

THE TEXAS ROOM DISPATCH

A Publication of the Friends of the Texas Room
Volume No. 2, No. 4, October 2004

ANNUAL MEETING

Saturday, October 23, 2004 * 10 a.m.-Noon
Museum of Printing History
1324 West Clay

The Museum of Printing History is located on West Clay Street between Waugh Drive and Montrose, one block south of West Dallas.

Free parking is available in the lot across the street or in the small lot on the left, adjacent to the Museum building.

Our speaker will be FTR Board Member George Werner. The title of his presentation will be "The History of Texas Railroads."

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Dear Friends:

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Texas Room will take place on Saturday, October 23 at 10:00 A. M. at the Museum of Printing History. The Nominating Committee will present its slate of officers and directors for the next two years. The Report of the Nominating Committee is listed below. On behalf of the board I want to thank the Nominating Committee for their hard work. They are: George Werner, Chairman; Betty Chapman, Jim Fisher, Kate Kirkland, and Carol Weaver.

Also, I want to thank those who will rotate off of the board in January: Jim Glass, Marks Hinton, Marvin Rich, and Elizabeth Whitlow. All of them have made invaluable contributions during the formative period of the Friends organization.

The Friends board is pleased to have received the report of the assessment visit to the HMRC last June by archivist Biruta C. Kearl. This assessment was done at the request of our board. It identifies many of the problems that concern our members and recommends three categories of priorities for resolution of these problems: immediate, short term, and long term. Among long-term priorities she suggests, "Keep African American collections at the HMRC where researchers can do their work in the context of the entire city." This recommendation is consistent with the position that our board has taken in our meetings and with our communications with the library administration and City Hall.

The library administration has acted on several of the immediate priorities, including consolidation of the three departments of the HMRC into one budgetary and administrative unit, scheduling regular meetings of the HMRC staff, securing the closed stack area, and keeping the air-conditioning equipment running 24/7 to maintain the proper levels of temperature and humidity. This is a good start to a process that should bring major changes over the next year.

Your board has approved a Contributions Policy, which is printed elsewhere in this newsletter. Consistent with this policy, we have approved the expenditure of \$4,000 toward the completion of the retrospective conversion of Texas and Local History Department materials not currently reflected in the library's online public access catalog. Many of these materials are catalogued, but the bibliographic records have not been added to the automated system.

The Cataloguing Department has not been able to continue work on this project due to staff reductions. The job will be outsourced to the OCLC RetroCon cataloguing and conversion service that the library has used in the past with excellent results. The first materials to be converted to electronic format will be the collection of Texas maps.

The Library plans to ask Biruta Kearl to formulate an implementation plan for

conducting a complete inventory of the HMRC collections. Because the existing library staff will be unable to commit the time required, the library administration hopes the Friends of the Texas Room will be a source of volunteers for this crucial project. Please let us know if you are interested.

Nancy Burch is working on our membership brochure that should be available this fall.

We have accomplished a lot over the last eighteen months. As our organization matures, we look forward to helping build the HMRC into one of America's finest archival centers.

Dorothy Knox Houghton

MINUTES, FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM, JULY 20, 2004

Friends of the Texas Room met July 20, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. at the Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay. After calling the meeting to order, President Dorothy Knox Houghton expressed appreciation to Dr. Mavis Kelsey for his generosity in funding the reprinting of the 1873 Birdseye Map that is once again for sale for \$7.00 in the Texas Room.

The president introduced Betty Chapman who presented "The Ups and Downs of Researching the Houston Public Library" in which she related her experiences in compiling the library's Centennial publication, 100 Years – 100 Stories: The Houston Public Library 1904-2004. Following the program, a discussion was held regarding possible solutions to the problems that researchers encounter at the Houston Metropolitan Research Center.

