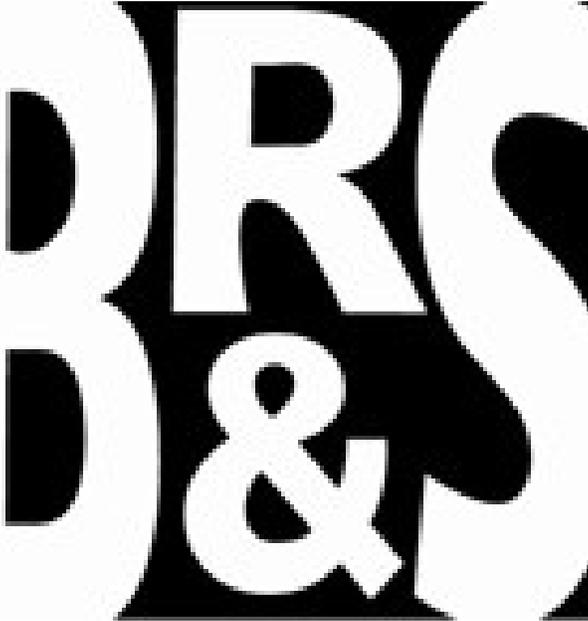


Spring Semester 2009
Volume 3, Issue 2

Idaho State
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Postings

Musings and goings-on from the Department of English & Philosophy



Special items of interest and stories contained inside

- Intermountain Graduate Conference
- Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival
- Graduation Party Pictures

Black Rock & Sage launches 2009 issue



English student, Jeff Pearson

Black Rock & Sage, ISU's student journal of creative works, threw a launch party for its brand new 2009 issue Friday, April 17 at the College Market. The launch featured a "rapid fire" reading, during which contributors to the magazine read for two to three minutes each. There was also an amazingly rich raffle drawing. Community members, students, faculty, contributors and their families, and magazine staff packed the Market.

Postings contains notes and updates that reflect the activities of the department. It also provides information about upcoming activities and other items of interest.

ISU Professor **Susan Swetnam** awarded **Tyler Chadwick** the Ford Swetnam Poetry Prize for his poem "Submerged: Two Variations on Serrano's 'Piss Christ.'" "Submerged" was selected by this year's judge, Paul Lindholdt, professor in creative writing at Eastern Washington University.



Ph.D. Student, Meredith Harvey

This year’s magazine illustrates the staff’s efforts to make *Black Rock & Sage* a journal for the entire university. For the first time, the magazine includes a CD featuring vocal and instrumental performances by music majors at ISU. Kori Bond and other music faculty played a large role in establishing this new partnership with the magazine. Art Department Assistant Professor Angie Zielinski and chair Rudy Kovacs, who encouraged art students to submit to the journal, made the final art selections. A larger portion of the 2009 issue was dedicated to art and design. Another first includes our first cartographic contribution. Sara O’Connor’s map traces the courtship of her grandparents through letters. Her grandfather traveled through Minnesota and Iowa working small jobs while her grandmother substitute taught at schools around the region. Their letters traveled to and from many different addresses.

Last but not least, the magazine, as always, features the best ISU has to offer in poetry and fiction. Graduate and undergraduate students in the Department of English and Philosophy’s Literary Magazine Production class made all the decisions as to which literature submissions to include. Housed in the Department of English and Philosophy, *Black Rock & Sage* is the university’s only student arts journal. All the work in the magazine was produced by students at ISU. To order a copy of the magazine, e-mail brs@isu.edu.



Professors Jessica Winston and Susan Goslee

Graduates Start Ph.D.

A number of our students will begin graduate programs in the fall, at ISU, Colorado State, University of Colorado, and elsewhere. Three are headed across the country to highly competitive English Ph.D. programs, and their experiences highlight some strengths of the English preparation available at ISU, notably faculty involvement with students.

