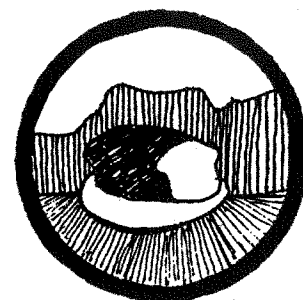


---

---

# BREAD LOAF RURAL TEACHER NETWORK



Alaska—Arizona—Mississippi—New Mexico—South Carolina—Vermont

## DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Sponsors Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network

### The Bread Loaf School of English

The Bread Loaf School of English is pleased to announce the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellowships for Rural Teachers. Beginning in 1993 and continuing through 1996, the Bread Loaf School will offer full-cost fellowships to 30 high school teachers of English each summer from six target states: Alaska, Arizona, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Carolina, and Vermont. Only first-year Bread Loaf students are eligible for these awards. These teachers will spend a full summer session at the Bread Loaf School of English, just outside Middlebury, Vermont, with all expenses paid: tuition, room, board, travel, and an allowance for books. In addition, these teachers will be eligible to compete for full-cost fellowships for a second and third summer at any one of the three Bread Loaf campuses, in Vermont; at Lincoln College, Oxford, England; and in Santa Fe, New Mexico. These second- and third-year fellowships will be offered through 1997.

Since 1920, the Bread Loaf School of English has been in the forefront of the education of

America's teachers of secondary-school English. Offering courses in literature, literary theory, the teaching of writing, creative writing, and (in Vermont alone) theater arts, Bread Loaf is well-known for its programs for educating and re-invigorating teachers from across the country. Today, Bread Loaf enrolls approximately 250 students at its Vermont campus, 75 in its program at Lincoln College, Oxford, and 75 at its program at St. John's College, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The faculty of the Bread Loaf School of English are drawn from distinguished colleges and universities in the United States and the United Kingdom.

### Bread Loaf and Rural Teachers

Although Bread Loaf welcomes students from all backgrounds and from all varieties of schools, Bread Loaf has since 1978 identified rural teachers as a special constituency. The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellowships represent a reaffirmation and a widening of Bread Loaf's commitment to rural teachers.

### The Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network

The DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellows will be chosen in approximately equal numbers from the six target states — approximately five incoming Fellows per state each year. During their first summer in Vermont, the Fellows will take two courses, in literature, writing, or theater. In addition, the Fellows will meet regularly as a group to establish a sense of solidarity and community of purpose, both within the individual states represented and within the entire community of Fellows. These meetings will be designed to prepare the Fellows to return to their home schools and states ready to form networks of teachers to help spread educational ideas. Fellows will also receive training in Bread Loaf's telecommunications network, BreadNet, so they can return to their home schools after the summer and, with close supervision and assistance from the Bread Loaf staff, form electronic networks — again, both within individual states and within the entire community of Fellows. In addition to the full-cost fellowships, each Fellow will also receive a \$1000 stipend, to finance

# Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network

Volume 1, Number 1  
November 1993

**Editor**  
Chris Benson

**Editorial Assistant**  
Sarah Hey

Address correspondence to Chris Benson, Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network, English Department, Box 341503, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29634-1503. The mailing address of the Bread Loaf School of English is Bread Loaf Office, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753-6115.

The Bread Loaf School of English publishes the *Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network* two times a year, in fall and spring.

**Director, Bread Loaf  
School of English**  
James Maddox

**Coördinator, Bread Loaf Rural  
Teacher Network**  
Dixie Goswami

**Senior Consultant to the Project**  
Jacqueline Jones Royster

**Director, BreadNet**  
William Wright

**Director, BLRTN  
Telecommunications**  
Rocky Gooch

**Technical Consultant to BLRTN**  
Caroline Eisner

**Bread Loaf Logo**  
Jeremy Gooch

Copyright 1993,  
Bread Loaf School of English

telecommunications costs, to make modest equipment purchases, and to finance the implementation of a classroom-research project back in his or her home school.

DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellows must be devoted teachers, interested in further education for themselves, involvement of their students in educational improvements within their schools, and development of state-wide and even national networks of rural teachers with similar interests.

The Bread Loaf School is committed to offering support and advice to the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellows at each stage of this project, first during the normal Bread Loaf summer session and later during the building of networks back in the Fellows' home schools and states. ■

## The DeWitt Wallace- Reader's Digest Fund

To help American youth fulfill their education and career aspirations, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund invests nationwide in programs to improve schools and communities, strengthen organizations that serve youth, and support programs that increase career, service and educational opportunities for young people. Approved annual grants exceed \$60 million.

## How to Apply

For applications for the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network and additional information, write to:

James Maddox, Director  
Bread Loaf School of English  
Middlebury College  
Middlebury, VT 05753

Applications must be received no later than March 15.

## DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellows, 1993

The following teachers from six target rural states were awarded DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellowships for 1993 and attended the Bread Loaf School of English during the summer. They are currently working on collaborative projects to improve students' experiences with literature and writing.

### Alaska

#### Fellows

Scott Christian  
Pauline Evon  
Allison Holsten  
Karen Mitchell  
John Morse  
Sondra Porter

#### School

Nitiski High School  
Kwethluk Community School  
Mat-Su School District  
Harborview Elementary School  
Brevig Mission School  
Susitna Valley High School

#### School Address

Pouch 10,000 Nitiski, AK 99635  
Kwethluk, AK 99621  
W. 125 Evergreen St., Palmer, AK 99645  
10014 Crazy Horse, Juneau, AK 99801  
Brevig Mission, AK 99785  
P.O. Box 807, Talkeetna, AK 99683

#### Network Leaders

Tom Litecky  
Tom McKenna

Palmer High School  
Unalaska City School

1170 W. Arctic, Palmer, AK 99645  
P.O. Box 260, Unalaska, AK 99685

### Arizona

#### Fellows

Sylvia Barlow  
Chad Graff  
Janet Olson  
Jim Schmitz

#### School

Chinle Jr. High School  
Monument Valley High School  
Chinle Elementary School  
Hopi Jr. & Sr. High School

#### School Address

P.O. Box 587, Chinle, AZ 86503  
P.O. Box 337, Kayenta, AZ 86033  
P.O. Box 587, Chinle, AZ 86503  
P.O. Box 337, Keams Canyon, AZ 86034

#### Network Leaders

John Warnock  
Tilly Warnock

University of Arizona - Dept. of English  
University of Arizona - Dept. of English

Modern Languages, Rm. 445, Tuscon, AZ 85721  
Modern Languages, Rm 445, Tuscon, AZ 85721

### Mississippi

#### Fellows

Leslie Fortier  
Carolyn Hardy  
Patricia Parrish  
Peggy Turner

#### School

Stringer Attendance Center  
R. H. Watkins High School  
Sumrall Attendance Center  
Guntown Middle School

#### School Address

P.O. Box 68, Stringer, MS 39481  
1100 W. 12th St., Laurel, MS 39440  
P.O. Box 187, Sumrall, MS 39482  
P.O. Drawer 8, Guntown, MS 38849

#### Network Leaders

Lois Rodgers  
Bette Ford

Hattiesburg High School  
Hattiesburg High School

301 Hutchinson Ave. Hattiesburg, MS 39401  
301 Hutchinson Ave. Hattiesburg, MS 39401

### New Mexico

#### Fellows

Ann Eilert  
Carlotta Martza  
Susan Miera  
Stan Renfro  
Norma Sheff

#### School

Los Alamos High School  
Santa Fe Indian School  
Pojoaque High School  
Wingate High School  
Escalante High School

#### School Address

1300 Diamond Dr., Los Alamos, NM 87544  
1501 Cerrillos Rd. Santa Fe, NM 87502  
Pojoaque Station, Santa Fe, NM 87501  
B.I.A., P.O. Box 2, Fort Wingate, NM 87316  
P.O. Box 157, Tierra Amarilla, NM 87575

#### Network Leaders

Vicki Holmsten  
Alfredo Lujan

San Juan Community College  
Pojoaque High School

4601 College Blvd., Farmington, NM 87402  
Pojoaque Station, Santa Fe, NM 87501

*continued on next page*

## DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellows, 1993 (cont.)

## South Carolina

Fellows

Janet Atkins  
 Ginny DuBose  
 Barbara Everson  
 Robin McConnell  
 Betty Slesinger  
 Joyce Summerlin

School

Wade Hampton High School  
 Waccamaw High School  
 Belton-Honea Path High School  
 Calhoun Falls High School  
 Irmo High School  
 Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School

School Address

P.O. Box 338, Hampton, SC 29924  
 2688 River Rd., Pawleys Island, SC 29585  
 11000 Belton Hwy., Honea Path, SC 29654  
 Edgefield St., Calhoun Falls, SC 29628  
 6051 Wescott Rd., Columbia, SC 29212  
 Box 158, Norway, SC 29113

Network Leaders

Beverly Busching  
 Charles McDonnell

University of South Carolina-Columbia  
 Piedmont Technical College

Columbia, SC 29208  
 Greenwood, SC 29646

## Vermont

Fellows

Mary Burnham  
 Jane Harvey  
 Grant Healey  
 Bill Rich  
 Ellen Temple

School

Waits River Valley School  
 Brattleboro Union High School  
 North/Paris Middle School  
 Main St. Middle School  
 Camel's Hump Middle School

