

# Texas Institute of Letters

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*October/November/December 2014 Newsletter*

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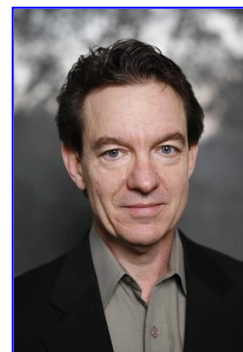
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## Lawrence Wright to be honored at TIL's spring meeting in Houston as winner of Lon Tinkle Award

*At the fall meeting in Austin of TIL's councilors and former presidents, Lawrence Wright was chosen as the 2015 winner of the Lon Tinkle Award for Lifetime Achievement. It will be presented at the April 11 awards banquet at the Hilton Hotel on the campus of the University of Houston. This award is given annually to recognize a distinguished writer whose career in letters is associated with the state. Last year's winner of the Lon Tinkle Award, Jan Reid, has written the beautiful essay below about Larry Wright. It should be noted that since Jan's essay, which he wrote only earlier this month, Larry's recent book, *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David*, has been named one of the 10 best non-fiction books of the year by the New York Times and Publishers Weekly, and Kirkus Reviews lists it as one of the best non-fiction works of 2014.*

### **Here's Jan's essay about Larry:**

“Watergate was such a joy. For nearly two years no one spoke of anything else. It was a national obsession, a slow-moving coup d’etat. Because it was such a spectacle and lasted so long, Watergate became as much a part of my life as a war or an economic depression or some other ongoing national calamity, and yet I experienced it not as disaster but as theater. One read the papers or watched television with a thrilling sense of *what next?*” That last turn of phrase could stand as the signature of his wondrous career.



Larry graduated from Tulane, where he met his future wife Roberta, a doctor's daughter from Mobile, in an archaeology class. With the Vietnam War and its draft impending, he applied for conscientious objector's status as a Christian Existentialist and was astonished when the Dallas draft board approved it. He had two weeks to find alternative service, which led him to the American

University in Cairo, where he taught English and took a master's degree in Applied Linguistics in 1969. Of the vast ancient metropolis, Larry wrote, "Roberta and I were married on January 22, 1970, in a depressing ceremony. It seemed to me to be a bad omen to be married by a Nazi." But his youthful experience there — and ever-deepening appreciation of Arabic history and culture — would one day contribute to making his frightened and enraged America a more comprehending place on earth.

After returning to the States in 1971, Larry wrote for publications in Nashville and Atlanta. In 1979 he published his first book, *City Children, Country Summer* — the tale of ghetto children from New York City immersed in an Amish community in Pennsylvania. He moved to Austin and became a staff writer for *Texas Monthly* in 1980, and though he was prolific throughout the decade, he claims he only lasted for six months as a company employee. During the same period he became a contributing editor of *Rolling Stone*. Bill Moyers wrote of Larry's first Carr P. Collins winner in 1988, "I finished *In the New World* at 4 this morning, and it's been a long time since I stayed up that late reading. But no memoir has so moved me since Willie Morris's *North Toward Home*. ... He has beautifully demonstrated that the past is dead; long live the past. And he has shown that you can inoculate yourself against America and, if fortunate, catch the disease anyway."

Though Larry and his family continued to make their home in Austin, in 1992 he joined the staff of the *New Yorker*. In his articles he has written on subjects as widely dispersed as the Mexican tycoon Carlos Slim, moviemakers under a tight regime leash in Syria, Bolivia's wealth of lithium, and the Madrid train bombings in 2004. Knowledge of and reflections on religion have been a consistent theme in his work. One of his most controversial *Texas Monthly* features, a profile of the late, iconic atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair, was titled "God Help Her," and at the *New Yorker* his two National Magazine Award winners — the two-part "Remembering Satan" in 1993 and "The Apostate" in 2011 — spawned two of his most important books. Sticking with a good title, *Remembering Satan* again won its author the Carr P. Collins award for best nonfiction in 1994. TIL colleague James Hoggard has said that book and the widely read articles eviscerated the logical, scientific, legal, and moral foundations of a national mania of satanic ritual-child abuse convictions and imprisonments based on the phony science of "recovered memory," though lives of innocent people have been ruined.

