



**Texas Institute of Letters
Winter/Spring 2023 Newsletter**



Compiled by Kathryn Jones, TIL Secretary

thetil.org

Greetings from the President

Dear TIL Members:

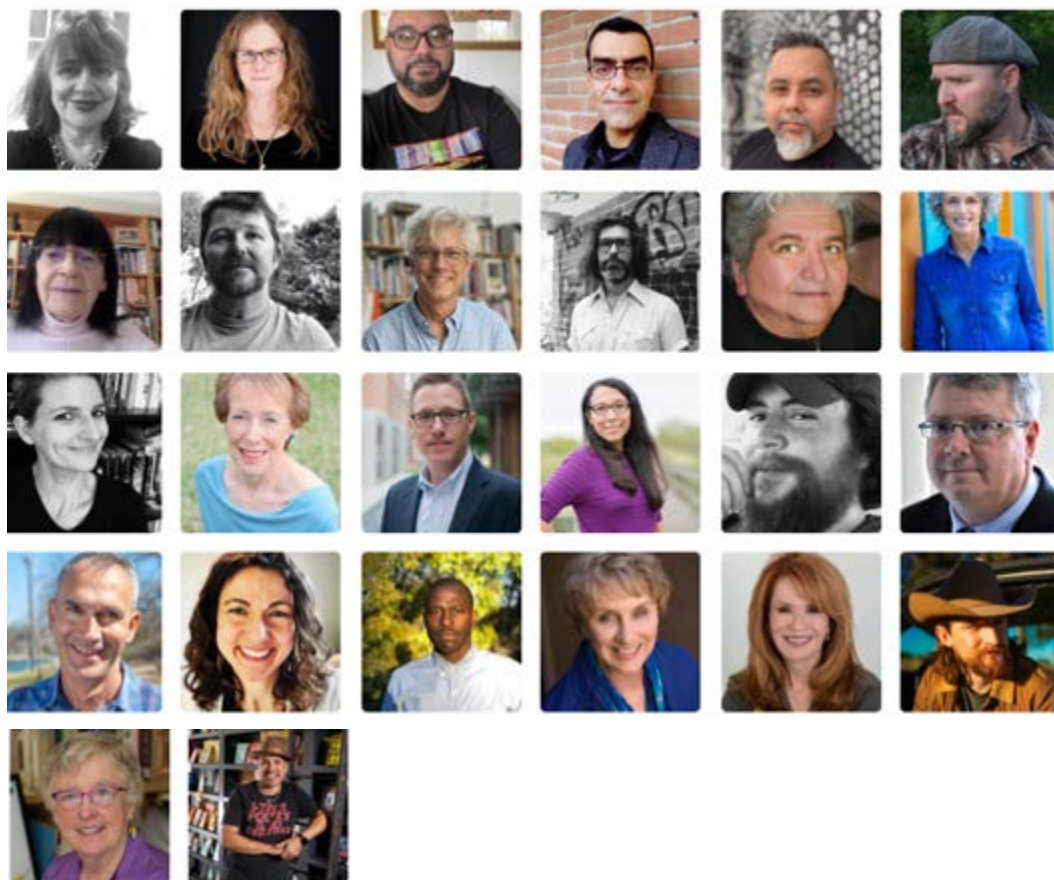
Happy new year!

Our annual banquet is around the corner on April 28-29 in Corpus Christi. Our host hotel is the Holiday Inn Marina, right across the street from the seawall. Every room has an ocean view, and there are plenty of restaurants and places to visit within walking distance. The cutoff date for reserving your room is March 13, so make your reservations soon. Click [here](#) for more information about the accommodations. Also, don't forget to buy your banquet [tickets](#). The event is open to the public, so bring your friends and family. We will be celebrating winners of our literary contests and honoring Beverly Lowry, recipient of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award.

This is the first ever TIL banquet in Corpus Christi, so I am working hard to introduce writers to our community. The children's awards event will be open to the public and held at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. Right across the street is the Art Museum of Corpus Christi, which I highly recommend. During the week of our banquet, schools and libraries will be celebrating Día de los Niños / Día de los Libros. The public library in nearby Robstown and the Mexican American Studies Department at Del Mar College have already agreed to be hosts for our TIL in Communities readings, which will take place on April 27th for those wanting to come early.

At our annual banquet, TIL awards more than \$27,000 to recognize outstanding literary works in thirteen categories. Soon, we will be recognizing works in *fourteen* categories. The council has recently voted to approve the establishment of the Giron / Valdez Bilingual Poetry Award in the amount of \$1,000 to be given biennially starting in 2025. This will be for a book of at least 45 pages written in English with a Spanish translation or written in Spanish with an English translation. Robert Giron was born in El Paso, graduated from UTEP, and is the founder and publisher of Gival Press. We are deeply grateful for his support of Texas literature.

This year, the council received a record number of nominations and is excited to welcome twenty-six writers! Please join me in congratulating Sheila Black, Jenny Browne, Christopher Carmona, Hayan Charara, Rubén Degollado, Heath Dollar, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, Owen Egerton, Brian Floca, Fernando Flores, Héctor Galán, Liz Garton Scanlon, Kari Anne Holt, Cynthia Levinson, Caleb McDaniel, Marcia Agueta Mickelson, Michael Mooney, Robert Moore, Michael Parker, Ashley Hope Pérez, Roger Reeves, Terry Shames, Helen Thompson, Christian Wallace, Suzan Zeder, and Joaquín Zihuatanejo.



As many of you noted, this is an outstanding group, representing so many areas of Texas and with a rich diversity of voices.

There is much to celebrate this year, but most importantly and with great anticipation, we celebrate the company of talented writers and good friends. Can't wait to see everyone in Corpus Christi!

