

The Texas Institute of Letters

January/February 2007 Newsletter

DUES-PAYING TIME IS HERE

January—the month that our annual dues are payable. And by the time you receive this—well, past due!

Forgive the crassness, but it's \$50, bud (or dude, sweetheart, partner or podnuh, pal, friend, darlin', mate, etc.), and treasurer Jim Hoggard up in Wichita Falls is waiting at his mailbox every day, looking for our checks.

Fill out the form on the last page of this newsletter and send it with your check. You may also choose to make a contribution to the Paisano Fund and/or to the Fred Whitehead Memorial Endowment Fund.

Here's a suggestion that might be helpful and save you some time and paperwork. Jim says you can combine your dues payment (\$50), any additional amounts you want to contribute to Paisano and Whitehead Memorial Fund, and \$50 (per person) for the our April banquet, and send it all in a single check to him with a designation of the proper allotments. Information below on our April meeting in Dallas.

That's James Hoggard, Department of English, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

MORE ABOUT OUR ANNUAL MEETING

We told you a bit in the last newsletter about our annual meeting, but probably should repeat those basic details and add a few more.

It's April 13-14 at the Hilton Park Cities Hotel, 5954 Luther Lane, Dallas 75225, the southwest corner of the Preston Road/Northwest Highway intersection. This is a prime location with lots of shops and restaurants, just down the road from the newly enlarged NorthPark.

The hotel is now ready to accept reservations. TIL members and guests will have the special group rate of \$129 per night for a standard room with a king-size bed or double queen beds. (Request the Texas Institute of Letters rate when calling. Our group code, in case you're pressed, is TXI.)

A limited number of guestrooms are available on the Executive Club Floor at the rate of \$159 per night for single or double occupancy. Each additional person will be \$10 extra.

Reservations, **due by March 23, 2007**, to qualify for the discounted rate, may be made through Central Reservations at 1-800-HILTONS (24 hours, 7 days a week) or by calling on-site at 469-232-4929 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday – Friday.

Or, go on line to www.dallasparkcities.hilton.com. Enter the three-letter code (TXI) under the "Special Accounts" section to receive a room at the special rate.

Reservations made under your block, not third party Internet sites, may be cancelled by 4 p.m. day of arrival (CST).

Guests wishing to reserve Executive Level guestrooms must do so by calling our on-site Reservation Line at 469-232-4929 Monday – Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Frankly, we're not sure what that is—it's just a bit better, we suppose.)

There are taxes to pay, of course—15 per cent "occupancy tax." And if you have a car that you'd like to park at the hotel, it's \$13 per night for TIL registrants.

Oh, yes, check-in time is 4 p.m. Check-out time is 12 noon.

OUR APRIL 13-14 SCHEDULE

Friday night reception at the Hall of State at Fair Park. This is the site of our founding in 1936. It's a beautiful and romantic place at a famous setting.

Saturday. Lunch for officers from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the hotel.

Saturday. Readings by new members from 3 to 4 p.m. at the hotel, followed by a cocktail party.

Saturday. Evening banquet after the cocktail party. **Tickets are \$50 each, and the DEADLINE IS APRIL 6. Checks should be mailed to James Hoggard. (See note above in italics about combining this amount with your dues check—if you prefer to do so.)**

MORE INFORMATION FOR DIRECTORY

By the way, paying our dues and planning for our annual meeting (when the directory will be distributed) might spur some of us into providing a few extra details about ourselves for the 2007 directory. Probably fewer than half of us have done that thus far, but the added details about who we are certainly will make the directory more complete and enjoyable. More than just your address, telephone number, e-mail, etc., which we already have, we'd like to know—in brief—what kind of writer you are, what you've written, special honors. Take a look at the present directory to see some examples.

Send your added details for your directory entry to Darwin Payne in Dallas (dpayne@smu.edu). And thanks!

NEWS OF MEMBERS AND OTHERS

Let's start with our president, **Fran Vick**, who has a piece in the new book, *Texas Women on the Cattle Trails*, about Cornelia Adair of the JA Ranch. The book is published by Texas A&M University Press and is edited by Sara Massey. **Joyce Roach**, a TIL member from Keller, Texas, wrote the introduction. A symposium and luncheon celebrating the book was scheduled for Feb. 10 in Fort Worth.

