

Texas Institute of Letters



July/August/September 2011

Newsletter

It's time to pay your dues for fiscal year 2011-12. Please use the form at the end of this newsletter when remitting them.

Hoggard Newest Texas Institute of Letters Fellow

Congratulations go out to **James Hoggard** of Wichita Falls, who has been named a Fellow of the Texas Institute of Letters. Members of the TIL Council voted Jim the honor at its September meeting in Dallas.

Being named a Fellow of the Institute is rare indeed. Jim is just the 14th person to be so designated in the 75-year-history of the organization. Council members believe that about 10 years have passed since the last Fellow was selected.

The bylaws do not provide a definition for a TIL Fellow. However, by tradition, persons named TIL Fellows have established a considerable and well respected body of work as well as contributed to TIL at a high level over the course of several decades. Officers, members of the Council, and other members of TIL look to Fellows for guidance in dealing with issues confronting the Institute.

"I was deeply moved when told I had been elected a Fellow," Jim said. "I've always thought of that honor as something one doesn't aspire to, though it does bring to one – at least it has to me – great respect for those who have received it. I'll add, too, though, that I've had great respect for those same ones long before they received the honor. I was moved when I got word that I was being asked to join TIL, and through the years a number of things associated with TIL have moved me. Who knows what makes one passionate about an organization? But in this case it's easy for me to see at least how much I value being a part of TIL."

Jim has published more than 20 books – poetry, fiction, and nonfiction – as well as dozens of individual poems, stories, articles, and song lyrics, plus several staged plays. His newest book is *The Mayor's Daughter*, a novel

published by Wings Press in September. The Perkins-Prothro Distinguished Professor of English at Midwestern State University, Jim is also a highly honored translator. He has received the Hart Crane and Alice Crane Williams Memorial Award for poetry, several TIL awards, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and other honors. He's also a past Poet Laureate of the State of Texas. Elected to TIL in 1977, he became Secretary-Treasurer in 1989. He has been Treasurer ever since, including the four years he served as President during the 1990s. During his time as Treasurer, TIL's assets have grown from about \$36,000 to \$832,000.

Here is the complete historical list of Fellows of the Institute: **Karle Wilson Baker, Joseph Dawson, J. Frank Dobie, Robert Flynn, John Graves, A.C. Greene, James Hoggard, Tom Lea, Leonidas W. Payne Jr., Marshall Terry, Frank Wardlaw, Walter Prescott Webb, John Edward Weems, and William Wittliff.**

