

feature

“CROSSROADS” AS WITNESS

by Rochelle Johnson, The College of Idaho

EDITOR’S NOTE: This year the Idaho Humanities Council has been touring a Smithsonian traveling exhibit called “Crossroads: Change in Rural America” to Idaho communities. The exhibit has been on display in Moscow, Burley, and Salmon. On display in Lewiston through the end of February, it will travel to Rexburg and finish in Nampa in June. IHC’s scholar for the tour is Professor of English and Environmental Studies at The College of Idaho, Rochelle Johnson, whom we asked to reflect on the exhibit themes for this issue of Idaho Humanities.

The *Crossroads* exhibit highlights the changing rural landscapes of our nation’s history. Through paintings, photographs, videos, and storyboards, the exhibit ultimately suggests something like this: rural landscapes are not merely a longstanding part of U.S. history; they convey defining features of the nation’s identity. More specifically,



Rochelle Johnson, *Crossroads* State Scholar

this Smithsonian exhibit suggests that rural landscapes manifest the nation’s opportunities, challenges, and conflicts. That is, rural landscapes testify to who we have been and to what we might become.

The exhibit reminds us that throughout history, the rural has been a place of hope and of ideals—whether agricultural, domestic, or environmental ideals. As one group of sociologists puts it, popular “understandings of the ‘rural’ usually involve idyllic images of pastoral lands, small towns, close-knit communities, and salt-of-the-earth farm families [who] are honest, hard[-]working,” and kind to one another (Alexander

Thomas *et. al.*, *Critical Rural Theory* [NY: Lanham, 2011] 23.) For some fortunate people, this ideal actually constitutes rural experience.

Harder to represent are those more disturbing elements of our nation’s story that the rural also embodies—those parts of our history that some would rather erase and forget. The Smithsonian exhibit lays less emphasis to this troubling side of rurality, but the fact remains that while, for many, the rural is a place of tranquility and hope, for others it represents isolation, fear, and even persecution. In spite of these contradictory meanings of the rural, one thing remains consistent in America’s changing landscapes, and we see it through this exhibit: the rural has been—and remains—a marker of change and an indicator of the future.

But what exactly is the rural? What does the term “rural” even mean? As stated in one study of more than 24 federal agencies’ definitions for “rural,” “rural is usually defined as *that which is not urban*” (Thomas *et. al.*, 28; emphasis mine). That’s not a very specific definition! Fortunately, the many images comprising this Smithsonian exhibit offer more specific understandings of the term. Here, we find that the “rural” is relatively open space, and the rural is agricultural. The rural is domesticated land, or the rural is what *used to be* wilderness. The rural is a landscape of hope and



Johnson speaks at *Crossroads* opening in Salmon

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from the Chair MURRAY FELDMAN



It was a busy fall for the IHC. We had two well received and successful distinguished lectures and dinners. Award winning author and poet Richard Blanco joined us in Boise, and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Viet Thanh Nguyen spoke in Coeur d'Alene. In October we had our fall grant award meeting, and we elected new Board members and bade farewell to some longstanding and dedicated Board members who contributed much to the Council's collective knowledge, wisdom, and support for statewide public humanities programming.

In November, a small IHC delegation attended the National Humanities Conference, a gathering of representatives from all of the state and territorial humanities councils, as well as from many academic humanities programs and departments. We left with many ideas and new insights for content, program delivery, Board development, and more. Also at that Conference, IHC Executive Director David Pettyjohn was elected to the national board of the Federation of State Humanities Councils, a noteworthy achievement that will facilitate our state's continued role in national humanities issues and an increased exchange of ideas, resources, and more with other state councils.

Looking ahead, 2023 is the 50th anniversary of our Council; we're already thinking about some special projects and events to mark that milestone. As part of the IHC's newly adopted strategic plan, we've established a Program Evaluation Task Force to review the effectiveness and reach of our current programming and to develop possible new programs and outreach. We welcome any comments you may have in those areas. All best wishes for 2020 from everyone at the IHC, with our thanks for your interest and support of the humanities in Idaho.

from the Director DAVID PETTYJOHN

We've all heard the news—Idaho is experiencing rapid growth. According to the latest census information, we are tied with Nevada as the fastest growing state in the nation. Although this is the case for some parts of the state, other locations are losing population and Idaho remains predominantly rural. Of Idaho's 44 counties, about half have 10 people or fewer per square mile.

Crossroads: Change in Rural America, an exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution, examines the issues facing America's rural population since it became a minority of the country's population and the ripple effects that occurred.

In August, representatives from the host communities gathered in Moscow for an installation workshop and to learn more about the exhibit's themes. Carol Harsh, Director of the Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street Program, provided an in-depth description of the exhibit, discussed programming ideas, and provided engaging opening remarks at the exhibit's grand opening.

IHC funds also provide programming in each community that highlights local issues. These include panel discussions addressing rural challenges and opportunities, local exhibits, and reading and discussion groups. Visit IHC's calendar of events for more information!



IHC Executive Director elected to Federation of State Humanities Councils Board of Directors



The Federation of State Humanities Councils announced the election of five new board members to its board of directors, effective November 9, 2019. The five new board members include two humanities council executive directors, from Arizona Humanities and Idaho Humanities Councils, and three public members, representing backgrounds in law, government and public affairs, and Indigenous culture and education.