School Address

Rt. 25, East Corinth, VT 05040  
 50 Fairground Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301  
 Jericho Rd., Richmond, VT 05477  
 107 Main St., Montpelier, VT 05602  
 Brown Trace Rd., Richmond, VT 05477

Network Leaders

Tish McGonegal  
 Nancy Olson

Camel's Hump Middle School  
 Brattleboro Union High School

Brown Trace Rd., Richmond, VT 05477  
 50 Fairground Rd., Brattleboro, VT 05301

## Rural Teachers &amp; Modems

by Rocky Gooch

To participate in BreadNet, Bread Loaf's, telecommunications network, teachers must have a computer, phone line, modem, and communications software. With these basic components, Bread Loaf teachers can access BreadNet through the host computer located at Middlebury College.

Because rural teachers connect to BreadNet by a long distance telephone call, time connected to a network comes back as a long distance telephone bill; however, a high-speed modem (14,400 bps or higher) will transmit text and images quickly and allow teachers to stretch their telecommunications budget further. Hayes Microcomputer Products, Inc., a manufacturer of modems, has generously agreed to provide Hayes Optima 14.4 high-speed modems for BLRTN teachers. During Bread Loaf's 1993 summer session, these modems were used for training, and the teachers were able to return to their schools with a modem in hand.

In spite of busy schedules and some technical glitches, most of the 1993 BLRTN teachers are currently online. Teachers use BreadNet to discuss particular educational issues and plan collaborative projects; in a few cases, students are online. The level of activity is very high and discourse is stimulating.

## HAYES MODEMS

For information about state contracts or large institutional purchases contact:

Marc K. Meltzer  
 Education Channel Manager  
 Hayes Microcomputer Products, Inc.  
 P.O. Box 105203  
 Atlanta, GA 30348-1238  
 404-840-9200

For information and individual purchases by teachers or others working in K-12 or Higher Ed. contact:

Scholastic Systems  
 Atlanta, GA  
 Lisa Blevins, President  
 1-800-347-5415

## Teaching Out in the Middle of Everywhere

---

*In July of 1993, BLRTN editor Chris Benson spoke with several of BLRTN's first year fellows about their experience teaching in rural America. Sondra Porter teaches in Talkeetna, Alaska; Betty Ann Slesinger teaches in Irmo, SC; and Norma Sheff teaches in Tierra Amarilla, NM.*

---

**CB: Tell me about your students.**

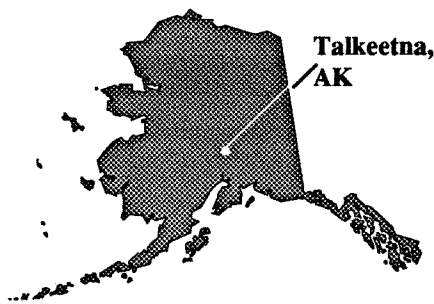
**Sondra Porter:** I live in rural Alaska, although we don't call it "bush" Alaska because we have a road system. I teach in a school that has about 125 students included in grades 7 through 12. I've been there for twenty years, and for much of that time I was the whole language arts department, though now there is someone else who teaches two of the courses. I teach eighth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade. My students come from a radius of fifty miles to my high school, which is not located within any single community. Three of the communities that my students come from are Talkeetna, Trapper Creek, and Willow. Other students live in places very isolated from any of these communities. Many families embrace the frontier mentality. And incidentally, the area has a great number of home schoolers because they live too far to bus to school or the parents don't want to educate their children the way the State of Alaska requires.

**CB: Explain what you mean by "community."**

**SP:** Any place where people are held together is a community. Talkeetna holds people together because it's been established as a tourist center and a jumping off place for people who climb Denali, or Mt. McKinley.

Originally, Talkeetna was a mining center. There are three rivers that converge there, so it was a good trading place. The road only came to our area about 1972; before that you had to get there by railroad. The community I live in, Trapper Creek, was settled by homesteaders in 1959, so consequently the majority of its inhabitants are not indigenous to the area.

We've literally carved our home out of wilderness. Most of the people have migrated there from other parts of the country. There are only about ten students who claim native heritage. If my students have native heritage, they are likely to have either Athabaskan or Eskimo backgrounds



because there hasn't been much mingling among the cultures. For instance, it would be rare to find someone with 1/8 Native American heritage.

**Betty Ann Slesinger:** The community I teach in is on the edge of a huge WPA water project in South Carolina, which boasts the biggest earthen dam in North America. This dam created a very large lake that obliterated many villages in the area. The area outside of Columbia, SC was once a wooded rural area; now it's become a suburb with a lot of expensive homes being built in expensive subdivisions all around the lake.

