

Idaho Humanities Council
awards 38 grants at fall meeting

The Idaho Humanities Council, the non-profit, state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, awarded **\$92,043** in grants to organizations and individuals at its recent board meeting in Boise. Thirty-eight awards include five Research Fellowships, six Teacher Incentive Grants, seven Planning Grants, 14 public humanities programs, including six projects funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities *We the People* program exploring American history and culture, and six awards to libraries for the NEH *Picturing America* program exploring American art masterpieces. The following projects were funded:

MAJOR AND MINI GRANTS



Alaska poet and environmental writer Gary Holthaus and musician Lauren Pelon will travel to Idaho in March to present a thoughtful program of music and readings called “The Story of Music, Stories from Home,” in Boise, Lewiston, and Driggs.

Picaresque II (Red Wing, Minnesota) was awarded **\$6,685** to bring musician Lauren Pelon and poet Gary Holthaus to Idaho to present a unique series of programs of music and spoken word called “The Story of Music, Stories from Home.” They will make presentations in Lewiston, Boise, and Driggs in March of 2010. Pelon is an internationally recognized singer and musician of ancient and modern instruments and Holthaus is a poet, essayist, and scholar. Pelon will play as many as 20 different instruments and Holthaus will read from works of such diverse poets and philosophers as Scott Momaday, Gary Snyder, Scott Russell Sanders, Confucius, and Yupik Eskimo elders. The project director is **Lauren Pelon**.

Lewis-Clark State College (Lewiston) received **\$2,000** to help support the 23rd annual Native American Awareness Week scheduled for March 8-12, 2010 in Lewiston. This event features PowWows, panel discussions, storytelling, a banquet, and speaker presentations on topics related to preserving the culture and history of Native Americans. The project director is **Bob Sobotta**.

The College of Arts and Sciences at Idaho State University (Pocatello) was awarded **\$2,000** to help support funding of a special retrospective issue of the journal *Rendezvous*, which recently lost funding due to state budget cuts. This 40th-year anniversary edition will consist of two commemorative volumes featuring a sampling of some of the best essays and articles published over the last four decades. The first volume was launched in early November; the second will be released in the spring of 2010. The project director is **Sharon Sieber**.

The Salmon Arts Council (Salmon) received **\$1,500** to host the Improv Shakespeare Company of Seattle, on January 16, 2010, at the Sacagawea Center in Salmon. The evening will feature actors in full Shakespearean costume, offering a performance, workshop, and lecture, followed by audience discussion. The community will have an opportunity to learn more about Elizabethan times through an interactive experience. The project director is **Mary Cerise**.

Idaho State University’s Reading Project (Pocatello) was awarded **\$2,000** to help bring Greg Mortenson, Director of the Central Asia Institute, to Pocatello to speak about the CAI and his book *Three Cups of Tea*. The *New York Times*



Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*, will speak in Pocatello about his work to build schools in Afghanistan.

bestseller is about the author’s work to build schools in remote areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan over a 15-year period. Mortenson’s book has received numerous awards, and Mortenson was a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize this year. He has established over 90 schools, providing education to over 34,000 students, the majority of whom are girls. The

(See GRANTS, Page 5

IDAHO
Humanities

Volume XIV, No. 1

The Newsletter of the Idaho Humanities Council Winter 2010

Talking About ‘Let’s
Talk About It’: 25 Years

By Ron McFarland
University of Idaho

Editor’s Note: 2010 marks the 25th anniversary of “Let’s Talk About It,” the statewide library reading-discussion program that has brought library patrons and scholars together face to face to discuss books from various themes over the course of a season. The program has been a partnership between the Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Idaho Humanities Council since its inception, with loyal and valuable support for more than a dozen years from US Bancorp. For a quarter century, the program has been administered by ICL librarian Peggy McClendon, who recently has retired, replaced by Betty Hoffman. Peggy annually has solicited applications from libraries all over the state to participate in the five-book program, and she has recruited “Road Scholars” to lead discussions in some of Idaho’s most rural towns, often over snowy roads for modest honoraria. Library patrons are extremely grateful, and despite the distance and inclement weather, scholars enjoy meeting with and leading discussions with patrons about books from many themes. In 1994, the IHC awarded Peggy McClendon its award for “Outstanding Achievement in the Humanities” for all she’s done for the program. On behalf of the Idaho Humanities Council, the many participating “Road Scholars” and many libraries throughout the state, we thank Peggy for her service and wish her well in her future endeavors.

University of Idaho English Professor Ron McFarland has been involved in the LTAI program nearly since the beginning, and in commemoration of the program’s silver anniversary, we asked Ron to write a little about his experiences as a “Road Scholar” for the program.

Unfortunately, I have lost the letter to the editor of the *Lewiston Morning Tribune* dated sometime in the early 1990s and protesting my upcoming visit to Elk River (population about 150) to lead discussion of John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* for the “Let’s Talk About It” series. The letter was the product of a former public school teacher and frequent contributor to regional newspapers, and as I recall it went something like this: “John Steinbeck—well known, fellow traveler, wrote propaganda novel, *Grapes of Wrath*. Why does UI English professor promote such trash? Do our tax dollars promote Communism?” Miss Hughes’s letters were clipped and concise. Some years thereafter I encountered her at one of the town’s small cafes. She was a large woman stuffing manila envelopes with her outrage. I read many of her letters on the opinion pages over the years, and I do not recall one that approved of anything. She died about ten years ago at the age of 88, and I find that I rather miss her clipped notes of disapprobation.



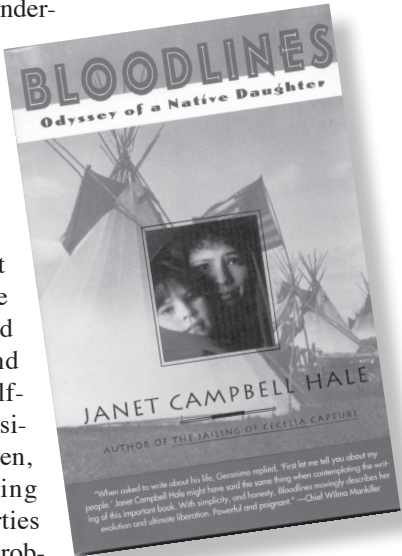
L to R: LTAI Coordinator Peggy McClendon, IHC Director Rick Ardinger, and former IHC Chair Ron Pisaneschi accept a check from U.S. Bank Senior Vice President Robert Aravich this past summer in support of the 2009-2010 “Let’s Talk About It” program. US Bancorp has been a longtime supporter of the statewide library reading-discussion program that brings scholars and library patrons together for book discussions

At the time, however, I was rather apprehensive about my upcoming book discussion, and I remember wondering whether the protester herself might show up and turn the evening to acrimony. She did not. Instead it was the cute red-headed librarian and maybe a half-dozen local residents, all women, ages ranging from the thirties to seventies probably. A couple of them had lived through the Great Depression.

Having now tallied nearly seventy “Let’s Talk About It” presentations for the Idaho Commission for Libraries since my first appearance on October 7, 1986, in Coeur d’Alene, I should confess that my memory inclines to accumulate episodes so that perhaps two or more of the four times I have visited Elk River have combined to bring about this single winter memoir. It is January 11, 1993, and I arrive at the community center to find the place pretty well snowed in, but I chivalrously take the shovel from the librarian and clear a path to the door. It’s my Boy Scout training in action.

For the event I’ve brought a VHS clip from the renowned Henry Fonda film, directed by John Ford, which won two Oscars in 1940. Like most presenters, I’m probably over-prepared and have taught the novel

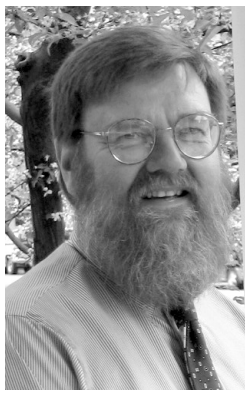
(See LTAI, Page 3)



Exploring the life and work of Mark Twain in 2010

By Rick Ardinger

One hundred years ago this April 21 will mark the death of American literary icon Mark Twain. He came in with Halley's Comet in 1835 and went out with it in 1910, as the story goes. Although his work continues to be read and re-read, and new collections and editions of his work continue to appear—even a previously unpublished work in 2009—the new year will bring some new works by and about Twain in commemoration of the centennial. Always interested in educating through commemoration, the IHC is planning its own activities for teachers this summer.



Idaho teachers are invited to apply to attend the IHC's week-long summer institute "Why Mark Twain Still Matters: Exploring the Mississippi River Books," July 11-16, on the campus of the College of Idaho in Caldwell. Teachers may apply online by March 1 (see related article on page 9). Room, meals, and texts will be provided.

We've lined up five of the finest Twain scholars in the nation to come to Idaho for that week, and we are working on a schedule that includes some evening public events that will be of interest to general audiences. Although the schedule is not as yet complete, check our website this spring for updates—or, better yet, send your email address to (info@idahohumanities.org), and we'll email you a notice about any free public lectures when we finalize the schedule.

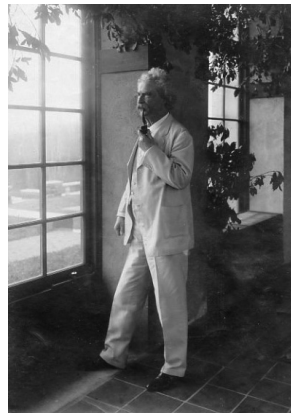
One of our scholars, for example, Laura Skandera-Trombley,

president of Pitzer College and author of *Mark Twain in the Company of Women* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) among other works, has a new biographical work forthcoming in March from Alfred Knopf on Twain's last years. Another of our scholars, Gary Scharnhorst of the University of New Mexico, recently compiled a complete collection of interviews Twain gave over the course of his life.

We don't need a centennial to explore the works of a literary giant, but the occasion does offer a timely opportunity to reflect on a writer who to this day is often the target of library patrons still seeking to ban his work. Through humor he tackled our worst hypocrisies with an acerbic vengeance. Religion, race, war, gender inequality, American imperialism, "the Gilded Age," the U.S. Congress—we can only imagine his take on the healthcare debates.

Participating teachers in our institute will focus intensely on four classics, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Life on the Mississippi*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, but the institute will explore the entire gamut of Twain's work, the time in which it was written, his use of humor to influence or comment upon social issues, and his enduring relevance.

If you know a teacher of any grade or discipline who would benefit from this experience, please let him or her know of this great opportunity. ❖



CSI's Jeff Fox elected IHC Chair

At its fall meeting, the board of directors of the Idaho Humanities Council elected Jeff Fox, Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at the College of Southern Idaho, as IHC's new chair. Fox has served on the IHC board for six years. He will serve a two-year term as IHC's chair.

He succeeds Ron Pisaneschi, Director of Content for Idaho Public Television, who served two two-year terms as IHC's chair. Fox has worked for the College of Southern Idaho for 22 years. Prior to becoming Vice President at the College of Southern Idaho, he served as chair of the English, Languages and Philosophy Department, and before that a professor teaching composition, modern Humanities, Japanese, and British Literature.



Fox also is an avocational musician who plays guitar, bass, and saxophone. Over the years he has played in big bands and small groups. He also has been involved off and on in jazz radio for over 20 years. Currently, he is a host on *JazzWorks*, a nationally syndicated jazz radio broadcast on National Public Radio stations across the country.

He began his association with the Idaho Humanities Council in the mid-1990s as a scholar in the "Let's Talk About It" program (see related article), and for many years traveled to libraries around the Magic Valley in that capacity. In 2003, he joined the Idaho Humanities Council as an academic board member, and he has served for several years on the Executive Committee. ❖

Three new members elected to IHC board

The Idaho Humanities Council (IHC) Board of Directors elected three new members to its 20-member board from **Lewiston** and **Boise** to serve three-year terms on the board, beginning November 1, 2009.

Lisa Brady (Boise) is an Associate Professor of history at Boise State University. She fills a SW Idaho Academic vacancy. Lisa holds M.Ed. and Ph.D. degrees from Montana State University and the University of Kansas respectively and has been teaching at BSU since 2003. Lisa is a specialist in environmental history and served as a lead scholar in IHC's 2008 summer teacher institute "A Word for Nature": Exploring Environmental Literature." Lisa also served as IHC's consulting scholar and lecturer for the tour of the Smithsonian traveling exhibit "Between Fences," when it toured six Idaho communities in 2008-2009. Her book *War upon the Land: Nature and Warfare in the American Civil War* is forthcoming from the University of Georgia Press.



Marc Johnson (Boise) rejoins the IHC board as an At-Large member after a three-year hiatus. Johnson is President of Gallatin Public Affairs, a Pacific Northwest public affairs/relations management firm. Marc holds a degree in journalism from South Dakota State University. The former press secretary and Chief of Staff for Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus, Marc served earlier

as an IHC board member and as two-term Chair of the Council. He has lectured at IHC institutes for teachers and through IHC's Speakers Bureau. He also served as Chairman of the board of the national Federation of State Humanities Councils, advocating for the work of the 56 humanities councils in the states and territories. In early 2009, he offered Congressional committee testimony in support of funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities and the state councils.