Member News

Annette Gordon-Reed was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in September, one of the most prestigious recognitions an American can receive. Here's how the Academy describes itself: "Founded in 1780, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences is an independent policy research center that conducts multidisciplinary studies of complex and emerging problems. The Academy's elected members are leaders in the academic disciplines, the arts, business, and public affairs." TIL congratulates her on this wonderful achievement. ★★ ★ The Wittliff Collections at Texas State University, founded by TIL Fellow **William Wittliff** and his wife, Sally, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this fall. A number of events are scheduled to mark the anniversary. Among the TIL members taking part are **Sarah Bird, Stephen Harrigan, Elizabeth Crook, and William Broyles Jr.** Here is a link: <http://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/exhibitions-events/events.html> ★★ ★ **Larry McMurtry** has a lengthy books piece in the November issues of *Harper's*, in which he engagingly tackles such varied subjects as Coco Chanel, A. Conan Doyle, and a collection of essays that ranges from Michael Jackson to an obscure 19th century botanist. ★★ ★ **Jimmie Killingsworth** has collaborated with noted Texas photographer Geoff Winningham to produce *Going Back to Galveston: Nature, Funk, and Fantasy in a Favorite Place*, new from Texas A&M University Press. Says Jimmie: "Musing on the distinctive character of Galveston — the changeable Gulf Coast shoreline, the grand hotels, the funky bars and tourist attractions — *Going Back to Galveston* ultimately reflects on how people relate to their favorite places and how nature constrains our ambitions and our fantasies about who we are and where we live." ★★ ★ **Ben Fountain's** new novel entitled *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk* is scheduled to be published in May by Ecco/HarperCollins. ★★ ★ Former TIL President **Dave Hamrick** has been named the permanent Director of the University of Texas Press. He replaces Joanna Hitchcock, who guided the press for nearly two decades before her retirement in February. Dave has been with UT Press since 2001 and served as Associate Director since 2008. He had been acting Director since Hitchcock's retirement. ★★ ★ This past year, **Bruce Bond** has had two collections of poetry accepted for publication: *The Visible* (LSU Press, 2012) and *Choir of the Wells* (a tetralogy of new books; Etruscan Press, 2013). Also he won *The New South* Poetry Award for the poem "Benthos," *The Saint Petersburg Review* Poetry Award for "Threnody: After Penderecki," and a William Matthews Poetry Prize for the poem "Jon Faddis and the High Note." ★★ ★ After getting his Dante fix in Florence (Italy, that is, not the Florence in Williamson County), **Bryce Milligan** performed his songs and poetry at the Prague Summer Writing Workshops, and he taught there for two weeks in July, reporting that it was a lovely break from the Texas heat. He also performed at the Albuquerque Cultural Conference in August, where he headed up a panel on new media-induced stress in writers and the complications it presents to traditional notions of creativity and publication. On Sept. 22, Milligan was honored by San Antonio's Gemini Ink organization with its Award of Literary Excellence. Gemini Ink published a letterpress chapbook (on handmade paper) by Milligan, entitled *Recasting*. The *San Antonio Express-News* ran a lengthy interview. Milligan's Wings Press is thriving in the new eBook era, having added most of its backlist to the world's e-shelves. Wings' 50th anniversary edition of TIL member **John Howard Griffin's** *Black Like Me* has received major publicity, with lengthy features appearing in *Smithsonian Magazine*, the *Houston Chronicle*, and *Humanities Texas*. Many more features are anticipated by the actual November 1 anniversary date. TIL member **Robert Bonazzi**, the editor of all of Griffin's posthumous publications, has fielded phone interviews from Australia to England. Wings Press will have a booth at the Texas Book Festival featuring new titles, including **James Hoggard's** novel, *The Mayor's Daughter*, which has received rave reviews in several Texas newspapers since appearing in September. ★★ ★ Bastropian **Carolyn Banks**