In the last generation there has been a change in the traditional culture of the area. Newcomers have

come in with new industry or with the university and have brought in a lot of money. Some of the descendants of the traditional rural culture think of themselves as the true Carolinians, and they don't consider the newly arrived, subdivided, suburban culture as reality. They think it's an artificial culture. That means we have kids in our school who are from both of those cultures. We have both white and African-American kids from both cultures. We have, therefore, many racial distinctions in our school but economic distinctions as well.

**SP:** Just think of how different it is for me. Our community is so small that I have known many of my students since they were born. Teachers are active members of the community too. Nobody's anonymous in such a small school. We also get to know students "transplanted" from other areas. I watch these kids come up through grammar school and junior high; then I get them and hopefully graduate them. I don't just have my students for one year; I have them for several years until they graduate.



**BAS:** I used to teach in a small school too. I think I prefer small schools because the students in that situation know you're always going to be there for them.

*continued on next page*

## Teaching Out in the Middle of Everywhere (cont.)

**CB:** Is there an advantage to teaching in a rural area?

**SP:** I am really committed to teaching in rural areas. I went on a teaching exchange and taught in Australia in a private boys' prep school for a year. An Australian teacher came to Alaska and taught in my school, and he and I agreed that the quality of education was better in the smaller school in Alaska, where you could deal with an individual. On the other hand, my own son was not able to get the level of math that he wanted because we can't get the staff to teach classes that only a couple students need. Many specialized classes are just not available.

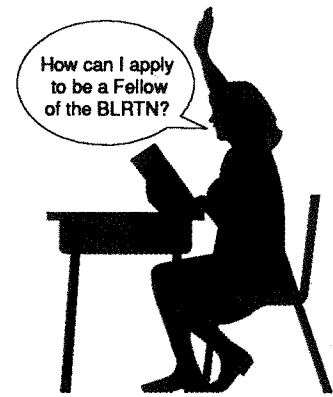
Other gaps exist too: in our school, if you want to take a foreign language you have to take Spanish, and then it is only offered every other year. There are many limitations in that manner, but we have learned to live with them.

I think BreadNet is going to be very important for rural schools because it will offer the things that my students can't get otherwise. My students are so isolated. For example, take the idea of career exploration. Many kids graduate from our high school and say, "Gee, I think I'll be a teacher or a park ranger." That's because those are two of the very few jobs that have been modeled in our community. I think that BreadNet will eventually expose my students to people who have done other things. BreadNet will prepare them to leave the community, if that's what they choose.

The prospect of young people leaving the area and state is a grim thought for me, but it's a reality. In order to find work or be successful, they are often forced to leave. As their teacher, I owe them an opportunity to learn those skills they will need elsewhere. Part of the rural Alaskan student's education has to be to learn to value where they come from, even if they ultimately end up leaving that

culture and lifestyle.

**BAS:** My kids need just the opposite; they need to learn how to appreciate cultures that don't have the things they take for granted, basic things like easy travel between towns and access to consumer goods. My students might disparage other cultures just because they differ from their own or because they are not as technologically advanced or as "comfortable." They might label those cultures impoverished, and therefore inferior to their own. So BreadNet will work for both communities in different ways. ■



For applications and further materials, write to

James Maddox, Director  
Bread Loaf School of English  
Middlebury College  
Middlebury, Vermont 05753

## A Conversation with Norma Russell Sheff of Tierra Amarilla, NM

**CB:** Tell me about the area where you teach, Norma.

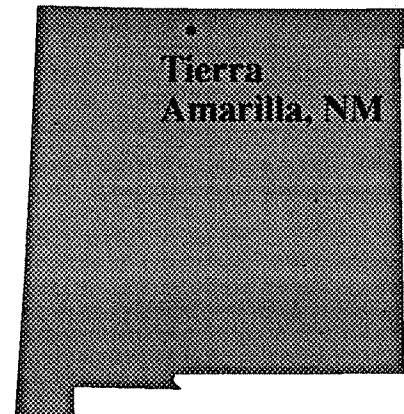
**Norma Russell Sheff:** We are in the north of New Mexico. We live west of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, very high up, about 8,000 feet above sea level. The village where I live, Chama, is the largest one around, and it has only 800 people. I teach in two schools: Escalante High School and Tierra Amarilla Mid High. Both schools are on the same grounds, and the total school population is about 230. Most of the students who come from the Tierra Amarilla area are Hispanic; there are very few Anglo families in and around Tierra Amarilla, although there are more around Chama. I would say our high school is about eighty percent Hispanic.