Christopher Riggs (Lewiston) is an Associate Professor of history at Lewis-Clark State College. He fills a North Idaho Academic vacancy. Chris holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history from the University of Colorado and has been teaching at LCSC since 2001. He is a specialist in Native American history and has published extensively in his field. Over the years, he has participated in and served as a consultant for many IHC-funded humanities projects and programs, dealing with Native American history, the History of the American West, America in the 1960s, and the Vietnam War.



The IHC board is comprised of Academic, Public, and At-Large members representing all regions of the state (N, SW, and SE). Four members are appointed by the governor. Terms are three years, renewable once. Several members rotate off the board each fall as terms expire and new members are elected. The IHC board will fill several vacancies in the fall of 2010. ❖

IDAHO Humanities COUNCIL

Vol. XIV, No. 1, Winter 2010

Idaho Humanities is published three times a year by the Idaho Humanities Council

217 W. State Street
Boise, Idaho 83702
(208) 345-5346
Toll Free: (888) 345-5346
Fax: (208) 345-5347
www.idahohumanities.org

Board of Directors

Chair

Jeff Fox, Twin Falls

Vice Chair

Katherine Aiken, Moscow

Fran Bahr, Coeur d'Alene
Lisa Brady, Boise
Mindy Cameron, Sagle
Kathy Canfield-Davis, Coeur d'Alene
Trent Clark, Soda Springs
Terry Engebretsen, Pocatello
Vince Hannity, Boise
Christine Hatch, Idaho Falls
Alice Hennessey, Boise
Marc Johnson, Boise
David Lachiondo, Boise
Bert Marley, Boise
Kevin Marsh, Pocatello
Ann McCormack-Adams, Lapwai
Martin L. Peterson, Boise
Ron Pisaneschi, Boise
Christopher Riggs, Lewiston
Shelton Woods, Boise

Staff

Rick Ardinger

Executive Director

rick@idahohumanities.org

Cindy Wang

Grants and Fiscal Officer

cindy@idahohumanities.org

Jennifer Holley

Special Projects Coordinator

jennifer@idahohumanities.org

Wilma Bowler

Administrative Assistant

wilma@idahohumanities.org

The Idaho Humanities Council, a nonprofit organization, receives funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and from other foundations, private corporations, and individuals. IHC's mission is to increase the awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the humanities in Idaho. It accomplishes this through educational projects for the general public and various target audiences. The Council plans and conducts projects on its own and in concert with other organizations such as universities, colleges, libraries, civic clubs, professional associations, historical societies and museums, and other cultural, educational, and community entities. IHC also provides grant support for humanities projects throughout Idaho.

Opinions expressed in *Idaho Humanities* do not necessarily reflect views of the Idaho Humanities Council or the National Endowment for the Humanities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Idaho Humanites Council is to deepen understanding of human experience by connecting people with ideas.

before, perhaps taking two or three weeks to cover it in a college class, so this will be an entirely different sort of experience. We'll meet for an hour and a half or so, and after I've made a few sweeping statements about the Depression era setting, about Steinbeck, and about the novel's stature (published in 1939, it won a Pulitzer Prize in 1940), I'll introduce a few discussion questions to get the talk underway. If the group resembles most of those I've met with over the years, a couple of them will not have finished the novel—perhaps more than that. Maybe two or three will not like the novel, while two or three may think it's wonderful.

If we're dealing with an unfamiliar book like Robert M. Utley's *Billy the Kid: A Short and Violent Life*, as we were in Kellogg about five years ago, no one will have encountered it before, but a classic like

The Grapes of Wrath is likely

to have something of a track record with the group, and such is the case in Elk River this wintry night nearly seventeen years ago. Almost at once I hear protests to the effect that ours is a bowdlerized version of *The Grapes of Wrath*, a censored text, edited and cleaned up for

squeamish readers. Not so, I insist. At which point two of the ladies jump up and head through the icy night toward the small library a block or two away. They return a few minutes later, embarrassed to confess that indeed we're all reading a reliable text. What has thrown them off, and what works well as a prompt for further discussion, is that they remember having been quite disturbed with various events and some of the language in the novel when they read it as teenagers, thirty or forty years before.

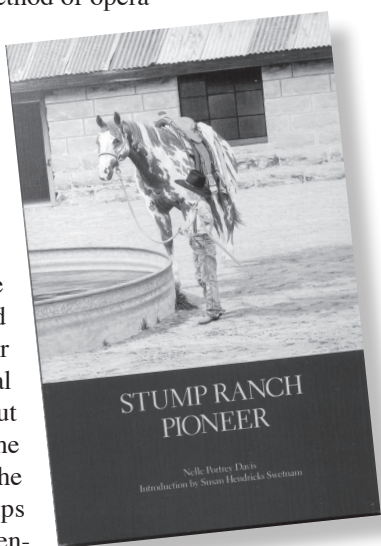
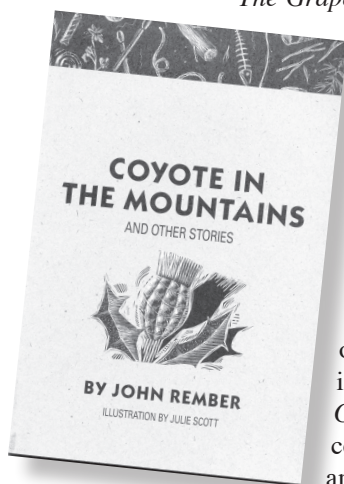
Over the twenty-odd years that I've worked as a presenter for LTAI, always under the supportive direction of Peggy McClendon, one of those people who simply should not ever be allowed to retire, I have made incursions into 23 Idaho towns, mostly here in the panhandle, and have surely worn out my welcome in Sandpoint, where I have imposed no fewer than fourteen times. I should either be given a key to the city, or ridden out of town on a rail. I have watched that group move from the lovely-but-cramped quarters of the old Carnegie building to their new, state-of-the-art digs, and I have been involved in significant changes in the method of operation.

Back in the 1980s, perhaps two dozen participants would show up and be divided into four or five breakout discussion groups. The presenter would open the affair with some general observations about the writer and the book, then visit the individual groups pretty much listening in and kibitzing; then the groups would reconvene and in the final fifteen minutes or so the presenter would sum up what he or she had overheard. Additional comments? Refreshments. Out the door.

And yes, refreshments do count, as much for the host group as for the visiting scholar. Who can forget the chocolate smorgasbord in Sandpoint for our discussion of Joanne Harris' *Chocolat* or the pastry feast in Nezperce for Diana Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava*? These books figure in the popular new theme, "We Are What We Eat."

Today virtually all of the discussion groups, most of which now average about 15 participants, prefer to meet as a committee-of-the-whole. With smaller groups it's easier to sit around in a circle or at a couple of tables. What? You've only read the first twenty pages of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*? That's okay.

(See LTAI, Page 4)



25 Years of Talking about Books and Ideas

Peggy McClendon
Let's Talk About It Coordinator (retired)
Idaho Commission for Libraries

The Idaho "Let's Talk About It" (LTAI) project is celebrating 25 years of bringing rural Idahoans and program scholars together to read and discuss books in public libraries. The project has been sustained through a partnership between the Idaho Commission for Libraries and the Idaho Humanities Council, with special funding from **US Bank** for the past dozen years. Thousands of participants, 275 program scholars, and 83 libraries have supported programs with their desire to read, connect, and grow. The project's 14 humanities-based "themes," focus on diverse topics, including Idaho literature, American classics, multicultural literature, aging, and the environment. Multiple copies of over 130 titles are part of the LTAI collection.



Betty Hoffman, new LTAI coordinator

When I was hired in 1985 to coordinate "Let's Talk About It," the Idaho State Library (now the Idaho Commission for Libraries or ICFL) had just received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to implement a pilot project in six southwestern Idaho libraries. The project planners wanted to create humanities-based programs for adults that could easily be replicated in rural Idaho communities and hosted by public libraries. Library programs for adults were scarce, and librarians had neither the time nor resources to develop such events. We thought then, as we do now, that once out of school, rural Idahoans have few continuing education opportunities, and cultural offerings were limited. The book club phenomenon was nascent in 1986, and a user-friendly interface for the Internet was still years away.

The success of the pilot project led to the establishment of a statewide project which has subsequently been funded by the Idaho Humanities Council, with the exception of a two-year grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities from 1990-92. Typically, 15 libraries participate each program year (September through May).

How it all began

The American Library Association (ALA) launched the nationwide "Let's Talk About It" program in 1982 with a \$1.5 million grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The program model developed from a book discussion group that began in the mid-1970s among friends in a small Vermont town. This was the cat-



Peggy McClendon

alyst for "Let's Talk About It," a national humanities program that would bring adults to the library to discuss books and to explore contemporary life and culture. LTAI participants read five books related to a single humanities theme and discussed

them under the guidance of a humanities scholar. Scholars play a central role in LTAI programs—they are the humanities link between the book and the reader. The LTAI model lifts informal discussions to a more rewarding level by introducing critical essays on the books and having the scholar help connect text, concepts, critique and scholarship.

In the past 25 years, the model has been adopted—and adapted—by hundreds of libraries across the country. LTAI has reached more than four million people around the United States.

Let's Talk About It comes to Idaho

In 1984, representatives from the Idaho State Library, the Association for Humanities in Idaho, and the Idaho Library Association attended national training and wrote a grant to fund a six-series pilot project in southwestern Idaho. I was hired to coordinate the pilot and write a grant to continue funding. The theme that was used—"Family"—focused on the contemporary American family since World War II.

In my tenure at the ICFL, I have had the pleasure to work with librarians across the state—from Bonners Ferry to Montpelier—and program scholars in Idaho, eastern Washington, and northern Utah who have dedicated themselves to taking their expertise in the humanities from the college campus to small town gatherings of friends and neighbors looking for an opportunity to expand their reading horizons. Both scholar and reader have been equally enriched by the experience.

A favorite quote that succinctly sums up the LTAI experience comes from a program participant, who said, "Hearing others' perspectives challenged me to think outside my 'box.'" LTAI has helped many readers "read outside the box" too. As I prepare to retire, I look back in appreciation for being a part of bringing over 460 series and 2,290 programs that provided intellectual stimulation and a sense of community to thousands of Idahoans who have participated. It is a legacy of words, ideas and fellowship that I hope continues for 25 more years. ❖

Saving McCall residents from the throes of cabin fever

After the deep dark of Winter Solstice, after the air takes on a sharp dry cold, Valley County residents still anticipate months before they can touch bare earth again. It is at this point in the year that McCall Public Library hosts the "Let's Talk About It" series. And over the years, I would credit this program for saving countless McCall residents from the throes of cabin fever.

"Let's Talk About It" is the only opportunity for our patrons to continue their quest for life-long learning and to connect with fellow citizens under the guidance of a visiting scholar. I have been honored to coordinate



McCall's programs, since for years—decades, to tell the truth—my own mother has been one of these visiting scholars, enjoying her discussions with readers around Idaho. She has passed on her love for reading with others to me, and "Let's Talk About It" has been the perfect venue for us to continue the tradition.

In the grocery store, at restaurants, walking down the street...for 10 months now, patrons have been asking me when the next program will be, what theme we will use, and who the visiting scholars will be. They have

not forgotten last year's program, and they are eager for more! ❖

Meg Lojek, Programs Librarian
McCall Public Library

LTAI
(Continued from Page 3)

Maybe you won't mind reading this paragraph on page 72. Thank you. On we go. It's mostly a mutual appreciation society: I liked this; I didn't like that. And this is why. Should our approach be more rigorously analytical, more intense? Shouldn't we mix it up a bit more, go ahead and offend each other from time to time? But then what of those who have not read "the assignment"? Some of them simply do not show up, but often those who have read only part of the book do come in. Their friends are there; it's a good chance to get out of the house, a cure for cabin fever in February.

Fortunately, in an odd way, I am accustomed to having students show up even in 400-level English literature classes unprepared (those would be junior and senior English majors), so I've learned how to roll with the punches. Especially when I was first performing as a presenter, my impulse was to give in to my egocentric urge to lecture. Why not? The folks in Mullan, or Grangeville, or Pierce seemed to enjoy it, and it was easy for me that way, so why not? The answer, of course, lies in that word "Let's." But then I can remember all too well those nights when it came off something like this: "Let's All Listen to ME ***Ron McFarland*** Talk About it." Two days later, when I'd write my report to Peggy McClendon, I'd find myself thinking in the confessional mode: "They paid attention very well. A wonderful time was had by me. Hurray for me."

Of course there are times when the one-man-show can hardly be avoided, like one evening in Orofino before that group got going really well. When my wife Georgia Tiffany (now also an LTAI presenter) visited there last March, we agreed that it was one of the best groups we'd ever encountered, right up there with the Priest River bunch. But this event occurred before that—when I was presenting James Welch's novel, *Fools Crow*, and it happens that I knew Welch pretty well, and had written and published commentaries on his work, and had taught this novel on at least a couple of occasions with some success. So I was loaded for bear. What did I *not* know about James Welch and this novel?

Well, what did it matter, since only four people showed up that evening, including the host, Chris Ashby, and my wife? Georgia had finished the novel, as had Chris, and one of the other two in attendance had nearly finished it. An elderly lady from the assisted living center where we met joined us just to listen in, but she hadn't read a word of the novel and appeared to be occupying a different mental space. We stalled for time. My wife plinked out a few tunes on the piano. Several folks from the center passed by, giving me brief false hopes, inasmuch as they did have books in hand, but I believe they were headed for a Bible study meeting. We began.

