

BREAD LOAF

Rural Teacher Network

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

Building Community

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Plus: teacher stories, interviews, and more about rural schools and communities

A Publication of the Bread Loaf School of English
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont
Fall/Winter 1996

From the Editor

by Chris Benson
Clemson University
Clemson, SC

During this election year, I have to admit I was a little miffed at several politicians for their mockery of the title of the First Lady's recent book *It Takes a Village*, a truncation of the African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child." Politicians on the one side implied that individuals sink or swim according to their own merit and their community is of no importance in the matter. Politicians on the other side were mostly silent, afraid to acknowledge that a community does indeed play a critical role in the growth of its children. It was, after all, a mean political season.

To say that communities play an important role in raising the child, though, is only half the truth, for the relationship between the child and his or her community is a symbiotic one, and it calls to mind the chicken-or-the-egg mystery. We can go around in circles debating whether strong individuals make good communities or strong communities make good individuals. The truth is that these things happen simultaneously, and we'd do well to ensure the well-being of the individual and the community.

Two years ago in the BLRTN magazine, we published a collection of stories about the rural communities that are home to Fellows in the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network. That publication sought to answer the question "What does a rural community look like?" The answer we found is that rural America is as diverse as urban America, representing a range of geography, climates, and cultures. From New England to the Deep South, from the Yukon to the Rio Grande, from the mesa to the island, rural schools face a variety of obstacles and use different strategies to surmount them.

At the first Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools held at the Bread Loaf campus in Vermont in June of 1996, rural teachers from across the country met to discuss some common goals. Despite the diversity of teachers and the communities they represented, virtually everyone at the conference agreed that a strong sense of community is necessary to educate children and to maintain growing, professional faculties of teachers.

At the conference, we heard distressing stories about communities that are at risk. Problems typically associated with urban places—drugs, gangs, teenage pregnancy, dropout rates, violence—are rural problems now. Why? The fragmentation of urban industrial society now occurs in rural locations as well, and the sense of community that typically unites rural places is disintegrating. Yet schools that take advantage of their small size can reverse this trend and provide ways to rebuild community. This view is offered by many of the writers in this issue of the BLRTN magazine on "Building Community."

On pages 17-29 in this issue, we present interviews with and the writing of special guests at the conference, national and state leaders in various fields of education. These stories complement the views of BLRTN Fellows, suggesting that BLRTN is on the crest of a national trend toward strengthening schools' roles in their communities and vice versa.

In this issue of the BLRTN magazine, "building community" refers not just to improving unity and cooperation among citizens in rural places like Wrangell, Alaska, or Aberdeen, Mississippi; building community also applies to individual schools and individual classrooms. How does a faculty, for instance, create for itself a shared sense of investment in its students? How does an individual teacher create among his or her students a shared sense of commitment to learning? How can telecommunications be used by teachers to create or strengthen professional communities of teachers and their students? These questions are addressed in the stories presented in this publication. ☺

DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund

The Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network is funded by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The mission of the Fund is to foster fundamental improvement in the quality of educational and career development opportunities for all school-age youth, and to increase access to these improved services for young people in low-income communities.

Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network

Fall/Winter, 1996

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From the Director

Some Things We've Learned...

by James Maddox
 Director, BLRTN
 Bread Loaf School of English
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 Middlebury, VT

The grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund which founded the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network in 1993 and which has supported it ever since will come to an end in August, 1997. With the end of this grant—the most generous in the history of the Bread Loaf School of English—now in sight, it's time to evaluate what we have accomplished and reflect upon what we have learned.

Under this grant, 121 teachers from our six target states have at-

crease in quantity and quality of students' writing and in the intelligent use of technology.

One hundred twenty-one teachers: not all that many, considering the population of the nation, or even the populations of these six states. But our network has worked precisely because it has remained small, based upon personal acquaintance and the shared experience of the Bread Loaf education. We're wary of presuming to offer ourselves as a model, but we're tempted do just that in pointing to our success as, precisely, a small, effective, tightly bound network of teachers.

We had a chance to show some of the accomplishments of our network last June, in a conference at Bread Loaf, to which we invited educators, journalists, funders, and other

Bread Loaf, over the weekend of June 20–22, 1997, to showcase some of the astonishing accomplishments of our Fellows and to learn of the innovations of our colleagues in other rural networks.

One thing we're sure of: we now know a great deal more about rural education than we did when Rocky Gooch and I set off on our first recruiting trip, flying to an extremely frigid Alaska back in January, 1993. Even back then, we knew something in our heads, but it has taken these four years for us to know it truly in our blood and in our bones: rural schools must take advantage of their own uniqueness by grounding themselves within their communities. Too often, rural students, bombarded by deeply negative media images of themselves (see Robert Gipe's reflections in his article in this issue of the magazine), see their ruralness only as a limitation, an embarrassing deficit to be overcome. Encouraging students to carry out research and write about their own communities and environments; BLRTN teachers' invitations to

Rural schools must take advantage of their own uniqueness by grounding themselves within their communities.