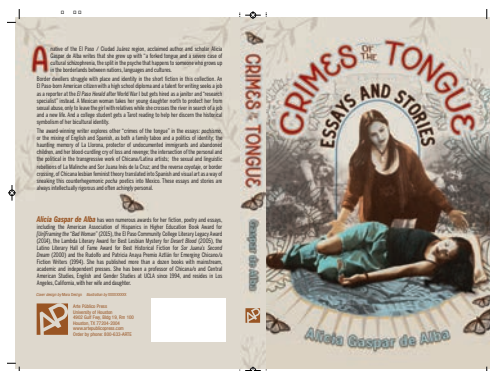
All best,

Diana Lòpez
President, Texas Institute of Letters

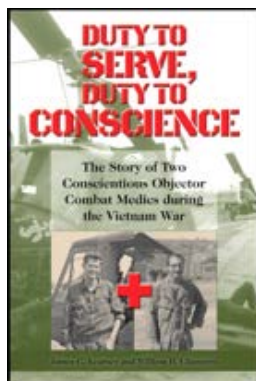


TIL Winter/Spring 2023 Newsletter – Member News

(Compiled in the order received – thank you!)



Alicia Gaspar de Alba's new book, *Crimes of the Tongue: Essays and Stories*, will be published this year by Arte Público Press. She will be reading from the book at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Thursday, March 23, and offering a storytelling workshop on Saturday, March 25.



Duty to Serve; Duty to Conscience: The Story of Two Conscientious Objector Combat Medics during the Vietnam War, by **James C. Kearney** and William H. Clamurro, is scheduled for an April 2023 release by the University of North Texas Press.

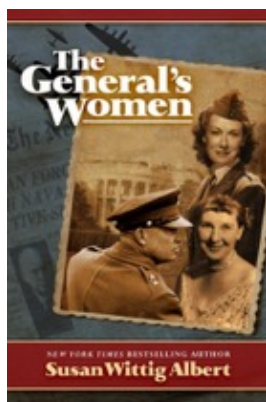
Here's the blurb: "Despite all that has been written about Vietnam, the story of the 1-A-O conscientious objector, who agreed to put on a uniform and serve in the field without weapons rather than accept alternative service outside the military, has received scarce attention. This joint memoir by two 1-A-O combat medics, James C. Kearney and William H. Clamurro, represents a unique approach to the subject. It is a blend of their personal narratives—with select Vietnam poems by Clamurro—to illustrate noncombatant objection as a unique and relatively unknown form of Vietnam War protest."

Tracy Daugherty's memoir, *The Land and the Days* (University of Oklahoma Press), has been nominated for an Oklahoma Book Award in nonfiction. His *148 Charles Street*, based on the life of Willa Cather, also appeared in 2022 (University of Nebraska Press).

Also, Tracy's biography of Larry McMurtry, *Larry McMurtry: A Life*, will be published this year on September 12 by St. Martin's Press.



Wes Ferguson's second podcast series, [Devil Town](#), came out in October and eventually climbed to #5 on Apple's popular ranking of Top Shows. It hit #2 in the true crime category.



Susan Wittig Albert's novel *The General's Women* has been chosen as the winner of this year's Texas Author Project competition in the adult fiction category. The book, about the WW2 relationship of Dwight Eisenhower and Kay Summersby, was also named as a Book of the Year by Foreword Magazine.

Other news: Four more books in her Robin Paige mystery series (co-authored with Bill Albert) are being published in audio. *Someone Always Nearby*, her novel about the friendship of Maria Chabot and Georgia O’Keeffe, will be published in November in hardcover, paperback, eBook, and audio. On the writing desk: *Forget Me Never*, #29 in the Pecan Springs mystery series.

C.W. Smith: I spent the past six months doing that dreary thing we all have to do – promote my new novel, *Girl Flees Circus*. Truth be told, bookstore appearances can be grim, but I’ve been having fun chatting via Zoom with book clubs hither and yon, with some live sessions sprinkled in....

On May 31, Lamar University Literary Press will publish *The Museum of Marriage and Other Stories*, a collection that showcases characters struggling with the demands and mysteries of the solitary life, romance, and marriage. Some dutiful pals have generously lent their endorsements: "*The Museum of Marriage* brims with all the complex stuff of life. Everything is here in C.W. Smith's wonderful stories--love, lust, loss, regret, fear and cruelty, hope and redemption, and the constant struggle between our better and lesser selves. Smith delivers the hard-won wisdom of a master writer at the top of his game, and it shows on every page. I loved these stories, and I expect you will too." (**Ben Fountain**, author of *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*, *Brief Encounters with Che Guevarra*, and *Beautiful Country Burn Again*.) This, from **Nan Cuba** (*When Horses Fly* and *Body and Bread*): "C.W. Smith uses the precision of a high-resolution microscope to capture with charm, wit, and love, the 1950s and relationships of couples at various stages, including three described by women. His gift is focusing with calibrated accuracy portrayals of familiar Texas boys and men trying goodheartedly to see beyond their quotidian lives." And, finally, "C.W. Smith scrutinizes motives and intimate connections in his collection *The Museum of Marriage Museum and Other Stories*. In one shocking tale a father's poor judgment leads him to drive into a low water crossing with fatal consequences for his family. In another a blind teacher tortured by several miscreant students plans a grim revenge. Acts of affection and disregard appear here, culminating in the final tender story of the imagined courtship of the author's parents in the 1930's. These nine stories, like desire itself, delight and surprise in unexpected ways. (Lynn C. Miller, *The Day After Death* and *The Unmasking*.)

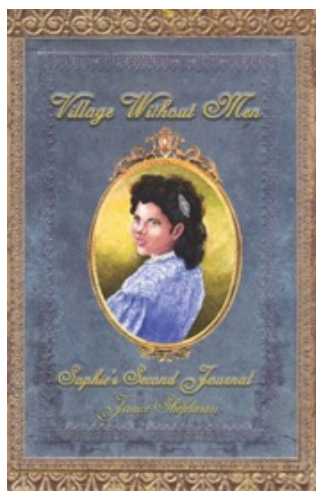
David Lee's *Rusty Barbed Wire: Selected Poems* was published by Samara Press in 2022. He and Jan are wintering on the Spanish Sun Coast where he is wrapping up a new manuscript, *The Canonical Hours*.



Ben Fountain's new novel, *Devil Makes Three*, will be published by Flatiron Books this September 26. He also has nonfiction forthcoming in *The New York Review of Books* and a short story in *Texas Highways*.

Kevin Prufer has two new books coming out, one later this year and the other next year. They are a book of poems called *The Fears* (Copper Canyon Press) and a novel called *Sleepaway* (Acre Books).