But no sooner did we begin than a youngish couple walked through the door and joined our group—a 50% increase in participation, just like that! But right away I noticed that their copy of *Fools Crow* had a different cover from ours, so I asked to have a look at it. It turned out that these nice folks had read a different *Fools Crow*. Their book was the nonfiction account of the life of a Sioux medicine man named Fools Crow, who died in 1989. Welch's novel concerns a Blackfeet leader, who also becomes a medicine man, but during the 1870s; it was published in 1986. Thomas E. Mails's *Fools Crow*, based on interviews conducted in the 1970s, was published in 1990. The couple decided to stay, though, and from time to time I would draw them into the discussion by asking such clever questions as, "Now, what do you think *your* Fools Crow

(See LTAI, Page 5)

LTAI: “I learned much more than I taught”

Jeff Fox, Chair
Idaho Humanities Council
LTAI “Road Scholar”

Let's Talk About It" is one of the most important programs the IHC provides, in my opinion. It reaches a committed and passionate population of readers and thinkers in our rural communities, and it gives those readers and those communities an opportunity to examine the human experience, the chance to look at the world through other eyes, and ultimately to reflect on our own lives, inspired as a result of the journey.

I first connected with the Idaho Humanities Council in the early 1990s when I was invited to be a scholar for LTAI. At the time, I had been in Idaho for only a few years, and so I welcomed the chance to take my passion for teaching literature and reading and discussion on the road to libraries around the Magic Valley. As a scholar for LTAI, I was honored to share my thoughts and then participate in rich and lively discussions of great and thought-provoking works.

One night, I was to lecture on a Sherman Alexie collection of short stories, many of which are riddled with what might be considered "inappropriate language." I admit to some trepidation when I walked into the library in Hansen and saw about ten women, all of whom had the look of "pillars of the community." I opened the evening



with an invitation to discuss Alexie's word choices, and what ensued was one of the best discussions of authorial choice, censorship, and artistic theory that I have ever experienced.

Another night in Wendell, I was prepared to speak on a book about pioneers in the Rocky Mountain West. The group of about 15 men and women, elders of the community, spoke their stories that night, stories of pioneering grandparents (and in some cases parents) who settled this land. Many had brought old journals and memorabilia of the forbearers. They verified fact in what we had read, added important human perspectives on the life and times of people they had known, people who could have written the book we discussed that night. There, we affirmed our humanity, proved once again that literature is a catalyst for an examination into the human condition.

There were many such nights over the years, and while the audiences and the libraries changed as I traveled to Wendell, Gooding, Hagerman, Jerome, Ketchum, Twin Falls, Hansen, and Filer, I learned much more than I taught, and I was enriched by these evenings, and I have always been thankful for the chance to make those human connections and promote the mission and vision of IHC by "deepening public understanding of human experience by connecting people with ideas." ♦

LTAI: “Fresh . . . shocking . . . incredibly moving perspectives to familiar books”

Susan H. Swetnam
Idaho State University
LTAI “Road Scholar”

How many 'Let's Talk About Its' have you done?" my doctoral student, Steven, asked last month as he considered his first.

Who knows? Twenty-five years' worth, but I haven't kept track. Maybe a hundred, a hundred and fifty. What I do remember is the year I led thirteen discussions, when scholars were in short supply.

Why? What's kept me, and what kept my late husband Ford, coming back for more, putting in all those freeway miles late at night in winter snows and autumn chills and nights plastered with blooming spring stars--nights when the real work of an early class at the university loomed dead ahead the next morning?

Because the people count on those sessions to stretch their minds, as evinced by nights like the one when Ford drove through a horrific blizzard to Challis to find much of the adult population waiting eagerly. As evinced by all the times I've been pinned over the punch and cookies by readers who didn't want the discussion to end, loving



their enthusiasm even as I yearned for the road.

Because those readers bring fresh, sometimes shocking, sometimes incredibly moving perspectives to familiar books. "Oh, my python does that," somebody told Ford in Idaho Falls regarding a work by Flannery O'Connor. In Chubbuck, when Yoshiko Uchida's *Desert Exile* was on the agenda, two dignified Japanese couples arrived ready to share their Idaho experiences during World War II. That night, we simply listened.

Because, when one of the books I wrote is up, the people want to pick my brain about the writing process, many asking because they have manuscripts under their beds or in their heads. Because I might do just a little toward helping at least a few of those books along.

Because of the librarians--those hard-working, dedicated, imaginative people who always remind me, especially when my own energy is flagging around mid-semester, what vocation means.

Especially Peggy. We'll all miss you. ♦

LTAI brings quality education to our rural area

Jean Elsaesser, Volunteer Coordinator
West Bonner County Libraries

The West Bonner Libraries in Priest River and Blanchard have enjoyed eight years of "Let's Talk About It" programs. Our first program was held in the fall of 2000 when we were working on establishing a library district in the area. Our meetings took place at Panhandle State Bank, our community sponsor. There was a large turnout for the "Tough Paradise: The Literature of Idaho" series, and the program had a positive effect on our efforts to become a library district.

This program is fun. The scholars are the

greatest. People enjoy the interaction with the scholars. They bring so much to the discussion and add background and depth to the readings.

"Let's Talk About It" also has been the impetus for the formation of other "BookTalks" at each branch. The discussion groups often turn to the Idaho Commission for Libraries for books from the LTAI series. It's a great resource for them. The diversity of the series is wonderful. The Lewis and Clark series was fascinating with both Allen Pinkham from the Nez Perce tribe and Jack Nisbet, author of *Mapmaker's Eye*.

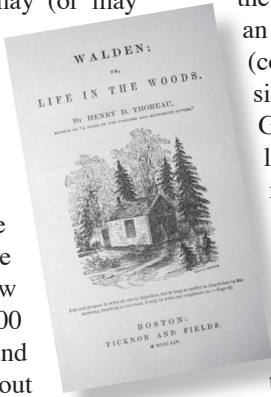
There are still more series to enjoy, many more books to read within each series, many more patrons who haven't yet had a chance to participate. This program brings quality education to our rural area and allows people to interact and enjoy the company and diverse opinions of others in the community. LTAI continues to foster support for our libraries. We truly appreciate the efforts of the Idaho Humanities Council, **US Bancorp**, the Idaho Commission for Libraries and our local sponsor, Panhandle State Bank, to bring entertainment and education to the adults in our area. ♦

might have had to say about this?”

Certain features of the “Let’s Talk About It” program have become constants and may (or may not) prove to be instructive. The demographics of the participants, as I have seen them, would look something like this: 80% or more female, average age over 50, white, middle class, and distinctively, definitively small-town. The largest cities I have visited two or more times are Moscow and Coeur d’Alene; the resort town of Sandpoint’s population now reaches to about 8,000 (it was around 5,500 in 1990); Bonners Ferry, Grangeville, and Orofino boast populations between about 2,500 and 3,500; at least a half-dozen of the towns I have visited list populations under a thousand residents, with Elk River being the smallest at 150 or so (Weippe follows at around 370).

Although I have given presentations in Orofino and Weippe when nearly half the group has been male, most of the LTAI sessions I’ve been involved with tend to support the demographic stereotype that women are the readers in the family or in the community. Sometimes, teasingly, I’ll ask, “Where’re all the guys?” The usual answers: “My husband doesn’t read much (except the newspapers—sometimes).” “My husband only likes nonfiction books.” “My husband only reads stuff like Tom Clancy or sci-fi.”

So, should we create a sort of “For Men Only” theme? Peggy McClendon and I have talked about this guy-theme idea off and on, but I’m inclined to agree with her that it would be risky. It might be fun to try, though.



A similar question might apply to one other major piece of the demographic puzzle: the age thing. With the almost famous exception of “that time when” an English teacher at Sandpoint High invited (coerced?) his class to attend the LTAI session on Emily Dickinson, for which my wife Georgia was the presenter, youth has remained largely unresponsive to the program. And this might suggest that the future of the program is in jeopardy. To bring in more young participants, whether teenagers or under-thirties: well, to appropriate the bard, it’s a consummation devoutly to be wished. The why may be obvious enough, but how? Serve pizza, one is tempted to say; give them extra credit for this or that class; make it “a couples thing”...

Surely the manifest premise of “Let’s Talk About It” is that we Americans need to be reading more, and one way of achieving that end is to arrange book discussion groups at the community level. The local library seems an obvious enough venue, but sometimes the librarian must feel like a cashier at Safeway on Saturday—slammed. She or he may have little or nothing in the way of personal time or resources to sustain the existing group of participants, let alone to build a new kind of base for the program. Moreover, I suspect that LTAI nourishes a latent premise of sorts: the desire to advance the appreciation of (God help me for saying this) “good literature,” or at least “good writing.”



Those of us who have been involved in the program over the years, or even just a year or two, have participated in or witnessed the expansion of themes and book titles in an effort to broaden audiences, encompassing everything from “Lewis and Clark” (mostly nonfiction) and “The Western Experience” (mostly fiction) to “Our Earth, Our Ethics” (mostly nonfiction) and “American Characters” (mostly fiction). Popular themes include “Family,” and “Working” and “Living in the Modern Rural West.” The theme that I’ve had high hopes for, thinking of how readers might want to expand their world—not focus on the West, rural or otherwise—is called “Across Cultures and Continents,” featuring mostly fiction from China, India, Nigeria, Cuba—the four corners of the world, so to speak. We are often too insular, too comfortably parochial, and we should encourage each other to expand our horizons. Maybe we should do as my father’s Rotary Club used to: each one bring one; that is, each member bring a friend to the next meeting.

Both my wife and I remain excited about “Let’s Talk About It.” The program has played an important role in my life as a teacher, reader, and thinker. I’m looking forward to that seventieth foray into the next small town, the next reading group, the next book. My Google search doesn’t even show a population for the town I’m about to visit: Blanchard, Idaho, population . . . ♦

Ron McFarland has taught literature and creative writing at the University of Idaho since 1970. He is a former Idaho Writer-in-Residence. His latest book, *The Rockies in First Person*, is a critical study of regional memoir (2008).

GRANTS
(Continued from Page 1)

ISU Reading Project encourages students and community members to read the same book, and offers opportunities for discussion among ISU students and the community. Activities will begin in November and continue through February. **Bonnie Frantz** is the project director.

The University of Idaho (Moscow) received **\$1,750** to help fund the eighth annual Native American Film Festival, titled *Sapatq’ayn Cinema*. The festival will be held at Moscow’s Kenworthy Theater on March 26-27, 2010. The festival helps facilitate dialogue on issues of history, race, and contemporary Indian and American life. The films are primarily written, directed, and acted by Native Americans. The opening evening will feature a drum song welcome and remarks by Nez Perce Elder Horace Axtell. The project director is **Janis Johnson**.

The University of Idaho School of Journalism and Mass Media (Moscow) was awarded **\$5,668** to develop and professionally videotape a Readers Theatre presentation exploring the history of court cases surrounding freedom of the press. The public program scheduled for Constitution Day, September 17, 2010, will be a dramatization of five key events in history, using word-for-word excerpts from cases tried in the U.S. Supreme Court. The program will highlight the relationship between freedom of expression and a democratic society. It will be recorded and a free DVD will be made available to teachers for classroom use. **Dinah Zeiger** is the project director.

The Wallace District Mining Museum (Wallace) received **\$4,500** to help digitize its collection of artifacts, photographs, and historical paper ephemera related to the mining history of the Silver Valley. The museum is entering the second year of a four-year project to electronically catalog the collection. The main goals of this automation project are to improve collections management, expand accessibility, and improve interpretation. The project director is **Jim McReynolds**.



Idaho Public Television (Statewide) received **\$12,300** to help support statewide broadcast of the 22nd season of the *American Experience* series. This award-winning series will feature new shows this

season, including eight new documentaries on the life of Dolly Madison, the beginnings of the modern environmental movement, the stories of James Earl Ray and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the “Triangle Fire” (the largest industrial disaster in American history), the life of Wyatt Earp, the conflicts among early American dinosaur paleontologists, the history of the American whaling industry, and the WW II bombing campaign against Germany. Five programs examining the 1930s also will be re-aired. The project director is **Penny Traylor**.

The Provo Theatre Company (Provo, Utah) was awarded **\$3,000** to complete a documentary film tentatively titled “Moscow Classics.” The film focuses on Professor Louis Perraud, a recently retired Classics professor at the University of Idaho. Perraud was the university’s last remaining Classics professor, and after he retired in 2008, the Classics major was discontinued. While the film focuses on Perraud as a gifted teacher, it also explores the decline of education in the Classics throughout the U.S. The film is expected to be completed in early 2010. **Craig Harline** is the project director.

The National Oregon/California Trail Center (Montpelier) was awarded **\$3,000** to help support a Heritage Festival to take place in July of 2010 in conjunction with the Smithsonian *Journey Stories* exhibition. The Center is one of six locations in Idaho hosting the traveling exhibition. Festival events will include historical exhibits, film and photography displays, hands-on workshops, lectures and local history projects. **Becky Smith** is the project director.