tended Bread Loaf and have then returned to their schools, to put into place the projects that they have planned with their colleagues during their Bread Loaf summers. Those "projects" have included readings of literary and cultural texts, shared between BLRTN teachers' classrooms in different target states; revolutions within teachers' classrooms, which have become telecommunications-based writing or publishing centers; and revolutions within entire schools, as the excitement stirring within BLRTN classrooms has spread, has caught the attention and interest of BLRTN teachers' colleagues and school administrators, and has helped to reform the schools' vision of their own mission, especially in the in-

friends of rural education in America. It was our aim and our hope to share some of the accomplishments of BLRTN with other networks—such as the Eastern Kentucky Teachers Network and the Alabama-based PACERS project—and, in turn, to learn from what those other networks have done to unite teachers in the service of rural school reform. That weekend at Bread Loaf was one of the great moments for our entire project, and BLRTN Editor Chris Benson has devoted half of this issue of the BLRTN magazine to the reflections of some of our "critical friends" at that conference. The conference was so successful in bringing together the friends of rural educators, in fact, that we will be holding a second such meeting at

parents and other community members into their schools, so that the classroom walls become semi-permeable membranes; setting up classrooms (such as Susan Miera's in Pojoaque, New Mexico) to become publishing centers for community organizations—these are some of the projects that have been worked out painstakingly on a school-by-school basis. There is no formula for making these school/community partnerships work, since each has relied upon the genius and commitment of the individual BLRTN teacher and her students.

There's another thing that we now know, something of which, it would seem, any idiot would be aware, but which it took some time for

us to learn. The lesson came home to us one memorable day, after Dixie Goswami, Eva Gold (from Research for Action, the organization that helps us evaluate our work), and I visited a school that will not be named here and later reflected that we had almost literally tiptoed past the office of a notoriously uncooperative, non-supportive principal, on our way to the classroom of a BLRTN Fellow. We had ambivalent feelings about this. On one hand,

five rural schools and to bring 18 rural teachers a year, from 1997 through 2000, to Bread Loaf. Profiting from our BLRTN experiences, we have formed partnerships with five schools where we already had BLRTN teachers in place, and where we had become acquainted with especially active, innovative, and supportive principals: Pojoaque High School (teacher Susan Miera and principal Ricque Finucane) and Laguna Middle School (teachers Phil Sittnick and Kim Bannigan and principal Nick Chermiah) in New Mexico, Ganado Intermediate School (teacher Nancy Jennings and principal Susan Stropko) in

Arizona, and Schoenbar Middle School (teacher Rosie Roppel and principal Dick Clements) and Ketchikan High School (teacher Natasha O'Brien and principal Anthony Kennedy) in Alaska. In December, 1996, the principals and teachers from these schools met

at Laguna Middle School to plan our four-year project, and at that time we all reflected that the idea that, it seems, any idiot should know—that school reform can work only if there are intensive partnerships between principals and teachers—was one of the education world's best-kept secrets: this collegial partnership of teachers and principals was unique in the experience of all the teachers and principals who met and worked together for those two days at Laguna. We are confident that our work with the Annenberg Rural Challenge will extend and deepen the work we have begun with the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network.

We see the importance of forging strong alliances, not only with our individual teachers, but with entire schools, above all those schools with proactive, reform-minded principals.

we welcome the opportunity to be able to support teachers working in an unfriendly environment such as this teacher's. On the other hand, we had to reflect that our chances of helping to make really significant, systemic changes within a school were negligible if the school administration regarded our efforts with indifference, let alone hostility. From that moment, in the first year of the grant, we began to see the importance of forging strong alliances, not only with our individual teachers, but with entire schools, above all those schools with proactive, reform-minded principals.

That simple lesson, we are very happy to say, resulted in Bread Loaf's latest rural initiative, one that would not have been possible without the deep experience afforded us by BLRTN. Late in 1994, Bread Loaf was named as one of the fourteen Founding Partners of the Annenberg Rural Challenge (ARC), the initiative for rural school reform funded by a staggeringly generous gift of \$50,000,000 from Ambassador Walter Annenberg. In the fall of 1996, after lengthy discussions with ARC administrators, Bread Loaf received a grant of \$500,000 to form partnerships with

writers for reform; Rocky Gooch, who has visited most Fellows' schools and many of their homes and has made even the most panicked and technophobic Fellows jubilant participants on BreadNet, certainly the most successful electronic network of teachers in America; and, foremost among all of us, Dixie Goswami, whose vision for reform, passion for democratic education, and generosity of heart and action have been the great, moving spirit of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network. ☺

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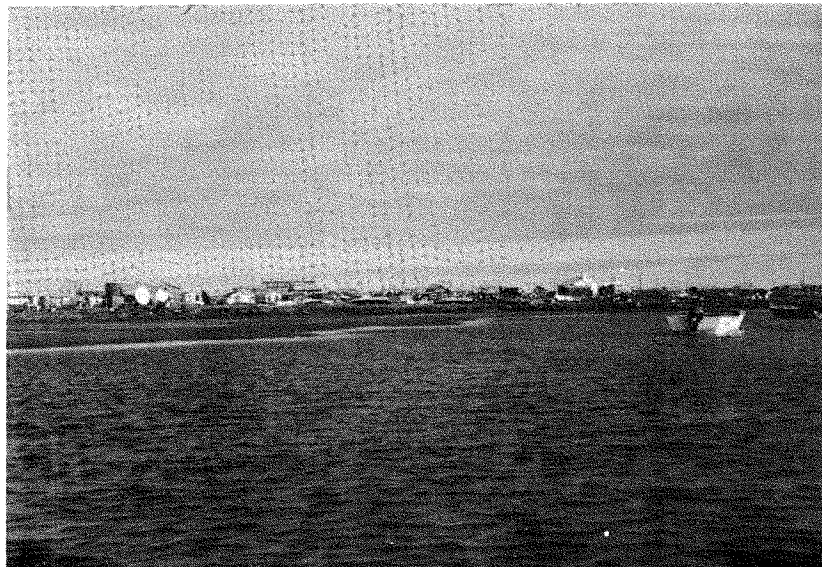
Shishmaref School: Where School and Community Intersect

