

Texas Institute of Letters Winter/Spring 2020 Newsletter



www.TexasInstituteofLetters.org

Prepared by TIL Secretary William Jack Sibley.



Greetings from The President:

Dear TIL-eros!

Y'all are quite an exciting group of people, as evidenced in the following news items from TIL Members' numerous literary escapades. And if you think we look good on paper, just imagine how impressive we are when gathered together at our Annual Awards Weekend!

We are chomping at the bit to experience the great readings and programming at TIL's 84th Annual Awards Weekend coming up in beautiful downtown Georgetown in just SEVEN WEEKS. (Banquet tickets and hotel rooms need to be reserved now, if you haven't already. And the Georgetown Sheraton has special TIL Rates available ONLY if you reserve by February 27th, one month ahead of the conference dates available at that lower price. See website at www.texasinstituteofletters.org for more info.)

You can reserve your rooms either online through the link provided on our website, OR by calling the number listed on our website. And we expect a full house for our Banquet, so be sure to purchase your banquet tickets as well.

We will have present not only new and old members, but also a crop of brand new literary award winners. The results of the literary awards are starting to come in, and we ought to have a full announcement on the winners out to you in another two weeks.

Boy, do we have fun things planned for y'all! A Friday night reception in the same courthouse where the first trial of the KKK in the nation, children and YA readings Saturday morning in an award-winning library, new member readings on Saturday afternoon, a dynamite banquet program Saturday night, and an optional expedition & reading to nearby Gault Archaeological Site Sunday morning, at a pre-Clovis human settlement estimated to be more than 16,000 years old.

I look forward to seeing each one of you, and making great new TIL memories together. con cariño, y hasta pronto,

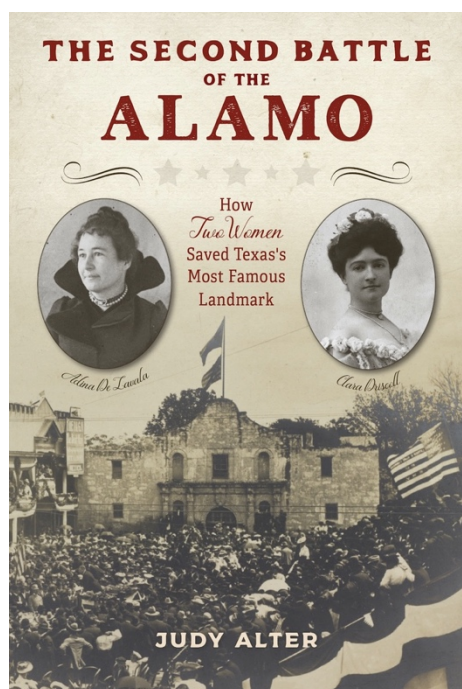
Carmen Tafolla

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TIL: Winter/Spring 2020 Newsletter - Member News

(Forty-one updates from TIL Members, in the order received)

Judy Alter: Judy Alter's new title, *The Second Battle of the Alamo*, will launch March 7 in San Antonio at the annual meeting of the Alamo Society at the Menger Hotel. Judy will be there to sign books and answer question. Rowman and Littlefield, a division of Globe Pequot, is the publisher.



James C. Kearney: I authored an article in the July edition of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* entitled, "Caspar Conrad Rordorf; Murder, Art, and Intrigue on the Texas Frontier." I have an annotated translation of a novel by W.A. Trenckmann (1859-1935) scheduled for release in the spring by Statehouse Press. In partnership with the Bullock Museum of Texas History, I have a five-series podcast available on for the public on the Bullock website: <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/podcast/vietnam-on-tape> In conjunction with the tapes, I am working on a book about conscientious objectors who served in the Army as medics in Vietnam entitled: "1-A-O; The Conscience that was Lost."