IHC Director David Pettyjohn will join James Burke a partner at Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP; Eva Caldera is the associate secretary/chief operating officer of the Phi Beta Kappa Society; Endawnis Spears is the director of outreach and programming and a founding member of the Akomawt Educational Initiative; and Brenda Thomson the executive director of Arizona Humanities.

“The Federation is committed to maintaining a diverse, well-rounded board that will effectively navigate the opportunities and challenges facing the state humanities councils,” said Esther Mackintosh, president of the Federation of State Humanities Councils. “From varied backgrounds, including that of finance, law, nonprofit management, government, native communities, and education, these newly elected members represent an impressive array of skills, talents, and backgrounds.”

The Federation of State Humanities Councils, founded in 1977 as the membership association of state and territorial councils, provides support for the state humanities councils and strives to create greater awareness of the humanities in public and private life. For more information about the Federation of State Humanities Councils, please visit: www.statehumanities.org.

opportunity

HELP IHC HELP IDAHO TEACHERS THROUGH GRANTS

Each year, the IHC provides assistance to Idaho’s most treasured resource—our teachers. One of our flagship programs is the facilitation of annual, weeklong, all-expense-paid, residential summer institutes in the humanities for K-12 teachers. Each July, teachers from across the state gather to learn about such subjects as the anniversary of the women’s suffrage movement, the works of Hemingway, Idaho history, and other important topics.

Throughout the year, we also provide financial assistance to teachers through our teacher incentive grants. These funds are a critical resource that allows teachers to enhance their current humanities courses, improve their curriculum by purchasing books or other resources, attending conferences, or taking students to see Idaho’s treasures firsthand.

Earlier this year, we kicked off an annual campaign to reach more Idaho teachers and you can help us reach our goal. If you have a cell phone, you’ll be able to take advantage of Text2Give. **It’s very simple—you just text the word “humanities” to 243-725.** You will then receive a text that includes a link to a special donation page and you can give any amount. You can easily enter your credit card information on the secure site. A receipt will be emailed directly to you. Every dollar raised will go directly to fund these grants to Idaho teachers. Thank you!



promise—an immigrant's trust in the promise of a better life. And, the rural is oppression and suffering—a human being held in bondage and laboring as another person's "property." The rural is a landscape of privilege—the place of vacation homes, country estates, and picturesque ranches. And, the rural is a landscape of poverty—the place of limited opportunities for education, medical care, food security, and economic certainty. The rural, it seems, is a contradiction.

Adding to the complexity is this: the same rural lands might carry distinct meanings for distinct groups. This leads to serious conflicts in our nation's history—and in its present. For the nation's early settlers, rural lands offered the promise of the nation. They offered the promise of private property and the assurance of an agriculturally-based economy. For existing indigenous populations, the development of rural lands often meant tribal relocation or decimation. For early settlers, some rural lands were best used for agriculture or for resource extraction—timbering, say, or mining. Later, others thought these same rural lands warranted protection and preservation. Also in early America, rural lands represented the profitable promise of plantation agriculture; for others, those same lands exhibited the horrors of enduring chattel slavery.

These vexing issues remain with us today. For some, certain rural lands offer peaceful living away from bustling urban centers. For others, those same rural lands represent the best site for hydraulic fracturing. For some, rural lands today offer the tradition of the family farm. For

others, those same lands are destined for annexing into largescale, corporate agriculture. For indigenous tribal nations, the rural might include sacred lands; for those investing in domestic energy, those same lands might include the promise of a pipeline. For some, a rural landscape might provide solace; for others, it might be seen as a threat. One person's kayak



Teapot Dome along Oregon Trail, Elmore County

launch is another's perfect location for an LNG (liquefied natural gas) plant. One person's economically suffering rural area might be another person's proposal for a nuclear disposal site. These are the real controversies of rural places and populations, and this Smithsonian exhibit invites us to explore them.

The exhibit also reveals that most of our nation's rural landscapes have changed so quickly that we risk losing sight of what they have only recently been. In some areas of Idaho, this pace of change has been slower than the national average, and for this we are probably grateful. For this, we may choose to live here. Still, many rural landscapes have

changed so drastically in near times, and many people aren't aware of this rate of change. As one writer puts it, "The landscape encodes memories that always threaten to escape, to disappear" (Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life, Southern Illinois, 1890-1990* [UNC P, 1994] xvii).

If we look closely, we see that rural landscapes can narrate the history of their use and development, even as they indicate the future. Here are some examples of the ways in which rural landscapes reveal our history and our future challenges. From wind farms to solar farms, from gas drilling sites to LNG plants, the uses of rural places exhibit our triumphs and struggles over energy supply. Through small family farms and million-acre corporate farms, rural landscapes exhibit the challenges of farming tradition and food supply. Through housing developments and cul-de-sacs, rural landscapes testify to our challenges related to human population growth. Through their changing plant species, rural landscapes testify to the health or disease of biodiversity.

A "crossroads" marks many things: a coming together and a leaving; a union and a departure; a movement amid a stasis; a hope for what is far off and a longing for what will be left behind; the promise of an unknown future and the reassurance of what is right here and now. These are the paradoxes of the rural crossroads.

