from the INTERIM DIRECTOR

ONE OF THE great joys—and perhaps the only joy—of being an interim director is getting to work more closely with some of the fine people who contribute so much to the Witliff's success. Over the past few months I've met regularly with our Associate Vice President, Juan Heath, along with our Vice President for Information Technology, Dr. Van Wyatt.

On a parallel track, I've also visited extensively with founding donor Bill Witliff as well as many of our individual donors. And then I've had the pleasure of day-to-day interactions with the Witliff Collections, terrific, highly dedicated staff. (They continue to make us proud—p. 11 for news of the recent honors they have received.)

What I see in all of this is a sense of a shared mission regarding the Witliff. These folks have come together in recognition that we are building something uniquely important—a living cultural cathedral that reveres, safeguards, and offers up for contemplation, the artistic treasures of our region. As J. Frank Dobie well said, “People living in the Southwest will lead fuller and richer lives if they become aware of what it holds.”

From collecting the artifacts to celebrating the authors and artists, the Witliff is a vital zócalo, a town center where the arts and the community come together. We are engaged in our audiences on many levels, including making use of leading social media platforms. To that end, we have recently developed a Facebook page and YouTube channel (see p. 6).

In our efforts to strengthen our operations, the Witliff Collections have recently participated in a museum assessment program, conducted by the American Association of Museums (AAM). We began with our staff and university administrators completing a self-study, which was submitted in a detailed report to the AAM. In June, we hosted our on-site reviewer, Lisa Hanover, who directs the Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania and is past president of the Association of Academic Museums & Galleries.

We aren't sure what to expect from our review. It's one thing to think you're doing a pretty good job. It's quite another to put yourself at the mercy of an independent, outside appraiser.

After Lisa closely analyzed our written report, she spent two days on campus, interviewing everyone on the Witliff staff as well as meeting with Joan Heath and Van Wyatt. She asked good, tough questions.

A few weeks later, Lisa responded with her report: a solid endorsement of the Witliff Collections. She described us as “a stellar operation,” noting the Witliff “is operating from a position of strength, and while the organization has been on a fast trajectory in terms of physical evolution, collections development, staff, and programming, the process has been deliberate and driven by a professional staff that is invested in the mission of the organization and a respect for their colleagues.”

Lisa also noted that, “An active founding donor, Bill Witliff, continues to be an enthusiastic proponent of these distinctive collections, and Texas State University–San Marcos has responded with a significant investment of financial capital in facilitating, staff, and programs in support of acquisitions.”

This AAM assessment underscores the benefits of cooperation among the staff, university administration, and our individual donors.

Our shared sense of mission is one of the Witliff’s key strengths, and it is responsible for much of our success. We are committed to meeting every new challenge from here. And so, if you are among those who believe in our mission and have confidence in our operations, would you consider reaching out with support for this important work? Charged with stewardship, we hope to continue our mission and have confidence in our operations, would you consider reaching out with support for this important work? Charged with stewardship, we hope to continue

the WILLIE NELSON recording collection

—By Graduate Assistant Alan Scharf, special contributor

The W I T L I F F C O L L E C T I O N S recently acquired a significant collection of Willie Nelson material that includes the vast majority of the Texas legend’s discography. As a lifelong Willie fan, musician, and record collector, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to inventory the acquisition.

What I was shocked to discover among the 877 recordings was the very first Willie Nelson record, a 45 rpm from 1957, “No Place For Me” backed with “Lumberjack.” Recorded in Vancouver, Washington, while Willie was working as a disc jockey and released on Willie Nelson Records, the disc introduced one of the more singular voices in American popular song.

It’s treatment of songwriter and fellow Texan Leon Payne’s “Lumberjack” displays the nuanced vocal phrasing and characteristic wit that has come to be the trademark of a Willie Nelson tune.