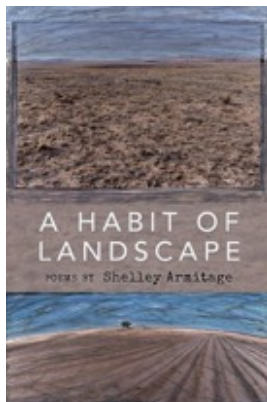
Janice Shefelman: My historical novel, *Village Without Men*, will be published on March 1 by Eakin Press. It is a sequel to *Sophie's War*, set in Comfort and San Antonio, Texas, during the Civil War. Like Sophie's father, most German immigrants were Unionists, living in a state that had left the Union. Thus, they were persecuted. Cabins were burned, and men were hanged who refused to fight for the Confederacy. Some men fled to the north to join the Union Army, including Sophie's father and Eduard, her true love. So women in Comfort were left to fend for themselves against hostile Indians and vigilantes. Because her mother's only desire is to return to Germany, which is impossible, it is Sophie who must try to keep the family safe until the men return.



Frank de la Teja: The January 2023 issue of the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* (vol. 126, no. 3) included my article “Women’s Lives in a Spanish-Texas Community: San Antonio de Béxar, 1718-1821.” My work on Erasmo Seguín continues, and I gave a paper on his time representing Texas at the second Constituent Congress in Mexico City, 1823-1824, which produced the federal Constitution of 1824 at the 16th Meeting of International Historians of Mexico, held at UT Austin October 30 to November 2, 2022.

In addition, I am working on an essay tracing the development of anti-slavery in Mexican political thought from the end of Spanish rule through the adoption of the state constitution of Coahuila and Texas in 1827.

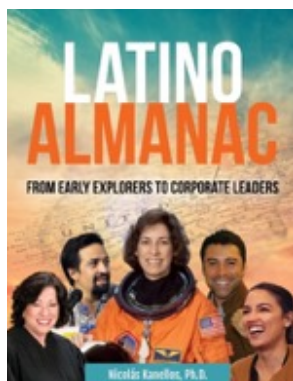
Shelley Armitage will publish a full-length book of poems, *A Habit of Landscape*, to be released in October 2023 by Finishing Line Press. Two poems “Languages Lost” and “Removal” will appear in an upcoming anthology published by Dos Gatos Press. Also forthcoming in the anthology *Women, Landscape, and Place* (Wittliff series) is an essay, “Place Matters,” and the poem “Antelope and I.” Armitage continues to publish with *Texaspoetryassignment*, including most recently “Staked Plains” and “Memory in Water.”



Carolyn Banks: When my two new novels come out in 2023, I will have authored eleven novels and a collection of short stories. I'm proud of my TIL membership, proud of my wikipedia page (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carolyn_Banks). I'm 81 years old and still love writing a humor column every month or so for my local newspaper, *The Bastrop Advertiser*.



Nicolás Kanellos's book, *Latino Almanac: From Early Explorers to Corporate Leaders*, released in September to critical acclaim. *Booklist* called it a “... thorough yet approachable resource ... accurate and insightful information ... a welcome entry point to understanding a vibrant ingredient of American life.” *Library Journal* said it is “... a valuable starting point for research on Latinos in the United States, who are united but diverse in multiple ways. ... this wide-ranging, clearly written volume will help [you] understand the past, present, and potential future of Latinos in the United States.”



José E. Limón, the Mody C. Boatright Regents Professor of American Literature (Emeritus) at the University of Texas-Austin, published two scholarly articles in 2021-22:

- "Facing Black, Effacing Jew: Race, Tikuun Olam, and the Baseball Novels of Mark Harris." *Aethlon: The Journal of Sports Literature* 38:2 (2001) 5-23.
- "Gone to Texas: Laura Krey, the Southern Renaissance, and Greater Mexico." *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas* 51 (March 2022) 8-24.

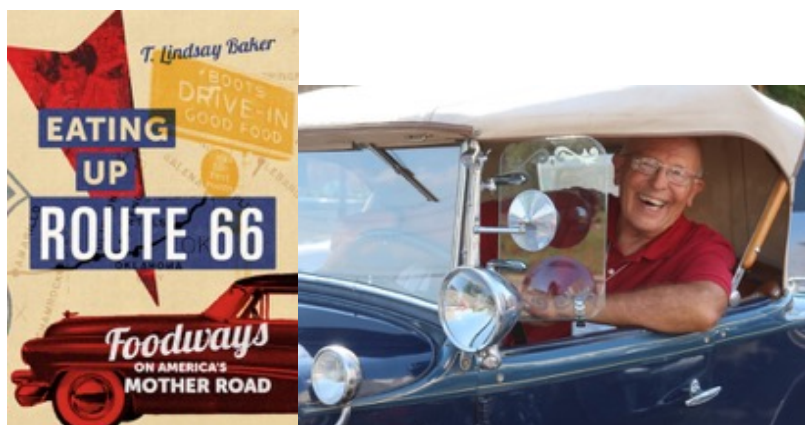
He also has completed his book manuscript, *The Streets of Laredo: Texas Modernity and its Discontents*, and it will soon be out for review.

Jesse Sublett: I would really love to share a photo from one of the joyful and rewarding promotional appearances in 2023 for *Last Gangster in Austin: Frank Smith, Ronnie Earle, and the End of a Junkyard Mafia*; (Warning, run-on sentence, please excuse) for example, at the Austin Headliners Club for the Austin History Center Association's inaugural Fuller Talks lecture series, or my High Noon speech at the Bullock Museum, or the SRO readings at the Texas Book Festival or BookPeople or at the Vintage Books & Wine Bar on 11th Street; however, I have to say that the biggest highlight of 2022 (and that's including all the super cool things we've enjoyed during our year-long, now ended, sabbatical in Los Angeles), was the birth of our first grandchild, Serafina Viola Sublett, on September 23, 2022. Lois and I are over the moon in love with her.



