

# Postings

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

## Winston Wins NEH Fellowship

**Jessica Winston**, Associate Professor of English, has been awarded a \$50,400 fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the 2011-12 year. The fellowship will allow her to complete her book, *Lawyers at Play: Literary and Political Culture of the Inns of Court in the 1560s*. The Inns of



Court were law schools and legal societies in sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century England, and members helped to form a large literary and political network. Winston examines how members of the Inns used their writing to foster their political thinking and involvement, and to create a political community that had the authority to challenge the institutions of central government — the monarch, privy council, and parliament.

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The Pegasus, the emblem of the Inner Temple, one of the four English legal societies collectively known as the Inns of Court. The emblem was likely adopted in the early 1560s when Lord Robert Dudley, then Master of the Queen's Horse, served as Inner Temple's Master of the Christmas Revels and head of the Revel's "Order of the Pegasus," a group that mimicked and mocked the royal court.

## 2012 Rocky Mountain Medieval & Renaissance Association Conference Coming to ISU Grant Awarded to Organizers

Assisted by a supporting grant from the College of Arts and Letters, professors **Thomas Klein**, **Jessica Winston**, and **Curt Whitaker** are now busy organizing the 2012 RMMRA conference, to be held at ISU April 12-14. They are excited to be bringing to campus keynote speaker Antonette diPaolo Healey, editor of the *Dictionary of Old English* and Angus Cameron Professor of Old English at the University of Toronto. The RMMRA holds annual conferences at universities across the west. The meetings attract in the neighborhood of 80 scholars, with international as well as regional participation. More information can be found on the homepage of the Department of English and Philosophy.



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ostings  
contains  
notes and  
updates that

reflect the activities of the department. It also provides information about upcoming events and other items of interest.

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*Y*our gift  
 can make  
 it happen . . .

We appreciate the generous gifts our friends and alumni have made to the department over the years.

They allow us to bring guest speakers and artists to campus, provide matching funding for much-needed technology upgrades, assist with funding the literary magazine *Black Rock & Sage*, and offer more scholarship opportunities.

To make a gift to the department, please go to the ISU Foundation website at [www.isu.edu/foundation](http://www.isu.edu/foundation) and click on **Make a Gift**. You may donate online using a credit card, or you may send your gift by mail.

## Enthusiastic Turnout for 2011 Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival

reported by Susan Goslee

This year's Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival ran from March 9 through 12 and featured **Karen Joy Fowler** as the Visiting Writer. Fowler, whose writing transcends genre classifications, has authored several novels and short story collections. *The Jane Austen Book Club* spent thirteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestsellers list and was a *New York Times* Notable Book. Fowler's previous novel, *Sister Noon*, was a finalist for the 2001 PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction. Her debut novel, *Sarah Canary*, was a *New York Times* Notable Book, as was her second novel, *The Sweetheart Season*. Fowler's short story collection *Black Glass* won the World Fantasy Award in 1999. Each festival event was hosted by a different local author or authors, all members of the ISU faculty, with one event sponsored by the staff of *Black Rock & Sage*, ISU's student journal of creative work.

The Festival opened on Wednesday at the Porfneuf Valley Brewery with a fine selection of local writers and singer-songwriters. The opening was hosted by poet **Cathy Peppers**, a former faculty member in English now serving in the Management program of the College of Business. On Thursday, University Night was held at the College Market, hosted by author **Carlen Donovan**, faculty member in English. We heard from poets, essayists, and fiction writers affiliated with ISU. Early Friday,

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### *Black Rock & Sage* Launches 2011 Issue

#### Launch Party May 5

The editors of *Black Rock & Sage* have scheduled Thursday, May 5

(5:30 - 7 p.m.) for its annual launch party, to be held in the Bengal Café of the PSUB. The capstone of the production year, the launch party celebrates the release of the new issue and honors contributing authors and artists. Please join contributors, their families and friends, and the *Black Rock & Sage* staff at the launch. Come enjoy a rapid-fire reading by contributing authors, refreshments, and the opportunity to be a part of ISU's creative community.

