89th Conference Begins

The drizzly weather didn’t dampen spirits as the 2014 Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference kicked off yesterday, bringing writers in every phase of their careers together. “I feel excited,” said Titi Nguyen from New York as she checked in. “This is my first conference.”

Nguyen joins 298 other participants from all walks of life who will spend the next ten days attending readings, lectures and workshops. “Coming here has been a dream,” said Inara Verzemnieks from Corvallis, Oregon, alluding to a number of writers like Marguerite Young and Carson McCullers who are part of the rich history of the conference.

“Each time I come here I’ve learned to read and think about writing more intelligently,” said Paul Austin from Durham, North Carolina, who has attended the conference as a contributor, waiter, scholar, and fellow. “I feel that I’m among my betters.”

Workshop Locations

Please note that these locations are only for today, Thursday, August 14. Vans to School House, Earthworm, and Homer Noble Farm will leave from the front of the Inn at 1:15 p.m.

Luis Alberto Urrea — Barn Classroom 3
Jane Alison — Library, main floor
Andrea Barrett — Barn Classroom 5
Eavan Boland — Little Theater
Marianne Boruch — Barn Classroom A
Maud Casey — Schoolhouse
Michael Collier — Frothingham Cottage
Kate Daniels — Barn Classroom 4
Percival Everett — Trenman Living Room
Ursula Hegi — Upstairs in Library (Back end of building)
A. Van Jordan — Barn Observatory
Victor LaValle — Upstairs in Library (front end of building)
Margot Livesey — Blue Parlor
Josip Novakovich — Earthworm
C.E. Poverman — Tamarack Living Room
David Rivard — Barn, Main Room
Scott Russell Sanders — Barn Classroom 2
Danzey Senna — Homer Noble Farm
Alan Shapiro — Inn West Seminar
David Shields — Barn Classroom 6
Natasha Trethewey — Barn Classroom 1
ANNOUNCEMENTS

LUNCH WITH YOUR WORKSHOP
Participants are reminded to sit with their workshop at lunch today. See the seating map on page 5.

COCKTAIL RECEPTION AT TREMAN
Meet your fellow Bread Loafers at a cocktail reception on the Treman Lawn at 5:30 p.m. Make sure to bring your ID especially if you’ve retained those youthful good looks.

FORGET AMAZON
The conference has a bookstore stocked with publications from faculty, fellows, and contributors. The bookstore is located at the back of the Annex building. In addition to books, the store carries clothing, toiletry items, and some snacks. Drop by and say hello to Christa Aleshire, who runs the mini-emporium. Bookstore hours are:
- Monday through Friday*, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, August 19, 9:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m.
- Saturday and Sunday, 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

SIGN-UP SHEETS FOR CRAFT CLASSES
Sign-up sheets will be posted by 8:00 a.m., two days in advance of classes. Look for sheets on the bulletin board near the Blue Parlor.

Jane Alison and her fellow Leigh Newman would like to emphasize that their craft classes (“Time on the Page” on August 19 and “The Glimmer Moment” on August 17) are applicable to fiction writers as well as nonfiction writers. In fact, it’s always worthwhile to look at classes outside of one’s genre.

Greetings from Your Head Waiters
Howdy, everyone, and welcome to Bread Loaf! We have a tremendous new crop of waiters, each of whom is totally ready to serve you. You’ll see us at mealtimes, making announcements and just generally looking sharp, dynamic, and awesome. We love to hear from you, but remember: we handle your food!

—Solmaz Sharif & Keith Leonard

ABOUT LUNCH
- Lunch will be served buffet style, so to avoid long lines, we urge you to follow the schedule noted here, based on your workshop schedule:
- On days when your workshop does not meet, please go to the dining hall starting at noon.
- On days when your workshop does meet, please go to the dining hall between 12:30 and 1:00 p.m.