reports that she was awarded a Texas Filmmakers Production Fund grant from Austin Film Society for her short film, "Sex and the Septuagenarian." The eight-minute movie stars Austinite Gary Chason. Banks wrote and directed it. A special screening edition of "Sex and the Septuagenarian" will be on sale at the TIL booth at the Texas Book Festival and online at riverroadbastrop.com ★★ An update from **Clay Reynolds**: "This past summer saw the publication of my collection of western novelettes by the famed dime novelist, Ned Buntline, by Union Square Press in New York. This features a scholarly introduction about the almost unbelievable exploits of Buntline and an analysis of the structure and form of the dime novel as a prototype of much modern fiction. Two sets of my on-going collection: 'Hoi Polloi,' one subtitled 'A Trio' and one subtitled 'A Quartet' have appeared in the most recent issues of *descant* and *The Texas Review*. My story, 'The Deacon's Horse' appeared in *Texas Soundtracks*, a collection of short fiction edited by **Terry Dalrymple**." ★★ Texas State University-San Marcos Department of History professor **Frank de la Teja** has been recognized as a recipient of the 2011 Regents' Professor Award by the Texas State University System (TSUS) Board of Regents. In addition to receiving a cash award and a medallion, Frank will carry the prestigious Regents Professor title for the remainder of his career. While he was born in Cuba and raised in New Jersey, Frank has become one of the foremost experts on Latin history in Texas – and we're damned grateful to have him here. ★★ **Robin Doughty** and Virginia Carmichael have a new book, *The Albatross and the Fish: Linked Lives in the Open Seas*, due out at the end of November from University of Texas Press. His Royal Highness Prince Charles has penned a Forward to their book, which deals with ways of conserving albatross and key fish species taken by industrial long line fishing in the world's oceans. ★★ **Fran Vick** emceed at the University of Texas College of Liberal Arts reception and celebration at the naming of the Captain John Clark Hurst Room in the Naval ROTC Suite of the new building under construction. Fran spearheaded the drive to raise \$100,000 for the naming of the room for this Marine captain hero of Vietnam who was killed while flying support for his fellow Marines on the ground July 13, 1968. No remains have been found, so this room will be the lasting memorial in his name. His last words to his twin brother, Jim, before he left for Vietnam, were, "If I don't make it back, don't let them forget me." This request is now being honored. ★★ **H. Palmer Hall's** newest book is *Into the Thicket* (Ink Brush Press). His previous book, *Foreign and Domestic* (Turning Point, 2009) has received positive reviews this year from *The San Antonio Express-News*, *Valparaiso Poetry Review*, *Connecticut River Review*, and other literary reviews. New poems and essays have appeared in *The Connecticut Review*, [Mississippi] *Valley Voices*, *San Pedro Review*, *The Line-Up*, *Palo Alto Review*, and other literary magazines. His poetry press, Pecan Grove Press, will have published 12 new books of poetry by the end of 2011. Among the books are poetry collections by TIL member **Kurt Heinzelman** and Texas poets Bonnie Lyons and Scott Wiggerman. The Pecan Grove Press will be exhibiting at the annual AWP conference in Chicago this spring. ★★ **Lynn Hoggard** chaired the international jury to select the winner of the 2011 Aurora Borealis Award, given every three years to the Best Translator of Fiction. Hoggard presented the \$1,000 stipend to Lourdes Arencibia Rodriguez of Cuba on August 4th during the XIXth Triennial Meeting of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) in San Francisco. Other judges for the award were translators from Russia, England, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. ★★ Some news from **Jan Reid**: "I'm kind of proud that my short story about boxing, 'No Good Reason,' has been selected for inclusion in the *On the Brink* anthology. Proud because it was a contest, and it's the first time I've published a true short story." ★★ **Jane Roberts Wood's** papers will be formally presented to the SMU DeGolyer Library on November 17 at a reception. A panel of two of her publishers, Ellen Temple and **Fran Vick**, and two of her reviewers, Phyllis Bridges and **Bob Compton**, will speak at the event. A book of her short stories is being published by the DeGolyer, director **Russell Martin** announced and will be available at the reception. Jane's papers join those of **C.W. Smith** and other noted Texas authors at the DeGolyer. ★★ Speaking of Charlie Smith, Jane says his novel *Steplings* is the best she's read this year. ★★ **Joe Lansdale** has received the Italian Sugarpulp Prize as a Grandmaster of Modern Crime Literature and as a founder of a new approach to crime stories. The award was presented to him in Padova, Italy. Well, deserved, we might add. ★★ The Texas State Library and Archives Commission presented a fascinating talk by Sam Houston biographer **James Haley**, "Little Known Facts about the Archive War: Why Did Angelina Really Fire That Cannon?" Haley painted the Archive War as one of the defining moments of Houston's second presidential term and described information he found in TSLAC's Andrew Jackson Houston Collection. When *Sam Houston: A Life* was published in 2002, it won the Western Writers of America's Spur Award, the Texas State Historical Association's Tullis Prize, and seven other awards. ★★ **Rolando Hinojosa** has two books coming out in November from Arte Público Press. *A Voice of My Own: Essays and Stories* includes four Hinojosa short stories and several essays: "Topics include the decision to write in English or Spanish, the problem of writer's block and the development of story ideas and characters. Other essays cover personal issues, such as memories of his father and his love of reading and its impact on his life, and scholarly subjects such as the development of Chicano and ethnic literature." The collection includes an introduction by UCLA scholar Héctor Calderón. Arte Público is also bring back into print Rolando's groundbreaking novel that

