



"...because people read t-shirts."

Vol. 12/No. 1 • April 2005

Upcoming Biblio Events

JAMES CASTLE, ICEHOUSE UNTO EARLY ATTIC: BOOKS & ART

29 April – 1 June 2005, Student Union Gallery, Boise State University
Reception 5:30 – 7pm April 29th

The Idaho Center for the Book traveling exhibition provides a unique and inspiring panorama of books and drawings by autistic, self-taught Idaho artist/bookmaker James Castle (1899-1977). Previously exhibited in New York City, Chicago, Canada, and England, the ICB show, in addition to rare, early Castle works recovered in an Idaho icehouse, now features additional art works and recently discovered Early Attic visual narratives by Castle, "translated" for the first time.

BOOKER'S DOZEN 2006 – June-August

Idaho bookmakers: enter handmade bookworks for consideration in the ICB travelling exhibition, BOOKER'S DOZEN. Fourteen books by Idahoans will be selected for the 2006 tour. No entry or reading fees. Call or write the ICB for entry details (contact information on p. 2).

ILLITERACY SMACK-DOWN

by Stacy Zehm

WEST OF 105 DEGREES: A BOOK ARTS RENDEZVOUS — by Paula Jull, Megan Martindale, and Madelyn Garrett

This issue's literary t-shirt by Matt Evans features a stationary global traveler!

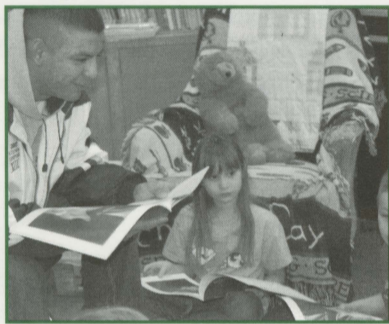


ILLITERACY SMACK-DOWN !!!

by Stacy Zehm

North Idaho College, first-graders, automobiles, and college wrestlers might seem like a strange combination of subjects, except when used to describe the Shirley Parker Reading Program, established in Coeur d'Alene to encourage reading as a life skill for local first-grade students.

Established by the North Idaho College wrestling program in partnership with local auto dealership Parker Toyota in honor of owner Doug Parker's late wife Shirley, the program brings NIC's champion wrestling team into first-grade classrooms throughout the Coeur d'Alene School District as mentors to promote reading.



North Idaho College wrestler Jaime Garcia reads to first-graders at Borah Elementary School in Coeur d'Alene during the Shirley Parker Reading Program in 2003. As part of the program, NIC wrestlers and coaches go to area elementary schools and read to a first-grade class each week during the wrestling season.

Through this unique partnership, literally hundreds of children are encouraged to get excited about books and reading each year.

A lady's love for reading – and wrestling

Shirley Parker believed in reading and the knowledge and inspiration books could bring to people of all ages.

She was an active member of the Coeur d'Alene community and was instrumental in the establishment of the Hayden Library in North Idaho.

A community servant, a wife, a mother, and a true lady, Shirley was a gentle woman*until she set foot in the NIC gym to cheer on the young men on the wrestling mat.

The Parkers's son Jim, now the president of Parker Toyota since Doug's retirement, was a wrestler and the family has always enjoyed the sport. The Parkers have supported NIC wrestling for years and have seen the faces of wrestlers and coaches change through more than thirty seasons as followers

of the Cardinal wrestling dynasty.

"Shirley was a huge supporter as well as a huge fan of NIC wrestling," said Pat Whitcomb, head coach of NIC's thirteen-time National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) national champion wrestling team and a former NIC wrestler himself.

The reading program was established by the NIC wrestling program in 2000 as a way for the athletes to give back to the community. After Shirley's death in 2002, the team decided to pay tribute to her and keep her memory alive by naming the reading program in her honor.

"NIC athletics is heavily focused on academics and community service in addition to the sport, so this program means a lot to us as a team," Whitcomb said. "It seemed so fitting to honor a cherished wrestling fan by naming the program after her. A program focused on one of her greatest passions – reading.