Larry's 2006 masterpiece, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11*, began with another *New Yorker* piece but also delved deep into his youthful Cairo experience and the wisdom and dogged reporting that fueled his understanding of Arabic history and culture. It won the Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction, the *Los Angeles Times* Award for History, a third Carr P. Collins Award, and several other honors. It was a *New York Times* bestseller and has since been translated in 25 languages. In the *Times*' review, fellow veteran Middle East correspondent Dexter Filkins wrote, "What a riveting tale

Lawrence Wright fashions in this marvelous book. *The Looming Tower* is not just a detailed, heart stopping account of the events leading up to 9/11 written with style and verve. [It's] a thoughtful examination of the world that produced the men who brought us 9/11, and of their progeny who bedevil us today." *Time* has rated it one of the 100 best nonfiction books ever written.

But then we come back to the thrilling sense of *what next?*

Beginning with his second National Magazine Award winner, "The Apostate," a profile of an accomplished screenwriter, Paul Haggis, who renounced his former faith, *Going Clear: Scientology, Hollywood, and the Prison of Belief* was also a *New York Times* bestseller in 2013. For the *Washington Post*, Lisa Miller wrote, "Wright brings a clear-eyed, investigative fearlessness to Scientology — its history, its theology, its hierarchy — and the result is a rollicking, if deeply creepy, narrative ride, evidence that truth can be stranger even than science fiction." It was a finalist for a National Book Award, won the Investigative Reporters and Editors Award, and was a co-winner of last year's Carr P. Collins Award.

Larry has not only refused to stick to a genre or field of expertise — he deftly moves from form to form. He was co-writer of the script for *The Siege*, a 1998 movie starring Denzel Washington, Bruce Willis, and Annette Benning that was eerily prescient of the chaos that descended on New York in the aftermath of 9/11. He then wrote a screenplay for a big-name director about the downfall of Panama's military dictator Manuel Noriega. The project ended "in turnaround," as they say of shelved Hollywood productions, so Larry recrafted it as a darkly comic novel, *Noriega: God's Favorite*, then turned it back around into another script for a movie starring Bo Hoskins that aired on Showtime. Both the novel and the movie appeared in 2000.

Following the success of *The Looming Tower*, he wrote and performed a one-man play, "My Trip to Al-Qaeda," which enjoyed a six-week sold-out run in New York. He has now written five produced plays, their subjects ranging ranging from Texas politics to an Israeli-Hamas standoff to Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci. Following its theater run in Washington, this year's "Camp David" — a portrayal of the Egyptian-Israeli summit and peace accord brokered by President Jimmy Carter — grew quickly into his ninth book, *Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David*. Joe Klein wrote for the *New York Times*: "In his minute-by-minute account of the talks Wright intersperses a concise history of Egyptian-Israeli relations dating from the story of Exodus. Even more important is Wright's understanding that Sadat, Begin, and Carter were not just political leaders, but exemplars of the Holy Land's three internecine religious tradition."

The Academy Award-winning director Alex Gibney has filmed documentaries drawing on Larry's play "My Trip to Al-Qaeda" and his Scientology book *Going Clear* — the latter to premiere at the

Sundance Institute in early 2015 and air on HBO. Larry is now writing a series for HBO set in the world of politics and titled *God Save Texas*. In yet another field of artistic endeavor, Larry conceived the ongoing idea of Capital Area Statues, Inc. (CAST). With his friends and fellow Lon Tinkle honorees Stephen Harrigan and William Wittliff, CAST has commissioned and funded three statues that evoke Austin's colorful history. The first placed a sculptural likeness of the Paisano ranch's famed Philosophers Rock, where J. Frank Dobie, Roy Bedichek, and Walter Prescott Webb carried on between plunges in Barton Creek, on a bank of Barton Springs. Their most recent contribution positioned a sculpture of Willie Nelson across the street from City Hall. At the unveiling, with characteristic bonhomie Willie sang a few lines of "Roll Me Up and Smoke Me when I Die."

Also of note, Larry's sister Rosalind Wright won the Jesse Jones Award for the best fiction with her 1986 novel, *Veracruz*. Larry serves on the Council of Foreign Relations. And he finds time to play blues keyboards, along with TIL colleague and guitarist Ricardo Ainslie, in Who Do, which long ago graduated from garage band status. Of Lawrence Wright's remarkable talents, one can only say, "What next?"



## Make plans to attend April 10–11 annual meeting

Our meeting and awards banquet on Saturday, April 11, will be on the campus of the University of Houston at the Hilton Hotel. The Friday, April 10, evening reception is planned to be held at a Houston art museum, yet to be determined.

Hotel rooms will cost \$109 per night, an unusually low rate. More details will follow.

We hope you can make it to Houston, where our membership doesn't seem to match the size of the city or the quality of its literary community. So, we're asking all to make a special effort to be there as we attempt to build up our Houston area contingency.

