

October 2005

Dear Friends of the Bread Loaf School of English:

I am writing my fall letter to you once again, to tell you about recent developments at the School of English and to ask you to consider making a generous gift to Bread Loaf.

Middlebury's new president, Ron Liebowitz, has pledged to try to bring financial aid for Middlebury's graduate programs up to the same level as support for Middlebury undergraduates: 100% of demonstrated need. I in turn have promised to appeal to our graduates, current students, faculty, and staff to give this year in as generous a way as possible, to help make this level of financial aid possible. Please do consider making the most generous gift you can to Bread Loaf this year.

The biggest news of this year is that Bread Loaf will inaugurate in 2006 a new campus at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. Bread Loaf has drawn large numbers of students from the Southeast for many years, and it is even a little bit odd that we have waited this long to open a campus there. The major obstacle to opening a campus in the Southeast is the humid heat there during the summers. Asheville, more than 2,000 feet above sea-level, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is the ideal location for avoiding those dire factors. There are days when the temperature goes above 90 in Asheville, but they are rare. All classrooms and dormitories are air-conditioned. Asheville is a compact, beautiful little city of some 75,000 (about the size of Santa Fe). It is a very vibrant city that attracts many artists. The University of North Carolina at Asheville has an extremely attractive campus; the university is quite small, enrolling only a few more hundreds of students than Middlebury College.

Every non-Vermont campus takes some direction for its curriculum from the place it is located. Bread Loaf/North Carolina will emphasize in its curriculum Southern and African American literature (and the very considerable overlap between those two literatures). In the future, we will also include courses in Appalachian culture. Tilly Warnock, who has directed our New Mexico campus for many years, will be the on-site director and will teach her "Rewriting a Life" course. John Warnock will teach a course on writing about place. Stephen Donadio will teach a course on the novels of William Faulkner and a course on modern British fiction. Beverly Moss will teach her course on the teaching of writing in multicultural classrooms and a course on writing and memory. Valerie Babb will teach a course on the African American novel. Lars Engle will teach a course on Milton and the Bible. Richard Chess, a faculty member at the University of North Carolina at Asheville, will teach a poetry-writing workshop. Can there be a more attractive set of courses for our first summer in Asheville? Because of our expansion into our fifth site, Bread Loaf will very soon increase the staffing in our central office by one person.

We had an unimaginably great summer in Vermont this year. Its highlight was a visit by Seamus Heaney, who delivered the Elizabeth Drew Lecture in our theater one evening and gave a poetry reading in the Barn (which he thought looked a little like Hrothgar's meadhall Heorot in *Beowulf*) the next. For the first time in decades, Alan MacVey didn't direct the major production this summer. Long-time Acting Ensemble member Brian McEleney directed a marvelous *Romeo and Juliet*, with Elizabeth Bunch and Stephen Thorne in the title roles. In this report on last summer, I can't omit mention that the Bread Loaf food was universally considered the best in anyone's memory. Indeed, Chef Jim Logan and his kitchen staff, I have learned, even became a little weary of being summoned into the dining hall at the end of many meals to receive our applause. For the second year in a row, the graduating class gave to Bread Loaf, as the senior class gift, a very generous donation to the James Andreas Scholarship Fund.

Although Emily Bartels and I haven't yet quite finished putting together next year's faculties, I can already report the terrific news that two of Bread Loaf's most well-loved teachers, Michael Cadden and Lucy Maddox, will be returning to teach with us in Vermont after a several years' hiatus. I am also proud

to announce that Michael Dirda, Pulitzer Prize-winning book reviewer on the *Washington Post*, will also join the Vermont faculty, as will Patricia Powell, author of three novels, who will teach fiction-writing and Caribbean literature.

Middlebury College's ongoing financial support for the Bread Loaf campus was everywhere evident this summer. After several years of anticipation, I can finally report the happy news that Johnson Pond is back with us again. The entire Bread Loaf campus now has wireless access during our summer sessions, and there will soon be a very large expansion of bandwidth available at Bread Loaf. I'll even brag about the total refurbishing of all the seat cushions in the Barn; many of us speculate that the replaced cushions had probably been there since Robert Frost was sitting among us. Middlebury has begun the long and expensive process of replacing the foundations on many of the older Bread Loaf buildings. This summer, Brandybrook Cottage was up on stilts while its foundation was being replaced. Despite those dozen beds being taken offline, we still had a record enrollment in Vermont: 260 students.

We also had a record number of students in Oxford (95), where John Fyler was the on-site director. Sandy LeGault insists that the *Midsummer Night's Dream* seen by the whole school was the best production ever of that play; Gregory Doran, who directed the production, came to Lincoln College to talk about his work (and Shakespeare's). One of the brightest notes at Oxford was our "Shakespeare: On the Page and on the Stage" course, taught by Miriam Gilbert of the University of Iowa. Miriam will be offering the course again in 2006. Also in 2006, Christine Gerrard will return to the faculty after a summer's absence, and we will also welcome new faculty members Jon Mee of University College and Sophie Ratcliffe of Jesus College.

In New Mexico, where Tilly Warnock directed, one high point of the summer was a reading by Middlebury's and Bread Loaf's own Julia Alvarez. I can already announce that Sandra Cisneros will read for us there next summer. Claire Sponsler will be on-site director. Jeff Porter will bring to the New Mexico campus his "Going Digital" course on writing and technology, which was a great success in Juneau last summer. Craig Womack, the University of Oklahoma writer and scholar of American Indian literature, will join the Santa Fe faculty this summer. So will the University of New Mexico's Jesse Aleman, a scholar of Chicano and Latino literature.

In Alaska, Kevin Dunn will return, after an absence, and serve as on-site director; he will also teach his famous course on the English Bible. Suzanne Keen will return as well, to teach a course on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poetry (including *Paradise Lost*) and a course on Joyce's *Ulysses* and other versions of the Odysseus story. Mark Long, of Keene State College in New Hampshire, will teach a course on modern American poetry, pedagogy, and writing and a field-based course on American environmental literature.

I am also happy to announce that PJ Paparelli, the artistic director of Perseverance Theatre in Juneau, will teach two courses: one on *Hamlet* from the page to the stage and a second on the creation of documentary drama for the theater. The *Hamlet* course will also involve two of the Perseverance actors, who will actually perform in a Perseverance production of *Hamlet* the next theater season. The course will look at *Hamlet* from the perspective of an actor in rehearsal, examining both the technical aspects of the language and developing a complex psychology for the characters, and will end in a performance involving students and professional actors. PJ's documentary theater course will derive from his own experience developing *Columbinus*, an interview-based drama on the Columbine shootings and modern adolescence that has received great acclaim both at Perseverance and in Washington, D.C. Students will create an original piece from interviews in the Juneau community. Bread Loaf/Alaska veterans Jeff Nunokawa and Courtney Cazden will round out the faculty in Juneau.

If you want to find out more details about courses for next summer, they will be posted on Bread Loaf's website sometime in December. Sandy LeGault is responsible for our truly spiffy and informative website.

I must bring this raucous listing of exciting events, past and future, to a close. Emily and I hope to see many of you at our five campuses next summer, and in the meantime we appeal to you once more to make the Bread Loaf School of English a major target of your charitable giving this year.

With best wishes to all,

James Maddox
Director