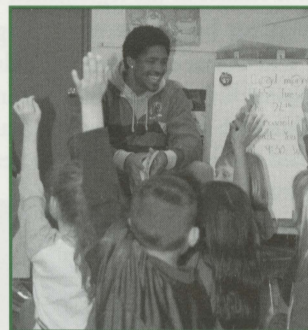
Getting excited about books

The North Idaho College wrestling team holds a fundraiser at the end of its preseason to support the program. The players collect pledges toward their completion of a mountain climb in Hope, Idaho, typically raising approximately \$1,000 that goes toward the purchase of books for every first-grader in the Coeur d'Alene School District.

Each week during the season, NIC wrestlers and coaches visit a local elementary school to read to the first-graders. The children are encouraged to take their book home to continue practicing their reading skills in addition to receiving a bookmark and poster of the wrestling team.

"It's important that the program doesn't stop when we walk out the door," Whitcomb said. "We want them to continue the reading experience."

Last year the Shirley Parker Reading Program benefited nearly 700 students, including all first-graders from the



NIC wrestler Josh Edmundson talks with a group of first graders at Borah Elementary School while reading to the kids during the Shirley Parker Reading Program this year.

Coeur d'Alene School District's ten elementary schools. This year, Whitcomb said he anticipates giving out the program's 3,000th book, *Clifford for President*.

NIC wrestlers enjoy the opportunity to take over where Shirley Parker left off, watching imaginations run wild by transforming from wrestlers to teachers to fierce action heroes and cuddly brown bears right before the children's eyes.

"It's really fun to hang out with the kids, especially when they're so excited to hang out with you," said NIC wrestler Kyle Frawley, who has been reading to the kids through the program since he enrolled at NIC in 2002.

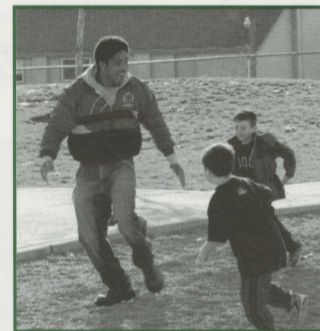
The wrestlers always make time to visit with the kids after reading and have even been known to sign a few autographs on the kids' books or on the wrestling team's posters or programs. The wrestlers play with the children during recess after the reading session to not only bond with the children, but to encourage fitness as well.

This year, the wrestling team visited several elementary schools during drug awareness week to talk about the effects of drug use on athletic performance and to encourage kids to be drug free.

The children really look up to the wrestlers. Literally.

First-grade teachers love to watch the looks on the kids' faces when the team of champion wrestlers walks into the classroom. Ranging from 125 to 280 pounds, the NIC wrestlers demand attention just by their presence.

Although there are always a few kids disappointed when Hulk Hogan or their other favorite professional wrestlers don't walk through the door, most of the children's eyes widen at the size and celebrity-like status of the wrestling team.



NIC wrestler Josh Edmundson plays with first-graders during recess.

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West of 105 Degrees Longitude – A Book Arts Rendezvous

by Paula Jull and Megan Martindale

Megan recalls asking, "Do you think anyone will send us their work?" as we pondered the possibility of spending over a year planning and executing a juried show of artist's books.

As officers of the Pocatello Book Arts group, we had set a goal to host and participate in a professionally juried exhibit in 2004. It was time for us to put ourselves as a club out there, to create a forum for book artists in the west to show their work, and reflect the diversity and imagination of this region's artists.

We also wanted to give our communities a chance to experience the work in person. There is no substitute for seeing the real thing, especially the hand held, interactive artist's book.

When it got down to defining eligibility, we simply opened an atlas, and pointed to Denver, Colorado, as a defining line. There is a thriving group of active practitioners in that city, and we wanted to include them. It just happened that 105 degrees longitude intersects the metropolitan area, so we chose "West of 105 Degrees Longitude" for the show title, later shortened to "West of 105."

The call for entries encouraged participants to offer accessibility to their work and many sent pieces that either had to be handled to be "read" or allowed for such interaction. The content was open to the discretion of the artists, and the result was a broad and satisfying assortment of statements from the poignant to the humorous.