## Letters from Sweden

**Jennifer Eastman Attebery**, Professor of English and Director of the Folklore Program, is visiting Uppsala University in Uppsala, Sweden this year as the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies. The Distinguished Chair position is co-hosted by the Swedish Institute for North American Studies and Uppsala University's Department of English. Her husband, **Brian Attebery**, also a Professor of English and editor of *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, has taken the opportunity to spend his sabbatical time at the university as a Visiting Researcher. Here are letters recently received with updates on their adventures.

### from Jennifer Attebery



Jennifer Attebery and Dag Blanck of SINAS, Uppsala University, deliver a seminar on Swedish Americans and Whiteness Studies at Linneaus University, Växjö, Sweden.

I am writing from my sun-lit office in Engelska Parken, the series of joined buildings that make up the humanities campus at Uppsala University. The name comes from the park beside the campus, which is known as the English park because it is not neatly arranged in geometric and balanced beds and borders.

The English department where I'm located is, of course, a language department in which language and linguistics are at least as important as literary studies. Uppsala is unusual in having the only American

Jennifer Attebery, page 7

### from Brian Attebery

I am currently in Uppsala, Sweden, where I have the enviable role of "accompanying spouse" to Jennifer Attebery, who is a Distinguished Fulbright Chair at Uppsala University. My sabbatical project is a book on myth and fantasy – an old topic but one that I am finding new ways into. So far I have written one chapter and all but the conclusion of another. Luckily, the English Department here has given me an identity as a *gästforskare*, or visiting researcher. That gives me access to the University mail system, wireless internet, and, most importantly, libraries. I do feel a part of the

Brian Attebery, page 8



Cathedral, Uppsala

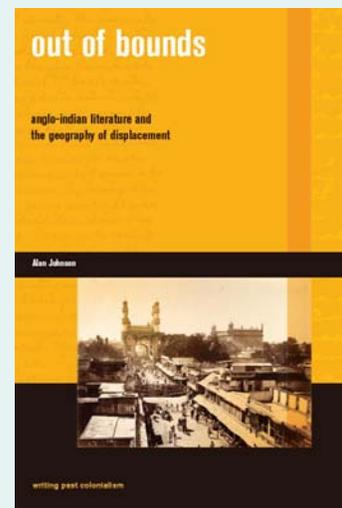
## New Book by Alan Johnson

### Out of Bounds:

Anglo-Indian Literature and the Geography of Displacement

Launch party at The Bridge Wine Bar and Restaurant on Thursday, May 5 at 3:00 p.m.

*Out of Bounds* (University of Hawai'i Press), depicts the crucial role that conceptions of iconic colonial Indian spaces —



jungles, cities, bazaars, clubs — played in the literary and social production of British India.

**Alan Johnson**, Professor of English, illuminates the underpinnings of such depictions and shows that they operated as powerful motifs in the acculturation of Anglo-India. He shows that the bicultural, intrinsically ambivalent outlook of Anglo-Indian writers is acutely sensitive to spatial motifs that, insofar as these condition the idea of home and homelessness, alternately support and subvert conventional colonial perspectives. *Please join us at the launch party to honor Alan's new book.*

## JAC Special Issue on Human-Animal Relations

JAC, a quarterly journal for the interdisciplinary study of rhetoric, discourse, and culture, is edited by **Lynn Worsham**, Professor of English. The journal recently released two double issues. The first, published in November 2010 (JAC 30.3-4), is a special issue on the rhetoric of the human-animal relation, featuring articles and reviews



that contribute to the new field of animal studies. The second, released in February 2011 (JAC 31.1-2), is a general issue, featuring articles, essays, and reviews on a number of topics,

including disability studies and animal rights, film theory, queer theory, political emotions, and the culture of higher education.

JAC, a peer-reviewed journal,

receives support from the Department of English and Philosophy, and also from Illinois State University, as well as the University of North Texas. For subscription information, please email Lynn Worsham (worsham@isu.edu).

Photos are cover images.