Banquet tickets are \$50 per person. Make your reservations with our treasurer, Jim Hoggard, 111 Pembroke Lane, Wichita Falls, Texas 76301. And if you haven't already done so, you should also pay your \$50 dues for fiscal 2014-15.

A form for both payments is at the bottom of this newsletter.



## Message from our president

This TIL Newsletter is not a discreet work of literature, but it definitely speaks to good literature. TIL members continue to bring awards home to Texas. In almost any genre, medium, or style, our members are garnering national, state, and regional awards on a variety of public issues and perspectives, including diplomacy and politics. Underlying the awards, our TIL writers reveal a dynamic commitment to the production of contemporary American thought. Indeed, some of the recent works became the focus of provocative thought. We congratulate our award-winning writers.

As an organization, the TIL will continue to give recognition to the Texas writers who achieve the highest level of literature. It's the least we can do to maintain the high mission of our founders.

Please remember to not only save the date for our annual awards banquet in Houston, but start making your plans to spend a rewarding week-end in one of the most dynamic cities in the United States. We'll send out the details for the week-end and for hotel registration in the next couple of weeks. See you in Houston.

Andrés Tijerina, President  
Texas Institute of Letters



## Michael Adams' report from Paisano

Not a lot of news from Paisano. The current fellow Brian Hart read at two events for his second novel *The Bully of Order*. And he has been working steadily on his third. Coming from his working-class background (carpenter, welder, dishwasher, commercial fisherman, line cook, janitor, hotel desk clerk, trapper, and rumored cheap lingerie-factory boss), Brian has set the bar very high for the most low-maintenance fellow in Paisano history. I haven't received a single call for repairs and requests. He's repaired what needed to be repaired and fixed things I had promised him UT would fix. His wife, Rachel, and two-year-old daughter, Madeline, have enjoyed and taken advantage of what the ranch offers—swimming in the creek, exploring the woods, welcoming the sun every morning. They, for the first time

for anyone in years, played in the front yard, a large section of which has now been landscaped and made sticker-free with high quality, drought tolerant grass--a gift from the Smith and McCullough foundations. The new fellow arriving February 1 is Cecilia Balli.



## NEWS ABOUT US, or—What we've been up to lately

**William Seale** has published a small book entitled *The Burning of the White House* which details the dastardly deed of the British in this 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, published by the White House Historical Association. Last summer he did research in Ireland where he was “amazed to find a whole new world” in the very up-to-date public archives in Dublin and Belfast. He further reports: “Superbly organized, with every convenience for the researcher. . . . Estate papers, often the best source for a town or county, are being collected in mass. Public records are there as well. It is not polite to say that genealogists swarm the reading rooms, but they do. Still, all researchers are served well, approximating what you find at our Library of Congress and National Archives.”

**John Spong**, senior editor at *Texas Monthly*, says he's proud to announce that he has joined the Advisory Council of The Wittliff Collections at Texas State. **John**, we're certain that they're very fortunate to have you.

**Paul Ruffin** has recently had fiction in *Boulevard*, *Hopkins Review*, *South Carolina Review*, and Wadsworth/Centgage Learning's *College Handbook of Creative Writing*. His essays have appeared in *Modern Age* and *Catfish Alley*, and his poetry has been featured in *Southern Quarterly* and *A Texas Garden of Verses: An Anthology*. The University of South Carolina Press will be publishing Ruffin's sixth book of stories, *"The Time the Waters Rose" and Stories of the Gulf Coast*, in early 2015. This month Texas Review Press will be releasing a book **Paul** co-authored with Bob Conroy, *The Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR)*, with a book on the M240 machine gun planned for early 2015.

In October **Betty Adcock**, who grew up in San Augustine, Texas, but now has found her way to North Carolina, was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame. A few years earlier she was inducted into the Fellowship of Southern Writers. And, heck, she also became a member of the Texas Institute of Letters!

**Gary Cartwright's** memoir will be published by the University of Texas Press early next year with the wicked title, *As Best I Recall*. Gary was our Lon Tinkle award honoree in 2012. You can bet there'll be some interesting material here!

Aside from telling us that he has been “losing weight and staying married,” **Emilio Zamora** has been making the rounds promoting his new book, *The World War I Diary of José de la Luz Sáenz in the Valley, San Antonio, Goliad, and Austin*. The Tejano Genealogical Society awarded him the Clotilde García book award for the Saéñz diary that he translated and edited as a publication for Texas A&M University Press in 2014. Emilio also presented a talk with the Texas Book Festival as a Featured Author. He is currently working as a “content specialist” in the formation of a Saturday Academy that will be inaugurated on January 10, 2015, as a community initiative to teach Mexican American history in Spanish to fourth and fifth graders at Austin’s Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center.

