

# Texas Institute of Letters



*July/August/September/October 2015*

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

## **Judges, guidelines for TIL literary contests; Prizes in eleven categories more than \$22,000**

Distinguished judges have been named for TIL's 2016 literary contests for works published in 2015. Translations published in either 2014 and 2015 are eligible for the biennial Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation of a Book.

Judges will select finalists and winners for the best works of the year in eleven categories. Winners will be awarded a total of more than \$22,000 at TIL's annual meeting to be held on April 15-16, 2016, in Austin. Submissions of works must be sent to **each** member of the appropriate committees at the addresses listed below.

Submissions must be postmarked no later than January 8, 2016. A person or publisher may enter only one work per author per contest category for the writing and translation contests; a person or publisher may enter only one work per designer for the book design contest. In other words, a publisher may enter different works by different authors, translators, or designers in one category but cannot submit more than one book by the same author, translator, or designer in one category. Also, authors, designers, publishers, and translators cannot enter the same book in more than one category.

All works entered must be published in a print format: Unpublished manuscripts and online publications will not be considered. To be considered, an entry must be the first published version of the work. The container of each entry sent to the judges must bear the words, "For TIL Award," and inside must be the name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the entrant. A statement of eligibility that confirms that the author of a work entered in the contest was born in or has lived in Texas for at least two consecutive years at some time must be included. A work whose subject matter substantially concerns Texas is also eligible. Materials submitted for entry will not be returned. Winners are expected to attend the TIL awards banquet to be held April 16, 2016, in Austin.

Please read if submitting for the Fred Whitehead Award for Best Design of a Trade Book: This award is not based upon the book's size or financial support from sponsors. It is an award for a trade book – emphasis on trade book – showing the designer's craft including ingenuity of concept restrained by a limited budget, i.e. the usual amount a press might spend on book production without any extra funds. Please do not submit expensive, over-sized art, coffee table, etc., books for this award.

**Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction** (\$6,000) and **Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction** (\$1,000). Steven G. Kellman (Chair), Department of English, University of Texas at San Antonio, One UTSA Circle, San Antonio, TX 78249-0643; Charlene Howell 6325-D Bandera Avenue Dallas, TX 75225-3627; Russell L. Martin III, Director, DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275-0396.

**Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Non-fiction** (\$5,000). Judyth Rigler (Chair), 1735 Avenida Alturas, NE Albuquerque, NM 87110-4944; Betty Wiesepape, 1706 North Cheyenne Drive, Richardson, TX 75080; Hugh Aynesworth, 3828 Townsend Drive, Dallas, TX 75229.

**Ramirez Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book** (\$2,500). Lonny Taylor (Chair), P.O. Box 1738, Fort Davis, TX 79734; Paul Carlson, 3 East Brookhollow Dr., Ransom Canyon, TX 79366-2524; Shirley Grau; 12 Nassau Drive, Metairie, LA 70005.

**Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry** (\$1,200) and **Bob Bush Memorial Award For First Book Of Poetry** (\$1,000). Deborah Paredes (Chair), Columbia Writing Program, 2960 Broadway, 415 Dodge Hall, MC 1804, New York, NY 10027; Nathan Brown, 10 Tanglewood Trail, Wimberley, TX 78676; Katherine Hoerth 4612 Country St., Edinburg, TX 78541.

**Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Short Nonfiction** (\$1,000). This prize is for the best article or essay appearing in print newspapers, journals, or magazines. A series of articles appearing in a print newspaper is also eligible and all parts of the series should be submitted. Geoff Rips (Chair), 1311 Ardenwood Rd., Austin, TX 78722; Jesse Sublett, 1607 Taylor Gaines St., Austin, TX 78741; Mark Busby 115 Cedar Springs Wimberley, TX 78676.

**Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story** (\$1,000). Tom Zigal (Chair), 2705 Benbrook Dr., Austin, TX 78757; Sarah Cortez, P.O. Box 980579, Houston, TX 77098-0579; Robert Flynn, 101 Cliffside Dr., San Antonio, TX 78231.

**H-E-B/Jean Flynn Best Children's Book** (\$500) and **H-E-B Best Young Adults Book** (\$500) and **Denton Record-Chronicle Best Children's Picture Book** (\$500). Jan Seale (Chair), 400 Sycamore Ave., McAllen, TX 78501; Greg Garrett, 5217 Old Spicewood Springs Rd., Apt 1512, Austin, TX 78731; Eleanor Cochran, 3301 Southhill Circle, Austin, TX 78703.

