

Texas Institute of Letters



October/November/December 2011

Newsletter

Annual Meeting, Banquet Information Announced

TIL's annual meeting will be at San Antonio's Menger Hotel, April 13-14. Reservations can be made by calling 1-800-345-9285. Be sure to mention Texas Institute of Letters when making your reservation to get the group rate. Reservations can also be made online at the Menger Hotel's Website:
[https://booking.ihotelier.com/istay/istay.jsp?hotelid=75799&languageid=1&_utma=1.2041729346.1325532037.1325532037.1325532037.1&_utmb=1.1.10.1325532037&_utmc=1&_utmz=1.1325532037.1.1._utmcsr=google|utmccn=\(organic\)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=menger%20hotel&_utmv=-&_utmk=228495133](https://booking.ihotelier.com/istay/istay.jsp?hotelid=75799&languageid=1&_utma=1.2041729346.1325532037.1325532037.1325532037.1&_utmb=1.1.10.1325532037&_utmc=1&_utmz=1.1325532037.1.1._utmcsr=google|utmccn=(organic)|utmcmd=organic|utmctr=menger%20hotel&_utmv=-&_utmk=228495133). Select "Groups" from menu across the top of the page and enter the following "Attendee Code": **041312letters**. (The first figure is the code is a zero.) The TIL group rate is \$115 per night. Reservations must be made by **March 20** to get the TIL group rate.

Please use the form at the end of this newsletter to remit 2011-2012 dues and to make your reservations for the banquet.

The Menger, which is the oldest continuously operating hotel west of the Mississippi, is located in downtown San Antonio, near the Alamo.

Driving Directions

From the Airport

Leaving the airport, follow the signs to 281 South (also I-37) to downtown San Antonio. It is approximately 15-20 minutes, depending on traffic. Entering the downtown area, take the exit marked Houston St/The Alamo. Go right

on Houston St. to Bonham (two signals), turn left on Bonham.

From Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, Waco and other points north

Take I-35 South into downtown San Antonio to I-37. Merge right and take the I-37 South exit. Once on I-37 South, merge right and take the exit marked Houston St./The Alamo. Go right on Houston St. to Bonham (two signals), turn left at Bonham.

From Corpus Christi and other points south

Take I-37 North into downtown San Antonio. Take the exit marked Commerce St. Turn left on Commerce (going under the highway) and drive down to Alamo Plaza (three signals). Turn right on Alamo Plaza, then right on Blum Street (first signal).

From Houston and other points east

Take I-10 West into San Antonio to I-37. Merge right and get onto I-37 North. Stay in the right lane and take the exit marked Commerce St. Turn left on Commerce (going under the highway) and drive down to Alamo Plaza (3 signals). Turn right on Alamo Plaza, then right on Blum Street (first signal).

A shuttle is available from the airport, with reservations suggested: www.saairportshuttle.com. Cabs are also available, with fares running about \$26 one-way from the airport.

All of the events on Saturday, April 14 – including the induction of new members and the banquet – will occur at the Menger. Details of the event on Friday night, April 13, are still developing.

Council Vote on New Members Slated for January

The TIL Council will meet January 14 in Dallas, where, among other business, new member nominations will be considered.

The TIL by-laws state the following about membership qualifications:

“Members shall have been residents of Texas for at least two years at any time prior to nomination and have some substantial connection or affiliation with the state through their work. Members shall be practicing writers who have demonstrated substantial literary achievement in their genres. In rare instances, persons who are not practicing writers may be considered for membership.”

These discussions generally get at the heart of our purpose as an organization, which is “...the stimulation of interest in Texas letters, the recognition of distinctive achievement in the field, and the promotion of fellowship among those especially interested in the literary and cultural development of the state.”

The council must approve these nominees by a four-fifths majority vote of those in attendance. Those approved will be submitted to the entire membership for approval following the January 14 meeting. New members will be installed at TIL’s annual meeting in San Antonio.

