

November 2006

Dear Friends of the Bread Loaf School of English:

I am writing to you once more to ask that you consider making a gift to Bread Loaf. We have many needs for the money. It is my long-range goal to offer 100% of demonstrated need to all students applying for financial aid, to raise faculty, staff, and actors' salaries, and to assist in Middlebury College's mammoth enterprise of renovating every building on the Bread Loaf campus. If you choose to give a gift to a specific named scholarship, your gift will go into the endowment for that scholarship and will help to provide funding for worthy recipients in perpetuity. We have a new named scholarship this year. Sadly, Tim Miller, universally loved by his Bread Loaf colleagues and teachers, died in September 2005; his many friends, led by his fellow Kentuckian Joan Altman, at once set up a fund in his memory and honor. If you choose to give your gift to the general Bread Loaf fund, your gift will be used to help fund the program in our next session.

You should have received by now one or two appeals from the Middlebury Gift Planning Office, asking you to consider making a gift in the form of an annuity, a trust, or a bequest. I know that it is tempting to regard such letters and brochures as junk mail; but I hope you will give some thought to this. When Lucy and I explored the possibility of a gift annuity to Bread Loaf last spring, I was quite startled to learn that the return on the annuity for the rest of our lives would amount to more than the income on any other fixed-income source I was aware of. If you are interested in learning more about these means of giving, contact Dan Breen (802-443-5864; dbreen@middlebury.edu) or Deb Wales (802-443-5616; dwales@middlebury.edu). You can also write to either of them at:

Office of Gift Planning
College Advancement
Munford House
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753

Any gift given in any form will go exclusively to Bread Loaf, not to Middlebury College general funds.

If you read the messages to Cyberbarn on BreadNet, you already know that I am suspending Bread Loaf's program in Alaska. The reasons are purely financial, having to do with low enrollments and nothing to do with the program there or our host institution, the University of Alaska Southeast. I hope, but at this point cannot promise, that the withdrawal will be only temporary. UAS has been an exceedingly generous and welcoming host. Many summers when I have made the rounds of the various campuses, the students in Alaska have seemed to me perhaps the happiest of any students on any campus. Emily and I will revisit the question of our presence in Alaska periodically over the coming years.

Now for the tour of the other four campuses.

The Elizabeth Drew Lecturer in Vermont this past summer was former Bread Loaf faculty member Oskar Eustis. Oskar no longer teaches with us, only because he has become Artistic Director of what is probably the most important theater in the country, the Public Theatre in New York. Oskar spoke stirringly of the power of democratic theater to help build and sustain communities. We will no doubt be hearing, in the coming years, about Oskar's artistic triumphs as well as the outreach efforts of the Public Theatre.

Another visitor to the Bread Loaf campus was Julia Alvarez, who read from her new book, *Saving the World*. Julia has also increasingly worked with the large cadre of Bread Loaf teachers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, many of whose students come from Julia's own native Dominican Republic.

Our major theatrical production this past summer was contemporary playwright Charles Mee's *Big Love*, an Aeschylus-based play about (among many other things) gender roles. Probably only those who saw it can understand what I mean when I say that it was certainly the most acrobatic Bread Loaf play in anyone's memory. We already know what the major production will be for summer 2007: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

Four faculty members who were absent last summer will return to Vermont in 2007: Susanne Wofford, John Elder, John Fyler, and Jonathan Strong. Cheryl Glenn, who teaches truly fascinating courses on how we engage with writing and how our writing mediates our engagement with the world, will be the only new faculty member in Vermont next summer. In addition, Bread Loaf has a new technology director, who joined us last summer and who will work with us year-round: Middlebury College's own Shel Sax, who has for many years been a prominent leader in using technology in pedagogy.

The renovation of the Bread Loaf campus proceeds apace. A beautifully renovated and refurbished Brandybrook was back online last summer. If all goes according to schedule, Birch and the Homer Noble farmhouse will be renovated by next summer. In addition, wireless capabilities on the campus will be strengthened and extended by next summer. All of these improvements (along with the rebuilding of Johnson's Pond--now renamed John's Pond in honor of Middlebury's former president John McCardell) attest to the substantial commitment to Bread Loaf that President Ron Liebowitz first promised in his inaugural address two years ago.