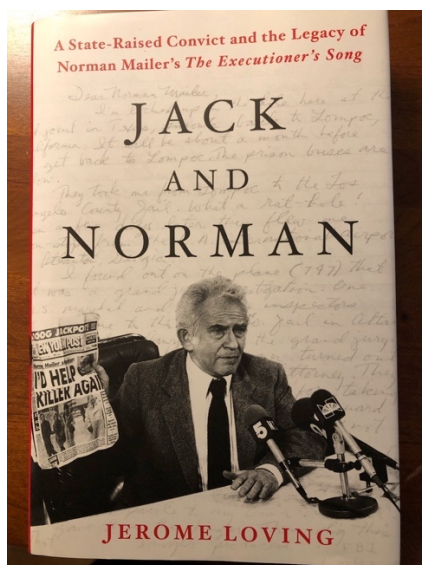
Larry D. Thomas: His most recent book of poetry, *In a Field of Cotton: Mississippi River Delta Poems* (Blue Horse Press, 2019), has received very favorable reviews in several literary publications including the Green Hills Literary Lantern, Dragon Poet Review, and Valley Voices: A Literary Journal. He has been selected to present poems from the collection at the 2020 Scissortail Creative Writing Festival, East Central University, Ada, OK which will be held in April, 2020. Thomas's recent publication credits include Louisiana Literature (book review and poem), San Pedro River Review, Southwestern American Literature, Review Americana, Valley Voices: A Literary Review and Voices de la Luna.

Lisa Sandlin: My news is that my new book (Cinco Puntos Press, 2019) "The Bird Boys" was chosen as one of 2019's 10 best crime novels by Marilyn Stasio of the New York Times. I'm working on a sequel, the third book in a series.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/05/books/review/crime-fiction-stasio-10-best.html>

Kip Stratton: My book, *The Wild Bunch: Sam Peckinpah, a Revolution in Hollywood, and the Making of a Legendary Film*, received 2019 nonfiction book of year honors in the Los Angeles Press Club's National Arts & Entertainment Journalism Awards contest. Winners were announced at a banquet held in December in downtown Los Angeles at the historic Biltmore hotel where honorees included Quentin Tarantino, Danny Trejo, Tarana Burke, Ben Mankiewicz, and Ann-Margret. I was completely blown away when I received notification that I'd won, just as I was when I learned that *The Wild Bunch* was a "Top Pick" among the Southwest Books of the Year. <https://www.library.pima.gov/southwestbooks/> In addition to just learning *Wild Bunch* will soon be translated into Italian, *The Wild Bunch* has been named the winner of the Ray and Pat Browne Award for the Best Single Work by one or more Authors in Popular and American Culture by the Pop Culture Association. I've been invited to attend the association's April awards banquet in Philadelphia, where Terry Gross, of NPR's Fresh Air, will present the awards.

Jerome Loving: *Jack and Norman: A State-Raised Convict and the Legacy of Norman Mailer's "The Executioner's Song,"* (St. Martin's, 2017) is now under contract for cinematic development by Village Roadshow Entertainment (VREG).



Wes Ferguson: was promoted to senior editor at Texas Monthly.

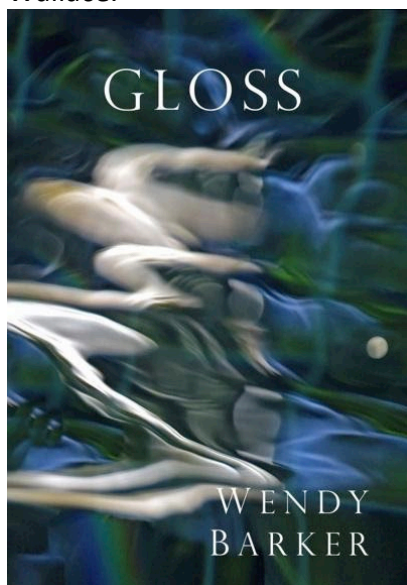
José E. Limón: was originally scheduled to deliver the annual Garry L. Nall Lecture at the invitation of the Center for the Study of the American West at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, TX on October 24, 2019. I say "was originally" because on that October day Canyon and the West Texas area experienced a snow and ice storm (!) and the lecture had to be cancelled. The title of the lecture is "From the Streets of Laredo to the Palo Duro Canyon and Other Texas Stories," and it has been rescheduled for April 23, 2020. My lecture is based in part on two unpublished film treatments that Larry McMurtry wrote as early versions of *Lonesome Dove*, and that are archived respectively in the Wittliff Collection at Texas State University and at the University of Houston Special Collections.

Michael Mewshaw: most recent book, *The Lost Prince: A Search for Pat Conroy*, has been longlisted for the 2020 Pen Biography Award.

Mary Rogers: My book, *Barbara Jordan, An American Hero*, has been optioned by Searchlight for a film starring Viola Davis as Jordan. Davis is also one of the producers for the film. Pulitzer-Prize-winning playwright Lynn Nottage is writing the screen play and has been in Texas recently to do some background research.