“The professors are really involved with and really seem to care about the students.”
- Jackson Medel

This May, **Jackson Medel** will receive his B.A. in English, with a minor in Folklore. He will then go to the University of Missouri – Columbia for their English M.A./Ph.D. program, with an emphasis in folklore. He received a generous funding package, including a prestigious, university-wide Thurgood Marshall Fellowship for his first year and several years of Teaching Assistant (TA) funding after that.

Jason Dietz, who earned an undergraduate degree in Psychology at Brigham Young University-Idaho before coming to ISU, will graduate this spring with his M.A. in English. He is off to Kentucky, where he will begin the Ph.D. program in Composition and Rhetoric at the University of Louisville. Like Medel, he was awarded a competitive, university-wide fellowship for his first year and a multi-year Teaching Assistantship.

JoSann Lien, who earned her A.A. at North Idaho College and B.A. in English at the University of Idaho, received her M.A. in English in 2007 from ISU, where she has since been teaching part-time. She is going to the English Ph.D. Program at the University of Minnesota, where she will focus on postcolonial literature, especially the literature of the Caribbean. She also won a competitive, university-wide fellowship for her first year, with TA funding in the following years.

The interests of the three students differ greatly: folklore, composition, and postcolonial literature. Yet these differences point to a strength of our program. While our degrees emphasize English and American literature, students can take classes focusing on various approaches and in related disciplines to develop their own interests and specializations.

For instance, Medel, the first graduate of ISU's new undergraduate Folklore Minor, gravitated toward the offerings in this discipline, since they allowed him to combine a long-standing interest in anthropology with a love of literature and storytelling.

For one class, he researched Native American Salmon River legends and their appropriation by European settlers. The resulting essay became his Ph.D. writing sample. Dietz found courses in composition and rhetoric most exciting, and an ideal place to combine his interests in psychology, writing, and rhetoric. For an essay in one class, he discussed Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi's theories of "optimal experience" and their application to the composition classroom, which also became his writing sample. Lien, who came to ISU with an interest in multicultural literature, developed a fascination with postcolonial writing in her seminar work, and especially the association of the Caribbean with madness in some European novels. She pursued this subject in her M.A. thesis on Creole identity in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, part of which she presented at the annual American Literature Association Conference in 2008.

Despite their differences, Medel, Dietz, and Lien all credit the faculty with helping them to reach their goals, citing faculty support as one of the most important aspects of their time at ISU. Medel appreciated "the amount of personal interaction I got to have with my professors." He observes, "The professors are really involved with and really seem to care about the students. They were totally willing to talk with me, and happy to hear about my progress." Dietz concurs: The faculty members are "marvelous" and have an "obvious mastery." They are "such good teachers" and "communicate what you need to learn" and in a way that helps students to "make connections among the classes." Lien, who worked as a research assistant for the professor who would later advise her thesis, agrees: "There's lots of faculty support here."

The students found other aspects of the program helpful, including the service and research opportunities. Dietz served as the prose editor for the ISU literary magazine, *Black Rock & Sage*, and as treasurer for the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA), noting that this made him aware of administrative and service aspects of academic life as well as "more attractive as a future employee and future Ph.D. student." Lien found her research assistantship rewarding, since it allowed her to see how longer research projects are formulated. She also found the EGSA meetings useful in helping her to learn about the program and the profession, and making important contacts with professors in the department.

We wish Jackson, Jason, JoSann, and all of our graduating students, the best for the future as they pursue their academic, professional, and personal goals!



JoSann Lien, Jason Dietz, and Jackson Medel

Faculty News

Brian Attebery received the 2009 Pilgrim Award presented by The Science Fiction Research Association. The Pilgrim Award is a lifetime award, given annually to an individual whose body of work contributes significantly to the study of science fiction and fantasy. Previous winners include writer-critics such as Ursula K. Le Guin, Brian Aldiss, and Samuel R. Delany as well as scholars from around the world, including film critic Vivian Sobchack and post-modern theorist Fredric Jameson. Attebery has written three books and numerous articles on both science fiction and fantasy. His most recent book is *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*, published by Routledge in 2002. He is the co-editor, with Le Guin, of the influential anthology *The Norton Book of Science Fiction*. He also edits a scholarly journal, the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*. He was named ISU's Distinguished Researcher for 1997, and he has previously been honored for his work by the Mythopoeic Society, the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts, and the Idaho Humanities Council.