Jesse and Serafina Viola

Don Tate: In 2022, Don wound down the year by appearing at two reading conferences on opposite ends of the country. In December, he spoke on panels at the Florida Association for Media in Education (FAME) in Daytona Beach. There, he was presented with a ceiling tile replica of the cover of his authored book *PIGSKINS TO PAINTBRUSHES: THE STORY OF FOOTBALL-PLAYING ARTIST ERNIE BARNES*. Also in December, he spoke and signed books in Anaheim, California at the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) conference. The highlight of his Christmas holiday—besides Santa and family time—was the sale of his newest authored book! Details forthcoming in the next newsletter! Don's next illustrated book, *ROTO AND ROY TO THE RESCUE* (Little Brown) will publish in March of 2023.



T. Lindsay Baker departs for the Ozarks last August in a Model A Roadster.

T. Lindsay Baker in October spent two weeks walking along sections of the Camino de Santiago medieval pilgrims' way in northern Spain. While he was trekking through sunny but bracing Iberian autumn weather, University of Oklahoma Press released his most recent volume, *Eating Up Route 66: Foodways on America's Mother Road* (Norman, 2022). The fruit of a dozen years of research in libraries, archives, and many, many eating and drinking places, it explores the lived history of both past motorists and those who made their travels possible along a 2,500-mile corridor of consumption that linked Chicago with Los Angeles.

In April 2018, T. Lindsay and Fort Worth photographer Paul Chaplo completed and under pre-publication agreement submitted to the Texas A&M University Press the manuscript for an illustrated guide to the remarkable vernacular architecture of Glen Rose, Texas, known around the world for prehistoric dinosaur tracks in the limestone bed of the Paluxy River. Finally, after COVID-related publication delays, in April 2022 the press released *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Glen Rose, Texas: Bypassed, Forgotten, and Preserved*.

T. Lindsay's next project is a long-planned history and heritage tourists' driving guide to former U.S. Highway 66' 175 miles across the Texas Panhandle. As he "pages through" decades of community newspapers along the old motorway, he gives himself breaks by writing feature articles on Mother Road topics for *New Mexico Route 66*, *Show Me Route 66* (Missouri), and *Route 66 Federation News*. Julie and T. Lindsay live in retirement on the Baker family farm roughly midway between Fort Worth and Waco.

William Jack Sibley: In process of completing next novel, THE HANG OF IT (yes, set in Texas -- but not about Texas, per se.) Manhattan Repertory in NYC will be workshopping my new play, RAIN/ PRINCESS ELIZABETH/ MALTA, in May - ticket info on my website, www.williamjacksibley.com.

At the final bell, my 2021 novel HERE WE GO LOOP DE LOOP ended up winning four National Book Awards (on website) and was on several "Best Book of the Year" compilations.



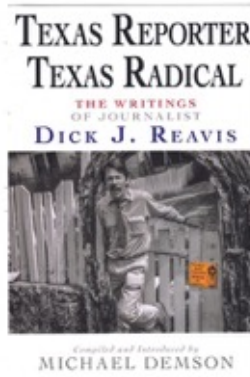
Laura Wilson's latest book, *The Writers: Portraits by Laura Wilson*, was published by Yale University Press last October. The culmination of over twelve years of work, the book features portraits of thirty-eight internationally acclaimed writers, and reflects on writing and photography's shared concerns with invention, transformation, and memory.

The accompanying exhibition of over 150 photographs was on view at the Harry Ransom Center from August 27, 2022, through January 1, 2023.

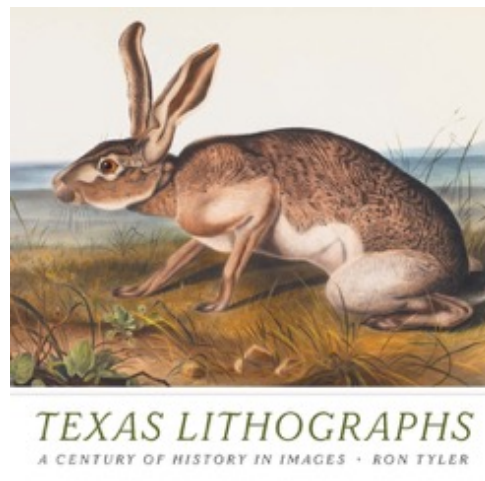


Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Laura Wilson

Dick J. Reavis: An anthology of forty years of my journalistic work, *Texas Reporter, Texas Radical*, was published in October by Texas Review Press. The selection consists of 25 pieces, some excerpted, some full text. I did not choose or submit the entries. I had even forgotten that I wrote a few of them. Without suggestions from me, Professor Michael Demson of Sam Houston State found them on the web. His selection is therefore an objective verdict on their value. When I read through the book, I saw that some of them, as the West Texas saying goes, weren't half bad.



Ron Tyler's latest book is *Texas Lithographs: A Century of History in Images* from the University of Texas Press. Lithography and Texas came of age together during the nineteenth century, and the heavily illustrated book provides a visual perspective on an iconic century. Ron began looking seriously at lithographs of Texas with a sesquicentennial exhibition at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art in 1986, and the book is the product of more than thirty years of research and contemplation.



Steven Schneider, professor in the Department of Creative Writing at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, led a workshop in the fall 2022 entitled “Approaches to Teaching Poetic Form” at the West Chester University conference “The Dramatic I/Eye: Reflections on Voice and Form in Contemporary Poetry.”

His poem “Chanukah Lights Tonight” was featured on Poetry Moments hosted by Spokane Public Radio, December 19, 2002, the first day of Chanukah. To hear Steven’s recording of his poem please go to <https://www.spokanepublicradio.org/show/poetry-moment/2022-12-19/steven-p-schneider-reads-his-original-poem-chanukah-lights-tonight>

Chris Barton appeared in person in December at the Jacksonville Public Library with the 86-year-old subject of his most recent book, *Moving Forward: From Space-Age Rides to Civil Rights Sit-Ins with Airman Alton Yates*. The appearance capped off a week in Florida that included two TV interviews of Chris and Yates as well as their Q&A session with elementary school students. The video of their Lit Chat event (moderated by TiLena Robinson, a social studies specialist with Duval County Public Schools and a member of the district’s African American History Task Force) can be seen at <https://youtu.be/XO0fpVMyh1E>.



