

Postings

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

English Faculty Member Receives Fulbright



Alan Johnson

Alan Johnson received a 2009-10 Fulbright Lecturing award to teach at the University of Mumbai from January through May 2010. While there, he plans to learn about India's university system, establish contacts with Indian colleagues, and learn more about the effects of globalization on India's pre-eminent city. He hopes that his knowledge of Hindi and previous visits to Mumbai will help enrich his stay. He also looks forward to sharing his experiences in "A Letter from India" to be published in the next newsletter. "I am thrilled and

excited by my selection, not only for the opportunities it allows for study, but also for the opportunity it offers to be an ambassador for Idaho State University and American higher education," Johnson said.

Johnson's specialty is postcolonial literature and theory, with a focus on South Asian literature, primarily Indian. He studies Indian authors writing in English who have become increasingly popular abroad as well as in that country, such as Salman Rushdie, Kiran Desai and Amitav Ghosh. While at the University of Mumbai, he will teach classes on globalization and literature, literary theory, and postcolonial studies.

Attebery Awarded Top Honors



Brian Attebery

Brian Attebery was presented with the 2009 Pilgrim Award in June at the annual meeting of The Science Fiction Research Association in Atlanta, Georgia. The Pilgrim Award is a lifetime award, given annually by the SFRA to an individual whose body of work contributes significantly to the study of science fiction and fantasy. 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 Ursula K. Le Guin (a previous Pilgrim Award winner), 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.

Special items of interest and stories contained inside

- Department Award Winners
- Dead Writers' Night
- Department Meet and Greet

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

Department of English & Philosophy Award Winners

Several faculty members have won awards multiple times; their names are listed just once in each category, chronologically since the time they first won an award.

Teaching Awards, since 1977

Distinguished Teachers: Irvin Hashimoto, Stephen Smith, Susan Swetnam, Carl Levenson, Ford Swetnam, Bethany Schultz

Master Teachers: Irvin Hashimoto, Waller Wigginton, Dante Cantrill, Denzel Smith, Stephen Smith, Carol Bagley, Susan Swetnam, Lawrence Rice, Ford Swetnam, Dennis Walsh, Carl Levenson, Anne Mullin, Roger Schmidt, Wayne Schow, Janne Goldbeck, Stephen Adkison, Curtis Whitaker, Jessica Winston, Bethany Schultz

Research Awards, since 1988

Distinguished Researcher: Brian Attebery, Susan Swetnam, Russell Wahl

Outstanding Researcher: Brian Attebery, Susan Swetnam, Russell Wahl, Jonathan Westphal, Jennifer Attebery

Service Awards, since 1989

Distinguished Public Service: Susan Swetnam

Outstanding Public Service: Susan Swetnam, Russell Wahl, Jennifer Attebery

Wahl award continues record of achievement



Russell Wahl

From the beginnings of the faculty awards in 1977, faculty in the Department of English and Philosophy have made a grand showing. The department has been notably successful in the area of teaching. In the 32 years since the inception of the teaching awards, 19 of our department faculty have been named Master Teachers and six of those were awarded the highest honor of Distinguished Teacher.

The research award, which began in 1988, has been bestowed upon five of our faculty who were named Outstanding Researcher. Among these five, three have gone on to claim the Distinguished Researcher Award.

The public service award, founded in 1989, has been given to three English and Philosophy faculty for Outstanding Public Service, with one faculty member awarded Distinguished Public Service.

Most recently, Philosophy Chair **Russell Wahl** received top honors in 2009 as Distinguished Researcher.



Susan Swetnam

A significant moment for the department occurred in 2008 when senior faculty member **Susan Swetnam** was named Distinguished Researcher. Swetnam had previously garnered Distinguished Teacher and Distinguished Public Service awards in 1988 and 1996 respectively, making her the only ISU faculty member to win all three. In a press release from May 2008, President Arthur Vailas, Ph.D. commended Swetnam: "Dr. Swetnam represents the type of excellence that truly enhances the recognition of Idaho State University and brings significant benefit to our students."



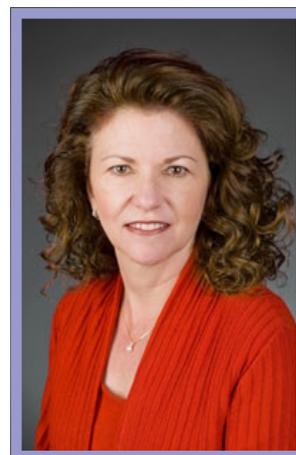
Also in 2008, for the first time English and Philosophy accrued two of the three awards, as **Bethany Schultz Hurst** was named Distinguished Teacher.

Over the years, the Department of English and Philosophy has distinguished itself by producing a high number of award-winning faculty members. The only question that remains is, who will be next?