TWO NEW MEMBERS JOIN IDAHO HUMANITIES COUNCIL BOARD

The Board of Directors of the IHC elected two new members to its 19-member board at their fall meeting in Boise. The new members will serve three-year terms and attend their first meeting in February 2020.



**MARY ANN
ALLISON**

Mary Ann Allison, Idaho Falls, is Professor Emeritus in Media Studies at Hofstra University. During her tenure, she led the re-accreditation process and was named Teacher of the Year in 2010 and 2013. She was also honored as Hofstra's first Mentor of the Year (2011). She has presented at numerous conferences and her research focused on communication media and patterns of social change, urban and suburban communication and community revitalization, and responses to new media. She is the co-author of *New Media, Communication, and Society: A Fast, Straightforward Examination of Key Topics* which was released in 2018.



**EDWARD "MAC"
TEST**

Edward "Mac" Test, Boise, is a professor of English and current chair of the English Department at Boise State University. He is the author of *Sacred Seeds: New World Plants in Early Modern English Literature* (University of Nebraska Press, 2019) which examines how New World plants—tobacco, amaranth, guaiacum, and the prickly pear cactus—and their associated Native myths impacted English literature and European culture. He has held fellowships at the Huntington Library, Folger Shakespeare Library, and the John Carter Brown Library. Dr. Test is also a poet and translator of Spanish. He has four book translations and has just finished a translation of the 1626 Spanish play, *The Lieutenant Nun*, which he work-shopped at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Canada in September 2018. He frequently gives talks for BSU's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.



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.

IDAHO HUMANITIES COUNCIL AWARDS \$115,122 IN GRANTS

IHC recently awarded \$115,122 in grants to organizations and individuals at its fall board meeting. Forty-two awards include twenty-five major grants for public humanities programs, two research fellowships, six Opportunity Grants, four Teacher Incentive Grants, three Museum on Main Street programming grants, and two other funded program partnerships. The grants were supported in part by funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Idaho Humanities Council's Endowment for Humanities Education.

MAJOR GRANTS:



Ada Community Library, Boise, was awarded \$3,500 for the 2020 Treasure Valley Reads, Ada Community Library's annual community-wide program that seeks to "introduce great literature to encourage critical thinking and social connections." For the centennial of women's suffrage, the Ada Public Library has selected

The Honey Bus by Meredith May. The project director is **Mary DeWalt**. PHOTO: Meredith May

Basque Museum & Cultural Center, Boise, was awarded \$4,000 for an exhibit to highlight Basque individuals, their businesses, and their significance to their communities. The exhibit will feature ways the Basques have preserved their culture through music, language preservation, and food. The exhibit completion is timed to open with the Jaialdi Festival in the summer of 2020. The project director is **Patty Miller**.

Beautiful Downtown Lewiston, Lewiston, was awarded \$1,000 for the development of a mural interpreting the history of women's suffrage. The project is in partnership with Lewis-Clark State College and students in the Projects in Public History course will be involved. The mural will be installed in time for a reception during Arts & Humanities Month in October 2020, and public lectures will be offered. The project director is **Courtney Kramer**.

Boise Art Museum, Boise, was awarded \$1,500 for the exhibition, "Women in American Impressionism: Three Masterworks from the Smithsonian American Art Museum." IHC funds will support an evening salon program for women's groups at the museum. The project director is **Melanie Fales**.



Idaho State University, Pocatello, was awarded \$1,447 for a public lecture titled "Moral Vulnerability in a Time of Political Crisis" by Professor Todd May. May will also meet informally with faculty and students to discuss his philosophical insights and his recent work as a philosophical consultant on the NBC show "The Good

Place." The project director is **Ching-E Ang**. PHOTO: Todd May

Boise State University, Boise, was awarded \$3,000 for the Hemingway Literary Center's program that examines diverse aspects of the theme "Exile, Refuge, Home." Topics to be explored include the experience of immigration, becoming a refugee, and the various forms of diaspora. Programming includes performances, talks, readings, and book groups and events will take place monthly from November to May. The project director is **Cheryl Hindrichs**.

City Club of Boise, Boise, was awarded \$3,000 for their annual Community Conversations. These luncheons and other signature events focus on relevant topics to the community and are designed to inform attendees on important and timely topics while promoting civil discourse. The events include speakers, panels, and question/

answer periods. The project director is **Morgan Keating**

City Club of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, was awarded \$2,000 for discussions on issues facing the Magic Valley, including civil discourse, urban growth and rural communities, and education. Events take place during a luncheon and involve local scholars, business leaders, and government officials. The project director is **Jan Hall**.

The City Club of Idaho Falls, Idaho Falls, was awarded \$2,000 funding for their 2020 program. These luncheons and other signature events focus on relevant topics to the community and are designed to inform attendees on important and timely topics while promoting civil discourse. The project director is **Brenda Price**.



Go Lead Idaho, Boise, was awarded \$1,000 to support a presentation by former US Treasure Rosie Rios. Rios' speech focused on gender equity in US history and her efforts to get former slave and abolitionist Harriet Tubman on the US \$20 bill. The project director was **Luci Willits**. PHOTO: Rosie Rios

City of Rexburg, Rexburg, was awarded \$1,000 for the 2020 Teton Story Telling & Arts Festival. The free summer event is offered to the community to offer educational opportunities as well as a venue for artists to display and sell their work. Along with the inclusion of storytellers, workshops on storytelling will be offered to students, with a competition that will select some to present on stage at the festival. The project director is **Mary Flanary**.