## Faculty Focus

Research • Publications • Awards • Activities

**Brian Attebery** was recently named recipient of the Children's Literature Association's 2009 Honor Award for his essay "Elizabeth Enright and the Family Story as Genre." This award is given annually for the best article published in the field of children's literature. Since its zenith in the mid-twentieth century, the family story has largely disappeared from critical discussion, partly because it has been treated as merely a form of realism. In his article, Attebery discusses how Elizabeth Enright's *Melendy* books show that family stories are both more formulaic and more interesting aesthetically than a purely realist reading allows.

On February 24 **Alan Johnson** gave a Fulbright talk in the Pond Student Union Building on his recent experiences in India. The lecture, titled "Bollywood, Hinglish, Mumbai: Reflections on a Fulbright in India," was sponsored by Phi Kappa Phi. His article "Ghosts of Irish Famine in J. G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur*" is forthcoming in the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* (London) 46:2, due out this June.

**Susan Swetnam** has just had a book manuscript accepted by Utah State University Press. The new work, titled *Books, Bluster, and Bounty: The Local Politics of Intermountain West Carnegie Library Grants, 1898-1920*, should be published by the end of the year. She has also been invited to give a keynote based on her book *My Best Teachers Were Saints* for the Idaho Council of Catholic

Women's annual meeting in May, and another keynote for the "Year of Idaho Food" conference in Caldwell in October. Swetnam is happy to report that *My Best Teachers* has just passed the 17,000 sales mark.

**Russell Wahl** recently travelled to the Université Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, France to present a lecture on Malebranche to the faculty. He is also gave a course on early twentieth-century analytic philosophy to the masters-level students there. He reports that "The students are very good and attentive, but it is exhausting to give a course and lecture to a faculty in a foreign language!"

**Nancy Wall** has been invited to participate again in the scoring of AP English Language exams June 10-18 in Louisville, Kentucky. This will be her fifth year of participation in this program.

**Brent Wolter's** paper "Collocational links in the L2 mental lexicon and the influence of L1 intralexical knowledge" has been accepted for publication in the journal *Applied Linguistics*. It's due to be published in August. In addition, he presented a paper entitled "Collocational knowledge in and L2: the role of L1 knowledge and frequency of input" at the Learners and Networks conference in Swansea, Wales in March. Both studies investigate psycholinguistic processing of linguistic structures in a second language. Both were co-authored with Dr. Henrik Gyllstad at Lund University in Sweden.

**Reminder:****We're on Facebook!**

Would you like to find out about department events *before* they happen? Get pictures and updates as soon as news breaks? The department now has a Facebook page! Go to [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com), look up **ISU English and Philosophy**, and click the "Like" button at the top of the page to follow us.



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**Graduate Student Hot Wire . . .****The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference** reported by Steven Hall

English graduate students from several intermountain universities gathered at Idaho State University on Saturday, February 5, for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference. The conference, hosted this year by **ISU's English Graduate Student Association (E.G.S.A.)**, attracted MA and PhD students looking for an opportunity to present their work among peers during a smaller-scale conference. Fifteen graduate students from ISU's Department of English and Philosophy gave presentations at the conference, representing the largest turnout from any single university.

The theme of this year's conference, "Challenging Boundaries, Seeking Intersections," was chosen with the intent to create a forum for English graduate students from any specialty, and to seek intersections between



those specialties within the field, in addition to boundaries between English and other fields. The resulting diversity of topics and themes explored by presenters proved useful and interesting for attendees from any specialty. For example, attendees presented on the impact of media and technology on composition, themes of Christianity and fantasy in literature, and

the experiences of women in the American West as expressed in literature, to name just a few.

One highlight of the conference was the keynote address given by our own **Margaret Johnson**, Chair of the Department of English and Philosophy, during the lunch hour. In her presentation, "Borderlines: Interdisciplinarity, Media Studies, and Genre," she reflected on the increasing potential for English scholars to expand the breadth of their scholarship by drawing connections to other areas and fields of study.

Overall, the conference was well organized and well-attended, thanks to the efforts of conference co-chairs **Jessica Edwards** and **Steven Hall**. The officers and members of E.G.S.A. wish to thank Jessica and Steven for all their time and effort toward making the conference a success. Appreciation is also due to those graduate students and faculty members who assisted in any way, particularly in serving as panel chairs during the conference.



