



THE TIL NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018/Spring 2019 Edition

Greetings from The President:

Dear Companeros TIL-eros!

It's the busiest part of the year as far as wonderful news goes! We have 13 literary awards to announce, 17 new members to induct, and some delightful programming for the TIL Awards Weekend coming up in just SIX WEEKS -- (Banquet tickets and hotel rooms need to be reserved now, if you haven't already. See website at <http://www.texasinstituteofletters.org> for more info.)

In addition, your Council voted in January to add a new digital aspect to awards consideration. Starting with the two award areas that receive the overwhelming bulk of the requests for digital submissions --the Bud Shrake Short Nonfiction Award and the Kay Catarulla Short Story Award-- the 2019 submissions for 2020 TIL Literary Awards will allow digital publication by solid sources to qualify for submission. (A detailed definition of qualification was voted on and will be included in the 2019 Call for Submissions this fall.) When it comes to writers and writing, we at the TIL Council intend to "have your back" and facilitate the flourishing of high-quality literary production in and from this state.

The TIL 2019 Literary Awards Press Release is out, and you should be receiving a copy by email separately. AND, your favorite part—authors send in their news for the newsletter! Find out what's happening in the world of writers and writing by checking out some of these amazing accomplishments below (under *Member News*.)

Most importantly, let's plan for a chance to get together and celebrate at our Annual Awards Weekend, six weeks from now, April 26-27, at the beautiful Casa de Palmas Renaissance Hotel in McAllen, Texas. You can fly into McAllen or fly into Harlingen (an hour away), or drive on down to the border like the San Antonians and some Austinites do.

Hasta muy pronto, and looking forward to seeing your inspired faces!

Carmen Tafolla

President, Texas Institute of Letters

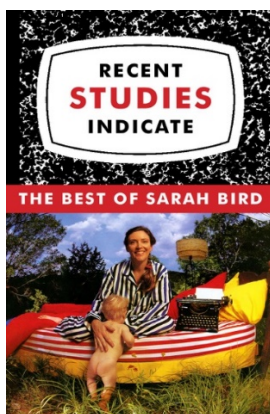
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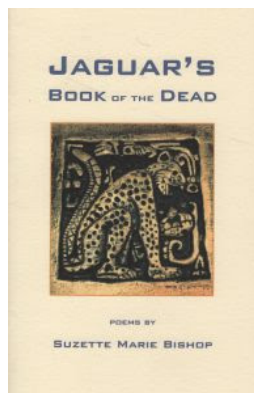
MEMBER NEWS:

Alwynn Barr was interviewed by C-Span during the summer to discuss his book *Black Texans* and its on-going importance.

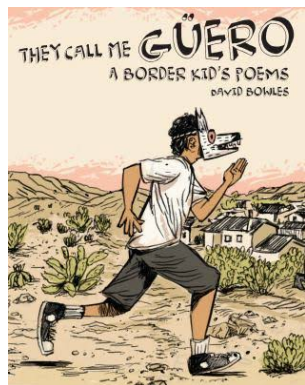
Sarah Bird is utterly thrilled with the cover that Derek George, brilliant designer at UT Press came up with for the collection of her past work that the press will be publishing this spring.



Suzette Marie Bishop's poetry chapbook, *Jaguar's Book of the Dead* was published in November. <http://presapress.com/books/jaguars-book-of-the-dead>



David Bowles's book *They Call Me Guero*, (2018) published by TIL Members **Lee and Bobby Byrd's** Cinco Puntos Press, has won the following awards: Pura Belpré Author Honor Book; ALSC Notable Children's Book; Walter Award Honor Book; Claudia Lewis Award; Bank Street College of Education Notable Poetry Book; National Council of Teachers of English Award; Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award; and most recently—TIL's Jean Flynn Award for Best Middle Grade Book. That's what we call a "sweep."