*Sheri Skelton
Shishmaref School
Shishmaref, AK*

Spring comes to northwestern rural Alaska in late May. It is a season of sand and endless hours of sunshine, interrupted occasionally by foggy mists that rise from the breakup of ice and envelope the island. The school is closed, and many of the teachers have left the island, or even Alaska, for the summer. Time is suspended. The warm spring weather and the continuous daylight tolerate no regulation of time according to clocks. Very few persons follow schedules, and many of the villagers are camping, hunting ducks or oogrooks, and gathering eggs. Children play outside, digging in the sand or darting in and out among the buildings in a game of hide 'n' seek.

Shishmaref in the spring provides a view of village life not seen during the school year and allows me to make a valuable connection with the community itself. Part of the allure of teaching in northwestern rural Alaska is the opportunity to live in a unique environment, but that same environment presents difficulties as well. The remoteness, the isolation, and a lifestyle without cars, shopping malls, fast food, running water and flush toilets provide a continual challenge. Longevity of teachers has been a constant problem in Alaskan bush schools.

After living in Shishmaref for five years, I know that the success of my teaching is dependent upon my relationship with the community. Bridging the gap between myself and the community is difficult and requires an understanding of the community itself. Lying on the shores of an island that is one mile by three, Shishmaref is virtually self-contained, accessible only by plane or boat; in stormy weather we are a world unto ourselves. The island looks out on a vast



The village of Shishmaref as seen from the lagoon

sea that continually gnaws away at its few acres of ground. A visitor to Shishmaref might think he or she was standing on the edge of the earth. But in spite of the isolation, or perhaps because of it, a defiance and an overwhelming sense of community exist here. Although Shishmaref has long been known for being a village full of friendly people, it also is a village that is extremely independent, speaking its own dialect of the Inupiaq language and maintaining an unwavering allegiance to family. In the early 1900's

when the flu epidemic swept through Alaska killing countless numbers of natives, the Shishmaref Eskimos established a barricade down the coast from Shishmaref. The barricade was manned and armed by men who, according to local villagers, did not hesitate to use force if someone tried to go past the barricade. The barrier prevented the further spread of influenza throughout Alaska, and not one person in Shishmaref died from the illness.

The village existed many

years before the school arrived, and although the school is a visible and viable entity in the community, its existence is also a marginal one. My initial presence in the community might also be defined in the same manner. When I stepped off the plane in July, 1991, I

was an alien. My prior knowledge of village life, weather conditions, food, clothing, shelter, or Eskimo culture was minimal. I differed from many of the teachers traveling to bush Alaska, however, in that I was not fresh out of college trying to land my first teaching job; I was not an outdoors person hoping to shoot a bear or a moose; I was not seeking adventure in the far north. I had come with a family.

In Shishmaref, I concentrated on settling into the community. Knowing little about the community,

I entered it with an open mind, without preconceptions or misconceptions. Firsthand experiences and gradual day-to-day living provided me with knowledge that helped me to define my role in the community. If not for the school, I would not be a part of this community. Shishmaref is not a place that I had even heard of or would even have considered moving to if I had not acquired a teaching job there.

What role does formal education play in an Inupiaq Eskimo village in northwestern rural Alaska? I have always believed that the basic goal of education is to make persons literate. In my prior teaching in Iowa, I had been engaged in making people literate, assisting students in preparation for life after high school, when they would enter college, vocational schools, or the work force. As a teacher in Iowa, I was only one link in the chain of my students' education. My contact with students lasted for one or two years. I then turned my students over to someone else. Ties were not completely severed; students occa-

sionally returned to visit, or our paths might cross at a ball game or a local store. But for the most part, I taught my students to read, write and communicate, filling in some of the discrete blocks of knowledge that amount to a high school education in the U. S. My students took that knowledge and went on their way.

Teaching in Shishmaref forced me to redefine my role as an educator and challenged my belief in a person's basic need for literacy. Few graduates from Shishmaref go to college, leave the village, or become employed. Living in Shishmaref, one can become cut off from the rest of the world. Yet total isolation and seclusion are not completely possible. Elements from the outside have found their way into the community, and there exists a desire to know. At times when I am frustrated with what appears to be apathy, a student will say, "I was watching a movie last night and a guy was accused of sedition. I knew what that was. We had that for a vocabulary word." Or another student will ask, "Did you see on the news,

Sheri, how many students didn't know that Chaucer dude wrote *The Canterbury Tales*?"

During my time in Shishmaref, I have become more committed to the belief that literacy enriches a person's life, that an educated, literate populace is crucial to economic development and to democracy.

Teaching in Shishmaref, I am a significant part of my students' lives. My contact with students here lasts for at least four years. The seniors I have this year have been under my guidance for six years. And that relationship won't end with their graduation. I know where every student who has graduated in the past five years is and what has happened to him or her during that time.

Arriving in Shishmaref, I had to adjust to the community and study cultural influences, both Inupiaq and Western. This is a community in transition. Traditional cultural values have been intertwined with Western thought and values. Life has been made easier with the introduction of snowmobiles, guns, and white man's food; and difficulties have arisen with the introduction of drugs, alcohol, and bingo, resulting in physical abuse, child neglect, and suicides.