began the acclaimed Klail City Death Trap series of mysteries, *Partners in Crime*. He has been busy giving readings at the University of Illinois, Texas Tech, and UT Permian Basin, and he will chair a panel at the Texas Book Festival. ★★ Arte Público founder **Nicolás Kanellos** published a new book last summer as part of the Joe R. and Teresa Lozano Long Series in Latin American and Latino Art and Culture by the University of Texas Press. *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño del Retorno* draws from Kanellos' Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project and is one of the first volumes to deal with this substantial body of work: "Written and recorded by people from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America, the texts presented here reflect the dualities that have characterized the Hispanic immigrant experience in the U.S. since the mid-nineteenth century, set always against a longing for homeland." ★★ The University of North Texas Press has just published a book edited by Maxine Johnston and **Pete Gunter** (written by Lorraine Bonney) titled *The Big Thicket Guidebook*. It contains "more information on the Big Thicket region than any rational person will ever want to know," Pete reports. "Eight hundred and fifty pages long, it contains maps, photos, sketches, and even a photograph of me. So you can see what a remarkably good book it is." ★★ From **L.D. Clark** comes this update: "Plans are underway to hold a sesquicentennial memorial in Gainesville in October, 2012, for the victims of the Great Hanging. In this lynching of October, 1862, 42 Unionists were hanged by a Confederate mob through a kangaroo court. All we truly know about this event comes from two texts of the time, both out of print for years: Thomas Barrett's *Great Hanging at Gainesville* and George Washington Diamond's *Account of the Great Hanging at Gainesville, 1862*. The Texas State Historical Association will be bringing out the two accounts in one volume, publication scheduled for August, 2012. Richard McCaslin of the history department at NTSU is writing a foreword for the volume and I am writing an afterword. We expect that the renewed availability of the two texts will revive interest in the study of this greatest mass hanging in American history." ★★ At the annual awards banquet on September 17, the Grand Prize in Southwest Writer's Annual Contest, the Storyteller Award, was given to **Luise Putcamp, Jr.** of Salt Lake City. She won with her personal essay "Confessions of a Card-Carrying Cadaver." She also won first place in the Personal Essay/Column category. The Storyteller judge was Sharene Marten-Brown, Art and Editorial Director, Ampichellis eBooks. ★★ **David Lee** in collaboration with Nebraska Poet Laureate Bill Kloefkorn has just published the third volume of a poetic trilogy, *Moments of Delicate Balance*, in a beautifully designed Wings Press edition. ★★ **Andrés Tijerina**, Professor of History at Austin Community College and author of several books on Texas history including *Tejanos and Texas Under the Mexican Flag* and *Tejano Empire*, both by Texas A&M Press, recently published an op-ed piece in the Arts & Life Section of the *Dallas Morning News* on "The Future of Texas Literature." Andrés is a Fellow of the T.S.H.A. and Editor of the Spencer Series on Texas and the Southwest for Texas A&M University Press – as well as a member of the Council of TIL. ★★ The film *A Bird of the Air*, based on **Joe Coomer's** acclaimed novel *The Loop*, had its Texas premiere at the Angelika in Dallas. Here's a link: http://www.angelikafilmcenter.com/angelika_film.asp?hID=7915&ID=490712h.0120185620866i4013.76 ★★