The Institute for Pacific Northwest Studies at the University of Idaho (Moscow) was awarded **\$2,500** to help support publication of a book exploring Idaho history and culture entitled *Idaho’s Place: Rethinking the Gem State*. The book features essays, photographs, and oral histories that offer “scholarly investigation as well as popular understanding” of Idaho history within the broader context and geography of the Pacific Northwest. Featuring essays by some of Idaho’s best historians, the book is expected to be released by the University of Washington Press in 2010. **Adam Sowards** is the editor and project director.

The Basque Museum (Boise) received **\$6,500** to help develop a major new exhibit entitled “Hidden in Plain Sight: The Basques” that will be on display at Ellis Island and at the Boise Museum in 2010. The exhibit will showcase Basque culture, origins,

language, immigration changes, and the history of the Basque people and their place in America. The exhibit is scheduled to debut at Ellis Island on February 1, 2010 – April 30, 2010, and will be in Boise thereafter for the next couple of years, including during Jaialdi: International Basque Cultural Festival in July 2010. **Patty Miller** is the project director.

Kootenai-Shoshone Area Libraries (Hayden) received **\$3,988** to bring independent actor, Melinda Strobel, to Idaho for a tour of a new one-woman show titled *Western Women: Pioneers and Prostitutes*. Beginning February 22, 2010, in Coeur d’Alene, the show will tour to public libraries in Moscow, Post Falls, Pinehurst, Sandpoint, and end in Bonners Ferry on March 1. It will explore the lives of five pioneer women, Dr. Bethenia Owens-Adair, Oregon’s first woman doctor; Mathilde Schroeder, who homesteaded a ranch near Keuterville, Idaho; Sister Loyola, one of six nuns from Belgium to begin a boarding school for the daughters of trappers in Oregon; Molly b’Dam, a prostitute in Murray, Idaho; and Charley Parkhurst, a woman stagecoach driver in California. **Melinda Strobel** is the project director.

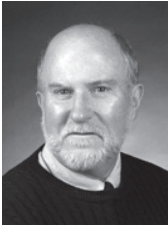
RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

The IHC board awarded five Research Fellowships to Idaho scholars. The board awards a limited number of Research Fellowships once a year to assist humanities scholars in major research for articles, books, and other scholarly efforts.

Keith Petersen, Idaho’s State Historian (**Moscow**), received **\$3,500** to complete a biography of U.S. Army Captain John Mullan (1830-1909), who led the crew in the 1860s that built the Mullan Military Road across northern Idaho, the first engineered highway in the west, stretching more than 600 miles from Walla Walla to Fort Benton, Montana. The road became the corridor for the first telegraph line in North Idaho, the Northern Pacific Railroad, Highway 10, and later Interstate 90.



Ron Hatzenbuehler, Idaho State University History Professor (**Pocatello**), received **\$3,500** to complete a book-length comparative study of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. Hatzenbuehler states that while there are numerous



(See GRANTS, Page 6)

GRANTS
(Continued from Page 5)

studies of each American political icon, there are surprisingly few comparative studies. He plans his book-length comparative study of their positions on race, federalism, citizenship, the power of the presidency, and more to be accessible to the general public.

Cheryl Hindrichs, Boise State University Assistant Professor of English (**Boise**), was awarded **\$3,500** to complete a book on late modernism in literature, particularly the works of three major writers, American poet Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), British novelist Virginia Woolf, and German critic Walter Benjamin, who developed the poetics of high modernism. She argues that between 1920 and 1940, writing style and innovation was influenced by social, economic, and political tensions, shifting classes, new technologies, gender ideologies, and more. Her goal would be to complete a book about how writers used forms from other arts (music, painting, and cinema) in their writing to respond to the culture of their time.



Leslie Durham, Boise State University Associate Professor of Theater Arts (**Boise**), received **\$3,500** to complete a book about the difficulty women playwrights confront in getting their plays performed on American stages. Though a number of contemporary women playwrights have won some of the highest awards for their plays, Durham demonstrates statistically how extremely difficult it has been for women playwrights to have their plays performed. Despite public protests on and off Broadway decrying the injustice of this fact, in 2008, fewer than a fifth of the plays performed were written by women.



Erika Kuhlman, Associate Professor of history at Idaho State University (**Pocatello**), was awarded **\$3,500** to complete a book on the history of widows and widowhood, fallen soldiers, their relationship to each other, and to the nation's war memories after WW I. In a book about the aftermath of the Great War, Kuhlman explores not just the stories of the immense number of fallen soldiers, but of the culture of grief, the wives and children left to survive without husbands and fathers, the culture of memory, and how nations chose to grieve and honor the fallen soldiers. Kuhlman will explore not just widowhood among Americans, but of other countries as well. Her aim is to argue against the notion that the battle front and home fronts during the war were somehow entirely separate from one another.



TEACHER INCENTIVE GRANTS

The IHC awards grants of up to \$1,000 twice a year to K-12 teachers and educational organizations to enhance teaching of the humanities in the classroom.

Susan Stagliano, a teacher at Valley View Early Childhood Center (**Bonn timer s Ferry**), received **\$1,000** for several activities related to the Human Rights activities conducted by the school district in collaboration with the Boundary County Task Force. Included in the project are guest speakers, an essay contest, and a field trip to the museum at North Idaho College. Stagliano hopes to teach students about civic engagement and active citizenship. The programs will provide opportunities for creative humanities education in an under-served and educationally under-funded area of the state.

Lynn Maciosek and Marilyn Mangum, teachers from Pinehurst Elementary School (**Pinehurst**), were awarded **\$1,000** to conduct four evening workshops focusing on the cultures of four different countries throughout the school year. The workshops will be open to students and their families and will feature music, art/craft, literature, drama, and games from each country. The four countries to be examined are Africa, Russia, Australia, and China. The teachers have integrated literature in their classroom and plan to use this opportunity to expand the information to a larger community audience.

The Garden City Library (Garden City) was awarded **\$1,000** to support their "Bells for Books" program, a mobile literacy project to bring the library to neighborhoods where residents would not have the opportunity to come to the library, specifically serving low-income and non-English-speaking families and at-risk students.

Douglas StanWiens, Timberline High School teacher (**Boise**), received **\$952** for "The Boise Architecture Project," an on-going award-winning program for advanced placement history courses and history club members. The main program is a website with posted photos and short summaries of Boise's historic buildings. It has existed for about four years and has documented over 150 buildings. This year they plan to document about 50 more buildings. The project goals are for students to learn local history, appreciate different architectural styles, and contribute their research to the community. This year they will also expand the project to include a third-grade collaboration with Collister Elementary School.

Madelaine Love, English and History teacher at Skyline High School (**Idaho Falls**), was awarded **\$500** to help support the Field Science/English class, incorporating Senior English research and writing with laboratory science classes. The paper is the required senior research paper. Students may write on any subject dealing with Idaho and the environment. The students share their work with parents and also are involved in a Museum of Idaho contest.

Sandra Gray, Washington Elementary teacher (**Pocatello**), received **\$1,000** to bring author Gary Hogg to the school for a one-day workshop on writing. Hogg will present an all-school assembly, conduct grade-level writing workshops to each class, and then present a workshop to teachers. The program will also include an ISU student working in the classroom with students on writing skills, and a workshop on new writing skills presented by ISU professor Janice Klug.



PICTURING AMERICA GRANTS

The National Endowment for the Humanities awarded several Idaho libraries the *Picturing America* package of 40 large, high-quality reproductions of selected American masterpieces. These pictures allow citizens to learn about history and culture in a fresh way. They help introduce library patrons to their artistic heritage, and provide an opportunity for them to gain a deeper appreciation for American history. The Idaho Humanities Council awarded six grants for library programs exploring aspects of these masterpieces.

American Falls District Library (American Falls) received **\$500** to support a special Veteran's Day commemoration, featuring a scholar lecture and an essay contest. **Harriet Newlin** is the project director.

Burley Public Library (Burley) was awarded **\$500** for a presentation by Idaho State University Political Science Professor David Adler on the Bill of Rights. **Valerie Bame** is the project director.

Jerome Public Library (Jerome) received **\$650** for both student and adult art classes incorporating several historical photographs from the sets, and the methods of producing the art depicted in the pictures. The project director is **Laura Burnett**.

The Blackfoot Charter Community Learning Center (Blackfoot) was awarded **\$500** to support classes on Native American history, a day-long program presented by Brenda Honena on local Native American traditions, and a "finger feast" held just before Thanksgiving. **Shirley Virgin** is the project director.

The Coeur d'Alene Public Library (Coeur d'Alene) received **\$1,000** to help support a program titled "Fiber & Fabric: Art Born of Necessity." They will host an exhibit of locally crafted quilts, knitting and weaving in November, will have a demonstration day with hands-on introductions to these crafts, and will feature a guest speaker, Idaho State University Art Professor Rudy Kovacs. **David Townsend** is the

project director.

Hayden Library (Hayden) received **\$1,800** to help support the first three speaker presentations in an eight month series from October 2009 through June 2010. Joanne Klein, Boise State University History Professor, will present "The Murder Mysteries' View of British History," addressing racism and anti-Semitic views in literature. William Johnson, retired Professor of English at Lewis-Clark State College, will present "Thoreau: Wilderness and the Wild," exploring the art of wilderness and the role of nature in our daily lives. Janet Worthington, an adjunct English Professor at Boise State University, will present an historical portrayal of Louisa May Alcott and discuss the stories woven into quilts, their historical significance and ties that connect a community. **Karen Yother** is the project director.

PLANNING GRANTS

Planning grants are awarded at any time to assist sponsors in planning and developing projects.

The University of Idaho (Moscow) received **\$1,000** to support research and planning of a UI History Week for high school teachers. The project director is **Ian Chambers**.

Idaho State University (Pocatello) received **\$1,000** to support planning meetings and two "pilot" community presentations in American Falls and Lava Hot Springs for the "Big Read" project, which encourages communities to read and discuss the same literary works. The project director is **Sherri Dienstfrey**.

Rathdrum/Westwood Historical Society (Rathdrum) was awarded **\$1,000** to support a planning meeting with several consultants to develop an interpretive plan for renovating the old Kootenai County jail and the annex near it as a museum with historical displays and research space. **Ellen Larsen** is the project director.

Cassia County Museum (Burley) received **\$1,000** to support scholar consultants Keith Petersen, Mary Reed, and Tom Blanchard in setting long-range goals to enhance interpretation of the museum's collections. **Valerie Bowen** is the project director.

Folksinger Rosalie Sorrels (Boise) was awarded **\$1,000** to support preparation of a booklet to accompany an album of traditional and regional folk music. The booklet will provide extensive interpretive information about the history and stories behind the music on the recording. **Sorrels** is the project director.

Trailing of the Sheep Festival (Hailey) was awarded **\$1,000** to support planning for an archival project that will assemble 13 years of the recorded histories, stories and traditional accounts of sheep life around Idaho and the west. The planning team will include Western Folklife Center scholars. The project director is **Mary Austin**.

Ana Maria Schachtell (Boise) received **\$750** to support creation of a CD based on the books *Latinos in Idaho* and *Jesus Urquides: Idaho's Premier Muleteer*. Alicia Garza, Kathy Hodges, and Maria Carmen Gambliel will serve as consultants. The ultimate goal will be a workshop on corridos (storytelling through music), with the students and local musicians creating a series of corridos about Hispanic historical figures over the past 150 years. The project director is **Ana Maria Schachtell**. ❖

**THE NEXT DEADLINES
FOR IHC GRANTS**

The next deadlines for Idaho Humanities Council grant proposals are **January 15 and September 15, 2010**. IHC strongly recommends that prospective applicants contact staff to discuss their project ideas before writing their proposals. Applicants also are strongly encouraged to submit a rough draft of their proposal for staff critique several weeks before the deadline. Grant guidelines and application forms, as well as information about IHC grants and activities, are available on IHC's website at www.idahohumanities.org, or by calling 208-345-5346.

Largest audience ever heard Timothy Egan in Coeur d'Alene

National Book Award-winner Timothy Egan, author of *The Big Burn: Teddy Roosevelt and the Fire That Saved America*, gave the 6th Annual Northern Idaho Distinguished Humanities Lecture in early October at the Coeur d'Alene Resort to the largest audience in six years in Coeur d'Alene—more than 400.

Earlier in the day, Egan also spoke to 350 students at Coeur d'Alene High School. Prior to speaking at the Resort, Egan greeted more than 150 Benefactors at the beautiful home of **Denny Davis and Kathy Canfield-Davis**, sponsored by the **Hagadone Corporation**.

