

# Postings

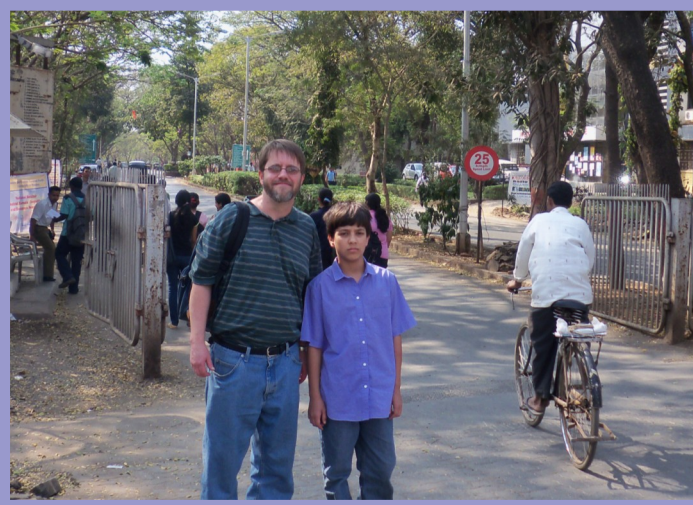
*Musings and goings-on from the Department of English & Philosophy*

English professor **Alan Johnson** received a 2009-10 Fulbright Lecturing award to teach at the University of Mumbai from January through May.

## Letter from India

By Alan Johnson

By the fourth flower bouquet and one hundredth photograph, I started to feel like a Bollywood film star. Flowers are the ritual offerings to guests in India, but the digital cameras and camera phones have become noticeably more common since my last visit two years ago. Here in Aurangabad, a bustling city steeped in Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim antiquity, the International Conference on Marginality hosted by the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University English Department has brought together many professors and graduate students, including a few from Iraq, Iran and Yemen. Three days before the



**Alan Johnson** and his son Roshin in front of the University of Mumbai main campus gate.

conference I was asked to give not one, but two presentations, and to chair three panels. By the end of the third and final day, after cups and cups of tea and mounds of food, having exchanged emails with scores of adulatory students (go figure), I thought, "This is what we need in Pocatello."

In many ways, students of literature here in India are much the same as those in the U.S.: cell (mobile) phones compete for attention with books, and fashions run to jeans, t-shirts and backpacks. What's distinctly different is the deference given to teachers: "Please, sir, tell us your view on this novel." "Thank you, sir, for sharing your learning with us." One could get used to this.

Special items of interest and stories contained inside

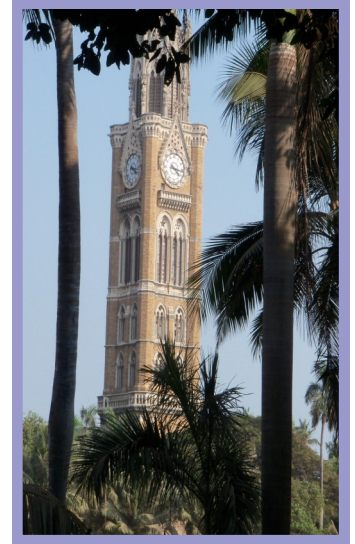
- Jennifer Attebery presents Fife Lecture
- Student publications
- Rocky Mountain Writers' Festival

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

The downside is a hesitancy to question the teacher: The guru's word is gold. Perhaps we could balance these different cultural attitudes—the Indian student's pedagogical deference, the American student's skepticism—and, in the spirit of globalization, sell it. There is, I'm told, a change occurring in high-level universities, and I did, in fact, sense a more Socratic openness in my University of Mumbai classroom, where bright students were attentive but not reverential.

Generally, literature students here enjoy both the analysis of words and the words themselves. Both have long traditions in India, where ancient philosophers influenced Plato and Company and poetic recitation is a familiar passion. An American would find the mix of political activism and aestheticism familiar: a professor who is also part of the Dalit (formerly "untouchable") community can hold forth about Brahminical tyranny in fiery cadences framed by references to Shakespeare. (He hates Gandhi, but that's another story.) A feminist can politely demolish traditional shibboleths. A student—well, a student must wait to assert her voice.

I hope it's clear that I've been enjoying my involvement with academic India, and that I have lots to look forward to in the months ahead. Tomorrow, it's the Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur. Stay tuned!



The original Victorian-era (1880s) clock tower on the old campus, which now houses only the law school and is far away from the current campus.

## Jennifer Attebery delivers Fife Honor Lecture at Utah State; presents research in Minneapolis

English professor and director of the ISU Folklore program, **Jennifer Eastman Attebery** was selected by Utah State University to give the Fife Honor Lecture in March.

"This is an annual honorary lecture given by a senior folklorist each spring," said USU folklore professor Lisa Gabbert. "The Fife Honor Lecture, named in honor of Austin and Alta Fife, has been held every year since 1981 and recipients are chosen on the basis of achievements in the field. Past lecturers have included Wayland D. Hand, Bess Lomax Hawes, Alan Dundes, David Hufford, Peggy Seeger, and Henry Glassie, among many other notable figures."