**Fred Whitehead Award for Best Design of a Trade Book** (\$750) T. Lindsay Baker (Chair); PO Box 507, Rio Vista, TX 76093; David Farmer, P.O. Box 1106, El Prado, NM; Cyndi Hughes, 8519 New Hampshire Dr., Austin, TX 78758.

**Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation of a Book** (\$1,000). Lynn Hoggard (Chair), 111 Pembroke Lane, Wichita Falls, TX 76301; Rainer Schulte, 605 West Lamar, McKinney, TX 75069; David Bowles, 4717 N. FM 493, Donna, TX 78537.

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## Jim Hoggard taking a well-deserved rest after 25 years as TIL's treasurer

James Hoggard, the Perkins-Prothro Distinguished Professor of English at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, two-time president of TIL, poet, short story writer, novelist, playwright, essayist and translator, became this organization's treasurer in April 1990. During his twenty-five years in office the assets of TIL increased by tenfold and more.

He now has retired as treasurer, effective Sept. 1, 2015, and is replaced by former president W.K. (Kip) Stratton.

Let's remember to congratulate and thank Jim for his many years of service of TIL. Knowing Jim, we can feel comfort in realizing that he'll continue to be an important member of the TIL council as a past president.

And Kip, you have our very best wishes in this important job for TIL.

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## Message from our president

Last month, the TIL Council held its meeting at the pristine Paisano Ranch of J. Frank Dobie, near Austin. We conducted the serious business of the Texas Institute of Letters, including our plans for

the 2016 Literary Contests, our New Member Selections, and management of TIL finances. But the best part is that we got to sit on the front porch of Dobie's old ranch house and look out over the Barton Creek canyons. TIL manages the Paisano for the University of Texas under the direction of our own Michael Adams, but specifically for our treasured Paisano Fellowship Program. Another of our decisions was to continue our participation in the massive Texas Book Festival.

The Texas Institute of Letters scheduled an expanded presence at the Texas Book Festival on Saturday and Sunday, October 17 and 18 at the capitol in Austin. We have a full slate of authors at our TIL Booth #213 in Tent #2 on the corner of Colorado and 11th Street for the two days, including TIL Council members. Some of our TIL members are reading in other TBF sessions, so they should drop by our TIL book-signing booth as well. Members can be scheduled in 2-hour shifts any time during the 2 full days of the Festival. The only caveat is that we cannot sell books on the TBF book list. See the TBF online at [www.texasbookfestival.org](http://www.texasbookfestival.org)

This year, the Council authorized us to sponsor a poetry reading session, scheduled to be held in a hearings room in the capitol. **(See the program attached)** We want the poetry constituency of Texas to know that we love them and that we hope they will, in turn, support our April 2016 poetry awards reception and TIL banquet. Kurt Heinzelman has organized a powerful program of poetry readings that should make a statement for the TIL in the poetry community.

And finally, we confirmed our agreement to hold our 2016 TIL Awards Banquet on April 16 at the Bullock State History Museum in Austin. Our headquarters hotel will be the AT&T Executive Conference Center on the campus of the University of Texas, right across the street from the Bullock. We'll have a premier TIL Poetry Awards Reception on Friday in the Tejas Room of the AT&T Center which has a large balcony viewing the capitol in one direction and the U.T. tower in the other. On Saturday, the Council will hold its official meeting, and we'll have our New Member Readings in the AT&T Auditorium.

We've secured a special room rate of \$229 at the AT&T Executive Conference Center, and we'll post that web page and banquet registration form next week for you to start reserving your place for a memorable week-end of awards and friendship with your fellow Texas writers. The famous Harry Ransom Center and the Blanton Museum of Art are also only a block or so from the AT&T Center for your casual enjoyment of their holdings. Or you can stroll the marble and oak corridors of the iconic Texas capitol. Mark your calendar because the Poetry Reception, the readings, and the TIL Awards Banquet promise to be a highlight of our Texas literary events.

