

Postings

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

Three in English Take Top Awards

This past spring, when Idaho State University announced its yearly awards, three English faculty were among those few who received the prestigious top honors. Both **Brent Wolter** and **Jessica Winston** were awarded as Outstanding Master Teachers, and **Susan Goslee** was recognized for her Outstanding Public Service.

Winston, Associate Professor of English, serves as Director of Graduate Studies. She specializes in English Renaissance literature, and has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals and anthologies. Winston's teaching includes classes in Shakespeare and early British Literature. She also earned an ISU Master Teacher award in 2007.

Winston is known as a professor who is invested in her students and their goals. "Her courses are among the most challenging, yet intellectually gratifying offered in the department," one student said, "and although her knowledge on the subject matter is formidable, Dr. Winston also makes her students feel comfortable exploring such material through her easy

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Jennifer Eastman Attebery Travels to Sweden as Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies



Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Professor of English and Director of the Folklore Program at Idaho State University, has been selected for the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies, Uppsala University. The Distinguished Chair position is co-hosted by the Swedish Institute for North American Studies and Uppsala University's Department of English.

Attebery will travel to Uppsala for spring semester 2011 to lecture in American

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Attebery helps make decorations for a maypole on one of her ventures. Photo by ISU Photographic Services/Susan Duncan.

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

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

These gifts allow 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.

To make a gift to the department, please go to the ISU Foundation website at 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.

Alan Johnson, professor of English, received a Fulbright Lecturing award to teach at the University of Mumbai, India, from January through May, 2010. He is now back home in Pocatello. On Oct. 21, he gave a fascinating colloquium presentation sharing his experiences and touching on some of the material in the article below. His "Letter from India," chronicling the earlier impressions gained in his travels, appeared in the summer edition of this newsletter.

Mumbai, Hinglish, Globalization: A Fulbright Journey

by Alan Johnson

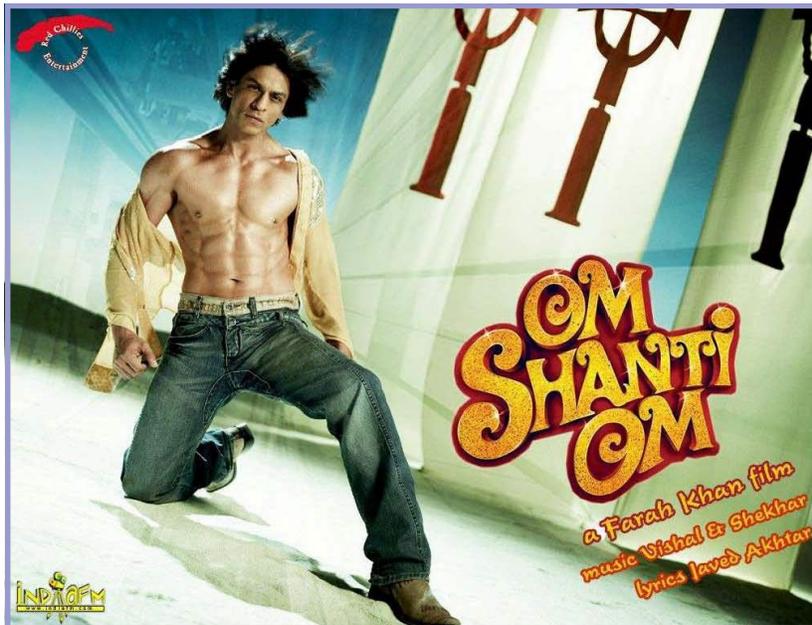
We — Margaret, our son Roshin (then 12), and I — arrived in Mumbai, on the west coast of India, on a pleasant day in February. By April, I knew, the glass walls of the city's air-conditioned malls would fog up in their determination to keep out the hot, sticky air. In early June the clouds would open up as the monsoon blew in from the Arabian Sea.

The sea is appropriately named. For two thousand years Arab and Indian traders sailed to one another's coasts with ships full of spice (Indian) and oils (Arabian). On a small island just off Mumbai's coast a Hindu people had chiseled caves and statues out of sheer rock in the sixth century. The Portuguese, who arrived a thousand years later — the sea, after all, brings many kinds of storms — promptly used the "heathen" statues for target practice, leaving Shiva and Parvati limbless but no less imposing. Mumbai's old name, Bombay (changed in the 1990s, but still frequently used), derives from the Portuguese for "good harbor" (*bom bahia*). Mumbai is simply the Marathi pronunciation of this. The sea, the city, even "India" — all retain foreign names that hide other stories.

