

# POSTINGS

The Annual Newsletter of the Idaho State University Department of English and Philosophy

Volume 9, 2014-15

## Department Announces the Price Worrell Scholarship Endowment



Price Worrell

English graduate student Price Worrell has endowed a scholarship exclusively for senior English majors at Idaho State University. The scholarship has been created to aid both individual students and the University as a whole. Worrell’s desire to create this endowment came from his own powerful life story, which he suggests is more common than many people believe.

Before completing his bachelor’s degree and starting graduate school, Worrell experienced many difficulties. At age 17, Worrell was adopted by Gordon and Pamela Lassahn, who removed him from an abusive home. Their continuous support and guidance assisted him in overcoming PTSD and alcoholism by his mid-30s. With these struggles behind him, Worrell began to pursue his dream of completing his bachelor’s degree. Like many of our students, however, Worrell ran into financial difficulties. After using up all of his financial aid in 2014 due to a series of personal misfortunes, he received help to finish his undergraduate degree.

In November of last year, Worrell received an inheritance from his adoptive father’s estate. His parents knew that he had always wanted the chance to help others in a lasting way and that he didn’t think he would ever have that chance. However, this inheritance gave him the opportunity to follow that dream. After discussing it with his mother, Worrell made the decision to use the money to establish a scholarship for the Department of English and Philosophy.

Worrell wants to use the money to help future students at the University follow their dreams, much like his parents helped him. This endowment will allow Worrell to aid students who may be in situations comparable to his; in fact, his dream is “to help students going through similar experiences...who have struggles early on in college due to personal hardships, overcome them, come close to finishing, and need financial help the last semester.” Worrell further believes that the endowment will also help the College of Arts and Letters, and specifically the Department of English and Philosophy, to reach out to and provide opportunities for prospective students. He believes that through this kind of outreach ISU will attract exceptional students who will help in building the school overall. Worrell hopes “to create a stronger sense of community in

the Department of English and Philosophy through activities that raise funds for and promote the scholarship.” Not only will the endowment give students opportunities to finish their education, but by awarding this money to future English seniors Worrell will also create a legacy of assisting others.

“We are thrilled to have this opportunity available for students who are earnestly pursuing studies in English but may have encountered obstacles in their senior year, so close to finishing, and who aspire to graduate study. This will be a tremendous benefit to those students,” said Jennifer Attebery, department chair.

In creating the scholarship, Price Worrell is holding out a hand to the seniors at Idaho State University who may need a bit of extra financial help to accomplish their dreams. He hopes to reassure students that while we all run into difficult times, it doesn’t mean we should give up. This scholarship works toward the “removal of the stigma against personal hardships from disabilities, such as mental illness and alcoholism,” which in turn might inspire individuals who have been, or are currently experiencing, difficult times to persevere.

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## Letter from the Chair of English and Philosophy

Commencement 2015 brought me the pleasure of meeting one of our Golden Bengals, poet and rancher Charles Potts (B.A. in English, 1965), who traveled back to Pocatello to attend commencement events, give a reading at local bookstore Walrus and Carpenter, and drop in on the *Black Rock and Sage* launch party to participate in the flash reading celebrating the 2015

issue. Potts's more than five-decade career as a poet has produced numerous volumes, the most interesting of which, to me, are those poems based in his family's Depression-era experience in Idaho's Lost River region and his current experience living in Walla Walla, Washington as a poet, horse-raiser, and patron of the arts. At his reading he shared some of this recent, as-yet-unpublished work. The department is grateful to Potts for his donation of several of his books, which we've shelved in our newly refurbished conference room library.

As I spent the weekend chatting with Potts and celebrating our current students' accomplishments, I was struck by the unity and impact of the department's work. In evaluations and administrative parlance, our work is artificially split into teaching, research, service, but in practice our work cannot be disaggregated. The kind of intellectual engagement that runs throughout our teaching, writing, investigating, arguing, and public lecturing was evident during commencement weekend in Potts's conversation—he is an avid reader whose creativity and inquisitiveness was nurtured by 1960s professors Ed Dorn, Larry Rice, and Bud Wigginton, all now departed. In this issue of *Postings*, readers will find further evidence of the unity and impact of our intellectual engagement, from nurturing undergraduate students to innovation in graduate education; from award-winning publications to public humanities events. My hope is that this intellectual engagement will be evident in 2065, when this year's graduates become Golden Bengals, and a few return to the department and share their career accomplishments with the next generation of humanities professors.



