

And the Winners Are...

The biggest draws for the fall 2007 Texas Book Festival held November 3 & 4 in Austin were presidential daughter Jenna Bush, author of a book primarily for juveniles titled *Ana's Story*; Marlee Matlin, an Academy Award-winning actress who is deaf and author of a children's book, *Leading Ladies*; and political writers Carl Bernstein and Jeffrey Toobin. TBR coeditor Mark Busby discussed his book *John Graves, Writer* in a session on Texas legends that also included Elmer Kelton, and Kelton's fans filled the room.

Some of the offerings at the annual event in the capital city lead to continuing questions about Texas literature—what defines it and what works are worthy of praise. In the *Dallas Morning News* this September, Judy Alter, long-time director of TCU Press, stepped into the line of fire and offered her list of the ten best Texas books, opening herself to some withering crossfire from several quarters. Here's her list:

- *Goodbye to a River*, John Graves
- *The Gates of the Alamo*, Stephen Harrigan
- *Love is a Wild Assault*, Elithe Hamilton Kirkland
- *Leaving Cheyenne*, Larry McMurtry
- *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas*, Larry McMurtry
- *Wanderer Springs*, Robert Flynn
- *The Time It Never Rained*, Elmer Kelton
- *Where Dreams Die Hard*, Carlton Stowers
- *The Captured*, Scott Zesch
- *Texas on a Plate*, Terry Thompson-Anderson

She also surveyed two other well-known observers of Texas literature for their lists of bests. Jim Lee is professor emeritus and former chair of the department of English at the University of North Texas. He lists:

- *A Woman of the People*, Benjamin Capps
- *Leaving Cheyenne*, Larry McMurtry
- *Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, George Sessions Perry
- *This Stubborn Soil*, William A. Owens
- *Farther Off from Heaven*, William Humphrey
- *The Collected Stories*, Katherine Anne Porter
- *The Great Plains*, Walter Prescott Webb
- *Interwoven*, Sallie Reynolds Matthews
- *A Personal Country*, A.C. Greene
- *The Good Old Boys*, Elmer Kelton

The other was Don Graham, J. Frank Dobie Professor of Southwestern Life and Literature at the University of Texas at Austin, and author of *Literary Austin* and *Lone Star Literature* and the forthcoming *State Fare: An Irreverent Guide to Texas Movies*. His list includes:

- *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy
- *No Country for Old Men*, Cormac McCarthy
- *Horseman, Pass By*, Larry McMurtry
- *In a Narrow Grave: Essays on Texas*, Larry McMurtry

- *Southwest*, John Houghton Allen
- *The Old Order*, Katherine Anne Porter
- *In the Rogue Blood*, James Carlos Blake
- *Different Fleshes*, Albert Goldbarth
- *Blood and Money*, Thomas Thompson
- *Some Part of Myself*, J. Frank Dobie

So we've decided to enter the fray and offer our lists. Mark Busby lists:

- *Goodbye to a River*, John Graves
- *The Crossing or All the Pretty Horses*, Cormac McCarthy
- *Horseman, Pass By or Lonesome Dove*, Larry McMurtry
- *The Collected Stories*, Katherine Anne Porter
- *North to Yesterday*, Robert Flynn
- *The Gay Place*, Billy Lee Brammer
- *The Valley*, Rolando Hinojosa
- *The Liar's Club*, Mary Karr
- *The Mustangs*, J. Frank Dobie
- *Climbing the Divide or After the Noise of Saigon*, Walt McDonald

Dick Heaberlin's list:

- *The Crossing*, Cormac McCarthy
- *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy
- *The Collected Stories*, Katherine Anne Porter
- *This Stubborn Soil*, William A. Owens
- *Terms of Endearment*, Larry McMurtry
- *Bonney's Place*, Leon Hale
- *The House of Breath*, William Goyen
- *Quincie Bolliver*, Mary King
- *Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, George Sessions Perry
- *A Time and a Place*, William Humphrey

Twister Marquiss' list:

- *Goodbye to a River*, John Graves
- *The Old Order*, Katherine Anne Porter
- *Semi-Tough*, Dan Jenkins
- *Strange Peaches*, Bud Shrake
- *All My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers*, Larry McMurtry
- *Corpus Christi: Stories*, Bret Anthony Johnston
- *Brownsville: Stories*, Oscar Casares
- *All the Pretty Horses*, Cormac McCarthy
- *North Toward Home*, Willie Morris
- *The Magic of Blood*, Dagoberto Gilb

Okay, Busby cheated by doing multiple choice, but we invite our readers to send their list to our business manager, Tammy Gonzales, at tammyg@txstate.edu. We'll post them on our website (<http://swrhc.txstate.edu/cssw/>). Perhaps some of the books reviewed in this issue may one day make someone's list. ☆