College of Southern Idaho, Twin Falls, was awarded \$3,000 for the 2020 Social Science and Humanities Symposium. This annual event brings high-quality experts to the College of Southern Idaho to provide social science and humanities content to the broader Magic Valley community. The 2020 event will feature academic experts on women's history and the commemoration of the 19th Amendment, as well as speakers with expertise in contemporary feminist issues. The project director is **Justin Viperman**.

Latah County Historical Society, Moscow, was awarded \$4,000 for "Seeking Suffrage," an event series that will take place from September 2019 through August 2020 and consist of four public presentations, an exhibit, and a community celebration. The events will focus on the significance of suffrage in the history of the United States and is designed to enlighten audiences regarding the longevity of the women's suffrage movement; the bravery many of its advocates exhibited; the political nuances often ignored; and the contemporary resonance of many of the issues involved. The project director is **Katherine Aiken**.



North Idaho College, Coeur d'Alene, was awarded \$4,000 to support the keynote speaker at the 2020 Diversity Symposium, the college's capstone diversity event. The 2020 keynote speaker will be Sammy Rangel, Executive Director and co-founder of Life After Hate and the author of *Fourbears: The Myths of Forgiveness*. The project director is **Hannah Paton**. PHOTO: Sammy Rangel

Lewis-Clark State College Native American Club, Lewiston, was awarded \$2,000 for LCSC Native American Awareness Week 2020. The week includes presentations by several speakers and panels, storytelling, a banquet, and a pow wow. The events seek to increase awareness of historical and contemporary issues of Native American culture. The project director is **Bob Sobotta**.

Magic Valley Arts Council, Twin Falls, was awarded **\$1,000** for the 2020 Indie Lens Pop-Up Free Film Screening. Indie Lens Pop-up is a neighborhood series that brings people together for film screenings and community-driven conversations. The films will be screened twice—once during the lunch hour and then in the evening. Moderated discussions will take place after each screening. The project director is **Melissa Crane**.



University of Idaho, Moscow, was awarded **\$3,000** for "Our Changing Climate: Finding Common Ground in Idaho Communities." These reading and discussion programs will feature Barbara Kingsolver's novel *Flight Behavior* and the discussion is supplemented with scientific data about climate change. The project director is **Jennifer Ladino**.

Museum of Idaho, Idaho Falls, was awarded **\$5,000** for the implementation of their permanent exhibit "Way Out West" (WOW). Funds will be used to complete the alcove gallery which will pose the question, "Who is Idaho?" The alcove gallery will create a reflective space within WOW where visitors explore and celebrate the variety of people, cultures, languages & traditions that contribute to the region. The project director is **Kimberly Lee**.



University of Idaho-VPAA, Moscow, was awarded **\$4,000** for the Common Reads Keynote Address featuring author Tommy Orange. Orange's novel, *There There*, was chosen by a committee composed of students, staff, faculty and community members to be the common read selection at the University of Idaho.

This event will coincide with Native American Heritage month and the annual meeting of the tribal leaders from the university's eleven tribe MOU designed to strengthen accessibility to Native American students. The project director is **Dean Panttaja**. PHOTO: Tommy Orange

Northern Pacific Depot Foundation, Wallace, was awarded **\$3,000** for the exhibit "Women's Rights, Bikes, and Bloomers." The exhibit will feature fashions, transportation means, and photographs of the era. The exhibit will also encourage bicycle rides and feature several public presentations. The project director is **Shauna Hillman**.

Panhandle Alliance for Education, Summerville, was awarded **\$1,000** for READY! for Kindergarten, a national adult reading program designed to teach parents and other care providers how to teach preschoolers reading skills to prepare them to enter the school system. Workshop attendees receive a kit, including books and educational toys to use at home. The project director is **Kathleen Mulroy**.

The Cabin, Boise, was awarded **\$2,000** for its Ghosts & Projectors Reading Series. This reading series pairs emerging, innovative, and experimental writers with writers from the Treasure Valley. IHC funds will support a discussion with Carmen Maria Machado, author of the short story collection *Her Body and Other Parties*. The project director is **Kurt Zwolfer**.



The Cabin, Boise, was awarded **\$3,000** for its 2019-2020 Reading & Conversations Season. Since 2002, the program has brought five highly acclaimed, dynamic authors to the area and it gives audiences a chance to hear Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award winners, MacArthur Fellows, and bestseller authors, as they share their work, personal stories, and commentary on current events and culture. A question and answer session follows the formal

presentation. Presenters are carefully selected with efforts made to reach diverse and under-served audiences. The project director is **Kurt Zwolfer**. PHOTO: Francisco Cantú

The Idaho Mythweaver, Inc., Sandpoint, was awarded **\$2,500** for "Wisdom of the Ancestors," the preservation of oral histories of Nez Perce elders that were recorded from 1989-2003. Jane Fritz, the original interviewer of several recordings will reformat the recordings into digital audio files. The project director is **Jane Fritz**.