Today, a wealthy, resurgent Mumbai is writing a new story. It reflects the changes sweeping India since the Rao government loosened protectionist reins in 1991 to usher in the global era. As a leading chronicler of India's changes, Gurcharan Das, observes in his bestselling *India Unbound*, "Whereas only 20 percent of the world's people lived in open economies in 1970, today more than 90 percent do." In many ways, Mumbai was a step ahead of the rest of India. It's as if Cervantes and Sterne got together with Manohar Malgonkar (a noted writer who once lived in the city) and Rushdie and a Bollywood studio to concoct scenes that defy simple description. An impressive new suspension bridge toll-way, the Sea Link, bisects the bay to sharply cut down traffic time. At the south end of the bridge is an enchanting seafront popular with walkers and joggers, but soon, as you pass the Nehru Planetarium and approach the 15th-century Haji Ali Dargah (tomb) just offshore, you see the familiar sight of makeshift homes, reminding you that although Mumbai has some of the world's richest people, its slums house millions.

It was in this area, in 2008, that another storm blew in, this time in the form of terrorists who would invade iconic landmarks, including the main railway station, built in the 1880s by the British, and the stately Taj Mahal Hotel, established by India's industrialist family, the Tatas, in 1903. The Tatas now own Rolls Royce and Jaguar, whose gleaming showrooms face streets clouded by exhaust. They quickly refurbished the burnt-out Taj. Nearby, the Leopold Café, long

tions. Another insightful commentator on India's changes, Pavan Varma, notes in his recent *Being Indian* that Hinglish "represents a confident new comfort zone" for upper middle class urbanites in central and northern India, one "in which people are more concerned with communication than with ideological loyalties." Hinglish is emblematic of Bollywood, Bombay's Hollywood, which itself is a testament to the mix of styles — Mughal and Hindustani, folk and highbrow, Lata



familiar as a backpacker hangout and also targeted, insists on leaving those 2008 bullet holes on view. It is a cliché, but it is true: Mumbaikars, like New Yorkers, are resilient.

Mumbai's new story is perhaps best reflected in the hybrid language of Hinglish, a mix of colloquial Hindi and English, that screenwriters and lyricists (and now novelists) use liberally in their crea-

Mangeshkar and Michael Jackson—that make up the city. On our first trip aboard the city's packed commuter trains, Roshin made a sudden connection: "Are these the same trains that are in *Slumdog Millionaire*?" In the midst of this 24-hour, ever-growing metropolis sits the oasis-like University of Mumbai campus, to which I was affiliated for my grant. The English Department

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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, look up **ISU English and Philosophy**, and click the "Like" button at the top of the page to follow us.

Black Rock & Sage

Enters 10th Year

by Steven Hall

With the opening of submissions on September 15, **Black Rock & Sage** officially began its tenth year of production. The editing staff — Steven Hall, editor-in-chief; Breein Bryant, poetry editor; Brandon Hall, prose editor — is busy getting the word out and is anxious to see what lies in store for the 2011 edition. In recent years, through the direction of the journal's faculty advisor Susan Goslee, possibilities for creative expression are greater than ever. For example, in 2009, assisted by Kori Bond of the Music Department, the journal began including a CD featuring

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vocal and instrumental performances by ISU music students. In addition, assisted by Angie Zielinski of the Art Department, a greater portion of the journal is now dedicated to visual art. To highlight that art, the journal now includes full-color pages.

Over the years, graduate students from the English Department have played a significant role in editorial production of *Black Rock & Sage*. Graduates enrolled in Goslee's "Literary Magazine Production" course become assistant editors and gain valuable hands-on experience in all phases of the editing process. Class members play a major role in the final content and appearance of the journal.

The department's graduate students have also been well represented in the journal's creative content, including many terrific pieces of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. As always, the journal's editors hope our graduate students will make many submissions this year. And, if you are still figuring out your spring schedule, consider joining the *Black Rock & Sage* staff by taking the course in "Literary Magazine Production."

