

Texas Oral History Association

SOUND BITES

SINCE 1983

FALL 2011



Gather 'round with TOHA

There's a place reserved for you at two upcoming events in 2012. The first is described below. See the TOHA Calendar, page 4, for an announcement about the second. Plan to take your place in the circle to meet new friends and renew acquaintances, refresh your knowledge of oral history and be inspired by new ideas.

Reserve March 2 and April 21 for TOHA!

March 2, 2012

VISIONS OF TEXAS: ART AND HISTORY IN THE LONE STAR STATE

Join us on Friday, March 2, at 2:30 p.m., at the Omni Houston Hotel, Four Riverway near the Galleria in Houston, for our annual joint session with Texas State Historical Association. Registration information and links to the hotel are available now at <http://www.tshaonline.org/annual-meeting>. Meet our presenters:

Paula Gerstenblatt, a professional artist, is currently a social work doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin. Previously, she was a mental health coordinator, literacy program director, child care and family educator, counselor, and grant writer. Paula brings her unique perspective on history, society, and art to TOHA with a presentation titled "Collage Portraits: Representing Small-Town Texas Memory with Mixed Media," in which she will incorporate visual imagery into a narrative analysis exploring the impact of participating in an art installation activity during a family reunion in Mart, Texas. Following in-depth interviews of three participants, collage portraits were created using printed text from interviews, family photographs, newspaper articles, and hand-drawn images. This paper will discuss the context of the study, development of the method, use of oral histories, and the potential of collage portraits as a method of inquiry and analysis for researchers, oral historians, and informants in qualitative research.

Dr. Katie Robinson Edwards is assistant professor at Baylor University's Allbritton Art Institute. Her research and publications, like her teaching, focus on modern and contemporary art history. In 2007, with a Faculty Research Fellowship from the Baylor Institute for Oral History and an oral history grant from the Center for the Advancement and Study of Early Texas Art (CASETA), she interviewed three major Texas modern artists of the mid twentieth century: Richard Stout, Jack Boynton, and Kelly Fearing. While fine art in Texas favored realistic representational images, with recognizable landscapes and scenes, these artists looked to European trends, taking on more subjective subjects and

sometimes going fully abstract, working with geometric forms or painting vast color fields. Katie's paper, "Oral History: Making Texas Abstract Art Concrete," will flesh out abstract art and bring its meaning back home to more Texas viewers. With case studies from the speaker's artist interviews as well as famous instances from Texas and beyond, this paper argues that oral history is an invaluable companion to artists' works, especially when that art proves difficult for the layperson.

Amy Ellis McDaniel, who holds two master's degrees in art history from Columbia University, is currently gallery director of the Fourth Street Gallery and FSG Art Consulting in Lampasas and adjunct faculty in the Fine Arts Department of Central Texas College in Killeen. Amy brings to Texas teaching, consulting, and curatorial experience in colleges and art museums in New York City and New Haven, Connecticut. Her paper, "A Public Art: The Vision Lampasas Mural Project in the Community," carries us to a downtown revitalized through four murals painted by community volunteers: *Boot Round Up* draws on the town's history of boot-making; *Generations* looks at several generations of businesses conducted in the very building on which the mural is painted; *Lampasas Postcard* celebrates historic sites in the city; *Water Is Life* features waterways important to the community in its heyday a century ago, including healing sulphur springs. Through oral history interviews, this project seeks to preserve the histories of these murals and the people who initiated and participated in them, as well as illuminate the stories that lie behind the murals and their connection to the history of the community.

TOHA Board of Directors News



TOHA Board of Directors 2011-2013

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New Officers

In July, **L. Patrick Hughes** was elected president and **Michael Botson**, vice president, for the 2011-2012 term of the TOHA board of directors.

Patrick promoted TOHA membership at the East Texas Historical Association fall meeting in Nacogdoches and encouraged submissions of articles to the *Sound Historian*. Since then, he has undergone major surgery in Austin. We wish him a swift and full recovery.