The juxtaposition of the traditional Inupiaq and the modern Western cultures is at times beyond logical comprehension. Pepsi, candy, frozen pizzas, salmon berries, seal oil, dried fish, and *muktuk* (whale) are dietary staples. Experienced hunters travel great distances on the tundra on snowmobiles. Here, ravens cannot be harmed in any way; even though a rack of drying fish may be eaten by ravens, nothing can be done to prevent that from happening. Here, if a dog cries like a human, the dog is immediately destroyed. Here, Michael Jordan walks on air and everyone, even the elders during Christmas week, plays basketball.

Flexibility and an open mind are essential for teaching here. Although many of the things I teach are traditional elements of a language arts curriculum, I have found that adapting materials relevant to the Inupiaq culture and the community of Shishmaref has enhanced the learning capabilities of my students. I have modified the curriculum of my writing class, an elective for juniors and seniors, to include as many community resources as possible. For creative writing



Spring breakup of ice in the Chukchi Inlet, Shishmaref, Alaska

(continued on next page)

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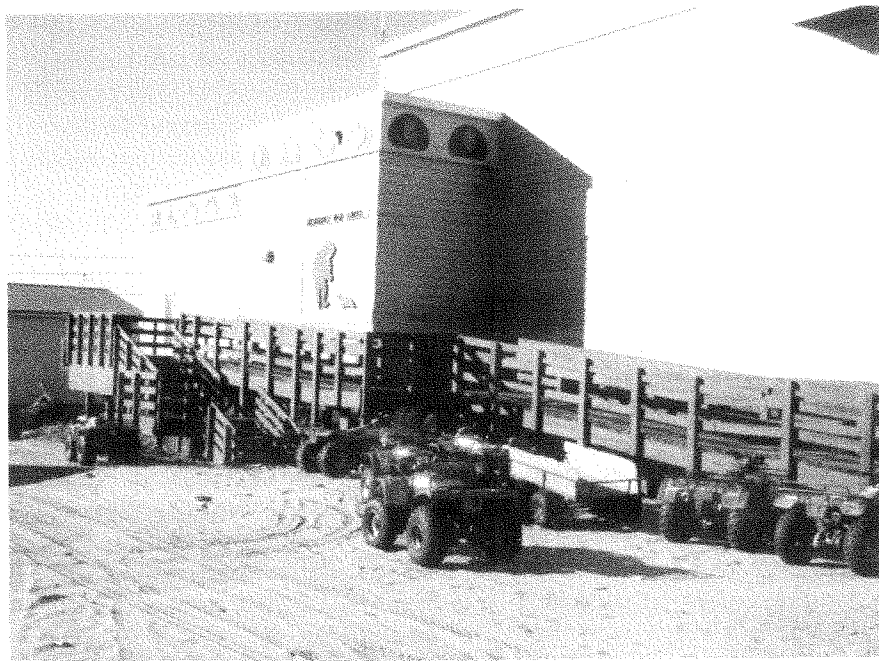
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Shishmaref... (continued)

assignments, I ask students to study the stories prevalent in the community which reflect their cultural history. For research assignments, I encourage students to delve into their history, to interview elders, to record information about Shishmaref's past, and to examine how that past affects the present. As a language arts teacher, I am fortunate to be in a community that offers a variety of resources and topics for writing, and I am continually amazed at the versatility and durability of the residents here. We have hunters, ivory carvers, skin sewers, dog mushers, persons who grew up in sod houses with no electricity, persons who used dogs as their main means of transportation, persons who have survived in a hostile and harsh environment. This practice of using Inupiaq culture as an element in the curriculum has helped me to adapt to my community too, and that's just as important because I couldn't be a successful teacher if I hadn't made that adjustment.

As a language arts teacher, I also have a monumental task in teaching standard English in a village that generally speaks a smattering of Inupiaq, English, and "village English." Although the majority of persons in Shishmaref speak English fluently, the Inupiaq language is still used by many of the elders, and more young people in the village are interested in becoming fluent in their native tongue. In general, the spoken language in the village is English interspersed with Inupiaq words. There is also a type of nonverbal facial communication with which one has to contend. Knowing the idiosyncrasies of verbal and nonverbal communication makes living in the village much less complicated. For example, many students indicate "yes" by widening their eyes, and they wrinkle their noses for "no." To refer to the day after tomorrow, Shishmaref people say "tomorrow next day." Days are counted by "sleeps." One might be going duck hunting in "three sleeps." If a child says, "He play be funny to me," that



Shishmaref School

means that someone is bothering the child. The verb "been" is frequently used to express past action, such as "He been go to Nome." In addition to these village English novelties, one also needs to be acquainted with at least some of the Inupiaq words that are commonly used, such as *alapaa* (cold) or *taima* (meaning "That's it.>").

Many students must overcome obstacles when writing, since much of the spoken language in the village would be considered nonstandard. Attempting to correct the spoken language here would be, I believe, an insurmountable and futile task, since at best it would only create a chasm between the villagers and me. Although I haven't assimilated the village English into my own usage, my own children easily picked it up and, according to the villagers, "sound like Eskimos." I have attempted to teach language skills here by making a distinction between the spoken and the written word and have found that my students, for the most part, are able to make that distinction also.

The Inupiaq culture is definitely an important aspect of the community of Shishmaref. But culture and

community are not synonymous. I am not nor will I ever be an Alaskan Native or an Inupiaq Eskimo, and the cultural heritage shared by my students is not one in which I can truly share, although I certainly do appreciate it. I can, however, incorporate aspects of the Inupiaq culture into my curriculum in order to make education more meaningful and personal for my students. I can continue to develop an awareness and understanding of the cultural and historical roots that nourish my students.