Through a remodeling of sorts, the journal's editors have attempted to make the *Black Rock & Sage* office (LA 215) a more hospitable, visitor-friendly location. Feel free to stop in any time. Have a sit on the new (old) couch, check out old editions (you might even buy a copy!), and visit with the editors about the university's only creative arts magazine.

Submissions are open until February 14, 2011. To submit, or for questions, email the editors at brs@isu.edu. For submission guidelines, please see the *Black Rock & Sage* website at www.isu.edu/blackrock.

Russell Wahl Invited to France as Visiting Professor and Researcher



Russell Wahl, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Philosophy Program has been invited to be a visiting professor and researcher at the Université

Blaise Pascal in Clermont-Ferrand, France during spring semester, 2011. Professor Wahl will be there in March and will lecture mostly on topics in philosophical analysis in the 20th century. He will also give a series of lectures to the faculty there. This summer he gave a paper on the logic of *Principia Mathematica* at a conference held at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of Russell and Whitehead's three-volume work.



Faculty Focus

Research • Publications • Awards • Activities

Administration Updates:

Susan Swetnam is now serving as Director of Composition, **Brent Wolter** is the new Assistant Chair, and **Terry Engebretsen** is filling in as the interim Director of American Studies. As reported in another article, Wolter received a Master Teacher Award this past spring. News of some of Swetnam's recent interesting activities can be found later in this column. Engebretsen has served the department previously as Chair and as Director of American Studies.

New & Returning Faculty:

This fall the department wel-

comed three new or returning full-time lecturers — Will Donovan, Debra Shein, and Michael Stubbs.

● **Will Donovan** holds an M.A. in English from ISU along with a B.A. in American Studies focusing on literature, history, and political science. He was a recipient of the Outstanding Graduate Teacher award and also the Kegel scholarship. Donovan enjoys entering student essays in the department Composition Contest, and has sponsored several winners. He is currently researching the Irish sport of Hurling and its ties to Irish Nationalism, circa 1890-1910.

● **Debra Shein** returns to English after two years in IT with Tigeri, ISU's enterprise resource planning project. Her varied fields include 19th- and early-20th-century literature, women's writing, the American west, and ecocriticism, as well as instructional design and technology and online education. Her M.S. in this field from Boise State University adds to her Ph.D. in English from the University of Oregon. Shein's peer-reviewed publications feature work on Abigail Scott Duniway, a leader of the early woman's movement. A print edition of one of Duniway's novels, a stage musical derived from another, and a PBS documentary were produced based on Shein's dissertation research.

Shein was recently interviewed by Oregon Public Broadcasting radio on the 90th anniversary of the amendment granting women the vote. The segment, "The Political Power of Women," is available online. Her article "When Geography Matters: Mary Hallock Foote's 'Maverick' and the Mysteries of the Snake River Lava Beds," originally published in *American Literary Realism* (2006), has been selected for reprinting in *Short Story Criticism*, v. 150, which will be released in early 2011.

● **Michael Stubbs** specializes in the representations of nature in literature. He received his D.A. in English from ISU after having earned an M.A. in English from the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, and a B.A. in English from Brigham Young University in Provo.

Brian Attebery recently travelled to Sweden, where he participated in a public panel discussion about fantasy, science fiction, and the academy at the Centre for Languages and Literature of Lund University. The panel also included fantasy and science fiction scholars Tom Shippey, Farah Mendlesohn, Edward James,

and Robert Maslen. Lund is a 350-year-old institution with around 46,000 students and is located in the southern part of the country. According to Stefen Ekmans in his blog *Mythotopes*, "You will not find such an esteemed collection of fantasy and sf scholars on the same panel again in Sweden anytime soon."

Ralph Baergen, Professor of Philosophy, is working with Steven Lawyer, a professor of psychology, on a future NIH grant on ethical issues surrounding payment to research subjects, particularly whether such payments undermine voluntariness of subjects' decision making. They are also co-authoring a paper on the ethics of inducing panic attacks in research subjects.

Hal Hellwig's brief article "As I Lay Dying and Features of Greek Tragedy," recently appeared in *The Explicator* (68.3 July-Sept. 2010). In addition, his review of *Mark Twain's Own Autobiography: The Chapters From the North American Review* (2nd ed., edited by Michael J. Kiskis with forward by Sheila Leary, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010) appeared in the *Mark Twain Forum* on April 29, 2010. In January, he will be presenting his paper titled "Innocence at Home': Angelfish, Stormfield, and Mark Twain's Final Denial of Time" at the Meeting of the Modern Language Association in Los Angeles. He is continuing to work on a book on the connections between American literature and American film noir.