President’s Message

Dear TIL friends:

Lots of our TIL members are working extra hard these days . Thirty of them – and that’s a pretty good portion of our 250 or so members – are trying to finish judging the many entries that have come their way for our 2011 TIL literary contests. That’s three judges per contest, and for the major categories we generally have twenty to thirty entries. That’s a lot of reading. The deadline for entries is Jan. 9, and we’re urging the panels to complete their work no later than March 1 so we can notify the three finalists for each contest that they’ve crossed that barrier with enough advance notice so they can make plans to attend our April annual awards banquet. The judges also will have chosen a winner among those three, but we won’t reveal that person’s identity until the April banquet.

Our literary contests are perhaps the most important thing we do. Being a winner or a finalist in any of the categories is the sort of recognition that sticks for a long time. For that reason, of course, our judges always work very conscientiously, and their selections over the years (with a very few exceptions, it must be admitted) reflect their keen judgments.

And then there’s another group of hard-working TIL members doing work that is just about as important. That would be our councilors, officers, and a good number of past presidents who remain active in our meetings. Coming up in our mid-January is the annual task of selecting new members for TIL. This year 29 new members have been nominated, more than I’ve ever seen in my several years of involvement.

Generally, about half of those nominated are admitted into membership. It takes a four-fifths vote of the council and participating past presidents to be presented to the entire membership for approval.

I am astonished every year at the number of highly qualified writers presented for membership. When TIL started in 1936 there were 50 charter members with the state’s population just over 6 million. That was about one member for every 120,000 Texans. Today there are some 25 million Texans (that is, living in the state), and we have about 250 members--one member for every 100,000 Texans. So, I guess over the years we’ve maintained a ratio that might be appreciated by our founders.

– **Darwin Payne**

Remembering J. Frank Dobie with Poems, Prayers, and Rattlers

[Note: As reported in the last newsletter, an event took place in the ghost town of Oakville on November 4 to remember J. Frank Dobie. The event was organized by South Texas rancher and writer **Bill Sibley** and others. TIL's **Jan Reid** was among the participants and files this dispatch.]

By Jan Reid

I rode down to Oakville with **Elizabeth Crook** and **Don Graham**, which was highly enjoyable. It was indeed a very worthwhile evening on the grounds of the old jail, which is now a bed and breakfast. The proceeds for the event went to the renovation of the Dobie West Performing Arts Theatre in George West.

There was music, including one song by a cowboy-music-old-timer that referred to the Mexican town of Musquiz, at the foot of the Sierra Madres. I wondered if I was the only other one who'd been to Musquiz.

The storytellers were just that, professionals in an actor-like way. But we writers did well too. On **Steve Harrigan's** recommendation Elizabeth read some interesting Dobie letters to his wife Bertha, and Don found a couple of prayers, rare, I guess, for an avowed agnostic. **Robert Flynn** read from *The Longhorns*, **John Philip Santos** read from *A Texan in England*, **Naomi Shahib Nye** read a poem that Dobie wrote, and our host **Bill Sibley** read from *Rattlesnakes*. (I wasn't aware that Dobie wrote about rattlesnakes; he sure had plenty of them to study and reflect on at Paisano.)

We were asked to read something from our favorite Dobie, and in my case that was his first book, *A Vaquero from the Brush Country*. It was first published in 1929, drawn in part from conversations he had in the Big Bend with John Young, who had been a brush country cowboy, a trail driver, and member of posses in the border wars along the Rio Grande and in the near-anarchy of the frontiers of the Texas Panhandle and New Mexico Territory. One might say that today it would be classified as an as-told-to book, but Dobie made it very clear that the prose crafting and many of the ideas and scenes came from him, not Mr. Young. He dedicated it to his revered rancher uncle of Live Oak County, Jim Dobie.

I learned a great deal from this book in researching my novel, *Comanche Sundown*. Billy the Kid had a rowdy cameo in the novel, and I'd like to return to him and the principal characters, Quanah Parker and the freed slave Bose Ikard, in another novel that would be a continuation of their interrelated story. So what I chose to read in Oakville was an abridged version of Dobie's chapter "Billy the Kid Interpreted."

It was great fun. We should be thankful to Bill Sibley for thinking of and organizing it.