Naomi Shihab Nye is visiting professor at the Michener Center for Writers in Austin this fall. Her new books are *Transfer* (poems) and *There Is No Long Distance Now* (stories). She recently toured Wyoming for the Civility Matters! project sponsored by the Wyoming Humanities Council. ★★ **Rich Levy** was recently chosen Houston's "Best Poet" by the *Houston Press* "Best of Houston 2011: Resident Genius" issue. Rich opened the new Houston reading series "Public Poetry" in April at the Central Branch of the Houston Public Library as well as at Discovery Green Park. In June, he was featured in an hour-long interview/reading on the KPFT 90.1FM program *Living Art*. Through Inprint, he continues to curate the Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, which last year featured Salman Rushdie (who read to an audience of nearly 2,000 at Jones Hall on December 3, 2010 – his largest audience ever), Amy Tan, Carlos Fuentes, Peter Carey, and Kay Ryan (who was awarded the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for poetry a week after her delightful Houston reading). This year's reading series features Margaret Atwood, W. S. Merwin, Michael Ondaatje, Jeffrey Eugenides, Nicole Krauss, Francisco Goldman, debut novelist Téa Obreht, Gary Shteyngart, Pulitzer Prize winning poet Rae Armantrout, and poet/critic and *Poetry* magazine editor Christian Wiman. He invites all TIL members to check out the reading series. Here's a link: www.inprinthouston.org. For tickets, give Rich a call. ★★ Ink Brush Press has published a new book by **Jan Seale, Nape**. ★★ And speaking of Ink Brush, **Jerry Craven** reports the press has published 12 books this year, five of them by TIL members. Here's a link: www.inkbrushpress.com. Jerry has also published a novel with Slough Press, a mystery set in East Texas. And, he reports that Lamar University has hired him to set up the Lamar University Press on the model of Ink Brush Press. LU Press will soon be open for submissions of nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. Stay tuned. ★★ Austin's Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum is benefiting from the contributions of two TIL members. **Joe Nick Patoski** is the guest curator for the special exhibit "Texas High School Football: More Than Just a Game." Joe Nick says that high school football is part of what makes Texas the dynamic place it is today: "We're different from everywhere else." The exhibit runs until January. Opening in December of