Steven G. Kellman: As indicated in the attachment, my latest book, *Nimble Tongues: Studies in Literary Translingualism*, will be published in February by Purdue University Press.

Wendy Barker: My 7th poetry collection, *GLOSS*, was just released from Saint Julian Press. It received a great review in *Publishers Weekly*! On Jan. 10 we held a launch for the book at the Twig Bookshop in San Antonio, also featuring Joshua Robbins and Jo Reyes-Boitel, all introduced by Natalia Treviño. On Jan 19, a launch in Austin at Malvern Books along with poets Michael Anania and Van Garrett. Jan. 26, I read at Poetry Flash in Oakland, CA, with Sandra M. Gilbert. Then on March 26, I'll be a featured poet at the Piper Center at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. May 31, reading with Alicia Ostriker at Parkside Lounge, hosted by George Wallace.



Naomi Shihab Nye: Since last July, Naomi Shihab Nye has been the Young People's Poet Laureate of the United States (Poetry Foundation) and the editor for the *New York Times* Sunday magazine poem. The National Book Critics Circle will award her the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award in New York City on March 12 (her birthday) and her new book *Cast Away*, just out, is about trash and related topics. Cover attached. Naomi says, "I am grateful for all these things."



David Lee: David Lee published his book (poetry) *Mine Tailings* with 5 Sisters Press and his Sugar House Review 10th Year Celebration chapbook *The Allegory of Perfection* in 2019.

Jose A. Rodriguez: My poem "La Migra" was reprinted in The NY Times Magazine in November. "Shelter" will be my second poem featured in The New Yorker this year.

Jerry Craven: Terry Dalrymple, Andrew Geyer, and Jerry Craven are collaborating on a collection of flash fiction. Each story will connect in some way with graphic art from Jerry Craven's February 2020 exhibition sponsored by the East Texas Art League, a show titled "Magical Realism." Stories written so far include Dalrymple's "Egret Angel," Geyer's "The Nightwatch," and Craven's "Scottish Queen of Skye." When completed the book will consist of ekphrastic flash fiction, with the writing as well as the graphics containing elements of magical realism. The three writers hope to complete the collection by early 2021. Their most recent collaboration is *Dancing on Barbed Wire*, a short story cycle set in Texas (Angelina River Press, 2018).



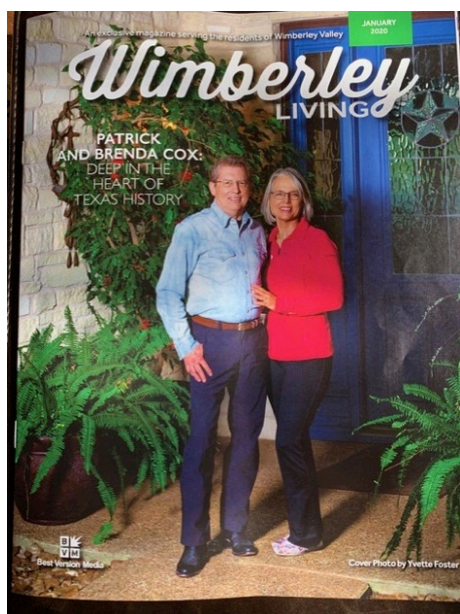
Scottish Queen of Skye

Jerry D. Thompson: Thompson's *Wrecked Lives and Lost Souls: Joe Lynch Davis and the last of the Oklahoma Outlaws* was recently published by the University of Oklahoma Press. Thompson's edited version of Harwood Hinton's long anticipated biography of Gen. John Ellis Wool will be published in summer 2020, also by the University of Oklahoma Press. Before passing away, Hinton worked on the manuscript for over fifty years. The book is entitled *Courage Above All Things: General John Ellis Wool and the American Military, 1812-1863*. Thompson also had a Civil War journal he edited, "'A Chicken for Breakfast at the Expense of Mr. Rebel': The Journal of Sergeant Nelson Howard, Company E, 13th Maine Infantry on the Texas Coast, 1862-1864" in the January 2020 issue of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*.

Joe Holley: After a few weeks' hiatus writing the Native Texan column for the *Houston Chronicle* while I finished up my book about Sutherland Springs, I've started up again. I'll be traveling the highways and byways as usual, looking for tales to tell. "Sutherland Springs: God, Guns and a Small Texas Town," published by Hachette Books, comes out March 17.