Past Paisano Fellows Have Busy Year; Renovations Continue

By Michael Adams

Director, Dobie Paisano Project

I'm pleased to report that our former fellows have published ten books over the past year, all receiving glowing reviews. They are: **Sarah Bird** (*The Gap Year*); **Stephen Harrigan** (*Remember Ben Clayton*); **Dagaberto Gilb** (*Before the End, After the Beginning*); **Michael Erard** (*Babel No More*); **Jan Reid** (*Comanche Sundown*); **C.W. Smith** (*Stepplings*); **Diane Wilson** (*Diary of an Eco-Outlaw*); **Manuel Martinez** (*Day of the Dead*); **Dominic Smith** (*Bright and Distant Shore*); and **Laura Furman** (*The Mother Who Stayed*).

Our two previous fellows, **John Pipkin** and **Philipp Meyer**, are under contract for their next novels, each due out in a year or so. **Scott Blackwood** received the distinguished Whiting Writer's Award. Poet **Harryette Mullen** received the \$50,000 Jackson Poetry Prize. Harrigan won the Texas Book Festival's Texas Writer Award [as did fellow TIL member **Lawrence Wright**]. Jan Reid won TIL's Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction. Smith's novel *Bright and Distant Shores* was shortlisted for The Age Book of the Year, as well as for the Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction. It also received a *Kirkus Reviews* "Best Books of 2011." Erard has reviews coming out in the *New York Times* and *The Economist*. He will be doing a lot of radio interviewing, including stints with *The Diane Rehm Show* and *The World*.

The PEN/O Henry Prize Stories 2011, which Furman edits, came out in April.

With the support of the Friends of Paisano, TIL, and The William A. and Madeline Welder Foundation, we have replaced 14 old, broken, drafty windows, which is making the winter days at the ranch much more comfortable and saving us a great deal on heating bills. J. David Bamberger of the famous Selah Bamberger ranch is about to complete his exhaustive study of the ranch (flora, fauna, terrain), providing us with a master-plan for possible use—including places to begin restoring the grasslands, how to better protect the creek, the best places for new trails, where we might build any structure, if that were ever a need.

DeGolyer Library Active in Publishing During 2011

By Russell Martin

Director, DeGolyer Library

Southern Methodist University

The DeGolyer Library has been especially active in the publishing division, with a number of new books, many by TIL members, including **Jane Roberts Wood**, *Seven Stories* (Dallas: DeGolyer Library, 2011), with an introduction by Phyllis Bridges and an afterword by the author. Another recent title is **Marshall Terry's** *Loving U.: The Story of a Love Affair (and Some Lover's Quarrels) with a University* (Dallas: DeGolyer Library, 2011), a personal view of the past 60 years of SMU history, revealing not only one writer's life but the life of a "sure enough" university. A chapter is devoted to TIL affairs. **C.W. Smith's** *Meeting Mister Tinkle* (Dallas: DeGolyer Library, 2011) is an elegantly printed pamphlet, with C.W.'s remarks on receiving the Lon Tinkle Award from the Texas Institute of Letters. **Darwin Payne's** *In Honor of the Mustangs: The Centennial History of Southern Methodist University Athletics, 1911-2010* (Dallas: DeGolyer Library & SMU Lettermen's Association, 2010) reminds all sports fans of the glory that was Walker, the grandeur that was Rote, with over 300 photographs, selected by Gerry York. *Farewell: Remembering Horton Foote, 1916-2009* (Dallas: DeGolyer Library, 2011) is edited by Marion

Castleberry and Susan Christenson and presents over 50 essays by Edward Albee, Ellen Burstyn, Robert Duval, Jean Stapleton, Jane Roberts Wood and many other writers, actors, and friends of the late Texas playwright (and TIL member) **Horton Foote**.

