

# Texas Institute of Letters Spring/Summer 2017 Newsletter



[www.TexasInstituteofLetters.org](http://www.TexasInstituteofLetters.org)

Prepared by TIL Secretary Sergio Troncoso.

### *Communiqué from the President*

Please help me welcome our new TIL Secretary, Sergio Troncoso, and offer our thanks to outgoing Secretary Karla K. Morton for all of her good work. Thankfully Karla has pledged to keep helping the TIL even as she continues her cross-country National Parks Tour (<http://www.texaspoetlaureate.com/tour.html>).



I'm pleased to announce our newest TIL council member: William Jack Sibley (<http://williamjacksibley.com>) of San Antonio. Many of you know Bill as a highly talented, award-winning novelist and screenwriter. Bill is also the visionary who created and manages the splendid "Dobie Dichos" literary gathering in Live Oak County each fall—always a magical evening of storytelling around the campfire.

Thanks again to everyone who helped make our annual meeting in El Paso so much fun (and a big success!) Next up is San Antonio April 6-7, 2018, which will coincide with the San Antonio Book Festival. Mark your calendars.

Update on Literary Contests: We are creating the first-ever physical awards for TIL literary prizes. The bases are unique, hand-cut pieces of native Texas fossiliferous limestone (shellstone.) Look for these to debut next April in San Antonio. Also this summer we are finalizing the judges for the next round of literary contests, which will be for works published in 2017. At our upcoming council meeting in September we will consider implementing a modest entry fee for the competitions. The rationale is that nearly every other literary contest in the country does so and for very good reasons. Consider: 1) Our rather shallow pool of TIL judges are flooded with more and more entries every year — especially as the number of self-published books rise. An entry fee helps filter the submissions and is a vital step in ensuring the continued sustainability of our contests. 2) The income derived from the entry fees will allow the TIL to provide a modest stipend to each of the judges for their many hours of work. At long last.

We're also working on fundraising initiatives (some of our literary awards remain unendowed), studying the idea to create a "TIL Writers in Schools" program, and much more! The September council meeting will be held at Robert Earl and Kathleen Keen's beautiful Hill Country ranch, courtesy of the Keens. As always, your thoughts/suggestions/feedback regarding the TIL are welcome. You can contact me at: [president@texasinstituteofletters.org](mailto:president@texasinstituteofletters.org)

*Steve Davis*

## Member News

(Fifty-one updates from TIL Members, in the order received)

**Lynn Hoggard's** *Bushwhacking Home and Other Poems* from TCU Press appeared in April. It's her sixth book and first full collection of poetry.

**Joe Holley**, in his final months as a *Houston Chronicle* editorial writer, was a Pulitzer-Prize finalist for a series of editorials on guns and gun culture in Texas. "The recognition was something of a shock, since Pulitzer judges traditionally recognize editorials that change minds or laws. In Texas, obviously, neither of those transformations are likely when it comes to guns."



Joe is retiring from the *Chronicle*, but will continue writing his weekly "Native Texan" column. Trinity University Press is publishing *Hometown Texas*, a collection of his columns, later this year. He will be spending more time at the little house he and Laura own in Marathon and working on a Big Bend-related book, as well as writing the column. Column ideas are always welcome.

**Light Cummins** has been busy speaking at a number of places about his two most recent books, *Allie Victoria Tennant and the Visual Arts in Dallas* (2015) and *Texan Identities: Getting Beyond Myth, Memory and Fallacy in Texas History* (2016.) He was also recent speaker at the XI Texas Aesthetic sponsored by the Reaves/Foltz Gallery in Houston. He received a 2017 grant for summer writing on his current book project entitled *Into the Vast and Beautiful Land: Anglo-American Migration into Spanish Louisiana and Mexican Texas*. This volume will be an edited compendium comprised of about a dozen of his historical articles published between 1980 and 2016, with a special introduction and an updated historical bibliography. He and his wife Victoria are participating in the 2017 Mayborn Center Literary Non-Fiction Conference. As joint authors, both of them continue on their longer-term book project entitled *Matrons to Modern Culture: Women and the Promotion of the Visual Arts in Texas, 1911-1942*. On a personal note, he is also writing for publication a reminiscence about his father who passed away in San Antonio this year at the age of 101. As a young boy, his father had a neighbor who once commanded a cavalry post on the Texas frontier after the Civil War, while as an older man he personally knew an astronaut who had walked on the surface of the moon— a rich life rooted deeply in the Texas heritage for over a century.