Wallace District Mining Museum, Wallace, was awarded **\$1,250** for the exhibit "The Buffalo Soldiers and their Role in the Coeur d'Alene." The exhibit will include photos, journal entries, artifacts, digital frames and books. A companion brochure will also be developed. The project director is **Tammy Copelan**. PHOTO: Buffalo Soldiers

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS:



Alyson Roy, University of Idaho, Moscow, was awarded **\$3,500** for a research fellowship to conduct research for a book project on the development of a visual language of empire in the Roman Republican period. She will trace the transformation of foreign objects into decoration and consumer goods, and examine the circulation of triumphal material culture into Spain, Gaul, and Greece. Roy will present her findings at academic conferences and to the general public at local venues.



Amanda Zink, Idaho State University, Pocatello, was awarded **\$3,500** for a research fellowship to assist with an anthology of student writings from the Indian boarding schools. "In Their Own Words" will allow scholars, students, and general readers to access and consider student experiences as they themselves constructed these experiences in their own words. The anthology seeks to assemble an archive of texts that convey the diversity and complexity of Native Americans' experiences at the boarding schools. Zink will present at academic conferences and will plan public lectures as well, coordinating with Native American Studies at ISU and the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

OPPORTUNITY GRANTS:

Hailey Public Library, Hailey, was awarded **\$967** for "A Story Worth Telling." Events included an historic walking tour with an educational booklet of images and stories, a turn-of-the-century photo exhibit in the library, a local Hispanic band, traditional Hispanic dance and western dance demonstrations. The project director is **LeAnn Gelskey**.



Priest Lake Museum Association, Coolin, was awarded **\$1,000** to support a presentation by Jack Nisbet about John Lieberg, a surveyor of the Priest River Forest Reserve. The presentation was part of the Priest Lake Heritage Speakers Bureau. Other speakers in the series include Kris Smith on the myths surrounding the lake, illustrating the importance of primary sources and interpreting history; Doni Guyer on the Linger Longer Resort; and Robert Bond on the birds of Priest Lake. The project director is **Kris Smith**. PHOTO: Jack Nisbet

CELEBRATED POET RICHARD BLANCO DRAWS HUNDREDS TO THE BOISE CENTRE LAST FALL

RECAP OF BOISE EVENT

Historic presidential inaugural poet Richard Blanco delivered IHC's 23rd Annual Distinguished Humanities Lecture last September at the Boise Centre to a large crowd of nearly 350. Blanco's topic was "To Love a Country: Diversity-Identity-Place."

Before the event Blanco was welcomed at the downtown offices of **Holland & Hart** for the Benefactor reception.

The IHC thanks the following event sponsors for helping to make a very memorable evening: **Holland & Hart, Boise State University, Idaho State University Kasiska Division of Health Sciences, Eve and Thomas Chandler, Boise State Public Radio, Idaho Statesman and Idaho Public Television.**

An additional thank you goes to **Rediscovered Books** for helping to publicize the event and facilitating book sales at the Boise Centre.

Thank you to the following very generous individuals who helped share the evening with students through their donations to the student scholarship fund: Jenny Emery Davidson and Mark Davidson, Murray and Nancy Feldman, Michelle Hicks, John Kriz and Carol Cronin Kriz, Lisa Scales and Robert Walther, Caroline Morris and David Monsees, Gary Wyke and Elizabeth Greene, Sharon and Conrad Colby, Pam Nagel, Sisti and Rory O'Connor, Steven Fields, Margaret Johnson, David and Patricia Lachiondo, David Pettyjohn and Geoffrey Parks, James Fullinwider and Claire Fenton, Sue Reents, Dana Morfin, and Rick and Rosemary Ardinger.



1. Richard Blanco signs a book for Susan Gibson in the Boise offices of Holland & Hart.
2. Blanco eloquently reciting his poetry to the audience.
3. IHC Chair, Murray Feldman, facilitating the Q & A session with Blanco following his talk.
4. A guest concentrating on Blanco's book signing at the Rediscovered Books table.
5. Blanco meeting several eager students after his talk.

Photos by Katherine Jones

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PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING WRITER VIET THANH NGUYEN REFLECTS ON REFUGEE EXPERIENCES AT COEUR D'ALENE EVENT LAST OCTOBER

RECAP OF COEUR D'ALENE EVENT



Pulitzer Prize-winning writer of *The Sympathizer*, Viet Thanh Nguyen delivered IHC's 16th Annual North Idaho Distinguished Humanities Lecture in late October at the Coeur d'Alene Resort to 500 guests. He discussed "Refugee Stories and American Greatness" to an engaged audience.

The day of events was made possible in part by major support from Marc and Vicki Brinkmeyer and Idaho Forest Group.

Earlier in the day, before an audience of several hundred Lake City and Coeur d'Alene High School students, Nguyen was interviewed by IHC alum Mike Kennedy about his writing process and experiences.

Before the evening event at the resort, Nguyen was welcomed at **Blair Williams' Art Spirit Gallery** by a large group of Benefactors for a private reception sponsored by the **Hagadone Corporation**.

The IHC hosted a special guest, the National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman Jon Parrish Peede and he expressed his thanks to the guests for attending.

The IHC also is grateful for additional critical support for the event from **Lewis-Clark State College, Coeur d'Alene, North Idaho College, University of Idaho, Coeur d'Alene, Coeur d'Alene Press** and **Idaho Public Television**.