Acquired from John Kalinsky, a consummate collector of Nelson’s work, the materials contain LP and 45 rpm records, audio cassettes, CDs, DVDs, and VHS cassettes. The oldest records here are two 45s from 1954 by Dave Ishbel that feature Nelson on electric guitar. Released by Sarg Records, a small label from Luling, Texas, these are Willie Nelson’s earliest appearances on record.

The collection chronicles Willie’s entire career, from his humble beginnings as a studio sideman to renowned bandleader and songwriter, culminating with his critically acclaimed 2010 release, simply titled “Country Music.”

Anyone who has attended a Willie Nelson concert can tell you about the marathon sets, the surprise guest appearances, and the melting-pot audiences of hippies, cowboys, bikers, and whoever else might show up. The collection features a rare DVD that captures this ephoristic atmosphere at Willie’s 64th of July Picnic in 1974, a carnival-like affair led by Leon Russell and featuring performances by Willie and some of the usual suspects such as Waylon Jennings and Jeff Wathler.

Other highlights include much of Willie’s early recorded output on the original vinyl records, deluxe edition CDs, and box sets of Willie’s classic albums with previously unheard studio outtakes, rare photographs, well-researched essays, and disc this as “Crazy: The Demo Sessions,” a batch of early demos that Willie would pitch to Nashville record executives.

These recordings are a welcome addition to the Witliff Collections’ Willie Nelson holdings, which include such artifacts as handwritten lyrics, some scribbled on paper scrap, scraps, and box sets of Willie’s classic albums with previously unheard studio outtakes, rare photographs, well-researched essays, and disc this as “Crazy: The Demo Sessions,” a batch of early demos that Willie would pitch to Nashville record executives.

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ON THE HEELS of the gallery renovation, our completely redesigned website recently made its debut. New to the site are slideshows spotlighting the literary, photographic, and Lonesome Dove collections, more in-depth information about each, a consolidated Research section, and an About section with visitor information, links to news releases, Keystone issues to download, and more. Spend some time within our beautiful new pages at www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu.

LAST SPRING WAS another exciting season of events at the Wittliff Collections, with author readings, exhibition receptions, panel discussions, film screenings, and live performances by several of Austin's music icons. Did you miss an event? If so, there’s a good chance you can catch it on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/WittliffCollections.

April 17 was the joint reception for “Viva México!” and Vaupero, and a chance to toast the Wittliff’s recently retired director, Connie Todd, who returned to speak as the evening’s presenter. Connie noted “the importance of images as a way into a culture—a truly remarkable thing,” then she went on to show the social and artistic relationships among the exhibition photographers, bringing their lives to light and their images to life.

Panel discussions, live music, local organic food and drink, and a running bar by Jim Highower were a treat for all who attended “The Living Spirit of Texas Populism” on May 1, celebrating our Swim Against the Current exhibition and Highower’s gift of his archive. The first of two panel discussions was on “Populism in Texas Politics,” with former U.S. Senator Fred Harris, editor of the Texas Observer, Bob Moses, the former executive VP of the national AFL-CIO, Linda Chavez-Thompson, and Progressive Populist editor Jim Cullen.

Jimmy LaFave kept the populist spirit alive by playing Woody Guthrie songs during a short break. He was followed by a discussion on “Populism in Texas Culture,” moderated by Gary Hartman, director of Texas State’s Center for Texas Music History. This panel featured Farm Aid executive director, Carolyn Mugar, Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Ben Sargent, documentary photographer Alan Pogre, and Tom Pittman, former Austin Lounge Lizards and host of KUT’s “Folkways.”

After guests enjoyed a reception of local and organic foods catered by San Marcos’ Cool Mint Café and locally crafted beverages provided by St. Arnold’s Brewery, Jim Highower took the stage and demonstrated exactly why he is such a sought-after public speaker. Closing the festivities were lively performances by singer-songwriters Carolyn Wonderland and Shelley King, followed by the Austin Lounge Lizards.