Attebery's Fife Lecture, "Personal Letters as Voices from the Past," occurred during the week of March 31. In addition to presenting the lecture to a mixed audience of students, faculty, and the public, Attebery visited a folklore class to interact with students more directly and attended an evening dinner event.

Attebery has also been invited to present her research on immigrant letters later this spring at a symposium, "The Migration Letter: Archiving Postal Era Intimacy," held in Minneapolis, on May 17-18, sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Immigration History Research Center and the Institute for Global Studies as part of their joint Global REM (Race, Ethnicity, Migration) program.

Attebery's research focuses on folk culture and history of the Rocky Mountain West in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her main contribution to these fields has been an expanded understanding of the multicultural West, in both material and verbal folklore genres. 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."

## Swetnam's Students Achieve Publication Success

Few achievements are as exciting to a writer as seeing his or her work in print. Over the past few years, English professor **Susan Swetnam** has taught writing courses to both undergraduates and graduate students where, notably, many of the students have published their work.

Swetnam writes:

"I've taught many enjoyable writing courses over the past 30 years at ISU, but two recent courses have been among the highlights: English 606, Seminar in Writing Creative Nonfiction (Fall 2008) and English 406/506, Magazine Article Writing (Fall 2009). Both included extremely talented students who rose

effectively to the challenge I gave them: not only to hone their craft as writers, but also to submit their work for publication. Seeing my own work in print has always been extremely satisfying for me, and, hoping that my students might share that pleasure, I designed both courses to include practical instruction on the mechanics of submission as well as more traditional instruction in creative writing itself.

"The results have been nothing less than thrilling. To date, more than half of the students who took English 606 have placed a piece written for the seminar. Though the Magazine Article Writing class just ended in December, four of the graduate students in that class and three of the undergraduates have already had pieces published or accepted.

"This is the sort of success that makes a professor's life worth living! I'm very, very proud of these students, of the many others who have been invited to read their work in public readings, and of all the others who are still pursuing their first publications."

The department celebrates the success of Swetnam's students by featuring the work of several of the students in the shadowbox in the halls of the Liberal Arts building this spring.



**Susan Swetnam** and graduate students **Jessica Edwards**, **Scott Holman**, and **Tera Cole** check out the display of student publications in the department shadowbox.

## Publications

The following students have published in the last few years or will be publishing their work as a result of Susan Swetnam's courses:

Andy Lilley, "Worth the Work," *High Country News* (published)

Sheldon Lawrence, "When Idaho Rained in Yellowstone: The story of Idaho farmers, irrigation pipe, and the fires of '88," *Idaho Magazine* (forthcoming)

Stacie Jensen-Hart, "There's a Rainbow Underneath," *Reflections: Narratives of Professional Helping* (forthcoming)

JoAnn Winberg, "Portable Pub Grub," *Backpacker* (published)

Jona Jacobson, "Cardamom, Carrots, Christmas Bells," *Dishrag Soup and Poverty Cake: an Idaho Potluck of Essays on Food* (published)

Marjanna Hulet, "A Treasure of Tales," *Family Fun* (published)

Jessica Hillam, "Big and Buff – but *Feminine!*" *American Track and Field Athlete* (published)

Ty Swenson, "Photo Record," *Idaho State Journal* (published)

Lalove Foster, "The Last Harvest," *Idaho Magazine* (published), and "Educating Idaho's Inmates," *Idaho Magazine* (forthcoming)

Naveed Rehan, "There's Something in the Air," *The Friday Times* (published)

Tera Cole, "Guilt Free Appetizers," *Inside Pocatello* (published)

Scott Holman, "Chain Free," *Dirt Rag* (published)

Jessica Edwards, "Clean & Simple," *Inside Pocatello* (published)

## Faculty News

**Susan Goslee** is a recipient of the Outstanding Public Service award.

**Jessica Winston** and **Brent Wolter** are recipients of the Master Teacher award.

**Jessica Winston's** article "Drama of the Inns of Court" (with Alan H. Nelson) was recently published in *A New Companion to Renaissance Literature and Culture* (2010), edited by Michael Hattaway and published by Blackwell.

**Curt Whitaker's** essay "Herbert's Pastor as Herbalist" appeared in *George Herbert's Pastoral: New Essays on the Poet and Priest of Bemerton* (2010), edited by Christopher Hodgkins and published by University of Delaware Press.

**Hal Hellwig's** "As I Lay Dying and Features of Greek Tragedy," an explication of Faulkner's work, has been accepted for publication by *The Explicator* and will appear this year. Additionally, his book review for the Mark Twain Forum on *Mark Twain's Own Autobiography: The Chapters From The North American Review* (Second Edition. Edited by Michael J. Kiskis. Foreword by Sheila Leary. University of Wisconsin Press, 2010) will appear online in early May.

He presented a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication on March 19 entitled "Soccer Requires Nimble Feet: How Idaho State University Created a Self-Guided Placement Tool."

Hellwig has recently been asked to serve as a reviewer, both book and manuscript, for *College Literature*, and he is an occasional reviewer for *South Atlantic Review*.