New from Chris: *MOVING FORWARD: FROM SPACE-AGE RIDES TO CIVIL RIGHTS SIT-INS WITH AIRMAN ALTON YATES* (a *School Library Journal* Best Book of 2022) and *GLITTER EVERYWHERE! WHERE IT CAME FROM, WHERE IT'S FOUND & WHERE IT'S GOING* (coming in June 2023). His other recent titles include *HOW TO MAKE A BOOK (ABOUT MY DOG)* and *FIRE TRUCK VS. DRAGON*. He’s also the author of *WHOOSH!* (included on 21 state reading lists), *THE DAY-GLO BROTHERS* (winner, Sibert Honor), and *SHARK VS. TRAIN* (a *New York Times* bestseller) and the co-host of ["This One's Dedicated to..."](https://www.thisonesdedicatedto.com) More at www.chrisbarton.info.

Carol Flake Chapman: My new book of poems, *Querencia: Sonnets on Seeking Home in a Troubled World*, will be released in April. The title comes from the Spanish word *querencia*, a term in bullfighting for the place in the bull ring where the bull finds safety, and which has come to mean a sense of home or belonging.

My poem “Resurrection,” which won an international poetry prize in November ’22, sponsored by Proverse Hong Kong, will be published in the Proverse anthology titled *Mingled Voices 7* in April.

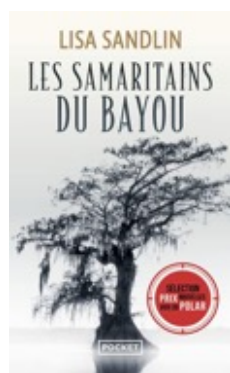
Cyrus Cassells' upcoming book of translations, *To the Cypress Again and Again*, is due out on March 1, 2023, from Stephen F. Austin State University Press. He previously won the 2020 Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for *Still Life with Children: Selected Poems of Francesc Parcerisas*.



Wendy Barker: *WEAVE: New and Selected Poems* was recently (end of 2022) published by BkMk Press. And in February, I will be a featured poet with Arizona State University's Piper Series. Also, a new chapbook, *Those Roads, These Moons*, is forthcoming this spring from Alabrava Press.

Betty Sue Flowers is an invited speaker at this year's Hay Festival of Literature, May 25-June 4 in Hay-on-Wye, known as the “national book town” of Wales.

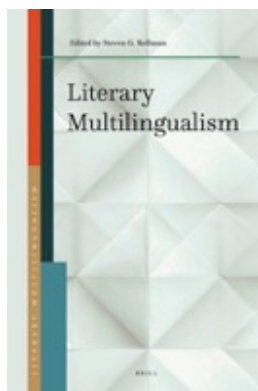
Reginald Gibbons' novel *SWEETBITTER*, which was published by a small press in 1995, and then reprinted in paperback by Penguin and then by LSU Press, is getting a third paperback reprint this year by JackLeg Press. The novel won the best novel award from the TIL, and also the Anisfield-Wolf Award in the category of fiction. I'm very grateful to TIL for its award, years ago, which helped the book find many more readers.



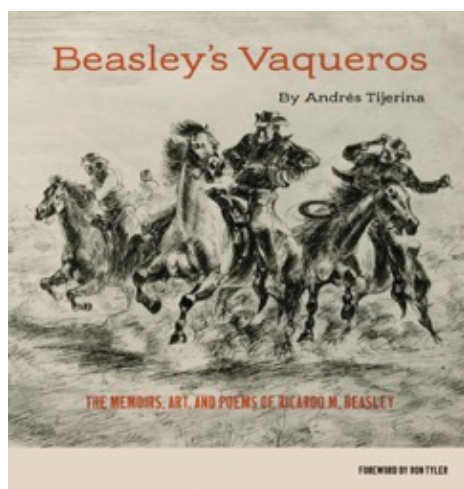
Lisa Sandlin's third book in a noir detective series has been bought by Suhrkamp Verlag out of Berlin (German title to be determined). The two previous books in the series, out in France in quality paperback, are additionally soon being published in mass market by Pocket Books and Belfond.

Steven G. Kellman is general editor of a new book series on Literary Multilingualism published by Brill:

<https://brill.com/page/LM>



Beasley's Vaqueros: The Memoirs, Art, and Poems of Ricardo M. Beasley by Andrés Tijerina (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2022) presents the life and pen-and-ink drawings of South Texas artist Ricardo M. Beasley between roughly 1940 and 1980. In addition to a selection of Beasley's art, award-winning author **Andrés Tijerina** has collected and translated an extensive interview with the artist and several of his poems.



Ron Tyler, Retired Director, Amon Carter Museum of American Art —

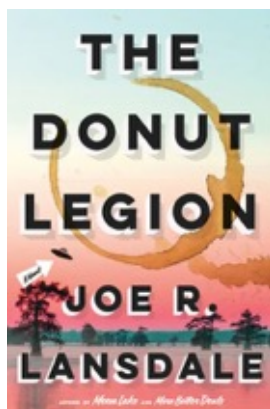
“Ricardo Beasley has sometimes been compared to the most famous cowboy artist, Charles M. Russell of Montana, and the parallels are intriguing. Beasley would have published a book of his drawings if he had found a person he thought worthy of the task. Andrés Tijerina is that person. He shares the love of the South Texas brush country that disciplined and inspired Beasley, and, as a U. S. Air Force pilot and decorated veteran of 100 missions during the Vietnam War, he experienced the same rush of adrenalin that Beasley’s vaqueros felt as danger stalked. But, most important, Andrés shares the passion that animates Beasley’s drawings.”

Kurt Heinzelman, University of Texas at Austin —

"Reading Beasley's words and images, you feel, as fellow Texan Walter Cronkite used to say, that 'You Were There.' In fact, Beasley was there. I think Tijerina's book is not merely of regional interest, but a national book with linguistic, gendered, economic, and identity issues, as well as the obvious societal ones, that are important for us all."

Producer **Ellen Temple** and director Nancy Schiesari are producing a series of short cuts inspired by their PBS documentary film, "Citizens at Last: Texas Women Fight for the Vote," www.citizensatlastfilm.com. The first one will feature Jessie Dent of Galveston, a Black suffragist, Howard University graduate, and teacher who fought and won higher pay for Black teachers in Galveston.

Joe Lansdale's new suspense novel *The Donut Legion* comes out in March from Mulholland Books.