Recent visiting authors included Claudia Rankine, Francine Prose, Tim O’Brien, and investigative journalist, author of Ashes of Waco, and former Texas Monthly senior editor, Dick J. Beavis, who discussed his firsthand observations working for temporary labor halls in conjunction with his latest book, Catching Out: The Secret World of Day Laborers. Beavis shared deeply affecting stories of the low-paying, demanding, and often dangerous jobs he and others performed, the unregulated, often unpredictable ways in which they were treated, and the camaraderie that grew between many of the workers.

Bill Minutaglio also discussed his latest book, In Search of the Blues: A Journey to the Soul of Black Texas, published by the University of Texas Press in the Wittliff’s Southwestern Writers Collection Series. Minutaglio recounted his experiences as an outsider searching for the African American musical heritage in Texas churches, on front porches, at juke joints, and anywhere else that people would allow him into their lives. The Wittliff Collections collaborated with Texas Folklife to bring in writer, folklorist, photographer, and filmmaker Alan Govenar to screen three of his short Texas documentaries Human Volcano, Texas Style, and Oceola Mayes: Stories, Songs, Poems, in conjunction with the South by Southwest film festival.

This fall promises to be just as engaging, see the back cover for a taste of what’s to come and, as always, check our online events calendar for all the up-to-the-minute details.
In many cases, McCarthy spent decades working on his stories before the books were published. One example featured in the exhibition is McCarthy's screenplay, "No Country for Old Men," which he completed in the 1980s but was unable to sell at the time. He eventually reworked the screenplay into a novel, and 20 years later, "No Country For Old Men" was published. The film version, made by the Coen brothers, won the Academy Award for Best Picture in 2007.

"One interesting thing about McCarthy's early screenplay is that the ending is very different from the novel," said Davis. "In the screenplay, Llewelyn Moss survives and he joins Sheriff Bell in a climactic gun battle against the Chigurh character."

In addition to highlights from the Permanent Collection coincides with the 25th anniversary of the publication of his novel, Blood Meridian. The Cormac McCarthy Society will be holding its annual conference at the Witliff Collections in late October, and the public is invited to the exhibition reception and keynote speech for the conference, a talk by McCarthy scholar and artist Peter Josephy on October 28. Admission is free. (See the sidebar, right.)

Several related collections, including Woolman’s correspondence with the author, complement the Cormac McCarthy Papers. All are processed and available for research; inventories are online: www.thewitliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/a-z/mccarthy.htm.
FRANCISCO MATA ROSAS
Born in Mexico City in 1958, Francisco Mata Rosas received his degree in photojournalism in the early 1980s. His photography has appeared in many publications, including the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, La Jornada, Milenio, Reforma, the Independent Magazine, Photography (London), and El Paseante (Spain). He has received numerous honors including the 1988 Prize of Acquisition at the Biennial of Mexican Photography, the Prize of Honor at the Bicentennial of the French Revolution in 1989, and the Third Annual Mother Jones Photography Award in 1993. His books include Sabado de Gloria (Grupo Deseo, 1994) and Litorales (Centro de la Imagen, 2000), a collaborative project with Eniac Martinez Ulloa using plastic cameras to photograph Mexico's coastal regions. México, Treviñant (Fondo, 2005) is his monumental work on Mexico City, where he lives. Currently Mata Rosas is working on a project covering the U.S.-Mexico border, researching the hybridization of cultures between the countries. More at www.francisco mata.com.mx.

Calecones y diablitos, Dia de los Muertos / Skeletons & Little Devils, Day of the Dead, Mexico City, circa 1985
writers on writing RICK RIORDAN


The Percy Jackson series features a twelve-year-old dyslexic boy who discovers he is the modern-day son of a Greek god. Riordan’s first book in that series, The Lightning Thief, was a New York Times Notable Book for 2005 and became a major motion picture in 2010. The five books in the series—now with millions of copies sold—have earned him an entire generation of Greek mythology.