He continues to work on a book-length manuscript for the University of Virginia Press, tentatively titled: "Transformations of the Flawed Hero of Literature and Film Noir into Television Knights of Comedy." His anticipated date of completion is August 2010, with a publication date of 2011.

Hellwig serves the Pocatello community as the Gate City Youth Soccer League registrar, where he is also on the board. The league conducts various soccer programs for more than 700 players in Bannock County. Hellwig will make sure that all players are registered with current information on local and statewide databases. He also helps organize tournaments for competitive players (about 150 boys and girls). In the late spring, he will be the assistant youth development program director, attending all games for younger players, and helping monitor referees, coaches, players and parents.

## Graduate Student News

In April 2009, **Naveed Rehan** published an article entitled "There's Something in the Air" in the magazine *The Friday Times*. This article is about the tar sand developments in Alberta, Canada and their resulting effect on the environment. Naveed wrote this piece while taking Dr. Susan Swetnam's non-fiction creative writing course.

**Tera Cole's** recipe piece entitled "Guilt Free Appetizers" was featured in a local magazine *Inside Pocatello*. This article is about how to create healthy appetizers for a party. Tera's inspiration for this piece came while taking Dr. Susan Swetnam's magazine writing class. Tera is nearing the completion of her M.A. degree.

**Scott Holman**, a Ph.D. student and avid outdoor enthusiast, recently had a back-page article entitled "Chain Free" published in the February edition of *Dirt Rag* magazine. Like Tera's piece, this article was inspired by Dr. Susan Swetnam's magazine writing class. Scott also attended the 2010 Mardi Gras conference at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge where he presented "On the Road Again/Mythic Heroes of the West: Francis Parkman's Influence on Jack Kerouac."



**Jessica Edwards** had an article entitled “Clean & Simple” published in the March edition of *Inside Pocatello*. This article featured ways to clean without harmful chemicals. Like Tera and Scott this article was written while taking Dr. Susan Swetnam’s magazine writing course.

In March, **William Chalmers** was a presenter and discussion leader on a panel discussion regarding the transferability of freshman composition courses and whether or not students can transfer what they learn in these courses to other disciplines.

**Aaron Cloyd** has accepted an offer from University of Kentucky in Lexington, and he will be beginning the Ph.D. program there this coming fall.

**Devori Kimbro** has been accepted with full funding to Arizona State University's English Ph.D. Program, and will be starting there in the fall.

She presented at the Phi Alpha Theta (History Honors Society) Northwest Regional Conference, April 15, 16, and 17. She presented a paper called “Poverty, Pestilence, and the Plague-Time Herbal in Early Modern London,” in which she discussed the manner that London’s medical communities utilized publications of herbals during the 1665 plague in order to forward their agenda of discrediting one another.

## Rocky Mountain Writers’ Festival

This year’s Rocky Mountain Writers’ Festival was another great success. Running from Wednesday, March 10 through Saturday, March 13 at venues around Pocatello, the Festival featured several faculty and student readers from our Department. Friday, March 12, centered around this year’s guest writer, poet Janet Holmes.

Professor Susan Swetnam and student Jen Hawkins were among the readers on opening night at the Portneuf Brewery. Thursday’s University Night at College Market was hosted by Senior Josh Mayes, and instructors, Brandon Hall, Carlen Donovan and recent alumnus Colin Meldrum were among the showcased poets and fiction writers. The audience at the College Market was standing room only.

Festival activities ran throughout Friday. Janet Holmes, a Professor in the MFA Creative Writing program at Boise State University, is an award-winning poet and Director of Ahsahta Press. Ahsahta Press is a poetry press affiliated with BSU and publishes books by many of the most interesting and innovative writers working today. It has a significant and growing national reputation and its Sawtooth Poetry Prize receives at least 700 to 800 manuscript submissions annually. Professor Holmes led a colloquium at 3 p.m. hosted by the English department. She began by describing how the press handles and assesses submissions to the contest then opened the floor to questions. Attending students and faculty wanted to know about all aspects of art publishing from book design and layout to arts funding and how the press picks its contest judge.

Immediately after the colloquium, events moved to the Pond Student Union’s Bengal Café. The student literary magazine, Black Rock & Sage, hosted the first annual “Afternoon: Come Get Your Book On” with live music, literary trivia games, free snacks and a raffle. This event segued into a very well-attended book fair showcasing many regional presses and writers, including Ahsahta Press. Then at 7 p.m. Professor Holmes read from her two most recent volumes *The ms of my kin* and *F2F*.

Saturday’s schedule involved both the Native Visions reading with poets and writers from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the festival’s finale reading that night.

This year’s Festival received generous support from the Cultural Affairs Council, the Pocatello Arts Council, and our Department, and next year’s line up is already in the works.

We appreciate the generous contributions our friends and alumni have made over the years. 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](mailto:johnmarg@isu.edu) or call the department office at (208) 282-2478.

## Department Baby



**Ava Jade Harker**

**Born: December 30, 2009**  
**6 lbs. 8 oz.**  
**19 1/2 inches long**

**Proud parents: Kevin and Dana Harker**  
**Big sister: Suni Marley**



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HERE

