

Minutes of the Meeting of TIL Council
September 16, 2006
Home of President Fran Vick
6335 W. Northwest Highway, Dallas

Present: President Fran Vick, Vice President Paula Marks, Secretary Darwin Payne. Recording Secretary Robert Compton, Treasurer James Hoggard, and Councilors John Miller Morris, Clay Reynolds, Lou Rodenberger, Jim Sanderson, Jane Roberts Wood, and former presidents and ex-officio members C.W. Smith and Bryan Woolley.

Absent: Carol Dawson

President Vick opened the meeting at 11 a.m. and welcomed new councilor John Miller Morris. She then called for a discussion of possible nominees for the 2006 Lon Tinkle Award for Continuing Achievement in Texas Letters.

After discussion of past recipients, including questions about names of Fellows of the Institute and past winners of the Tinkle Award, members offered several nominations.

(Current Fellows of the Institute are: Robert Flynn of San Antonio, John Graves of Glen Rose, Marshall Terry of Dallas, and William D. Wittliff of Austin. Flynn and Terry were designated Fellows at the 68th annual meeting in March, 2004, in Fort Worth. They joined previous honorees John Graves of Glen Rose and William Wittliff of Austin. Under TIL rules, only five living Texas writers may own the title. The late J. Frank Dobie, a charter member of the Institute, was its first Fellow, honored by the organization in 1949. Other former Fellows were Walter Prescott Webb, Karle Wilson Baker, Joseph M. Dawson, A.C. Greene, Tom Lea, and John Edward Weems.

*(Winners of the Lon Tinkle Award, through 2005, are:
1981 -- Tom Lea; 1982 -- John Graves; 1983 -- Williams Owens; 1984 -- Larry McMurtry; 1985 -- Donald Barthelme; 1986 -- Elmer Kelton; 1987 -- A. C. Greene; 1988 -- C.L. Sonnichsen; 1989 -- John Edward Weems; 1990 -- Marshall Terry; 1991 -- Margaret Cousins; 1992 -- Vassar Miller; 1993 -- Horton Foote; 1994 -- Americo Paredes; 1995 -- William Humphrey; 1996 -- Cormac McCarthy; 1997 -- Rolando Hinojosa-Smith; 1998 -- Robert Flynn; 1999 -- Walt McDonald; 2000 -- Leon Hale; 2001 -- William Goetzmann; 2002 -- Shelby Hearon; 2003 -- Bud Shrake; 2004 -- T.R. Fehrenbach; 2005 -- James Hoggard)*

Among those named as possible nominees were David Weber, Lawrence Wright, Allen Maxwell, Larry L. King, Stephen Harrigan, Annette Sanford, Don Graham, and Bill Wittliff.

After discussion, the Council voted unanimously to offer the award to

Wittliff, a longtime active member of the TIL.

Vick told the Council that the second term of Councilor Clay Reynolds would end in April, 2007, and asked members to offer names of possible replacements.

After discussion of several names, Jane Roberts Wood made a motion, seconded by C.W. Smith, that these names be considered in 1-2-3 order: Fritz Lanham, book editor of the Houston Chronicle; author Jan Seale of McAllen, and Ben Fountain, fiction editor of Southwest Review, Dallas. If Lanham accepts, the other nominees would be considered for future openings on the Council. The motion was passed unanimously.

Vick reported that the Park Cities Hilton probably will be the hotel site for the April 13-14, 2007, meeting in Dallas. A contract is pending. She said the likely site of the Friday night, April 13, reception is the Hall of State at Fair Park, where the TIL was founded in 1936. Use of the building's Great Hall has been offered free of charge, said Secretary Darwin Payne.

There was some discussion of the hotel's requested guarantee of 70 rooms (30 for Friday night, 40 for Saturday night). Vick said she would try and have that guarantee reduced.

In a discussion of finances, Hoggard reported that Institute's financial condition was good, with total assets of \$740,900.25 (Checking and Business Accounts, \$40,152.51; Securities Accounts, \$700,74.74. The latter account includes endowment monies that fund annual awards).

(A copy of the full financial statement, June 1, 2005-May 31, 2006) will be filed with the minutes.)

Morris suggested that endowments be sought for awards not so funded, and asked if Barnes & Noble had been approached as a possible donor. In a discussion, other possible donors were suggested, including former Gov. Bill Clements of Dallas, and the Meadows Foundation of Dallas. Hoggard said that among the awards not presently endowed are the Translation and Young Peoples Book Awards.

The two major awards are the Jesse Jones (\$6,000) for Fiction, and the Carr P. Collins Award for Nonfiction (\$5,000). Of the eleven other awards, seven -- First Fiction, Significant Contribution to Knowledge, Poetry, Newspaper Journalism, Magazine Journalism, Translation, Humor -- are for \$1,000, and the others range from \$750 -- Best Design of a Trade Book, Short Story -- to \$500 -- Children's Book, Young Adult Book).

Morris said that the Institute's goal should be to make each of the lesser monetary awards at least \$1,000 each, and that the goal should be to endow all awards for at least \$15,000.

Smith said that, incidentally, the Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Poetry, funded by his father, would be increased next year from \$1,000 to \$1,200.

Continuing a discussion that began at the April meeting, Vick asked about the progress of the TIL website, being transferred from West Texas A&M University to Lamar State University. She asked if the Council would like to vote on developing its own website. After considerable discussion, in which councilors agreed that its own website would be best, Vick asked Morris to set up a committee to explore such development.

In the meantime, the website, now being redeveloped by Jerry Craven at Lamar, would continue there until the question is resolved.

Vick also suggested that a permanent office is needed to store TIL records. Reynolds suggested a library of books that have won TIL awards over the years. Vick asked Reynolds to talk with former Councilor Dick Holland and come up with a plan to accumulate those books and a place to put them.

Vick next asked for Councilors to offer nominations for new members. No streamlined method has been discovered for reducing paperwork on nominations, she said.

Nominations should consist of 1) A nominating essay which should include a resume of the nominee's career, 2) a seconding letter, 3) 15 pages of the nominee's work which may come from one or more writings.

These nominations should be sent to the vice president:

Paula Marks, Box 935, St. Edward's University, 3001 S. Congress, Austin TX 78704.

Seconding letters may be e-mailed to Marks at paulam@stedwards.edu

The following nominees were offered, with nominators and seconders, when known, following each name:

1. Willard Spiegelman (Hoggard, Woolley)
2. Evangelina Vigil (Rodenberger, ?)
3. Kent Biffle (Compton, Payne)
4. Bill Gray (Reynolds, Carlton Stowers)
5. Ken Davis (Reynolds, Sanderson)
6. Andres Tijerina (Marks, Morris)
7. David Doro (Woolley, ?)
8. Stephen Graham Jones (Sanderson, Smith)

9. Henry Chappell (Rodenberger, Sanderson)
10. Ty Cashion (Morris, Marks)
11. Karen Olsson (Smith, Woolley)
12. Ron Rozelle (Smith, Compton)
13. Will Clarke (Payne, ?)
14. Bill Sloan (Payne, Reynolds)
15. Nat Blakeslee (Payne, ?)
16. Deborah Crombie (Vick, Marks)

Vick told Councilors that, if there were no objections, the next meeting of the Council would be at her home on Jan. 20, 2007.

Before adjourning, Vick and the Council wished (in song) happy birthdays to Lou and Charles Rodenberger, who also were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. All were treated to cake and coffee.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.