Bethany Schultz Hurst's poems "Every Couple Before Us" and "Complications of a Late Freeze" were accepted for publication in *The Gettysburg Review*. Her book-length manuscript, which has been a finalist at Carnegie Mellon Press and for the National Poetry Series, is currently a finalist for Anhinga Press's Robert Dana Prize for Poetry.

Susan Swetnam's article "Of Raspberries and Religion: Food and Cultural Evolution At A Contemporary Idaho Convent" was accepted for publication by *Gastronomica*. In late August, she traveled to Detroit to give a two-day pre-school-year workshop for the teachers of St. Mary-McCormick Academy, based on her book *My Best Teachers Were Saints*. In September, she attended the "Arts and the Public" conference in Boston co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Historical Society and the New England American Studies Association. There, she presented a paper describing the local politics of Intermountain West Carnegie library support and arguing that the subject constituted a significant case-study for those who seek to muster grassroots support for cultural institutions today. In October, she presented the keynote address, "Food in Early Idaho," at the Idaho Historical Society's annual Esto Perpetua Awards luncheon in Boise.

Jessica Winston's article "English Seneca: Heywood to Hamlet" recently appeared in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature* edited by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank. The volume was awarded the 2010 Roland H. Bainton Prize for Best Reference Work by the Sixteenth Century Society & Conference. According to the Society's website, the criteria for selection include "quality and originality of research, methodological skill and/or innovation, development of fresh and stimulating interpretations or insights, and literary quality."

Brent Wolter is editing the lexis (vocabulary) section of Wiley Blackwell's *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. It's a massive, ten-volume project that is currently scheduled to be released during 2011.



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and enthusiastic classroom manner.”

Winston came to ISU in 2002. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley College and her M.A.

and Ph.D. in English at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Wolter, also an Associate Professor of English, has been at ISU since 2005. His primary expertise is applied linguistics. Before coming to Idaho, Wolter taught English in Japan for more than a decade.

At ISU, one of his main responsibilities has been to collaborate on the establishment and implementation of the Department’s Graduate Certificate in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). The program is designed to serve both teachers in local communities, as well as teachers of English in foreign language environments.



Wolter

Wolter is well-regarded by his students, who appreciate his fresh approach. “He has beyond a reasonable doubt changed my life for the better and I can’t imagine that I am the

only one he has inspired,” one student said.

Wolter earned a doctorate in Applied Language Studies at University of Wales, Swansea.

Goslee, Assistant Professor in English, teaches creative writing, literary journal production, and British literature. Since 2008, she has worked as the co-director of the weeklong Rocky Mountain Writers’ Festival that brings together writers and readers of literature from throughout the region to Pocatello to participate in readings and writing opportunities.

Goslee is the treasurer and a board member for the Appalachian Institute for Creative Learning, a non-profit organization that provides enrichment programs for nontraditional learners and under-served gifted children. She has been active with the Appalachian Institute each summer since the early 1990s. Within ISU, she serves as faculty advisor for *Black Rock and Sage*, a student-run journal. She is also on the advisory board for *Rendezvous*, an interdisciplinary ISU journal, and on the ISU Reading Project committee.

Goslee earned her Ph.D. in literature and creative writing from the University of Utah, her M.F.A. Degree in creative writing from the University of Alabama, and a B.A. degree in psychology from Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.



Meet & Greet 2010

On Wednesday, Oct. 20, the department hosted its second-annual and second successful “Meet & Greet” for undergraduates. It was a chance for majors and minors to re-connect with their classmates and faculty in a relaxed atmosphere, and an opportunity for any undeclared students and lower-classmen interested in the department’s courses of study to ask questions and become familiar with what we have to offer. This year the bookstore again donated three generous gift cards. These prizes, along with several be-ribboned batches of baked goods, made for closely monitored raffle drawings. Attendees generated lists on sheets of butcher paper of best or worst film adaptations of books. And, since we are the Department of English and Philosophy, this activity generated much lively debate as well. There was a brief presentation that described the focuses of the department as well as how a degree in English or Philosophy is an excellent preparation for a wide variety of career paths. Most of the event, however, was the all-important snack consumption and casual discussion.