Riordan taught middle-school English at Saint Mary’s Hall in San Antonio for many years, and in 2001, he was honored with the school’s first Master Teacher Award. He now writes full-time. He is also the author of The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones. His newest series is the Kane Chronicles, which involve Egyptian mythology and premiered in 2010 with the release of The Red Pyramid.

Riordan began donating his literary works to the Wittliff Collections in 2005. In addition, he has participated in Wittliff events, and he is a featured author in the Southwestern Writers Collection book anthology, Lone Star Sleuths: Mystery Detective Fiction from Texas. Riordan recently visited the Academy Award-winning screenwriter and director of Texas Projects represented by scripts, production and publicity materials, photographs, and set designs include Kramer vs. Kramer, Still of the Night, Places in the Heart, Billy Bathgate, and Noah's Arc.

Choctaw Nation member RON QUERRY is the acclaimed author of the novels The Death of Bernadette Lefthand and Bad Medicine, which depict the intersection of white and native worlds. Of Querry’s writing, Tony Hillerman said, “The Death of Bernadette Lefthand should rank among the classics of American fiction.” Querry’s papers include notes, drafts, and other materials relating to these novels and his other writings, as well as Querry’s personal correspondence, photographs, and subject files.

JACK JACKSON, also known as JAXON, is widely considered the author of the first underground comic to be widely distributed. Jackson, born “God Nose,” later became an illustrator and author of historical fiction. That work forms the bulk of this collection and includes research material, drafts, and illustrations for his titles, including Columbus, Imaginary Kingdom: Texas As Seen by the Rivera & Ruhl Military Expeditions, and Shoting the Sun: Cartographic Results of Military Activities in Texas.

The finding aids for these and all of the Wittliff’s collections are available through the A-Z Guide to the Collections in the New Research section of the website.

NEW IN THE SOUTHWESTERN WRITERS COLLECTION BOOK SERIES

Susan Wittig Albert’s previous books in the Wittliff’s Southwestern Writers Collection are Ordinary Days: Writings about Ordinary Days and the threats facing it, especially climate change and resource depletion. Asking herself, “What does it mean? And what ought I do about it?”, she determines practical steps to take, such as growing more food in her garden, and she also helps us as readers make sense of these issues and consider what our own responses might be.

In this most recent title in the Southwestern Writers Collection Series from UT Press, Albert’s journal entries provide an engaging account of how 365 seemingly ordinary days can lead to major changes in how one views the world. As Albert blends her work as a writer with her rural life in the Texas Hill Country and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, her ecletic daily reading ranges topics from economics, food production, and oil and energy policy to physics and the writing life.

Albert becomes increasingly concerned about the natural world and the threats facing it, especially climate change and resource depletion. Asking herself, “What does it mean? And what ought I do about it?”, she determines practical steps to take, such as growing more food in her garden, and she also helps us as readers make sense of these issues and consider what our own responses might be.

In 1967, he became the first writer to be selected for the prestigious Debut-Panama Fellowship. The books include 12B Country (1968), A Lonesome Traveler (1970), Seven Days in the Delta (1971), Mississippi: Memories of a Native Son (1981), The Greatest Statesmen in Texas (1983), and Daddy Was Daddy: The Passage of an American Son (1994).

HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE FOR PUBLIC HISTORY STUDENTS

THREE IMPORTANT ARCHIVES are now fully processed and open for research, thanks to graduate students in Texas State’s Public History program. Last fall, the students completed arranging and inventorying these holdings, under the guidance of Lead Archivist Katie Salzmann, as part of their coursework in archives management. Working in groups of four, they applied what they learned in readings and in class to make the Robert Benton, Ron Querry, and Jack Jackson collections available to a wider audience.

The ROBERT BENTON Papers document the career of the writer with his rural life in the Texas Hill Country and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, her eclectic daily reading ranges topics from economics, food production, and oil and energy policy to physics and the writing life.

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FROM PAINTED LIGHT:

I started painting on photographs in 1978.... Printmaking was a painstaking meditative process, it taught you patience, and so did hand-coloring photographs. It suited me, and it was sensuous.