Thank you to the following very generous individuals who helped share the evening with students through their donations to the student scholarship fund: Richard and Antje Cripe, Terry and Connie Montanye, Belinda and Timothy Gordon, George and Juli Ives, Joe and Lynn Morris, David Pettyjohn and Geoffrey Parks, Margaret Johnson, Timothy and Wanda Quinn, Kelly Groller, Kris Hannigan-Luther, Ken and Mary Thompson, Philip and Sandra Deutchman, and an anonymous fund in the Innovia Foundation.

Thanks also to **The Well-Read Moose** for facilitating book sales and the book signing at the resort that evening.



1. Viet Thanh Nguyen greeting Shawn Keough, a member of the State Board of Education, at the Benefactor reception at the Art Spirit Gallery.
2. Reception goes enjoying a brief moment with Nguyen.
3. Nguyen speaking to event attendees about growing up in America as a refugee.
4. National Endowment for the Humanities Chairman Jon Parrish Peede addressing the large crowd at the Coeur d'Alene Resort.
5. An event guest is getting Nguyen's *Sympathizer* book signed.

Photos by Loren Benoit



2019 SUMMER TEACHER INSTITUTE ON WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE WAS AN 'INSPIRATION'

RECAP OF TEACHER INSTITUTE

IHC's July weeklong teacher institute titled "*Are Women People?*" *The Journey for Voting Rights*, held on the campus of Boise State University, included 40 participating teachers from all regions of the state.

As the nation prepares to commemorate the centennial of the 19th Amendment, this institute offered an in-depth study of how women achieved the right to vote. Teachers explored the many stories of women's suffrage, paying attention to different strategies used, rationales given, and outcomes achieved. *The Women's Suffrage Movement*, edited by Sally Roesch Wagner (2019), was the institute text. Wagner also presented the opening keynote.

Presenting scholars included Katherine Aiken, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Idaho, Amy Canfield, Associate Professor of History at Lewis-Clark State College and IHC Executive Committee member, Janis Johnson, Assistant Professor of English, University of Idaho and IHC Board member, Maggie Rehm, Women's and Gender Studies, University of Idaho, and Rebecca Scofield, Assistant Professor of History, University of Idaho.

Some the participants offered these parting comments:

"Thank you so much for this opportunity. I am leaving so inspired and ready to share all of this inspiration with my students and staff."

"The vote is a power, a weapon of offense and defense, a prayer." -Carrie Chapman Catt. "I love this quote and it sums up why suffrage was such a necessary battle, and why this week was so necessary for me - to come to a greater understanding of how it all happened."

"I applied for this institute out of a fundamental desire to get to know the history of the women's vote at a deeper level. I am coming away feeling incredibly confident in that new knowledge and feeling empowered amongst so many people studying the same thing. It reminded me of that passion to learn that I used to have."



2019 Summer Teacher Institute Participants

IHC WELCOMES INTERN FROM BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY



DOUG EXTON

The IHC happily welcomes BSU student Doug Exton as a new team member for the spring semester. Doug is working on his Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a double minor in Urban Studies and Geospatial Information Systems. He is excited to learn about the work of the IHC and gain more knowledge about nonprofit management, the public sector, and the gem state. Doug will assist us in grants management, database organization, and programming initiatives.

Doug was lured west from Fairfax County, Virginia due to the appeal of the open spaces and ease to connect to nature. After graduation in May he plans to continue to live in Boise because he appreciates the people, city, and what Idaho has to offer.

Doug is an avid baker and plans to bring many samples of his goods to the office, which was a plus on his resume. Currently his favorite books are *Seven Deadly Wonders* by Matthew Reilly and *Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks* by Ken Jennings (the GOAT from Jeopardy). We are delighted to have him at IHC!

Boise Community Radio Project, Boise, was awarded \$1,000 for workshops during the 2019 Hermit Music Festival. Workshops shared traditions of American music and dance and offered a chance for participants to discuss and take part in instrumentation, vocalization, and musical history. The project director is **Ava Honey Whitlock**.

English Department - University of Idaho, Moscow, was awarded \$1,000 for the Palouse Literary Festival and to support fees for three writers (fiction, nonfiction, and poetry) to present during the festival. The project director is **Tobias Wray**.

KISU-FM Public Radio / Idaho State University, Ammon, was awarded \$1,000 for a unique radio project using interview audios from documentaries and interviews housed in the Grateful Dead Archive at the University of California, Santa Cruz. The station will air excerpts from the interviews along with contemporary guest interviews of historical biographers and journalist; interpretive commentary will be part of the program before and after the airing of the clips. The project director is **Cory Edmondson**.

Burley Public Library, Burley, was awarded \$1,000 to support "Rural Summit: Small Town Idaho in the Crossroads." The event featured panel discussions that addressed issues impacting rural Idaho including diversity, healthcare, agriculture, and education. The project director is **Tamara Garcia**.

TEACHER INCENTIVE GRANTS:



Kirsten Pomerantz, Lake City High School, Coeur d'Alene, was awarded \$800 to purchase kits that provide several puzzles and activities for students to more closely examine the literature assigned by teachers. They will be used for curriculum in the American Voices, Survival, and Civil Rights unit for 9th graders.