And I can be a member of the community. I do not just teach here. I live here. The people in Shishmaref are my neighbors and friends. My presence in this community is important because it strengthens the bond between community and school. I'm a teacher who believes that education can influence one's future. I also believe that one's education is significantly improved when the school and community form a partnership. In Shishmaref I see the promise of such a partnership. At times the intensity and sustaining power of an education in this place seems as bright and long as the spring sunshine. ☺

The Wholeness of Teaching: Moments of Survival

by *Moira Donovan*
Peoples Academy
Morrisville, VT

Stage Manager: *So, friends, this is the way we were in our growing up and in our marrying and in our doctoring and in our living and in our dying.*

—Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*

Everyone wears jeans, the standard uniform at these small town car shows. Tee shirts and jeans. Barbecued ribs and chicken are served under a tent around back of the converted A & W. The bulk of the crowd still goes to the main window in front with the long counter top and wooden bar stools, same as on an ordinary night, and orders from the regular menu: corn dogs, chili dogs, burgers, and the big fries this place is famous for. Hungry as we are, even this greasy food smells extraordinary. Looking in the take-out window, I see the tip of the chef's white hat over the grill, teenage girls busy making thick milk shakes and deep frying onion rings and fries, and bottles of vinegar and big shakers of salt on the counter.

While I'm waiting for our order to be called, I look at the cars in the show. Corvettes are pulled over to one side together, but everything else is lined up haphazardly: you might have a '38 Ford truck next to a little '68 muscle-car Camaro. Some vehicles are still in original condition; some are souped up with 4-barrel carbs and through-the-hood air intakes.

While looking across the rows of spotless engines, I wave to a boy I recognize from school. He had been my student briefly in seventh grade during a ten-week writing class, but he was uninterested in written expression, and we had several conflicts during class. But now he waves back to me. His older sister eyeballs him and gives him an elbow into the side. "You don't talk to teachers, idiot."

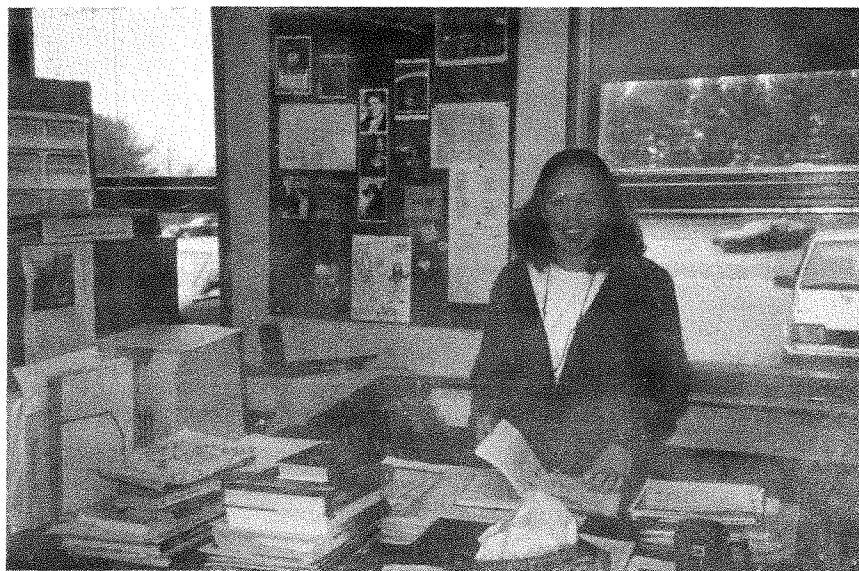
She smiles over to me because I am watching, but I think she meant it just the same. Most of the girls working behind the counter in the A & W have been in my classes.

By the time our take-out is cooked and our number called, we have looked at all the Fords and Chevies parked in lines across the small parking lot and lawn. I sit at the only available picnic table back behind most of the fifty or so cars in a shady corner, where I spot a few teachers from my school. I'm not all that anxious to say hello to them. Not because I don't like them. I just want to be away, be with my family, instead of my job, and sometimes I want to be in a place where I don't know anyone. Hard to do in a small town. Every Monday morning at school is tense because everybody finds out everything that happened to everybody else during the weekend. Nothing escapes the gossip mill in the school halls. Guidance has a busy day on Mondays sorting out who is feuding with whom.

This town—let's just call it "Grover's Corners," the setting of Thornton Wilder's classic American drama *Our Town*—is representative in many ways of all small towns. It has a population of 4,733; if I called the local hospital, I might have to adjust that number by one or two. The one movie theater is now divided into three. Both supermarkets are super-sized, so big that folks complain of getting lost inside. Grover's Corners has two auto parts stores, three hardware and building supply stores, two restaurants with bars inside, and more video places than I ever thought necessary or possible. A few gas stations, beauty salons and mom-and-pop stores dot the town's edges. No place for ballet or opera or even a circus to come to. People leave for those events.

The old part of downtown is compact, just a T-shaped intersection of two streets with an architectural conglomeration of century-old buildings and newer ones lining the main

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Moira Donovan in her classroom at Peoples Academy

The Wholeness of Teaching...