The Meet & Greet is already on the books for 2011; we’re aiming for “tradition” status on the department calendar. Next year, we may hold it earlier in the semester. The department regularly hosts welcome/welcome back events for faculty and graduate students. The undergraduates would benefit from such an event as well. We might also invite a handful of majors to help organize the Meet & Greet for a shared sense of ownership. Other ideas for how to improve upon our early success? Please let us know! Email Susan Goslee: sgoslee@isu.edu.

Next Up: The Second Annual Winter Holiday Bowling Party in December.

Graduate Student Hot Wire . . .

Welcome new graduate students! Spring 2010: Jennifer Foradori (Ph.D.), Hailey Hodges (M.A.), Ellie Leith (M.A.). Fall 2010: Seth Clark (M.A.), Michael Gentry (Ph.D.), Kelly Meyer (Ph.D.), Derik Robertson (Ph.D.), Emily Treasure (M.A.).

Melinda Evans presented a paper, "For Thinking Will Orecome': Mary Wroth and the Private Anxiety of Faith" at the University of California, Riverside graduate student conference "(dis)junctions 2010: States of Crisis" in April. She also presented her research on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "Crooked by Nature': A Revisioning of Eve and her Flowers," at the Intermountain Graduate Research Symposium held at Utah State University in March, and gave her paper,

"The Duchess of Dempsey Creek Counts Her Sheep: Mabel Kasiska and Authoritative Identity," as a part of a panel presentation at the meeting of the Western Literature Association in Prescott, Arizona, in October.

Steven Hall's personal essay titled "Harvest Time" was published in the Summer edition of the magazine *Seeing the Everyday*, and an article he wrote for Susan Swetnam's magazine writing class last Fall — tentatively titled "Cloverleaf Creamery" — will be

published in an upcoming edition of the magazine *Zone 4*. In addition, he presented a paper titled "Sifting the Ordinary for Understanding: Letters from Frank" at the 2010 Western Literature Association conference .

Elise Barker's article "Playing with Jane Austen: Gender Identity and the Narrowing of Interpretation" will appear in the Jane Austen Society of North America's internet journal, *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal Online*, and will be available through the JASNA website Dec. 16.

EGSA to Host 6th Annual Graduate Conference:

"Challenging Boundaries, Seeking Intersections" by Steven Hall

The English Graduate Student Association will host the **6th Annual Intermountain Graduate Student Conference on Saturday, February 5, 2011**. We encourage all graduate students to take advantage of this opportunity to gain conference experience by submitting proposals by Dec. 4. The theme for the conference, "Challenging Boundaries, Seeking

Intersections," aspires to provide a broad forum for exploring the intersections between specialties in English and in the boundaries between English and various fields. In the past, this conference has thrived on participation from our graduate students, not only through presentations, but also through contributions during the planning and organizing stages, and during the actual conference. We will continue tradition

and waive the registration fee for EGSA members. Lunch will be served, during which the keynote address will be given by our department chair, Margaret Johnson. For additional information, such as how you can contribute to the conference, please contact one of the conference co-chairs, Steven Hall or Jessica Edwards, at igc.english@gmail.com.

Dead Writers' Night

by Ted Bonman

ISU graduate students and faculty kicked off Halloween weekend at the fifth annual Dead Writers' Night, sponsored by EGSA. This year attendees assembled at the Thai Paradise restaurant, and here's hoping that restaurant venues remain a part of the tradition. The night was cold, especially on the heels of a warm October, but spirited readings and Thai food helped dispel the chill. Highlights included Hailey Hodges reading a Shel Silverstein poem

titled "Toucan" in an indisputably appropriate costume. Scott Holman shared two readings, one of them a frightening excerpt from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Ted Bonman read the final selection, a short story titled "August Heat" — an incongruous choice, given the weather. Readings were culled from a wide range of literature, but all of them possessed that frisson that makes for a good Halloween story. Thanks to everyone who attended and read!



Alumni Dispatches

notes from the wild blue yonder

Chris Carlson (M.A. English, 1970) reports that he will officially be “out to pasture” at the end of this year. The founding partner of Galatin Public Affairs returned to his native Idaho last December, moving into a retirement home his wife, Marcia, and he built on Cave Lake near Medimont in southern Kootenai County.