**CB:** What do the people do there?

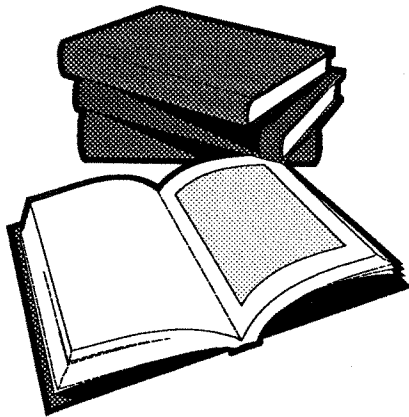
**NRS:** They teach; they work for the government on road building and maintenance. Tierra Amarilla is the county seat, so we have other jobs related to county government as well. There are a lot of ranchers, and there is a lumber industry, although it is dwindling. There is a lot of tourism there, and a lot of people have retired to the area because it has such a lovely summer climate.

**CB:** What drew you to teach in this area?

**NRS:** The character of the people drew me as well as the character of the land. I



grew up in northern Arizona among people like the ones among whom I live now. I'm talking of a vital, intelligent people who are hardworking, warmhearted, and



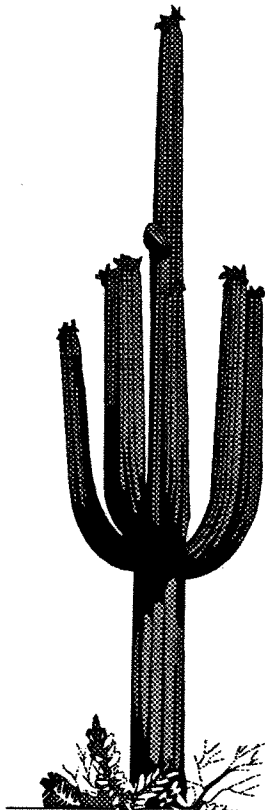
generous to a fault. They're independent, yet they're receptive to others and respectful when respect is due. I feel a great deal of respect for these people. I don't mean to give the impression that this community is free of all the evils of society. We have our problems like any other community, but we have a great resource in the character of the people.

**CB: Tell me about your students.**

**NRS:** A good number of our kids go to college, and they are fairly well-equipped to do so. About half are perfectly bilingual and that is increasing a bit. In the past, speaking Spanish was discouraged by some of the parents and some others in the community, but things have changed; there is a renewed appreciation for Hispanic culture and my school is encouraging that. This year I'll be teaching three bilingual language arts courses, in which I'm going to include Hispanic *cuentos* of northern New Mexico, which are traditional stories handed down through the culture. The Museum of New Mexico Press has published a book, which I will use, that includes Hispanic *cuentos* printed side by side on facing pages with the English translation.

**CB: What role do you think BreadNet will play in the education of your students?**

**NRS:** I think it's going to be incredible. My students are rich in energy to share, and I think BreadNet will give *them* a window to the world as well. A lot of my students have a high self-esteem regarding their culture, and



they want to share that with others. For example, we just graduated a boy whose graduation was no easy accomplishment. But his family's support of him, the consideration with which they treat each other, and their tradition of respect for their elders had bred in this boy a sense of community, family and belonging. Those values gave this boy the extra boost he needed in order to graduate. My students can share this kind of self-confidence with others through BreadNet. And like all students, mine also love computers, so they will enjoy it for the opportunity to use computers too.

**CB: What do suppose your students will want to discuss with other rural students over BreadNet?**

**NRS:** My students don't want to be thought of only as Hispanic. For example, they often don't like the term "village" applied to where they live because to some people that word might suggest stereotypical connotations of "Hispanic lifestyle." They prefer the word "community." So I'm also curious to find out which things they will share about themselves on BreadNet and which things they won't share.

**CB: What made you decide to apply to be a fellow in the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network?**

**NRS:** Well, when I saw the Bread Loaf School of English catalog, I was very excited by what was in it. For a long time I'd thought that there would never be enough time to study *all* the things I was interested in, and I'd been reconciled to learning about the things that *were* possible. But looking through the Bread Loaf catalog, I saw all those things that I was once—and now realize I still am—eager to study. Things such as modern British literature, the theatre, acting workshops, nature writing, and other writing courses.

Bread Loaf is a rich experience. You know you're alive here because the experience of studying among other dedicated teachers reawakens all those parts of you that have gone to sleep. The best part of being a fellow in the BLRTN is that, I feel, there is a kind of benevolence afoot; the people who are part of BLRTN sincerely care that we improve ourselves and our students through the experience. The administrators of the grant as well as the fellows sponsored by it are committed to reaching out to rural teachers and bringing them into a larger world where teaching and learning thrive. ■

# Alaska Teacher Network Plan

The teachers in each of the six target rural states are developing plans to begin collaborative projects within their home states as well as with students and teachers in other rural areas. Below, the Alaska teachers have outlined their plans for the current year.

## Main Goal:

By the end of the school year we would like to have in place a program for regular communication by the teachers and students on the Alaska/Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network.