**Judy Alter's** novella, *The Color of Fear*, is the seventh title in her Kelly O'Connell Mysteries series. Judy has several projects lined up and is hard at work on them and on learning to walk again after a complicated hip revision.

**Mark Busby's** first collection of poetry, *Through Our Times: Occasional Poems 1960-2017*, was published this spring by Lamar University Literary Press. Mark read from the collection at the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University in late April.

**Fran Vick** and her husband were inducted in the inaugural Hall of Fame at RecSports at the University of Texas at Austin—Ross for his prowess as a fast pitch softball pitcher in the 1950's and 1960's. He was one of the best, going to four world tournaments before he was through with fast pitch softball. Fran was inducted for playing volleyball with her sorority, Alpha Chi Omega, and coming in second. Ross was previously inducted into the TAAF Hall of Fame.



“When I am not being touted for my athletic abilities, I am working on a book with Jane Monday and her husband, surgeon Charles Monday, on Dr. A. E. Spohn of Corpus Christi, Texas. This will be Jane's and my third book on South Texas. Spohn's story is incredible. He brought the rabies vaccine back to the United States from Dr. Louis Pasteur after making a mad dash to Paris in an effort to save Henrietta King's half brother, Will Chamberlain, from the attack of a rabid coyote, and was successful.”

**Gerald Duff's** new novel *Nashville Burning* will be published by TCU Press in September of 2017. It's currently listed and described on the Amazon website.

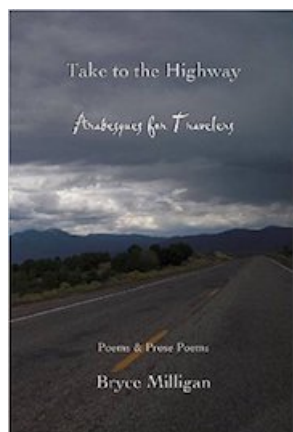
**Pat Carr** will be giving an advanced fiction workshop for the International Women's Writing Guild at Muhlenberg College, July 7-14, and she will be mentoring the Hemingway Retreat at the Hemingway/Pfeiffer Center in Piggott, Arkansas, November 7-10. *The Persimmon Tree* just published her anti-war piece, “Autobiography,” in their spring issue.

**Sarah Bird:** “I went *way* out of my comfort range and did something that makes me quite happy. I spoke at a fundraiser luncheon for Annie's List and during my speech, the group received \$100,000 in texted pledges and donations. And all of it goes to put more progressive, female candidates in offices statewide.”

3: A Taos Press is honored to offer acclaimed poet **Leslie Ullman's** latest book—a hybrid collection of essays, poems, and writing exercises. Inviting writers and serious readers into the spaces poetry can open up around us and inside us, *Library Of Small Happiness* focuses on aspects of craft while embracing a holistic approach that makes accessible the unique



intelligence of poetry. “My book might be especially helpful to teachers, either for class prep or to use as a text.”