Today, when all workshops meet at 1:30 p.m., we ask poets and nonfiction writers to show up at 11:30 a.m., and fiction writers, please hold back until noon.

- Lunch service continues until 1:30 p.m. each day (with the exception of today, when it ends at 1:00 p.m.). If a line forms at the dining hall door—which has been known to happen—please note that you can scoot in through the dining hall door to start at the salad bar, if you like.

REMINDEERS
- Please remember that your devoted waitstaff are also writers, whom you’ll see in workshop, at lectures, and giving readings later in the conference.
- Meal times are prompt and leaving the dining hall on time helps waiters get to lectures and readings on time. Just ask for a to-go cup! Keep all dishes and silver in the dining room.
- Coffee is available in the morning by 6:30 a.m. After breakfast ends, coffee and water are available in the barn throughout the day.
- If you have an allergy or food concern, please be proactive and discuss any questions or concerns with your waiter or the head waiters.
- Please do not bring alcohol into the dining hall.
Announcements, cont’d from p. 2

INDIVIDUAL FACULTY CONFERENCES
Faculty will be scheduling 30-45 minute conferences with each Bread Loafer. Since schedules are crowded, you might want to think in advance about when you are available.

DIRECTORS’ OFFICE HOURS
Michael Collier will be available 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. on poetry workshop days and 12:00 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. otherwise. Jennifer Grotz will be available 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. daily. The Directors’ Office is across from the Back Office, next to the Blue Parlor.

THE POSTMAN DOESN’T RING
Please check your mailbox at the Inn often, as it’s one of the main ways for us to communicate with you. If you lose your mailbox information, check with the Front Desk.

THE SILENCE OF THE PHONES
Let your loved ones know that cellular phone reception is generally unavailable on the Bread Loaf campus. You can use your calling card in the phone booth by the Laundromat and in the Inn.

WORKSHOP PHOTOS
Photographer Edward Brown will be visiting workshops to take group photos. Edward will take photographs throughout the conference, and an order form for some photos will be available later in the conference.

Blue Parlor Organizational Meeting
“Organizational” seems so drab, I know. But I promise, there is nothing drab about the Blue Parlor! The quaint little room where you registered yesterday is the venue for Bread Loaf’s very own literary salon, a special space where we gather to read our work, support each other, nibble on a few tasty snacks, and sip fancy-schmancy lemonade provided by yours truly. Whether you write fiction, poetry, nonfiction, blog posts, tweets, emails or text messages, this reading series is for you! Yes, you!

Tonight at 7:30 p.m., immediately after dinner, we’ll gather in the Blue Parlor (to the left of the Back Office, in the back of the Inn) to brainstorm possible themes for readings and to go over the “organizational” logistics of the BP Reading Series. Things like, when and where do I sign-up? How long do I read? Do I have to wear a tie? The meeting will be done in time for us to head over to the 8:15 p.m. reading. We’ll cover all that needs to be covered and I’ll answer any questions you might have.

Tomorrow, please be sure to come to the first Blue Parlor reading at 5:30 p.m. The sign-up sheet for that reading will go up after tonight’s meeting. Sign-up sheets for subsequent readings will be available Friday the 15th, Sunday the 17th, and Wednesday the 20th, by 8:00 a.m. sharp, on the Blue Parlor bulletin board (right beside the back office). For those of you who are unsure or shy about reading, do it! I promise, you’ll be glad you did. We’ll root each other on, embrace each other, love each other. So join us to make the magic happen at the 2014 Blue Parlor Reading Series, because, really, we can’t do it without you. Yes, you!