## Group Objectives:

1. All six teachers of the Alaska BLRTN will have access to and be active on BreadNet, a computer conferencing system designed for high school English teachers. We will work closely with Rocky Gooch, the BLRTN Telecommunications Director, to iron out wrinkles in the system.
2. We will communicate at least once each week with another BLRTN member.
3. Each teacher will submit at least one piece of student writing to "What's Happening in Alaska?" a new publication containing the best writing of students in the BLRTN. The writing will include expository and narrative essays, interviews, collaborative writing, poetry, etc. If possible, these submissions will be transmitted electronically to Sondra Porter in Trapper Creek, the managing editor of the publication. Black and white drawings by students will also be included.
4. Each teacher will explore the possibility of obtaining financial (matching funds) and technical support from his or her school district.
5. Each teacher will make contact at least once with one of our network leaders about how things are going.

## Individual Objectives:

**Sondra Porter:** Compile the publication "What's Happening in Alaska?". Perhaps a student or a small group could do the layout. Bring lots of copies to the October meeting.

**Allison Holsten:** Explore contacts with the University of Alaska for connections to Internet, and possibilities for a group grant. Explore Internet gateway. Discuss mentor program with others.

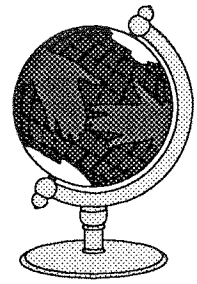
**Karen Mitchell:** Explore and establish elementary connections for the classroom. Explore and establish the ASWC connection.

**Pauline Evon:** Establish and promote the Native American Talk BreadNet conference for Alaskan students.

**John Morse:** Investigate community, school, parent, and student dynamics.

**Scott Christian:** Organize the October meeting for the entire group. Explore and establish the ATRN connection. ■

# What Is Bread-Net?



In 1983, Bill Wright, Director of Information Technology for the Bread Loaf School of English at Middlebury College, initiated BreadNet, a national microcomputer-based network of teachers and writing specialists. Based at the Bread Loaf School of English, BreadNet connects students and teachers by modems, telephone lines, and computers—easing the isolation in rural schools in states such as Alaska, New Mexico, Montana, Kentucky, and South Dakota, and in urban schools in cities like Manhattan and Dallas—where, as Bill Wright points out, teachers can still feel cut off. He explains that BreadNet is a bit like electronic mail but has some significant differences: "Electronic mail is more of a one-to-one medium. You can send one message to one person or use a distribution list and send one message to many—broadcast it. A computer conference gives you more of the feel of sitting around a table, a seminar table, with twelve to fifteen people discussing ideas. So what we do is have groups of teachers work on a conference and share ideas. We are also able to explore the idea of having groups of classrooms. In other words, instead of one-to-one pen pal arrangements, we can have five or six classrooms working together on a project. The rule has been that BreadNet is open to teachers who attend or have attended the Bread Loaf School of English. That includes Bread Loaf in Vermont, Santa Fe, and Oxford, England. It's also open to people they're working with on projects." ■

Excerpted from Bread Loaf News  
Fall/Winter 1992



# Bread Loaf-Vermont: A Glance Back at the Summer of 1993

by Dixie Goswami

Each year scores of teachers meet at Bread Loaf for an enriching intellectual experience, and last summer was no exception. For six weeks we met in seminars, in the Barn, in the computer center, in the library, on porches, in the dining room, and on walks. We learned quickly that rural teachers—even those in the same state or county—are remarkably diverse but share urgent questions about the students and communities they are committed to. Race, class, gender, and language were compelling issues, frankly discussed. BLRTN teachers planned classroom inquiry projects designed to help us look critically and thoughtfully at our educational practices and policies and tried to figure out how we could use BreadNet as a tool to help

us stay in touch and get the job done. Very much a part of the larger Bread Loaf community of 250 teachers and faculty in Vermont, by early August (when the BLRTN T-shirts arrived), the BLRTN nevertheless had an identity of its own. The summer wasn't easy for many teachers, being apart from families or living off-campus with families or missing ceremonies. It was difficult, taking courses, working on BreadNet, juggling meetings. Some teachers left Vermont one day and began teaching back home the next day. But the experience was exhilarating and, at times, fun.