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A Note from the Curator

by Madelyn Garrett

"West of 105" was an exhibition defined by geography. It celebrated the diverse range of current work by book artists who live and work in the West. It was also an exhibition that paid tribute to the orneriness, optimism, adventurousness, and iconoclasm that still defines the country west of 105 degrees longitude, long after its colonization by nineteenth-century visionaries, trailblazers, refugees, and misfits.

Although the physical landscape was tamed, sadly, long ago, the virtual vistas of Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Cole still resonate, inspire, and inform our idea of all things "western." The West of our imagination – the vast unknown distance toward which our ancestors headed – was always more a state of mind than a geographical locus. It still is. Looking West is a universal impulse. Like Apollo driving his chariot, we follow the sun.

The entries for West of 105 were cheerfully diverse, reflecting a wide range of interests and materials. Fine press, bookbinding, and artists' books were all represented. From the playful to the political, from the traditional to the edgy, the books submitted for "West of 105" reflect what is happening "right now" in Book Arts in the West.

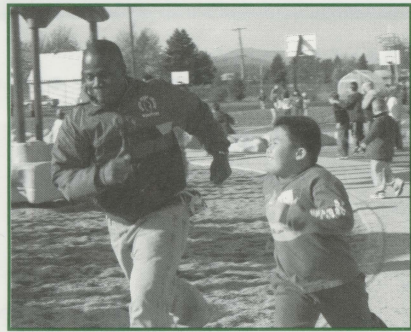
Selecting the books that would become "West of 105" was as enjoyable as it was difficult. The task of the juror is to select books, based upon predetermined criteria. The disparate books submitted were individual entities, examined for form, content, craftsmanship, as well as how successfully each of these qualities was integrated into the final submission. But it goes further. Each book must also be selected based upon its individual contribution to the whole. In the end, each book selected will become a part

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"It's priceless to see these big guys sitting in those little chairs in front of a floor full of kids, really connecting with them," Whitcomb said. "I truly believe they are making a difference in the lives of these kids."

Softening the hearts of both big and small

Somehow, as the North Idaho College student-athletes come to discover, community servants tend to receive so much gratification from giving to others that it far outweighs the effort they put in.



NIC wrestler Ken Gray runs with a first-grader at recess. The NIC wrestling team reads to the kids and interacts with them through the Shirley Parker Reading Program.

Shirley Parker believed it and such is the case for the NIC wrestlers who present the children with story time and

books. The satisfaction of making a difference in a child's life makes them feel like the winners.

"The program really does two things," Doug Parker said. "The first is obvious in the benefits it brings to the kids through that community service, but it also shows the community that there's a lot more to these wrestlers than meets the eye. They're out there working in their communities and making a real contribution outside of sports or NIC."

Frawley, who moved to the area from Tacoma when he enrolled at NIC, said he had done some community service back home, but had never had the chance to work one on one with kids before.

Oddly enough the prospect of working with dozens of the pint-sized first-graders seemed an intimidating thought at first to many of the wrestlers, but Frawley said he is glad to have had the opportunity to work with the kids in the elementary schools and help teach them the importance of reading to both their educations and their lives.

"Some of these kids don't really have anyone else to look up to, to play with them or read to them," Frawley said. "It's a positive experience for everyone involved."

Everyone. From the kids, to the coaches, to the players and teachers as well as those who see Shirley Parker's memory live on within the young faces of the children inspired through this program.

"We're really out there to make a difference in these kids' lives," Frawley said. "But I think we enjoy it as much as the kids do."

Reading program receives regional recognition

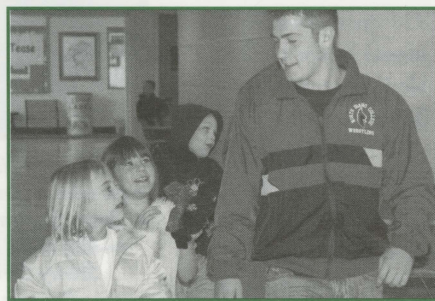
The Shirley Parker Reading Program received national attention when the Parker Toyota dealership and the NIC wrestling team were featured in the July 2003 issue of *Time Magazine* for their work with area first-graders.