The Pilgrim Award is the oldest and most prestigious award in the field of science fiction scholarship. It was instituted in 1970 and named for J. O. Bailey's pioneering study of science fiction called *Pilgrims through Space and Time*. Bailey was also the first winner of the award. The official presentation of Attebery's Pilgrim Award will take place in June at the annual meeting of the SFRA in Atlanta, Georgia.

Russell Wahl was honored as ISU's Distinguished Researcher this spring.

Jennifer Attebery was honored as ISU's Outstanding Researcher this spring.

Hal Hellwig presented two conference papers during the fall semester: "*Project Runway* and *Top Chef*: The Everyday Extreme Value of Clothing and Eating" at the Modern Language Association Conference in San Francisco in December, and "Mark Twain's Substitute Self: A Traveler in the Nostalgic Timeless Realm" at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference in Louisville in November.

His book, *Mark Twain's Travel Literature: The Odyssey of a Mind*, was published in 2008 by McFarland Press. He penned a book review for the Mark Twain Forum: *Mark Twain on the Move: A Travel Reader*. (Edited by Alan Gribben and Jeffrey Alan Melton. The University of Alabama Press, 2009) This review appeared on February 23, 2009.

He continues to explore options for two book-length projects, one on the urban landscape with a number of writers, including James, Hawthorne, Twain, and others, and another on the dominance of the film noir protagonist in a variety of popular culture venues, such as *Star Trek*, *Have Gun Will Travel*, *Frasier*, and *The Rockford Files*, along with literary figures such as Faulkner and Hemingway.

Ralph Baergen and Chris Owens (Chair, Dept of Pharmacy Practice and Administration) did questionnaire research to learn more about how M.D.s and mid-level prescribers (physician assistants and nurse practitioners) collaborate with pharmacists when deciding on drug therapies for their patients. The results will appear in the May/June issue of the *Journal of the American Pharmacy Association*. The full title of the article is "Multistate Survey of Primary Care Physician and Midlevel Provider Attitudes Toward Community Pharmacists," by Christopher Owens, Ralph Baergen, and Paul Cady. Collaboration between prescribers and pharmacists results in safer, more effective drug therapies. Not surprisingly, Baergen and Owens found that M.D.s who are older, white and male are least likely to collaborate with pharmacists, and that physician assistants and nurse practitioners do best in this regard.

Curt Whitaker presented "Herbert's Metrics," a discussion of different ways of scanning Herbert's poetry, at "George Herbert's Travels," a conference devoted to Herbert and held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in October. In the spring, Whitaker presented "Green Performances: The Renaissance Garden as Intellectual Display" at the Pacific Northwest Renaissance Conference, held at Montana State University in Bozeman.

Brent Wolter presented a paper called "L1 Knowledge and the Development of L2 Intralexical Links" at the 2009 American Association of Applied Linguistics conference in Denver in March. L1 means first language and L2 means second language.