This fall **Mark Busby** received the Presidential Distinction Award for Scholarly/Creative Activity for the College of Liberal Arts at Texas State University. In June, as a follow-up to TIL’s great Havana trip in June 2013, Mark and Linda did a Hemingway, museum, sidewalk café, French wine tour of Paris.

**Frank de la Teja** (along with co-editor Timothy Matovina) won the Presidio La Bahia Award for best book on early Texas history from the Sons of the Republic of Texas. The award was presented at the presidio in Goliad on Saturday, December 6. *Recollections of a Tejano Life: Antonio Menchaca in Texas History* (University of Texas Press, 2013), is part biography and part detective story. Menchaca dictated his reminiscences to a collaborator sometime in the mid-1870s, but the two halves of the manuscript became separated. The first part, which told of Menchaca’s participation in events up to the battle of San Jacinto, was published first in 1907 and has seen subsequent uncritical reprintings. The second half, which picked up the story after the battle and also included recollections of life in and around San Antonio going back to Spanish colonial times, remained in family hands until sold to the University of Texas in the 1950s. De la Teja and Matovina have brought the whole manuscript together, edited and annotated it for publication, and included an introductory essay that serves as a biography of Menchaca, a reconstruction of how the manuscript came to be and how the two halves were separated, and an analysis of its meaning.

**Dominic Smith** sold his most recent novel--*At the Edge of a Wood*--to Farrar, Straus & Giroux for 2016 release in the US. The book will also be published in the UK, Australia, the Netherlands, and Germany.

By the time you read this, **Light Cummins** will have had two books come out this fall: *On History's Trail: Speeches and Essays of the Texas State Historian, 2009-2012*," published by the Texas State Historical Association, and *Discovering Texas History*, co-edited with Bruce Glasrud and Cary Wentz, published by the University of Oklahoma Press. And before 2015 is over you'll be reading his biography of Texas artist Allie V. Tennant entitled *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas, 1892-1971*. It has been accepted for publication by the Texas A&M University Press to appear in 2015, And there's more: Light gave the Presidential address at the Louisiana Historical Association in March of this year. It will appear as an article, "The Stephen F. Austin Family in Spanish and Antebellum Louisiana" in the spring 2015 issue of the journal *Louisiana History*. I also wrote an historical article, "The South and the Spanish Borderlands," that will appear in the fall 2015 issue of *Southern Studies*. Light has been so busy he may need a rest. He and his wife Victoria co-authored a chapter in the new book "Texas Women: Their Histories, Their Lives," published by the University of Georgia Press, edited by Elizabeth Hayes Turner, Rebecca Sharpless, and Stephanie Cole. Our chapter is entitled "Frances Battaile Fisk and the Promotion of the Visual Arts in West Texas." Light Cummins

**Tracy Daugherty** way up at Oregon State (and who not long ago published that fascinating and excellent biography of Donald Barthelme) has just published a new collection of short stories, *The Empire of the Dead*, Johns Hopkins University Press. His biography of Joan Didion, *The Last Love Song*, is forthcoming in August from St. Martin's Press. And, guess what? This is interesting. He's now in the process of interviewing the family of Billy Lee Brammer and doing research for a proposed biography of Brammer. He would very much appreciate hearing from TIL members who knew Brammer and have memories, perspectives, and anecdotes to share. Tracy's e-mail is [tdaugherty@oregonstate.edu](mailto:tdaugherty@oregonstate.edu).

TCU Press published **Jim Sanderson's** mystery, *Nothing to Lose*, in 2014, which has a setting in a place Jim knows something about—Beaumont. Livingston Press will publish the prequel, *Hill Country Property*, in 2015. *Pissed Away* [wasn't that a typo, Jim? Oh, no, I see it wasn't!] was a finalist for the 2014 Gival Award. Brash Books will re publish *El Camino del Rio* (1998) and *La Mordida* (2002) in book and electronic formats sometime in the future.

**Joe Lansdale's** new novella, *Prisoner 489*, has just been published, and next year Mulholland/Little Brown will be publishing his novel *Paradise Sky*, a historical work about a black cowboy and soldier and marshal in the West. Another novel, *Fender Lizards*, about the humorous trials and tribulations of a young girl growing up in East Texas, will be published by Subterranean Press. Joe's



Hap and Leonard crime series will be filmed by the Sundance Channel, and should air late next year or early in 2016. Bill Paxton will be directing *The Bottoms*, and Peter Dinklage is set to star in *The Thicket*.