Bethany Schultz Hurst

Welcome Lynn Worsham

This fall the ISU Department of English and Philosophy welcomed our newest faculty member, **Dr. Lynn Worsham**. Worsham received her doctorate from the University of Texas, Arlington. She has been the editor of *JAC: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics* since 1999. Prior to coming to ISU, Worsham taught at Illinois State University. Her most recent publication is a book she edited with Gary A. Olson entitled *Plugged In: Technology, Rhetoric and Culture in a Posthuman Age*. This work is a collection of essays focusing on how technology has influenced rhetoric and writing. Worsham is currently working on an article entitled “Rhetoric in an Age of Catastrophe,” which is part of a book project on rhetoric, violence, and emotion. She presented her research in October at the University of Houston where she has been named Houston Distinguished Visiting Professor. The Department of English and Philosophy is honored to have Dr. Lynn Worsham join our faculty.



Lynn Worsham

Faculty News

Hal Hellwig will be presenting two papers at the Modern Language Association annual conference in late December: “Editing Mark Twain’s *Following the Equator*,” for the Discussion Group on Bibliography and Textual Studies and “New Media and Business Writing,” arranged by the Association for Business Communication.

He will also participate in a panel discussion of statewide writing directors of a State Board of Education mandated online tool, a Self-Guided Placement web instrument, at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, set for March 2010. His talk is entitled “Soccer Requires Nimble Feet: How Idaho State University Created a Self-Guided Placement Tool,” and will assess web instruments students use to place themselves in classes.

Brent Wolter’s article “Meaning-last vocabulary acquisition and collocational productivity” was published in *Lexical Processing in Second Language Learners* in 2009.

Alan Johnson presented a paper on Bollywood film on Oct. 8 at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association in Snowbird, Utah.

In Spring 2009, **Lynn Worsham** was named Houston Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Houston. She traveled there in October to hold informal workshops with faculty and graduate students and deliver a lecture entitled “Rhetoric in an Age of Catastrophe.”

Jessica Winston's article "English Seneca: Heywood to Hamlet" appeared in the Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485–1603, edited by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank and published by Oxford University Press in 2009.

She also gave public humanities presentations in October on her research to two Idaho chapters of the American Inns of Court, a professional lawyers' association. These presentations included: "The Renaissance Inns of Court and the Origin of the American Inns" at the Theron W. Ward American Inn of Court in Rupert; and "Law and Literature: The Literary Associations of the Inns of Court" at the Ray McNichols American Inn of Court in Moscow.

Jennifer Dawes Adkison presented "'Take, eat that ye may live': Religion in Depictions of the Donner Party" at the Western Literature Association conference in Spearfish, South Dakota in October. This work draws on her research into the narratives of women who survived the Donner Party tragedy in the winter of 1846-47 in the Sierra Nevada.

Tom Klein's article "Anglo-Saxon Literacy and The Roman Letters on the Franks Casket" appeared in the most recent issue of Studia Neophilologica. It considers the question of why an eighth-century Northumbrian would suddenly shift from writing with runes to writing with Roman letters.

New Department Administration



Margaret Johnson

Margaret Johnson, professor of English, began serving as chair of the Department of English and Philosophy during summer 2009. Her primary area of teaching and research is writing pedagogy, and she also works in the fields of contemporary American literature and film studies.



Jessica Winston

Jessica Winston became the new English Graduate Director in fall 2009. She is an associate professor of English, with an expertise in Renaissance literature. She has served on the Graduate Committee for five years and helped to coordinate the implementation of the new Ph.D. Program in English and the Teaching of English.



Jennifer Dawes Adkison

Jennifer Dawes Adkison took the helm of the American Studies Program at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. Adkison is also an Associate Professor of English. Her research interests include nineteenth-century American women writers, western narrative, and the study of literature and environment.

Graduate Student News

Lalove Foster recently published an extensive feature entitled “The Last Harvest” in the April 2009 issue of *Idaho Magazine*. The article, which mixes memoir, reportage, and commentary, began as a class assignment for **Susan Swetnam’s** English 606, Seminar in Creative Nonfiction, class in fall 2008. It is featured (with an illustration) in the magazine and described there as follows: “Raised on a potato farm in Shelley, the author describes the endangered future of family farming, and rues the potential loss of a legacy.”

Tyler Chadwick’s review essay of Stephenie Meyer’s *Twilight* Saga, entitled “Reading the Mormon Gothic” was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* in summer 2009. He presented an expanded and revised version of this essay, entitled “Toward a Mormon Gothic: Stephenie Meyer’s Vampires and a Theology of the Uncanny,” at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association (RMMLA) Convention held at Snowbird, Utah, in October. He also published a slightly revised version of that paper ((along with an editorial introduction and another paper on *Twilight* [this one by someone else])) in *Reading Until Dawn: Critical Essays on Stephenie Meyer*, an online, open-access journal he started earlier this year as a forum in which to engage *Twilight*. The journal can be found at <http://www.motleyvision.org/readinguntildawn/>. Submission information is available on the website for anyone interested in joining the growing *Twilight* studies conversation.

Steven Hall’s interview with Curt Ellis, entitled “The Making of King Corn” has been accepted for publication in *ISLE (Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment)* which is the official journal of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment). King Corn is a documentary film made by filmmakers Curt Ellis and Ian Cheney (with director Aaron Woolf), depicting their journey to the heartland as they seek answers to one of contemporary agriculture’s most obvious, yet elusive questions: Where does our food come from? Hall conducted the interview with Ellis as a way to gain greater insight into the film and particularly to understand the themes and issues of the film for an audience of literary scholars focused on environmental issues.