Parker Toyota was honored for the 17th consecutive year as a recipient of the Toyota President's Award, which is given for excellence in all aspects of dealership operations. The ad space in *Time Magazine* was provided by Toyota to feature the award-winning dealerships, and Parker Toyota decided to profile one of its most rewarding service partnerships, the Shirley Parker Reading Program, in front of thousands of *Time* readers in the regionalized Pacific Northwest issues.

Writing bug hits wrestling coach

Whether or not it was the kids or the "writing bug" that inspired him to fulfill his life's ambition to write a book, Whitcomb accomplished his goal last year when he published his first book. It was a dream that took over a decade to reach.

Whitcomb was once a high school economics teacher and to fill time while on summer vacation of his first year of teaching in Kingston, Idaho, in 1990,



NIC wrestler Joe Vananman talks with kids in the hallway at Borah Elementary.

Whitcomb began writing a story about three college friends who reunite annually to play golf and reminisce. He continued to work on the book for eight years, sometimes writing all night, other times not writing for months.

When it was finished, he shared it with his wife Jan, whom he met while the two were attending North Idaho College and with whom he now shares four children. Jan read it, loved it. Then she shared it with the members of her book club who also enjoyed it and decided to encourage Whitcomb to publish it.

He started his own publishing company, Autumn Mist Books, based in Hope, Idaho, and printed "A Walk in Autumn's Mist" in November 2003.

"The book is doing very well," Whitcomb said. "It feels good to have seen the project to completion."

A seed planted benefits all involved

Long after the death of Shirley Parker, the reading program named in her honor is reaping valuable rewards for all the parties involved in it: children excited about reading, a coach realizing his dream of being a published author, a young team of wrestlers who are better people because of the gratification they've received, knowing they were able to touch the life of a child.

In this unlikely mix of characters, books were the component that helped create the synergy of the Shirley Parker Reading Program, making the individuals involved in it the real champions.

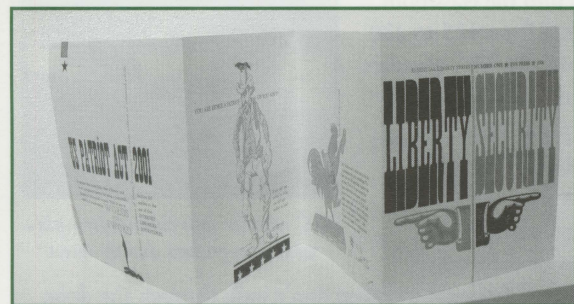


The Time Magazine article printed July 28, 2003 on the Shirley Parker Reading Program.

West of 105 Degrees Longitude – continued from page 1

We were delighted to have a juror of quality and reputation in Madelyn Garrett, who selected artists from eight states, who met standards of professionalism and conceptual accomplishment in this overview of contemporary artist's books.

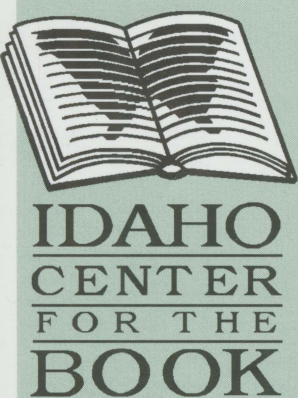
They arrived packaged with care, wrapped and re-wrapped in tissue paper or cushioned by Styrofoam peanuts. Typed and hand-addressed labels were attached to brown, corrugated boxes or recycled, padded envelopes. Whispering, pale pages offered a look into a region of book artists.



The topics of Elsi Vassdal Elli's current work are religion, politics, war, and terrorism. "Liberty|Security" was printed on 30+ year old safety paper she rescued from the recycling bin following a basement clean-up at Western Washington University, her colophon states. "I elected to do a commentary on the U. S. Patriot Act of 2001," says the artist. "The text has been minimized for this piece. Instead, I drew upon my sizable collection of cuts and ornaments and combined them with wood type."

Forty-two books were selected and displayed in the Transition Gallery at Idaho State University, and later at the second venue, the Spori Gallery at BYU-Idaho. Megan conceived the "book buffet" display area, where small books could be feasted upon in a cozy counter style presentation. She also created the phrases, "An Unfolding Encounter," "A Stream of Dialogue," and "A Hand Held Utterance" on book pages to connect the wall areas to the work and the viewer.