Questions, concerns, high-fives? Contact Michelle Peñaloza

From the Front Desk
Please keep these guidelines in mind for convenience and safety:
• There is no smoking allowed inside any building on campus or on any porch.
• We suggest you start a room list by each hall phone so buildingmates can find you if you get a call.
• Please park all cars in the Barn parking lot. The exception to this rule covers those staying at Tamarack, Gilmore, Fritz, Frothingham, Earthworm, and Brandy Brook, and also cars parked for less than 10 minutes for the purposes of loading and unloading.
• If you have a serious medical emergency, call 911, then notify the front desk. Notify the front desk for minor medical issues. If you have a medical emergency between 2:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., call extension 2700. After 10:00 p.m., call extension 2713 or 2710.
Slideshow Highlights History

Middlebury College professor David Haward Bain will offer his annual slideshow and talk on the history of the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference tonight at 9:30 p.m. in the Little Theatre. Bain, the author of *Whose Woods These Are: A History of the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference*, traces the lively history of the conference from its founding to present.

Bain’s talk will feature anecdotes about some of the notable names in American letters, and the slideshow features candid photos of writers at work and at play, including Robert Frost, Ralph Ellison, Truman Capote, Sinclair Lewis, Carson McCullers, Anne Sexton, John Gardner, Eudora Welty, John Irving, Toni Morrison, Wallace Stegner, Richard Wright, Archibald MacLeish, and Richard Wilbur, as well as some current faculty members. This beloved tradition provides participants with a context for the work ahead of them and a rich sense of the Bread Loaf heritage.

A Welcome Letter from the Bread Loaf Social Staff

Hello, Breadloaf! We’re the BL Social Staff. We’d love to meet you, so please don’t be shy! We’re easy to spot because we’re usually the ones hauling around and pouring the beer! You’ll also see us manning the door during the Barn Social Hour and the Barn Pub each night where cheap beer and wine are available, as well as free soft drinks (not to mention the wonderful conversation from Randy and the Social Staff). We’ll also host three campus-wide receptions (with an open bar) and two dances.

Like you, we’re all writers and will be participating in workshops. Most of us have been here before, so if you’ve got any questions about anything on this mountain—“Where is the Dragon’s Den?” or “Can I check out a book from the library?”—please let us know and we’ll do our best to lend a hand. We’re so glad you’re here, and we look forward to your company.

—Nate Brown, Jamie Hatley, Jessamine Chan, Jonterri Gadson, Steven Kleinman, Jacques Rancourt, Margaret Ross, Cam Terwilliger, Keith Wilson
Seating Chart for Today’s Lunch

Please sit with your workshop group today at lunch. Poets and nonfiction writers should arrive at 11:30 a.m., and fiction writers should arrive at noon. Lunch service will continue until 1:00 p.m. today.
Announcements, cont’d from p. 3

APPLE CELLAR TECH
Technicians’ hours for the computer lab will be noted on the Apple Cellar door.

PIZZA IN THE BARN
Come by the Barn this evening from 10:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. The conference will provide pizza—but when it’s gone, it’s gone. The Barn Pub will be open during that time.

SHARE THE EXPERIENCE ON TWITTER... #BUTNOTDURINGREADINGS
The conference encourages you to unplug while you’re here, but the final edition of The Crumb lists the Twitter usernames of conference participants so you can follow them when you get home. Twitter users who would like to be included in that list should email blcrumb@gmail.com with their full name. For those who can’t live without Twitter, we encourage you to use the hashtag #blwc14; previous attendees sometimes follow along from afar.

CAMPUS WIRELESS
You’ll find wireless internet access at many locations on campus. The name of the network is midd-standard, and the case-sensitive password is Middlebury-wireless.

EXPLORE SCENIC MIDDLEBURY
Starting tomorrow van trips to Middlebury leave from the Inn at 1:30 p.m. and return from Middlebury at 3:45 p.m. to arrive at Bread Loaf at 4:00 p.m. There is no trip planned today. Sign up at the front desk if you’d like to ride into town, as trips do not take place if no one signs up. Please be mindful to be on time—the driver will not wait for stragglers or lollygaggers.