DeGolyer Library is also the home of the Book Club of Texas. Founded originally by **Stanley Marcus** in 1929, the Book Club was revived in 1988 and moved back to Dallas in 2007. The Book Club welcomes all who are interested in Texas history, literature, and fine printing. Recent publications include Everett C. Wilkie, Jr., *The 1861 Texas Printings of the Ordinance of Secession, a Declaration of the Causes, and an Address to the People of Texas: An Illustrated Descriptive Printing History Commemorating the Sesquicentennial Anniversary of Their Adoption and the Secession of Texas from the United States of America* (Dallas: Book Club of Texas, 2011), an essential bibliographical reference, with numerous color plates and facsimiles. Josefina Niggli, *The Defeat of Grandfather Devil: From the Twelfth-Century Spanish Shepherds' Play as Performed Yearly at Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico* (Dallas: Book Club of Texas, 2010), is a previously unpublished nativity play, with charming illustrations by Artemio Rodriguez, edited and with an afterword by William M. Fisher (Dallas: Book Club of Texas, 2010). For information on these and other Book Club titles, contact the DeGolyer Library or visit the Web page. Here's a link: <http://smu.edu/cul/degolyer/>.

Member News

Nicolás Kanellos has received the PEN Southwest Book Award for Nonfiction for his *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño Del Retorno*, which was published by the University of Texas Press last year. **Pat Carr** was shortlisted for the same award for *One Page at a Time: On a Writing Life*, published by Texas Tech University Press in late 2010. Congratulations to them both. ★★ Pat's also taught a workshop on writing the Civil War novel during the last week in August at the Chautauqua Institute, while *One Page at a Time* won the book design award at the New York Book Fair and was a finalist for the Willa Cather Creative Non-fiction Award. Her novella, *The Radiance of Fossils*, has been accepted by the Main Street Rag Press for publication next spring. ★★ *Ten Spurs Vol. 4: The Best of the Best Literary Nonfiction of the Mayborn Conference* has been selected by Edwidge Danticat and Robert Atwan as a "Notable Special Issue" for their *2011 Best American Essays*. **George Getschow** is the editor of *Ten Spurs*. In his foreword to the anthology, he explored the influence of **Larry McMurtry** and his bookstores, Booked Up, on creating a new generation of up-and-coming writers. The cover of *Ten Spurs Vol. 4* is an artist's rendition of Archer City – dominated by a single light on the square and Larry's mammoth bookstores. ★★ Speaking of McMurtry, he's penned reviews again for *Harper's*, where, in the January issue, his topics range from the rise of Amazon.com to John Updike (whom McMurtry calls the best American belletrist ever) to whaling. That issue also features an interesting article about Western explorer and landscapist Friedrich von Egloffstein with wonderful illustrations courtesy of SMU's DeGolyer Library and references to the work of the late TIL member **William Goetzmann**. ★★ **Dominic Smith**, currently a visiting writer at SMU, is the recent recipient of a New Works Grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council for the Arts. ★★ **Naomi Shihab Nye** reports she had "one of the best times ever" while presenting as part of the "Babel Series" in the Saarinen-designed Kleinhans Music Hall for the Just Buffalo Literary Center in Buffalo, New York. ★★ **Jim Donovan's** Alamo book, *The Blood of Heroes*, will be published by Little, Brown on May 15. ★★ **Carolyn Banks** received a Texas Filmmaker Production Fund grant from Austin Film Society for her eight-minute comedy short, "Sex and the Septuagenarian." Starring Austin actor Gary Chason, the movie shows a henpecked man in his 70s finally getting a well-deserved moment of triumph. Banks wrote the script and directed the movie, which was shot and edited by Jessica Gardner, with whom Banks has worked many times before. Last year, Banks produced and Gardner shot and directed "A Child's Christmas in Texas," based on a short story by TIL member **William Browning Spencer**. That movie is still on the festival circuit and has shown in Dallas, College Station, and

