91st Conference Begins

The Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference kicked off yesterday, making 2016 the ninety-first year that writers have gathered together here on the mountain to read, listen, dance, and discuss. This year’s 250 participants hail from all over the country and all stages of their writing careers. Returning participants were heard making much of the Inn’s recent renovations, while all across campus, first timer’s could be seen searching out their new digs, maps in hand. The sun and the Adirondack chairs are out, and it is promising to be a fantastic ten days here in Ripton.

Workshop Locations

Please note that these locations are only for today, Thursday, August 11. Vans to Schoolhouse, Earthworm, and Dragon’s Den will leave from the front of the Inn at 1:15 p.m.

Jane Brox - Barn Classroom A
Kate Daniels - Barn Observatory
Percival Everett - Barn Classroom 3
Lynn Freed - Tamarack Living Room
Patricia Hampl - Inn West Seminar
Jane Hirshfield - Barn Classroom 1
A. Van Jordan - Barn Classroom 4
Laila Lalami – Frothingham Living Room
Yiyun Li - Dragon’s Den Living Room
James Longenbach - Library Main Floor
Thomas Mallon – Library Upstairs (Front end of building)
Benjamin Percy - Earthworm Living Room
Carl Phillips - Blue Parlor
Joanna Scott - Treman Living Room
Danzy Senna - Barn Classroom 2
Alan Shapiro - Barn, main room
David Shields - Barn Classroom 5
Natasha Trethewey - Barn Classroom 6
Luis Alberto Urrea - Schoolhouse
Laura van den Berg - Library Upstairs (Back end of building)
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!

—Kathryn Savage & Kawai Washburn

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.).

Reminders

• 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.

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 selectively available on the mountain. You can use your calling card in the phone booth by the Laundromat and in the Inn.

THE QUIET MAN (ON THE INN PORCH)
Should your phone be blessed with reception, please be mindful of where you choose to chat. Meetings with faculty, agents, and editors will be taking place across campus. With this in mind, we ask that while in the Dining Room, the Barn, the Little Theatre or on the Inn Porch, you keep to a quieter medium, such as text, and please keep your phone on silent.

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 Informational Meeting
It’s not your mama’s Blue Parlor! Due to the popularity of the inimitable Blue Parlor reading series, the 2016 readings will not actually take place in the Blue Parlor. Bread Loaf’s own literary salon has moved to fresh digs on the main floor of the Library, where we will convene to share and celebrate our work, wow each other outside workshop, and enjoy pre-dinner snacks, provided by your host, Katie Moulton.

Tonight at 7:30 p.m., immediately following dinner, you’re invited to the Library to learn more about the Blue Parlor reading series, brainstorm theme nights, and ask questions. A few of the hot topics to be discussed: How and where do I sign up? For how long can I read? Do I have to wear a tie? Will there be wine? Will there be blood? This meeting will finish in time for us to head over to the 8:15 p.m. reading.

The sign-up sheet for the first Blue Parlor reading will be posted on the Blue Parlor bulletin board outside the Back Office after tonight’s meeting. Sign-up sheets for subsequent readings will be available on Friday, August 12, Monday, August 15, and Wednesday, August 17, at 8 a.m. sharp. Tomorrow, Friday, August 12, please come to the first of the series at 5:30 p.m. Stay tuned to the Crumb for further announcements of themes, readers and secret locations.

For those of you who are unsure about reading, give it a go! At least, come check us out. We’ll laugh, we’ll cry, we’ll make that appreciative crowd noise in our throats. Join us, Bread Loafers! Let’s make some magic on the mountain.

Questions, concerns, high fives? Contact Blue Parlor Coordinator Katie Moulton.

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 building mates 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 Brandybrook, and also cars parked for less than 10 minutes for the purposes of loading and unloading. In addition, there are two Accessible Parking spots – one in front of the Inn and one in back.

• 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 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., call extension 2700. After 10:00 p.m., call both extensions 2713 and 2710.
FROM THE LITTLE THEATRE

1. Bells will be rung at 15 and 5 minutes prior to each lecture and reading. Please arrive on time.
2. Trash cans are located near the exits of the theater. We love it when people use them.
3. Please leave the outside chairs where they are and avoid pulling them up close to the doors.