"The physical presence of books is often understated. The wall text, letters on fluttering book pages, was intended to act as a linear link, a trail of breadcrumbs, to pull the viewers into and through the gallery. Additionally, we wanted to encourage consumption of the work. Turning pages is necessary for the proper digestion of artist's books," Megan observes. "Viewers of art are conditioned to look and not touch. The book buffet indulged the viewers' impulse for tactile manipulation."



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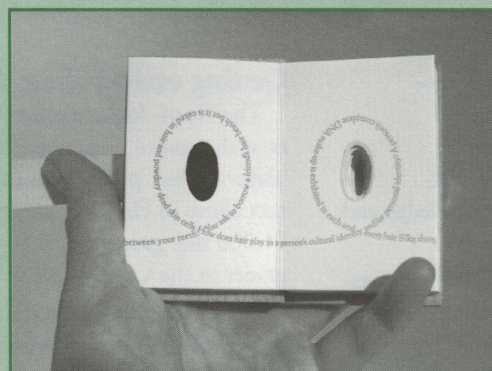
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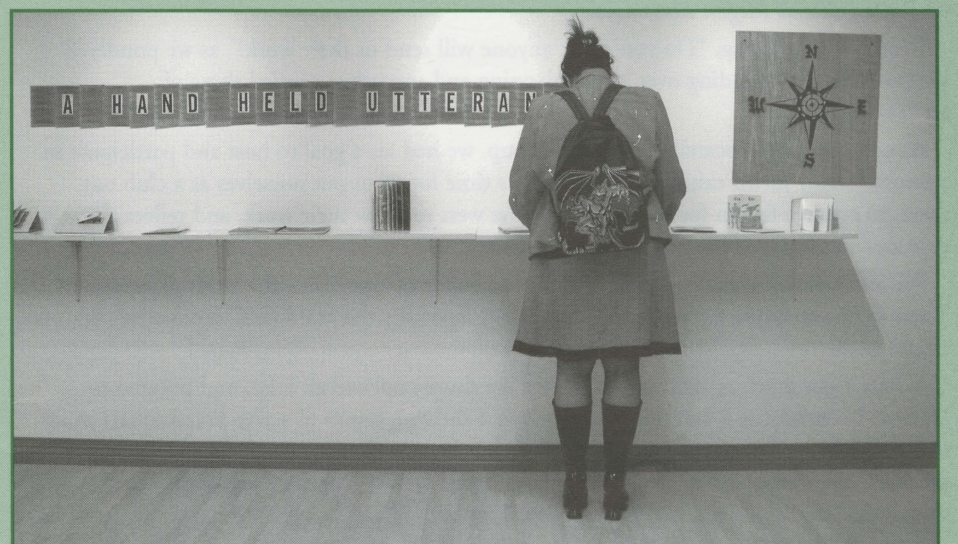
of a larger, integrated entity, as the substance and personality of the exhibition itself emerges.

It was my privilege to be part of a process that once again brought to the fore the important question of "What is a book?" This exhibition challenged all conventional answers to that question. I hope it also raised many more questions. What are the relationships between form and content? How important are design and craftsmanship and can you have one without the other? These and similar queries allow viewers and book makers alike to rediscover the amazing adaptability and endurance of the book.

"West of 105" was an important exhibition. It showed off traditional letterpress printing, thoughtful typography, intuitive illustration, and imaginative artists' books painstakingly produced. Ultimately each book was a testament to the far-sightedness that looking West inspires."



In "Black Hole," the text asks, "How does hair play in a person's cultural identity and/or personal identity? A person's complete DNA make-up is exhibited in each and every hair. Silky, shiny...., salt and pepper, grey, white, redhead, strawberry blonde, dyed blond...." This tiny letterpress print spirals around a row of holes receding to a final black opening, filled with a wound ball of human hair. Diane Jacobs of Portland, Oregon crafted this exquisite little book.



Biblio-diner, partaking of "The Book Buffet."

View "West of 105" @ <http://www.isu.edu/~martmega/>