Austin as well as at the Museum of the Moving Image in New York City. Banks and Gardner recently teamed again on “Plug In,” now in post-production. Of “Sex and the Septuagenarian,” Banks had this to say: “Don’t let the title scare you away. This isn’t a movie about Jerry Sandusky. It’s a hilariously funny slice of a really sympathetic character’s life.” The movie is available at riverroadbastrop.com. She’s not crazy about the cover, but Banks’ *Death by Dressage*, her comic mystery set in the equestrian show world, is about to be published in Finland. We took a look at the cover, which features a skull in a top hat reflected in a horse’s eye. Believe us when we say we’ve seen much worse, Carolyn. It looks good. ★★ ★ Speaking of covers: The cover of *Dreaming Sam Peckinpah*, your faithful correspondent’s most recent work, is mighty fine, thanks to the talented eye of publisher **Jerry Craven**. But recently **Bob Compton** studied the illustration on the back and wondered aloud if it depicted the notoriously hard-living film director or if it was my own self. I wasn’t sure if I should be insulted or gratified. ★★ ★ Former sportswriter and current Dallas-based playwright Larry Herold’s *The Sports Page* takes a comic look at a Dallas Cowboys training camp circa 1966. Among the characters are a sportswriter or two with a few things in common with the likes of **Dan Jenkins**, **Bud Shrake**, **Gary Cartwright**, and **Carlton Stowers**, all of whom spent some time writing about the Cowboys early in their careers. The play opens February 9 at the Stage West Theatre in Fort Worth. Here’s a link: <http://stagewest.org/season/add/sports-page> ★★ ★ Here’s an update from **Stephen Michaud**: “I’ve just published my first original eBook – actually an enhanced eBook – entitled *Terrible Secrets: Ted Bundy on Serial Murder*. My co-author is Robert Keppel, Ph.D., the Seattle cop who chased Bundy around for 15 years. The book features audio clips from Bob’s Death Row interviews with Bundy, plus video interviews with various key players. Publisher is Authorlink in Irving, run by Doris Booth. It took exactly five months from conception for us to go live with TS. I never once considered pitching it to any of the old-line houses who’ve published me for 30 years.” ★★ ★ And here’s an update from **Barbara Whitehead**: “I have been (thankfully) busy in the last few months – who knows what the next months will bring? This summer I did four linocut illustrations plus the book design for a collection of stories by Lonn Taylor coming out this spring from TCU Press. I designed for Texas A&M University Press *Letters to Alice: Birth of the Kleberg-King Ranch Dynasty* by Jane Monday and **Fran Vick**. I made a drawing of the couple [Kleberg-King] on their wedding day for the jacket. I made a huge linocut for a poster for the 18th annual Austin Film Festival this past October. I just finished a drawing for a nice broadside for the Book Club of Texas printed letterpress by Asa Peavy with a quote by John Wilson concerning grasses re-growing after the drought. And.....I did the cover for **Carolyn Osborn**’s new novel for Wings Press, *Contrary People*, to be out in the spring.” ★★ ★ About *Letters to Alice*, Fran has some further explanation: “This cache of letters were found in Corpus Christi and donated to the archives at Texas A&M University at Corpus Christi. When Robert Kleberg visited Captain Richard King to discuss taking on his legal affairs, he met King’s youngest daughter, Alice Gertrudis King, and neither of their lives would ever be the same again. Kleberg’s love letters to Alice represent a unique collection of letters between one of the great Texas cattle barons and his wife. These letters for the first time give Kleberg’s personal perspective on his first meeting with Alice King, their early courtship, the difficulties obtaining her parents’ permission to marry, and the poignant time surrounding Captain King’s death.” Sounds like very interesting material about two of Texas’ most historically significant families. ★★ ★ **Neal Barrett** has been named Author Emeritus for “lifetime achievement” by the Science Fiction Writers of America, at its annual Nebula Awards Weekend. A “career-spanning” collection of his short fiction from the 60s to the present, around 50 stories, about 500 pages, called *Other Seasons*, is on tap from Subterranean Press. ★★ ★ **David Lee**’s new book of poetry, *Moments of Delicate Balance* (with William Kloefkorn) was published by Wings Press this fall. ★★ ★ This year **Lisa Sandlin**’s story “Phelan’s First Case” was a finalist for a Shamus Award from the Private Eye Writers of America. Her book with artist Catherine Ferguson, *You Who Make the Sky Bend*, won a New Mexico Book Award. ★★ ★ Texas A&M University Press has released **T. Lindsay Baker**’s latest book, *Gangster Tour of Texas*. The volume is a heritage tourists’ guide to 20th-century organized crime sites in the Lone Star State. For the purposes of the book, Baker defined organized crime as “any activity in which two or more people conspire to break the law for personal gain.” This definition is parallel to the one in the Texas criminal statutes. The guide begins with the start of alcohol prohibition in Texas, voted by the legislature in 1918, and runs through 1957, when Texas Rangers closed the illegal casinos in Galveston. Sixteen chapters examine a variety of