—Rosalie Moffett & Justin Boening

Announcements, cont’d from page 3

THE BREAD LOAF SCHOOL OF ENGLISH

The Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury’s summer intensive graduate program in English, offers courses in literature, creative writing, pedagogy, and theater arts. Students may attend for one or more summers of continuing graduate credit or work towards an MA or MLitt in English, studying at the Bread Loaf campus in Vermont or at the school’s Santa Fe or Oxford, UK campuses. Director of Admissions Dana Olsen will be available to answer your questions about the program today, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Barn. Just look for Dana in the Barn main room.

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.

EXPLORE SCENIC MIDDLEBURY

Starting tomorrow, van trips to Middlebury leave the Inn around 1:30 p.m. and return from Middlebury at 3:40 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 lollygaggers.

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, 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, Bread Loaf! We’re the 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 beer and wine are available for $4 each, 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.

—Leah Bailly, Jamel Brinkley, Sara Burnett, Matthew Kelsey, Alice Kim, Steven Kleinman, Margaret Ross, Sam Ross, Noa Stetzer
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.
Extra, Extra! Write All About It

The Crumb relies on submissions of news, editorials, overhead comments, and reviews of the waiters from all conference participants. “Let’s face it—The Crumb is in a sad state,” says conference director Michael Collier, “so I encourage Bread Loafers to take on the role of citizen journalist and revive the fine tradition of good storytelling.”

If you’d like to submit a news or editorial item, place your copy in the Crumb envelope outside the Back Office or e-mail it in to 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 her 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.

MASSAGE SCHEDULING
Massage appointments will be available August 17, 18, and 19. Sign-up sheets are on the Dining Room bulletin board.

SHARE THE EXPERIENCE ON TWITTER...
#BUTNOTURINGREADINGS
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 #blwc16; previous attendees sometimes follow along from afar.

OVERHEARD AT BREAD LOAF
“I’m excited to feel terrified.”
“They call me the hug machine.”
“It’s all new and fancy.”
“Last summer I was the Bread Loaf escort.”
“Leeches!”
Email us more at blcrumb@gmail.com!

WEATHER WITCH
Periods of sun.
High: 75° Low: 63°
It's with great sadness that we note the recent death of one of Bread Loaf’s great friends, Ian Pounds. Ian was a teacher, writer, musician, lyricist, guidance counselor, firefighter, mason, carpenter, canvas maker, philanthropist, humanitarian, and dreamer. He first came to the conference as a waiter in 1996 and followed up (1997-1999) with a stint in Little Theatre sound booth where he was responsible for initiating some of the rites and mysteries that have come to define the booth’s peculiar culture. Later he became the coordinator for the Katharine Bakeless Nason Literary Publication Prizes and for a few years he was the liaison between Middlebury College’s dining services and the Bread Loaf social staff. In this role, diplomacy did not come naturally to him but he was, nevertheless, diplomatic. A resident of Ripton, Ian would throw a party for the Bread Loaf staff on their night off, which he held at his magical, renovated school house. These parties became legendary as was his officiating of the Writers’ Cramp Race for which he was known to wear glittery but tattered costumes. The many Bread Loafers who got to know Ian over the years found his passion for life, his romantic idealism, his openness to all kinds of writing, and his critical generosity to be representative of the best the conference offers. During the years he taught in Afghanistan, he loved, late at night, listening to the Bread Loaf podcasts of lectures and readings. To many of us, over the years Ian had became an important and reliable friend. To get a fuller sense of his remarkable life, we have posted his obituary on the bulletin board outside the dining hall.

Ian Pounds with Jennifer Grotz and Carl Phillips, Bread Loaf, 2008

A Warm Welcome

We want to give a special welcome to poet and novelist Fanny Howe who is visiting for a few days with her daughter Danzy Senna, son-in-law Percival Everett, and grandchildren Henry and Miles. Fanny Howe is one of America’s most distinguished writers and we are honored by her presence.

GUESTS

Join us in welcoming the following visitors to the mountain:

Miriam Altshuler
David Haward Bain
Patrick Donnelly
Jenna Johnson
Carolyn Kuebler
PJ Mark
Fiona McCrue