**Andrés Tijerina, President**

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# Sarah Bird to be given Lon Tinkle Award

By W.K. (Kip) Stratton

Two-time Jones Fiction Award winner and former Dobie Paisano Fellow Sarah Bird has been named the winner of the Texas Institute of Letters' Lon Tinkle Award. The award, given to a significant Texas author with a career in letters associated with the state, will be presented at TIL's annual banquet, scheduled for April 2016 in Austin.

Sarah has been a noteworthy voice in Texas literature since her novels began to appear in the 1980s. In particular, books like *Alamo House* (1986), *The Boyfriend School* (1989), and *The Mommy Club* (1991) won her acclaim from critics and established a devoted base of fans of her fiction.

*The Mommy Club* and *The Yokota Officers Club* (2001) won TIL's Jesse H. Jones Award for Fiction. She was inducted into TIL in 1993 and has served two terms on the TIL Council. In 2010, Sarah won a Dobie Paisano Fellowship, becoming one of the best known writers to become a fellow. During her time living on the Dobie Paisano Ranch, she raised the profile of the fellowship program, helping to ensure its future success.

In addition, Sarah has been selected for the Barnes & Noble Discover Great Writers series; New York Public Library's 25 Books to Remember list; *Elle Magazine* Reader's Prize; *People Magazine*'s Page Turners; *Library Journal*'s Best Novels; and a National Magazine Silver Award for her columns in *Texas Monthly*. In 2012 Sarah was voted Best Austin Author for the fourth time by the readers of the *Austin Chronicle*; was inducted into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame; and received the Illumine Award for Excellence in Fiction from the Austin Library Foundation. In 2013 she was selected to be the University of Texas' Libraries Distinguished Author speaker, and was featured on NPR's *The Moth Radio Hour*.

Last year, the Texas Book Festival presented her with the Texas Writer Award—a prize that included a pair of custom-made Western boots emblazoned with the festival logo.

Her most recent novel, *Above the East China Sea* (2014), garnered widespread acclaim, earning her some of the best reviews of her career. *The Washington Post* called it “. . . an extraordinary effort of the imagination and a major display of literary talent—an absolutely don't-miss novel that should become a classic contribution to the fiction of our era.” *The Dallas Morning News* said, “*Above the East China Sea* should be the one that lands Bird among the literary elite. This is the rare tome that has the goods for both popular and critical acclaim at the highest level.” The novel received multiple starred reviews from the publishing trade press.

Her other novels include the mystery *Virgin of the Rodeo* (1999), *The Flamenco Academy* (2006), *How Perfect Is That* (2008), and *The Gap Year* (2011). Her recent novels have been published by Alfred A. Knopf.

Sarah draws heavily from her life in much of her fiction, leavening well-wrought and meaningful stories with sublime humor. Her father was a career officer in the Air Force, and the family traveled extensively around the world. She graduated from the University of New Mexico, then attended the University of Texas in Austin during the 1970s, earning an MA in Journalism. She first established a name for herself as an Austin writer as contributing editor to *Third Coast Magazine*, a publication that in the 1980s was known for the high quality of its articles and its innovative design. Her success as a magazine writer continued when she became a popular humor columnist for *Texas Monthly*.

She also has found success as a screenwriter. She wrote the screenplay for *Don't Tell Her It's Me*, which was based on one of her novels. She has written other screenplays for Paramount, CBS, Warner Bros, ABC, and several independent producers.

Her script *Daughter of a Daughter of a Queen* is currently in development after Sarah was selected for participation in Meryl Streep's inaugural Writer's Lab in September. Just 12 screenplays were chosen out of more than 3,500 submissions. The winners were selected by the New York Women in Film & Television and the Iris film collective. The lab is a collaborative effort with the Writers Guild of America East.

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## **Bryce Milligan reveals 'secrets' of Wings Press as it celebrates its fortieth anniversary**

The very notable Wings Press, "the corazón of American small press publishing," celebrates this year its fortieth anniversary. For the last twenty of those years its owner and publisher has been Bryce Milligan, a prominent and faithful TIL member since 2003. In its forty years Wings Press has published 227 titles.

As stated on its website: "Wings Press publishes multicultural books, chapbooks, ebooks and broadsides that, we hope, enlighten the human spirit and enliven the mind. Everyone ever associated with Wings has been or is a writer, and we know well that writing is a transformational art form capable of changing the world, primarily by allowing us to glimpse something of each other's souls. Good writing is innovative, insightful, and interesting. But most of all it is honest."

