Paisanos,

I imagine that some of you have received your January (or June) Newsletter and laid it aside, thinking it just had the same old information and there was no need to read it right then, and then you never picked it up again. Please don’t do that this time.

This newsletter contains all the regular information on fellow members’ news, details on the upcoming meeting, the Meeting Registration form, and a Member Spotlight—but it also tells about some very significant changes that are about to happen to the Texas Folklore Society.

Many changes lie ahead for the TFS this year. For the past couple of years the Board has been working on plans to move the headquarters to a new location. This information was shared during the Business Meeting on the last day of our 2019 Meeting, in McKinney. The Board decided to send Requests for Proposals to numerous institutions, and received a few requests for extensions, then finally offers from two universities to become the new host institution. After reviewing the offers, they have settled on one university, Tarleton State University, and a representative plans to attend the 2020 Meeting in San Antonio to make a presentation about what Tarleton can provide.

Stephen F. Austin State University has hosted the Texas Folklore Society since 1971. In December of 2018, I updated the Board on recent developments at SFA, including new computers and other amenities, the recent ongoing support they had provided in terms of graduate assistants and other student assistance, and also the plans to build new office space for the TFS and a few other academic organizations hosted by SFA (including the East Texas Historical Association) in Steen Library on campus.

When I learned of the Board’s decision to seek another host institution despite SFA’s continuing (and increasing) support, I informed them that if the headquarters moved to another university, my term as Secretary-Editor would end at the time they planned the move. My employment is with SFA, and although I’ve enjoyed serving as the Secretary-Editor, I am not in a position to begin my career over at another university.

SFA has provided support for the TFS for nearly fifty years, and all for free. While Tarleton State has expressed interest in hosting us, it is at a substantial cost. Ultimately, the decision to move and to which location requires the approval of the general membership. Therefore, I hope that you are able to attend the upcoming meeting in San Antonio to hear the proposal, ask questions, and make your voice heard.

See you soon,
Jim Gatewood, a Dallas history professor, has just completed his tenth book, *The Dallas Citizen’s Final Report on the Kennedy Assassination*; check out his web site at www.gatewoodbooks.com to learn more about this book and his other works. Jim Harris published *Ruby Dallas*, a novel which can be found at a variety of online sources, including the Lea County Museum web site (https://leacountymuseum.org).

Sara and Wallace McKee once again managed a table at the National Cowboy Symposium in Lubbock last September, along with several other friends and members from Lubbock. Thousands of people attend this event each year, and this is great way to share information about the TFS with folks who have similar interests, so let Sara and Wallace know if you’re willing to help out next September.

The Society once again sponsored an event in George West that celebrates all things J. Frank Dobie; what was once called George West Storyfest is now called Dobie Dichos. It takes place the first weekend in November, and we thank our very own Mary Margaret Campbell for helping coordinate these efforts.

The *East Texas Historical Association* meeting took place in Nacogdoches October 10-12; Darrell McDonald chaired the TFS session, and he gave a paper on Amada Cardenas, a woman who grew peyote for Native American ceremonies. Two other new members from Stephen F. Austin State University also presented papers; Perky Beisel spoke about horse saying and lore, and Karol Chandler-Ezell gave a fascinating paper about folk medicine and remedies.

The TFS continues to support all of these “outreach” efforts, where we can share information about the Texas Folklore Society with others, as well as support our members’ efforts in other groups with similar interests. If you are scheduled to appear at an upcoming event, let us know so we can supply you with brochures, handouts, and any other materials you may need. For more information on these and other related events, visit the TFS website and click on Upcoming Events.

We learned in November that Rhett Rushing had died; Rhett was a past-President, and he presented many papers over the years, several of which had been published in our miscellanies. If you would like to make a contribution in his memory—or that of any other members—you can do so by sending it to the main office, and you can designate that you would prefer your funds be used for Student Travel Stipends or other specific purposes.

If you have news items you’d like shared, either in the next newsletter or on our Facebook page or on the web site, please send the information to us in the main office at tfs@sfasu.edu. We’re always happy to share information about our members.
TFS Publications

Ron Chrisman, the Director of the UNT Press and an ex-officio TFS Board member, has encouraged us to do more Extra Books, since single-author books on a specific topic tend to sell better than our traditional miscellanies. To that end, we’ve done a couple of them in recent years, and we have a few more lined up for the next couple of years. Here’s a summary.

