Cochran**: "My autobiography on renowned Las Vegas gambler Doyle Brunson, aka 'Texas Dolly,' hit the bookstores November 10 and, according to the publisher, has already gone to a second printing. *The Godfather of Poker* was published by Cardoza Publishing."

**Jan Reid** says his *Texas Tornado: The Times and Music of Doug Sahm*, written with input from his son Shawn Sahm, will be out in the spring, University of Texas Press. "I'm writing a biography of Ann Richards, also UT Press," he tells us. "And TCU Press has agreed to publish my historical novel, *Comanche Sundown*, which revolves around the youths of the half-breed chief Quanah Parker and a black cowboy and freed slave, Bose Ikard."

**Dick J. Reavis**, up in Raleigh, NC, reports that his book, *Catching Out: Secrets of a Day Labor Hall*, will be published by Simon & Schuster on February 16. It's an account of his days as a manual laborer on temporary jobs at the bottom of the American labor market, during 2007 and 2008.

**David Lee** has three books forthcoming within the next few months: *Texas Wild Flowers: A Triptych*, Wood Works Press; *A House Made of Time* (with William Kloefkorn), Logan House Press; and *Stone Wind Water*, Black Rock Press.

Our former president **Fran Vick** says she is up to the same old things—“raising money for Texas State Historical Association and for a Liberal Arts Building at the University of Texas.” Jane Monday and I have signed a contract with Texas A&M University Press to edit love letters from Robert Kleberg to Alice King from 1884 to 1887, so we are researching that.

At the Friends of Sam Rayburn annual awards banquet on Oct. 1, **Robert S. Weddle** was presented with the organization's fifth annual H.G. Dulaney Award for public service. State Historian Light Cummins, one of the speakers for the occasion, paid tribute to Bob for his many works of historical non-fiction. The award is named for the longtime director of the Rayburn Library and Museum, who died this year.

**Larry Thomas** (2008 poet laureate of Texas) is back from a recent trip to The University of Texas of the Permian Basin where he was honored with a proclamation from the mayor of the City of Odessa designating November 14 as “Larry D. Thomas Day.” He was featured at another poetry event (“Poetry in the Basin”) sponsored by Midland College, UTPB and the Permian Basin Poetry Society.

**Prudence Mackintosh** will be at UT-Austin for the January-May semester. She’ll be teaching a non-fiction writing class for juniors and seniors in the Liberal Arts Honors program. “John and I are moving to Austin for six months. We will live in a tiny fully furnished cottage near the campus.”

**Jerome Loving** (inducted in TIL in 2009) has completed his full-length biography of Mark Twain for the University of California Press. It’s 550 pages, and it will commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Twain’s death. Due out this spring under the title, *Mark Twain: The Adventures of Samuel L. Clemens*.

**Bill Minutaglio**, professor of journalism at UT-Austin and author of the new biography, *Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life*, is overseeing a Nonfiction Book Writing seminar at UT, inspired in part by a course at Columbia University led by the writer Samuel Freedman. Students work all semester on 40-page proposals for narrative nonfiction books and are guided in the process by agents, publishers, authors and editors.

**Jim Donovan**, whose recent book, *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Bighorn* (Little, Brown), drew wide praise, now has turned his attention to another—and certainly as far as Texans are concerned—an even more important and iconic battle with a tragic ending. “I’m working on a book about the battle of the Alamo,” he says. “I’m largely finished with the research phase—many, many trips down I-35 to UT’s Briscoe Center for American Research, and the DRT’s Research Library in San Antonio, among other archival venues—and have recently started writing.”

**Joyce Roach**: “Donning Publishers, who ordinarily publish pictorial histories, have published a book of mine entitled *The Little Town That Could, Westlake, Texas: Origins and Legacies*. It’s 300 pages and more about the Cross Timbers region and folk history of North Central Texas than about the town!”

**Andres Tijerina** has a book manuscript in progress entitled *How to Pass History* under contract with Kendall Hunt Publishing Company and a chapter in a book of readings entitled *Tejano Leadership in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas* edited by **Jesus F. de la Teja** now in production by Texas A&M University Press.

**Andrew Hudgins** has been chosen to receive the 2010 Governor's Award for the Arts (that’s the Ohio governor), which will be given next April. His new book *American Rendering: New and Selected Poems* is coming out with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, also in April.

**Naomi Shihab Nye**’s *Honeybee* (Greenwillow, 2008) won the Arab American Book Award (Young Readers division).

And, finally, let’s not forget our president, whose book, *Landscape and Journey*, which won the New Criterion Poetry Prize, has been published by Ivan R. Dee. Note, too, this volume and his other poetry is always published under his full name, **William Virgil Davis**.

# TIL Archives Established at Texas State; Send Your Related Documents

The Southwestern Writers Collection/Wittliff Collections at Texas State University in San Marcos is establishing a comprehensive archive of TIL material. While the collection already has a number of TIL-related documents, it is looking for more. "We are primarily interested in correspondence, meeting agendas and minutes, bylaws, financial records, programs, nominations, annual awards lists, publications, bibliographies, news releases, ephemera, and general working files," said Shin Yu Pai, Assistant Curator for Acquisitions.