Norma Cantu's new novel, *CABAÑUELAS*, has been published by University of New Mexico Press. Also, she reminds us that there is a new writer's retreat in South Texas: San Ysidro Ranch Writers' Residency -- the four or five writers selected will be invited to a solitary retreat (with stipend) for a month each on a ranch near Carrizo Springs and 25 miles as the crow flies from the Mexican border.

Sandra Cisneros, was selected as one of the [Frederick Douglass 200](#) which is made up of people who most embody Douglass's work. She has also won the [PEN/Nabokov Award for International Literature](#).

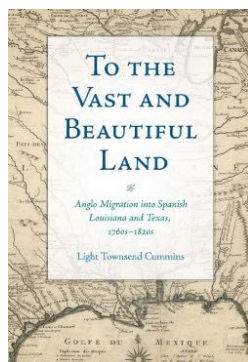
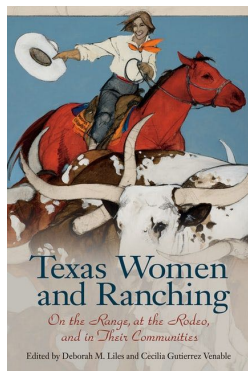


Photo by Keith Dannemiller, 2018

Cary Clack will be editing an anthology of Black Texas writers for the Witliffe series, and is researching all writings by African-Americans (and African-Tejanos) from this state.

James Crisp contributed a chapter entitled *Delineating Davy, Defining Ourselves: The Alamo in 1960 and in 2004* to *Writing History with Lightning: Cinematic Representations of Nineteenth-Century America* (LSU Press) whose purpose is “not so much to point out historical errors (although we can't resist that), but to show how the films reflect the hopes, fears, and preoccupations of the period in which they were produced. This kind of film criticism was a new departure for me, and I learned a lot as I did the research.” His current project is (still) the edited Texas Revolution memoir of Herman Ehrenberg, in which both Ehrenberg, a prisoner in April and May of 1836, and the Mexican officer in command at Matagorda, invented people who didn't exist in their respective memoirs and reports. Crisp says, “Explaining how we know this, and why they might have lied about what happened, is my difficult but rewarding task.”

Light Cummins has retired from his faculty position in the History Department at Austin College, after forty years of service, and moved with his wife to Denton. His book, *To the Vast and Beautiful Land: Anglo Migration into Spanish Louisiana and Texas, 1760s – 1820s*, was published in February, 2019 by the Texas A&M University Press. He and his wife, Victoria, have signed a contract to edit a book of readings entitled *Making the Unknown Known: Women in Early Texas Art*. His chapter dealing with Federal art projects in Texas during the New Deal is forthcoming in Texas in *The New Deal*, edited by Milton Jordan and George Cooper, and he wrote the introduction for *Texas Women and Ranching*, edited by Deborah Liles and Cecilia Venable.



Steve Davis has edited a new book, *The Essential J. Frank Dobie* (Texas A&M University Press, Fall 2019) that contains Dobie's most vital and enduring writings, with a special emphasis on stories that only Dobie could tell, those resulting from his own matchless personal adventures. He rode twisting mountain trails throughout remote Mexico in search of lost mines and saved the Texas longhorn from extinction. During World War II, he dodged German V bombs in England and later observed the Nuremberg Trials and toured Hitler's chancellery. Believing that "Texas Needs Brains," Dobie was decades ahead of his time in championing civil rights and protecting the environment. The book is part of the Wittliff Collections Book Series. Steve is already working on a second book for that series: *Rivers of Texas: A Literary Companion*.

Jim Donovan's new book, *Shoot for the Moon: The Space Race and the Extraordinary Voyage of Apollo 11*, was published this month by Little Brown. Mike Collins, the command module pilot on that mission, has said, "This is the best book on Apollo I have read."

Gerald Duff was inducted into the Texas Literary Hall of Fame on March 15 in Fort Worth. Inducted with him was Susan Wittig Albert, Glenn Dromgoole, Gerald Duff, John Erickson, Jan Reid and Red Steagall.