The 2019 TFS Publication was Extra Book #27. It is a collection of Burle Pettit’s editorial columns from the Lubbock Avalanche Journal, spanning his fifty-year career. The book provides insight into an entire region’s culture, customs, and activities throughout the second half of the 20th Century. Burle’s columns covered not only reflection on small-town life in West Texas, but also the many changes experienced by the Hub City, Lubbock, Texas.

Up next is a memoir by Beatrice Upshaw, telling about her experiences growing up in County Line, a Freedom Colony west of Nacogdoches, Texas. A Biscuit for Your Shoe will be Extra Book #28. Beatrice recounts stories of growing up in the community, and how family and neighbors relied on their ingenuity, faith, and the support of one another. Richard Orton provides an introduction to the book, explaining his involvement with the community and the prominent family at the heart of it, the Upshaws. The book includes many pictures (both family photos, and some taken by Richard that had previously been published in his book, The Upshaws of County Line: An American Family).

In 2021, look for Rare Integrity, by Hansen Alexander. Extra Book #29 will be a reprint of this biography on one of the Texas Folklore Society’s founders, Leonidas Payne. In it you’ll learn fascinating facts about Payne’s family, education, and association with the Texas Folklore Society, mostly through his correspondence with colleagues and friends, including, J. Frank Dobie, e. e. cummings, and Robert Frost.

Now is the time to pay your 2020 Dues.

As of the end of December 2019, our membership was at 258. January marks a new year for membership dues, and many people have already paid their 2020 Dues online or by calling the office—after they received an email notice. We thank you for your prompt attention to this. Our dues cover a regular calendar year, beginning each January, so please try to pay as early as you can at the beginning of the year and help us avoid additional postage.

Last fall we mailed fewer “done letters” than in previous years; these went to folks who hadn’t paid their 2019 Dues by the end of August. Help us save that additional expense on postage by renewing as soon as you can. You can pay by mailing in a check or calling us on the phone with a credit or debit card. Please keep your dues current, and if you have any questions about your membership, contact Charlotte Blacksher, our Office Secretary and Treasurer.

I also encourage you to consider buying a membership for a friend or relative, or perhaps a co-worker you think would be interested in joining the TFS. Our membership numbers have been declining in recent years, as we’ve lost lots of long-time members. It will be important to have a concerted recruiting effort for the next generation to keep the organization going strong for years to come, especially as we enter into the next phase.
The 104th annual meeting of Texas Folklore Society will be in San Antonio on April 9, 10, and 11, 2020. Last year’s meeting was in McKinney; 68 people registered for the meeting, and we had 72 at the banquet; we also had 31 who took part in the tour of Chestnut Square and the Collin County Historical Museum.

We last gathered in San Antonio back in 2007, so it’s time to once again see what the seventh largest city in the United States (and the second largest in Texas) has to offer us. Jim Bridges and Kim Smith, our Local Arrangers, have been taking care of the plans for this year’s meeting. Lori Najvar, Margaret Cox, and Ken Untiedt are on the Program Committee, and Lori has put together something a little different for the program. Take a look at Page 6 to get a preview of this year’s papers and presenters.

The dates of the meeting have been changed back to Easter weekend this year, so be sure to check your schedules and plan accordingly. There will be big decisions to be made regarding the future of the Society, so plan to attend the meeting if you want to keep up with what’s about to happen in this new era for the TFS. Also, it’s always good to invite some friends to come along. Attending the meetings is the best way for people to learn what the TFS is about, and if they come once, they’re sure to come back.

For those who arrive in time, the Thursday Afternoon Tour will be of Mission San José; the tour will also include the National Historical Park and UNESCO site, and may feature a possible ranger-led tour and 23-minute park film, Gente de Razon—People of Reason. A self-guided tour is also possible. A bus will pick up members at the hotel and take them to the tour and then return you to the hotel immediately afterward. Be sure to be in the hotel lobby by 1:30 to leave on time.

All events will be at the Omni San Antonio Hotel at the Colonnade, which is the same hotel we used the last time we visited the Alamo City. Call 1-210-691-8888 to make your reservations, and ask for the special Texas Folklore Society Meeting rate: just $129 for singles or $139 for triple occupancy, plus taxes; other options and rates are available. You must call by March 17th to get the TFS rates. You can make reservations through the hotel’s web site, by copying and pasting the following link into a search engine: https://www.omnihotels.com/hotels/san-antonio/meetings/tx-folklore-society-2020-conf-04092020.