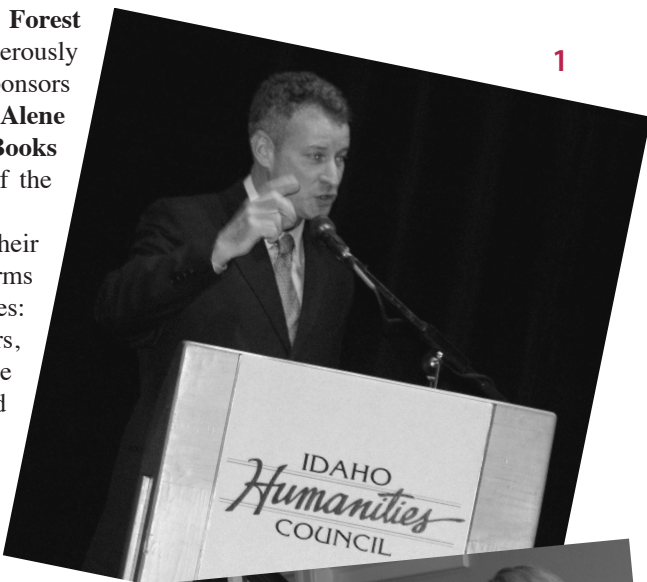
Enormous thanks goes to longtime

supporter Mark Brinkmeyer and the **Idaho Forest Group** and to **North Idaho Title** for generously sponsoring the evening. IHC thanks media sponsors **Idaho Public Television** and the **Coeur d'Alene Press** for promoting the event, and **Borders Books** for facilitating books sales (with a portion of the sales going to support IHC programming).

The IHC is grateful to Benefactors for their added generosity, including the following firms and individuals that purchased BenefactorTables: North Idaho College, Gallatin Public Affairs, Idaho Forest Group, North Idaho Title, Hagadone Corporation, Witherspoon Kelley, Virginia and Graydon Johnson, Intermix Networks, Joe and Lynn Morris, Coeur d'Alene Press, Idaho Public Television, and Scott and Mary Lou Reed.

Thank you also to Martin Wells and Susan Briehl, Gary Williams and Joy Passanante, Emily Duvall, Fran Bahr, David and Jan Moseley, Joe and Sharon Lind, Sid and Kathy Smith and Dean and Cindy Haagenson for the student scholarship donations.

We thank IHC's northern Idaho board members, **Kathy Canfield Davis, Mindy Cameron, and Fran Bahr**, and the planning committee: **Virginia Johnson, Ginny DeLong, Cindy Haagenson, Nancy Flagan, Fay Sweney, Judy Meyer, Katie Sayler and JoAnn Nelson**, whose dedication to the humanities in their community made this evening possible. Lastly, tremendous thanks to **Karen Yother** for her instrumental assistance in helping to arrange, plan, and coordinate this event. ❖



MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:



Photos courtesy Donnel Schmidt.

- 1 – *The Big Burn* author Timothy Egan speaks to a sold-out crowd at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.
- 2 – Benefactor Reception hosts Denny Davis (L) and Kathy Canfield-Davis pose with Timothy Egan.
- 3 – Timothy Egan passes a signed book back to a patron.
- 4 – Author Timothy Egan signs a book for a student at Coeur d'Alene High School.

Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer spoke to more than 600 in Boise

Abraham Lincoln historian Harold Holzer gave the 13th Annual Distinguished Humanities Lecture in late-October in Boise to more than 600 people. Holzer's talk "Why Lincoln Still Matters" was well received by a loyal following of IHC supporters.

Earlier in the day Holzer was interviewed for Idaho Public Television's *Dialogue* program and attended a Benefactors Reception at the

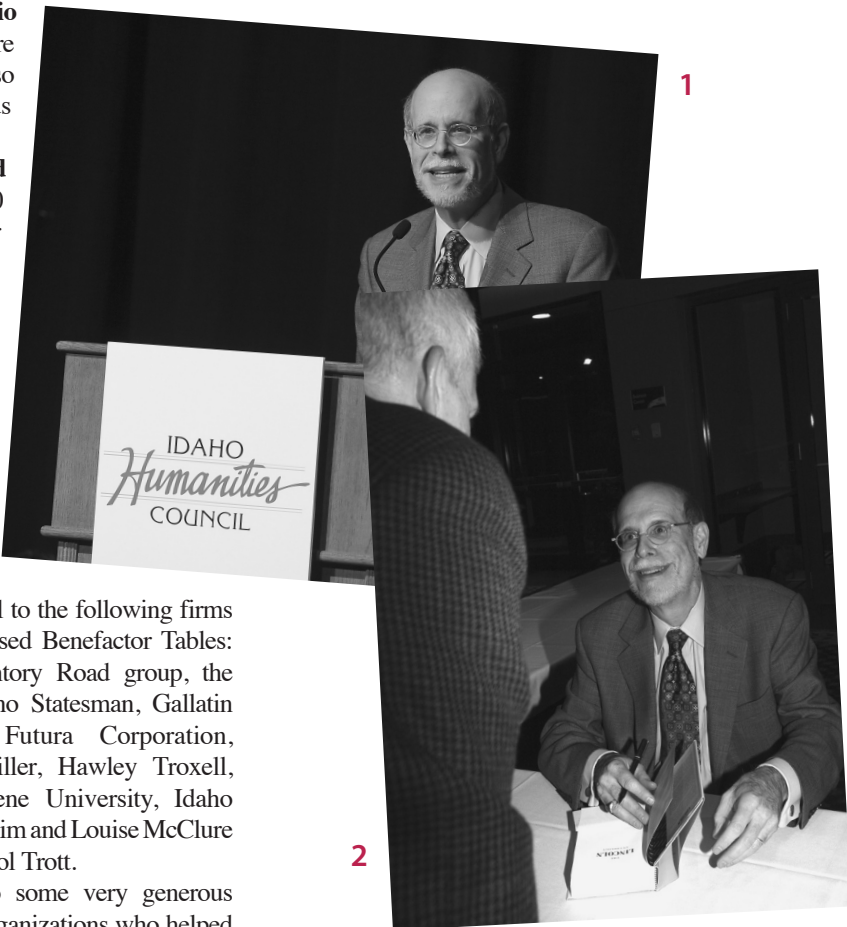
Statesman, Boise State Radio and **Idaho Public Television** were invaluable partners. **Hotel 43** also generously donated a gorgeous suite for Mr. Holzer.

Brent and Carol Lloyd opened their lovely home to 200 Benefactors for a pre-dinner reception. The reception was generously supported by the **Boise Co-op and Jim Wisner**. An additional thank you goes to Laura Jonio and Barnes & Noble for facilitating book sales, with part of the proceeds going to support IHC programming.

The IHC also is grateful to the following firms and individuals that purchased Benefactor Tables: Holland and Hart, Promontory Road group, the College of Idaho, The Idaho Statesman, Gallatin Public Affairs, Futura Corporation, McDevitt and Miller, Hawley Troxell, Northwest Nazarene University, Idaho Public Television, Jim and Louise McClure and Steve and Carol Trott.

Thank you to some very generous individuals and organizations who helped share the evening with area students through their donations to the student scholarship fund: Jake and Alice Forsythe, William and Judith Collins, Futura Corporation, Idaho Power Foundation, Sarah Churchill, Lane Williams, Judy Bloom, Fran Bahr, Paul and Peggy Street, Judy Austin and Don Bott, Paul March, Steve and Marsha Smylie, Sisti and Rory O'Connor, Tom and Alice Hennessey, Chuck Guilford, Michael Faison, and Mike and Penny Barrowcliff.

Finally, tremendous thanks to the event volunteers including Pam Fonshill, Kate Riley, Mark and Julie Baltes, Spence Holley, Phyllis Ward, and Linda Perkins. ❖



MADE POSSIBLE BY CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:



Photos courtesy of the Visual Media Group

- 1 – Lincoln historian Harold Holzer speaks at the 13th Annual Distinguished Humanities Lecture in Boise.
- 2 – Harold Holzer signs a book and speaks to a patron at the Barnes and Noble table.
- 3 – (L-R) IHC Chairman Ron Pisaneschi, Carol Lloyd, Harold Holzer and Brent Lloyd pose for a photo at the Benefactor Reception.
- 4 – (L-R) Sharon Price, Carole McWilliam, Joan O'Neill and Park Price enjoy the Benefactor Reception.

beautiful foothills home of **Brent and Carol Lloyd**.

The IHC thanks its underwriters for helping make a very successful evening. Thank you to the **OfficeMax Boise Community Fund** for generously sponsoring the evening. In addition, IHC's media sponsors **The Idaho**

Have dinner with Award-winning historian and teacher Elliott West in Idaho Falls on April 22

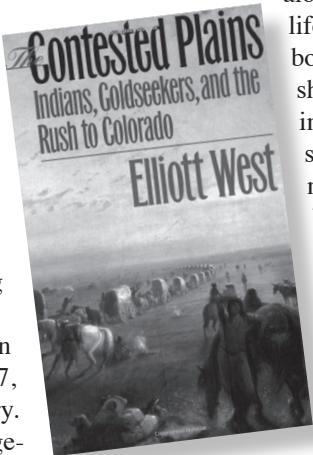
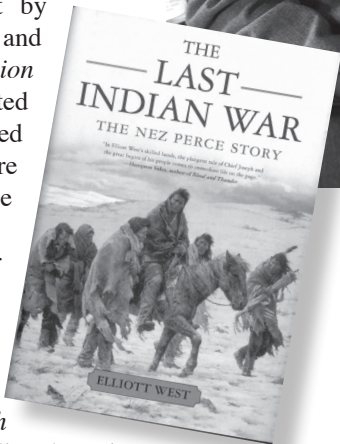
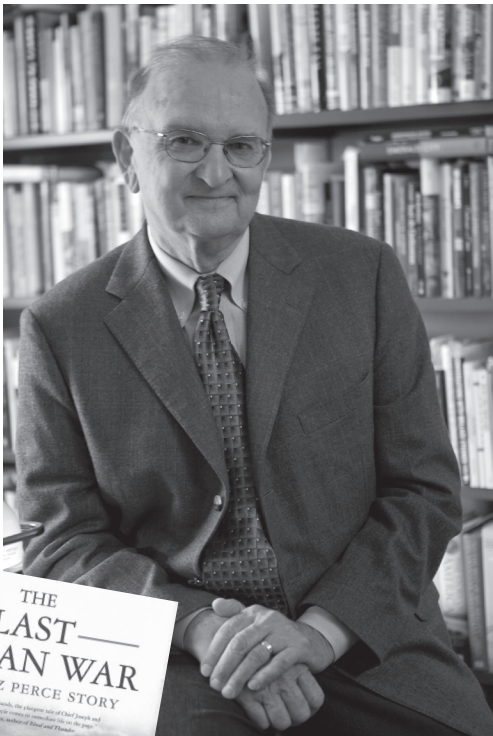
Historian Elliott West, author of many award-winning books about the history of the American West, including *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (Oxford University Press, 2009), will be the guest speaker at the IHC's 3rd Annual Eastern Idaho Distinguished Humanities Lecture and Dinner on Thursday evening, April 22, at University Place in Idaho Falls. Tickets will go on sale soon on IHC's website at www.idahohumanities.org or by calling (888) 345-5346.

The event so far also is sponsored in part by the *Post-Register*, and *Idaho Public Television* which have supported IHC's Distinguished Humanities Lecture in Idaho Falls since the beginning.

A professor of history at the University of Arkansas, West is also the author of *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far-Western Frontier* (1989); *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (1995), which received the Western Heritage Award; and *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (1998). The latter book received five awards including the PEN Center Award.

Recognized for his exemplary teaching as well as his scholarship, West has been recognized by his university and by the Carnegie Foundation for outstanding teaching, and currently is one of three national finalists to be recognized in 2010 as the best college teacher in America. A contender for the Cherry Award, West is in the running to receive a \$200,000 prize sponsored by Baylor University for inspiring classroom teaching.

West's latest book, *The Last Indian War* is an unforgettable portrait of the Nez Perce War of 1877, the last great Indian conflict in American history. It was, as West shows, a tale of courage and ingenuity, of desperate struggle and shattered hope, of short-sighted government action and a doomed flight



to freedom. To tell the story, West begins with the early history of the Nez Perce and their years of friendly relations with white settlers. In an initial treaty, the Nez Perce were promised a large part of their ancestral homeland, but the discovery of gold led to a stampede of settlement within the Nez Perce land.

Numerous injustices at the hands of the U.S. government combined with the settlers' invasion to provoke this most accommodating of tribes to war.

Having researched government, military records, and contemporary interviews, West offers a riveting account of the flight of 800 Nez Perce, including many women, children, and elderly, across 1500 miles of mountainous terrain. He gives a full account of the battles--and the unexpected turns, brilliant stratagems, and heroism that occurred

along the way. And he brings to life the complex characters from both sides of the conflict. The book sheds light on the war's legacy, including Chief Joseph, whose speech of surrender, "I will fight no more forever," became as celebrated as the Gettysburg Address. West's presentation will be the third annual East Idaho Distinguished Humanities Lecture in Idaho Falls. Past speakers have included presidential historian and biographer Robert Dallek (2008), and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (2009), author of *the Midwife's Tale*

IHC's Distinguished Humanities Lecture & Dinner with Elliot West 7:00 p.m., Thursday, April 22, 2010, University Place Bennion Student Union, Idaho Falls

Name _____ Telephone (____) _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
_____ Benefactor Tickets @ \$70/ person
_____ Benefactor Tables for 7 @ \$490
_____ Attending Benefactors Reception
_____ General Tickets @ \$35/person
_____ General Tables for 7 @ \$245
_____ Vegetarian Meals (include name of guest)
_____ Donation for student scholarship tickets

Paying \$ _____ by check. Make checks payable to: Idaho Humanities Council
Charge \$ _____ to my credit card:
☐ Visa
☐ Mastercard
☐ American Express
Card # _____ Exp. Date _____
Please print name as it appears on the card _____
Signature _____
☐ I am unable to attend, but enclosed is my donation to the IHC \$ _____

If purchasing a table, please attach a sheet with names of guests. Otherwise, their tickets will be held under your name at the door.