Chris Ellery's *Canticles of the Body: Meditations on the Liturgical Cycle* was published late in 2018 by Resource Collections, the literary and academic imprint of Wipf & Stock Press. A collection of poems in the tradition of spiritual writers such as Rumi, Saint Francis, Thomas Merton, Rainer Maria Rilke, Madelaine L'Engle, Mary Oliver, and Rabindranath Tagore, *Canticles* superimposes the chakra of Kundalini yoga with the seasons of the liturgical calendar to create an extended meditation on the "body" in the many senses of the word, expressing observations, questions, and epiphanies arising out of the tension between spiritual aspiration and the facts of incarnate existence.



Wes Ferguson received a Gold Award in November 2018 from the International Regional Magazine Association for a travel feature story titled "The Big Empty" in *Texas Highways Magazine*.

Ben Fountain's account of the 2016 presidential election, *Beautiful Country Burn Again: Democracy, Rebellion, and Revolution*, was published last September by Ecco/HarperCollins to positive reviews in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *New York Review of Books*, among other places. The paperback edition will be published this coming September.

Don B. Graham's *Giant: Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, James Dean, Edna Ferber, and the Making of a Legendary American Film* (St. Martin's) is coming out in paperback on May 27.

Elizabeth Harris (*Mayhem: Three Lives of a Woman*) will be reading in the March 20 *Why There Are Words* (curated by **Alison Moore, (Dobie-Paisano fellow 2007/2008)** - at Malvern Books in Austin. The theme for this event is Alchemy. Harris states: "My idea of the Alchemy is the conversion of experience by writing into the gold of art." <http://elizabethharriswriter.com/>

William Hauptman's YA show, *Huckleberry Finn's Big River*, an abbreviated version of the adult show that won seven Tony Awards in New York in 1985 containing several songs by the late Roger Miller. This production was at Glen Echo, Maryland, at the Adventure Theater, was well-received by the critics, will play for a month; then on to Milwaukee and Oklahoma City. While this version of the show has nothing that should disturb children--that is, no Pap Finn trying to kill his own child-- it's not a completely innocent play and has several open discussions between Jim and Huck (who in this production are the same age) about race and slavery. Rogers & Hammerstein, who license the show, graciously made it possible.

Tish Hinojosa toured for her new record *West* with several shows in California, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon and Washington, then a March 30 performance at La Peña in Austin with internationally acclaimed singer and activist from Nicaragua, Katia Cardenal. She's headed down to McAllen for TIL Awards Weekend, and then off to Europe for presentations in London, Germany, Netherlands, and Italy. *My Homeland*, a re-make of her 1989 record *Homeland* will be ready for release this spring! The 30th anniversary edition is recorded in the same studio as the original, at The Fire Station in San Marcos, TX, with the original engineer, Gary Hickenbotham. You can pre-order the *My Homeland* CD at <http://www.mundotish.com>.



Katherine Hoerth was a featured poet at SCMLA Poet's Corner in San Antonio. In March, she will be read at Lone Star College for Writers in Performance. Recently, her poetry has been published in *Valparaiso Review*, *Southwestern American Literature*, *Huisache*, *Mezzo Cammin: A Journal of Formal Poetry by Women*, *Reunion*, and *Poets Reading the News*.

Jim Hornfischer was awarded the 2018 Samuel Eliot Morison Award during a ceremony on board the USS Constitution in August. The award is presented to a writer whose work "reflects the best of Admiral Morison: artful scholarship, patriotic pride, an eclectic interest in the sea and things maritime, and a desire to preserve the best of the past for future generations." Previous recipients include Patrick O'Brian, Nathaniel Philbrick, David McCullough, and Bernard Bailyn.

Nicolas Kanellos's Arte Público Press has been awarded the National Book Critics Circle's Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award. The award was conferred at a ceremony at the New School in New York City on March 14. Arte Público will be celebrating its 40th anniversary in November.