criminal enterprises and then give directions on how to visit the actual crime scenes from robbery sites to safe houses, from abduction points to murder scenes. ★★★ **Frank de la Teja** has been named Regents' Professor of the Texas State University System. He was one of only two professors so honored in 2011 and the seventh to receive the award from Texas State University – San Marcos. At present he's working with Dr. Timothy Matovina on a critical edition of the recollections of Antonio Menchaca, a prominent member of 19th century San Antonio society and veteran of the Texas War of Independence whose reminiscences from the 1870s have until now only been known from the part published by Frederick Chabot in 1937. The book will include an extensive biographical and analytical introduction as well as edited and unedited versions of the recollections. Also, 2012 will mark Frank's 15th year as book review editor for the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*. Frank encourages anyone interested in reviewing for the *Quarterly* – he's always looking for fresh blood – to visit the Texas State Historical Association web site (<http://www.tshaonline.org/froms/book-reviewer-questionnaire>) and fill out the reviewer questionnaire.

★★★ An update from **Rolando Hinojosa**: "*Puentes*, the Arizona State University literary magazine, has published papers on my work during the Symposium in my honor at Teas State University by scholars from Ramón Lull University in Barcelona, by two professors from U.C.-Santa Barbara, one from U.C. – Merced, and one from a scholar at Texas A & M University at Corpus Christi. This summer, I conducted a two-week creative writing class at Graz University (Austria) for western European students. I read from my work at University of Northern Colorado, Texas Tech, U.T. of the Permian Basin, University of Houston-Victoria, Northern New Mexico College, University of New Mexico, and read two papers at the University of Illinois, Urbana – Champaign, an essay during the Texas Literary Festival. And, on the seventh day, I rested." Deservedly so! Hinojosa has seen publication of *In My Own Voice: Essays and Stories* and republication of *Partners in Crimes*, both by Arte Público Press. ★★★

And an update from **Debbie Nathan**: "Here's some news about my recently published book *Sybil Exposed* (Free Press), which debuted October 18. It was selected as a "Discover" book by Barnes & Noble, and for Indie Bookseller's Dec 2011 "Indie Next List." It will be coming out as an audiobook on Dec. 26, and June 12 in paperback. And it's been published in Australia. It's about a bunch of things, mostly 1950s-1960s psychiatry and women and New York, but there's a Texas angle which I invite readers to look for deep in the book. Treasure Hunt clue: Stuart Long, venerable journo and late husband of the late Emma Long, the Austin city councilwoman for whom the park is named." We

know what the secret is and it is well worth searching out! ★★★ **Marion Winik** is all excited about her bi-weekly column "Bohemian Rhapsody" at BaltimoreFishbowl.com – quick links to past editions are found at marionwinik.com/work.html. Anyone who would like to be on the mailing list to receive notice when new columns appear can sign up on the home page or drop a line to maliwali@aol.com. She's still teaching in the MFA program at University of Baltimore, still reviewing books for *Newsday*, and has recently recorded essays for PRI and NPR.

And we still miss her here in Austin. ★★★ **Bill Minutaglio** and **Steve Davis** made the pages of the *Dallas Morning News* as word spread of their alleged big-dollar contract to pen *Dallas 1963*, a book that will examine the city from the time of JFK's election in 1960 to the assassination three years later. The book will be published by TWELVE. Steve tells us that the size of the advance wound up being exaggerated but said it was decent enough. He

and Bill are planning to do "a real quality treatment of Dallas, not just the sensationalistic stuff." ★★★ *The Scribbling Cure*, a new book of poems and prose poems by **Robert Bonazzi**, will be published by Pecan Grove Press in March. It will be published in cloth and trade paperback editions. This will be Bonazzi's sixth book of poetry. The last volume, *Maestro of Solitude* (Wings Press, 2007) was a TIL finalist in 2008. ★★★ **Gary Lavergne**