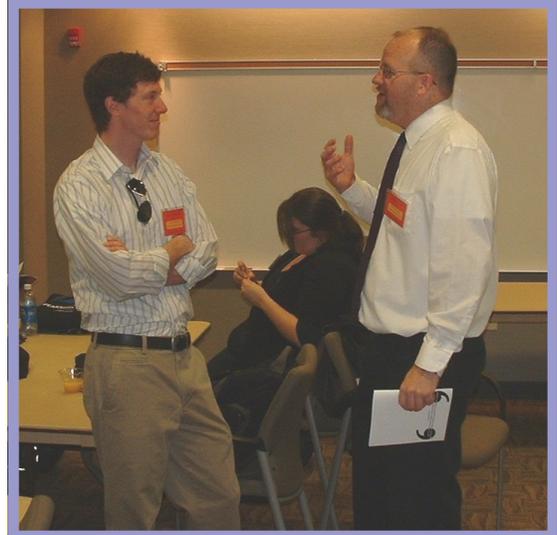
Russell Wahl

Graduate Students

5th Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference



M.A. students, Danielle Knapik, Tera Cole, and Devori Kimbro



Ph.D. student, Steve Harrison talks with a conference attendee

Graduate students from several different states converged on Idaho State University on Saturday, April 11 for the 5th Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference. The conference, co-sponsored by the Student Association of Graduates in English (S.A.G.E.) at Utah State University, attracts M.A., D.A., and Ph.D. candidates who wish to share their work in a student-centered environment.

This year's theme, "Performances," spawned an interesting collection of papers. Many teaching assistants focused presentations on issues of the composition classroom. One paper suggested the possibility of a textless course, and others posited the future role of technology in the composition classroom. There were, of course, several presentations that discussed literature in performance. ISU M.A. candidate **Lalove Foster** challenged previously accepted roles in the nineteenth-century sentimental novel, and another presentation examined the role of Ophelia in a stylized film adaptation of *Hamlet*.

A highlight of the conference was the lunchtime appearance by keynote speaker Rob Carney from Utah Valley State University. Carney recited several of his award-winning poems for an enraptured crowd, and then engaged in a lively Q & A with conference participants, speaking about the trials of teaching edgily in conservative climates.

This year's conference was engaging and well-planned, thanks to the exhaustive efforts of EGSA conference chair **Steve Harrison**. E.G.S.A. wishes to publicly thank Steve for his time and attention.

Graduate students and faculty alike were eager to gather together and discuss a portion of M.A. candidate **Erin Gray's** thesis entitled, *I Am This Small*. Erin's thesis project is creative and, as such, provided an intriguing mid-semester diversion for busy English folks. *I Am This Small* is a somewhat biographical work that weaves a tale of naiveté confronting big city life, drug abuse, and questions of God and existence. Gray was on hand to answer questions and receive constructive criticism from his peers.

2009-2010 EGSA Officers

President: Tera Cole
Ph.D. VP: Steven Hall
M.A. VP: Aaron Cloyd
Secretary: Jessica Edwards
Treasurer: Dana Harker

Steven Hall was recently awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Graduate Student Research and Scholarship Committee (GSRSC) for a book project titled *Writing the Jefferson: Creative Nonfiction Essays on Northern California and Southern Oregon*. For the project, he will be editing a collection of both previously published and unpublished essays about the region of northern California and southern Oregon, exploring the ways the region's culture and history have been defined by its landscape and geographic boundaries rather than artificial state borders.

EGSA Brown Bag

For an M.A. student, few prospects are as intimidating as that of applying to a Ph.D. program. ISU English M.A. students were privileged to get a behind-the-scenes glimpse at a successful Ph.D. program application through the efforts of **Jason Dietz**, an M.A. candidate who has recently been accepted into three prestigious programs, including University of Louisville and Purdue.

Dietz, who is currently serving as EGSA treasurer, agreed to host a Brown Bag lunch event after an EGSA meeting in order to speak about the experience of applying for Ph.D. programs, and to answer any questions the assembled students had regarding the process. Dietz detailed the hard work and attention to detail that he had put forth in order to achieve his goal of being accepted to a program of his choice. While the meeting was primarily for the benefit of M.A. students, several Ph.D. candidates remained to listen to the presentation and offer their own helpful advice.

Dietz encouraged all M.A. students who are interested in pursuing a doctoral degree to approach an appropriate mentor/adviser as soon as possible, since he/she will be an indispensable tool in the application process.

Pocatello Turns Out for Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival

Weeks past spring break and weeks before the end of semester, mid-April is normally a time when academically-affiliated writers and writing aficionados go to ground, buried under ungraded papers and lessons plans. The 2009 Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival, however, brought poetry and fiction fans out in force to hear young writers, established local writers, and award-winning poet and Native American activist Smon Ortiz. This year's festival ran from Wednesday, April 8 to Saturday, April 11 and included four readings, a colloquium, and a book fair. The average attendance for the readings was well over 40 people. The Festival did National Poetry Month proud.