The San Antonio Public Library will host an exhibit, "40 Years of Wings Press," in the gallery of the downtown public library, Oct. 28-Nov. 19.

Recently, Bryce agreed to participate in a Q&A session via email with TIL secretary Darwin Payne and newsletter editor. Here's how it went:

**Payne:** *This year 2015 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of Wings Press, a remarkable accomplishment for a "small press." Congratulations. What has been the secret to its success?*

**Milligan:** That depends entirely upon your definition of success. I've always thought of what I do as "necessary work" – publishing underrepresented voices and viewpoints, some experimental work, and some work simply because it is good and deserves to be "out there." I try to create books that are pleasing as physical objects, creating an aesthetic match between form to content, but also consulting with my authors about design. Having endured a poorly designed book or two myself, I believe that if the author is not thrilled with the physical book, he or she is a lot less likely to go out and tell folks how happy they are with their new baby. Authors don't seek out a press like Wings because they want a bestseller, but because they want a book that reflects their vision. Wings has global distribution, and almost all the books for the last decade have come out simultaneously in paper and ebook formats, but it takes either major advertising dollars or a degree of luck that I've never had to make my authors more than a few hundred dollars in royalties in a year. For poetry, sometimes it is a good deal less than that, and I publish a lot of poetry.

**Payne:** *Has the press changed in its purpose since 1995, the year you took over? And could you tell us a bit about the founders back in 1975?*

**Milligan:** Wings was founded in 1975 by Joseph F. Lomax, editor, and Joanie Whitebird, managing editor. Whitebird was the driving force behind the first truly multicultural anthology of contemporary Texas poetry, *Travois*, published in 1975 as a cooperative venture between the Houston Museum of Fine Arts and another small Texas publisher, Thorp Springs Press. Wings Press was founded that same year as "an informal association of artists and cultural mythologists dedicated to the preservation of the literature of Texas." They published some impressive authors over the years, but it was mostly poetry chapbooks. Joanie had pretty much run the press into the ground by 1993. She knew it but did not want to give up the press because she felt she would be letting down the folks who had helped her over the years. She admired what I had done with a couple of literary magazines I'd founded and edited, *Pax: A Journal for Peace through Culture* and *Vortex: A Critical Review*. She also liked my literary activism on behalf of Chicano literature. So she said I could have the press for \$100, if I would swear to "keep it going." Joanie was very much into her Native American image of herself, so we split our palms in the back yard and I swore to keep the press alive. It was a very natural transition, pairing up

with what I had done as a book columnist for the Express-News and the *Light*, with the lit mags, with directing the Inter-American Book Fairs and the Latina Letters conferences. It was all of a piece. Or it seemed that way to me. I expanded the press's mission to include more than Texas. The "purpose" – as it says in the back of every book -- is to "publish multi-cultural books, chapbooks, ebooks, recordings and broadsides that enlighten the human spirit and enliven the mind ... without commercial considerations clouding the decision to publish or not to publish."

**Payne:** *What inspired you to get involved in publishing? In being an author yourself? In helping other authors through your press?*

**Milligan:** I cannot remember not writing. As for publishing, as a very young kid I was fascinated by my grandfather's typewriter. He was a Santa Fe station agent in White Deer, Texas, and I played on his all-caps typewriter. In high school I edited and "published" some mimeographed anti-war leaflets, perhaps because I was the only male who could both type and run the mimeograph. Then in 1983 I became the editor of *Pax: A Journal for Peace through Culture*. At the time, being the editor of a lit mag meant you were involved in typesetting and layout too, which seemed to come naturally. I was also hanging out with Angela De Hoyos and Moises Sandoval, who ran a micro-press, M&A Editions, in San Antonio. They taught me a lot, and inspired me with their vision of literature's potential as an agent of change.

**Payne:** *Perhaps the single most recognized achievement came with your publication of John Howard Griffin's posthumous novel, Street of the Seven Angels, and then the definite edition of Black Like Me. Could you tell us how this came about?*

**Milligan:** In 2003, Robert Bonazzi, executor of the John Howard Griffin estate and the long-time publisher/editor of Latitudes Press, re-settled in San Antonio. We had published the literary journal, *Vortex: A Critical Review*, in the late '80s. Bonazzi showed me *Street of the Seven Angels* while he was still living in California, and we had begun to work on it by mail. Street came out about the time Bonazzi arrived in San Antonio. It got a good deal of attention, so we plowed into the Griffin canon, beginning with re-editing *Black Like Me*. Wings went on to re-publish Griffin's entire canon, some as stand-alone ebooks, and to issue new collections of essays by Griffin, edited by Bonazzi.