Larry D. Thomas's poem, "Driving Through West Texas" (from his poetry collection, *Stark Beauty*, Timberline Press 2005), was selected for inclusion in a K-12 digital curriculum Texas state history course which is being utilized to instruct approximately 6,000 students across the state. The curriculum was developed by Edmentum, an ad tech company which serves 43,000 schools in all 50 states and over 100 countries worldwide. "Driving Through West Texas" also appears in the SIRIUS: ENGLISH I EOC READING workbook, Copyright © 2020 by Sirius Education Solutions LLC (SIRIUS is an Austin-based publisher dedicated to helping all students succeed on the STAAR tests).

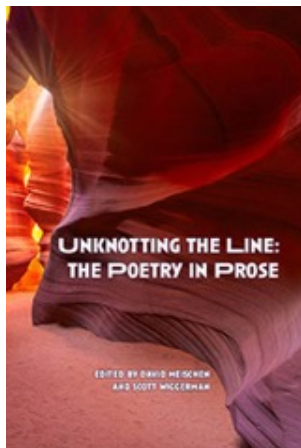
Thomas's poem, "Eye Surgeon" (published in the *Concho River Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1), was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His short-short story, "Plain Pine," was published in the *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies* (December 2022, Vol. 53, Issue 3).

In 2022, **Jose Antonio Rodriguez's** poetry was featured in *The New Yorker*, *The Missouri Review*, the Academy of American Poets website, and *Pleiades*. His new poetry collection is forthcoming in early 2024.

Scott Wiggerman: Each day a haiku chosen by a guest editor is featured on The Haiku Foundation home page, <https://thehaikufoundation.org>, and I've been honored to be selected as guest editor. My selections of previously published haiku will be featured for the Per Diem/Haiku of the Day during National Poetry Month, April 2023, and all the poems will then be archived on the THF website. Guest editors also choose a topic for the month, and mine is LGBTQIA+ haiku, a much-needed topic for Japanese form poetry which is seldom addressed.

Red Moon Press is the biggest haiku-related press in North America, and I'm also excited that the editorial board for *contemporary haibun* recently made its selections for the next volume (2023) of the annual print series published by Red Moon Press, and one of my haibun has been chosen for it: "To Get There."

Finally, the new anthology that I've been working on with my husband, **David Meischen**, should also be available in spring 2023. *Unknotting the Line: The Poetry in Prose*, the fifth volume of the Dos Gatos Press series "Poetry of the Southwestern United States" will feature only work from the following genres: the prose poem, flash fiction or flash nonfiction, haibun/tanka prose/cheribun—genres that consist largely of prose, but that pay attention to image and metaphor, to rhythmic phrasing, to compression, and to the language of poetry. It will include work from several TIL members.



James E. Crisp: I am happy to announce that on February 4 I received in Austin the annual Non-Fiction Book Award from the Philosophical Society of Texas for my recent work, *Inside the Texas Revolution: The Enigmatic Memoir of Herman Ehrenberg*. This is the third award earned by the book, in addition to the Summerfield G. Roberts Prize from the Sons of the Republic of Texas, and the Dwight L. Smith Award from the Western History Association for the best reference work in the History of the American West. I must say that I'm gratified that my 29 years of work (off and on) on this book has been so recognized. I can also say that researching and writing this book was a hell of a lot of fun. If you love what you're doing, you'll never work a day in your life!

My trusty German translator as I completed the work is another TIL member, **James C. Kearney**.

W.K. (Kip) Stratton has four poems in the forthcoming *Writing Texas 9*. He read the poems at the Texas Association of Creative Writing Teachers meeting on the TCU campus in September.

His book-length poem, *Last Red Dirt Embrace*, was published in August as the concluding volume of the *Dreaming Sam Peckinpah Quintet*. "I sort of figured I was finished with poetry with that book," Kip says. "But things happen: love, death, spiritual renewal, and so on. And you find yourself writing more poems because you more or less have to. And you take part in the Emily Dickinson Gathering of Poets in December in Conroe and you write a new poem for that — actually you write three. And suddenly there's a substantial start on a whole new book. And, well, hell, you might as well finish it. I guess I'm still not over the poetry disease, which first infected me back in high school."

Also in September, *Texas Highways* published his essay on Big Bend's Comanche Trail, which can be found at this link: <https://texashighways.com/culture/history/the-comanche-trail-in-big-bend-recalls-a-bygone-era-of-tribal-raids-into-mexico/>

Research for that project took him across the river into Mexico, photo below:

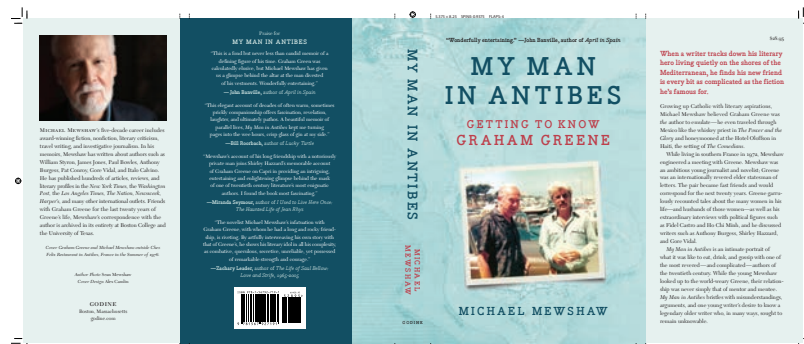


Kip is tentatively scheduled to be part of a Comanche Trail conference at the Gage Hotel in Marathon later this year.

Lupe Ruiz-Flores: My new historical fiction picture book, *Piece by Piece: Ernestine's Gift for President Roosevelt*, will release in September 2023. During the Great Depression, Ernestine Guerrero's family didn't have much. The Mexican- American teen was so grateful for the government food aid they received in San Antonio, Texas, that she wanted to personally thank President Roosevelt. But how? After seeing the plans for a very difficult woodworking project, she decided she would make it herself and send it to the president. Piece by piece, that's exactly what she did. And the clock case she built remains on display in the Roosevelt Presidential Library to this day. Publisher: Millbrook Press. Illustrated by: Anna López Real. Author website: www.luperuiz-flores.com



Michael Mewshaw: Surely by now I must be one of the oldest members of the TIL, having been invested in 1975 and having won the Fiction Award in '80 and '83. I have a new book coming out on June 6, my 23rd book, *My Man in Antibes: Getting to Know Graham Greene*. It's a memoir about my friendship with Greene, based on our 20 years of correspondence which is contained in its entirety at the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin.