Pend Oreille Arts Council, Sandpoint, was awarded \$658 to bring Living Voices "Hear My Voice" to Sandpoint. They will present a program on the suffragist movement to students during five school performances and one public evening performance for the community. The project director is **Hannah Combs**.



Kelly Hughes, Garden Valley School, Garden Valley, was awarded \$1,000 to support a new interdisciplinary humanities course with drama, art, music, history, and literature teachers.



Heather Osterhout, Declo Elementary School, Declo, was awarded \$1,000 to support a lecture from Idaho Shakespeareance to enhance the study of Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet*. PHOTO: Students participating in Shakespeareance

MoMS PROGRAMMING GRANTS:

Latah County Historical Society, Moscow, Burley Public Library, Burley, and Lemhi County Historical Society, Salmon, were each awarded \$1500 to support the development of local programming to enhance the hosting of *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*, a traveling Smithsonian exhibit that explores issues facing the rural population. Programs included panel presentations, local exhibits, and reading & discussion programs.

OTHER PROJECTS:



Idaho Public Television, Boise, was awarded \$12,000 to continue the ongoing partnership with IHC to provide statewide airing of *American Experience* and *American Masters*. These insightful and thought-provoking documentary series chronicle important events and people in U.S. History. The project director is **Teri McColly**. PHOTO: N. Scott Momaday

Idaho Commission for Libraries, Boise, was awarded \$20,000 to continue the ongoing partnership with IHC to provide about 75 reading/discussion programs called *Let's Talk About It* in libraries across the state. About 15 libraries choose a themed series of five books. The grant supports facilitation of the program, including copies of the books for libraries to lend to patrons, and organizing and funding scholars to lead discussions of each of the book within the themes. Themes include: American Classics, Global Perspectives, Our Earth, Our Ethics, Western Fiction, and Connecting Generations.

THE NEXT DEADLINE FOR IHC GRANTS:

The next deadline for Idaho Humanities Council grant proposals, including Research Fellowship Applications, is **August 15, 2020 for the initial application**, and **September 15, 2020 for the final submission**. IHC strongly recommends that prospective applicants contact staff to discuss their project ideas before completing proposals. Grant guidelines and application instructions are available on IHC's website at www.idahohumanities.org, or by calling 208-345-5346.



TEACHERS! SAVE THE DATE! JULY 20-25, 2020 SUMMER INSTITUTE: POETRY AS PROTEST

Teachers are invited to apply to attend IHC's summer institute "Poetry as Protest: Dissent Through Song and Literature"

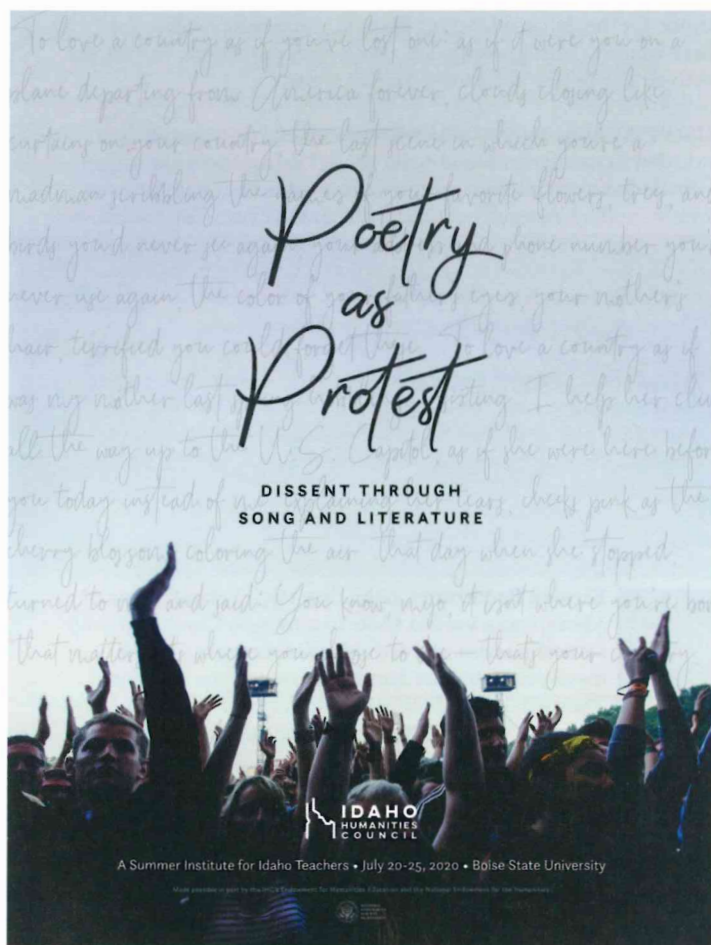
Idaho teachers of all grades and disciplines are invited to apply to attend IHC's 2020 weeklong summer institute, titled *Poetry as Protest: Dissent through Song and Literature*, July 20-25 (Monday through Saturday), on the campus of Boise State University. Successful applicants will receive lodging and meals, texts, and the opportunity for optional college credit. Community college teachers also are eligible to apply.

The deadline for online applications is March 1, 2020. For application instructions, visit www.idahohumanities.org.