## Graduate Student Achievements

"The Day the Dam Broke," a story written by **Michelle Coates**, was published in *Idaho* magazine (November 2010). It is based on her experiences during the flood resulting from the collapse of the Teton Dam on June 5, 1976, and in the months afterward.

**Steven Hall** has had two magazine articles published that were originally written for Susan Swetnam's magazine writing class, an article titled "The Funeral Singer," in the February 2011 issue of *Idaho* magazine, and an article in *Countryside and Small Stock Journal* titled "Taking Ownership: Bringing Thanksgiving Back to the Farm." He also presented a creative essay titled "Five-Six Islands" at the 6th Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference held on the ISU campus in February (see article in this issue), which he co-hosted.

**Kim Madsen** (MA 2010, entering PhD program Fall 2011) will present a paper at the biennial international conference of ASLE (The Association for the Study of Literature & Environment), June 21-26 in Bloomington, Indiana.

**Naveed Rehan** was awarded a *Partial Scholarship for PhD Studies Abroad* by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. She has also been awarded an ISU Graduate Student Scholarship.

## Alumni Dispatches

*Notes from the wild blue yonder*

**Geoffrey Kain** (D.A., English, '84), full professor and Honors Program Director at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, Florida. Most recent publication: "Continuing the Gandhi Legacy: An Interview with Arun Gandhi," *South Asian Review* (Spring 2011).

**Kathleen R. Seaton** writes the following: I am indebted to teachers in the ISU Department of English and Philosophy. Without the knowledge, the patience and support of professors Susan Swetnam, Ford Swetnam, Denzel Smith, Wayne Schow, and Janne Goldbeck, I'm sure I wouldn't have had the opportunities that have come my way. Though I was not the best student, and though they may not remember me, they led me to the understanding that education is a lifelong endeavor and crucial for overcoming adversity and healing. After graduation I went on to earn an MFA from the Ohio University School of Film, and then an interdisciplinary PhD from the School of Communications.

Currently, I'm an associate professor in the Department of Foreign Language & Literature, Tunghai University, in Taiwan. I have been here for almost twenty years. I teach composition, drama, acting, and children's literature and film. I am now directing the second senior play. I have also written seven children's books, published here in Taiwan.

Teaching here has given me opportunities to travel throughout Asia. As a quilter and textile artist, travel has given me opportunity to learn the many traditions and practices of this art, such as batik, shibori from Japan, Chinese painting, and embroidery. As a faculty member, I have been given the opportunity to make friends from all over the world, not to mention learning a diversity of culinary delights.

I once worked part-time as an assistant in the department. I was a non-traditional student caring for my six children throughout my studies. One of my favorite memories includes taking one or two of my young children, in a stroller, with me to Professor Denzel Smith's Shakespeare class. They listened, as I did, in complete rapture, as if they and I understood his every word. At home, instead of bedtime stories, I read my assignments from Professor Susan Swetnam's course in Mark Twain. They still laugh at the voices I used for Huck Finn, Pap, and Tom. Five of my six children still live in Idaho and one in Utah.

I am now the grandmother of nine and just became a great-grandmother for the first time. Eleven years ago I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, another life challenge. Although this condition has halted my travel, I'm still determined to strive to be as excellent as the teachers from ISU's Department of English and Philosophy. When I retire, I plan to return to my home in Pocatello. Maybe I'll come by for a visit.

## Winston

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The book will draw attention to a hitherto neglected literary community in the Renaissance, and contribute to recent studies of the early modern political discourse. While historians and literary critics have examined the political ideas of individuals, and in individual texts, little attention has been paid to the broader networks of relationship that fostered political expression and participation. Winston's work shifts our attention to the associational culture of the Inns of Court, a place where men turned to poetry, drama, and classical translations to talk with each other and to those in the government about some of the most pressing political debates of the day. The NEH received over 1,400 fellowship applications and awarded ninety-nine, a funding rate of 7%. For a full list of NEH awardees, go to [http://www.neh.gov/news/awards/FA-FB-AwardsList\\_Dec2011.html](http://www.neh.gov/news/awards/FA-FB-AwardsList_Dec2011.html).