**Bryce Milligan's** *Take to the Highway: Arabesques for Travelers* (West End Press, 2016) received the Notable Writers Book Award at a ceremony in March hosted by the San Antonio Public Library. The book was also a finalist for the Balcones Poetry Prize. Milligan finally finished editing *Literary San Antonio*, which TCU Press will bring out early in 2018, in time for the city's Tricentennial celebrations (and the TIL gathering in San Antonio next spring). Milligan and noted scholar Tomás Ybarra-Frausto will conduct a series of pláticas throughout 2018 discussing the city's literary heritage. Milligan's Wings Press is proud to be publishing this fall **Carolyn Osborn's** *Durations: A Memoir and Personal Essays*, which Laura Furman calls “an engrossing, satisfying, and rewarding book from one of Texas's best writers,” and Andrei Codrescu praises as “detailed, vivid and unforgettable.” Wings Press's

best selling title remains John Howard Griffin's classic, *Black Like Me*, which was just reprinted yet again. First published in 1961, it unfortunately remains a “book for our time.”

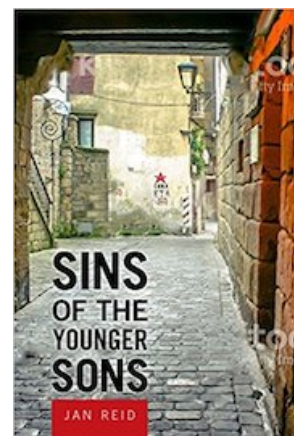
**Jerry Bradley** won the 2017 Boswell Poetry Prize from Texas Christian University and received poetry awards from the Conference of College Teachers of English and the Texas College English Association. He has poems in recent issues of *Main Street Rag*, *Evening Street Review*, *Writing Texas*, *Cape Rock*, *Visions International*, and several anthologies including *The New English Verse*.

**T. Lindsay Baker** is preparing to start writing a book, *Eating Up Route 66*, on the foodways of historic roadside dining along former U.S. Highway 66 from Chicago to Los Angeles. Although he has been driving 1928-31 Ford Model A cars since he was a teenager, he is about to leave on Independence Day on a 5,500-mile trip both directions along the 85% of historic pavement that remains from the former U.S. highway in a 1930 Ford station wagon. His purpose is to refresh his memory on the fatigue, discomfort, and uncertainty of cross-country travel in the types of motor vehicles for which the road was designed and constructed. All the way he will be taking careful written notes on the performance of the vehicle and on the traveler experience, which it is hoped will enhance the content of the published study.

**Ronnie Dugger:** “Since last July I have been writing essays for *Reader Supporter News*, the online reporting/comment service, analyzing and criticizing Trump and now his administration; called for his impeachment about two, three weeks ago. I am also long-run writing now a book about nuclear weapons ethics, also writing occasionally for the strongly continuing *Texas Observer*.”

**Sergio Troncoso** has a short story, “Library Island,” in the Winter 2017 issue of the *Michigan Quarterly Review*, and an essay, “Passing Ambition,” in the anthology *We Wear the Mask: Fifteen True Stories of Passing in America* (Beacon Press, 2017). A resident faculty member of the Yale Writers’ Conference, Troncoso finished teaching a nonfiction workshop in June.

**Jan Reid’s** novel *Sins of the Younger Sons* has been published by TCU Press. Bookstore events through the summer are scheduled in Austin, Marfa, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and Santa Fe. Specifics on those can be found as they’re updated on his new website <http://www.JanReid.com>. His work in progress is a sequel, at least in its initial setting, of his long-ago first novel, *Deerinwater*. Its working title is *Two Bubbles Off Plumb*.



**Larry D. Thomas’s** most recently published book is *Bleak Music: Poems & Photographs of the American Southwest*. The book features twenty of Thomas’s poems written in response to twenty photographs by Jeffrey C. Alfier, the publisher/co-editor of the *San Pedro River Review*. In early 2017, Thomas’s online chapbook titled *Pecos* was published by *Right Hand Pointing* and is available for free reading/downloading at <http://www.righthandpointing.net/larry-d-thomas-pecos>. Thomas’s poetry has recently appeared in *Callaloo*, *Arkansas Review: A Journal of Delta Studies*, *Southwestern American Literature*, *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*, *San Pedro River Review*, and *Green Hills Literary Lantern*.

