

TIL newsletter, March-April, 2007**Here they are: our finalists
for 2006 TIL literary awards**

Finalists for works published in 2006 have been named for our annual TIL literary contests. Winners will receive cash prizes as high as \$6,000 (a total of \$21,200) at our April 13-14 annual meeting in Dallas at the Park Cities Hilton Hotel.

The 2007 Lon Tinkle Award for Excellence Sustained Throughout a Career will be presented at the Saturday night banquet to William D. Wittliff. This award, funded by Marshall Terry and Mrs. James Early, carries a \$1,500 prize.

(Please note the March 23 deadline for the group discount rate at our hotel for the April 13-14 meeting in Dallas. See item below for details.)

Here are the finalists:

Jesse Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction, (\$6,000)

Cristina Henriquez (*Come Together, Fall Apart*, Riverhead)

Cormac McCarthy (*The Road*, Knopf)

Dominic Smith (*The Mercury Visions of Louis Daguerre*, Atria)

Steven Turner Award for Best Work of First Fiction, \$1,000

Ben Fountain, (*Brief Encounters With Che Gueverra*, (Ecco/Harper/Collins)

Cristina Henriquez (*Come Together, Fall Apart*, Riverhead)

Dominic Smith (*The Mercury Visions of Louis Daguerre*, Atria)

Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction, \$5,000:

Larry L. King (*In Search of Willie Morris*, PublicAffairs)

John Taliaferro (*In a Far Country*, PublicAffairs)

Lawrence Wright (*The Looming Tower*, Knopf)

TIL Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book, \$2,500:

Edward T. Cotham Jr. (*The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine: The Illustrated Note-Book of Henry O. Gusley*, UT Press)

Jerry Thompson (*Civil War to the Bloody End: The Life and Times of Major General Samuel P. Heintzelman*, Texas A&M)

Robert Wooster, *Frontier Crossroads: Fort Davis and the West*, Texas A&M)

Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story, \$750

Kerry Neville Bakken ("The Effects of Light," in *Glimmer Train*)

Rajesh Parameswaran ("The Strange Career of Doctor Raju Gopalarajan," in *McSweeney's Quarterly*)

Mark Wisniewski ("Prisoners of War," in *Glimmer Train*).

Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry, \$1,200

Christopher Bakken (*Goat Funeral*, Sheep-Meadow)

Barbara Ras (*One Hidden Stuff*, Penguin Poets)

Susan B. Anthony Somers-Willet (*Roam*, Southern Illinois)

Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation of a Book, \$1,000

Christopher Bakken and Roula Konsolaki (Translation from Greek of Titos Patrikios' book of poetry, *Lions' Gate*, Truman State Univ.)

Marian Schwartz (Translation from Russian of Ruben Gallego's *White on Black*, John Murray)

O. Henry Award for Best Work of Magazine Journalism, \$1,000

Pamela Colloff ("The Desert of the Dead," *Texas Monthly*, Nov. 2006)

Catherine Mansell Mayo ("From Mexico to Miramar or, Across the Lake of Oblivion," *Massachusetts Review*, Winter 2006)

John Spong "The Good Book and the Bad Book," *Texas Monthly*, Sept. 2006)

Friends of the Austin Public Library Award for Best Children's Book, \$500

Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson (*A Brave Boy and a Good Soldier: John C.C. Hill and the Texas Expedition to Mier*, Texas State Historical Assn.)

Sherry Garland, illustrated by Ronald Himler (*The Buffalo Soldier*, Pelican)

Tim Tingle, illustrated by Jeanne Rorex Bridges (*Crossing Bok Chitto: A Choctaw Tale of Friendship and Freedom*, Cinco Puntos Press)

Friends of the Austin Public Library Award for Best Young Adult Book, \$500

Carlos Nicolas Flores (*Our House on Hueco*, Texas Tech)

Heather Hepler (*Scrambled Eggs at Midnight*, Dutton)

Janice Shefelman (*Sophie's War*, Shoal Creek)

Fred Whitehead Award for Best Design of a Trade Book, \$750

Mary Ann Jacob (*Timeless Texas*, Texas A&M)

Sergio A. Gomez (*The King of Things/El Rey de las Cosas*, Cinco Puntos)

Bill Wittliff and Julie Savasky (*La Vida Brinca*, University of Texas)

Stanley Walker Award for Best Work of Newspaper Journalism Appearing in Newspaper or Sunday Supplement

Tony Freemantle ("The Gulf Coast Revisited," *Houston Chronicle*)

Eyder Peralta and Claudia Feldman ("The Butterfly and the Knife," *Houston Chronicle*)

Todd Spivak ("Hog Wild," *Houston Press*)

Bill Wittliff to be honored With Lon Tinkle Award

Our honoree for the Lon Tinkle Award for 2006, William D. Wittliff, has achieved a remarkable career of distinction in so many different fields that it would be impossible to categorize him.

He is, among other things, an accomplished publisher, writer, photographer, director, producer and screenwriter.