In the book *Songs of America: Patriotism, Protest, and the Music That Made a Nation*, Jon Meacham writes "Through all the years of strife, we've been shaped not only by our words and our deeds but by our music, by the lyrics and the instrumentals that have carried us through dark days and enabled us to celebrate bright ones." And, in his poem, "Mother Country," Richard Blanco reminds us "to love a country as if you've lost one" and "it isn't where you're born that matters, it's where you choose to die – that's your country." This institute will explore poetry and song focusing on several themes and historical eras and will examine multiple minority voices and several genres, including protest music, rap, hip-hop, and slam poetry.

Participants will delve into the history of dissent and historical influences on contemporary authors. Teachers will discuss ways to help students become engaged in the study and creation of poetry. The week-long institute will include daily poetry readings, scholarly lectures offering historical content and context of poetry and song, workshops on creating and teaching poetry, and special evening presentations open to the public.

For more information call the IHC office, (208) 345-5346, or contact Cindy Wang at cindy@idahohumanities.org.





SAVE THE DATE!

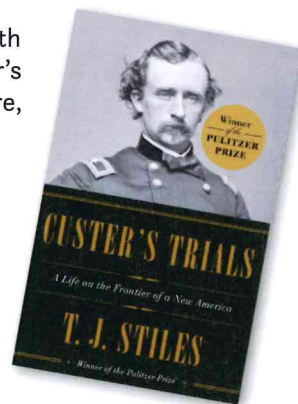
HISTORIAN T.J. STILES TO SPEAK IN IDAHO FALLS IN APRIL



Two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize, historian T.J. Stiles will be the speaker at the Idaho Humanities Council's 13th Annual Eastern Idaho Distinguished Humanities Lecture and Dinner on **Thursday, April 30, 7 p.m., at the DEC* in Idaho Falls.** Stiles will speak about his last book *Custer's Trials: A Life on the Frontier of a New America*, which won the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for History.

Tickets are available by visiting www.idahohumanities.org or by calling the IHC at 208-345-5346. General tickets are \$50 and Benefactor tickets are \$75. Benefactors are invited to a small private pre-event reception with Mr. Stiles at 5:30 p.m. The evening will begin with a no-host reception and music at 6:15 p.m. at the DEC. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m., with Stiles's talk to follow. Stiles's books will be available from Barnes and Noble onsite for signing afterwards.

Custer's Trials paints a portrait of Gen. George Armstrong Custer both deeply personal and sweeping in scope, proving how much of Custer's legacy has been ignored. He demolishes Custer's historical caricature, revealing a volatile, contradictory, intense person – capable yet insecure, intelligent yet bigoted, passionate yet self-destructive, a romantic individualist at odds with the institution of the military (he was court-martialed twice in six years). The key to understanding Custer, Stiles writes, is that he lived on a frontier in *time*.



Stiles also won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Biography and the 2009 National Book Award for Nonfiction for his critically acclaimed book *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*. Stiles served as historical adviser and on-screen expert for *Jesse James* and *Grand Central*, two films in the PBS documentary series *American Experience*. He has written for *The New York Times Book Review*, *Smithsonian*, *Salon*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other publications.

A native of Benton County, Minnesota, Stiles studied history at Carleton College and Columbia University, and resided in New York City for twenty years. He lives in San Francisco with his wife and son.

Seats are limited. *Denotes new venue this year.

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what are
you reading?

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



Reader: Meg Lojek

Occupation: Library Director,
McCall Public Library, McCall

Book: *Lab Girl* by Hope Jahren

Hope Jahren thinks everyone has a special tree they can remember in exquisite detail from their childhood (I do). The difference

with Jahren is that her fascination with trees never waned. This memoir shows how she persevered to establish herself as a premier geo-biologist --even when she faced extreme challenges from a male-dominated world and from her own internal struggles with manic depression. She draws subtle conclusions between the plants and the people in her life. Both are developing, struggling to survive, adapting, but the metaphor isn't heavy-handed.

I found this book to be beautifully written and a unique intersection of the humanities and the sciences. I finished *Lab Girl* with a newfound appreciation of trees as beautiful, complex systems. Jahren's heartfelt descriptions of organisms that survive and even thrive in harsh climates by knowing when to withdraw and reserve-- and when to reach for the sunlight-- put the wonder back into biology for me. Trees have a lot to teach us.



Reader: Kenton Bird

Occupation: Associate Professor,
School of Journalism and Mass
Media, University of Idaho,
Moscow

Book: *A Pilgrimage to Eternity:
From Canterbury to Rome in
Search of a Faith* by Timothy Egan

Idaho readers may be familiar with Timothy Egan's far-reaching history of the 1910 forest fires (*The Big Burn*, 2010) or his earlier saga about the Dust Bowl and how it affected a generation of Americans (*The Worst Hard Time*, 2006). Egan's latest book, *A Pilgrimage to Eternity*, is the story of a spiritual quest and a personal journey. It begins at Canterbury Cathedral in England and finishes in Vatican City. In between, Egan visits monasteries, libraries and shrines as he explores firsthand the history of Christianity in Europe. Traveling mostly alone (later joined by family members) and on foot (though occasionally by train or car), Egan seeks to discover what he believes through encounters with the sacred. It's an inspiring and informative book from a Pulitzer prize-winning reporter and *New York Times* columnist who grew up in Spokane.