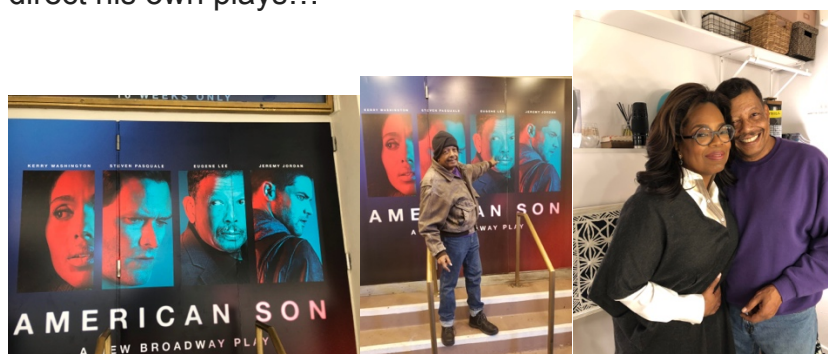
Steve G. Kellman's latest book, *The Restless Ilan Stavans: Outsider on the Inside*, will be published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in April.

<https://www.upress.pitt.edu/books/9780822965855/>

Joe Lansdale's next novel in the Hap and Leonard series, *The Elephant of Surprise*, will be published in March by Mulholland Books, a division of Little Brown. Also forthcoming is *Blood in the Gears*, a collection of his crime and mystery work. This is the second of four volumes from this press dealing with his science fiction, crime, horror, and Southern Gothic writings. Also, *The Sky Done Ripped* is forthcoming from Subterranean Press, third in a fantasy series about a brain-enhanced seal named, Ned. Really. An episode of *Creepshow* for the SHUDDER streaming channel has been filmed, based on the short story "The Companion" written by not only Joe, but, also, his children, Keith and Kasey Lansdale, and will premier sometime this year.

Gary M. Lavergne has announced his retirement from his position at The University of Texas at Austin. His last day as a UT employee will be March 31, 2019.

Eugene Lee: Hot off a Broadway run in *American Son*, new TIL Inductee Eugene Lee is delighted about becoming a new member of TIL, and about continuing to write and direct his own plays...



Jose Limón was awarded the Distinguished Scholarly Achievement Award by the Western Literature Association at their annual meeting in St. Louis, Missouri in Oct, 2018. Limón's scholarly article on San Antonio artist, Jesse Treviño, "Sighting Mexican America Among the Phantoms: Jesse Treviño and the Art of Remembrance," appeared in *Chiricú: Journal of Latina/o Literatures, Arts and Cultures*, 3/1, 2018.

C.M. Mayo's book, *METEOR*, which won the Gival Press Poetry Award, will launch at the Associated Writing Programs conference in Portland, Oregon, where she will participate in the Gival Press 20th anniversary celebration reading. Her seven haiku, "In the Guadalupe Mountains," written while Artist-in-Residence in Guadalupe Mountains

National Park in 2017, appear in the recent issue of *Cenizo Journal*.

<http://www.cmmayo.com>



Ann McCutchan's two operas will be given their first full productions in 2019. *Purewater*, an adaptation of Gide's novella *La Symphonie pastorale*, will be premiered at the Abrons Arts Center, NYC, June 1. *Swan's Inlet*, based on an original story, will be premiered at East Carolina University in November. In October 2018, *Here is Home*, a documentary on the life of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (author of *The Yearling*) was premiered in Gainesville, FL, and Ann, Rawlings's biographer, assisted filmmaker Sonya Doctorian with the script and appeared in the film as well. <https://vimeo.com/297967055>. Her Rawlings biography for W.W. Norton is in final edit, *Here Is Home: Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Cross Creek*.

