

THE CRUMB

The Bread Loaf
Writers' Conference

VOL. 81

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2006

NO. 8

"It's fresh, so very fresh."

Today's Events

7:30 a.m.

Breakfast, Bread Loaf Inn

9 - 10 a.m.

Lecture: "Somatic Wisdom in Fiction," with Kevin McIlvoy, Little Theatre

10:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

Poetry and Nonfiction workshops

1 - 2 p.m.

Lunch, Bread Loaf Inn

2:30 p.m.

Craft classes

4:15 p.m.

Reading: Jennifer Grotz and Josip Novakovich, Little Theatre

5:30 p.m.

- Special talk: Mark DeVoto reads from his father's letters, Little Theatre
- Blue Parlor reading, the Barn

6:30 p.m.

Dinner, Bread Loaf Inn

8:15 p.m.

Reading: Laila Lalami and Carl Phillips, Little Theatre

9:30 p.m.

Waiter reading, Little Theatre

Got C•R•A•F•T?

Locations for today's classes (2:30 to 3:30 p.m.) follow. Wednesday's craft classes will be listed in Wednesday's Crumb.

Fiction

- "Plot: From Tabloids to the Greeks and Back Again," with Randall Kenan, Barn A
- "Writing Visceral Prose," with Nicholas Montemarano, Barn 5
- "Challenges in Using Metaphor," with Glaydah Namukasa, Barn 4
- "Using Dreams," with Ian Pounds, Barn East classroom

Poetry

- "Poets Write Memoir," with Toi Derricotte, Barn 1
- "Zbigniew Herbert's Strategems and Crimes," with Jennifer Grotz, Barn 2
- "Little Engines: Moving Forward Without Narrative," with Richard Siken, Barn 6

Nonfiction

- "Worth a Thousand Pictures," with Ted Conover, Barn 3

Ordering Bread Loaf 2006 Audio

The conference makes lectures and readings available for purchase on CD. Each CD will cost \$6 (includes shipping and handling). You'll find an order form in your mailbox by the end of Thursday, and the forms, with payment, will be due by 10 p.m. on Saturday. The college can only accept cash and checks for the audio orders.

Waiter Reading Part II Tonight

Come watch the waiters do their thing in the Little Theatre at 9:30 p.m. They're dancing maniacs. They're a pack of writing wonders.

Departure Reservations

The following Bread Loafers need to confirm departure information with the front desk by 9 a.m. today: **Coté, Wong, O'Keefe, Austin, and Hall (J)**. Those from this list who don't confirm by this deadline may not have transportation to the airport at the end of the conference. (For real.)

Lunch to Be Served by Faculty and Fellows Today

It will be a sit-down meal, served from **1 to 2 p.m.** in the dining hall.

Note to **Faculty and Fellows** serving lunch today: please arrive at the dining hall at **12:15 p.m.** for advanced training in restaurant service.

Announcements

Soccer players needed

Sign up to play soccer tomorrow (Thursday) at 1 p.m., on the field next to the barn. Six players are signed up so far. More welcome. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board near the Back Office.

Massage

Bread Loaf Barn East Wednesday 12:30 - 6:30 p.m. times available. Thursday 10 - 11 a.m. or 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. last time available at the conference. Thanks to all the clients!

Share a Ride

LuLu would love to share a ride into Burlington on Sunday. Her plane departs at 4 p.m., but she doesn't mind getting to the airport early. Please find her or leave a note in Box 2374.

Hoping to share a ride home after the conference? We'll post a ride board near the dining hall door. Look for it after dinner this evening.

Visitors

Join us in welcoming the following visitors to the mountain: David Barber, HG Carrillo, Ted Genoways, Linda Pastan, C. Dale Young, Christopher Castellani, Merrill Feitell, Patrick Phillips, Joshua Wolf Shenk, Patrick Donnelly, and Carolyn Kuebler. The following conference guests will be leaving the mountain today: H. Emerson Blake, Peter Connors, MMM Hayes, and Thom Ward.

Overheard

"If Oedipus calls, tell him I'm not here."
"You got your lyric in my rhetoric."
"When someone says something like that, you can't just go back to where you were before."
"All my best friends are chocolate."