**Payne:** *Texas authors are well represented by Wings Press. Do authors from other states have a chance of publication with you?*

**Milligan:** Well, actually, Wings has authors from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, China, England, Puerto Rico, and twenty-six U.S. states. They include the current or former poets laureate of the U.S., Delaware, Louisiana, Nebraska, Utah, Virginia, and Texas.

**Payne:** *As a small press ("the Corazón of small presses") you most likely print in small numbers. What would be a typical press run?*

**Milligan:** Handmade chapbooks are generally in runs of 300 or 500 copies. Poetry paperbacks generally 1,500 to 3,000. I've had a couple of poetry titles sell up to 10,000 copies. Fiction is not much different, actually – 3,000 generally, with a few surprises. Carmen Tafolla's children's book about Emma Tenayuca just went to its fifth printing. Steve and Reefka Schneider's illustrated book of bilingual poetry, *Borderlines*, sold around 7,000 copies in hardback before going to paperback. But there are plenty of poetry titles that never sell more than 1,000 copies.

**Payne:** *Are many of your books profitable? How much do you rely on outside funding?*

**Milligan:** Well, some of them have to be profitable to make the others possible. Wings is not a nonprofit, so there is no outside funding except for an academic subvention grant every now and then. The *Her Texas* anthology that came out last January was partially supported by subscription sales for advance signed copies, plus a few donations raised by the editors. I do have an anthology coming out in a couple of years that is in the middle of an online kickstarter campaign. Brave new world, I guess.

**Payne:** *Tell TIL readers about your staff? How many permanent staff members? How many are standing by, ready to come to your assistance?*

**Milligan:** Well, let's see. That would be me. And me. Bonazzi is a frequent volunteer. We often package review copies together, then go have tacos.

**Payne:** *How many titles has Wings Press published since its founding in 1975. How many since you took over? How many titles would you publish in a typical year?*

**Milligan:** Between 1975 and 1993, the press put out 18 chapbooks and seven books. Since 1995, as of this fall, I've published exactly 200 books. I've gotten as many as 25 new titles out in a single year, but that was really pushing the envelope. This year there are 18 new titles, ranging from handmade chapbooks (three) to poetry paperbacks to full-color illustrated poetry hardbacks to a large history of early automobile advertising art, to 300- and 400-page collections of essays. Oh, and a book on trout fishing in the desert. Pretty little hardback. Oh, and a book that delves into archeo-linguistics and contemporary environmental concerns. Pretty diverse list. Next year I'm only doing five or six new books as I need to attend to some personal writing and editing projects.

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## **Keeping up with our members—here's what they've been up to lately**

**Sergio Troncoso** is serving as one of three national judges for the 2016 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. Meanwhile, On July 29, 2014, the El Paso City Council voted unanimously to rename the Ysleta branch public library in his honor. It becomes the Sergio Troncoso Branch Library. A dedication

ceremony was held there on October 2, 2015. Here's how Sergio, who now lives in New York City, responded: "I am grateful and honored to have this public library branch named after me. Ysleta is, and always will be, my home, the place where I was born and grew up as a child. The first place I wrote about as a writer. The El Paso Public Library was so important for me as a young reader, so this honor has a deeper meaning for me. It is the kind of place where I found sanctuary in El Paso as a poor kid who loved to read. The public library was 'home' for my mind and my imagination. After I heard about this honor and after the city council voted for it, I thought about how I could inspire children and young adults in Ysleta to love reading and stories just as I did. That's why I decided to establish the [Troncoso Reading Prizes](#). It is one way I can continue to give back to the Ysleta community and encourage the love of reading and writing."

**Laura Wilson's** newest book, *That Day: Pictures in the American West*, has been published by Yale University Press in association with the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University. The images of such diverse subjects as cattle ranchers, border-town cotillions, Plains Indians reservations, and artists and writers associated with the region, tell sharply drawn stories of the people and places that have shaped, and continue to shape, the nation's most dynamic and unyielding land. Excerpts from Wilson's journals over the past 30 years accompany the photographs, recalling her personal experiences behind the camera at the moment when a particular image was captured. In addition to the book, 74 of Wilson's photographs are featured in an exhibition by the same name at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art and will be on view until February 14, 2016.

