Book Signing and Reception

The book signing and reception will take place today on the Treman lawn at 5:15 p.m. Authors will be available to sign copies of their books while all participants enjoy refreshments. The bookstore will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. today to ensure that last-minute shoppers can get books just before the signing. So, go make some of those hard-earned writer dollars rain and snap up gorgeous books by the faculty, fellows, guests, and contributors.

In the event of rain, the book signing and reception will be held in the Barn.

Staff Reading Tonight

Because they look like bouncers, professional sound technicians, sleek bartenders, and office divas, you might not immediately realize that our administrative staff members are talented writers as well. In keeping with The Crumb’s high standard of journalistic integrity, we would like to state the objective truth: staff readings will be astonishing.

Gather at the Little Theatre at 9:30 p.m. to hear the stunning poetry and prose of Matthew Kelsey, Jamel Brinkley, Noah Stetzer, Katie Moulton, Conor Burke, Gabrielle Bates, Shubha Sunder, Sam Ross, and Justin Boening.

Craft Classes: Back in Action

Craft classes resume today after a leisurely Monday afternoon. Some classes may still have spaces available; check the sign-up sheets by the back office. Sign-up sheets for Thursday’s classes will be posted by 8:00 a.m.

“F*ck it Up Beautifully,” with Xhenet Aliu - Barn classroom A
“Conjuring Mystery in Fiction,” with Maud Casey - Barn classroom 203
“Magical Realism,” with Daniel Wallace - Barn classroom 206
“Doing It My Way,” with Jericho Brown - Barn classroom 101
“Icon, Painting, Picture, Portrait, Headshot, Cameo: the Vicissitudes of Translation,” with Michael Collier - Barn classroom 102
“Up Close and Personal: An Examination of D.H. Lawrence’s Long, Long Poem ‘Fish,’” with Maeve Kinkead - Barn classroom 205
ANNOUNCEMENTS
FROM YOUR FACULTY HEAD WAITER
Faculty and fellows, join us as we wait tables at lunch on Wednesday, August 23. Please sign up in the Back Office by 12:00 p.m. today. Training for faculty and fellows will begin at 12:15 p.m. Wednesday. Remember to wear close-toed shoes!

CONTRIBUTOR SCHOLARSHIPS
General contributors should consider applying for one of the three scholarships available for returning contributors. The Carol Houck Smith Contributor Scholarship and Donald Everett Axinn Contributor Scholarships are awarded to contributors currently attending without financial aid who wish to return to Bread Loaf in a consecutive year and who found the conference particularly helpful in the revision and inspiration of their work. Applicants are asked to submit the work from their workshop packet, a revision that demonstrates significant attention to what was learned at Bread Loaf, and a sample of new work composed after Bread Loaf. Check the Bread Loaf website for details come mid-November.

FROST WALK REMINDER
Please gather on the Bread Loaf Inn Front Porch at 10:30 a.m. if you signed up for the self-guided Robert Frost Interpretive Trail Walk.

LITTLE THEATRE ETIQUETTE
Please arrive to events on time, turn off your cell phones, and put away electronic devices.

OUT OF THE BLUE (PARLOR)

There will be NO Blue Parlor reading tonight (Tuesday). See you Wednesday! 5:30 p.m., at the Library.

OVERHEARD
“Hate birthday parties.”

[sigh] “Rejection, rejection.”

“They just changed the water so it’s icy... like your soul.”

“Who’s scared of oranges?”

“The only thing that cheered me up was seeing that Grace Kelly also died on that day.”

“That’s a great band name. The arbitrary moats?”

“Men, men, men, men, men, men. men. men!”

Overheard anything interesting?
E-mail us at blcrumb@gmail.com!

GUESTS
Join us in welcoming Will Allison, Millicent Bennett, Allison Wright, Anna Pitoniak, Sebastian Matthews, and Michael Wiegers to the mountain.

Please wish Henry Dunow and Douglas Stewart a safe journey as they leave Bread Loaf today.

From Jayne the Masseuse:
“Take advantage of alternative modalities of massage, life reading, and chakra alignment. Special price for all three!”

A NOTE ON VALUABLES
Keep your valuables with you! Bread Loaf can get busy, and it’s easy to forget where you might have put something. If you’ve lost something, please check with the front desk.

WEATHER DOG BEN
Thunderstorms
High: 80° Low: 59°

by Carl Phillips
Astronomical Performances in Writers’ Cramp Race

In the early hours leading up to yesterday’s solar phenomenon, fifteen Bread Loafers successfully completed the 2.75-mile Bread Loaf Writers’ Cramp Race. These writer-athletes gathered in front of the Annex at 7:45 a.m., tired from the previous night’s merry-making but uneclipsed.

At exactly 8:00 a.m., as the moon crept along its path toward the sun, the writers felt their feet leave the ground, and they launched into orbit. Clear skies and light breezes made for ideal running and viewing conditions. Winners Elijah Bean (18:04) and Emma DeCamp (18:24), both of Constellation Contributors, rose heroically over the mountain, surpassing last year’s fastest times by two seconds. Chasing their shadows came Lauren Groff of Galaxy Faculty. In the Women’s Division, Doe Hatfield intercepted Caroline Casper for third place, and in the Men’s, Charles Kaufmann and Jonathan Freeman Coppodge lined up for second and third.