The long-time former press secretary to four-term Idaho Governor Cecil D. Andrus has stayed busy finishing a manuscript recounting his nine years working with Andrus as his press secretary and then as the Assistant to the Secretary and Director of the Office of Public Affairs when Andrus was Interior Secretary. In addition, the former political editor of the Idaho State Journal (1969-1970) returned to his original journalism career and is writing a weekly political and

public affairs column for the St. Maries Gazette-Record.

Meredith Harvey, who recently completed a graduate degree in English, has been hired as Assistant Professor of English, Aurora University, George Williams College Campus, Williams Bay, WI.

Marjanna Hulet (M.A. English, 1992) continues to work for ISU's Information Technology Services (ITS). This spring, she was promoted to the position of Tiger Training Coordinator. She serves as the chair of Pocatello's Planning and Zoning Commission.

William James Wilson (B.A. English, 1969) reports his “first ever publication in a commercial magazine.” He goes on to write that “My story was published in

the October 2010 issue of *Idaho magazine*, on page 19. It is titled: 'Along Johnson Bar: A Horseman Recounts His Solo Ride through Hells Canyon, at Age Four.'

“It's the story of my riding, for the first time ever, alone, on a horse from Johnson Bar back down the Idaho side of the Snake River in Hells Canyon, to the Sheep Creek ranch. My father had taken me along to visit my paternal grandfather, and his second wife, at the Sheep Creek ranch in Hells Canyon. I had just turned four in April of 1940, and this trip was probably some time around May of 1940.”

Wilson has been retired from the Boise Public Library for twelve years, and has recently begun to write his autobiography.



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Studies and to pursue her research concerning Swedish immigrant folk culture, focusing on spring/summer calendar customs. Her time at the Institute and English department will bring her into contact with scholars of the Swedish immigration and with resources in Swedish libraries and archives, including Uppsala's extensive folklore archives. “I'm thrilled to be traveling to Uppsala,” Attebery said. “Uppsala is the center for Swedish immigration and folklore studies with a

wealth of resources in my fields of concentration.”

Fulbright Distinguished Chair positions are a highly selective part of the Fulbright U.S. Senior Scholar Program, an international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government with additional support from host nations. According to the Fulbright Commission website, “awards in the Fulbright Distinguished Chairs Program are viewed as among the most prestigious appointments in the Fulbright Scholar Program,”

awarded to 40 candidates per year who are “eminent scholars and have a significant publication and teaching record.”

Idaho State University has had 15 Fulbright U.S. Senior Scholars among its faculty, five of them English faculty, including Attebery, who was a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Gothenburg University in 1998 and her husband Brian Attebery, who was a Fulbright Senior Scholar at Uppsala University in 1988. An internationally acclaimed scholar of fantasy and science fiction

literature, Brian has received invitations to lecture in Belgium, Poland, Finland, and Lund, Sweden, while the Atteberys are resident in Uppsala.

Leading up to her Fulbright semester, Jennifer Attebery has been on sabbatical during fall 2010 pursuing research in Rocky Mountain archives with a Faculty Research Committee grant. In visits to regional historical society collections and the special collections at Brigham Young University-Provo, Denver Public Library, Utah State University, University of Idaho, and Augustana College, Attebery has discovered diaries, account books, oral histories, program pamphlets, and speech scripts that document the Swedish Americans' celebration of the spring-summer holidays. Her fall semester work will culminate in presentation of a book prospectus to a university press specializing in folklore.

Attebery earned her Ph.D. in folklore and American studies at Indiana University in 1985. Her research focuses on folk culture of the Rocky Mountain West in the 19th and early 20th centuries, with

an emphasis on ethnic groups. Her main contributions to these fields have been expanded understanding of the multicultural West and new attention to the personal letter as a vernacular form.

Attebery was selected to deliver the 2010 Fife Honor Lecture at Utah State University's Folklore Program, and was invited to present her research concerning immigrant letters at a May 2010 international symposium, "The Migration Letter: Archiving Postal Era Intimacy," at the University of Minnesota. A further development from that symposium is a panel on immigrant letters at the Social Science History Association conference, which will take Attebery to Chicago in late November 2010.

Attebery's peer-reviewed publications include three books. Among them is *Up in the Rocky Mountains: Writing the Swedish Immigrant Experience*, published by University of Minnesota Press in 2007, reviewed in the *Journal of Folklore Research* as "a significant contribution to folklore and history."