Come and find us on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/isu.english.and.philosophy>

### Help support the Department of English and Philosophy

The department is truly grateful for the generosity of its donors and alumni, who make possible a wide variety of learning and research opportunities for our students, our faculty and our community. Your gift can:

- ◆ Bring visiting speakers, writers, and artists to campus
- ◆ Develop our technological resources for pedagogy and research
- ◆ Fund *Black Rock & Sage*, our literary magazine (profiled in this issue!)
- ◆ Provide scholarship opportunities for outstanding students

To make a donation in any amount, please visit <https://pledge.isu.edu> and complete an Idaho State University Pledge Form. Be sure to indicate that your gift is for the Department of English and Philosophy.

For questions about donations, please contact:

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Thank you for your support of the humanities at ISU!

## Department Hosts the Humanities Café

For the 2014-15 academic year, with the lead of Professor Thomas Klein and Assistant Lecturer Steven Hall, the Department of English and Philosophy coordinated the Humanities Café, which seeks to promote the humanities within the greater Pocatello community. “[The Café’s] goal is to offer a venue to explain what we do for the larger community,” Dr. Klein said. Because the humanities are often overlooked, this event serves as a reminder of their relevance.

The Café was initiated by the history department two years ago and was modeled on ISU’s Science Café. Last year, the sociology department organized the Café, and the Department of English and Philosophy took over for the current school year, thanks to a grant from the Idaho Humanities Council obtained by Jennifer Attebery, chair of the department.

Each year, the Café centers on a selected theme and includes presentations by faculty in humanities-focused departments such as English, history, theater, sociology, languages, music, and mass communications. To appeal to audiences outside of the university, this year’s events were held at Portneuf Valley Brewing, and featured talks on the theme of “Revolutions.” As Klein explains, “experts in the different fields talk for a broader audience,” and so crafted their presentations in order to remain accessible for a larger public while also deepening the audience’s understanding of revolution in its many forms.

Each Café, Klein notes, “adapts to what the presenters are interested in within [this year’s] overall theme of Revolution,” and focuses on a sub-theme such as political, artistic, sexual, religious, or technological revolution. For the Café devoted to political revolution, for example, students in the ISU production of Shakespeare’s *Richard III* performed a pivotal scene from that play, while English PhD student Jacob Claflin explained how many productions of the play have “been used to comment on political situations, most specifically the rise of totalitarian dictatorships in Europe, and the Thatcher government of the 1980s England.” Claflin said that he enjoyed how the Café gave him “the chance to share work with people outside the discipline and outside of the college.”

Other department members contributed to the Café. Visiting Assistant Professor Robert Watkins and Associate Lecturer Carlen Donovan presented on artistic revolution. Klein, in addition to hosting the Café, presented on revolutions in technology, using his background in medieval literature to compare the rhetoric of medieval wooden tablets, Victorian postcards, and modern-day text messages.

What do the humanities, and specifically the English and Philosophy department, have to offer to the broader Pocatello community? This question was answered in the loft of Pocatello’s rustic brewery, where students, faculty, and members of the community could enjoy themselves while watching a scene from *The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*, listening to an animated talk on Tennessee Williams, and contemplating revolutions in sexuality, politics, and religion. An in-depth and engaging exploration of the humanities, the Café demonstrated to a larger public why the humanities matter so urgently in the twenty-first-century, and how the Department of English and Philosophy is committed to communicating that urgency to our local community.

## Bethany Schultz Hurst Publishes First Book

miss lost nation

Bethany Schultz Hurst

2013 ROBERT DANA-ANHINGA  
PRIZE FOR POETRY  
SELECTED BY RICHARD BLANCO



miss lost nation  
Bethany Schultz Hurst



Bethany Schultz Hurst, Assistant Professor of English, recently published her first book of poetry. *Miss Lost Nation* won the 2013 Robert Dana-Anhinga Prize for Poetry, and was published by Anhinga Press in fall of 2014. Contest judge Richard Blanco praised the unique voice of Hurst’s poems, admiring how it “leaps off the page with a masterful, complex range that weaves narrative and lyric; subversive wit and true emotional grit; social commentary and deep personal longing.” Hurst also toured in support of the book upon its release, giving readings in St. Augustine, Ocala, Orlando, and Tallahassee.



2014-2015 Graduating TESOL, MA, and PhD students

**Summer 2014:**

Robyn DeWall- M.A. (not pictured)

**Fall 2014:**

Chris Brock, Braden Chase, and Misty Prigent- TESOL Certificate (not pictured)

Justin Murdock and Talsan Schulzke- M.A.

Steven Hall- Ph.D. (not pictured)

**Spring 2015:**

Jocelyn Foreman and Amelia Kaspari- TESOL Certificate

Forrest Johnson, Amelia Kaspari, and Patricia Miller Schmidt- M.A.

Zachary Dilbeck and Jennifer Foradori- Ph.D. (not pictured)

## Ph.D. Program Recognized for Innovation

Last spring, the department's Ph.D. program in English and the Teaching of English was among the small number of exceptional programs detailed in the Modern Language Association (MLA) Task Force Report on Doctoral Study in Modern Languages and Literature. The report is concerned with establishing a uniform set of recommendations for doctoral education programs. ISU's inclusion is an acknowledgment of our program's commitment to the vision and recommendations presented in the MLA task force report, which correspond with its vision for the future.