Michael has already completed plans for a future TOHA program meeting in joint session with Texas State Historical Association, slated for March 2013 in Fort Worth.

Community Award Committee Seeks Nominations

Committee co-chairs, **Kay Mizell** and **Michelle Mears**, remind us that TOHA offers a special award to community groups that are conducting, or have recently conducted, successful oral history projects. The Mary Faye Barnes Award for Excellence in Community History Projects is named for longtime community historian and twice TOHA president, Mary Faye Willms-Barnes, of Lockhart. For the purposes of this award, community history is broadly defined to include the history of a village, town, or urban neighborhood, but also a business, school, hospital, social organization, religious organization, or other institution.

To be considered for the 2012 award, submit your nominations **by February 1**. Begin at the community awards page at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29362>. Locate the Community History Award Nomination Form, fill it out, and return it with the required attachments. The award consists of a certificate in a presentation folder and recognition on TOHA's website. Whenever possible, the award is presented in the community setting.

Book Reviewers Needed for *Sound Historian*

Through its book reviews, the TOHA journal keeps us in the know on current trends in the world of oral history and inspires us with new ideas and applications for our projects. Book review editor, **Dan K. Utley**, invites you to volunteer to write reviews of new and classic oral history publications. We know you have opinions about what you read, so here's an outlet for expressing yourself! Let Dan know of your interest today at 512.252.0290 or dku@suddenlink.net.

Texas History Day 2011

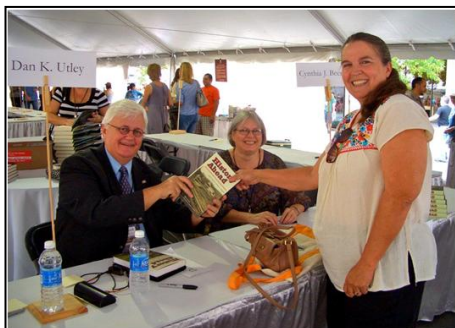
TOHA thanks **Susan Burneson** and **Hubert Miller**, who judged for the TOHA award recognizing outstanding use of oral history in individual documentaries entered in the state's history fair contest, held May 6-7, 2011, in Austin. The annual theme was Debate & Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences. To win the TOHA award, students must interview at least three people and demonstrate use of the interview materials in their documentaries.

Outstanding projects earned these students the 2011 TOHA Award:

Junior (grades 6-8). First place: Ben Martinsen, Waco Baptist Academy, Waco, for "Get in the Game: Leveling the Playing Field," which investigated the world of para-athletes, focusing on Oscar Pistorious, whose bid to compete in the 2012 Olympics has created an international debate on the rights of disabled athletes. Second place: Will Wakefield, Benjamin Franklin Middle School, Dallas, for "M14 vs M16," which asked the question, Was replacing the M14 with the M16 in the Vietnam War an ethical decision that protected or endangered American lives?

Senior (grades 9-12). First place: Subhash Gubba, William B. Travis High School, Sugarland, for "Beyond the Cradle: The Outer Space Treaty," which looked at debates on space law concerning arguments on who can control space, who can do what in space, and space war and weaponry. Second place: Carolina Lopez-Trevino, John Jay Science & Engineering Academy, San Antonio, for "Breaking Down the Great Wall: Nixon's Visit to China," which exposed ways Nixon's diplomacy set the groundwork for transforming China into the world's second largest economy.

Member highlights



Dan K. Utley and **Cynthia J. Beeman** (seated) were featured at the Texas Book Festival in Austin in October, where they signed copies of their book, *History Ahead: Stories beyond the Texas Roadside Markers* (Texas A&M, 2011). Look for a second volume with more stories, tentatively titled *More History Ahead*.

In addition to their writing and research, Dan and Cynthia are actively engaged in other historical work. Cynthia not only serves on TOHA's board of directors, but she is the current president of the East Texas Historical Association. Dan teaches at Texas State University and has assumed the role of book review editor for TOHA's journal, *Sound Historian*.