Bruce Bond: I had two books released in 2019: a book of prose, *Plurality and the Poetics of Self* (Palgrave MacMillan), and a collection of poems, *Words Written Against the Walls of the City* (LSU).

Patrick Cox: We were featured in *Wimberley Living Magazine* this month - "Deep in the Heart of Texas History." The story covers my historical research and writing along with the volunteer and civic work that my wife Brenda and I do in the community. We were very honored to be selected for this story by Ashley Brown. We are also organizing the Wimberley Area Writers group. We have many talented people in our community who publish fiction, nonfiction, poetry, screenwriting, technical and many other areas. We want to reveal the beauty, compassion, joys and sorrows, and the soul of our area writers. Thanks to the inspiration of TIL for stimulating the idea for a local organization of Wimberley Area Writers.



Ann McCutchan: I have a piece of news. My opera (as librettist) *Purewater*, written with composer Andrew Rudin, will be produced by the Center for Contemporary Opera at the National Opera Center in New York, June 4. It is adapted from André Gide's 1919 novella *La Symphonie Pastorale* and set in Nebraska, during the Dust Bowl period.

Gerald Duff: TCU Press will be publishing my novel *Memphis Bluff* in May 2020.

Sergio Troncoso: His new book of linked short stories on immigration, *A Peculiar Kind of Immigrant's Son* (Cinco Puntos Press) was selected Best of Texas 2019 by *Lone Star Literary Life*, which hailed the book as "an outstanding collection of connected short stories uniquely reflecting life along the troubled Texas-Mexico border." The Austin Public Library and the McAllen Public Library also chose the book for their Recommended List. *Texas Monthly* recently included Troncoso's earlier novel, *From This Wicked Patch of Dust*, in the article, "Reinventing the Canon: Why It's More Important Than Ever to Read Latinx Literature." He is also the editor of a new anthology, *Nepantla Familias: A Mexican-American Anthology of Literature on Families in between Worlds*, forthcoming from Texas A&M Press in 2021. In June, he will be teaching a Work-In-Progress intensive workshop for the Yale Writers' Workshop. Please visit his website, www.SergioTroncoso.com, for more news and appearances.



Chip Dameron: Last November, Chip Dameron read from his book of Dobie poems at two events: Dobie Dichos at the historic Oakville jailhouse, and the celebration of Steven Davis's latest book, *The Essential J. Frank Dobie*, at Texas State University. Chip has also begun serving as president of the board of directors of the Writers' League of Texas.

Hugh Aynesworth: I have been heavily involved in two Netflix documentaries (one in February, the other in December 2019) ... stories in which I played a major part in interviewing two famous (infamous?) killers. The first was the story -- with numerous new disclosures -- of Ted Bundy. The second Netflix production -- which debuted in early December of 2019 -- told the story of Henry Lee Lucas. Presently I am writing a book about a couple dozen noteworthy stories I have done since I got into journalism in 1950. These include the JFK assassination and its aftermath, Chappaquidick, the assassination of Martin Luther King, the Oklahoma City bombing, the Branch Davidian horror in Waco, the strange death of Howard Hughes in Mexico, the Pennsylvania congressman who had two wives (at same time), the crimes of Billie Sol Estes, meeting with Fidel Castro in Cuba, helping negotiate the release of several kidnapped Texas oilmen in Eritrea and traveling to Viet Nam with Ross Perot.

Norma Cantu: I am now the President of the American Folklore Society. I continue to travel to readings from my recently published books: *Cabañuelas, a Novel* and *Meditacion Fronteriza, Poems of Love, Life, and Labor*. In January, University of Texas Press published *meXicana Fashion: Politics, Self-Adornment, and Identity* that I co-edited with Aída Hurtado.

Paul H. Carlson: Paul Carlson with Clint Chambers recently published *Comanche Jack Stilwell: Army Scout and Plainsman* with the University of Oklahoma Press. His manuscript "Historic Tales of the Llano Estacado," his 25th book, will be published later this year.

Rod Davis: Rod Davis's new novel, *East of Texas, West of Hell*, is forthcoming in the spring from NewSouth Books. It is a sequel to the critically-acclaimed *South, America*, featuring ex-Dallas TV reporter Jack Prine on a continuing *noir* journey of rescue and revenge by way of violence and betrayal from Savannah to the High Plains.