**Jerry Craven's** book, *Women of Thunder* (TCU Press) has won distinction in *ForeWord Review's* IndieFab Book of the Year Awards as the best multicultural novel published in 2014.

**Norma Elia Cantú** has been busy writing and traveling and talking. Publishing: *Transcendental Train Yard* – with artwork by Marta Sánchez--Wings Press, 2015, and *Ofrenda: Lilita Wilson's Art of Dissidence and Dreams*, Texas A&M University Press, 2015. Traveling and talking: Spoke at the University of Philippines, Diliman; delivered a keynote at the Examples of Excelencia Awards ceremony, Washington, DC. And, by the way, she is presently hosting a Fulbright Scholar from Austria who studies US Latina/Chicana literature.

**Rod Davis** writes: "TIL friends: Those of you who knew the late Katy Marshall might be interested in this essay on her death and her life in the October issue of *D Magazine*. If you can buy a copy on the newsstand, I'd recommend it as thanks to the magazine for publishing the piece at length." Rod's review of Rick DeMarinis's new novel, *El Paso Twilight*, is in the September issue of *The Texas Observer*, and his reviews of Willie Nelson's *It's a Long Story: My Life* and of Gerald Duff's *Playing*

*Custer* appear in the online publication Lone Star Literary Life. Rod will be a featured speaker on crime fiction at the Rocket City Lit Fest in Huntsville, Alabama in October, and will read from his most recent novel, *South, America*.

**Bryce Milligan** reports that the San Antonio Public Library will host an exhibit, "40 Years of Wings Press," in the gallery of the downtown public library, Oct. 28-Nov. 19.

From **Jerry Thompson**: "My *A Civil War History of the New Mexico Volunteers and Militia* is finally out from the University of New Mexico Press. At the present, I am working on a book for TCU entitled: *Jose de los Santos Benavides and the Making of the Texas-Mexico Border, 1823-1891*.

From **Judyth Rigler**: "Here's what I've been up to here in Albuquerque: After writing and editing book reviews for 20-some-odd years, then writing aircraft accident reports for about 15 with my pilot-husband Erik, we've retired yet again and have a couple of 'hobbies' that seem an awful lot like work, but are fun as well. We are restoring a 60-acre camp in the Manzano Mountains (website in progress: [www.capillapeak.com](http://www.capillapeak.com)), and we get to enjoy it as well. It has a very unusual history, but so far we haven't seen any ghosts. Been stacking firewood and expect to get the stove going in the cabin soon. This summer, we hosted a couple of art camps taught by Erik's cousin, fiber artist Susie Monday from San Antonio, and her printmaking pal from Fort Worth, Juneann Peck. Campfires, hayrides, food & wine, and great times. We've also been working hard on genealogy for the last year; both of us are half-Czech and have been tracing our roots. A week ago, we stood at Castle Clinton in Battery Park, New York, on the exact date and spot where Erik's great-grandparents and their nine children stepped off the SS America 151 years ago, before there was an Ellis Island or a Statue of Liberty. We are both producing newsletters for our families to help the elders like us to know more about those who made such sacrifices to come here, and so that the youngsters won't have the same lame excuse we have: "Why didn't we ask Grandpa [or Grandma, or Uncle William] about the family while he/she was alive?" Possibly the most interesting, and frustrating aspect of family tree research is that for every question you get answered, a half-dozen more pop up."

From **Judy Alter**: My sixth Kelly O'Connell Mystery, *Desperate for Death*, launched as an e-book in May, with print to follow (soon, I hope). In June I was inducted into the Western Writers of America Hall of Fame. This is the first year they inducted living authors, a fact for which several of us expressed special appreciation. I was among previous winners of the WWA Lifetime Achievement Award, all of whom were inducted. The ceremony was at the Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock, and I was thrilled to have all four of my children as a cheering section. This summer will see a digital reprint of

my historical novel, *Jessie*—about Jessie Benton Frémont. And in the fall Texas Tech University Press will publish my small book, *Texas is Chili Country*. I expect to get another novel out in the fall but I'm still fiddling with schedules.