**Carolyn Osborn’s** new book, *Durations*, subtitled *A Memoir and Personal Essays*, will be published by Wings Press September 1, 2017. The title comes from frequent World War II reliance on the word which Carolyn, as a child, translated to “Nobody knows how long.” Her father used it in 1942 when Carolyn, her brother, and her mother were sent home to Tennessee from his California army post for “the duration.” A “duration” also covers the years of her mother’s mental illness, her father’s remarriage, and the family’s move to a small town in Texas. Other durations include personal essays about her experience as a sometimes reluctant high school cheerleader, travels to Scotland ancestor hunting, to Egypt, and the Galapagos, an appreciation of her father, and learning, with her husband’s help, how to run a small cattle ranch.

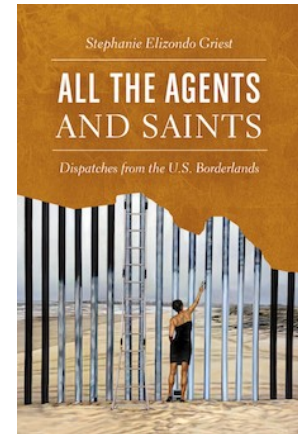
For the last two weeks of May, **C.M. Mayo** was the artist-in-residence at the Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Far West Texas. She is at work on a memoir, *World Waiting for Dream: A Turn in Far West Texas*.

Her long essay about the Mexican literary landscape and the power of the book will be published this month in a Kindle edition by her own imprint, Dancing Chiva as *Dispatch from the Sister Republic or, Papelito Habla*. Excerpts, including those on the first printing press of the Americas in Mexico City, and the “Tenth Muse, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz”—the 17th century literary nun featured on Mexico’s 200-peso bill—are posted this link:

<http://www.cmmayo.com/articles/dispatch-kindle.html>.

Mayo's review of Patrick Dearen's *Bitter Waters: The Struggles of the Pecos River* appears in *Literal Magazine*, May 2017, online at <http://literalmagazine.com/bitterwaters/>.

**Stephanie Elizondo Griest** will be publishing her fifth book, *All the Agents & Saints: Dispatches from the U.S. Borderlands*, in July with UNC Press. It explores the social, political, and existential ramifications of having an international borderline slice your ancestral land in two, as experienced by Tejanos in South Texas and Mohawks in upstate New York. This fall, she'll be launching a national book tour with stops in D.C., NYC, Boston, North Carolina, and all over Texas (Corpus, Austin, San Antonio, San Marcos, Houston, Kingsville). For details, visit: <http://www.StephanieElizondoGriest.com>.



**James Crisp:** "In March my essay, "Who Were the Texians?" appeared as a chapter in *Single Star of the West: The Republic of Texas, 1836-1845* (University of North Texas Press), pp. 81-109...

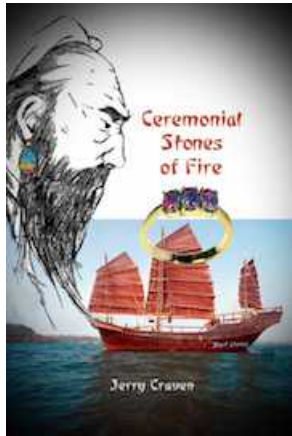
I have another piece currently with the prospective publisher -- it is an essay comparing the 1960 and 2004 movies titled *The Alamo*, starring John Wayne and Billy Bob Thornton, respectively, as Davy Crockett. That essay is scheduled to appear as a chapter in a multi-authored work on how movies have treated 19th-century America, with each historian exploring one or two movies...

My next work will be the biography and annotated memoir of Herman Ehrenberg (a Prussian teenager who fought on the Texan side of the Revolution)."

**Jesse Sublett:** "It's been a busy season, launching the release of "Armadillo World Headquarters: A Memoir," by Eddie Wilson with Jesse Sublett, distributed by UT Press. Eddie and I have had a great time doing our Jagger/Richards act on the radio, TV, and book events, such as the Austin History Center on May 9th, where we had an overflow crowd... We'll continue doing events for the Dillo book in the fall, along with the publication of my book on the history of Esther's Follies, Austin's long-running (40+ years) political satire, magic, and comedy revue on Sixth Street. Just got back from Nashville, researching a true crime book on a murder case from 19889 that was tangled up in music chart fixing, sleazy indie promoters, and dope running—right up my alley.