Opening night of the festival at the College Market was hosted by Cathy Peppers and featured festival founder Will Peterson, **Susan Swetnam**, Harald Wyndham, Leslie Leek, as well as songs from Bob Picard. Thursday night was reserved for up-and-coming writers and host Jeff Pearson, an English major at ISU, entitled it "Come As You Are Night." The audience ranged from faculty to famous visiting poets to young people from all around the community. The crowd packed the renovated "Power House" on West Wyeth. Instead of sitting on a hot seat, readers stood under a small hanging heat lamp and the audience lounged on old car seats or mis-matched chairs. The crowd lingered to discuss the readings on the wonderful balcony overlooking the park long after the official event ended. Main Street Coffee hosted Friday's Celebration Night. Harald Wyndham served as coach, and readers included former ISU English faculty member Michael Sowder (now teaching at Utah State), poet and novelist Kevin Kiely, ISU faculty member and writer Michael Corrigan, and river-guide and writer Amil Quayle.



Professor Jennifer Attebery and M.A. student Erin Gray

Though Simon Ortiz attended many of the readings, led a colloquium on Friday titled “Past, Present, Future Indigenous Presence with Regards to Land, Culture, and Community,” toured Fort Hall with local writer Ronald Snake Edmo, and participated in the book fair, on Saturday he didn’t seem tired at all and gave an amazing reading. The Festival was honored to host Professor Ortiz. An indigenous writer of Acoma Pueblo descent, Ortiz is a poet, fiction-writer, and essayist who has received award recognition from the National Endowment for the Arts as well as Lila Wallace—Reader’s Digest Fund Awards and the New Mexico Governor’s Award for Excellence among many other honors. Professor Ortiz teaches at Arizona State University. On Saturday night, Snake Edmo opened the evening by reading a selection of his most recent poetry and journal entries. Professor Ortiz then read from a handful of his latest works of poetry. The Bengal Café was full and as soon as Ortiz finished reading, a line of audience members eager to purchase his work, formed at the book sales table.

When asked for her impression of the festival, co-director **Bethany Schultz Hurst** remarked, “What struck me was the turnout. We had about 50 people at each of the five events, and not the same 50 people. Every reading had its own personality, its own cross section of the Pocatello community. I was glad to see the festival’s broad and varied appeal. At the same time, the festival’s atmosphere was still intimate and friendly.”

Organizers already have next year’s festival in mind and hope to once again combine the welcoming atmosphere, large turnout, and impressive readers for another great four days in 2010.

First Annual Graduation Party



English B.A. student Kara McCurdy



(left to right) Baoguo (Bob) Zhang (English D.A.), Holli Brookshier (English B.A.), Kara McCurdy (English B.A.), Laura Hampton (English M.A.), Spencer Case (Philosophy B.A.)



Students and faculty enjoy the party



Professor Susan Goslee and English B.A. student Veronica Hapgood

Over the years, friends and alumni of the department have been charitable with their contributions, and we sincerely appreciate their generosity. These contributions have allowed us to bring guest speakers and artists to campus, provide match funding for much needed technology and system upgrades, assist with funding the literary magazine *Black Rock & Sage*, and offer more scholarship opportunities. If you are interested in contributing to the department, please contact Terry Engebretsen, chair, engeterr@isu.edu or call the department office at (208) 282-2478.

English Faculty climb to new heights



Professors **Tom Klein**, **Alan Johnson**, and **Brent Wolter** on top of Borah Peak (known to Idahoans as Mt. Borah). They climbed the highest peak in Idaho on August 23, 2008, just before the start of the new school year.

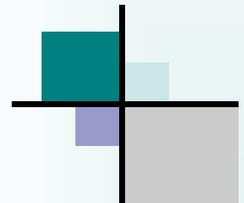


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