Robert Flynn: Robert Lopez Flynn was out of sync at Pecha Kucha.

Robert Lopez Flynn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4L-aTf3TEFo>.

Marquis Who's Who, the world's premier publisher of biographical profiles, is proud to presented Robert Lopez Flynn with the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award. An accomplished listee, Mr. Flynn celebrates many years' experience in his professional network, and has been noted for achievements, leadership qualities, and the credentials and successes he has accrued in his field. As in all Marquis Who's Who biographical volumes, individuals profiled are selected on the basis of current reference value. Factors such as position, noteworthy accomplishments, visibility, and prominence in a field are all taken into account during the selection process. In recognition of outstanding contributions to his profession and the Marquis Who's Who community, Mr. Flynn has been featured on the Albert Nelson Marquis Lifetime Achievement website. For more information, www.ltachievers.com

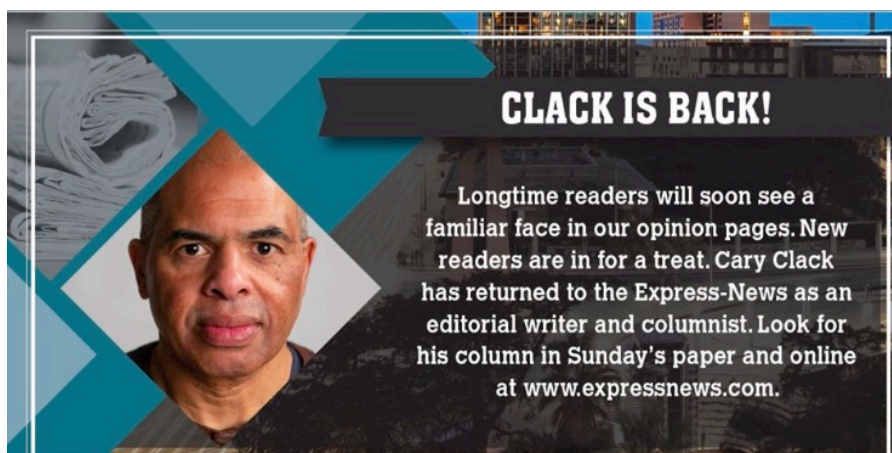
Betty Adcock: Betty Adcock, whose 7th book of poems, *Rough Fugue*, was published by LSU Press in 2018, is the featured poet in the recent *Birmingham Poetry Review*, one of the few journals-on-paper. An essay on Adcock's work by Susannah Minst, Professor at Skidmore; an interview with Betty, and eight new Adcock poems appear in the spring 2020 BPR.

Stephen Michaud: - First published 37 years ago, *The Only Living Witness*, the Ted Bundy story written by TIL members Stephen G. Michaud and Hugh Aynesworth, has come back to life as a newly-released paperback in the United Kingdom. Meantime, Aynesworth appears as an expert source on the Henry Lee Lucas documentary, "The Confession Killer," now airing on Netflix.

Ron Rozelle: I am the author of ten books of fiction and nonfiction, with another going through edits. My first was *Into That Good Night*, a memoir published in 1998 by Farrar, Straus, Giroux, and the most recent is *Exiled: The Last Days of Sam Houston*, from Texas A&M Press. In 2017 I retired after a forty-year teaching career and now write, read submitted manuscripts for several university presses, conduct writing workshops, and edit a Brazoria county magazine titled *Image*. My wife Karen, also a retired teacher, and I recently moved from Lake Jackson to Pearland, where we are closer to our grandchildren and live with two elderly opinionated cats.

Nan Cuba: A featured journalist in the Netflix docuseries about Henry Lee Lucas called *The Confession Killer*. She and a psychologist used Lucas as a case study to report on the origins of extraordinary violence. Her next novel is a tragicomedy about that experience.

Cary Clack: In December, after an 8-year absence, Cary Clack returned to the *San Antonio Express-News* as columnist and member of the Editorial Board. Besides a Sunday column, he writes three unsigned editorials each week. His first time around, he was with the newspaper from 1995-2011.