next year will be a special exhibit with the working title of “Women Shaping Texas in the 20th Century.” **Paula Marks** is serving as guest curator. Paula explains the duties of guest curator: “The work involves everything from developing the storylines with museum staff and an advisory committee to going out and finding artifacts and writing text.” ★★ An update from TIL Fellow Robert Flynn: “I spoke to the Stark Museum in Orange about my novel *Tie-Fast Country*. Also, in addition to my story, ‘Tumbleweed Christmas’ being read by Marcia Gay Harden in the Texas Bound series at the Dallas Museum of Art, my story ‘The Midnight Clear’ was read by actor/director/producer Mark Miller at a fundraiser for Friendship Shelter, ‘the only shelter with a beachfront view,’ Laguna Beach, California.” ★★ **Dale L. Walker** has written the introduction to the newly published *Long Way to Texas: Three Novels by Elmer Kelton* (New York: Macmillan/Forge). The three novels in the 500-page omnibus— *Joe Pepper*, *Long Way to Texas*, and *Eyes of the Hawk* — originally appeared in the 1970s under Elmer’s penname, Lee McElroy. Walker, Kelton’s long-time Macmillan/Forge editor, is also author of many historical books for that publisher and is one of the principal contributors (with over 60 articles) to the two-volume *The Settlement of America: Encyclopedia of Westward Expansion from Jamestown to the Closing of the Frontier*, published in September, 2011, by M.E. Sharpe, Inc. Of New York. ★★ **Jerry Thompson** received the Clotilde P. Garcia award for the best book on Tejano history at an awards banquet in San Antonio of the Texas Hispanic Genealogical Society. This is the second time Jerry has won the award. He also received the award in 2009 for his *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas*, which also was a TIL award-winner. ★★ **Willard Spiegelman** spent part of the fall as a fellow at the Bogliasco Foundation, on the appropriately named Golfo Paradiso, east of Genoa, where he worked on various projects. He has also been busy scribbling art pieces for *The Wall Street Journal*. New essays on poetry are forthcoming in *The Hopkins Review*, *Cambridge History of American Poetry*, and elsewhere. ★★ An update from **Prudence Mackintosh**: “I have a column in the October *Texas Monthly* and will have another in the January 2012 issue. I’m busy preparing a syllabus for the spring course I teach at UT-Austin. The course is called ‘Getting It in Writing.’ Essentially, I become a writing coach for 15 Liberal Arts Honor students in January. It’s labor intensive for both students and teacher. This is the third year I’ve done this. John and I enjoy living half the year in Austin.” ★★ **Jerry Bradley** was the featured poet in the February, 2011, *Red River Review*. He also has recent poetry in *CCTE Studies*, *New Texas*, *descant*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Illya’s Honey*, *Right Hand Pointing*, and the tequila-themed anthology *Agave*, just out from Ink Brush Press. He is poetry editor of *Concho River Review*. ★★ *Agave* also features “Good Tequila, Naked Women, and Bluebell Ice Cream,” by **Terry Dalrymple**. He also read the short story at the Langdon Literary Weekend held in September in Granbury. ★★ Before we leave *Agave*, your faithful correspondent **W.K. (Kip) Stratton** is alleged to have a poem in that selfsame anthology. Though contrary to what you might read in those pages, he has little experience drinking the nectar of the agave. Promise. Nor with sotol. Promise. And he’s never littered the Chihuahuan Desert with empty beverage bottles of any sort. At any time. Double promise. ★★ Earlier this year the University of South Carolina Press released **Paul Ruffin’s** fourth book of essays, *Travels with George in Search of Ben Hur*. His fourth collection of short stories, *Living in a Christ-Haunted Land*, will be released in French translation by 13E Note Editions (Paris) in 2012. He is collaborating with Will Hayden, star of the Discovery Channel’s *Sons of Guns*, on a book about Hayden’s life and the evolution of Red Jacket Firearms. Paul was a featured author at the South Carolina Book Festival in May and will be a featured author at the Southern Book Fest in Nashville the weekend of October 15th and 16th. He will also be a featured author at the Southern Kentucky Book Festival in April 2012. ★★ **Reginald Gibbons** participated in a 75th-birthday celebration of the Romanian writer Norman Manea in New York in June (Manea is one of the most important European writers since World War II). Reg has been appointed a Fellow of the Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC, and during 2011-12 he will be in residence there for two weeks. At Northwestern University he is now the Frances Hooper Professor of Arts and Humanities. ★★ **Jerome Loving** is scheduled to appear on a panel at the Texas Book Festival in Austin, October 22-23. His slot is Oct. 22, 10;-10:45. His *Mark Twain: The Adventures of Samuel L. Clemens* came out in paperback this year. He will be among several TIL members who will be on panels or will be moderating at the festival. Here’s a link: www.texasbookfestival.org ★★ **Debbie Nathan** has big news about her newest book, *Sybil Exposed*, which has an October publication date from The Free Press. *Publishers Weekly* has awarded it a starred review, and it has been chosen a Barnes and Noble “Discover” book, meaning it’ll be on a table near the front of all B&N stores from November through January. It’s being simultaneously published in Australia and marketed in England. And it’s been excerpted in the *New York Times Magazine*. ★★ “Phelan’s First Case” by **Lisa Sandlin** was nominated for a Shamus Award by the Private Eye Writers of America. Lisa reports she didn’t win, but she did get to see the Clydesdales in St. Louis while there for the awards ceremony. Her new book, *You Who Make the Sky Bend*, is a finalist for a New Mexico Book Award. ★★ An update from **John Irsfeld**: “On June 30, I retired from active duty as a Professor of English at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, after 42 years. During that time I served not only as an English teacher but also as Chairman of the English Department (11 years), executive assistant to the

Senior Vice President and Provost (three years), deputy to the President (four years), and Vice President and deputy to the President (three years), which worked out to 21 years in the classroom and 21 years in administrative work. The administrative work was rewarding in many ways but it did interfere with my writing. My most recent novel *Night Moves* was published in 2007. I have no more excuses now, so it's back to the work that led me into all this. I hope I haven't forgotten how to do it." ★★★ **Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni** has been busy this fall as Gulf Coast Reads featured her novel, *One Amazing Thing*. She gave four readings in September alone at Pearland, Sugar Land, Houston/Katy, and Baytown. A new video featuring Chitra is on Youtube. Here's a link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pCQrufxdkHc> ★★★ And, finally, the **Leon Hale** update: The former TIL Council member, aged 90, recently decided to come out of retirement and write another book. He sat for two days, staring at a blank computer monitor, and finally wrote this sentence: "Aw, the hell with it."