This fall, Texas Tech Press releases the paperback edition of *Broke, Not Broken: Homer Maxey's Texas Bank War*, by Broadus Spivey and Jesse Sublett, the true riches to rags story of Homer Maxey (father of sculptor Glenna Goodacre), and his epic legal battle to expose corrupt bankers

in West Texas and regain his reputation. TTUP says it has been one of their bestsellers. Austin attorney Broadus Spivey is a past president of the Texas State Bar.”



**Jerry Craven:** “My 2017 publication, *Ceremonial Stones of Fire* (<http://www.angelinariverpress.com>) is a collection of stories based on experiences and people I knew in Malaysia, Singapore, Nepal, Thailand, and along the pirate coasts of the Straits of Malacca. Coming soon from Angelina River Press will be *Parallel Hours*, a novel Andrew Geyer and I wrote about events in the late 20th century and the early 13th century in Azerbaijan. Fellow TIL members **Terry Dalrymple**, **Andrew Geyer**, and I have completed a draft of a collection of tightly connected short stories set in Texas. We will soon have it ready for publication before the summer is over, and we will be looking for a publisher. During the writing of the book, each of us published several of the stories in literary journals.”

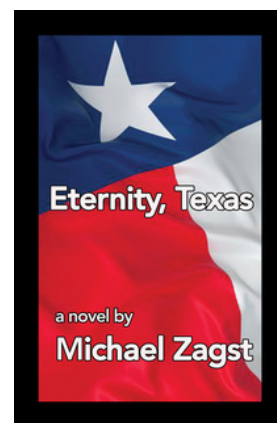
**Greg Garrett** had an interesting spring. It’s not every year you balance an appearance on Fox News, an interview with *Playboy*, and appearances that ranged from Dallas Baptist University to BookExpo America in New York City. His new nonfiction book, *Living with the Living Dead*, was one of Oxford University Press’s lead trade titles for 2017, and it launched on May 21 with a party at BookPeople. He began a new novel, a multicultural tale set in France during the Bastille Day attack of 2016, and a new nonfiction book on race and film. As a part of that book’s research, he’s helping Washington National Cathedral program a 2018 weekend on race and film with critics and filmmakers in attendance to talk about how narrative can help us discuss race and prejudice. He continues to teach at Baylor, and to write in various cool places, including Paris, France and Kingsland, Texas.

**Lonn Taylor** has an article about his childhood memories of Washington, D.C. in the 1940s and 50s coming out in the summer issue of *White House History*, the journal of the White House Historical Association. He continues to write his weekly “Rambling Boy” column, about people and places in Texas, for the Marfa *Big Bend Sentinel* (the paper recently published his 700th column) and to do a weekly radio broadcast on KRTS Marfa Public Radio.

**Christopher Cook:** “After a couple of years in Mexico and a couple of years in Central Texas, my wife Katka (Katerina Pinosova) and I are heading back home to Prague in the Czech Republic this summer. It’s been... well, it’s been an interesting time to be living in the USA after so many years abroad (I first left back in 1994). The highlights of this extended journey have been the many occasions to spend time with family and friends, and to make some new friends. Seeing so much of my writer pals, especially the Knuckleheads in Austin, has been an ongoing feast (quite literally: all those long discursive lunches at Threadgill’s). I will sorely miss that. Hasta luego, mis amigos.”