**Gary Cartwright's** memoir, *The Best I Recall* (University of Texas Press) is described as a “lively, humorous, and often eloquent memoir” in which this “legendary Texas journalist looks back at a career that ranged from sports writing with Bud Shrake, Dan Jenkins, and Blackie Sherrod to a twenty-five-year stint as Senior Editor at *Texas Monthly*.” And by the way! We hear that his memoir was inspired by the acceptance talk he gave at TIL's annual meeting a couple of years ago when he received the Lon Tinkle Award.

**Manuel Martinez** from way up in Ohio reports that his novel, *Los Duros*, which was a TIL finalist, has won an American Book Award.

**James Hoggard** is going to be reading and participating in a panel discussion with Noel Crook and Gwendolyn Zepeda at the Texas Book Festival on Saturday, Oct. 17, from noon till 12:45 p.m.. The event will be held in room 2.012 of the Capitol building. Among other things, he'll be focusing on his latest collection of poems, *Soon After Rain*.

**Gary Lavergne** delivered a lecture entitled “The Greatest One: Thurgood Marshall and the Destruction of the Texas White Primary” during Constitution Day at Northwestern State University of Louisiana in Natchitoches, LA on October 8. It marked the 65th anniversary of the *SWEATT v PAINTER* case and the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

**Paul Ruffin's** sixth collection of short stories, *The Time the Waters Rose: And Stories of the Gulf Coast*, will soon be released by the University of South Carolina Press. Paul, Texas' poet laureate for 2009, has recently published books on the BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) and the M240 machine gun.

**Lisa Sandlin** has a new book, *The Do-Right*, and she'll be at the Texas Book Festival.

**Larry D. Thomas's** *As If Light Actually Matters: New & Selected Poems*, the most comprehensive and definitive collection of his poetry to date, was released in June 2015 by Texas Review Press, Texas A&M University Press Consortium.

**Jerome Loving** has written a new introduction for his Signet Classic Book of Mark Twain's Short Stories.

**Naomi Shihab Nye**'s book *The Turtle of Oman* won the Arab American children's book award. Wings Press has just brought out *Famous*, a single poem turned into a book, richly illustrated by Lisa Desimini.

**John Blair**'s *Playful Song Called Beautiful*, his third book of poetry, has been awarded the 2015 Iowa Poetry Prize. This year's judge was University of Iowa Writers' Workshop visiting professor Craig Morgan Teicher.

**Light Cummins**' book, *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas*, has been published by the Texas A&M University Press. Allie Tennant was a sculptor and civic leader in Dallas from the 1920s to the 1960s. Best known for her iconic "Tejas Warrior" at the entrance to the Hall of State in Fair Park, she also served almost 30 years on the board of directors of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts while actively promoting the visual arts through her memberships in women's clubs and various art associations in the city. Another current book by Light, *Discovering Texas History*, published last fall, continues to receive good reviews. Light also has an essay dealing with the public art and architecture of the 1930s in a book entitled *The New Deal in Texas* forthcoming from the University of New Mexico Press.

**Greg Garrett** writes from Austin that it's good to be home and back writing. Greg and his family spent the summer at Christ Church, Oxford—popularly known as the "Harry Potter College" because of its famous Great Hall. While across the pond, Greg did media and speaking events for his Oxford University Press trade title *Entertaining Judgment*, including appearances on BBC Radio, a lecture for the London Philosophy Society at the gloriously gloomy St. Mary Aldermary Church in The City, and a packed talk and book signing at Waterstones Bookstore in Oxford with absolutely no crazy people in attendance—an Oxford first, according to the Waterstones event coordinator. In June, Greg released a new edition of the novel *Cycling* through his Austin Heights Books, and got word that his memoir of depression and faith, *Crossing Myself*, will be republished in a new edition by Morehouse Books in the coming year.

**William Sibley** says it's It's "DOBIE DICHOS" time again in old South Texas! Our Fifth Anniversary! Friday night, November 6, 2015 - begins at 6PM – Oakville, Texas. TIL members reading this year include Andrés Tijerina, Carmen Tafolla and Master of Ceremonies Bill Sibley.