## Jennifer Attebery

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literature professorship in Sweden, currently held by Dr. Danuta Fjellestad, whose current research concerns visibility in contemporary print texts. The department here is roughly one-third American literature, one-third British literature, and one-third language/linguistics, with a professor as the intellectual head, but not the administrator, for each section. Each section also has many faculty at the docent level (similar to our associate professors), and lecturer level (similar to our assistant professors), doctoral students, mas-



Uppsala Castle (Swedish "Uppsala Slott") is a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Vasa castle, begun in 1549 by King Gustav Vasa and expanded and rebuilt several times over by his successors; what is visible today is mainly reconstruction after a 1702 fire.

ter's degree students (an unusual degree in Sweden; university teaching is done by those with doctorates and by doctoral students), and undergraduates concentrating in English. A good percentage of those in the last category plan to teach English in the schools. Doctoral students are often advised by a professor, but they also have a committee that includes docents and lecturers with appropriate expertise in the subject of the candidate's project. That sounds very much like our own way of proceeding until one finds out that committee members may be located at other Swedish universities or even at universities outside of Sweden. An academic in Sweden ends up in a collegial relationship with a network of scholars in her/his field, making the boundaries of departments more porous and adding to the pool of expertise available.

Within the English department are two institutes, one in Celtic Studies

and the Swedish Institute for North American Studies (SINAS), which is my host. Institutes, very common in Swedish universities, are a means of nurturing inquiry in a research area that cuts across disciplines. Both departments and institutes sponsor a variety of events: seminars, lectures, symposia; every week I receive announcements for several of these. This evening, for example, I plan to attend a lecture sponsored by the Hugo Valentin Institute, which will be delivered by Docent Nanci Adler from the Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam, speaking on "narratives of loyalty" told by Communist party members in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Events are usually very well attended by faculty and students at all levels, and attendees take notes and ask very perceptive questions. A session usually includes a 45-minute presentation (the sense of an "academic hour" here is 45 minutes) and

discussion that can last 45 minutes or more.

My time during March has been dominated by the course I'm teaching, 20<sup>th</sup>-century American Indian folklore and literature. My students are sharp, hard working, and eager to participate in discussion. They make my job easy, fun, and gratifying. I have students from Sweden, the USA, Turkey, Greece, and Canada. Because of this mix of points of origin, we are finding it additionally interesting to compare our own cultures. The Swedish system places high expectations on the students. There is less contact time in the classroom, but students are expected to devote full time to their studies outside of the classroom. With two 2-academic-hour seminars per week, the number of pages assigned per week is roughly 200 pages of secondary texts or the equivalent of two novels, if primary texts. Students are encouraged to go beyond this assigned reading by exploring related topics on their own. Yet, there is relatively little assigned writing, usually the equivalent of one short report and one longer essay or take-home examination. Participation in discussion is assumed to contribute to the students' grades, but without quantifying what that means. For course grades I have three choices: high pass, pass, or fail.

When my course is finished in mid-March I will turn my attention to preparation for several speaking engagements in April: two lectures, one here in Uppsala as Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies and one at the University of

Muenster, and a seminar in multi-ethnic literature at Södertörn University. Already in February I've spoken at Linneaus University, Växjö, in a whiteness studies seminar with Docent Dag Blanck of SINAS.

Alongside these teaching and speaking opportunities I'm finding time to write every day, and I have colleagues at SINAS who are interested in and knowledgeable about Swedish America, with whom I can discuss many of the issues that arise as I write. The Swedish library system has also been essential in providing hard-to-locate secondary sources. With two and one-half chapters already drafted, my book manuscript on the spring-to-summer holidays is well on its way to completion by the end of the calendar year. For that project I plan one research trip in April to the Emigrant Institute, Växjö, to examine fieldwork notes compiled by an early twentieth-century sociologist, Albin Widén, who surveyed and interviewed Swedish-Americans in the period between the two world wars.

The humanities campus at Uppsala University hums with the faculty and students' deep engagement in intellectual activity. Faculty here worry about the future of the humanities and they complain about having to attend administrative meetings, but these worries and complaints are minor in comparison to the quality of their teaching and research experience here at Uppsala. I'm treasuring my time here and hope to be able to internalize and bring back with me to Idaho a sense of the kind

of intellectual engagement I see around me here.