Andrew Sansom: *The Art of Texas State Parks* celebrates the rich tradition of the Texas State Park System which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Offering an engaging visual arts survey of Texas state parks as seen through the eyes of leading artists from across the state. Authors Andrew Sansom and Linda J. Reaves have collected original works from thirty of the state's most influential artists. Sixty-five stunning visual works are accompanied by a thoughtful essay by William E. Reaves on the time-honored legacy of landscape painting in Texas and by Sansom's reflections on the vital place of landscape art in Texas conservation. Rounding out the collection, assistant state park director Kevin Good offers an informative profile of Texas state parks, and the work concludes with profiles of the artists whose pieces appear in this special centennial collection.

The centennial of the state parks system offers the perfect occasion to create a lasting visual record of Texas parks in art while memorializing the past and ongoing development of the distinctive collection of Lone Star parks and natural areas. *The Art of Texas State Parks* offers readers increased awareness of Texas parklands and heightens their popular appeal through the elegant and inspired works of some of Texas' finest contemporary artists.



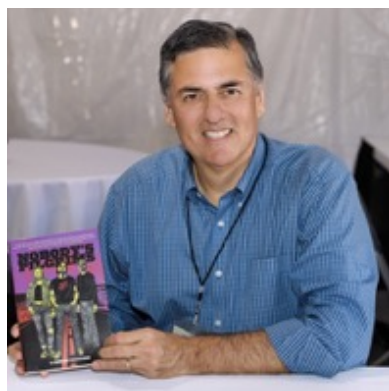
Release of *The Art of Texas State Parks* was accompanied by an exhibition of many of the paintings at the Bullock State History Museum in Austin. Other showings will follow at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, and other museums across the State through early 2024.

All author proceeds from the sale of this book will benefit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation.

Octavio Solis' play "Scene with Cranes," a new work commissioned by California Institute for the Arts, premiered at REDCAT Theatre on September 30. YouTube vid: <https://vimeo.com/751457362>

"Quixote Nuevo" opens at South Coast Repertory in Costa Mesa, California, on September 30 and runs through October 28, 2023. The play then opens at Seattle Repertory Theatre on January 19 and runs through February 11, 2024, and at Portland Center Stage in Oregon on March 1 and runs through March 31, 2024.

Sergio Troncoso is teaching a fiction workshop at the 2023 Yale Writers' Workshop, and he'll also be traveling to the Tucson Book Festival in March and for the TIL's shindig in Corpus Christi at the end of April. He recently signed an audio deal for his recent novel, *Nobody's Pilgrims*. *Kirkus Reviews*: "Troncoso delivers a surprisingly fast-paced, character-driven story.... A sublime, diverse cast drives this tale of looking for a safe, welcoming home." Lastly, Sergio wants to thank Steve Davis for taking him to the Rusty Bucket Jawsmacking BBQ (the official name) in west San Antonio. Sergio's been having BBQ dreams ever since!



Kathleen Kent's seventh novel, **BLACK WOLF**, is a Russian spy novel based on the author's experience working as a Department of Defense contractor in the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, facilitating in the dismantlement of stockpiled nuclear weapons. Publication date is February 14 from Mulholland Books.



Francisco X. Stork: My novel, *I Am Not Alone* (Scholastic), a story about mental health, love and community, comes out July 2023.

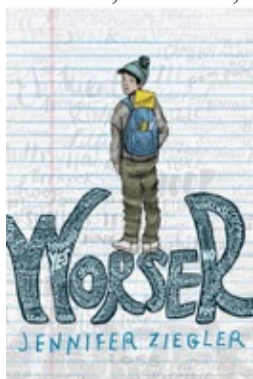


Melissa Studdard: I recently joined the 24 Pearl Street faculty at Fine Arts Work Center, as well as the faculty at Lone Star College System's new online college. A few recent highlights were seeing my poem "I Have an Apology, 6 Requests, and 4 Offers (But Not in That Order)" from *Dear Selection Committee* choreographed by Julliard's Caili Quan and performed by two of her students for the Ashbury Park Dance Festival. I was also happy to be interviewed in *Ms. Magazine* and *The Adroit Journal* this past semester by two very insightful, generous interviewers. After cancelling a few months of in-person book-release readings due to a family illness, I'm now looking forward to getting back out there and reading at the L.A. Times Festival of Books, AWP, and other events this spring. My current works in progress include a poetry collection and a libretto for an oratorio tentatively scheduled to premiere at the 2024 Aspen Music Festival.

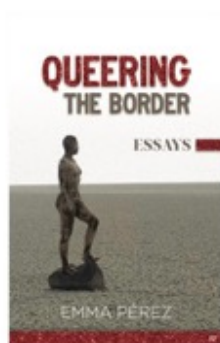
Robin Davidson: My most recent book of poems, *Mrs. Schmetterling* (Arrowsmith Press, 2021), was curated by Mark Cervenka for an exhibition of the poems and [Sarah Fisher's](#) artworks included in the volume for the University of Houston Downtown's O'Kane Gallery in Fall 2022. The exhibition, "[Mrs. Schmetterling Unframed](#)," was on display from October 20 through December 14, 2022.



Jennifer Ziegler's middle grade novel *Worser* was named a best book of 2022 by *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and *The New York Times*.



Emma Pérez has a new book of essays, *Queering the Border*, forthcoming from Arte Público Press in 2023.



Look at This Blue, by **Allison Adelle Hedge Coke**, Coffee House Press, was selected as a 2022 National Book Award Finalist (Poetry) and celebrated by the National Book Foundation. Hedge Coke also is a director of [UCR Writers Week](#) and invites all to attend (free).



Darwin Payne: So hard to believe that this coming November 22 will mark the 60th anniversary of JFK's assassination. I was a reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald*, thoroughly involved in covering the events of that awful weekend. This fall, before November, my memoir of my involvement will be published by the University of North Texas Press under the title, *Behind the Scenes: Covering the JFK Assassination*. It will include my coverage and comments about the situation in Dallas prior to the president's arrival, my work at Dealey Plaza, time with Abraham Zapruder, going up to the sixth-floor window, interviewing Lee Harvey Oswald's fellow roomers, my Saturday at the police station amidst that growing crowd of reporters when Oswald being brought to and from interrogation sessions, and more, including my visit with Marina Oswald soon afterwards. I still have my two reporters' notebooks from that weekend.