**Michael Zagst's** new novel is *Eternity, Texas*, published by Buffalo House Books in paperback and Kindle. From the jacket copy: In the months between visiting a Stone Age settlement and attending a small town rodeo, a writer of historical markers tries to make sense of Texas history as he is drawn into a scandal involving stolen and forged documents...It all comes down to Eternity, Texas. Supposedly, the town earned its name from a small religious sect in the 1820s who considered this part of the world to be heaven on earth. Another version suggests it was the exact opposite, that even a brief stay there would feel like eternity. As with any fact or any myth, the town is a combination of both.



**Robert Bonazzi's** second book about John Howard Griffin, *Reluctant Activist*, will be published by TCU Press in the autumn of 2017. His first book about the Texas author, *Man in the Mirror: The Story of Black Like Me* (Orbis, 1997) was reviewed widely and enthusiastically, selling over 80 thousand copies. *Mirror* and *Black Like Me* are both e-books from Wings Press. Bonazzi is the Executor for the Griffin Estate.

**Darwin Payne:** "The June issue of D magazine has reprinted my article on the KKK in Dallas in the 1920s which first appeared in *Legacies* in 1996.

Article: <https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/2017/june/when-dallas-was-the-most-racist-city-in-america/>.

Editor's Note: <https://www.dmagazine.com/frontburner/2017/06/when-dallas-was-the-most-racist-city-in-america/>.

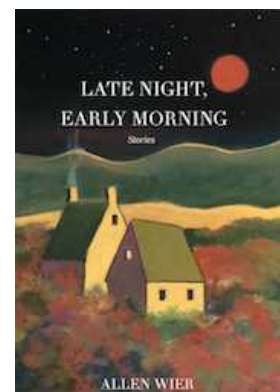
And on June 28 I'll be speaking at the Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas on the same topic: <http://www.hpumc.org/event/2017-06-28-dallas-and-the-kkk-a-dark-chapter-in-the-1920s-darwin-payne/>."

**Joe Lansdale:** "TV series based on my series of books about Hap and Leonard, cleverly called *Hap and Leonard*, has been renewed for a third season. *Bubba and the Cosmic Blood Suckers* comes out this fall from Subterranean Press, and next year from Mulholland/Little Brown a new novel, *Jackrabbit Smile*, is forthcoming."

**David Lee's** new book *Bluebonnets, Firewheels, and Brown Eyed Susans: New and Used Poems From the Bandera Rag and Bone Shop* is out from Wings Press. This past fall he taught in the MFA program at the University of Nevada, Reno. He has also been actively working to prevent the Trump administration from rescinding National Monument status to Monuments in the American Southwest.

**Allen Wier** retired from the University of Tennessee for less than a year when he was offered and accepted the Watkins Endowed Visiting Professorship in Creative Writing at Murray State University in Kentucky. One of his duties he has thoroughly enjoyed is being the nonfiction editor for the university's literary journal, *New Madrid*. If you have an essay seeking a home, consider *New Madrid*.

Allen's new collection of short stories, *Late Night, Early Morning*, is forthcoming from the University of Tennessee Press in October, 2017. Allen's artist wife, Donnie, did a pastel painting that the press is using as the book's cover.



Recent poems and essays of **Carol Coffee Reposa** have appeared or are forthcoming in *Red River Review*, *Amarillo Bay*, *The San Antonio Express-News*, *Blue Hole*, *Texas Weather* (anthology), *An Amazing Eclectic Anthology*, and *Voices de la Luna*. She continues to plod through a new manuscript of poetry which she hopes to finish by 2050 at the latest. To her considerable surprise, she learned in May that she had been named 2018 Texas Poet Laureate.

**Lisa Sandlin:** "I participated in a panel at the Dallas Book Fest, very fun; am teaching at the Story Catchers Workshop in mid-June in Chadron, NE. The El Paso TIL meeting sounded great!"

From **Nicolás Kanellos**, a list of recent publications. The first is a history of contemporary Chicano literary publishing.

"El libro chicano y sus editoriales." *Historia comparada de las Américas: Perspectivas de la integración cultural*. Ed. Liliana Weinberg. México, DF: UNAM Centro de Investigaciones sobre América Latina y el Caribe, 2017. 573-590.