If paying by credit card, you may use this form and fax it to (208) 345-5347. Reservations will be made upon receipt of payment. All reservations will be confirmed by letter. Tickets will not be sent, and table designations will be available at the door. If you are supporting student scholarships to attend, you will receive a special acknowledgement letter and recognition from IHC at the dinner. Idaho civics teachers are working with the IHC to identify scholarship recipients. For more information, call (888) 345-5346.

Please clip and complete this form
and return it to:
Idaho Humanities Council
217 W. State St., Boise, ID 83702



and *Well-behaved Women Seldom Make History*. The IHC hopes the annual lecture will become a signature cultural event for residents of Idaho Falls and the surrounding area.

For more information about the dinner and lecture, contact the Idaho Humanities Council at (888) 345-5346; or purchase tickets online at www.idahohumanities.org. ♦

IHC releases unique CD of historical Idaho songs

The Idaho Humanities Council announces the release of *The Idaho Songbag*, a CD of more than two dozen historically based songs inspired by Idaho people, places, and events from the mid-19th century to the present. Performed by musicians as diverse as folk music icon Pete Seeger to Salmon River loner "Dugout Dick" Zimmerman, *The Idaho Songbag* features songs about mining, murder, labor disputes, politics, protests, and cowboy laments, and comes with an illustrated 72-page booklet of lyrics and stories behind the songs.



Nampa musician Gary Eller gathered the historically based songs from a variety of sources for *The Idaho Songbag* as part of his ongoing Idaho Songs Project.

The CD selections are the work of Nampa resident and "song catcher" Gary Eller, who several years ago began traveling around the state, thanks to an IHC grant, to search archives large and small, scour the internet, meet with musicians in public "song swaps," and gather recordings of musicians both well known and unknown who have either written original music or passed along old songs they've learned from others. *The Idaho Songbag* is a compilation of polished

studio recordings, wax cylinder, reel-to-reel, and cassette recordings, and more recent field recordings of musicians performing songs in their kitchens and living rooms.

"It's a work of historical preservation in the tradition of Alan Lomax to gather this sampler of music unique to Idaho," says Rick Ardinger, Executive Director of the Idaho Humanities Council. "It's a labor of love for Gary, who came to the IHC with a proposal to travel the state in search of Idaho's musical heritage--and one song has led to another."

So far, Eller has gathered more than 1,000 Idaho songs.

Inspired by Idaho folksinger Rosalie Sorrels' songbook *Way Out in Idaho* (1991), published for Idaho's statehood centennial a generation ago, Eller met with Sorrels, recorded himself singing several songs from her out-of-print book, and found hundreds more obscure and little known songs he has recorded for the first time.

"This is not a CD featuring Idaho's best-known musicians," Eller says. "That's really not its purpose. With a couple of exceptions, most featured on *The Idaho Songbag* are not professional musicians. The



project is about the content of some historically based songs you won't find elsewhere, not so much about who performs them."

Two exceptions are recordings by folk icon Pete Seeger, singing a song he wrote in the 1970s protesting further dam development in Hells Canyon, and beloved Idaho songwriter Pinto Bennett, who performs a song based on a story told to him by his own grandfather about

a revenge-killing, Basque Country fugitive who settled near Mountain Home during the Great Depression.

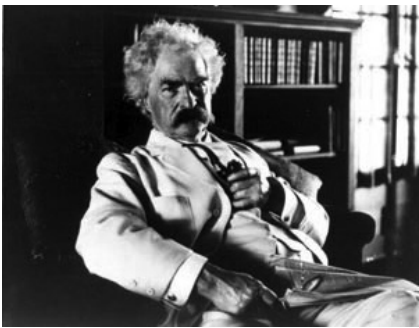
Idaho City's Beth Wilson, for example, sings a song that was first published in the *Idaho World* newspaper in the 1880s. Fellow Idaho City musician John Thomsen performs a humorous song he wrote about nuclear potatoes. St. Maries musician Earl Gleason sings a song of labor woes in north Idaho logging camps. Givens Hot Springs musician John Larsen sings a catchy autobiographical tune written by an inmate of the Old Idaho Penitentiary in the 1950s. Former

(See SONGBAG, Page 12)

IHC summer teacher institute to explore works of Mark Twain

Idaho teachers of all grades and disciplines are invited to apply to attend the Idaho Humanities Council's 2010 weeklong summer institute, titled *Why Mark Twain Still Matters: Exploring the Mississippi River Books*, scheduled for July 11-16 at the College of Idaho in Caldwell. Successful applicants will receive lodging and meals, texts, and the opportunity for optional college credit. Those traveling more than 250 miles one way may be eligible for a modest travel stipend. **The deadline for applications is March 1.**

Supported in part by the IHC's endowment for humanities education and a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities "We the People" program, the institute will feature daily presentations by scholars immersing teachers in the life and work of the American literary master. Teachers will be selected by April 1 and sent texts to read in advance of the institute.



"Why Mark Twain Still Matters: Exploring the Mississippi River Books" is the theme of the IHC's 2010 weeklong summer institute, July 11-16, at the College of Idaho. Teachers may apply online by March 1 to attend.

Participants will explore some of Mark Twain's best known novels, stories, and essays in the context of the time in which they were written. Participants will enhance their understanding of late-19th century American history, and the use of the novel as a vehicle for influencing public opinion on the issues of the day, and will gain a better appreciation of Twain's uniquely American sense of humor.

Teachers will study how this master storyteller became a national personality, a larger-than-life spokesperson who, through humor, influenced public opinion on issues of race, government, gender equality, morality, religion, war, manifest destiny, and America's emerging role as a 19th century imperial power. At the same time, they will learn how Twain transformed the American

novel as a literary genre.

The texts to be studied include: *Life on the Mississippi*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. Daily topics will focus on Twain's development as a writer as well as his greater cultural presence.

The lead scholars for the week are Gary Scharnhorst, Professor of Literature at the University of New Mexico, and Laura Trombley, President of Pitzer College in California. Both are nationally recognized scholars of Twain and 19th century American literature. Other scholars joining them for the week include Michael Kiskis, Elmira College, New York; Tom Quirk, University of Missouri-Columbia; and Ann Ryan, LeMoyne College, New York. The week may also feature other guest speakers, films, and evening programs related to the topic.

Teachers interested in applying online or in more information about the institute should visit www.idahohumanities.org or contact the Idaho Humanities Council at (208) 345-5346. ♦

Smithsonian exhibit on Journeys to tour Idaho in 2010-2011

The IHC will bring a unique Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibit to six Idaho communities in 2010 and 2011 titled *Journey Stories*. *Journey Stories* will use engaging images, audio, and artifacts to tell stories that illustrate the critical roles travel and movement have played in building our diverse American society. **The exhibit will visit the Boundary County Historical Society (Bonners Ferry), The National Oregon/California Trail Center (Montpelier), Blaine County Historical Museum (Hailey), Olde School Community Center (Fruitland), Jerome Public Library (Jerome) and the Hayden Branch Library (Hayden) between May 2010 and March 2011.**

Journey Stories – including tales of how we and our ancestors came to America – are a central element of our personal heritage. From Native Americans to new American citizens and regardless of our ethnic or racial background, everyone has a story to tell. Our history is filled with stories of people leaving behind everything – families and possessions – to reach a new life in another state, across the continent, or even across an ocean. The reasons behind those decisions are myriad. Many chose to move, searching for something better in a new land. Others had no choice, like enslaved Africans captured and relocated to a strange land and bravely asserting their own cultures, or like Native Americans, who were often pushed aside by newcomers.



The development of transportation technology was largely inspired by the human drive for freedom. Our transportation history is more than trains, boats, buses, cars, wagons, and trucks. *Journey Stories* will examine the intersection between modes of travel and Americans' desire to feel free to move. The story is diverse and focused on immigration, migration, innovation, and freedom. It includes accounts of immigrants coming in search of promise in a new country; stories of individuals and families relocating in search of fortune, their own homestead, or employment; the harrowing journeys of Africans and Native Americans forced to move; and, of course, fun and frolic on the open road.

The exhibit will be on display for six weeks in

each of the six Idaho communities. While on display, each community will develop around the exhibit its own local programming, ranging from school projects, to lectures, films, local displays, reading and discussion series, and other activities limited only by the imagination. Project scholar and Boise State University Associate Professor of History, John Bieter, will also give the opening talk at each of the six grand openings.

Journey Stories has been made possible in Idaho by the Idaho Humanities Council, the National Endowment for the Humanities "We the People" Program and Southwestern Region Greatest Need Fund in the Idaho Community Foundation. ♦



'With Malice toward None': Bridging Cultural Divides

by James Leach, Chairman
National Endowment for the Humanities

Editor's Note: The following is taken from a speech by James Leach, former Republican Congressman from Iowa and newly appointed Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, at the Federation of State Humanities Councils National Conference on November 6, 2009, in Omaha, Nebraska. It outlines the new Chairman's concerns about civility in today's society and touches upon his interest in seeing initiatives that inspire programs that promote civility and bridge cultures.

I was raised 300 miles east of here in Davenport, a wonderful community sited on the westward side of the Mississippi, as Omaha is of the Missouri. These two towns vie with St. Louis for the appellation "Gateway to the West." St. Louis was the first significant provisioning center for trappers, traders and sod-busters, but the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi was at Davenport. A decade later, Omaha supplanted both St. Louis and Davenport as the frontier's eastern edge with the passage of the Pacific Railroad Act of July 2, 1862.

On this extraordinary day 16 months into his presidency, Lincoln not only launched the Union Pacific Railroad on a path to the sea but signed the Morrill Act establishing land-grant colleges which, matched 80 years later by the G.I. Bill, amounted

to the greatest expansion of educational opportunity in American history. I mention this conjunction of legislative initiatives signed into law on the same day because at a time of national peril Lincoln set a precedent of investing in the future. Our Manifest Destiny was facilitated by public investments in infrastructure and learning.

We gather here today in another trying period. We come to affirm our commitment to revitalization of a critical aspect of American life: the humanities.

The Congress and the president have thoughtfully seen fit to recognize the importance of the work of the NEH and of the state humanities councils by entrusting us with a higher level of funding than we have seen in 14 years. But, still, in inflation-adjusted numbers NEH appropriations are barely more than a third of 1979 levels and remain less in unadjusted dollars than in 1994.

An important aspect of my job is to make clear that while there is a cost to all government programs, little can be more costly to society than short-changing the humanities. The humanities are the soul of society.

To illustrate why humanities matter, let me underscore the relevance of scholarship and its intersection with what has been dubbed "the public humanities."

The United States is currently intertwined in two civil wars, both more than a third of the way around the world, each with a unique set of problems. One is



NEH Chairman
James Leach

in the wake of a terrorist attack on our shores plotted from a mountainous Afghani redoubt. The other was precipitated against a country that was not involved in the plot against America but was thought to be on the verge of developing weapons of mass destruction, a thesis since debunked.

In making assumptions about the wisdom and manner of intervening in the affairs of other countries, would it have been helpful for policy-makers to have reviewed the history of the French colonial experience in Algeria, the British and Russian experience in Afghanistan, the French and U.S. experience in Vietnam?

Would it have been helpful to study comparative religions and observe the historical implications of the Crusades and their relevance to peoples in the Middle East today? And what meaning might be found in our own colonial history—the asymmetric tactics, for instance, of Francis Marion, the South Carolina patriot known as the Swamp Fox, who attacked the best trained army in the world at night and then vanished into impenetrable swamps during the day?

The NEH advances scholarship in these and other areas. But how does a society translate scholarship into public policy? This is a challenging undertaking because it involves multiple parties—serious scholars

(See LEACH, Page 10)

on the one hand and a curious public and professional policy-makers on the other.

A monk contemplating alone in a cave may be admirable, but wisdom that isn’t shared is noiseless thought in the forest of humankind. Likewise, thoughtful scholarship that is available but unread by policy-makers who might have limited interests or ideological biases is a prescription for social error with many costly dimensions.

On the assumption that this is neither a time for scholarly cave-sitting, nor vacuous citizenship, the role of the state humanities councils is critical.

Some of you are aware that I have suggested that the NEH focus on a “bridging cultures” theme. What is meant and how do our institutional pieces fit together?

Whether the NEH and the state councils should include foreign dimensions in public cultural engagement is not a choice. We are in an interdependent world, and how we lead or fail to lead will be directly related to how well we come to understand and respect other peoples and other societies. It will also depend on how we come to understand ourselves—our own history, values and diversity of experiences.

In a political setting that is bordering on a civility crisis at home and a civilization crisis abroad, it is my intention to launch on behalf of the NEH a “civility tour,” visiting every state in the union and helping initiate discussions about the state of American civility.

It is impossible for a thinking citizen not to be concerned about American public manners and the discordant rhetoric of our politics. Words reflect emotion as well as meaning. They clarify—or cloud—thought and energize action, sometimes bringing out the better angels in our nature, sometimes lesser instincts.

There is a mantra all our mothers taught us that sticks and stones break bones but names don’t hurt. Unfortunately, in the social life of our nation this isn’t always the case.