The book will have 35 archival photos, many of which never have been seen. In addition to the hardback edition, thanks to the Vick family foundation for supporting an electronic copy, too. (Thanks, **Fran Vick**, our former TIL president!)

Celeste Walker: I'm thrilled to announce that the anthology of five of my plays, titled *Sassy Mamas and Other Plays*, has been published by Texas A&M Press as part of the Wittliff Collections Literary Series. More information on the February release at www.tamupress.com.

Also, I decided to try my hand at poetry and was encouraged when my poem "Our Stories" was published in the November issue of the International Women's Writing Guild's Network Newsletter.

Jesús Treviño will be screening the one-hour documentary *Visions of Aztlan*, which he wrote and directed, at the Wittliff Collections in San Marcos on Wednesday, April 26, at 3 p.m. The screening will be followed by a Q & A with the author. The film chronicles the rise of a national Chicano art movement beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present and features such Texas Chicano artists as Amado Peña, Santa Barraza, Carmen Lomas Garza, Cesar Martinez, and others.



Photo by George Rodriguez

Joanne Leedom-Ackerman: I'd like to announce the publication of my new novel *Burning Distance* due out March 7 from Oceanview Publishing. I will be on the road for readings and events after publication. You can check <https://joanneleedom-ackerman.com/speaking/> for dates and events near you and/or request an event or bookclub!

"Burning Distance is a double helix of a book, carefully plotted and beautifully told. It's a spy story interwoven with a love story, and the strands fit together in a way that moves the reader effortlessly from chapter to chapter. While fiction, its narrative of the CIA and the Middle East arms trade are very close to fact. Joanne Leedom-Ackerman observes the world of American spies and Arab fixers through the eyes of a young woman who keeps asking questions about her mysterious past until she gets all the revelatory answers. A subtle and satisfying novel."

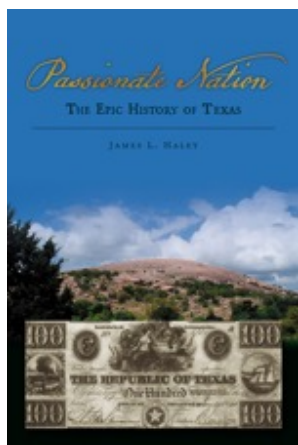
—**David Ignatius**, *New York Times* best-selling author, *Washington Post* columnist and novelist



George Getschow: In 2020, there were only five “literary landmark” sites in Texas. Literary landmarks are special plaques created by The Texas Center for the Book to honor and commemorate the literary works and legacy of important Texas writers. Now there's one dedicated to **Larry McMurtry** in Archer City, Larry's hometown and the place where his life as a storyteller began. I worked closely with the Texas Center for the Book, the Texas State Library Association, McMurtry family members, and the Archer Public Library to honor Larry's life and legacy with a literary landmark. Larry's landmark is being installed on the outside entrance to the Archer Public Library. The purpose of a literary landmark is to educate the public and attract tourists, book lovers, and history buffs to the places where authors left an indelible literary mark. Larry's literary landmark was unveiled on November 18 at the iconic Royal Theater during an event that featured a panel discussion about Larry's titanic influence on Texas and the literature of the West with TIL members **Steve Harrigan, Beverly Lowry**, and me. The event also featured a special screening of the *Lonesome Dove* miniseries.

As part of the literary landmark event, The Texas Center for the Book conducted interviews with Beverly Lowry and Steve Harrigan about Larry's literary legacy that TIL members should find illuminating. Watch their TXBookChat, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jp2ryuQ10XI>

James L. Haley since June has been Writer-in-Residence at The Pines, a nonprofit retreat facility at the foot of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains fifty miles west of Pueblo, Colorado. His principal job is researching a book about 19th century British immigrants who crowded into the area. Working title is HIGH TEA IN THE ROCKIES: THE ENGLISH "COLONY" IN COLORADO, 1870-1900. After months of supply-chain delays, the University of North Texas Press reprinted his prize-winning Texas history PASSIONATE NATION in June. He is looking forward to returning next fall and taking up Texas history once again.



Norma Elía Cantú: I presented my work at the Feria Internacional del Libro in Havana. Reading at the Casa de las Americas. I was also honored for my writing by Gemini Ink in November's Inkstravaganza Fundraiser.

Carol Coffee Reposa, 2018 Texas Poet Laureate, has been struggling with health issues and has moved from San Antonio to Fort Worth. You can write to her at:

Carol Reposa
6301 Overton Ridge Blvd, Apt. 304
Fort Worth, TX 76132

Preston Lewis: *Call of the Wilde*, the eighth book in his comic western series “The Memoirs of H.H. Lomax,” was released in February by Wolfpack Publishing. *More Cat Tales of the Old West: Triumphs, Trials and Trivia of Frontier Felines* is scheduled for a spring release from Bariso Press. The previous book in the series, *Cat Tales of the Old West: Poems, Puns & Perspectives on Frontier Felines*, received a Will Rogers Bronze Medallion for written western humor in October.



Kathryn Jones' long investigative piece, “Breaking the Brazos,” appears in the January/February 2023 issue of the *Texas Observer* magazine, which received a grant from the national Fund for Environmental Journalism for a series on Texas rivers, and on the website. See <https://www.texasobserver.org/brazos-river-development-pollution-drifting-toward-disaster/>



Her journalism work also has been published in *Texas Highways*, where she is a regular contributor. Four of her poems were included in *Lone Star Poetry* (Kallista Gaia Press, 2022). Her prose poem “The Last Conquistador” will appear in Dos Gatos Press’ upcoming *Unknotting the Line: The Poetry in Prose*, the fifth in its series, Poetry of the Southwestern United States. Her essay “Bonding Over Books” also will appear this year in a book of essays on Larry McMurtry edited by **George Getschow** and published by UT Press.

See you all next time in the TIL Summer/Fall newsletter!