(continued)

street. In a book at our school library I have seen historic photos of this place, congested with horses and wagons and women in long prairie skirts crossing the mud underneath new gas lights on the main street. So there is a past here, a past when trains arrived to load our New England lumber and carry it away to the cities, a past when only the hardy ventured north. Some of these buildings are empty now, a string of failed businesses whose dusty, paint-chipped signs advertise their vacancy. Other businesses have survived the changes, and these employ local people, including my tenth graders, who need jobs to pay for their cars and car insurance. Kids drive at sixteen. Seems young, but they feel the urge to get out, to move away, to get beyond this place, this time, this town.

Like the photos in the library, the school buildings themselves tell a history. The official education of Grover's Corners' children started in 1899 with one building, which still houses the kindergarten, although teachers worry it might fall down around them. The oldest part of the high school was built early in this century and stands tall. The main structure was built by a man who, although born in Grover's Corners, sought his fortune elsewhere and returned with a young bride in hopes of building a spectacular home high on the hill overlooking the town. She died before his vision could be realized. So plans changed: a grand school was erected instead, paid for and given as a gift to Grover's Corners. It became the central school for a few neighboring towns and opened its doors in 1927.

The building is a beautiful, tall, two-story structure, 60 feet by

145 feet, constructed of tapestry brick with granite trimming. Pillars of Indiana limestone stand like giant sentinels on either side of the entrance. On the first floor is an auditorium capable of seating 450, with study and recitation room; on the second floor are the laboratories, drafting room, commercial rooms, and sewing room; in the basement are the kitchen, cafeteria, manual training department, locker rooms, and a gymnasium.

Wings were added to the main structure in the 1950's and now need renovation. But the town voted down the bond proposal that would have fixed the place up. Most of my students were excited about the prospects of a new gym. I speak to them about the importance of voting, about the fact that the bond issue was decided by only a fraction of the town's residents. Had more people voted, I

Grover's Corners has two auto parts stores, three hardware and building supply stores, two restaurants with bars inside, and more video places than I ever thought possible or necessary.

tell them, they might be bouncing basketballs in a new gym. They seem to understand that they are the losers in such local politics, but they don't experience the same involvement when I discuss presidential elections. I am frustrated by teen apathy, especially because when it comes to allowing smoking or wearing hats in school they are enthusiastic policy advocates.

During the car show, the owner of the hamburger joint, the organizer of this yearly event, pulls a twenty-something woman out of the kitchen to sing a few Patsy Cline songs. The band, playing more softly so we can hear the girl's voice, has been tirelessly playing country music with fiddle and guitars for a couple of hours and appears relieved to accompany her. She sings "Crazy." The evening stretches out around me, smooth as black ice.

Grover's Corners is a place I've learned a lot about simply by observing what goes on. In a few weeks my students will read Wilder's play *Our Town*, a drama about hope and loss, love and death, issues woven throughout our town. Will Wilder's characters, Mrs. Webb and Mrs. Gibbs, who work tirelessly to make a home, speak to my students? Will my students see their own mothers in a more sympathetic way? Will they begin to imagine the power of love—marriage—death in our town?

Literature like *Our Town* gives me the strength to be here, in the classroom, with these kids. It gives me a reason to be here, and I want my students to experience it the way I do. My students don't use literature as a retrospective tool yet. At least not school literature. For them, school is separate from life, from their commu-

nity. This I understand. Often I don't want "school life" to creep into my personal life, and vice versa. I can't find 100 percent fulfillment in the

classroom, and neither can they. But I keep looking for ways to integrate the intellectual and the emotional.

The young woman inside the burger joint finishes the last sustained note of "Crazy," and everyone claps. We finish our burgers and fries and even find room for a creamie. Everyone is hanging around the car show to find out which car will win the trophy. There are categories, and several cars win for this or that. But the overall big winner for the night is one that my youngest child picked out, the '38 Ford pickup truck. This is Grover's Corners, rural America, small town U.S.A. I look around at the many familiar faces of students, shopkeepers, colleagues, and know it has, for me, become our town. ☘

Living on the Rock

by Rob Buck
Wrangell High School
Wrangell, Alaska

The kids call it "The Rock." As in Alcatraz. And though they are only half joking about this island, there is a trace of truth in their words. Wrangell, an island in southeast Alaska, is one of many islands that make up the three-hundred-mile Alexander Archipelago stretching from Ketchikan to Haines. It is a place where water, both falling from the sky and surrounding us on all sides, is an everyday element of our existence. The island is roughly forty miles long and fifteen miles wide, but the entire community resides on one end, encompassing roughly five square miles. This is my home.

I have come to appreciate this remote place in the way one comes to appreciate fine bourbon—you begin to acquire a taste for it after years of telling yourself you like it. After having endured several seasons of nearly eight feet of rain per year, I've come to appreciate the continuous precipitation in the same way I appreciate the surrounding sea. In a strange way, the mist and fog and rain have begun to comfort me, serving as an insulator against the world.

But if the geography of this island isolates Wrangellites from the

I have come to appreciate this remote place in the way one comes to appreciate fine bourbon—you begin to acquire a taste for it after years of telling yourself you like it.

rest of the world, it also makes us more dependent on one another. And there is an abiding generosity of folks here when others are in need. My wife and I have received gifts from strangers at our daughter's birth, phone calls

and letters of support during times of crisis from people we have never met. We have come home from a stay in the hospital to find our lawn mowed and our refrigerator full of prepared meals. Yes, the people of this island constitute a true community in every sense of the word.