Since his election to the Texas Institute of Letters at the age of 29, he has served as president (1974-78), been a member of the Executive Council until 1990, and in 1993 became a TIL Fellow.

With his wife Sally he founded a book publishing company, The Encino Press, in 1964 shortly after graduating from the University of Texas. Encino Press has specialized in regional material about Texas and the Southwest, including Texas Folklore Society publications. Encino has won more than 100 awards for quality of design and content. The last book from Encino was John Graves' *Blue & Some Other Dogs*.

Wittliff's excellence in the film industry is seen in his adaptations of *The Black Stallion*, *Lonesome Dove*, *Legends of the Fall*, and *The Perfect Storm*, among others. His film, *Raggedy Man*, was based upon his childhood experiences.

As an accomplished photographer and writer, Wittliff's photographs documenting the life of the Mexican vaquero have been exhibited in numerous galleries and institutions throughout this country and in Mexico. His two recent books are *Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy* (2004) and *La Vida Brinca: Tragaluz Photographs* (2006).

In 1985 he and Sally founded the Southwestern Writers Collection by donating their lifelong collection of original manuscripts and books to Southwest Texas State University.

Wittliff is a member of the Texas Philosophical Society and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences. He has served for six years on the executive board of trustees of Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

The Lon Tinkle Award will be presented at the Saturday, April 14, banquet at the Hilton Park Cities Hotel in Dallas.

Still time to make hotel reservations for April 13-14

TIL's special group rate at the Hilton Park Cities Hotel, our headquarters for the April 13-14 annual meeting, is \$129 for a standard king or double queen room based on single or double occupancy.

Reservations must be made by **March 23** to get this special rate.

By telephone call Central Reservations, 24 hours a day, at 1-800-HILTONS, and request the Texas Institute of Letters rate. Or go on-line at www.dallasparkcities.hilton.com. On-line reservations must designate a three-letter code, TXI, under the "Special Accounts" section, for the special rate.

A number of guestrooms on the Executive Club Floor are available at a reduced rate of \$159 per night for single or double occupancy.

Overnight parking is \$13 per night for TIL members receiving the group rate.

Occupancy tax is 15 percent.

Check-in time is 4 p.m.; check out at noon.

The hotel is located at 5954 Luther Lane, just off Douglas Street at the southwest corner of the Preston Road/Northwest Highway intersection. It's in the very interesting Preston Center shopping area, boasting of plenty of shops and restaurants, and just down Northwest Highway from NorthPark Center.

Reservations for banquet—and don't forget 2007 dues

Tickets for the April 14 dinner in Dallas are \$50 per person, and the deadline is April 6. Please note whether you will attend the Friday night reception at the Hall of State.

Dues for the year 2007 are payable, too—\$50 for the year.

You can make payments for dinner and dues in a single check, if you prefer, made out to Texas Institute of Letters.

Send checks to our treasurer, James Hoggard, Dept. of English, Midwestern State University, Wichita Falls, TX 76308.

Friday night reception at Hall of State

This reception promises to be an extraordinary event, for it marks a return to the Hall of State, the exact site where the Texas Institute of Letters was founded in 1936 during the Texas Centennial.

Most if not all TIL members have visited the Hall of State, the centerpiece for the Centennial in 1936 and still the most noted building on the fairgrounds at Fair Park. Its Hall of Heroes, with larger than life-size sculptures of Texas heroes, and the Great Hall, boasting of a mural depicting the entire history of Texas to 1936, are special features.

Hors d'oeuvres and drinks will be served at the reception, which will be from 6 to 8 p.m. A 57-passenger chartered bus will be on hand at the hotel to take members to and from the reception. It would be most helpful if you could indicate whether you will be attending the reception when you submit your checks for the Saturday evening dinner.

Present for that memorable 1936 founding session were such noted lights as Frank Dobie, Walter Prescott Webb, and Henry Nash Smith.

News of members and others

Good news for **Ben Fountain** (TIL, class of 2006). Barnes & Noble has declared him the winner in the fiction category for its 2006 Discover Great New Writer Awards, citing Ben's new collection of short stories with that intriguing title, *Brief Encounters with Che Guevara* (HarperCollins). He was cited as "a writer with a sharp, provocative mind whose debut, a collection of eight short stories, offers both a journey to places most of us have never seen and a view on life and war that's full of ambiguity." Winning the award brought Ben a prize of \$10,000.

Robert M. Utley continues his groundbreaking treatment of the Texas Rangers in *Lone Star Justice* with his second volume, *Lone Star Lawmen* (Oxford Press). This one takes up the story in 1910. In his review for the *Dallas Morning News*, **Clay Reynolds** declares it to be a "well-researched study [that] adds enormously to Texas history." He sums up its content more colorfully by saying that "Mr. Utley details Ranger exploits of investigating race riots and lynchings, controlling wide-open oil boomtowns, chasing bootleggers, arresting gamblers and stopping vigilante violence, while at the same time dealing with election fraud, stock rustling, murder and bank robbery." Yep, that's Texas, all right.