Meredith Harvey presented “Rudolfo Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* and *La Curandera’s Place in a Hybrid Western Culture*” at the Western Literature Association 44th Annual Conference: High Plains Drifting: Which Way(s) West? in Spearfish, South Dakota, in October.

Erin Gray was one of four readers who performed Harald Wyndham’s epic poem “Sarajevo” at the Old Town Actors’ Studio in October.

Idaho Food Bank Service Project

We all know that the economy is tight right now, and more than ever the Idaho Food Bank needed donations for its Thanksgiving packages. EGSA decided to sponsor a food drive to aid in the effort. On Nov 11 several EGSA members got together to decorate the food collection box. Using glitter, colored paper, paint, and other art supplies (courtesy of our crafty secretary **Jessica Edwards**) we turned an ordinary cardboard box into a work of art. A big Thank You goes out to all who helped decorate the box and to those individuals who have donated food. EGSA members hope that the food bank service project will become a graduate student tradition.



**Dana Harker, Michael Lee,
Tera Cole, Jessica Edwards**

Department Meet & Greet



A collection of undergraduates and faculty at the department meet and greet.

At 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct 21, the student reading room in the Department of English and Philosophy was suddenly standing-room-only with a line out the door. The department's first annual "Meet and Greet" for undergraduates was a huge success. The event had two goals. First, we wanted to provide a time early in the academic year for current majors and minors to visit with each other and with faculty in a relaxed atmosphere. Next, we wanted students interested in our department to have a chance to learn about our courses of study, meet students already involved in our advanced courses, and chat with faculty. We also knew exactly how to achieve these goals: baked treats, prizes, and activities. In our prize raffle, three students won gift certificates to the university



bookstore. At the event, students generated a great list of possible future department activities for undergraduates. Suggestions included movie marathons, make-your-own sushi night, service projects, bowling, laser tag, ice cream eating contests and much more. There was a brief presentation that described the focuses of the department, as well as how a degree in English or Philosophy is excellent preparation for a wide variety of career paths. Most of the event, however, consisted of all-important snack consumption and casual discussion. It was wonderful to be able to steer students interested in literature, film, or creative writing to faculty who were standing just a few feet away. We will hold our second annual meet and greet in Fall 2010 but in a much, much bigger space.

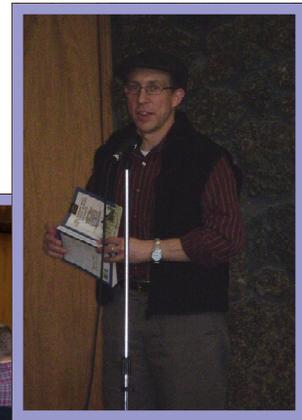
Dead Writers' Night



Veronica Hapgood



Steven Hall



Tom Klein

EGSA held its annual Dead Writers' Night on Oct 30 in the ISU SUB Canoe Room. There was a fantastic turnout (although only Virginia Woolf arrived in costume). A few faculty members were in attendance: **Tom Klein**, **Jennifer Attebery**, and **Alan Johnson**. Klein read a rousing version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, a fourteenth-century Middle English alliterative romance, although the portion he read was more horrifying than romantic, which kept in the spirit of Halloween. Stirred by Klein's performance, Johnson recited a poem from memory about an unfortunate peanut stuck on a railroad track.

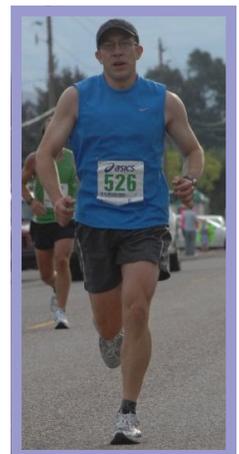
There were also many graduate and undergraduate students in attendance. **Veronica Hapgood** read Virginia Woolf's suicide note which fit the morbid mood of the afternoon. **Dana Harker** read a bizarre piece entitled "Mayonnaise" from Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Cat's Cradle*. **Steven Hall** and **Tera Cole** both read pieces by Edgar Allan Poe.

It was an entertaining event complete with cookies, hot chocolate, hot cider, and of course great literature. EGSA wants to thank everyone who came out and showed their support.

Personal Achievement



In September, **Tom Klein** made a Personal Best at 1:35 in the "Running the Gap" Half-Marathon in Pocatello. Tom has been running races in Pocatello since 2005. He has run five half marathons and two full marathons. Congratulations Tom!



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 matching 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 Margaret Johnson, Chair, johnmarg@isu.edu or call the department office at (208) 282-2478.

Department Babies



Congratulations to **Rachel Wilde** and her husband, Justin, on the birth of their son, Cooper Wilde. Cooper was born on September 30, 2009.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Foradori** and her husband, Ehab, on the birth of their daughter, Farida Heba Abdallah. Farida was born on August 28, 2009.

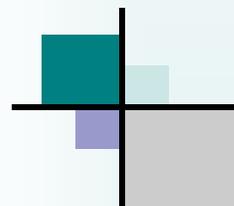


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