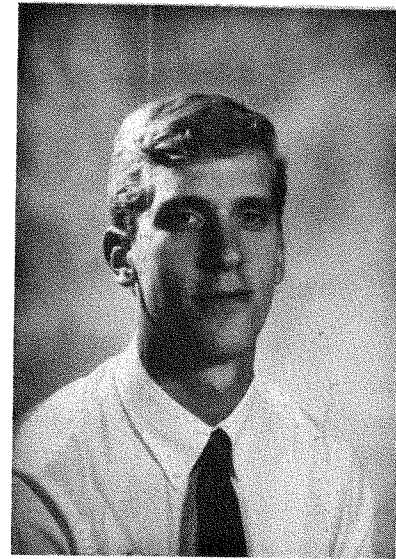
One element of this closeness, however, has its drawbacks, and it has to do with being a teacher. I call it "getting hit." "Getting hit" is the spontaneous incidence of a parent/teacher conference at any time and any place on the island. I often "get hit" while in line at the post office (we have no home delivery) because it's the only place in town where one finds a line. Or, I get hit at the doctor's office, where even in a community of this size, one must wait at least forty-five minutes for an appointment. For example, a parent might say to me, "So that assignment you gave the other day, that one about that Beowulf fella or whatever and something about being a hero. I didn't understand that one at all. I tried to help Meredith, but I didn't know what you were talking about. I didn't read the thing, but still, what did you want with that one?"

Sometimes I wonder if parents think I make this stuff up to cause tension in the family. I try to respond coherently, and there is a slight nodding of the head, but the eyes tell me

they don't understand, and before I can dig myself in deeper, Trudy, the nurse,

pokes her head out of the doorway and calls my name.

I love this town, this wonderful place that sits in the middle of the Tongass National Forest, the largest in the nation. Alaska Airlines flies in



Rob Buck

daily, and the state ferryboats arrive several times a week, but once you land here, by either boat or plane, you have a feeling of being tethered to it. Wrangellites are, in a real sense, bound to this island. In the middle of the night, if you had to leave, you couldn't. And the collective realization that we are bound here together makes those incidents of impromptu parent/teacher conferences possible and inevitable. I like the informality, though at times I crave anonymity.

On this island, where every child is or will one day be my student, I am "The Teacher." As the only high school English teacher here, I cannot escape that identity. If my wife and I go to dinner at one of the three restaurants, I will see parents and have a conversation. If I'm hiking in the mountains, I will meet a parent at the trail head who wants to ask about her child. If I'm at the hardware store buying parts to fix my shower, a kid will ask me about his assignment. If I'm at the airport to board a plane, I will know most of the people there, each wanting to know where I'm off to and why. I'm not complaining exactly, and in my six years in Wrangell, I have in fact come to tolerate and appreciate the close-knittedness of this community.

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...The Rock *(continued)*

There are advantages and disadvantages to living in a community far removed from what we like to refer to as "the real world." The advantages, for me, outweigh the disadvantages. I have complete autonomy in terms of daily lessons; I write my own curriculum and set my own pace. I teach to the entire range of students, from mainstreamed students to Merit Scholars. This lends a richness to the day, a day that never sees me repeat the same class. I am able, over a four-year period, to build relationships with students that would be unheard of in a larger school. They arrive at my door as freshmen, giddy with excitement, unsure of themselves as people, as writers, as thinkers, and barely able to sit still for a lesson. From that moment forward, through a great deal of effort, they grow and transform themselves nearly into capable adults. I enjoy this. On graduation night, I, along with their families and friends, send them off into the world and feel an investment in them. I count them as they go, remembering the struggles, the laughs, all of it.

Though I've chosen to make my life on a remote island in Alaska, my association with Bread Loaf and my use of BreadNet have given me a new way to connect with the larger community of secondary English teachers who live in other small rural towns throughout the United States. My students are interacting with students in faraway Mississippi and learning what they think, and it's exciting to watch the progression of understanding between my students and those in Mississippi. Through this interaction my students have begun to see their own lives through the eyes of someone else and have found a new perspective to view their surroundings. This is valuable for them and for me. My students might always call this island "The Rock," but they know there is a large and complex world beyond our watery boundaries, a world I hope I have helped them prepare well for. ☺

Teaching Out in the Middle of Everywhere: Tununak, AK

An Interview with Hugh Dymont

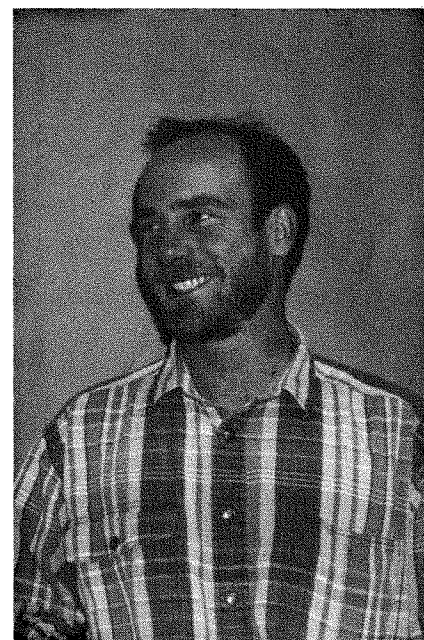
EDITOR'S NOTE: Hugh Dymont teaches at the Paul T. Albert Memorial School in Tununak, Alaska, located 500 miles west of Anchorage. Tununak is a village of 330 Yup'ik Eskimos and a few émigrés like Hugh, who have come to live there. Hugh was a first-year DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fellow at the Bread Loaf School of English in 1996. It was at Bread Loaf during that summer that I had the pleasure of talking with him about teaching and living in Tununak.