has won another award for his latest book, *Before Brown*. The Writers League of Texas has announced that Gary is the winner of the 2011 Best Book of Non Fiction. The WLT will recognize Gary and the winners in other categories at 7 p.m. on Thursday, January 19, 2012 at BookPeople in Austin. *Before Brown* is also the winner of the 2010 Carr P. Collins Award for Best Work of Non-fiction by the Texas Institute of Letters, and the 2010 Coral Horton Tullis Memorial Prize for Best Book on Texas History by the Texas State Historical Association.

★★★ **Jim Sanderson** has published a new novel with Inkbrush Press. *Dolph's Team* is a part of the series that he started at the University of New Mexico Press. ★★★ Jay Milner was never a member of TIL, but he influenced a generation of TIL writers in a variety of ways. He published *Incident at Ashton*, a novel dealing with the press and integration in the South, served as a reporter and editor on Hodding Carter's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Greenville*

(Mississippi) *Delta Democrat-Times*, and was an editor and writer on the legendary *New York Herald-Tribune*. Later he wrote a memoir, *Confessions of a Maddog*, and for years penned a syndicated column dealing with books that originated in the Lufkin newspaper. **Bob Compton** also assigned him books to review for the *Dallas Morning News*. Milner was at different times a PR guy for Willie Nelson, a magazine editor, and a journalism professor at SMU, where he crossed paths with **Darwin Payne** and where he hired **Pete Gent** and **Billy Lee Brammer** to teach in the department. **Gary Cartwright** said, “Jay was the first certified book-on-the-shelf writer I ever knew personally and a huge influence on everything that happened to me thereafter. His novel, *Incident at Ashton*, was a great read and an invaluable lesson in how to write a book – first, you write a sentence....” Jay Milner died in Fort Worth in December. He was 88. ★★ And, finally, the **Leon Hale** update. The nonagenarian former member of the TIL Council reports that a short story written by his wife, Babette Fraser Hale, has won the 2011 David Nathan Meyerson Prize for Fiction. Her story, “Silences,” appears in the new issue of *Southwest Review*, Volume 96, Number 4. The judge for this competition was Francine Prose. (Babette Fraser Hale is also the donor of the Soeurette Diehl Fraser translation prize, for which TIL is very grateful.) Congratulations to Babette!

TIL OFFICERS

President, Darwin Payne, Dallas, dpayne@smu.edu

Vice President, Fritz Lanham, Houston, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Secretary, W.K. (Kip) Stratton, Round Rock, **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Treasurer, James Hoggard, Wichita Falls, james.hoggard@mwsu.edu

Recording Secretary, Betty Wiesepape, Richardson, Betwx@aol.com

TIL COUNCILORS

T. Lindsay Baker, Rio Vista, second term ends April 2013

Ty Cashion, Huntsville, second term ends April 2012

Robert Compton, Garland, first term ends April 2012

Steve Davis, San Marcos, first term ends April 2013

Kate Lehrer, Washington, D.C., first term ends April 2012

Frances Neidhardt, Sherman, second term ends April 2012

Carmen Tafolla, San Antonio, first term ends April 2013

Andrés Tijerina, Austin, second term ends in April 2012

<http://www.texasinstituteofletters.org/>

Send news for the next TIL Newsletter to Kip Stratton: <mailto:tilsecretary@yahoo.com>

2011-12 Dues, Banquet Reservations Form

Please print this form and send it with a check for your 2011-12 dues to the address below.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

TIL dues for fiscal year 2011-12 (if you've not yet paid them) _____ \$50.00

Paisano Fund _____

Fred Whitehead Memorial Endowment Fund _____

Scholarly Book Award Endowment Fund _____

O. Henry Award Endowment Fund _____

Stanley Walker Award Endowment Fund _____

April 14 Banquet Tickets, \$50 per person _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

*Make check payable to **Texas Institute of Letters** and send with this form to:*

James Hoggard, Dept. of English, Midwestern State University, 3410 Taft, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

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