A business session was conducted following the program. The minutes of the April membership meeting were approved as printed in the Newsletter. The president reported that our current bank balance is \$11,313.05. A nominating committee was appointed; George Werner will serve as chairman with Betty Chapman, Jim Fisher, Kate Kirkland, and Carol Weaver as members. Officers for 2005-2006 will be elected at the October meeting.

It was announced that a membership campaign will be conducted in the fall. Nancy Burch is working with a firm to design a brochure. Members were asked to send names of prospective members—individuals or organization lists—to Membership Chairman, Dorothy Johnson. Our membership currently stands at 183.

The president read a list of volunteer opportunities in both the Archives Department and in the Texas Room. These jobs will be placed on the Friends' new website which Vernon Gillette has put in operation. We would like to increase the number of volunteers in these areas. Several suggestions were

made by members regarding the use of both high school and college students as volunteers. Brenda Tirrell, Manager of the Central Library, replied that these possibilities would be studied.

A discussion was held concerning dispersal of Friends' funds, possibly in the amount of \$4,000. At our request, the HMRC staff submitted a list of items that were needed. The Board will study these suggestions and determine allocation of funds.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Following the meeting, copies of 100 Years – 100 Stories were available for sale.

Respectfully submitted,
Betty T. Chapman, Secretary

ELECTION OF OFFICERS & DIRECTORS FOR 2005-2006

Officers and Directors for 2005-2006 will be elected at the Annual Meeting on October 23.

REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE

George Werner, Chairman

The following have been nominated as officers and directors
for Friends of the Texas Room
for 2005-2006

President - Dorothy Knox Houghton
Vice President - Barrie Scardino
Secretary - Betty Chapman
Treasurer - George Werner
Directors: Paul Homeyer, Sims McCutchan, Anne Sloan

Nominations may be made from the floor, but, in accordance with our By-laws, no name may be placed in nomination without the consent of the nominee.

BOARD PROFILE: GEORGE WERNER

George C. Werner was born at St. Joseph's Hospital on 7 April 1936 and has lived in the Houston area ever since. Although he grew up five miles from downtown Houston, he says "Houston area" as the city didn't reach out and annex his neighborhood until about 1950. Following graduation from high school, George went to work for Humble Oil & Refining Company and retired in October 1994 with over 40 years of service at Humble and its successor Exxon USA. Most of his career was spent in the Corporate Planning Department

making energy studies and projections. Along the way he obtained Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the University of Houston.

George's interest in history began in school as he enjoyed the courses and, of more importance at the time, found them easy. In college he took as many history electives as possible; however, he states that in no way is he a trained historian.

Another one of George's interests is transportation, particularly the Texas railroad system. This interest in trains dates from his youth, when he lived near a junction of several routes and listened to the "whistles in the night." In his early teens, in pre-freeway Houston, he and a friend rode their bicycles throughout Houston searching out various railroad facilities. While his camera equipment and technique at the time left much to be desired, he fondly remembers the excursions, which took place during the railroads' conversion from steam to diesel.

At that time there was little published material on Texas railroads. In the late 1960s, when he became editor of *Gulf Coast Railroading*, the newsletter of the Gulf Coast Chapter, National Railroad Historical Society, George also discovered that much of the "conventional wisdom" was incorrect. As a result, he began visiting the Texas Room to read microfilm of the Houston and Galveston newspapers during his lunch hour. Even at 20 minutes a day he was able to glean a considerable amount of information on early Texas railroads.

Over the years, George has written a number of articles, which have been published in various railroad historical journals and has also assisted a number of authors in preparing their manuscripts. He also edited or wrote all of the railroad articles for *The New Handbook of Texas*.

George considers spending a day at trackside watching the flow of trains or a day at an archive looking for an elusive piece of information among his favorite things to do. Over the years he has researched at a number of archives and appreciates the amount of material and facilities of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center. He became interested in participating in the Friends of the Texas Room when collections he saw 15 years earlier could not be found or when he heard horror stories from people who donated materials, which also could not be found when they came back to do subsequent research.

CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

Friends of the Texas Room Policy for Contributions to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center, which includes the collections of the Archives and Manuscripts Department, the Texas and Local History Department, and the Special Collections Department of the Houston Public Library

From time to time, the Friends of the Texas Room will purchase and contribute to the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library items that will enrich and enhance the above named collections and ensure their preservation.

All such contributions will be purchased by the Friends directly and then given to the Library with specific stipulations as to how such contributions are to be used by the Library to enhance and ensure the preservation of the HMRC collections.

The Friends will give no money directly to the Library.

The Friends will not buy expendable supplies for the Library.

The Friends will not fund Library personnel.

CULTURAL MATCHING GIFTS

Are you or your spouse working for or retired from a corporation which makes cultural matching grants or volunteer involvement awards if you give to or do volunteer work for a cultural institution?

Will your employer match your gifts to cultural institutions that qualify under IRS 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code?

The Friends of the Texas Room has such a qualification. Send your corporation's cultural matching funds form with your check for membership in FTR. If you volunteer your time as an officer of FTR or in the Texas Room or HMRC, keep track of your hours and turn them in to your corporation so that the FTR may obtain a grant from your corporation's program. This is "found money" for FTR and can be used towards making a difference to the Texas Room and HMRC.

EXXONMOBIL FOUNDATION GRANTS

The Friends of the Texas Room would like to express its thanks to the ExxonMobil Foundation for the \$2,000 in grants made earlier this year. These grants were made as part of the ExxonMobil Foundation's program of financial

assistance to organizations whose activities are supported by volunteers who are ExxonMobil employees or retirees (George Werner and Dorothy Johnson). This program aids the Houston Metropolitan Research Center (HMRC) in two ways. First, the volunteer hours help to reduce the burden on the staff in many areas such as helping to process the large backlog of uncatalogued collections. Secondly, the grants help the Friends to provide needed equipment to help make the HMRC more user friendly or to acquire items to expand the collection.

WHAT OUR FRIENDS ARE DOING

We have had a great response to an email sent out recently asking our members to tell us about what they were doing in conjunction with the HMRC. Below are some of the responses.

HMRC Volunteers.

Don Teter of Baytown writes, "I am one of the very few volunteers in the Texas Room. There is a great need for volunteers, as the staff cannot accomplish everything that needs to be done. There is a variety of work in which anyone can find his/her niche. I go to the Texas Room two days a month and spend about three hours each visit doing whatever I am able to do. The assignments are interesting, and I'm learning a lot about the library and what is available and where things are located. I can work at my own speed and choose my own times. Parking is free for volunteers in the underground garage, so I'm never exposed to bad weather."

Charles Stephenson writes that, after he retired as the Chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Lee College, he was not yet ready to give up the college life. He enrolled as a student and took classes in English literature, writing and computer science and has earned at least 68 hours of course credits. He was taking a course in American Studies when his professor suggested that he go to the HMRC to do research for a paper. Charles needed a subject to write on and the professor, who had been at the HMRC the day before, felt that Charles could probably identify a subject for his paper by going to the HMRC. Louis Marchiafava had just begun working on the jazz collection and needed assistance. Charles assisted by in numerous interviews and transcriptions for the jazz collections. He became so involved that he wrote a book on the subject, *Texas Jazz Musicians in the Big Band Era, 1928-1942*. He is currently looking for a publisher. After working with the HMRC's jazz collections, Charles worked on indexing the picture postcard collection of Julia Ideson. He is now working on a catalog of the negatives from the Houston Post (1955-1989). The HMRC has approximately 70 boxes with some 500 to 700 negatives in each box. Charles has completed work on about six boxes so far and has seen negatives of numerous movie actors, of early Fat Stock Shows, lots of negatives of Houston buildings that no longer exist, the early Alley Theatre, scenes from plays, lots of ladies sitting at the Rice and at the Shamrock Hilton. To quote Charles, "I came to the HMRC to write an article for class and wrote a book. I have been

volunteering ever since, assisting the HMRC to provide greater access to some of our collections to our customers.”