I saw right away that something interesting happened when you put paint on the surface of a photograph. It was changed in ways that have more to do with our recognition and expectation than anything else. Photographs have certain inherent properties as reliable documents, as visual evidence you can trust. (This is no longer the case since

photographing something makes you see and pay attention, colorizing it afterward—rendering it—makes you pay closer attention yet. You get to know every last detail, every shadow and edge. It makes you and that image intimate.

Once an idea is set in motion and the first images are made (or sometimes the other way around), a series is started that can never be finished. It’s reassuring to know that since all thoughts are incomplete, ideas evolve and change—That change—the series can be revisited, added to indefinitely. This slow accumulation of images over half a lifetime—whether it’s the little cactus plants on my windowsill, the dead creatures found in the desert, or the flowering plants that come up in my backyard—become like a disjointed diary of my enduring fascinations, a history of my devotion to the idea that there are endless unique things to look at and record. — KATE BREAKEY

KATE BREAKEY is internationally recognized for her large-scale, richly hand-colored photographs, including Small Deaths, her acclaimed portrait series of birds, flowers, animals, and insects. Breakey’s new exhibition, Painted Light, is the first career retrospective of her luminous work. With over 130 selections from nine suites of photographs, including Remnants, Principles of Mathematics, Laws of Physics, Loose Ends, Cactus, and Memories & Dreams, this show encompasses a quarter-century of prolific image-making and reveals the range of the artist’s creative explorations. The Wittliff holds the major archive of Breakey’s work, and this exhibition, part of PICTOSEPTEMBRE USA, celebrates her second book in the Wittliff’s Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series, published this October by UT Press. Painted Light is on view through February 4, 2011. Join us November 6 for the reception and book launch.

JOIN US NOVEMBER 6, 2010

Help us celebrate KATE BREAKEY at the Painted Light exhibition reception and book launch of her new 158-image monograph from UT Press published in the Wittliff Collections’ Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series. This special evening begins with the reception at 7:00 pm, then the artist will be speaking about her work and signing books. We are especially grateful to our Partner Sponsor for this event, SUSAN CREWS BAILEY.

Sunday, November 6 7:00 pm Reception 8:00 pm Program Admission is free. Books will be for sale for $55.00 plus tax. Attendees are asked to RSVP to thewittliff@txstate.edu.

Bitter Sweet Harvest

The Bracero Program was a guest-worker initiative created by President Franklin Roosevelt that spanned the years 1942-1964 when millions of Mexican agricultural workers crossed the border to work in more than half of the states in America. February 23 through April 29, 2011, the Wittliff Collections and Texas State’s Public History Program will co-present this traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian Institution, which explores the braceros’ contributions to communities in Mexico and the United States, the opportunities that became available to them, and the challenges they faced as guest workers during the war years and afterward. The exhibition will include 15 fine-standing banners with oral histories, quotes, and photographs by Leonard Nadell, whose images inspired the Smithsonian’s work on Bitter Sweet Harvest. For more information, visit the Bracero History Archive online at www.braconline.org.