Extra, Extra, Write All About It
The Crumb relies on submissions of news, editorials, overheard comments, and reviews of the waiters from all conference participants. “My long-standing feud with the editor of The Crumb has been well-documented,” says conference director Michael Collier, “so I encourage Bread Loafers to take on the role of citizen journalist and contribute content to the conference newspaper.”

If you’d like to submit a news or editorial item, place your copy in the Crumb box outside the Back Office or e-mail blcrumb@gmail.com. Please indicate which day you’d like your announcement printed. Announcements must be received before 3 p.m. to be printed in the following day’s edition.

Community items are limited to a headline, plus thirty words. We will print items on a first-come, first-served basis as our limited space permits. Submit by e-mail only. Community items include activities like quidditch tournaments or informal meetings.

The editor delights in reading missed connections in his spare time, but the newspaper will not run advertisements or personals.

The Crumb’s office is located in the Back Office. Feel free to drop by. Archived issues are available on the conference web site.

COFFEE TALK WITH STEVEN
Ladies tell me that it’s all about the shoes.

TODAY’S TRIVIA QUESTION
Which faculty member “co-stars” as, or struggles mightily to play, “himself” in the movie adaption that is based on his forthcoming book? Bonus hint: the ubiquitous James Franco will be directing the film.

(The answer will be published in tomorrow’s edition)
“The most ambitious thing we ever cooked for the conference was a 300-pound whole pig. I had to buy a brand-new vat to marinate it and use a hack saw to cut it.

The waiters here are just great to work with. I mean, you’re writers—most of you’ve probably worked in restaurants.” - Chef Darren Zeno

“I’ve been here since God was a baby.” - Mary Glidden

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**ADDENDA & CORRECTIONS**

The craft class schedule included in your package contains an erroneous summary of Dave Madden’s talk. The correct description is:

**Better Nonfiction through Neuroscience**

Essays, they say, show you a mind at work, but what’s a mind at work even look like? For answers, we’re going to have to ask neuroscience. In this class, we’ll look at what the study of neurons and synapses have revealed about how language and learning works, and we’ll use this knowledge to write nonfiction that more deeply engages the brain. Nonfiction that makes gorgeous synaptic leaps. The goal here is to read and follow the example of nonfiction works that don’t just show off a mind at work, but that somehow induce new thoughts in the mind of the reader.

This class will still be offered on August 20 in Barn classroom 3.

Some of you may have noticed that your agent/editor meeting is scheduled at 12:00 a.m. While nocturnal wordsmiths may prefer midnight meetings, this is a typo. It’s supposed to be 12:00 p.m. (noon).

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**COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENT**

Join LA-based yoga instructor Ani Raya-Flores for a **free yoga class** in the library on Friday, August 15 at 7:00 a.m. A sign-up sheet will be placed on the bulletin board near the dining hall, so put your name in to ensure a spot. All levels and genres welcome.
Maxine Kumin  
(1925 — 2014)

Young Nun at Bread Loaf

Sister Elizabeth Michael has come to the Writers’ Conference.
She has white habits like a summer sailor
and a black notebook she climbs into nightly
to sway in the hammock of a hundred knotted poems.
She is the youngest nun I have ever known.

When we go for a walk in the woods
she puts on a dimity apron that teases her bootops.
It is sprigged with blue flowers.
I wear my jeans and sneakers. We are looking
for mushrooms (chanterelles are in season)
to fry and eat with my drinks, her tomato juice.

Wet to the shins with crossing
and recrossing the same glacial brook, a mile
downstream we find them, the little pistols,
denser than bandits among the tree roots.
Forager, she carries the basket.
Her hands are crowded with those tough yellow thumbs.

Hiking back in an unction of our own sweat
she brings up Christ. Christ, that canard!
I grind out a butt and think of the waiting bourbon.
The sun goes down in disappointment.
You can say what you want, she says.
You live as if you believe.

Sister
Sister Elizabeth Michael
says we are doing Christ’s work, we two.
She, the rosy girl in a Renoir painting.
I, an old Jew.