Projects & Publications Using HMRC Resources.

Dr. Mavis Kelsey and Robin Brandt Hutchison (librarian at Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A & M University) have spent six years working on *Engraving Prints of Texas: 1554-1900*. The book will be published by Texas A & M Press in the spring of 2005. Dr. Kelsey writes that he “is very grateful to the staff of the Texas Room, who will receive credit for every image they provided.” He also promises us a copy of his book when it is published.

Virginia Hancock has been collecting information on the Sims family and Kenneth Franzheim.

Susan Teich has been using the Texas Room to research her husband’s ancestor, Franch Teich (1856-1939), an early Texas sculptor whose Houston work includes the Dick Dowling Monument (1905), the Pioneer Monument (the 1936 obelisk in Hermann Park), the base of the Sam Houston Monument at Hermann Park (1925), and numerous memorials in Glenwood Cemetery. She is currently trying to locate two granite lions by Teich that are pictured in *A Comprehensive Guide to Outdoor Sculpture in Texas* by Carol Morris Little. Susan writes that, “If the granite lions exist, my goal is to find them so that they can be restored to public view. I am hoping the Texas Room will provide clues to help me do that.”

Jackie Brannon Giles is collaborating with IT expert Glen Whiting on a proposal for “Integrating Internet TV into the Texas Library System.”

Jim Fisher, Senior Producer at Houston PBS, writes that, in March, he completed the fifth program in the Houston PBS Series, “Houston: Remember When.” Entitled “KUHT: Fifty Golden Years,” it tells the story of KUHT-TV, Channel 8: how it started, how it has evolved, and where it is today.

Trevia Wooster Beverly has published the third edition of *At Rest: A Historical Directory of Harris County, Texas, Cemeteries (1822-2001)* and is almost finished with *Suffer the Children: A History of the Confederate Orphanage at Baylands, Harris County, Texas*. As always, she relied heavily on resources at the HMRC.

Jim Glass has four projects in the works: (1) A history of the founding of Houston; (2) a finished manuscript entitled “Lost Measures” that traces the mensuration system we now use, based upon human dimensions, that will be lost when the metric system comes in; it covers measures in all civilizations from ancient Sumer to 19th-century Texas; (3) an article on the history of the Lynchburg-San Jacinto-Wooster area that is looking for a publisher; and (4) a first draft, requiring

major re-writing, of a manuscript about "Racer's Storm," the benchmark Galveston hurricane of 1837.

Gene Church Schultz writes that his father, an architect, considered the Ideson Building the most beautiful building in Houston. Gene's parents took him to the Norma Meldrum Room almost every Saturday of his childhood. As a writer, he has used the Texas Room for research.

Eleanor C. Ricards writes that she and her husband joined the Friends of the Texas Room because they support everything they can at the Houston Public Library. In fact, their daughter, Andrea Lapsley, is Assistant Director for Marketing and Development at the Houston Public Library.

Karen Rogers, a founder of the Rice University Historical Society, writes that, a couple of years ago, the RHS re-published *Setting of the Jewel: The Rice Institute*. It contains 441 photographs of Houston in 1912. She plans to donate a copy to the Texas Room.

Please continue to contact Sandra Lord, editor of the Texas Room Dispatch (sandraslord@aol.com), with information about your volunteer service at the HMRC and about projects you are working on that utilize the resources of the HMRC.

IN THE NEWS

On August 24, 2004, the Houston Chronicle published an article entitled "After 100 years, it's time to turn the page." Author Allen Turner wrote that our beloved "downtown building will get a cover-to-cover upgrade to mark its centennial anniversary." Copies of the article are available at www.chron.com.