Friday, February 23: A public reception and program will feature guest speaker Kristine Navarro, director of the Institute of Oral History at UTEP. Watch the Wittliff’s online events calendar for details.
In 1860, Eight hundred and seventy-Austin's 1977, by Wayne Oakes Brammer at the Raw Deal (right) assist researchers, and "the spirit of place" in the Mexico, and houses writing for the region's literary of the region's literary present major exhibitioning to fostering "the of the region's literary, film makers, photographers in the U.S. her varied career as author of over a dozen published books, including t-shirts and other promotional item s, and editions of the novels translated into Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. See our interview with Riordan on p. 11. [Gift of Riordan] • Poet, essayist, and memoirist MIRIAM SAGAN lives, writes, and teaches in Santa Fe. Her literary archive documents her varied career as author of over a dozen books that include Searching for a Mustard Seed: A Young Widow's Unconventional Story. Sagan is a founder member of the collaborative press Tres Chicas Books. 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Framed snapshots of many regulars adored the walls, and these now form the bulk of this collection. Notable subjects include Billy Lee Brammer, Gary Cartwright, Jim Hightower, Mike Levy, Ann Richards, and Bill Wittliff. [Gift of Lily Emma] • Additions to the RICK RIO RDI A N Archive demonstrate the wide-spread appeal of his Perry Jackson and the Olympics series through letters and photographs sent by fans, awards, t-shirts and other promotional items, and editions of the novels translated into Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. See our interview with Riordan on p. 11. [Gift of Riordan] • Poet, essayist, and memoirist MIRIAM SAGAN lives, writes, and teaches in Santa Fe. Her literary archive documents her varied career as author of over a dozen books that include Searching for a Mustard Seed: A Young Widow's Unconventional Story. Sagan is a founder member of the collaborative press Tres Chicas Books. 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Framed snapshots of many regulars adored the walls, and these now form the bulk of this collection. Notable subjects include Billy Lee Brammer, Gary Cartwright, Jim Hightower, Mike Levy, Ann Richards, and Bill Wittliff. [Gift of Lily Emma] • Additions to the RICK RIO RDI A N Archive demonstrate the wide-spread appeal of his Perry Jackson and the Olympics series through letters and photographs sent by fans, awards, t-shirts and other promotional items, and editions of the novels translated into Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish. See our interview with Riordan on p. 11. [Gift of Riordan] • Poet, essayist, and memoirist MIRIAM SAGAN lives, writes, and teaches in Santa Fe. Her literary archive documents her varied career as author of over a dozen books that include Searching for a Mustard Seed: A Young Widow's Unconventional Story. Sagan is a founder member of the collaborative press Tres Chicas Books. 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THE KEYSSTONE

exhibitions & events CALENDAR

exhibitions

20 AUG 23 – DEC 12, 2010
LONESOME DOVE Collection Costumes, props, set pieces and designs, photographs, scripts, and other "making of" materials are on view from the CBS mini-series based on Larry McMurtry's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel.

september

14 THE MFA STUDENTS read their poetry and fiction. 3:00 pm

19 THE MFA STUDENTS read their poetry and fiction. 3:00 pm

october

2nd SUNDAY: BOOK LAUNCH FOR PAINTED LIGHT: Celebrating the exhibition and new book in the Witliff's Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series Talk by KATE BREAKEY, book sale and signing to follow.

November

6 RECEPTION & BOOK LAUNCH FOR PAINTED LIGHT: Celebrating the exhibition and new book in the Witliff's Southwestern & Mexican Photography Series Talk by KATE BREAKEY, book sale and signing to follow.

11 AN EVENING with TEXAS MONTHLY Editor Jake Silverstein and John Spong talk with GARY CARBWRIGHT about his legendary story writing and career with the magazine. 6:30 pm Retirement Reception for Cartwright 7:30 pm Panel Program

16 THE MFA STUDENTS read their poetry and fiction 5:00 pm

traveling shows

SEP 1 – NOV 30, 2010
Lonesome Dove: Photographs by Bill Wittliff is showing at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan, Oklahoma.

SEP 11 – NOV 24, 2010
The Exquisite Eye / El ojo fino is at the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs.

SEP 11 – DEC 31, 2010
Port of the Ordinary: Photographs by Keith Carter, the exhibition based on the Wittliff series book Keith Carter Photographs: 25 Years, is on view at the Beaville Museum of Art.

The KEYSSTONE editors

Steve Davis
Michelle Miller

THE KEYSSTONE collections at the ALKEK LIBRARY

Southwestern Writers Collection
Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection
Texas State University-San Marcos

601 University Drive, San Marcos, TX 78666-4604

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EXHIBITION HOURS
See the website for exhibition information and viewing hours.

RESEARCH HOURS
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ADMISSION is free.

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ONLINE (Directions, parking, archives info, etc.) www.wittliffcollections.txstate.edu

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