We have all followed the reactions of a Member of Congress who blurted on the House floor that the President of the United States was lying in a speech to the Congress. On the other side of the aisle a Member described Republican health care plans as amounting to a desire that people simply “die quickly.”

The paucity of respect reflected in the above comments pale, however, to a background of increasingly spiteful partisan rhetoric. In a political system characterized by historic antipathy to extremes, the decibel level of partisan voices is rising. Rancorous, socially divisive ideological assertions are being made with such frequency that few are thinking through the meaning or consequences of the words being used. Public officials are being labeled “fascist” and “communist.” One Member of Congress has even suggested that colleagues be investigated for “un-American activities.”

“It is impossible for a thinking citizen not to be concerned about American public manners and the discordant rhetoric of our politics.”

Most bizarrely, some in public life have toyed with hints of history-blind radicalism—the notion of “secession.”

Even the most cursory study of history would reveal the gravity and implications of such polarizing language. We fought a war across two oceans to defeat fascism and spent billions and sacrificed thousands to hold communism at bay. And a century and a half ago, over 600,000 Americans were killed in a bloody civil war over the question of secession. That war, we thought, settled two issues: that slavery was incompatible with humanist, democratic values and that these United States are indivisible, inseparable from each other. We are a union, after and above all.

The increasing use today of the vocabulary of cultural wars and secession is deeply troubling. We have a unique national culture with a mosaic of subcultures. A critical question is whether we treat our many cultural differences with dignity and respect and as opportunities to grow and learn, or as divisive traumas worthy of warring over.

Where do the humanities, the NEH and the state humanities councils fit in?

The poet Walt Whitman once described America as an “athletic democracy.” What he meant was that American politics in the 19th Century was rugged and vigorous and spirited. So, in some ways there is nothing new in what we are witnessing today. Indeed, the 19th Century was riddled with nativism, anti-immigrant, anti-Catholic sentiment and, of course, toleration for human degradation implicit in slavery and indentured servitude.

We have progressed but not as far as we should or can. And, as history has shown, societies can regress as well as advance. Citizen vigilance is thus every generation’s responsibility.

“Rancorous, socially divisive ideological assertions are being made with such frequency that few are thinking through the meaning or consequences of the words being used. Public officials are being labeled ‘fascist’ and ‘communist.’ One member of Congress has even suggested that colleagues be investigated for ‘un-American activities.’”

I love Whitman’s celebration of the common man and his artist’s sense for our post-Civil War frontier democracy, particularly his use of the athletic analogy.

I come from a state that has a football team, the Iowa Hawkeyes, that at least so far has played remarkably well this year. What is impressive is that the coach and the players, like the coaches and players of the teams they face, are taught to play hard as a unit and by the rules. Their opponents—Wisconsin, Michigan, Penn State—are rivals rather than enemies. The teams respect each other. The referees throw flags if they see a clip or a player is off-side.

By contrast, in politics there are few rules and no referees. The public has to make judgments influenced by some candidates who have larger megaphones, often paid for by well-heeled interest groups, than others. Nevertheless, the goal of politics should be to emulate the best in American competition—coaches like Joe Paterno and Kirk Ferentz, Tom Osborne and Bud Wilkinson, John Wooden and Pete Carril, Dean Smith and Dan Gable, Vivian Stringer and Lisa Bluder; players like Nile Kinnick, Bill Russell, Bill Bradley, Shane Battier, Flo Hyman, and Tim Tebow.

In politics we sometimes assume great leaders are presidents. Some like Lincoln and FDR have been. But I have an affinity for those never elected to anything: scholar/statesmen like George Kennan who compassionately understood the Russian people and yet masterminded our Cold War containment strategy that reined in their totalitarian elite; Ted Sorensen who was the voice of a Camelot President; Harry Hopkins who devised a WPA program that instilled vastly greater federal resources in the arts and humanities relative to the GDP during the Great Depression than we devote today.

Past Congresses have often been feisty, but what is so confounding about today’s politics is the break with one central aspect of American tradition. Historically, legislative decision-making has generally been based on what might be described as a Hegelian give-and-take between the parties—the thesis being one party’s perspective, the antithesis the other’s, and the synthesis being legislation that accommodates concerns of each. Over the last several decades, however, a trend has developed or, more precisely become accentuated, where legislative compromises are being made almost exclusively within whichever party controls Congress rather than between the parties. The desire of the majority to accommodate the minority is waning, as is the desire for the minority to allow legislative “successes” for the majority. Balanced debate has been superseded by issue distortion and notions like the common good have given way to partisan and interest group calculations.

As party-line attitudes and voting have become harder edge, Congress is taking on some of the traits of European parliaments. The majority party is increasingly viewing itself as the legislative party of governance; the minority, the opposition.

Far better it would be for all legislators to consider themselves responsible for governing and for both sides to recognize that the other has something to say and contribute. In a society as complicated as ours has become, it is irrational to think that Republicans cannot find some Democratic initiatives helpful to society and that Democrats cannot from time to time vote with Republicans.

As for attitudes, the public goal should be to recognize that it is great to be a conservative or libertarian; great to be a liberal, a moderate, or progressive. But it is not great to hate. It is not great to refuse to respect one’s fellow citizens at home and refuse to endeavor to understand fellow peoples abroad.

The decency and fairness with which political decisions are made are generally more important than the outcome of any issue. The “how” almost always matters more than the “what.”

I spent three decades in Congress but began a public career in the State Department. In the few weeks I have been privileged to head this unique independent agency I have been impressed with the analogies that exist between the State Department and the NEH.

The various state and territorial humanities councils are like domestic embassies tied loosely into the NEH in Washington. The difference with the State Department is that in the humanities the energy flow is inverted. In foreign policy our ambassadors make recommendations and then in Washington the State Department in consultation with the White House determines policy. In the public humanities Washington may give a bit of advice or suggest direction but decision-making is in the councils. Leadership is decentralized.

Likewise in the academic humanities. The ferment of ideas come from outside Washington. Panels of experts drawn from across the land are assembled to peer-review proposals for grants that emanate from every corner of the country and sometimes abroad. Washington may suggest categories of interest but the creative work is done by scholars at hundreds of academic and cultural citadels.

“Bridging cultural divides and developing a sense for a common humanity are moral and social imperatives. Together, we in the humanities are obligated to help advance an ethic of thoughtfulness rather than conformity of thought, decency of expression rather than coarseness in public manners.”

In the public humanities there is little Washington may suggest that hasn’t been experimented with or inaugurated before. All of the councils represented here have programs—from the “Café Society” in Illinois to “Think and Drink” in Oregon to “Reflect” in Montana to Maine’s “Literature and Medicine” series to this state’s “New Nebraskans” and “Good Life” initiatives—that anticipate or might be considered part of a “bridging cultures” rubric.

The reason I consider it important from NEH’s perspective to refocus and reframe programmatic approaches with a cohesive theme is to emphasize that divisive attitudes and malicious words can, like hate speech, jeopardize social cohesion and even public safety. Conversely, healing approaches such as Lincoln’s call for a new direction “with malice toward none ” can uplift and help bring society and the world closer together.

Bridging cultural divides and developng a sense for a common humanity are moral and social imperatives. Together, we in the humanities are obligated to help advance an ethic of thoughtfulness rather than conformity of thought, decency of expression rather than coarseness in public manners.

Civilization requires civility.
Thank you. ♦

IHC Warmly Thanks Idaho Humanities Council Donors!

Contributions made between November 1, 2008 and December 1, 2009

Champion (\$2,500 +)
The J.R. Simplot Foundation
James F. & Julie M. Wisner

Benefactor (\$1,000 - \$2,499)
AJ & Susie Balukoff
Anonymous
George & Bev Harad
Tom & Alice Hennessey
Sylvan Creek Foundation
The Adams Foundation

Pioneer (\$500- \$999)
Katherine Aiken
Alaska Airlines
Rick & Rosemary Ardinger
George & Karen Baker
Jennifer Holley
George & Sondra Juetten
Ron Pisaneschi & Virginia Bennett
Marilyn Shuler
Craig & Jane Spencer

Sponsor (\$250- \$499)
Fred & Betty Bagley
Don Bott & Judy Austin
Edd & Wilma Bowler
Trent & Rebecca Clark
Archie & Marilyn Clemins
Patrick Day
P. Gary Eller & Teri Devine
Jeff & Evin Fox
Mary Giannini & Art Harlow
Terry & Diana Gipson
Jerry & Julie Glenn
Charles Guilford
Vince & Janet Hannity
Klara Hansberger
Barnes & Noble Booksellers
Kevin Marsh & Erika Kuhlman
Lex & Celia Kunau
Patricia Libby
David & Judith Lombard
Jo Anne Minnick through the Idaho Women’s Charitable Foundation
Michael Moore
Rick & Lisa Ogle
Jane Oppenheimer
Dick & Susan Parrish
Michael Reuling & Marianne McIntosh
Nick & Carole Stokes
Wood River Women’s Charitable Foundation
Member’s Fund in the Idaho Community Foundation

Donor (\$100- \$249)
Ingrid Adler
Jane E. Ahrens
Jon Albertson & Vicki Rentmeister
Albertsons Community Partners
Gov. Cecil & Carol Andrus
Anonymous
Brian & Jennifer Attebery
Louie & Barbara Attebery
Bruce Ballenger
Robert Barclay
John & Susan Bennett
Jean Betebenner
Borders Books
Paula Brown Sinclair
Keith Browning
Ross Burkhart
Don & Karen Burnett
Stewart & Molly Butler
Bob & Elaine Carpenter
Gary & Tona Casella Family
Mr. & Mrs. Pete Cenarrusa
Doug & Deidre Chadderdon
Tom & Eve Chandler
Lennard Chin Family
Doug & Ann Christensen
Karen Christenson
Linda Copple Trout
Shirley Crowe
Barbara Dargatz
David & Deborah Dash
Jenny Emery Davidson & Mark Davidson
Virginia DeLong
Fritz & Gene Dickey
Melissa Lloyd Dodworth
Paul Dubman & Diane Newton
Ted & Darlene Dyer
Tony Edmondson & John Murray
Roy & Frances Ellsworth
Terry Engebretsen
John & Sarah Etchart
Michael Faison
Forrest & Lynne Geerken
John & Kathy Grossenbacher
Dean & Cindy Haagenon
Hagerman Valley Historical Society
Ron & Ellie Hampton
Charles & Dorothy Hansen
Orval & June Hansen
Kathleen Hardcastle
Ruth Harris
Ron & Linda Hatzenbuehler
Barbara Hawley
Brad & Sandi Hill
Ernie & Carol Hoidal
Marilyn Howard
Pamela Howard
Dan & Gail Hunt
Marjie Johnson

Virginia Tinsley Johnson
Anne Marie & Harold Jones
Errol Jones & Susan Rainey
Mee-Ae Kim & Chris Grant
Lawrence & Kaye Knight
Peter Kozisek & Julia Robinson
Kevin & Debra Kraal
David & Patricia Lachiondo
Leavitt & Assoc. Careers & Consulting
Edwin Litteneker
Brent & Carol Lloyd
Don Lojek
Helen Lojek
Wallace Lonergan
Corinne Lyle
Bert & Michelle Marley
Charles & Sonia Mastache
John Matthew & Judy McKay
Ann Mattoon
Alberta Mayo
Joe & Lyn McCollum
Rosemary McGrath
Ken & Amy Mecham
Memorial Community Center
Cathy R. Silak & Nicholas G. Miller
Rodney & Lois Miller
Nels & Briane Mitchell
Dr. & Mrs. Robert Morrell
Charles & Janet Mosier
Craig & Carolyn Nelson
Jo Ann & Kay Nelson
Hugh & Kaye O’ Riordan
Skip & Esther Oppenheimer
Owen & Janet Orndorff
Arlene Oyer
Russell Wahl & Pamela Park
John & Jackie Parrish
Marty & Barb Peterson
George & Janell Pfoertner
Steven & Robin Piet
Bob & Calista Pitts
Park & Sharon Price
Mary Ellen & Dick Pugh
Nick & Sharon Purdy
Mountain View Title
Robert & Sally Richards
Sylvia Robison
Mrs. Gustav Rosenheim
Rudolph & Angela Rossmann
Charlie & Nancy Rountree
ROW Adventures
Rep. John & Kay Rusche
Robert & Marian Rust
Maria Salazar
Donnel Schmidt
Delbert & Alice Scott
Vickie Simmons
J. Walter & Kristin Sinclair
Rick & Carole Skinner
Steve & Betty Slifer
Wally & Mary Clagett Smith
Joann Spence
Randy & Molly Steele
Dr. & Mrs. Robert V. Studebaker
Susan Swetnam
Dr. & Mrs. Carl Tate
Tate Family Charitable Trust
Fred & Joan Thompson
Midge Thysell
William & Reva Tooley
Cutler & Nancy Umbach
Terry Walther
Mark & Cindy Wang
Keith J. & Rowena Ward
Otha & Helen Watts
Betty Weston
Virginia Willard
William & Dolores Winkle
Ralph & Carolyn Wolter
Shelton & Karen Woods
Virginia Woolley
Stephanie Youngerman