The task force recommends a number of approaches to doctoral education in modern languages and literature, most of which can be broadly applied to the Humanities as a whole. These recommendations were developed to address the shifting roles and responsibilities of doctoral study in the twenty-first-century, and the report presents strategies for incorporating these changes into programs so as to sustain doctoral study into the future.

The task force report showcases ISU's innovative postgraduate program which combines the textual/theoretical study of American and British Literatures with the rhetorical and practical experience of teaching literature and composition. In the description, Director of Graduate Studies Jessica Winston states, "The primary aim of the degree is to train graduates for teaching careers at two- and four-year schools, especially community colleges." The report also explains the rich history of doctoral training in English at ISU since 1971, noting how the graduate degree in English was first offered as a D.A., or Doctor of Arts, which had a primary emphasis on pedagogy and instruction. In 2009, the D.A. was replaced with the Ph.D. in English and the Teaching of English. The curriculum of our Ph.D. program retains the spirit of the D.A. degree in its incorporation of practical and theoretical approaches to instruction as a core element of the program. Students must complete two seminars in composition and literature pedagogy, and two teaching internships that require them to plan and teach a course delving into an aspect of pedagogical theory in a literature or composition classroom. The students' dissertations are generally literary, and one part of the qualifying exam is based on the teaching of English, usually linked to the research the student did for his/her dissertation.

ISU's inclusion in the report sets our Ph.D. program in English and the Teaching of English apart from most other schools in the country, and constitutes an impressive mark of distinction. Other schools cited in this report were Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Colorado, and the University of Washington, all of which have significantly more resources than ISU. Our program trains students to be diligent, adaptable, and philosophical teachers, and we are proud of the students, faculty, and staff who make our program an innovative site of teaching and learning.

## Faculty Awards and Accomplishments:

**Jennifer Attebery**, Professor of English, was honored as ISU outstanding researcher.

**Tera Joy Cole**, Assistant Lecturer in English, published "Where Things Are Made" in *Blunderbuss Magazine*, an online literary journal.

**Hal Hellwig**, Associate Professor of English, published "Venice and the Decline of the West: Henry James, Mark Twain, and the Memorials of the Past" in *Henry James Today*, edited by John Carlos Rowe (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014), and "William Blake's Jerusalem and the Los Angeles of Film Noir" in *Philosophy and Literature*.

**Bethany Schultz Hurst**, Assistant Professor of English, published her poem "Crisis on Infinite Earths, Issues 1-12," selected by Sherman Alexie for inclusion in the *Best American Poetry 2015* anthology and in the *New Ohio Review* 16 (Fall 2014), and published "Fruits of Our Labor" in *American Literary Review* (Spring 2015).

**Alan Johnson**, Professor of English, published "The American Hero's Passage to India: Geography, Frontier Myths, and Planetary Perspectives" in *Writing Today: International Journal of Studies in English* 1.2 (2014); "Local Writing is World Writing: Reflections on Literary Studies in a Global Age" in *The Atlantic Critical Review* 13.2 (2014): 1-15; and his anthology *Postcolonial Literature Today*, co-edited with Jagdish Batra, (Prestige Books International, Delhi). The volume includes chapters by ISU alumni Diane Yerka, M.A. 2013, Dahood El-Oqla, Ph.D. 2013, and Kelly Meyer, Ph.D. 2014.

**Thomas Klein**, Professor of English, published "The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket: Reading Text, Image, and Design on an Early Anglo-Saxon Artifact" in *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, and "Resolving Exeter Book Riddles 74 and 33: Stormy Allomorphs of Water" in *Quidditas: Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 35 (2014), 29-47. The article is co-authored with David Delehanty, Professor of Biology at ISU, and William Klein, Thomas's father and Professor of English at Kenyon College.

**Roger Schmidt**, Professor of English, published "To What Shall I Compare This Life?" in *Raritan* 33.4 (2014): 95-106.

**Mike Stubbs**, Assistant Lecturer in English, published "Chasing Winter: A Fast Exit Requires Pursuit." *Idaho Magazine* (May 2015): 42-45.

**Curt Whitaker**, Associate Professor of English, published "Bioaesthetics and the American West" in the edited collection *Found in Alberta: Environmental Themes for the Anthropocene* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), and was honored as ISU outstanding teacher.

**Amanda Zink**, Assistant Professor of English, published "Maternal Economies in the Estranged Sisterhood of Edith Summers Kelley and Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Studies in American Fiction*. Spring 2015, and "Carlisle's Writing Circle: Boarding School Texts and Decolonizing Domesticity" accepted for publication in *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. It will appear in 2016.