Annette Sanford, our prolific member who lives in Ganado, Texas, celebrated her beloved town in a "Texas Highways Moment" in the December 2006 issue of *Texas Highways*, in an interview by Kathryn Eastburn. Eastburn describes Annette as one who "might well be seen as the Eudora Welty of Texas" and "Texas' first lady of the short story." Annette has lived in the small town of Ganado for more than fifty years. Where's Ganado? Just east of Edna, ninety miles southwest of Houston. Besides Annette's accomplished short stories, she has written romance novels under several pseudonyms.

A group field trip to London? Why not? The London Book Fair will take place in Earls Court on April 16-18. It's promoted as the world's leading spring publishing event for the trading of rights, bookselling and book production services. It brings together more than 23,000 authors, agents, scouts, editors, publishers, wholesalers, booksellers and librarians from over 115 countries over its three-day duration. Topics include "The Cult of the Celebrity" and "The Future of the Author." Check it out: www.londonbookfair.co.uk/publunch.

Mark Busby is co-editor with Terrell Dixon of a new University of Texas Press book about **John Graves** entitled appropriately *John Graves, Writer*. Mark introduces the volume with a critical overview of Graves's life and work. **Don Graham** provides the finishing touch with a discussion of Graves's reception and literary reputation. The book also includes an interview of Graves by our past president **Dave Hamrick**. And **Bill Wittliff, Rick Bass, Bill Broyles, John R. Erickson**, Bill Harvey, and **James Ward Lee** tell of the influence that Graves has had on fellow writers.

Your newsletter editor received a welcome note from **Malcolm D. McLean**, now living in Georgetown, Texas, at the age of ninety-four. Recently he and his son, John Robertson McLean, went to Mexico City for the centennial celebration of the death of Guillermo Prieto, Mexico's most illustrious poet-statesman. It was a ten-day visit with all expenses paid by the Mexican government. In 1937 McLean wrote his doctoral dissertation on the poet-statesman Guillermo Prieto, and the Mexican government published it and his 400-page bibliography of Prieto's works. On this recent occasion the government brought out a second edition of McLean's bibliography and invited him to attend the festivities. At the event McLean was recognized as "the discoverer of Guillermo Prieto." Two of McLean's speeches, made nine years earlier, were also published in a 539-page volume entitled

Repertorio *Guillermo* *Prieto*

Good news reported by **Robert Phillips** of the University of Houston. His seventh book of poetry, published by the Johns Hopkins University Press under the title of

Circumstances Beyond Our Control, has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, and the National Book Critics' Circle Award. Wow!

As part of the Southwestern Writers Collection Book Series, the Texas State University-San Marcos is issuing a new title, *Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas Mexican Literature*. Editor is **Dagoberto Gilb**. The book received a grand kickoff with a Feb. 10 event at the Alkek Library on campus with readings, panel discussions, and book signings by the authors. Among contributors to the anthology is **Rolando Hinojosa**.

Towards the end of the year the *New York Times* listed its ten best books of 2006. Among the top five non-fiction books was **Lawrence Wright's** *The Looming Tower*. The *Times'* quick summary of the book, published by Alfred A. Knopf, says it "unmasks the secret world of Osama bin Laden and his collaborators and also chronicles the efforts of a handful of American intelligence officers . . . in their efforts to stop it." The honors just keep coming for this fine work.

Rick Bass's new book containing ten of his short stories, *The Lives of Rocks* (Houghton Mifflin Co.), earned high praise in the *New York Times* book review section. This no surprise either.

Jan Reid has published *Layla and Other Assorted Love Songs by Derek and the Dominos*. It details the story of Eric Clapton's 1970 song and album and colorful band of American players. Rodale is the publisher, and it's part of the company's series on the making of "classic" rock 'n' roll recordings. Already the book has been highly praised by *Entertainment Weekly*, *Booklist*, the *Austin Chronicle*, *Austin American-Statesman*, and *Hittin'the Note*. That's not all Jan has been up to. You probably read his very vivid personal remembrance of Ann Richards in the November issue of *Texas Monthly*.