"Brief History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States" and "Introduction of 'I'm Going to Mexico.'" *The Routledge Anthology of U.S. Drama*. Ed. Joshua E. Foster. NY: Routledge, 2017.

"Sotero Figueroa: Writing Afro-Caribbeans into History in the Late Nineteenth Century," *The Latino Nineteenth Century*. Eds. Rodrigo Lazo and Jesse Alemán. NY: New York University Press, 2016. 323-340.

"Notes on the Mexican American Circus." Ed. Katie Lavers. London: Routledge, 2016. 377-385.

"Two Legacies: Chuck Tatum and Tomás Rivera." *De Aztán al Río de la Plata: Studies in Honor of Charles M. Tatum*. Ed. Sergio Martínez. Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2016. 41-48.

**Jan Seale:** “My newest book, a collection of 45 essays titled *Ordinary Charms*, is forthcoming in the fall from Lamar University Literary Press. In April, my fantasy for young audiences, *Bug Joy*, was seen by 700 children and adults at the University of Texas-RGV theatre. It featured two lively cicadas, two vicious roaches, and a brother and sister attempting to have fun in the summer. In May, five of us Valley writers who contributed to Laurence Musgrove’s and Terry Dalrymple’s *The Texas Weather Anthology* gave a reading at Barnes & Noble, McAllen. And this spring I received a certificate of appreciation from the current RiverSedge literary journal staff at the celebration of their 40th anniversary for having been one of the founding editors.”

**Clay Reynolds** published, “Reaching the Summit: Ruminations on Retirement of a Baby Boomer: A Confession and a Valediction.” *Texas Review* 37.3&4 (2016-2017): 139-149; and “Balanced Marriage.” *Texas Review* 37.3&4 (2016-2017): 95-118.

**José E. Limón** presented a paper entitled “Nelson Algren's Texas Fiction: Mexicans and Anglos in the Great Depression” at the annual Arte Público Conference in Houston on February 10, 2017. The paper is derived from a chapter from his book-in-progress, *Neither Friends, Nor Strangers: Anglos and Mexicans in the Literary Making of Texas*. He also organized and co-chaired three panels on border anthropology for the Inter-University Programs in Latino Research conference in San Antonio on May 18, 2017.

**Sarah Cortez’s** most recent book, *Vanishing Points: Poem and Photographs of Texas Roadside Memorials*, has won three prizes: Southwest Book of the Year, first prize for Editing from Press Women of Texas, and first prize for Editing from the National Federation of Press Women. She has completed her second year as faculty at the West Chester Poetry Conference in Pennsylvania, and completed keynotes and/or teaching for many organizations, such as the Houston Writers Guild, Dallas Book Festival, We The People, Bayou City Literary Festival, and the Oklahoma City Literary Festival. She recently judged for the International Latino Book Awards.

**Mike Cox**, who escaped from his hometown of Austin to the hills of Wimberley last year, has a new book out on the history and folklore of that big red granite building at the head of Congress Avenue, *Legends and Lore of the Texas Capitol* (Charleston, SC: The History Press). He says the book had unfortunately gone to press before lawmakers fell into a physical confrontation near the end of the recently completed regular session that ended with one House member threatening to shoot another member. He does, however, save for posterity in his book a mention that the Legislature once passed a resolution honoring Albert Henry Desalvo, the so-called Boston Strangler. He says he particularly enjoyed researching and writing the history of the 1888-vintage state house, which his great-grandfather had a hand in building. And no, he was *not* one of the convict laborers.

Cox currently is at work on two more books: a look at historic sites across the Western U.S. for a book from Two Dot Press tentatively titled *Finding the Wild West*; the other the first in-depth look at one of the nation's more kooky (and deadly) 19th century PR stunts.