The Texas Bound, Arts & Letters Live program on January 12, 2015, at the Dallas Museum of Art will include readings of short stories by former TIL short story award recipient Bret Anthony Johnston and TIL members **Clay Reynolds** and **Betty Wiesepepe**.

**Leon Hale**, former TIL Council member, recipient of the Lon Tinkle award, and longtime columnist of the *Houston Chronicle*, will be one of four inducted into the Texas Newspaper Hall of Fame on January 23 in Galveston. Other 2015 honorees include Ken Towery, a reporter and managing editor of the *Cuero Daily Record* who received the Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting in 1955 for his series exposing the Texas Veterans Land Board scandal; and Houston Harte and Bernard Hanks, who formed a partnership that eventually included 19 daily newspapers and several non-daily newspapers with a combined circulation of more than 600,000 in six states.

**W.K. (Kip) Stratton's** essay concerning the 25th anniversary of his stepbrother's death from AIDS is scheduled to appear in the February 2015 issue of *Texas Monthly*. Dale Waner died in Fort Worth in January 1990 as the American AIDS crisis was reaching a peak.

Congratulations, **Bruce Bond**, for winning The Tampa Review Prize for your book of 150 sonnets entitled *Black Anthem*. The book will thus be published next year by University of Tampa Press in hardcover and paperback. In addition Four Way Books has accepted his book of poems entitled *Sacrum* (forthcoming in 2017). Also, Bruce just won the Richard Peterson Poetry Award from Crab Orchard Review for his poem "Gold Bee."

**Rod Davis** launched his "Meat 'n Three World Tour" to support his Southern noir novel *South, America* with readings and signings from Austin to Nashville, including stops in Muscle Shoals, AL; Pass Christian, MS; and New Orleans. He joined panels or gave talks on *noir* and crime fiction at a number of literary events, including the Southern Festival of Books, Louisiana Book Festival, Texas Book Festival and the Pirate's Alley Falkner Society Words & Music Festival. More events are upcoming in 2015. Among numerous reviews, Jim Sherman in *The Texas Observer* observed: "There is much here that brings to mind the Dave Robicheaux novels of James Lee Burke, and Burke's norteamericano version of magical realism....For readers' sakes, if not for Prine's, I sincerely hope those sequels are on the way."

This year **Barbara Ras** traveled with the International Writing Program to join writers from the Silk Road countries for a symposium in the Maldives. It's an ongoing project, and the chance for literary

exchange has been extraordinary, she reports. Participating writers came from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the Kyrgyz Republic. A website at <http://iwp.uiowa.edu> will soon launch to curate cultural material from the Silk Road. For notable publications, a poem appeared in *Granta*, which occasioned an online conversation between Barbara and poet Matthew Dickman. It'll soon to be on their website.

**Lonn Taylor**, way out west in Fort Davis, brings us the welcome news that his column, "Artifact," on significant historical artifacts in Texas museums and collections, which has been appearing semi-monthly in *Texas Monthly*, will appear monthly in 2015. In January **Lonn** and his wife Dedie will fly to Key West for a week to celebrate his 75th birthday. While there, in addition to visiting the Hemingway House and the fabled six-toed cats that still exist there, they'll make a trip by seaplane to spend a day at Fort Jefferson in the Dry Tortugas, a place they both have wanted to see since reading about it as children in Richard Haliburton's *Royal Road to Romance*.

**Pat Mora** has a new children's book, *Water Rolls, Water Rises, El Agua Rueda, El Agua Sube*, is Children's Book Press, Lee & Low Books. Also, **Pat's** literacy initiative, Children's Day, Book Day/El día de los niños, El día de los libros, continues to grow with the assistance of the Texas State Library, the Texas Library Association, and the Texas Book Festival among other organizations.

**Marian Schwartz's** new translation of *Anna Karenina* has just published by Yale University Press. She'll be doing a reading for it in Austin at BookPeople on Sunday, January 11, at 4 p.m. In September **Marian** won the Read Russia Prize for Best Translation of Contemporary (Russian) Literature (into any language) for her translation of Leonid Yuzefovich's *Harlequin's Costume* (Glagoslav).

**Carolyn Osborn** has a long essay called "Ranching on Dry Ground" appearing in the winter issue of the *Missouri Review*. It deals with her and husband Joe's experience on a small ranch in Central Texas which she inherited from her Texas mother. Its history of ownership, Carolyn's introduction to ranching, and, of course, the scarcity of water are all involved.