Attebery's most recent publication, "Scandinavianism in the

Rocky Mountain West, Pragmatic and Programmatic," will appear in the collection *Swedes and Norwegians in the U.S.* edited by Dag Blanck and Philip Anderson, forthcoming from Minnesota Historical Society Press in 2011. Her articles have also been published by the refereed journals *Scandinavian Studies*, *American Studies in Scandinavia*, *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, and *Pioneer America*. Her book *Building Idaho* (University of Idaho Press, 1991) won the Idaho Book Award. She was an ISU Outstanding Researcher in 2008 and 2009.



Looking for
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department website:
www.isu.edu/english.

Congratulations!

Susan Swetnam won her division in a half marathon in Montana in September . . . by half an hour. She is a dedicated athlete whose commitment to her sport is as thoroughgoing as her commitment to her scholarship. Well done!

New Arrival. Robert Murdock Skidmore, born to **Jessica Winston** and **Jim Skidmore**, July 23, 2010, 8 lbs. 0 oz.



Mumbai

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syllabus, to which instructors must adhere in order to facilitate an exam-heavy curriculum, reflects some of this diversity, with offerings of Indian English, Australian, American and many non-western texts. Professors are all bi- or trilingual, switching as comfortably between English and Marathi (or Hindi or Gujarati) as the FM station hosts that keep up a lightning-fast Hinglish commentary for the city's mostly non-local drivers.

Almost inevitably, in our increasingly interdependent world, there are those who claim to find such mixing unorthodox, unpatriotic. The Shiv Sena, a hardline Hindu regionalist group that asserts their Maratha heritage in the name of the 17-century warrior-king, Shivaji, who was never subdued by either the Mughals or the British, has tried to force taxi drivers into learning Marathi and lobbied for the withdrawal of films perceived to be anti-Hindu and anti-Maratha. This October, the group bullied the University into dropping a novel by eminent Indian-Canadian Rohinton Mistry, who happens to be from the city's Parsi minority, from the English syllabus for being "offensive." Earlier, the Shiv Sena had organized truckloads of thuggish members to protest the opening of a film, *My Name Is Khan*, with the Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, who they claimed was — you guessed it — anti-Indian. To his credit, Khan stood his ground, police intervened, and the film, which happens to be set



IIT-Guwahati Campus, 2010

mostly in the U.S., eventually went on to do well. (It helped that one Shiv Sena truckload arrived at the wrong theatre. When I saw the film a few weeks later, the storm had long blown over.)

Given this rich cultural backdrop and Indian education's experience with political turmoil, what, I wondered, had I to offer to students in India? I came mostly with the aim of seeing India's globalizing changes up close. I had grown up in India, but was a product of the American academy, which has been perceived in India with mixed feelings: western, and therefore biased against non-western cultures; American, and therefore dynamic. The India I had known as a kid was culturally rich but materially poor. America had benefitted by siphoning off many of the country's brains. Today that is reversing, with Indian expatriates returning as entrepreneurs and scien-

tists to their wealthier homeland. If Rushdie's generation of elites signified a passage to prosperity, today's generation is cashing in on the return trip. In the 1970s, it was common to hear older Indian civil servants bemoan the departure of the British and lament their futureless world. Now the lament is over any red tape that gets in the way of the appetite for change.

India's public universities, meanwhile, have largely been mired in British Raj-era bureaucracy and factionalism. Pitroda, the American-educated, recently appointed Head of the National Innovation council that is charged with shepherding the country into a Decade of Innovation," declares that "For the first time in the history of this country we are a nation of a billion connected people," which marks a "tectonic shift" in fortune. The problem, as he knows too well, is that India is at a critical



Patriotic Indians at Wagah Border, Punjab, India, 2010

Juncture, its status quo butting heads with a technology revolution that Pitroda himself helped inaugurate. He has an unenviable task, but an enviable purse at his disposal. Not surprisingly, perhaps, he sees the American university system as a model. As private institutions mushroom across India, mostly to cater to the technology boom, Pitroda's council aims to increase public universities from the current 350 to around 1500 in the next five years.