## Graduate Student Accomplishments:

**Deirdre Carney**, Ph.D. candidate, published "Social Work" in *The Truth about the Fact* 9.1 (2014): 87-92.

**Jeff Howard**, Ph.D. student, published "What Is the Use of a Book...without Pictures?: Images and Words in Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" in *The Explicator* 73.1, and "Trickster's Economics: Conservation and Innovation in the Game of Jinx" in *Children's Folklore Review* 36 (2014): 9-16, and "Pausing for Effect: Silence as a Principle of Learning" in the *Writing Lab Newsletter* 39 (2014), 3-4.

**Samuel Head**, M.A. student had his article "Teaching Grounded Audiences: Burke's Identification in Facebook and Composition" in *Computers and Composition* accepted for publication in 2016.

**Seth Clark**, Ph.D. candidate, published "'Confusion Now Hath Made His Masterpiece': (Re)Considering the Maddening of Macbeth" in *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium*.

**Jacob Thomas**, Ph.D. student, published "The Lion of Panjshir: Ahmad Shah Massoud, the Folk-Hero and 'Saint' of Modern Afghanistan" in the Proceedings of the 2014 Conference of the Society for Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery.

**Diantha Smith**, Ph.D. student, had her guest blog post, "It's All Greek to Me...Until Someone Writes an E-mail" featured on the Bedford/St. Martin's composition blog, "Teacher to Teacher."

## **Black Rock & Sage: An Introduction to Publishing for ISU Students**

*Black Rock & Sage*, the creative arts journal sponsored by the Department of English and Philosophy, offers an excellent way for students to learn about the submission and publication process while gaining vital editorial experience. The magazine features the creative works of Idaho State University students and is published annually at the end of spring semester. Current editor-in-chief Natalie Homer explains that *Black Rock & Sage* “publishes anything we deem worthy of artistic merit,” as editors are “open to a wide range of submissions, anything from x-rays to costume design to dance routines.” The magazine’s most popular genres, however, tend to be poetry, visual art, and short fiction. The number of submissions for each genre varies, with poetry bringing in the most for this year. Although primarily produced by English and Philosophy, *Black Rock & Sage* also partners with the Art and Music departments. In fact, an added feature of the magazine is a CD containing selected submissions of student musical performances.

The magazine’s editors and assistant editors are undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in Literary Magazine Production (English 4409/5509). Homer explained that the assistant editors’ jobs “consist of participating in rush meetings [class periods devoted to choosing pieces for publication], soliciting ads for the magazine, and attending *Black Rock & Sage* events” such as Write-A-Thons and visiting author readings. Once a student has taken the class and has been an assistant editor, he or she is then eligible to be a senior editor, such as poetry and prose editors and the editor-in-chief.

As Homer notes, working on *Black Rock & Sage* is an “invaluable hands-on experience for introduction to the publishing field.” Students are able to participate in the entire magazine production process. *Black Rock & Sage* staff first advertises to encourage students to submit. Once the magazine has submissions from students, the editors begin the process of selecting pieces to publish; the editors vote on the pieces during rush meetings and the majority vote rules. After the rush process acceptance and rejection notices are sent out. Collectively, the selected pieces are then copyedited many times, making for a long and intense part of the magazine’s production. After the pieces are ready for print, the editors work on the format and layout, receiving crucial assistance from a design intern. When formatting is completed, the magazine is sent to a printer in Massachusetts, and upon its return the editors host a launch party to celebrate its release. Homer stresses that “the launch party is one of the most important parts of producing the magazine because all contributors are invited to read from their pieces, display their work, or to perform.”

Throughout this process, student editors are able to see how much effort and work actually goes into producing a journal. Considering most literary journals don’t have large circulations, Homer describes them as “labors of love.” She says that “the work and time that goes into them is almost always a sacrifice on the part of the editors.” *Black Rock & Sage* shows aspiring editors what it means to work truly for the love of it. Student writers and artists who are published in *Black Rock & Sage* benefit as well, as they are given the confirmation that others are interested in and appreciate what they are writing or making.

### **New Faculty**



**Jacob Berger**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy

Jacob earned his Ph.D. from City University of New York. He specializes in philosophy of mind.



**Robert Watkins**, Visiting Assistant Professor in English

Rob earned his Ph.D. from Iowa State University. He specializes in rhetoric and professional communication with an emphasis in visual literacy through comics.



**Matthew Levay**, Assistant Professor of English

Matthew earned his Ph.D. from the University of Washington. He specializes in British literature and culture from the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century to the present with emphases in modernism, the history and theory of the novel, and popular print culture.



**Michael Westwood**, Assistant Lecturer in English

Michael earned his M.A. from Azusa Pacific University. He specializes in TESOL.