**Roberto Bonazzi**'s *Outside the Margins: Literary Commentaries* is now available from Wings Press. And another book, *Awakened by Surprise: Selected Fictions*, has been accepted by Lamar University Literary Press for publication in 2016.

**Steven Saylor's** new novel, *Wrath of the Furies*, published in October, is the latest in his 15-volume series about Gordianus the Finder, detective of ancient Rome. He'll be signing copies at Murder by the Book in Houston on Nov. 2, and BookPeople in Austin on Nov. 3.

**Leon Hale's** new edition of *One Man's Christmas* is in Texas bookstores and available on line as of October 1, published by Winedale. It's in soft cover, with two brand new stories, new illustrations and design. The 1984 original was published by Shearer.

**Carolyn Banks** just had a poem accepted into The Great American Wiseass Poetry Anthology to be published in 2016 by Lamar University Press. The title of her poem is "Aria da Capo: To Marriage." Ironically, someone just posted on Facebook that they'd married Carolyn. This is not true, but they did put her picture up beside the announcement, so it's meant to portray the Carolyn Banks from TIL! Disinformation, Carolyn tells us. (Well, Carolyn, we're still a bit mystified as to what this means.)

Here's the latest from **Pat Carr**: I'm finishing my September Sundays series this week (a writing seminar every Sunday afternoon in September) here in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and I'll be conducting the week-long Hemingway Writers' Retreat at the Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum in Piggott, Arkansas, from November 2 to November 6 (with this one we have an afternoon wine break).

**Gene Fowler** will give a talk about his book, *Mavericks—A Gallery of Texas Characters*, at the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio on Sunday, January 10, 2016. The talk will be given twice that afternoon, and the exact times will be on the ITC website. Free admission to the Institute that day.

**Jim Sanderson** succinctly reports that *Hill Country Property* is out. In February, Brash Books will re-release *El Camino del Rio. La Mordida* should soon follow.

**Pat Mora's** new children's book, *Remembering Day: El Día De Los Muertos*, will be published by Piñata Books/Arte Público Press this fall. The literacy initiative Children's Day, Book Day/El día de los niños, El día de los libros, usually known as Día, celebrates its 20th Anniversary this April and is being promoted by the Texas State Library. Join us in sharing bookjoy with all of our children, says Pat.

**Gerald Duff's** novel *Playing Custer* has been published by TCU Press. He'll be doing a presentation from it at the Southern Festival of Books in Nashville in October.

**Chris Ellery** has won the 2015 X.J. Kennedy Award for Creative Nonfiction. His memoir "A Boy in Bethany" explores the socio-political complexities of the Middle East through an account of a day's walk from the Arab Quarter of Jerusalem over the Mount of Olives to Bethany and Abu Dis.

Chris also has poetry forthcoming in *The Sufi Journal*, *The Texas Wise Ass Poetry Anthology*, *Texas Weather Anthology*, and *Southern Poetry Anthology, Volume VIII: Texas*.

**Christopher Cook** reports that he and his wife, Czech artist Katerina Pinosova, have been in the USA for six months now, living in the Hill Country west of Austin. He says, "After 21 years overseas, I feel like an immigrant living in a country with first-world technologies and third-world politics. But I did find an excellent barbecue joint." Meanwhile, the television network TNT has green-lighted the TV series pilot script Christopher recently finished, based on his novel *Robbers*. The show is now being cast and is scheduled for shooting after the first of the year.

**Sarah Cortez** has been the featured author at both the Waco WordFest and the Midland Public Library Foundatin's Permian Writers' Workshop this fall. Soon she'll be off to Georgetown Poetry Festival to teach the pantoum and continue the series of readings featuring *Goodbye, Mexico: Poems of Remembrance*.

**William Virgil Davis's** new book, *Dismantlements of Silence: Poems Selected and New*, is just out from Texas Review Press (Texas A&M Press Consortium). Bill has new poems in recent issues of *Concho River Review*, *Nebo*, *Poem*, *Southern Poetry Review*, *The Hopkins Review*, and *San Pedro River Review* and poems forthcoming in *The Texas Review*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Gargoyle*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Sewanee Review* and *The Valparaiso Poetry Review*, where he will be the "Featured Poet."

AND IN CONCLUSION: **Leon Hale**, now in his 95th year, reports from the front porch of his home at Winedale, TX that the sun is rising and setting exactly on schedule in that part of the world.

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[Return Home](#)