**Jan Seale** brings lots of news from her McAllen home in the Rio Grande Valley. Our 2012 Texas poet laureate and her photographer son Ansen entertained 650 teachers attending their annual Texas Council of Teachers of English Language Arts in Corpus Christi with a dialog on the creative process. Then she flew to the University of South Carolina-Aiken where she was a guest for the Oswald Distinguished Writers Series. There was an evening reading of **Jan's** poems and a short story featured in a new anthology of paired stories of Texas and Carolina writers, *A Shared Voice*, edited by TIL member

**Andrew Geyer** and his colleague Tom Mack. *Concho River Review* published Jan's article, "Tripping the Light Fantastic: A Look at Texas Poets Laureate," in their spring issue, and *English in Texas* published "Creative Joy: Process and Product" in the fall. *Texas 5X5*, published by Stephen F. Austin State University Press and edited by former Texan Laurie Champion, contains five of Jan's stories, as well as five stories each by fellow Texas writers **Jerry Craven**, Kristin vanNamen, **Andrew Geyer**, and **Terry Dalrymple**. *Texas Review Press* is soon to bring out a happy volume of recipes by the Texas poets laureate, among the entries are **Jan**'s border recipes for Drunk Beans and margaritas. Her latest book, *Nature Nurture Neither*, from Angelina River Press, is a memoir about her family's journey into creativity, since she and her late husband Carl, as well as their three sons, made their life's work in the arts. It is mostly anecdotal but contains a section on research into the subject.

**Wendy Barker**, also an outstanding poet, also has good news. Her sixth full-length collection of poetry, *One Blackbird at a Time: The Teaching Poems*, has been chosen to receive the John Ciardi Prize for Poetry and will be published by BkMk Press, Fall 2015. Her fourth chapbook, *From the Moon, Earth is Blue*, will be published by Wings Press Fall 2015 as well. And the anthology she is co-editing with 2011 Texas Poet Laureate **Dave Parsons**, *Far Out: Poems of the 60s*, will be published by Wings Press Spring 2016. Individual poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Southern Review*, *Crab Creek Review*, *Nimrod*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Lips*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *Superstition Review*, *Matter Press*, *Ilanot Review*, *The South Carolina Review*, and *Barn Owl Review*.

**Barbara Whitehead**: The Woods Hole Historical Museum (MA) has just published a large format book that she designed, laid out, and over saw the printing, *Atlantis Stories: Before the Mast on a Sailing Research Vessel, 1944-1948*. This is a memoir of great interest to old school sailors bringing to life the excitement and hardship aboard the world's largest ketch. **Barbara** was very lucky to have sailed on *Atlantis* when she was a summer employee at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute in the early 60s. This was just a day sail because women were not ordinarily allowed to go on long cruises. *Atlantis* was transferred to the Argentinian Navy in 1966. "It was such a pleasure working with the old photos with familiar faces" says **Barbara**. During the cold of last winter she had the different pleasure of painting longhorns in snow for the cover of Patrick Dearen's *Big Drift*, for TCU Press. And **Barbara** has just finished the first design proof of a memoir of the noted Texas architect Frank Welch. It's chock full of photos of his work—again for TCU Press.

**Jesse Sublett** writes that "it's been a pretty good year. The book I wrote with Broadus Spivey, *Broke, Not Broken: Homer Maxey's Texas Bank War*, published by Texas Tech Press in June 2014, is

now in its second printing, and my long-awaited nonfiction book about Austin's Timmy Overton Gang, will finally see the light of day. Next February 2015, History Press will issue 1960s *Austin Gangsters: Organized Crime that Rocked the Capital*. There will be parties with drinks & loud music!" (Note: And if anybody knows about loud music, it'll be Jesse!)

Just in time for Christmas, Texas Tech University Press released **Paul Carlson**'s book *Dancin' in Anson: A History of the Texas Cowboys' Christmas Ball* with a Foreword by musician Michael Martin Murphey.

**Domingo Martinez** has just published his second book, *My Heart Is A Drunken Compass*. Such great titles! We figured you wouldn't be able to top the one you gave to your first book, *Boy Kings of Texas*, but indeed you have. "So far, not a bad review, lots of press across Texas and elsewhere," **Domingo** tells us. *Texas Monthly* did a "Texas-centric" excerpt.

**Jerry Thompson**'s 900-page study of the New Mexico Militia and Volunteers during the Civil War (*A Civil War History of the New Mexico Militia and Volunteers*) will be out from the University of New Mexico Press in Spring 2015. Almost a thousand pages? **Jerry** explains: "This was a two-year project that wound up taking 10."