Advocate (\$50-\$99)
Jan M. Alden
Jeanne Allen
Robert & Elizabeth Anderl
Anonymous
Scott K. P. Arnold & Maura L. Goddard
Fran Bahr
Larry & Laureen Belmont
Julio & Julie Bilbao
Mayor Sandi Bloem
Dr. Roger Boe & Rep. Donna Boe
Karl Brooks
Max & Darlene Burke
Ceva Jean Bush
Ann Carlson
Bethine Church
Leo & Lulu Mae Coates
Dillon & Audrey Cole
Jim & Jerre Coleman
James & Peggy Countryman
Len & Mary Crosby
Anna & John Daley
Lyn Darrington
Robert & Anne DeBord
JoAn Dilweg
Jean Eberle
Jeanne & Sandy Emerson
Maria G. Essig
Shirley Ewing & Bill Ondrechen
Cheri Folkner
Dr. Allan & Fran Frost

Steve & Cilla Garvan
Helen Grainger Wilson & Monte D. Wilson
Catherine Gray
Mike & Glenda Green
Robert Guyon & Kathleen Kangas
BASIC, Blanchard
Robert & Willodell Hawley
Bob & Donna-Marie Hayes
Tom Heinrich Jr.
Jay & Jo Henderson
Butch Hjelm
Dr. Robert Hoover
Chuck & Kathy Hosack
Ron James & Lili Zou
Cynthia Carr Jenkins
Daniel & Carmelyn Johnson
Holly Kartchner
George & Cassie Kelley
Kevin & Virginia Kirk
Bonnie Krafchuk
Gail LeBow
Roger & Ruthi Lee
Bethea Lenzi
Andy & Halena Lerner
Duane & Phyllis LeTourneau
Don & Marcia Liebich
Paul & Katie Link
Louise & Terry Maley
Steven & Pam Mayfield
Kathleen McClenahan
C. Thomas & Sabra McCreedy
Patty Miller
Clay & Barbara Morgan
Dennis W. Ohrtman
Loran & Ruth Olsen
South Bannock County Historical Center
Carl & Pat Olsson
Sharon Ostrom
Del Parkinson
Tara Penry
Daniel Peterson & Mary Foster
William & Kathie Phoenix
Mrs. Rayborn’s Recycling Club
Paul & Alexis Rippel
Bruce Robbins & Maggie Chase
Ed & Sheila Robertson
Ken & Betty Rodgers
Joseph & Rita Rodriguez
Joan Rogosch
Bob & Becky Sabin
Sheila Saunders
Gary Erickson & Harriet Shaklee
Ken & Janet Sherman
Jerry & Ann Shively
Max & Carole Smolinski
Bob & Bessie Skinner
Dennis Skinner
Gary & Julie Slee
Mary Sorenson
Jeri St. Clair & Robert Allen
Randy Stimpson & Courtney Morgan
Calvin & Macey Swinson
John & Martha Tanner
Michael & Sue Tomlin
Jeff & Karan Tucker
Webb Van Winkle & Maureen Cunningham
Robert Vestal
Susan Wallber-Ring
Dick Wandrocke
Michael Warwick
Theodore Watanabe
Connie Weaver
Susan Whaley & Bert Bowler
Milly Whitted
Delta Kappa Gamma
Kathy Winterton
Dick & Gerry Wisdom
Janet Worthington
Ellie Ysursa

Volunteer (Up to \$49)
Anonymous
Chris & Susan Baughn
Bruce Belzer
Diana Benedick
Joe & Harriet Berenter
Steve & Marsha Bjornn
Mary Lee & Ray Blackford
Tom & Florence Blanchard
Isabel Bond
Dorothy Brassey
Cambridge Museum
Kathleen Marion Carr
Robert & Eleanor Carriker
Jean Chantrill
Lorraine & Charles Childers
Alan & Anne Christie
M. Marlin & Donetta Clark
Alan & Alice Crockett
Virginia De Long
Frances & Michelle Dega
Mary DeWalt
Ben & Diana Dicus
Earl Druker
James & Deleah Eavenson
Bill Eddy
Melanie Edwards
Constance Farmer
Ken & Ethel Farnsworth
Steve & Wendy Floray
Ray & Carolyn Frei
Friends For Learning
Jane Fritz
Mary Jane Fritzen

Mark & Dana Fuller
Friends of the Garden Valley Library
Dick & Susan Gardner
Jim & Barbara Gentry
David Giles
Ronald Goble
Ronald & Jane Goin
Peter Grubb & Betsy Bowen
Linda Hackbarth
Bucky & Toni Halker
Jean Hanson
Nina Hawkins
Heatherwood Retirement
Russ Hepworth
Isabel Holt
Cynthia Hull
IGIVE.COM
Edgar Jacobs
Jerome Public Library
Bill & Cheryl Johnson
Patricia Keith
Earl & Gwen Kimball
Jonathan & Pamela Lawson
Steve Lee
Bob & Ann Loucks
Charlee Magnus
Maria Mallory
Mary Ann Mathews
John & Mary Ann McHugh
John & Peggy McMahon
Susanne Miller
Betty J. Moore
Gayle Moore
Native Idaho Daughters
Susan Neal
Douglas Nilson
James & Benita Odenkirk
Vauna Oliason
Mary Osterman
Joel & Nikki Pearsall
Kim Philipps
Thomas & Susan Reeb
Dorothy L. Reynolds
Virginia Ricketts
Deborah Robertson
Diane Ronayne
Bob & Nancy Russell
Jeff Sherwood
Lewis & Doris Ann Smith
Tom Spanbauer
Susan Stagliano
Brent & Kay Stauff
Tony Stewart
Mary Trail
Linda Werner
Ralph & Ann Wheeler
Susan Wolfe
Ann P. Zollinger

IN MEMORIAM

In memory of Bob M. Lenzi
Bethea Lenzi
In memory of Minijeane Kirk
Kevin & Virginia Kirk
In memory of William V. Studebaker
Louie & Barbara Attebery
Dr. & Mrs. Robert V. Studebaker
In memory of James H. Hardcastle
Kathleen Hardcastle
In memory of Harry Magnuson
Katherine Aiken
In memory of Iris Stevenson
Vauna Oliason
In memory of Helen Bray
Vauna Oliason
In memory of Sharon Van Slyke
Maria Salazar
In memory of Johnny Johnson
James & Deleah Eavenson
In memory of J.P. Whitted
Milly Whitted
In memory of Robert Severance
Edd & Wilma Bowler
In memory of Bert Colwell
Edd & Wilma Bolwer
In memory of Juliette Mustard
Edd & Wilma Bowler
In memory of Robert V. Hansberger
Nels, Briane and Brittany Mitchell
In memory of Jay Hill
Bill and Delores Winkle
In memory of Marjorie Scott
Jerry and Julie Glenn
In memoy of Forrest Church
Ann Mattoon
In memory of Amy M. Christie
R. Alan and Anne Christie

IN HONOR

In honor of Bethine Church
Otha & Helen Watts
Ann Mattoon
In honor of Ron Hatzenbuehler
Katherine Aiken
In honor of Anne Voillequé & Louise Nelson
Ron & Linda Hatzenbuehler



217 West State Street • Boise, Idaho 83702
Change Service Requested

Time for a change? Please let us know by checking the appropriate box below and returning with your label:

- ☐ Name misspelled
- ☐ Contact person changed
- ☐ Wrong address
- ☐ Received more than one
- ☐ Remove from mailing list

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Boise, ID
Permit No. 679

SONGBAG
(Continued from Page 8)

Idaho Fish and Game manager Stacy Gebhards, of Lake Fork, sings a satiric song about the natural and manmade challenges salmon face as they return from the ocean to Idaho to spawn. Ione Thielke, the 1950s “Musical Poem Recorder of Cascade, Idaho,” sings a song about wild horses in the Owyhees. Other features include two short songs from Frank Church’s 1956 Senate campaign; a song of 1850s Mormon pioneers; an 1880s Oregon Short Line railroad song, a ballad about the infamous murder of Lloyd Magruder . . . and much more.

The *Idaho Songbag* CD was the final component of a larger three-year initiative of the Idaho Humanities Council to promote greater appreciation of American roots music, that featured a weeklong institute for teachers, a traveling Smithsonian exhibit, and other activities, all funded in part by grants from the Idaho Community Foundation and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. The title of the CD is taken in homage to poet Carl Sandburg, who published the book *The American Songbag* in 1927.

The *Idaho Songbag* CD is available for \$15 (plus \$3 shipping and sales tax) through the Idaho Humanities Council website (www.idahohumanities.org), by calling (208) 345-5346, or through select record stores. ♦

South Bannock County Historical Center receives
Elsensohn Award

The South Bannock County Historical Center (SOBANCO) in Lava Hot Springs is the 2009 recipient of the “Sister Alfreda Elsensohn Award,” a \$10,000 award of pooled resources of the Idaho Humanities Council, the Idaho State Historical Society, and the Idaho Heritage Trust annually recognizing outstanding work of an Idaho museum. Representatives of all three organizations met in Lava Hot Springs on Friday, November 20 to present the award to Museum Director Cathy Sher.

Earlier in the day Governor Butch Otter was in Lava Hot Springs to declare the town Idaho’s “Capital for a Day,” and to issue a proclamation declaring November 20 “South Bannock County Historical Center Recognition Day.”



Museum Director Cathy Sher (center), accepts the \$10,000 Elsensohn Award from (L to R) Idaho Heritage Trust representatives Tony Verilone and Jerry Myers, Idaho Humanities Council Board Member Kevin Marsh, and Idaho State Historical Society Trustee Jim Johnson.

The surprise award is in recognition of outstanding service by an Idaho museum in the preservation and interpretation of local history.

The award is named after Sister Alfreda Elsensohn, who founded the Historical Museum at St. Gertrude in Cottonwood. Sister Alfreda sought to collect, preserve, and interpret artifacts from Idaho County and the surrounding area to better educate the public. It is her vision of Idaho museums as

exciting, interactive, interpretive, and educational institutions that the Award seeks to recognize by honoring one outstanding Idaho museum each year.

Recipients of the award are leaders in the field of Idaho museums that will be able to use the \$10,000 award to move to a higher level of professionalism. The 2008 award went to the Bonner County Historical Museum in Sandpoint. ♦

What Are You Reading?

In each issue of *Idaho Humanities*, several readers tell us what they've been reading and what they recommend.

Reader: Sue Thilo
Occupation: Community Volunteer, Hayden
Book: *Peace Like a River* by Leif Enger



Peace Like a River had been in a stack of books by my bed for nearly three years. After dusting it off and reading the first 18 pages, I fully understood why Leif Enger’s first novel is a recommended favorite among fiction readers.

This deeply affecting story is told by Reuben Land – through his eyes as an 11 year-old boy in 1960’s Minnesota and as an adult looking back. He describes a tragic incident that unravels his humble family, ultimately turning their world upside down. The storyline is simple, but I found myself inspired by its underpinnings of family love, heroism, human kindness, and miracles.

Reader: Larry Hunter
Occupation: Attorney at Moffatt Thomas Barrett Rock & Fields, Chtd., Boise
Book: *Lincoln President-Elect: Abraham Lincoln and the Great Secession Winter 1860-1861* by Harold Holzer

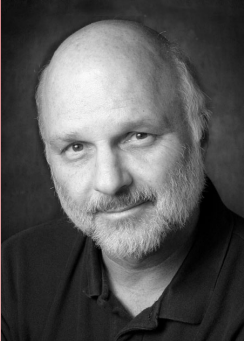


The premise behind Harold Holzer’s book is a description of the “interregnum,” as he refers to the four-month period that existed between the presidential election and Lincoln’s inauguration. In the best of times, such a gap could be difficult; after the election of 1860, it was monumental.

Holzer effectively challenges the widely held thought that the interregnum was a period in which Lincoln did not distinguish himself. He would not commit himself to the burning issues facing his presidency; such as secession, compromise on slavery, and the choice of his cabinet members. However, as Holzer points out, Lincoln “successfully maintained a masterly inactivity and public silence to prevent the spread of slavery, privately fought a bare-knuckle political battle to bar unprincipled compromise, and brilliantly introduced himself to the press and people of the North with a new look, new image, and a new style of informal oratory along a triumphant voyage to the capital.”

Holzer succeeds in educating us to the problems Lincoln faced and how he masterfully confronted them. It is not a quick read, but it is well organized, interesting, and a further testament of Lincoln’s political genius.

Reader: Harald Wyndham
Occupation: Poet and publisher of Blue Scarab Press, Pocatello, Idaho
Book: *Grand Canyon and other Selected Poems*, by Amil Quayle



Grand Canyon is a strong collection of over 100 poems, many of them river poems written by the experienced boatman, Amil Quayle, who lives in St. Anthony, Idaho, but spent many summers running the Colorado River as a professional guide.

Those experiences plus a family rich in troubles and interesting characters put no small amount of ‘true grit’ into these poems, which are true in the way Frost’s poems are true. They are not so much made things as the byproducts of a full life, gathered from the wild ride through the rapids of the day.

Anyone who has gone down big water in kayak, cataraft or pontoon, clinging to paddles, ropes and hand-holds for dear life while running white thunder between rocks will relate to these poems. Anyone who has lost friends to that water will find resonant thoughts here as well. As Amil says about the Grand Canyon: *See how puny the words are / Do not believe them / Go there.*