If you have TIL materials you'd like to contribute to the collection, please contact Shin Yu (ShinYu Pai at ShinYu.Pai@txstate.edu or 512-245-2346) or **Steve Davis** (sdavis@txstate.edu or 512-245-9180). The mailing address is The Wittliff Collections, Alkek Library, 601 University Drive, Texas State University, San Marcos TX 78666.

## Advisory Council Being Formed to Assist in Funding Paisano's Renovation

**Carolyn Osborn** is busy forming an Advisory Council for Friends of Paisano to help the University of Texas in its project to renovate J. Frank Dobie's famous place outside of Austin that for many years has provided a wonderful home for the Dobie Paisano Fellows. Thus far, in addition to Osborn, that council consists of **Kip Stratton, Jim Hoggard, Mary Margaret Farabee, and Darwin Payne**. The renovation is in progress now, and the goal of the Advisory Council will be to assist in raising funds to help pay for it.

As TIL members know, the University of Texas owns Paisano and is responsible for its upkeep. However, its budget allows for only \$250,000 to replace the roof, the kitchen, the back bathroom, the back bedroom, all plumbing, all electricity, and half a foundation. An additional \$200,000, the amount the Friends of Paisano needs to raise, would pay for the front half of the foundation, replacement of termite-ridden walls, new doors, windows, and floors in the front bedroom, the writing room, and the living room as well as repairs to the chimney.

UT's plans show the footprint of the original house. Its various additions and the front porch will be kept. Damages inflicted by time and termites apparently have done the rest.

And here's the important part: **Tax deductible donations are needed for Friends of Paisano**. Unless these additional funds are raised, Carolyn advises, "it will be a long, long time before UT can afford to finish the work."

Donations should be made out to The University of Texas, with Paisano Renovation noted in the memo line, and sent to:

**Texas Institute of Letters, c/o James Hoggard, PO Box 9032, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.**

## Writers League of Texas Book Award Winners Announced

TIL member **Jim Donovan** took top non-fiction honors in the Writers League of Texas literary contests for 2009 with his book, *A Terrible Glory: Custer and the Little Big Horn, The Last Great Battle of the American West* (Little, Brown). His \$1,000 award and other finalists and winners were announced at the Texas Book Festival in Austin.

Finalists in the non-fiction category included several other TIL members, including **Mike Cox** for *The Texas Rangers: Wearing the Cinco Peso 1821-1900*, his first of a two-volume history, and **Marion Winik** for *The Glen Rock Book of the Dead*.

**C.W. Smith's *Purple Hearts*** was a finalist in the fiction contest.

### TIL OFFICERS

**President**, William Virgil Davis, Waco, [William.Davis@baylor.edu](mailto:William.Davis@baylor.edu) (underscore between William and Davis)

**Vice President**, John Miller Morris, Austin, [jmorris@utsa.edu](mailto:jmorris@utsa.edu)

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**Secretary**, Darwin Payne, Dallas, [dpayne@smu.edu](mailto:dpayne@smu.edu)  
**Treasurer**, James Hoggard, Wichita Falls, [james.hoggard@mwsu.edu](mailto:james.hoggard@mwsu.edu)  
**Recording Secretary**, Betty Wiesepape, Richardson, [Betwx@aol.com](mailto:Betwx@aol.com)

**TIL COUNCILORS**

T. Lindsay Baker, Rio Vista, first term ends April 2011  
Ty Cashion, Huntsville, first term ends April 2010  
Emily Fox Gordon, Houston, first term ends April 2011  
Fritz Lanham, Houston, second term ends April 2011  
Frances Neidhardt, Sherman, first term ends April 2010  
Jan Seale, McAllen, second term ends April 2011  
W.K. (Kip) Stratton, Round Rock, 1st term ends April 2010  
Andres Tijerina, Austin, first term ends in April 2010

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**Please use this form for remitting your dues for 2009-10 fiscal year  
and for reserving banquet tickets for the spring annual meeting.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

TIL dues for the fiscal year 2009-10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50.00  
Paisano Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
Fred Whitehead Memorial Endowment Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
Scholarly Book Award Endowment Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
O. Henry Award Endowment Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
Stanley Walker Award Endowment Fund \_\_\_\_\_  
May 1 banquet tickets, \$50 per person \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

***Make check payable to Texas Institute of Letters and send to:***  
**James Hoggard, Dept. of English, Midwestern State University, 3410 Taft, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.**

Directions to Carolyn Osborn's house from the Radisson Hotel in Austin for the  
Friday reception:

From the front of the hotel facing north: Turn west, which is left, on Caesar Chavez. Pass through three traffic lights. Angle right on MoPac Expressway (Route 1) and continue to the Windsor Rd. exit, which will be the second exit after you enter MoPac. Turn right and continue under MoPac to stop light. Cross Exposition. a major street with a another stoplight. Continue west. Cross Pecos, a four-way stop. 3612 Windsor is three blocks past Pecos on the right.

If you're coming from the north, take MoPac (Route 1) south, take Windsor Rd. exit to the right and when you come to the first stoplight, turn left. Follow directions above, that is, cross Exposition, etc. Our phone: 472-4533.