**Sarah Cortez**'s book of poetry, *Cold Blue Steel*, published in 2013, was named a finalist in the Writers League of Texas Poetry Awards. **Sarah**, in her first term as a TIL councilor, has this fascinating and obviously true thing to say about her combination of police work and poetry. We took it from her website: "My two greatest loves are poetry and policing. The tasks of each of these 'jobs' hone the senses. For instance, policing requires acute focus on data acquired through the five senses plus the crucial sixth sense of intuition."

**Alan Governar**'s new musical play, "Texas in Paris," will open off-Broadway at the York Theatre on Feb. 5. Reviews will begin on Jan. 27. It's a return to the New York City limelights for the multi-talented **Alan**.

**Elizabeth Crook**'s gripping novel, *Monday, Monday*, about Charles Whitman's devastating 1966 rifle attacks from atop UT's Tower in which he killed seventeen innocents below and wounded many others, is on the *Kirkus* list for best fiction books of 2014. In its review *Kirkus* wrote: "Crook's account of that mayhem is both gruesome and perfectly pitched." And on the nonfiction list we find **Lawrence Wright**'s *Thirteen Days in September*. For more about Larry, see above.

**Dominic Smith** sold his most recent novel—*At the Edge of a Wood*—to Farrar, Straus & Giroux for 2016 release in the U.S. You'll also find it in the UK, Australia, the Netherlands, and Germany.

It's been a notable year for **Greg Garrett**, although mostly notable for what happened outside the world of writing and publishing. This requires some extra space. In June, on a beach in Isla Mujeres, Mexico, he married Jeanie after four years of courtship (and 15 years of bachelorhood). He is now the father not only of two rather large boys, but too very small girls, which means he is relearning the art of the bedtime story. On a professional front, **Greg** spent much of the spring giving talks about the novel *The Prodigal*, which appeared in November of 2013 from HarperCollins/Zondervan. He also taught in the Writers League of Texas "Texas Writes" series for rural public libraries, and classes for the League on point of view and writing the novel. He spoke at South by Southwest Music in April, delivered the Dobbs Endowed Lecture on the power of great stories at Truett Seminary in Waco, and talked to media outlets including BBC Scotland about his work as writer and scholar. For the fifth summer in a row, **Greg** spent a period of weeks at Gladstone's Library in Wales, where he is a Residential Scholar, and he continues to recommend the place to Texas writers seeking a quiet and supportive place to work. Finally, at year's end, **Greg's** nonfiction book on the afterlife in literature and popular culture, *Entertaining Judgment*, came out from Oxford University Press, and 2015 promises lots of opportunities to discuss and promote that book, including the January 22 book launch at Austin's BookPeople. All we can say is, attaboy, Greg!

**Clay Reynolds** published a short article, "Ice Storm" in *Chronicles: A Journal of American Culture*, and a handful of book reviews. Oh, and his novel *Vox Populi: A Novel of the Common Man* received an honorable mention in the 2014 volume of The Pushcart Prize.

**Lowell Mick White** has been working on a couple of projects with Dobie Paisano Fellow Diane Wilson (author of *An Unreasonable Woman*) and Austin arts activist Pamela Booton for the Alamo Bay Writers' Workshop and Alamo Bay Press. ABWW is an annual event which will take place this year in New Orleans, after previous workshops in Austin and Seadrift. The press published three books in 2014, its first year, most notably TIL member **Dave Oliphant's** *The Cowtown Circle*, which came out this month.

Author and literary agent **Jim Donovan** continues to make news with his writing. He has a contract for a new (untitled as yet) book on the Apollo 11 lunar landing. "I'm happy to be working on a book which allows me to actually speak to participants in the event," Jim says, "something I wasn't able to do in researching my previous two books, *A Terrible Glory* (the *Battle of the Little Bighorn*) and *The Blood of Heroes* (the *Battle of the Alamo*)."

**Jay Brandon's** novel *Shadow Knight's Mate* was published in October. It and its author were featured at the recent Texas Book Festival.

**Naomi Shihab Nye's** recent chapter book for children, *The Turtle of Oman*, (Greenwillow) made it on to the Horn Book and Kirkus Best Books for children 2014 lists.

Oh, yes, yours truly, **Darwin Payne**, saw his biography entitled *No Small Dreams: J. Erik Jonsson, Texas Visionary* published by SMU's DeGolyer Library. The Brooklyn-born Jonsson was one of the founders of Texas Instruments. He was called upon to be mayor of Dallas just after the assassination of President Kennedy, and he did much to restore Dallas' lost reputation during his seven years as mayor, being principally responsible for the D/FW International Airport, a forward-looking new city hall designed by I.M. Pei, founding of the University of Texas at Dallas, and the Goals for Dallas program that brought ordinary citizens into envisioning goals for the city's future. Also, I'm in the fifth year now of researching and writing the centennial history of Southern Methodist University, which will be published in early 2016.