But the model that Pitroda has in mind, it seems to me, is the increasingly utilitarian one taking shape in the U.S., not the 19th-century idea of a well-rounded education. Initiatives like his, laudable as they are, resemble the global rush to train technologists and technocrats with little knowledge of the humanities. The study of literature and the arts in

such a model is, apparently, expendable. Despite this trend, in my lectures and private conversations during visits to a range of institutions and regions, I happily discovered a thirst for literature and the arts as great as anywhere else. True, India's huge population and shortage of college seats makes for intense competition, and everyone speaks about India as the next superpower (China excepted). Yet India has deep literary and philosophical traditions that you can hear frequently in favorite vernacular quotations and songs, and that you can see in the genuine respect for scholars.

I was particularly struck by this on a visit to the northeastern state of Assam. In the capital city of Guwahati, a professor friend, a linguist cataloguing the region's many tribal languages, showed me the courtyard of a government

building where, exactly a year before, a bomb planted by insurgents had killed scores of lawyers. That had been one of the last violent acts of a long insurgency begun by tribal groups fighting for more autonomy from the Indian government. On that same visit I spoke at a university attended by many such tribals, who, though committed to being Indian and not at all linked to the insurgents, are nonetheless eager to assert their distinct identities. And it is the arts, and intellectual dialogue, that provide crucial spheres in which they can express themselves. Ironically, I shared the dais (a guest lecturer is always on a dais in India) with the Inspector General of Police, who had recently earned a Ph.D. on Shakespeare. He wore a sporty tan vest and black tailored trousers, and was escorted by two Jeep-fuls of armed guards. Over a cup of tea, I asked him why, if he loved Shakespeare, he had joined the police. "I was a college teacher first, long time back," he said. "But few opportunities for advancement." Here, then, was a telling conjunction of *realpolitik* and the arts, avocation and utility. Advancement in the form of corporate and government jobs trumped deeper aesthetic and intellectual desires. The students knew better, I think. They hung onto every word I had to say about the place of literature in an era of globalization (my Fulbright theme), however inarticulate I was. They proudly told me about their aspirations and their

tribal customs. A generation ago their regional pride would have seemed embarrassingly backward-looking and un-hip. Today, as India's material changes accelerate, this pride is a badge of their dialogic identities, at once tribal (and there are many tribes) and Indian. In this they offer a real counterweight to the kind of monologic outlook expressed by the Shiv Sena in Mumbai, chauvinists who quietly send their children abroad. Predictably, they do not read novels. Rohinton Mistry is amused, and he is sad.

But like the students I met across India, a range of Mumbai citizens have rallied to Mistry's defense. The city's legendary mix of styles and religions and languages is never silent for long. Nor is Mumbai alone: Indian cities have for centuries been distinguished by their eclecticism, their fusion of expressive traditions, and I hope Pitroda's changes will not overlook this in the zeal for educational efficiency. Most significant, perhaps, is India's recent English-language publishing boom, with scores of young writ-

ers giving expression, often in Hinglish, to their particular middle-class urban experience. One writer, Chetan Bhagat, churns out page-turners, one of which was the basis for a huge Bollywood hit, with a typical mix of Hindi and English songs. Bhagat is now a self-appointed spokesman for the country's outward-looking, secular-minded, impatient youth. Ashok Chopar, a publishing CEO, is giddy: "What a far cry from the time when there were just a handful of Indian writers in English . . . Today there is a great awakening and the money game is getting bigger too. . . . [P]eople from all walks of life can hope to be writers, it's no longer limited to the elite."

I also traveled to other colleges and universities, including a beautiful northern campus of the Indian Institute of Technology (with its own 24-hour electricity, a rarity in India) to lecture to faculty and students; a center for the study of contemporary theory in the industrialized northwestern state of Gujarat, where I led a three-day workshop on globalization and

literature; two institutions in another part of this state, one a women's college, the other a Gujarati- and Hindi-language publishing house; and two universities in the country of Sri Lanka, which was just celebrating the one-year anniversary of victory, after a 27-year civil war, over the Tamil Tigers. Back in Mumbai, I sat on panels organized by the American Center, whose mission is to promote the U.S. as an education destination and to facilitate cultural exchanges between the two countries. My old elementary school friend, Paul, is now the U. S. Consul General, and I can attest to his nice digs at the consulate.

Unfortunately (in my view, at least), and in keeping with Mumbai's changing face, the grand consulate will soon shift location to a newly built-up section of the city. I have no idea how all this will turn out, but I do know one thing: India's story is the story of the 21st century.