The address is 9821 Colonnade Boulevard, San Antonio, Texas 78230 in case you want to use your GPS. This hotel features standard amenities, including available wireless Internet service, refrigerators and tea and coffee in the rooms, and valet or self-parking. It also has Bolo’s full-service restaurant, a fitness area, and indoor and outdoor pools, as well as business services. It’s even pet-friendly, for small pets; call for details. You can use the free shuttle service available from the airport by contacting the hotel ahead of time. Check-in time is 3:00 p.m., and checkout is at 12:00 p.m.; call for other requests.

The President’s Pre-Hootenanny Reception, hosted by Charlie McCormick and Schreiner University, is from 7:00–8:00 Thursday evening, with the Hoot immediately following. Check the space on the Registration Form if you plan to attend, just so we can have plenty of refreshments available.

The Friday night Banquet entertainment will be Eva Ybarra, the undisputed grand dame of the conjunto accordion, and her two-generational 5-piece band, Su Conjunto Siempre (along with vocalist Sandy Rodriguez). After the banquet is over and Eva and the band have finished, we’ll have another Hoot and all members can join in the music and storytelling.

Use the form at the right to register for all meeting events. Cut it out, fill it out, and mail it in.
2020 Texas Folklore Society Meeting, San Antonio, TX
April 9-11, 2020

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Card Number  ______-______-______-______  Expiration Date ______  code on back ______

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Name(s) for Meeting Registration: ____________________________________________

Name(s) for Banquet: _________________________________________________________

Name(s) for Tour: __________________________________________________________

Update Membership Information

Address: ________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: _________________________________________________________

Phone, Email: __________________________________________________________

***Remember to call or email to request table space if you wish to display books, tapes, or other wares.***

Meeting Registration fees must be received by **March 17th**. If you have questions or comments, contact us via email at tfs@sfasu.edu or call us at 936-468-4407. Keep in mind that due to changes in her schedule, Charlotte is only in the TFS office on Thursdays and Fridays now, from 8:00-12:00. Please mail this form and your payment to the Texas Folklore Society office: **P. O. Box 13007-SFA Station, Nacogdoches, TX 75962-3007.**
Thursday, April 9
1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Registration, La Joya Ballroom, 1st Floor
2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Tour of Mission San José (meet in the Hotel Lobby beginning at 1:30)
2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Board Meeting (2:00-5:00) Colonnade C, 20th Floor
7:00 to 8:00 p.m. President’s Pre-Hootenanny Reception, sponsored by Schreiner University
8:00 p.m. Hootenanny

Friday, April 10
8:00 a.m. to Noon Registration
8:15 a.m. Welcome: TFS President Sarana Savage and Norma Cantú, American Folklore Society, 2020-2021

Session 1 (8:30 to 10:00 a.m.) Chair: Donna Ingham, Spicewood
“Accordians in Texas Cultures” Laura Niland and Shirley Johnson, Austin
“Hoo Hoos in Texas: An Unlikely Mix of Timber Tycoons, Black Cats, Snarks, and Ragtime” Ann Meador and Ruth Massingill, Huntsville
“Chili Queens of San Antonio” Sara Rodriguez, San Antonio

Session 2 (10:15 a.m. to 11:45) Chair: Patrick Vick, Dallas
“Imagining Angelina Eberly’s Table” Mary Margaret Pack, Austin
“Quinceañeras Autotopographies at the Capitol” Rachel Gonzalez Martin, Austin
“Best Enemies: The Paredes Quarrel with Webb and Dobie, and What It Means for Understanding the History and Folklore of South Texas” John Phillip Santos, San Antonio

Lunch break

Session 3 (1:45 to 3:15 p.m.) Chair: Fran Vick, Dallas
“Fiestas on the Border: Matachines and George Washington’s Birthday in Laredo, Texas” Norma Cantú, San Antonio
“El Paso Food Voices: Preserving Folklore through Food Stories” Meredith Abarca, El Paso
“The Essential J. Frank Dobie” Steve Davis, New Braunfels

Session 4 (3:30 to 5:00 p.m.) Chair: Mary Margaret Campbell, George West
“Growing Up at Brown’s House in South Austin, Texas, USA” David Orton, Austin
“Charge Hell with a Bucket of Water” Mary Fogel, Austin
“What’s in a Name? Odd Stories Behind Texas Town Names” Jo Virgil, Austin
“The Life and Art of Tom Lea” Lynsie Veuleman, Corpus Christi