During the month of October, the Archivists of the Houston Area (AHA) are hosting an exhibit at the Ideson Building. The exhibit includes the time capsule recently recovered from the 1952 Harris County Criminal Courthouse. On Saturday, October 9, 2004, the AHA hosted *Family History Preservation Day* at the Ideson Building. To learn more about AHA, go to www.rice.edu/fondren/woodson/AHA.

The Texas Library Association will hold their 2005 Conference in Austin and 2006 Conference in Houston. For more information, call toll-free 1-800-580-2852.

DUES REMINDER

Our Membership Year runs from January 1 - December 31. Please fill in the membership form at the end of this Newsletter and mail it with your check to P. O. Box 27827, Houston, TX 77227-7827. Please make your check payable to "Friends of the Texas Room." If you have friends who might be interested in membership, please submit their names and addresses along with your check

and we will send them information. If you have email, please include it. This saves us mailing costs.

FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM: WHO WE ARE

Mission. The Friends of the Texas Room seeks to support the collections of the Texas and Local History Department, the Archives and Manuscripts Department, and the Special Collections Department of the Houston Metropolitan Research Center of the Houston Public Library.

Board of Directors:

President - Dorothy Knox Houghton

Vice-President - George Werner

Secretary - Betty Chapman

Treasurer - Marks Hinton

Board members-at-large: Jim Glass, Marvin Rich, Anne Sloan, Elizabeth Whitlow

HOW TO CONTACT THE FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM

Membership applications, dues, donations, and mail for Board Members should be sent to the address below:

Friends of the Texas Room
P. O. Box 27827
Houston, Texas 77227-7827

HOW TO CONTACT THE TEXAS ROOM DISPATCH

Submissions and comments for the Texas Room Dispatch should be sent to the Texas Room Dispatch Editor at the address below.

Sandra Lord
Texas Room Dispatch Editor
P. O. Box 230183
Houston, Texas 77223-0183
(713) 222-9255 * Fax: (713) 921-1510
Email: SandraSLord@aol.com

JOIN THE FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM

Please spread the word and help us find new members. If you have access to a list of likely members which you can share with us, we would appreciate it. The Membership Application below can be emailed to your prospects or photocopied and faxed or mailed to prospective members.

FRIENDS OF THE TEXAS ROOM

Membership Application

Membership Year: January 1 – December 31

RETURN TO: P.O. BOX 27827 * HOUSTON, TEXAS 77227-7827

First person:

Second person at same address:

first name middle/maiden last name first name middle/maiden last name

Mailing Address (Street or P.O.)

City/Town

State

ZIP +4

Telephone - Fax - E-Mail

First Person

2nd Person (If Different)

HOME: _____

OFFICE: _____

FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY (please circle)

Individual \$20 Family * \$30

Individual Senior (60+) \$10 Senior Family (60+) * \$15

Student * \$10 Name of School _____

Attending _____

* Family denotes two people at same address.

* Student must give name of school attending.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION

\$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: (Membership **plus** contribution)

\$ _____

NOTE: Friends of the Texas Room is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization operating under IRS Code 501(c) (3). Membership and additional contributions over and above membership, are tax deductible to the extent of the law. Is your gift eligible as a "matching gift" from an employer or other entity? If so, please give the name:

Volunteer Interests:

Please check below if you would like to volunteer for **FTR** activities or library services:

- Collections Volunteer: Be trained and increase your own knowledge about research techniques.
- Newsletter: Writing articles about materials in the collections or reporting on related activities.
- Website manager: Design and maintain an official site for the Friends of the Texas Room.
- Membership: Maintain up-to-date membership list and send out renewal notices.

- Telephone/E-Mail Committee: Contact for meeting cancellations, unscheduled events, or breaking news.
- Hospitality: Meeting room preparations, greeting people, refreshments when needed, etc.
- Programs: Help develop programs or special seminars or workshops.
- Public Relations: Developing posters, displays, news releases, handouts, etc.
- Special Projects
- Other: _____