Bryce Milligan's Wings Press is having a Texas spring of a different sort. His spring list of books includes seven books by Texas authors, including **Paul Christensen's** *Strangers in Paradise: A Memoir of Provence*, and Claude Stanush's collection of short stories, *Sometimes It's New York*. Also due publication this spring by Wings Press is a limited edition chapbook, **Robert Flynn's** *Burying the Farm*. This unique book features a letterpress cover on handmade paper that incorporates Texas mesquite leaves in the paper. Bryce reports that his books now are being distributed nationally by the Independent Publishers Group of Chicago, an arrangement that takes away his previous title as chief shipping clerk.

Mike Hardy of John M. Hardy Publishing, will issue **Bud Shrake's** latest novel, *Custer's Brother's Horse*, in September, a book set in Texas at the end of the Civil War. Cover photo is by **Bill Wittliff**. Concurrent with this new novel will be the reprinting of Shrake's *Strange Peaches*.

Paul Ruffin's second collection of essays, *The Segovia Chronicles*, recently was published by Louisiana Literature Press. Setting is the Segovia, Texas, area. Paul's third collection of stories, *Jesus in the Mist*, will be released by the University of South Carolina Press. Recently, Paul, who lives down in Huntsville, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize for an essay he wrote for *Connecticut Review*.

L.D. and LaVerne Harrell Clark, the prolific husband and wife writing team at Smithville, Texas, have done some creative estate planning. They are providing in their will an endowment fund to benefit the creative writing program in the Department of English and the Southwest Regional Humanities Center at Texas State University-San Marcos. The Smiths' house in Smithville and 240 acres of land in Bastrop County will be a part of the bequest. Income from the endowment will cover stipends and related costs of a writer-in-residence who will live at the Clarks' present home in Smithville for four to six months. Clark Fiction Awards will be presented annually in two categories—for a published novel of more than 45,000 words and for a published novella of between 20,000 and 45,000 words. Judges will be chosen from the Texas State's English Department and the Southwest Regional Humanities Center in conjunction with the Texas Institute of Letters. The Clarks became TIL members in 2001. They have been married for 55 years. L.D. has written fourteen books; LaVerne, eight books.

In the nature of errata: Last issue we made note of Jack Selden's new book, *Return: The Parker Story* (about Quanah and Cynthia Ann), but we assigned it the wrong publisher. The book actually is published by Clacton Press.

Here was the headline in the *New York Times* (Feb. 8, 2007): "What He Learned While Writing His Book, Whether or Not It's Theater." Story went on to tell about **Lawrence Wright's** one-man show on the Great White Way in which, beginning March 1, he regales audiences with the story-behind-the story concerning his widely admired book about the formation of terrorists, *The Looming Tower* (Knopf). The show is entitled "My Trip to Al-Qaeda." Larry, who spent nearly five years researching the book, much of that time in dangerous climes, will be appearing at the Culture Project in SoHo. We should say that Larry is no stranger to the stage. He has written plays, and while at Woodrow Wilson High School in Dallas he took roles in *Oklahoma!* and *Our Town*.

Michael Zagst has a new address—Wimberley, Texas, instead of Truchas, New Mexico. An inspiration to move struck him, he says, after he spent two days this winter on the metal roof of his Truchas house, shoveling off two feet of snow above a layer of ice while tethered to a rope about his waist. That's when he decided to leave.

The National Book Critics Circle will confer its 2007 Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing this month to **Steven G. Kellman**, who is film critic for the *San Antonio Current*, a contributing writer for *The Texas Observer*; and professor of comparative literature at UT-San Antonio.

Paul Baker and **Bill Wittliff** will be presented Texas Medal of Arts Awards by the Texas Cultural Trust in April. Baker was the founding director of the Dallas Theater Center among other things, and Wittliff—well, read above about him. Walter Cronkite and Sissy Spacek were among the others honored. CBS newsman Bob Schieffer will emcee the April 3 event in Austin.

Bill Crider's short story, "Cranked," has been nominated by the Mystery Writers of America for the Edgar Award for best short story of 2006. Winners will be announced at the Edgar Awards banquet on April 26 in New York at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Lou Dubose, who teamed with the late **Molly Ivins** with *Bushwhacked*, is at it again. This time he and Jake Bernstein have published *Vice: Dick Cheney and the Hijacking of the American Presidency* (Random House).

Sorry to report the death of Daniel Stern, who was Cullen Distinguished Professor of English in the University of Houston's Creative Writing Program. Stern was 78. **Fritz Lanham** wrote the obit for the *Houston Chronicle* that detailed Stern's colorful and accomplished life.

The *Southwest Review* has named Hester Kaplan and Linda Hall as 2006 winners of the McGinnis-Ritchie award for non-fiction, and Baron Wormser and Caroline as winners for fiction. Daniel Mark Epstein and April Bernard have won the Elizabeth Matchett Stover Memorial award for poetry. Lynn Aarti Chandhok won the 2006 Morton Marr Poetry Prize.

(Caption for photograph)

TIL president Fran Vick and former president C.W. Smith in a quiet moment at the February councilors' meeting at Fran's condo in Dallas.