Remembering J. Frank Dobie in George West and Oakville

By Bill Sibley

As you may know, Texas author J. Frank Dobie grew up on a ranch just south of George West, in Live Oak County. (My Grandfather was ranch foreman for J. Frank's Uncle, Mr. Jim Dobie, a cattle baron who helped finance the building of San Antonio's St. Anthony Hotel.)

The year 2013 will mark the 125 anniversary of J. Frank Dobie's birth. For the past 23 years the town of George West has put on Storyfest, and as a guest emcee at last year's event, I suggested that perhaps it might be a good time to re-introduce J. Frank's writing to younger readers. As a child I thoroughly devoured Dobie's stirring tales of historic Texas and the southwest. He was the first writer I was ever aware of who wrote about places I'd actually been to. Some of my favorites were *A Vaquero In The Brush Country*, *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver*, *The Mustangs*, and most terrifying, *Rattlesnakes*.

Mary Margaret Daughtery, Storyfest Executive Director, lassoed my initial suggestion and decided to return to what was an original precept of the event – the reading of J. Frank Dobie's writings by Texas authors, performers and various notables. The nearby ghost town of Oakville has graciously offered their locale (Bed and Breakfast Inn, restored 1880 jail, Town Square, etc., <http://www.oakvillejail.com/>) for a Friday, November 4, evening gathering of "campfires, chili con carne, pan de campo – and the words of J. Frank." The event gets underway at 6 p.m.

Since 1964 the University of Texas and the Texas Institute of Letters have operated the Dobie-Paisano Fellowship Program, a writers retreat at Dobie's old ranch home outside Austin. The award has been given to such distinguished authors as **Sandra Cisneros**, **Jan Reid**, **Dagoberto Gilb**, **A. C. Greene**, **Stephen Harrigan**, **Gary Cartwright**, **Oscar Casares**, and **Sarah Bird**. It is hoped that we will be able to attract some of these writers (and others) to attend our night of "Dobie Dicho's" to honor the preeminent storyteller of South Texas, J. Frank Dobie. The old West Theatre in George West is being restored as the Dobie-West Performing Arts Center and a portion of whatever is raised from the Friday night event will go toward that effort as well.

Here's a link: http://www.mysoutex.com/view/full_story_landing/9346525/article-Dobie-West-Theatre-renovation-committee-seeks-funds-for-HVAC-system

*(Editor's Note: This article is adapted from e-mail correspondence between **Robert Flynn** and Sibley, a Texas rancher and writer.)*

President's Message

As I've mentioned before, our April 14, 2012, annual meeting will be at the Menger Hotel in San Antonio. For years I had been curious about this famous hotel and its wood-paneled bar where Teddy Roosevelt recruited a large number of his Rough Riders, occasionally glancing at it on my rare visits to the Alamo over the years but never setting foot in the place. Finally, last week my wife had to go to San Antonio on a "business" trip (recruiting graduate students for SMU), and I accompanied her, insisting that we stay at the Menger.

The verdict?

Absolutely, in my opinion, a perfect hotel for a bunch of writers.

Not necessarily the rooms – ours was modest but very satisfactory – but in that famous and wonderful bar, in the spacious lobby which has numerous comfortable areas with sofas and chairs for visiting at length, in its next-door location to the Alamo, in its proximity to the Riverwalk a block or so away, and in its modest rates.

Probably a lot of you have spent time in the Menger already. I may be the last TIL member not to have stayed there. But I'm very pleased with what I saw, and I expect that you will be, too.

This is the time of year that our literary contest judges soon will be receiving entries and spending lots of time reading. Entries always seem to arrive in November and December. Please be sure to submit your own entries, and also to encourage others to do so. Entries in the Stanley Walker Award and the Translation Award (for translations published this time in 2009, 2010, and 2011) have been rather scarce in recent years, so don't be reluctant to solicit entries especially for those two categories. The judges and their addresses are on our website: texasinstituteofletters.org.

– Darwin Payne

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.**

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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 Form

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

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TIL dues for fiscal year 2011-12 _____ \$50.00

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