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Los Paisanos

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LOS PAISANOS

Saludo a Todo Los Paisanos:

In a recent personally conducted Los Paisanos poll concerning the literary activities of local writers, only one author answered my ear-to-ear questionnaire with a "What is the use of writing now?" Regardless of the hazardous business of finding a publisher willing to gamble on future book sales, and in spite of the terrific emotional impact engendered by each day's war news, all of them, with the exception of the Texan, are finishing the book that has been in the offing, or planning new one with a confident approach to our present tight-rope-walking existence and to the ultimate worth of personal achievement.

Consider for a moment Alan Swallow, poet-publisher, and instructor in English at the University of New Mexico. Dr. Swallow has just recently edited three books which will appear this summer from the publishing house of James A. Decker, Prairie City, Illinois. *American Writing, 1942*, the first of the three, will be published soon. It is an anthology of short stories and poems which appeared in the non-commercial magazines of 1941 and will include also a yearbook of those magazines. The volume will contain more than fifty poems and several short stories, including one story and several poems selected from THE NEW MEXICO QUARTERLY REVIEW. The anthology is the first of an annual selection which Dr. Swallow will edit.

Three Young Poets, to appear soon also, includes work of three poets, Thomas McGrath of New York City, William Peterson of Glendale, California, and James Franklin Lewis of Batesville, Arkansas.

The third book, *Three Lyric Poets*, presents the work of three Southern poets selected with an introduction by Dr. Swallow. The authors are Tom H. McNeal, head of the English department at East Texas State Teachers College, Alice Moser of New Orleans, and Byron Herbert Reece of Blairsville, Georgia. In addition to this work, Dr. Swallow has also signed a contract for a first book of his own poem which will appear late in the fall under the title *The Remembered Land*.

Conrad Richter, whom Albuquerque proudly claims because he and his wife and daughter Harvena lived here for a number of years (Harvena graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1938), was awarded the annual gold medal for literary achievement by the Society for the Libraries of New York University at the society's annual meeting, May 20. The *New York Times* literary supplement of June 7 carried a one-third page announcement of the decision of the judges, Harry Hansen, Edward Weeks, and Pearl Buck. Mr. Richter is the author of three distinguished books: *Early American* (1936), *The Sea of Grass* (1937), and *Trees* (1940). He has just finished a novel, which will probably be published in the fall. It too is a piece of Americana.

Dorothy and Nils Hogner, whose recent *The Animal Book* is considered their best, are now busily engaged on another juvenile to be called *Stories of the Bible*, which the Oxford Press will issue. According to an eye-witness, Nils' illustrations for the forthcoming one are "perfectly beautiful." They will spend the summer in their Greenwich apartment instead of at their summer studio in Litchfield because Nils is finishing a government consignment of murals, and because both of them have signed up for the duration as air wardens of their precinct.

Kyle Crichton, dramatic, screen, and stage critic for *Collier's Magazine*, spent the Fourth of July week-end in Albuquerque en route to New York from Hollywood. During his short visit he saw all of his friends, from Elfege Baca to Mrs. Clara Fergusson, but most of his time was spent with Mr. E. Shaffer, editor of the *Albuquerque Tribune*, whose hundreds of friends and admirers throughout New Mexico hope for an early recovery from his present illness in St. Joseph's Hospital. The only side-light obtained from Kyle regarding the play on which he has been working for some time was a broad grin.

Erna Fergusson, "Our Southwest's" distinguished author and lecturer, says that she has had a "not too busy summer," but it seems to me that she has been very busy, writing, lecturing, and attending to civic duties. The manuscript of her forthcoming book will be in the hands of her publishers on scheduled time, early fall. In addition to a variety of interesting maps, one of the most charming features of the book will be a set of illustrations of ceramic figurines which Erna fell in love with during her intensive study of Chile last year and which she had an artist pose and photograph against typical backgrounds such as fiestas and wine-harvests.

Miss Fergusson was the honorary chairman of the Albuquerque

June Music Festival given under the direction of the distinguished pianist, Maurice Dumesnil of New York City. Six of the chamber music concerts were given at the Los Poblanos ranch home of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Simms, and the remaining two at Carlisle Gymnasium on the University campus. Paul Horgan, who grew up in Albuquerque, opened the first broadcast of the event. . . . Paul's most recent story "A Try for the Island," which appeared in the June issue of *Harper's* is a chapter from a novel which he is now completing—a study of adolescence presented from a subjective point of view.

Martha Foley, former editor of *Story* who has taken over the late Edward O'Brien's job of selecting the best short stories of each year, has asked permission to include Boyce Eakin's story *Prairies* in the 1942 volume of *Best Short Stories*. Mr. Eakin's story appeared in the August 1941, issue of the QUARTERLY REVIEW. Originally from Connecticut, Boyce Eakin lived in Taos for several years.

Mabel Major, of Texas Christian University, former president of the Texas Folklore Society, and collaborator with Dr. T. M. Pearce and Rebecca Smith on *Southwest Heritage*, is a charming addition to the University of New Mexico's summer school faculty. Miss Major has supplied the following very interesting supplement to "Los Paisanos" concerning Texas writers.

Hasta la próxima vez.

JULIA KELEHER

NOTES ON TEXAS BOOKS AND WRITERS

The most important fiction out of Texas on the spring book list is Karle Wilson Baker's *Star of the Wilderness*, a first-rate historical novel of the years just before San Jacinto. History is there and accurate, but it does not get in the way of the story. This second novel of Texas' foremost poet is an entire success. The first one, *Family Style*, was not quite.

John A. and Alan Lomax's collection of ballads, *Our Singing Country*, is a considerable addition to the body of folklore. It is a handsome Macmillan book of 190 songs and with headnotes by the contributors and delightful interspersed essays on ballad hunting by John Lomax. Musical scores, as prepared by Ruth Seeger, are given for all of the songs.

Frank Dobie is entertaining the soldiers in the large Texas army camps with Mexican legends and yarns. The section "Life Goes to a

Party" of *Life Magazine* for June 1 was practically devoted to showing him in action. The photographs were made at the annual meeting of the Texas Folklore Society at Texas State College for Women in May.

George Sessions Perry, whose *Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, was the 1941 Texas Institute of Letters Book Award novel, is at San Antonio writing stories and articles of the Texas air training fields. See nearly any issue of current magazines for his work.

Alfred A. Knopf has announced the June 29 publication of *A Talent for Murder*, by Anna Mary Wells, formerly of Dallas and the English department of Texas Christian University, now Mrs. Theodore Smitt of Detroit. This murder mystery is another evidence of Miss Wells' versatility. For several years she has been writing stories for the *New Yorker*, the *American Mercury*, and the *Family Circle*.

The Sunday, June 14, *New York Times* ran a story on creative arts at Texas Christian University with special attention to the very substantial poetry scholarship.

For other Texas writers see May 16 "Southwestern Issue" of the *Saturday Review of Literature*. It is nearly all Texan, too much Texan to be fair to the whole region. It was edited by John McGinnis of the *Southwest Review* and the "Book Section" of the *Dallas News*.

MABEL MAJOR