6:00 p.m. Cash Bar, Colonnade Ballroom, 20th Floor
7:00 p.m. Banquet, with Entertainment by Eva Ybarra, followed by a Hootenanny

Saturday, April 11
Session 5 (8:45 to 11:45 a.m.) Chair and commentary: Robert Flynn, San Antonio
“Voices of Our Neighbors: Poetry, Music, and Culture” Naomi Shihab Nye, San Antonio
“African American Influence through Music and Poetry in Texas” Cary Clack, San Antonio

Business Meeting: President Sarana Savage presiding

Closing Ceremony: President Sarana Savage
Member Spotlight: Roy Sanders

Roy Sanders has been taking part in the Hootenannies for several years now, so this Member Spotlight introduces you to someone you’ve probably seen and heard, but perhaps not yet met.

Roy attended his first TFS meeting in 2014 in Fort Worth. His wife-to-be, Peggy Gaskamp, had attended the year before (in Corpus Christi) and said, “This is really your kind of deal. You need to go next year and bring both your instruments. Trust me.” She said there was plenty of string band music (a passion for him going way back), and lots and lots of storytelling: the stuff you can only learn from your grandmother because “It ain’t wrote down in books.” She also said there was a guy there with a skunk-skin hat. (Lee Haile, as you may have guessed.)

The Fort Worth trip was special to Roy on many levels. He joined the hootenanny—and has since become a regular, playing finger-style guitar and banjitar. It was also the first time he had been to Fort Worth since his birth. Adopted from Homestead Maternity Home at six days old, he had never returned. On that trip, he toured the historic Tarrant County Courthouse, where his adoptive parents had gone long ago to finalize his adoption.

Roy grew up in Port Lavaca, evacuating for three hurricanes (sleeping through the Hurricane Carla trip). After college at Texas A&I in Kingsville, Roy worked for the Kingsville Record, the Temple Daily Telegram, Stephens Publishing (Waco magazines), and the Bryan-College Station Eagle. He is now in his 24th year as Editor of the Burleson County Tribune, in Caldwell. Each week is a new story for Roy; he feels he is the county’s unofficial historian, recording that history in real time, as it occurs.

Roy and Peggy are both genealogists and family historians, who have plenty of their own folklore to share with the next generations of their families. Like Peggy, Roy has become the keeper of his family’s extensive memorabilia: photos, home movies, documents, and letters—some going back to the 1890s. Similar to Peggy’s mother (Tomelane), his family is mainly Celtic-American, with most ancestors coming from the British Isles, many of them displaced Scots relocated to Northern Ireland, “Scots-Irish,” as his mother called them.

For some reason, old-timers on both sides of his family pulled him aside as a child to share their stories. Roy suspects they sensed that he cared about that history—and wanted to be the keeper of it. Roy’s music is a reflection of his family history. Some ancestors of long ago played as he does now—keepers of the old-style rural American folk music. As with other TFS musicians, Roy knows songs well over 100 years old—obscure tunes early Texans brought with them, often about true-life events.

Roy and Peggy have, combined, five children (plus 2-3 extras) and eight grandchildren (three of which were born June-November 2019). They plan to share their family history with all of them, and maybe some will one day also be in the TFS. Both Roy and Peggy love the spirit of the TFS: a family-like atmosphere, where the stories and songs define us and our state, regardless of our origins.
Since 1971, the Texas Folklore Society’s headquarters have been in the historic Rusk Building, located on the Stephen F. Austin State University campus in Nacogdoches, Texas. Originally F. E. (Ab) Abernethy’s faculty office, over the years the space has taken on legendary status at SFA. After the TFS moved to SFA, Ab got a bit cramped; he decided to knock a hole in a wall with a sledge hammer and build an additional room under the adjacent stairwell. Later, when the entire building was being renovated, he changed the lock on the door and refused to allow anyone in, gaining access himself through a window. Another renovation a decade later more than doubled the space, but a noisy elevator machine prompted him to request that the machine be moved—and it was. Visitors to the campus would occasionally stop in to take a look at the “museum,” which was mostly a collection of Ab’s world travels and TFS artifacts. It’s been a good home, but all good things come to an end.

The TFS will be moving to a new host institution by the end of May 2020. This year’s meeting in San Antonio will be an important one, so plan to attend if you can; members will hear details of the proposal for the new location. See inside for details on the upcoming meeting, as well as the impending move.