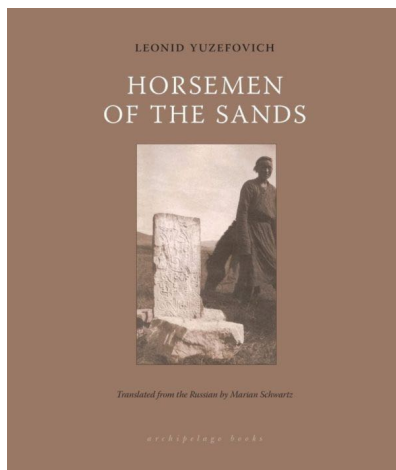
Pat Mora hopes that since we're all readers, we'll help promote and support Día de los Niños, Día de los Libros (Children's Day, Book Day, usually abbreviated to "Día") April 30th and every day of the year. <http://www.patmora.com/whats-dia>

Carolyn Osborn's essay, *Between the Waters*, will be published in the *Antioch Review's*, Fall 2019 issue. It's about searching for an immigrant great-grandfather's home in Donegal County, Ireland in 1956.

Carol Reposa, 2018 Texas Poet Laureate, has poems, reviews, and essays in *The San Antonio Express-News*, *The Enigmatist*, *The Larger Geometry*, *Poems for Peace*, *Voices de la Luna*, *Writing Texas 6*, and the 2019 *Texas Poetry Calendar*, with a fifth collection, *New and Selected Poems 2018* (TCU Press) scheduled for release later this year. She also has given readings and workshops at the San Antonio Museum of Art, St. Mary's University, The ASU Elmer Kelton Conference, the Langdon Conference, TACWT, and SCMLA. Meanwhile, in a parallel universe, she spends her days strolling along an endless sunny beach where she gathers sand dollars by the dozen.

José Rodríguez's new poetry collection, *This American Autopsy*, is forthcoming fall 2019 from University of Oklahoma Press. His memoir *House Built on Ashes*, was a finalist in creative nonfiction for the 2018 PEN America Los Angeles Literary Award.

Marian Schwartz's translation from the Russian of Leonid Yuzefovich's novella, *Horsemen of the Sands* was published in October by Archipelago Books. The novella was praised in *Publisher's Weekly*: "Shot through with a mythic and cipherlike style, Yuzefovich's novellas are cogent depictions of faith, obsession, power, and the ties that bind..." In January, Columbia University Press published her translation of Olga Slavnikova's *The Man Who Couldn't Die: The Tale of an Authentic Human Being*, part of its 100-volume Russian Library series, a "darkly sardonic novel of life in a post-Soviet Russia that keeps looking longingly to its totalitarian past.... Concise but densely packed and subtle in its satire. Well-known in Russia, Slavnikova is a writer American readers will want to have more of" (*Kirkus Reviews*).



Jan Seale got married the day after Thanksgiving "to a man I've known since childhood. (See photo.) For our honeymoon, we went on a Caribbean cruise in January where I taught memoir writing on the days we were at sea." Recently, she spoke at Book Day for a large club locally and also did a poetry reading in a series commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Presbyterian church in McAllen. She adds, "speaking of McAllen, I am delighted to welcome TIL to my hometown. Y'all come!"



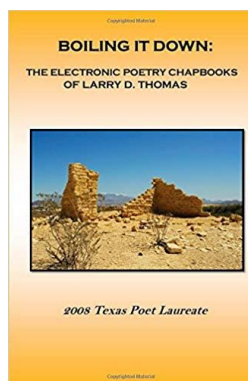
Janice Shefelman launched her Young Wolf trilogy of early readers at Austin's own Book People on Saturday, March 16, at 2:00 p.m. Originally published by Random House, the books, *A Mare for Young Wolf*, *Young Wolf's First Hunt*, and *Young Wolf and Spirit Horse* are being released in a new edition by Eakin Press, an imprint of Wild Horse Media of Fort Worth, Texas. All three are illustrated by her husband, Tom Shefelman.

<http://shefelmanbooks.com>



W.K. (Kip) Stratton's book, *The Wild Bunch: Sam Peckinpah, a Revolution in Hollywood, and the Making of a Legendary Film*, debuted on the *Los Angeles Times* nonfiction bestseller list when it was published in February. It has received numerous reviews and has been excerpted on the Daily Beast. Stratton is currently on a multi-city book tour.