Photo by Debbie Utley



Dr. Jennifer Ross-Nazzari received NASA's annual History Division Award on November 2, 2011, an honor given to the person who has provided outstanding contributions to fostering NASA history during the past year. In making the presentation, NASA Chief Historian Bill Barry noted that Jennifer is an accomplished oral historian who in the last year interviewed dozens of individuals in many aspects of human spaceflight. As a skillful researcher, she responded to numerous requests for detailed information and assisted other Centers in finding answers to difficult questions. She has assisted the Johnson Space Center's Historic Preservation Officer and led a project that provided specific information for the agency's Shuttle Recordation effort. Several times Jennifer provided (on camera) historical information for video documentaries being produced by independent companies.

An accomplished author, Jennifer has published a journal article, presented at a national conference, submitted a chapter for a publication featuring prominent experts, and written for *Wings In Orbit: Scientific and Engineering Legacies of the Space Shuttle*.

Jennifer holds the unique distinction of being a scholar of women's history and NASA history. While working full-time at JSC and teaching history online for the University of Maryland University College, she completed the biography of a lifelong worker for a woman's right to vote, *Winning the West for Women: the Life of Suffragist Emma Smith DeVoe* (University of Washington, 2011). She also serves on committees for several national history-related organizations. Jennifer has served as the NASA Johnson Space Center Historian since 2004.



Susan and Rob Burneson of Austin have launched Voices of the Violet Crown (violetcrownvoices.com), a website and blog updated weekly. The site features excerpts from oral history interviews, photographs, video clips, two films, essays, neighborhood news, and links to

other oral history websites. The Burnesons have coordinated the ongoing project in Central Austin since 2003. They received the 2009 Mary Faye Barnes Award for Excellence in Community History Projects for their film *A Community Mosaic*.

SOUND BITES is an occasional newsletter of the Texas Oral History Association Board of Directors for the benefit of TOHA members. For questions, submissions, or comments, or to volunteer as a newsletter reporter, please contact Lois E. Myers at lois_myers@baylor.edu or 254.710.6285. To access live links in the newsletter, view Sound Bites online at <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA/index.php?id=29357>.

TOHA 2012 Calendar of Events

JANUARY 1	TOHA's 2012 membership year opens	Renew today and invite a friend to join! Complete the form included with this newsletter and point your friends to the membership form available at baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29341 .
MARCH 1 – 3	Texas State Historical Association Omni Houston Hotel, Houston <i>Register now at tshaonline.org.</i>	TOHA session: Friday, March 2, 2:30 p.m. "Visions of Texas: Art and History in the Lone Star State." Full program details available in January at tshaonline.org .
APRIL 11 & 18	Baylor Online Workshop: Getting Started with Oral History	Learn more and register beginning in February at baylor.edu/oralhistory .
APRIL 21, 2012	 ANNOUNCING!! First annual TOHA Conference Baylor University, Waco	Join us for TOHA's inaugural stand-alone conference. The conference will be held on a springtime Saturday at Baylor University in Waco. Proposals for papers and ideas for workshops are under review now and the program details will be announced early next year. Look for a variety of presentations from students and seasoned oral historians alike. Included will be a practical workshop. Make plans to join us and bring your friends!
MAY 6 – 7	Texas History Day TOHA Award Judging Austin	Volunteer to serve as judge for the TOHA award by e-mailing lois_myers@baylor.edu . View 2011 awards at baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29364 .
SEPTEMBER 4-7	XVII International Oral History Conference Buenos Aires, Argentina	Learn more at baires2012.org .
SEPTEMBER 22 - 24	East Texas Historical Association Nacogdoches	Details later at easttexashistorical.org .
OCTOBER 12 – 16	Oral History Association Cleveland, Ohio	Program proposals may be submitted until January 20, 2012. Get forms and instructions at oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/2012-call-for-papers/ .