Aside from establishing a network for professional development and designing activities and courses that bring children and young people

together to read, write, and publish, BLRTN teachers wish to have a voice in conversations about school reform, to serve as a national advocacy group for rural education, and to promote greater equity of resources and deeper understanding and respect for teachers and students in rural communities. As this newsletter notes, BLRTN teachers are already being called upon at national and state policy discussions about technology and education; others have leadership roles at the state and local level. This extraordinary group of rural teachers brought new perspectives and knowledge to Bread Loaf-Vermont, challenging assumptions about texts and pedagogies, entering and shaping ongoing conversations about literature, language, culture, and learning. ■

## School Daze

by Chad Graff

Get up! *No, I don't want to.*  
Eight minutes pass. Get up! Get up!  
Eight more minutes pass. Get up! Get up!  
Get up! Get up! *Okay, Okay.*

Put on my bike clothes. Go for a ride. See the sun come up. Say my poem:

*Silent sunrise over Church Rock  
Colors whorl on the white sky.  
Riding my bike,  
I face the day.*

Look out at the mesas and know I'm lucky I'm not crammed in a subway on my way to work.

It's not that I like to exercise at 6 a.m. I'd rather be sleeping, but I

know that if I'm not awake and alive at 8:15, then there's no chance that my students, some of whom got on the bus a little after 6, will be. So I pedal.

Then I shower, maybe think of something to write about or say during the day. Drink coffee and eat something on my way out the door.

Riding to school, I see how many kids I can wave to, or smile at.

I walk into the teachers' lounge, grab my attendance card and bulletin, and then walk down the hall, again wave (with my eyes this time), smile.

And then there are kids inside my room. Yes, they are my students! Teach, Create, Inspire, Nourish, Learn, Write, Write, Write. Or, try and do all of those things and try and feel good about the results.

Use Active Verbs! Use Fewer Adjectives! What? You say

you don't know what an adjective is? Good. Then you won't use too many.

Introduce one of my "friends"—a certain poem—to my students. Try to get them to love it too. What's he or she saying? What are you thinking about?

Great. Now write about that for a while.

What? The poem?

No. Life, man. Connect it to your life. What you know. What you want to write about.

Try to do it again and again each day. Three classes, ninety minutes each.

Try to stay alive. Try to live a little too. Fight battles I can win. Go to sleep by 11. Wake up by 6 and remember how lucky I am to be in this place, with these people, learning and teaching. ■

# Contours of the Imagination: Landmark Poems

BLRTN fellow Chad Graff initiated THE LANDMARK POEM assignment for other fellow Bread Loafers. He described the assignment to his colleagues at Bread Loaf this summer. After completing the writing assignment, several of the BLRTN teachers decided to use it in their classrooms this year. Here is Chad's introduction to the Landmark Poem assignment:

## The Landmark Poem

by Chad Graff

Rex Jim, a Navajo writer and teacher who lives in Rock Point, Arizona, gave this assignment to students in my class at Monument Valley High School in Kayenta, Arizona. Kayenta and Rock Point, approximately sixty miles apart, are towns centrally located in the Navajo Nation. Rex teaches at Rock Point High School, a community school known for its pioneering work in bilingual (Navajo/English) education.

Preceding this assignment, Rex spoke in both English and Navajo about his experiences growing up on the reservation, his experiences off the reservation, and his personal connec-

tion to some of the landmarks surrounding Rock Point. Regardless of where he is in Rock Point, he can look up and see a landmark, a unique place in the landscape, that recalls a contemporary story or event. For example, there is a place outside of Rock Point that he looks at and remembers the story of his grandmother, who hid there with her son while fleeing capture. She eventually fled to Mexico and spent several years there before returning to Rock Point. He recalls her show of power in relation to that landmark and remembers his own powers as an individual.

Rex then asked my students to think about landmarks that they see in their own lives every day. After a minute or so, he asked them to take out a piece of paper and write briefly

about the landmark, describing it and relating something about themselves or their past to it. What he wanted them to end up with, he said, was approximately four lines that showed the connection between the landmark and the students themselves or their history; they could then memorize those lines and repeat them to themselves every day upon seeing the landmark. After about fifteen minutes, most students had several lines and were well on their way toward meeting the goal of the assignment.

Below are several landmark poems. This collection includes poems written by BLRTN teachers as well as poems by students in Susan Miera's class in Pojoaque High School in New Mexico. ■

### Ripton Stream

The river falls for the sea.  
My mind is a channel of rocks.  
Atmosphere is the father.  
My language joins the flow.

Stan Renfro—Ft. Wingate, NM

### Morning

Raven sentinels, black tricksters  
Scavenge death (with guttural asides)  
Croak the warnings from the pines  
Survive—aha— Surprise!

Ann Eilert—Los Alamos, NM

### Untitled

Mesa tops  
Clear skies  
This is the light in my eyes  
These days shouldn't die.

Robert Shuttles, Grade 11

### Tierra Amarilla

From the center of the football field  
at Escalante High, Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico,  
where my heart is at home,  
I see, massively-beautiful,  
ruggedly-scarred, deep-ridged and ancient, the twins,  
doubly-cliffed, two thousand feet of sheer gray granite,  
the Brazos Bluffs. To the north, snow-capped Chama Peak,  
above my house; to the west, the ridged gray bluffs  
you follow to Dulce; and, south, the highway over  
Tierra Amarilla Hill, and the sky deep blue over all.  
There is on earth no place more fair. HEART SYMBOL!