Each runner made their ascent to the finish line accompanied by planetary-sized clapping and cheery astral showers. Peter Ho Davies, the other star of Galaxy Faculty, spoke of the power of gravity on his side during his descent toward the horizon. A glimpse of Solar System Fellows was provided by Vanessa Hua soaring across the mountain. To the best of our knowledge, nobody was swallowed by a black hole or incinerated by a comet, though the absence of any light from Meteorite Scholars suggests that body may have been captured by aliens. All in all, it was a celestial affair.

Cosmologist Jennifer S. Cheng & Sports Journalist Shubha Sander contributed reporting.

“Runners Up

“I think the problem has to do with your POV.”

“Hey guys! The eclipse was two hours ago!”

“Well. This is anti-climactic.”

“Has anyone seen my coffee?”

“These revision exercises are getting absurd.”
The Writer’s Cramp Race is Not Decadent and Depraved

By Kevin Baggett

The first job I can remember ever wanting as a child was sportswriter. For a 7th grade English assignment I was required to interview two people in a profession in which I was interested and write a report about their work. The experience of meeting sportswriters from the daily paper in Biloxi, who were weary from covering local high school bowling tournaments, disabused me of the notion of ever following such a career path. Reporting on the fabled Writer’s Cramp Race is a fulfillment of that long-ago deferred dream. So many stories from past races are handed down by generations of Bread-Loafers. Who could forget the time when Toni Morrison pantsed John Irving at the starting gate in ’81? Or the time John Gardner, emerging from a hiding spot in a copse of trees, joined the race in the last 100 yards to win, an outcome which was later voided? I picked up my press pass from the front desk, ambled outside to the starting line, and took my place in the press pool on the stone fence with the other bleary-eyed reporters.

I made mental notes of the runners doing various stretches to limber up for the run around the mountain, wondering which type of artist makes the best athlete. Is it the poet, whose strides are as graceful and purposeful as their stanzas? Or my fiction writer comrades whose neuroses provide rocket fuel-like energy to propel them forward? Or is the memoirists, who might have rowed crew at university or scored multiple touchdowns in the Williams-Amherst game?

A reporter from ESPN 8, the Ocho, glanced at my press pass and said, “The Crumb? Never heard of it.” He held onto a list of participants like it was a racing form at the OTB. “Who do you think will win this thing? One of the younger Fellows?”

“Charlie Baxter,” I said.

He looked at me askance.

“Never sleep on a wiry Minnesotan.”

“He pulled out of the race already. Turf toe injury,” he said.

A baker’s dozen plus four or five took off with much fanfare, their feet pounding the pavement of Route 125 as hard as the dump trucks that rumble past hourly, and the runners disappeared around the bend. I looked around and asked now what? The Ocho reporter said now we wait. So I waited.

How else can you cover a foot race unless you ran alongside the runners? Maybe I could, for the first half mile, interview them breathlessly and try to keep apace. Then I made a mental note: Bread Loaf golf carts—an idea whose time has come.

The first runner appeared at the bottom of the hilly approach to the Inn. How cruel was it to make the last stretch such a steep hike! But then again, these runners are writers, who are used to steep climbs against reason and publishers’ expectations.

More runners soon appeared after the first place winner crossed the finish curb or barricade post (this part was unclear to me). What is clear to this reporter is that the race, like everything at Bread Loaf, is a cooperative, community event. Runners who had completed already cheered on their compatriots until the end. One, novelist Lauren Groff, sprinted down to the bottom of the hill to accompany the last person through the arduous final phrase of the course.

All of the smiling contestants gathered for a group photograph. A cynical sportswriter, like those two I interviewed as a youngster, would say this was the participation trophy photo. But it’s too difficult to be a cynic here in this landscape, with this particular tribe. Still, I’d like to see elements added to next year’s race. I propose a triathlon. Runners cross the finish line, then join the Zumba class for an hour, and finish up with a doggy paddle swim in the South Branch Middlebury River.

Photo by Charles Kaufmann
Introduction to Barefoot Running Today

Ever wonder what it feels like to run with the grass between your toes and an open field in front of you? Chip Kaufmann will share some tips and tricks learned as a competitive barefoot runner today at 12:45 p.m. Discover your natural balance, strength and stride. Eighty-five million years of product development—these shoes weigh zero ounces! Meet on the grass by the flagpole across the road from the Inn.

COMMUNITY ITEMS

Mitali Desai, on the meaning of pregnancy, from Helena Viramontes workshop:

“ There is a picture of my mother when she was pregnant with me. Pregnant: (of a woman or female animal) having a child or young developing in the uterus. Pregnant: full of meaning; significant or suggestive. In the picture, just a silhouette, she is full of me, of the meaning of me. All belly with skinny legs and arms like a thirteen-year-old girl. This makes me feel guilty. I imagine the Texas heat in August, cicadas and roaches the size of birds, days stretching listlessly into one another, punctuated only by summer storms, electricity pulsing through doorknobs and kitchen spoons. My mother in bed, stomach tight and sour like a grapefruit, days of traveling the world in rickety airplanes over with my impending arrival. I tell her, quietly, how sorry I am that I signaled the end to all of this—the life she had before. I am sorry for stretching her body, for leaving her skin rippled and loose. She laughs and shakes her head, picking up the photograph like it is a picture of someone else. “I was thirty-four here, sweetie. I wanted you so badly.”

“I know,” I say, watching her look at her shadowed younger self, “but still.”