**Bobby Byrd's** poem "Pomegranates" appeared in *Readings in Contemporary Poetry* published by the Dia Art Foundation and edited by Vincent Katz. The book anthologizes 96 poets and their poems featured in the Dia/Chelsea Poet Series in New York City from 2010 to 2016. Byrd's reading is available in video and audio at:

<http://www.diaart.org/media/watch-listen/todd-colby-and-bobby-byrd-video-from-readings-in-contemporary-poetry/media-type/video>

(beginning at 32:15); and

<http://whitepantiesanddeadfriends.blogspot.com/2015/12/my-reading-at-dia-chelsea-nyc-september.html>.

**Lee Merrill Byrd and Bobby**, in their roles as co-publishers of Cinco Puntos Press, are honored to be publishing this year two books by TIL members: *The Last Cigarette on Earth*, a collection of poems by **Benjamin Alire Sáenz** (August, 2017); and **David Bowles' Feathered Serpent / Heart of Dark Sky, The Origin Myths of Mexico** (October 2017). Lee is the editor of both books.



On July 17, **Celeste Bedford Walker** will be the guest speaker for a writers group called Scriptwriters of Houston. She looks back on her long, forty-year career as a playwright and shares what she's learned about the art and the audacity of writing for the theater.

**William Hauptman:** "My musical written in collaboration with the late Roger Miller, *Big River*, was revived by the Encores Series at City Center this year, and favorably received. I also have a new novel, *Journey to the West*, which will be published early this fall by iuniverse. TIL members will be able to order if from my website (<http://www.WilliamHauptman.net>, but may change as publication nears)."

**Laura Wilson's** exhibition of 85 photographs, *That Day: Pictures in the American West*, is on view at the Whitney Museum of Western Art through August 13. She also has twelve of her portraits of Donald Judd on view in the exhibition Judd/Malevich at the Galerie Gmurzynska in Zurich, Switzerland.

**William Spencer:** "My new short story collection entitled *The Unorthodox Dr. Draper and Other Stories* will see publication in late July. I expect to do a signing at BookPeople in August. The early reviews are out (*Publishers Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*) and I am very pleased with them."



**David Parsons:** “In April I was asked to read again the poem, *Texian*, that I had written for and read at the unveiling and opening of the Texas Flag Park ([www.texasflagpark.com](http://www.texasflagpark.com)) in 2011. The park featuring a statue of a Texian soldier and the 13 Texas battle flags of the revolution is in Conroe next to the main Montgomery County Library on I-45N.

I was humbled and honored also learn that they are planning to have the poem placed in the park on a bronze plaque for visitors to the park to read. City of Houston’s Favorite Poem Project will include my favorite poem (*Song of Wandering Aengus* by W.B. Yeats) and a short narrative I wrote about my first encounter with the poem in their upcoming anthology edited by Robin Davidson, Houston Poet Laureate.

I have been asked to be the Final Judge in the X.J. Kennedy Poetry Prize sponsored by Texas Review Press (Please encourage good aspiring poets with their first book ready to be published to enter): <https://texasreview.submittable.com/submit/1489/2017-x-j-kennedy-poetry-prize>.

I also have a poem forthcoming in the anthology, *Carrying the Branch: Poets in Search of Peace* and was selected to lead a Planting the Oar seminar for the National Endowment of the Humanities Telling Project for Vets.”



## **Texas Institute of Letters**

### **Officers**

President, Steve Davis, San Marcos  
Vice President, Carmen Tafolla, San Antonio  
Secretary, Sergio Troncoso, El Paso  
Treasurer, W.K. (Kip) Stratton, Austin  
Recording Secretary, Joe Holley, Houston

### **Council Members**

Sarah Cortez, Houston, second term ends April 2018  
Christine Granados, Fredericksburg, first term ends April 2018  
Kurt Heinzelman, Austin, first term ends April 2018  
Diana Lopez, Victoria, first term ends April 2018  
Russell Martin, Dallas, second term ends April 2018  
William Jack Sibley, San Antonio, first term ends 2019  
Jerry Thompson, Laredo, second term ends April 2018  
Ann Weisgarber, Sugar Land, second term ends April 2019