Lycka till,

*Jennifer Attebery*



## Brian Attebery

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English department and its offshoot, the Swedish Institute for North American Studies, since I was a Fulbrighter here myself twenty-three years ago and have been back a few times to give seminars and examine a Ph.D. candidate. The Professor of American Literature intends, if time permits, to have me do a seminar for the graduate students and faculty in her field.

Being away from home and duties in Idaho gives me time to do the kind of extended researching and thinking needed to produce a book, but the surroundings give me an extra boost of inspiration. The University was founded in 1477 and the city dates back to the twelfth century (as a suburb of the an older Viking settlement now known as Gamla Uppsala, or Old Uppsala). Not much of the medieval city is visible, but it's hard to tell which buildings might have ancient timbers under their modern coats of stucco or brick. It's an intellectual center close to Stockholm (less than an hour by train), and a much more cosmopolitan place than it was two decades ago. We live right in the center: a ten minute walk from the train station and even closer to the looming cathedral. Our apartment is just below the castle where Queen Christina

ruled and where Rene Descartes, brought in as her court philosopher, caught his death of cold from the Swedish winters.

We are taking as much advantage as possible of the city's cultural life and of our proximity to Stockholm. By the time we leave, we will have seen the Royal Opera doing Mozart, the Stockholm Philharmonic performing Scandinavian composers, a local but internationally renowned men's choir, and the National Theatre's performances of both halves of *Angels in America* – in Swedish!

I am also taking advantage of being in Europe to make contacts with other scholars in my field. I've been invited to give talks on fantasy or science fiction in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Poland. We flew to London in January for a weekend visit to a fantasy scholar there, who also had me talk with her dissertation advisees. A scholar from Greece who works on cyberpunk came here to do a lecture, and she hopes to bring me to Thessaloniki some day.

Time is going by rather quickly, so one of the things I try to do every day is walk around the city and remind myself that I am indeed in Sweden. When we first arrived, there were only a few hours of daylight and the snow was formidably deep. Now the snow is melting and the sun stays up till nearly 6:00 p.m. By the time we leave in late May, it will be balmy and green, with endless Northern evenings. It's a great opportunity to experience all those things and to refresh our knowledge of Swedish culture and language as well as our friendships.

*Brian Attebery*

## RMWF

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Karen Joy Fowler and ISU's own **Brian Attebery** (home briefly from Sweden especially for the event — see article "Letters from Sweden" in this issue) presented a colloquium entitled "Combining History with Fantasy: The New Historical Narrative." Attebery is the recipient of the Pilgrim Award for lifetime achievement in science fiction and fantasy criticism. He has also been named an ISU Distinguished Researcher and recognized by the Idaho Humanities Council for Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities. The presentation was hosted by writers **Susan Goslee** and **Bethany Schultz Hurst**, both faculty in the Department of English and Philosophy.

**Black Rock & Sage** sponsored the Festival's Book Fair and "Afternoon" event Friday afternoon in the PSUB's Bengal Café. Attendees could purchase books from local authors and presses; make their own blank journals, complete with hand stitching at the Craft Booth; put in an order for a short-order poem from the Poetry Machine Station; and then eat free loaded baked potatoes while they waited for the server to deliver their completed poems. The Afternoon's trivia station was also an enormous hit. We're not sure if it was so popular because every correct answer won chocolate or because the station's host was sporting a very fine bow-tie.

That evening at 7 p.m. Karen Joy Fowler read her story "Booth's Ghost" from her new collection

*What I Didn't See* to a packed house at the Bengal Café. Community members and students alike were excited to come out and hear what their fellow writers had been up to and to meet a brilliant and engaging established author in person.

The Festival closed with "Finale Night" at the Warehouse on Saturday evening. Authors were paired up to read alongside one another so their works might be in conversation. The finale was hosted by author **Leslie Leek**, a faculty member in Communication and Rhetorical Studies.

The directors, **Susan Goslee** and **Bethany Schultz Hurst**, are thankful for the generous support the Festival received from ISU's Cultural Affairs Council, the Idaho Humanities Council, and ISU's Department of English and Philosophy.



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