Carmen Tafolla has a bilingual children's book coming out next year from Cinco Puntos, and is deeply immersed in research on the biography of Emma Tenayuca, famed labor rights organizer and social justice orator who in 1938, at the age of 21, led 12,000 Pecan-Shellers in a two-month strike that brought her national notoriety and an FBI classification as "A-1, Most Dangerous: for her ability to incite a crowd." While by day Carmen is your meek and mild TIL President, by night she performs at such venues as the 2018 National Council of the Teachers of English, the San Antonio Symphony (where she helped adapt and narrate a Tex-Mex version of *A Midsummer Night's Sueño*), a Pecha Kucha talk and the San Antonio Book Festival (next month), and, according to rumor, the Texas Institute of Letters Awards Weekend in McAllen.



Larry D. Thomas has a new book out from Blue Horse Press titled *Boiling It Down: The Electronic Poetry Chapbooks of Larry D. Thomas* (cover image attached). The book contains all fifteen of Thomas's electronic poetry chapbooks, and is available at amazon.com. Additionally, Thomas has new poems in *Southwestern American Literature*, *San Pedro River Review*, *Concho River Review*, and *Green Hills Literary Lantern*.

Jerry D. Thompson's *Wrecked Lives and Lost Souls: Joe Lynch Davis and the Last of the Oklahoma Outlaws* will be out from the University of Oklahoma Press in November. Thompson is finishing a biography on the life of Major General John Ellis Wool that

University of Arizona scholar Harwood P. Hinton began some fifty years ago on one of the few officers who fought in the War of 1812 and served in the Civil War.

Sergio Troncoso has a forthcoming short story collection, *A Peculiar Kind of Immigrant's Son*, a *Collection of Short Fiction*, Cinco Puntos Press, October 2019. Also he just signed a contract to edit an anthology tentatively entitled, *Nepantla Familias: A Mexican-American Anthology of Literature on Families in between Worlds*, Texas A&M Press, forthcoming in 2021. The anthology will be part of the book series from The Wittliff Collections. In February, Troncoso flew to El Paso to award the annual Troncoso Reading Prizes at the Sergio Troncoso Branch Library to students who read the most books during a three-month period. He will be teaching a fiction workshop at the Yale Writers' Workshop in June.



Ron Tyler has two new books coming out this spring. The first is *Western Art, Western History: Collected Essays*, from the University of Oklahoma Press, and the second is the catalogue he edited for a large Texas exhibition that will open at the Witte Museum in San Antonio with a two-day conference on May 3-4, *The Art of Texas: 250 Years* (TCU Press). The

exhibition will run through the summer.

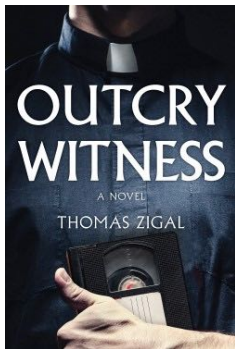
Ann Weisgarber's third novel, *The Glovemaker*, was released in the U.S., the UK, and Germany in February 2019. She says, "the book tour takes me from Galveston to Australia, with a few points in the middle; so far, the funniest experience was sharing the stage with a skull." This winter she served as a judge for TIL's fiction prizes and is also on TIL's Welcome Committee for the 2019 Inductees in McAllen.



Steve Wilson's fifth collection of poetry, *The Reaches*, will appear in late 2019 from Finishing Line Press.



Tom Zigal's new novel, *Outcry Witness*, was published by TCU Press in February 2019. It will appear in an Italian edition in September. The novel provides an insider's view of how sex abuse crimes have taken place for decades among the Catholic clergy and how innocent lives have been destroyed. Investigative journalist Jason Berry calls *Outcry Witness* "a spiritual thriller" and a "gripping story of a clergy abuse cover-up told from the inside." Novelist and playwright Anthony Giardina describes the novel as "a riveting page turner and a deadly serious meditation on the confusion and hypocrisy" that continue to shake the Catholic Church.





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