**Dave Parson's** sixth collection of poetry, *Reaching for Longer Water*, is available for preorder at Amazon and Texas Review Press/Texas A&M University Press Consortium. For those of you who want to think about it for a while longer, it'll hit the streets in April. **Dave**, who was our state's 2011 poet laureate, was selected recently as one of the final judges for the 2015 Artlines/Museum of Fine Arts Houston Ekphrasis Poetry Competition.

Now this would have been interesting to hear and see. Over the brief Thanksgiving holidays **Tino Villanueva**, who's now living in Boston, read at the University of Bologna in Italy. He was invited by the Hispanists there. When he got to his book, *So Spoke Penelope* (Cambridge: Grolier Poetry Press, 2013; 2<sup>nd</sup> printing 2014), he read poems he had written in the original English. But for five poems he had a chosen, he had a female (an Italian professor of Spanish) read the Spanish and Italian translations.

**Carolyn Banks**, Austin Community College adjunct assistant professor and recent Democratic candidate for Texas House of Representatives, District 17, has a novel, *The Darkroom*, just being released. "It's actually an old novel," she says, "originally published in 1980. It's based on a 1976 murder that rocked the Washington, D.C. area." *The Darkroom* is being revived by Authors Guild as part of its Back in Print program "It's an honor to have this book out again," **Carolyn** reports. She credits the FBI, in part, for its revival. "Just this year, the

murderer, Bradford Bishop, who is still at large, was named to the FBI's Most Wanted list." The central character in the book was modeled upon Bishop, a State Department official who killed his family, then disappeared.

**Fran Vick's** husband, Ross, had a fascinating and sensational career as a men's fast pitch softball, and he's now being recognized for it. He'll be inducted into the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation Hall of Fame on January 15th. His sport was men's fastpitch softball. He pitched in for World tournaments, in State Tournaments from 1953 to 1976 and Regional Tournaments from 1953 to 1961. He was an All-Star pitcher at the University of Texas UTSAM competing with other college teams and he won intramural championships for his Beta Theta Pi fraternity. He pitched numerous perfect games and no-hitters and was All Tournament Pitcher and Most Valuable Player numerous times. **Fran** and Ross met on a blind date at the Regional Tournament in 1953 at her hometown of Lake Jackson. The Hall of Fame honor came about because their son, Pat, gave a paper on his father's softball career at the Texas Folklore Society meeting two or three years ago. He became so intrigued with his father's softball from his research that he kept on with it and finally put together quite a notebook of clippings about his father. It ended up at the TAAF offices and they decided Ross should be in the Hall of Fame. Pat is now working on a book and screen play about men's fast pitch softball, with his father as the main character, of course. Ross III is working on a screen play based on my father's World War I memoir published by Texas A&M Press. Fran says: "So I'm enjoying having two writers in the family! Who would have thought it?"

**Abraham Verghese**, our distinguished author/physician, has been appointed as the Linda R. Meier and Joan F. Lane Provostial Professor at Stanford University. His next novel, *The Maramon Convention*, will be published by Scribner.

**David Lee's** collection of poetry, *Last Call*, is out and about and so is he, doing tours and gigs through this coming April. "Imagine Chaucer with a twang," someone said about it, meaning high praise, of course.

**Gary Lavergne** recently made an appearance on a television series called A CRIME TO REMEMBER, which is on the Investigation Discovery Channel. The episode is available for viewing in its entirety at: [http://www.investigationdiscovery.com/tv-shows/a-crime-to-](http://www.investigationdiscovery.com/tv-shows/a-crime-to-remember)

remember/a-crime-to-remember-videos/the-28th-floor.htm. Readers will remember **Gary**'s great book on the subject, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*.



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## **2014-15 Dues, Banquet Reservations Form**

Please print this form and send it with a check for your 2014-15 dues to the address below. You may also send your payments--\$50 per person--for the April 11, 2015 annual meeting in Houston. And, of course, you may choose to contribute to the various funds listed below.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

TIL dues of \$50 for fiscal year 2014-15 (if not paid already)

\$50 \_\_\_\_\_

April 10-11 meeting, Banquet Tickets, \$50 per person  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Paisano Fund Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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\$ \_\_\_\_\_

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