Laura Wilson: Laura Wilson's celebrated book, *Watt Matthews of Lamshead*, was printed for a sixth time this fall. Her exhibition, *That Day: Pictures in the American West*, has been on exhibition recently at the Longview Museum of Fine Arts in Longview, Texas, The R.W. Norton Art Gallery, in Shreveport, Louisiana, and The Tyler Museum of Art in Tyler, Texas. Additionally, she has an exhibition, *Laura Wilson: Looking West*, at the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in Fort Worth, Texas, where she was inducted as a member in November 2019. This exhibition will travel to the Red and White Gallery in Fayetteville, Texas in April. Laura will be honored with the 11th annual Literati Award at the Tables of Content fundraiser for Friends of SMU Libraries in March 2020.

Gene Fowler: Deployed a highly technical graphic aids in his presentation on the border radio stations at the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio this past September. On May 1, Gene will pontificate about hearing-it-on-the-outlaw-x at the Witte Museum's Conference on Texas.



Sandra Cisneros: Gaumont Film Company and Sandra Cisneros have partnered to develop the classic novel *The House on Mango Street* for television. The book has been a bestseller for 30 years, translated into more than 25 languages and serving as required reading at all academic levels. Despite multiple offers throughout the years, this is the first time Cisneros has agreed to bring the book to the screen. She explained that the current political landscape and discussion surrounding immigration and Latinos in the United States makes the need for diverse stories urgent and necessary. Cisneros will work directly with Gaumont to make this project happen, serving as an Executive Producer. Gaumont is known for such shows as Netflix's *Narcos* and *F Is for Family*.

Carol Reposa: The most recent collection of 2018 Texas Poet Laureate Carol Coffee Reposa is *New and Selected Poems* (TCU Press), but she's also plugging away at a sixth manuscript, *Sailing West*, and has individual poems in *Words in Concert*, *Writing Texas*, *The San Antonio Express-News*, *Through Layered Limestone*, and *The Larger Geometry*. Last September she delivered the keynote address at the 2019 meeting of The Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers, giving additional readings and presentations during the ensuing months at the Langdon Weekend, Texas A&M--Corpus Christi, Women Writing the West, San Antonio's Oakwell-Tobin Library, and the world premiere of *SA 24: Two Dozen Songs from Now*. Ever the optimist, she continues to believe that in her next life she will own a comfortable beachfront home with a wrap-around porch somewhere on Padre Island, where she will follow Otis Redding's example and spend hours watching the tide roll in.

Karla K. Morton: Announces that her forthcoming poetry book about the National Parks co-authored by fellow Texas Poet Laureate **Alan Birkelbach**, "**Words of Preservation: The Poetic Journey Through the National Parks**" will be released Fall 2020, (TCU Press) with the release party to be at Big Bend National Park on November 14, 2020. While on the road, Morton and Birkelbach write lyrics, and singer Michael Martin Murphey is creating an album of their songs and will perform at the release party as well. This is the first book of its kind: never have *all* the National Parks been represented in a book of poetry! The two spent three and one-half years visiting all 62 National Parks - writing poetry and taking photos, and a percentage of the sales from this historic forthcoming book will go back to the National Park system.

William Jack Sibley: "You are not required to set yourself on fire to keep other people warm - Anon." Today's comforting thought as I assume the role of TIL Secretary. Mistakes will be made! On another note, as co-founder and emcee of DOBIE DICHOS, our number 9 year happened back in November. An all TIL bevy of noted notables came and spoke - Steve Davis, Sergio Troncoso, Sarah Bird, Chip Dameron, Celeste Walker. A great, great evening. Next DD lift-off - Friday, November 6, 2020. Actress Diane Ladd has re-optioned my screenplay, RELATIVE TRUTH, and I'm almost (almost) finished with my third novel, HERE WE GO LOOP DE LOOP – much ado about a cowboy, an heiress, her brother's husband and a badass 79 Mercury Montego.

Carmen Tafolla: has just finished co-editing a forthcoming anthology, *Puro Chicanx: Writers in the 21st Century* (Cutthroat, 2020.) She'll be presenting at the National AWP Conference in San Antonio in two different presentations, one of which is free to the public at the Lila Cockrell Theater downtown Saturday March 7th at 8:30 p.m. San Antonio has just unveiled the nation's first wall-hung solar mural, and Carmen's lines of poetry are part of the mural. Featured on the front cover of Authentic Texas Magazine, she is scheduled to present in Alabama; San Marcos; the Blue Hole; India; and Kathmandu, Nepal. And guess who's featured in San Antonio's Fiesta Flambeau Parade this year, themed "Literary Classics", on the UTSA Float "Sonnets and Salsa"?





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