Meanwhile, Bread Loaf's year-round work with various networks of teachers continues, in inspiring ways. We have worked with networks of teachers in Lawrence, Massachusetts and Greenville, South Carolina for many years, and school administrators themselves acknowledge that the Bread Loaf teachers have had a marked impact on their entire school systems. Using generous gifts from the state and from private foundations, Bread Loaf has been working with another network of teachers in Kentucky for almost a decade. This coming year, we hope to ramp up our efforts in Trenton and New Orleans,

two cities where we have been active in the past. We continue to seek outside funding to bring teachers to Bread Loaf and to work with them year-round.

A highlight of the summer in New Mexico was that Sandra Cisneros returned there for a reading of her work. Next summer, Claire Sponsler will again direct there. Suzanne Keen, who has previously taught only at our Alaska campus, will be teaching in New Mexico in 2007. Kate Flint will also be returning there after a summer's absence. Maria Spicer-Escalante, who taught at our Mexico campus in 2004, will be teaching a course on multicultural education. Her husband, Juan Pablo Spicer, will teach a course on Latin American fiction. Many of you will have noticed that Bruce Smith taught a course last summer that took advantage of the offerings at the Santa Fe Opera (I was led to slap my forehead in disbelief that I had never asked anyone to teach such a course before). The trips to the opera attracted many students who were not enrolled in the course, just as "Page and Stage" in Oxford often attracts many theater-goers who are not themselves Page-and-Stagers. The season next summer will include (among other operas) Puccini's *La Boheme*, Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*, and Richard Strauss's *Daphne*.

At Oxford last summer we welcomed new faculty members Jon Mee and Sophie Ratcliffe. John Fyler led his class on a Chaucerian pilgrimage through London, and Peter McCullough led one of his classes on a tour of Cotswold churches and the other class (on the Restoration and early eighteenth century culture and literature) on a tour of landscape gardens and of Restoration sites in London. Not only will Peter be teaching that second course again in 2007; he has also agreed to be Bread Loaf on-site director at Lincoln College for the summer session. Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, who last taught for us in 2004, will return to the faculty in 2007. Long-time faculty member Jeri Johnson is taking the summer off. Miriam Gilbert is already in the process of choosing the plays for "Page and Stage." The one new faculty member at Oxford next summer will be medievalist Nick Perkins.

Under the leadership of Tilly Warnock, our Asheville campus had a very successful opening and first summer. The opening, which I was happy to be able to attend, included a full Southern-style barbecue and music by a local bluegrass band (both provided by UNCA). John Warnock used his "Writing about Place" course to introduce his students to many local sites in that culturally rich part of the country. Noted Southern historian John Shelton Reed early in the summer gave a talk, "What's Southern about the South?" Located near Asheville is Warren Wilson College, site of probably the most well-known low-residence MFA program in the country. Middlebury College's own Rob Cohen, a fiction writer, was in attendance at Warren Wilson this past summer and came over to give a reading to the Bread Loaf students. I hope that this is the first step toward a mutually beneficial affiliation between Bread Loaf and Warren Wilson. Many of you will no doubt be interested to know that Alaska veteran Jeff Nunokawa will be teaching in Asheville next summer. So will Catherine Tudish, who spent her first summer in Vermont this year. She will again offer her fiction-writing course as well as a course on Southern fiction.

I am enclosing with this letter Bread Loaf's annual poster/flyer and a bookmark, the latter created to hand out at our booth at the November NCTE convention in Nashville. I'm sorry that this letter isn't early enough to apprise you of our booth and a Bread Loaf party there on November 17; these were advertised on Cyberbarn. I hope that you will pass the poster along to a friend who might like to learn about Bread Loaf. And I hope that some of you will use the bookmark as you do your reading in advance for whichever of Bread Loaf's four wonderful campuses you will attend in 2007.

With all best wishes,

James Maddox
Director