Who says Dallas is a barren place with almost no literary connections of any significance? Well, maybe lots of people, but **Darwin Payne** delivered a paper on Jan. 20 at the Dallas History Conference with the title, "Literary Connections: Mark Twain, Katherine Anne Porter, William A. Owens, and Tennessee Williams." And yes, there were literary connections with these folks, and they were pretty interesting, too. It was the eighth annual Dallas History Conference, this one notable for being held in the Old Red Courthouse, soon to reopen as the Old Red Museum of Dallas County History & Culture.

David Weber continues to make news at the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at SMU with special events and book publications. This past fall semester his guest lecturers included such individuals as novelist **Alan Wier**, and the Center published a reprint of the extra-large 1936 Centennial Edition of the *Texas Almanac & State Industrial Guide*, complete with a beautiful map. Jackie McElhaney wrote an introduction for the book and originated it as a project.

Judy Alter, in her "Texas Letters" column in the *Dallas Morning News*, presented recently a summary of Christmas books by Texas authors and Texas presses. **Elmer Kelton** was represented in *Christmas at the Ranch*, published by State House Press of Abilene. It includes three of Kelton's essays on Christmas. The late **A.C. Greene's** *Christmas Memories*, published by the University of North Texas Press, looked at the traditions of his childhood Christmases and the effect they had on his ideas about Christmas. TCU Press published **Joyce Gibson Roach's** *Texas and Christmas: A Collection of Traditions, Memories and Folklore*. It contains memories of Christmas in West Texas and in the German community.

Of special interest to many is a new book by a man who married into the Quanah and Cynthia Ann Parker family, *Return: The Parker Story*, written by Jack Selden after forty years of research. It's published by Best of East Texas Publishers.

Shelby Hearon's *Year of the Dog*, an intriguing new novel published by the University of Texas Press, has as its setting Shelby's adopted home state of Vermont. There is a dog, of course, as a main character, but the main theme of course is on relationships. Shelby is now the author of fifteen highly acclaimed novels.

Flash from **Mike Cox**. He has a new book with a compelling subject. It's entitled *Texas Disasters: True Stories of Tragedy and Survival*. Publisher is Globe Pequot Press. The book covers everything from Texas' first major disaster, the wreck of a Spanish fleet off Padre Island in 1554, to Hurricane Rita. The appendix lists all disasters in Texas that claimed more than a dozen lives, from train derailments to tornadoes. Upcoming later this year is the first volume of Mike's next work, a 250,000-word history of the Texas Rangers to be published by Forge Books.

Almost all Texans of a certain age remember the cartoon booklets that were distributed by an oil company to school children under the title, "Texas History Movies." Now those are immortalized by the Texas State Historical Association by the late **Jack Jackson's** *The New Texas History Movies*, a revised edition with new cartoon strips and text by Jackson.

Don Graham is the editor of a new book published by the TCU Press entitled *Literary Austin*. It includes essays, fiction, and poetry by such authors as **Dobie, Bedichek, Webb,** and **Carolyn Osborn, Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, Dagoberto Gilb, Stephen Harrigan,** and **Lawrence Wright**. Then there are poets **Thomas Whitbread,** Dave Oliphant, David Wevill, and Christopher Middleton. And we can't forget Ralph Yarborough, Ann Richards, Dave Richards, **Liz Carpenter,** Willis Morris, John Henry Faulk, and **Molly Ivins**. This many entries takes lots of space. It's 448 pages.

Carlton Stowers is back in the news with another book, *Oh Brother, How They Played the Game: The Story of Texas' Greatest All-Brothers Baseball Team*, published by the State House Press. It's a true account of a Hill Country team composed entirely of brothers (although Lyndon B. Johnson sometimes filled in until the ninth brother got big enough to play).

2007 DUES FOR TEXAS INSTITUTE OF LETTERS

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail _____

TIL Dues \$50.00

Paisano Fund _____

Fred Whitehead Memorial Endowment Fund _____

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And, if you want to include these in your check:

Tickets for April 14 annual dinner (\$50 each) (Deadline is April 6) _____

I (we) will _____ will not _____ attend Friday, April 13, reception.

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Make check payable to Texas Institute of Letters and send to:

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