Norma Sheff—Tierra Amarilla, NM

### Untitled

One eyed, one legged  
broken-beaked and naked,  
Stinky, dirty, full of the dickens,  
but, of course, they are my chickens.

Ronald Roybal, Grade 11

## Announcements and Meetings

Please send announcements, correspondence, and articles to Chris Benson, BLRTN editor, English Department, Clemson University, Box 341503, Clemson, SC 29634-1503. Future issues of the BLRTN will include features by rural teachers and students.

### **Bread Loafers in Washington: U.S. Department of Education Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI): September 27-29**

- Bill Wright, BreadNet Director, conducted this meeting, which focused on how electronic networking can be used as a tool for professional development of teachers. Lucy Maddox (Director of Bread Loaf/Santa Fe and member of Native American Talk conference on BreadNet), Kim Krall (Bread Loaf teacher at the Santa Fe Indian School), and Douglas Wood (Bread Loaf teacher at Summit Parkway Middle School, Columbia, SC) participated. Doug Wood had this to say (on BreadNet) about the OERI sponsored meeting: "I'm excited about OERI and the U. S. Department of Education making electronic networking and professional development of teachers a priority. They actually want teacher input . . . ."

- Jim Maddox, Rocky Gooch, Dixie Goswami, and Lucy Maddox met with the Alaska BLRTN in Anchorage during the first week of October. They participated with BLRTN teachers and network leaders in the Alaska Writing Consortium sponsored by the University of Alaska Southeast on October 2; met with Karen Mitchell's Teacher Research seminar in Juneau; visited with Terri Austin and members of the Alaska Teacher Research Network in Fairbanks; and spent some time in Nitiski with Scott Christian and in Kwethluk, with Pauline Evon. The group spent a good bit of time reviewing the busy and demanding weeks since they were convened at Bread Loaf in Vermont and revising and planning activities for the remainder of the semester. Sondra Porter distributed copies of the first issue of *What's Happening in Alaska*, written and published by students in BLRTN teachers' classes. (Copies are available from BLRTN newsletter on request).

- The first meeting of South Carolina's BLRTN teachers and network leaders took place on October 20-21, scheduled to coincide with Clemson University's first annual African-American Festival of Literature and Arts. The group had the opportunity to meet with Alice Childress, the distinguished lecturer, director and actress who has written for theatre, motion pictures, television and adult and young adult novels. During the informal meeting the SC BLRTN had a chance to discuss Childress' work and their classrooms as well as review plans for BreadNet and other activities for 1993-94.

- On September 24-25, Lois Rodgers, Bette Ford, Peggy Turner, Patricia Parrish, Leslie Fortier, and Carolyn Hardy met with about twenty teachers, faculty, and staff who attended the 1993 Piney Woods Bread Loaf Summer Writing Institute. Bill Wright and Ken Alston (co-director of Piney Woods/

Bread Loaf) conducted BreadNet technical sessions; Jackie Royster and Elspeth Stuckey (co-director of Piney Woods/Bread Loaf) talked with the group about plans and projects for this academic year; Jim Maddox and Dixie Goswami joined a session led by BLRTN teachers at the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English conference in Jackson, MS. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for December.

- Jim Maddox and Rocky Gooch were in New Mexico and Arizona for a few days in September. They visited Jim Schmitz at Hopi High School, Keams Canyon; Stan Renfro at Fort Wingate High School; Sylvia Barlow at Chinle High School; Susan Miera at Pojoaque High School; Carlotta Martza at Santa Fe Indian School; and Ann Eilert at Los Alamos High School. The Four Corners BLRTN is planning a fall meeting.
- Vermont Bread Loaf Rural Teachers plan to meet on October 30. Tish McGonegal and Bill Wright attended the National Rural Education Association meeting held in Burlington, VT on October 14-16.





Several of the 1993 Fellows of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network. Bottom row, left to right: Allison Holsten, Ann Eilert, Peggy Turner, Leslie Fortier, Carolyn Hardy, Ellen Temple, Jane Harvey, Scott Christian, Chad Graff, Stan Renfro, Norma Sheff. Top row, left to right: Ginny DuBose, Pauline Evon, Joyce Summerlin, Patricia Parrish, Sondra Porter, John Morse, Janet Atkins, Jim Schmitz, Karen Mitchell, Mary Burnham, Janet Olson, Susan Miera, Barbara Everson, Carlotta Martza.

Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network  
English Department  
801 Strode Tower  
Clemson University  
Box 341503  
Clemson, SC 29634-1503