DeVoto Talk at 5:30 p.m. in the Little Theatre
Bernard DeVoto at Bread Loaf: Mark DeVoto reads from his father's letters

PARTING SHOT. At Bread Loaf, who said to Robert Frost's face: "You're a good poet, Robert, but you're a bad man." Answer: Bernard DeVoto, in 1938. Bread Loaf historian David Bain writes: "The prize-winning Bernard DeVoto (1897-1955) was an amazing storyteller. He wrote one of the best books of American narrative history, Year of Decision—a powerful montage—and one of the best books on his idol Mark Twain. As a literary critic in the 30's, 40's, and 50's, he was loved, hated, feared, and revered. He had courage: he stood up to establishmentarians, the witchhunting Senator McCarthy, and the FBI, and was one of our early environmentalists. And no one with the possible exception of Wallace Stegner wrote more vividly about the Bread Loaf experience. DeVoto's collected letters are a joy—funny, incisively opinionated, and energetic. Mark DeVoto, his son, is an eminent composer and musicologist (Reed College, UNH, and Tufts) who as a boy came to Bread Loaf when the giants were rattling the windows.

Get to Know the Faculty, a Quiz

(There will be no new challenge today because, well, there was a staff reading last night and things got out of hand. Tune in tomorrow.)
Yesterday's challenge: Name the faculty member who was fired by a boss named Howie at a restaurant called the Floradora. Answer: Antonya Nelson.

Reading Change for Today

Please note that Jennifer Grotz will be reading with Josip Novakovich at 4:15 p.m. today.

Proof your name in the directory—Thursday

On Thursday, we'll have a master copy of the directory in the Blue Parlor, so Bread Loafers can stop by throughout the day to check their listing, and make any changes needed. We will then revise the listing and put directories in mailboxes on Saturday. The directory will include contact info for all participants, including faculty, guests, and staff.

Get Well Card for a Veteran Bread Loafer

Norton Girault, Bread Loaf veteran, is feeling much better, and we hope he will be able to rejoin us soon. If you would like to add your name to our poster-sized get well card, look for it on the table near the mailboxes in the Bread Loaf Inn.

In a Vermont Minute

Have you ever wondered what you can do in a minute? Here are a few suggestions: check your mailbox (check ‘em people, check ‘em), sign up for a craft class, get some coffee in the dining room, and um, read at the “One Minute in Heaven Reading.” Yes folks, in a Vermont (which is very different than the NY one) minute, you can get your work out into the world. Tonight, come to the Barn at 5:30 p.m. for the fastest reading on the mountain. See what amazing things can happen in one page of writing.

There are still spaces available to read tonight, so please sign up! Also, this morning sign-ups for the Pink Parlor reading went up and space is still available for Thursday’s “Religion and Politics” reading. As always, make sure your reading is timed to 5 minutes and write your name comprehensibly. Puns? Thoughts on the meaning of life? Then talk to Blue Parlor Duchess Nina McConigley.

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New Work

(Excerpts from the workshops)

He asked for the afterbirth and the nurses gave it to him. I guess they figured he was going to do some sort of protection ritual with it. He took it out to one of his sites and buried it. He says that right after birth the electrical charge of the placenta is incredibly strong and he is wondering if it may help produce an anomaly he can then measure. I suppose it makes no difference—after all, in an American hospital they would have just thrown it out—but I have to admit it feels strange that part of me and my baby—the part we shared for nine months—is now buried in Africa.

- from “Thick Weather,” by Kathleen Gurnett

The boy’s wet blond hair fanned across his forehead as if he’d just climbed out of a pool. His lips were blue and his unmoving eyes stared up past long, wet lashes. His teeth rested against the plastic tube the paramedics had slipped down his windpipe. He looked like my son, John. And he was dead.

I was frozen by the enormity of what I faced. “Paul,” one of the nurses called me. “Continue CPR,” I said reflexively to the nurse poised over the child’s chest. I told myself to just do the drill. This small thing on my stretcher wasn’t a child: he was a series of decisions I had to make, an exercise the team and I had to go through. And any redemption we could pull from that room would be a function of how well we did our jobs. On some level, it didn’t matter whether the small wet thing would become a child again or would be taken to the morgue: our only hope for solace would hinge on working quickly and efficiently.

- from “Something for the Pain,” by Paul Austin