Chris Benson: Hugh, now that the school year is over, can you look back on a particularly rewarding project you and your high school students did this year?

Hugh Dymont: For a number of years we've enacted something called the Yup'ik Puppetry Theater, in which we study the stories from Tununak's oral tradition, and we perform them in a puppet theater, with lighting and music. A professional puppeteer from Oregon came to the village and taught us how to make beautiful, large puppets. The children, of course, enjoyed this immensely, but the biggest compliment, in my view, was that the elders have been pleased to see their stories, history, and culture being performed in the Yup'ik language. We flew in single-engine planes to five or six villages to perform the stories. One of the eldest men in Tununak said the students performed the stories better than he could tell them. I think he appreciated that the students performed the stories as true to the elders' telling as possible.

CB: If the stories are always recounted exactly the same way, how do the people of Tununak express their creativity and imagination?

HD: The view that stories or narratives must be original and spring from the imagination of one person may be a Western idea. Yup'ik stories don't serve completely the same purpose that, say, short stories serve for readers of popular magazines in the mainstream culture of the U. S. These stories serve to give direct advice and moral instruction, and they provide a source of entertainment in a historical context. The Yup'ik, in my mind, express individual creativity in their beautiful drawings or basketry and through hunting and fishing. They express creativity in their work, in the activities associated with subsistence lifestyle. I mean, you have to be pretty



Hugh Dymont

creative to subsist in the tundra by hunting and gathering.

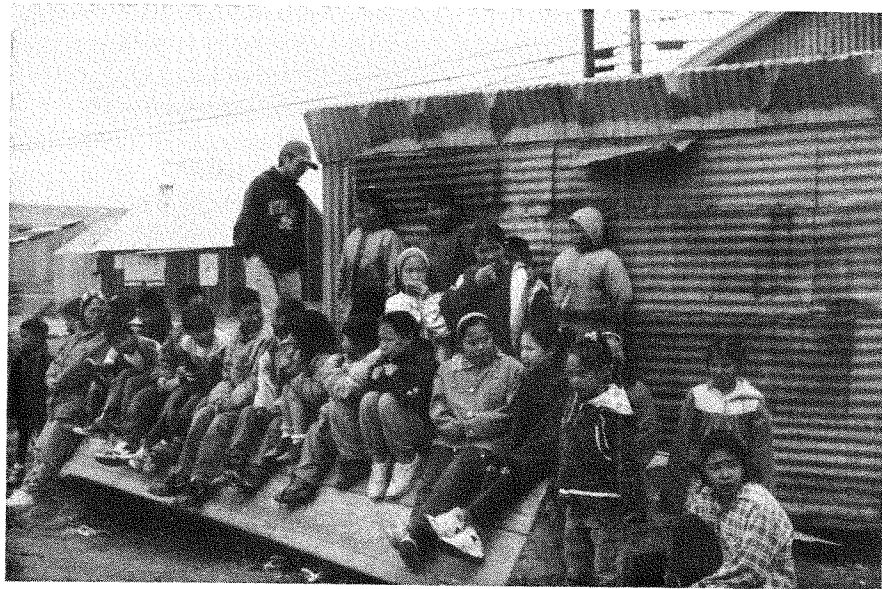
CB: Where is Tununak?

HD: We're almost 500 miles due west of Anchorage on the coast of the Bering Sea. The surrounding area is called the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. It's bordered by the Yukon River on the north and the Kuskokwim River on the south. There's permafrost, and it rains a lot in the coastal regions, so the rain forms a lot of small ponds and lakes, and the land is called a "wet tundra." The terrain is about two-thirds water, and it's very lush with beaver, mink, caribou and migratory birds that come north for the summer.

There are mountains—hills rather—900 to 1,000 feet high around Tununak. The village of Tununak consists of 330 Yup'ik Native Alaskans and a few outsiders like myself. There are no roads in or out of Tununak; travel between villages is by single-engine plane or snow machine in the winter or small open boat in the summer. There is no running water, no movie theaters, no library or bookstore, no espresso coffee shops.

CB: So your school must be very isolated.

HD: Yes and no. We are part of a school district that is gigantic geographically but tiny in population. Our school district is greater in square miles than the state of Ohio, but our student population is only 2,500. The district school board is composed of members representing about 25 separate Yup'ik villages. We also have a local advisory school board in Tununak that has budgetary authority over our village's school. So while we are part of a school district of the state of Alaska, our school is governed to a significant degree by representatives of the community. Tununak's school in particular is very small—about 90 students total, kindergarten through twelfth grade.



Students of the Paul T. Albert Memorial School

CB: How do people subsist?

HD: They hunt geese and ducks in the spring and fall; they fish for herring, salmon, and halibut in the summer. Because we're on the coast, meat is provided by marine mammals. In the winter, we set nets under the ice in the rivers to catch trout, whitefish, and pike. The Yup'ik have extraordinary technical knowledge about how to subsist.

CB: You've learned these things from the Yup'ik?

HD: Yes, I showed an interest, and the people in the village taught me how to do many things. However, I'm still very much a beginner since a lot of these skills take a lifetime to master. The first person to show me some of these skills was a young Yup'ik man who had worked as a teacher's aide in the school. We became friends and he taught me a lot of manual skills: where to hunt geese, where to catch fish, how to set nets, how to hunt seals. In learning these skills, I was continually posing questions to him about the people and the culture. Without my knowing, this made him uncomfortable, as the Yup'ik are reserved and it's consid-

ered a little impolite to ask too many forward questions, particularly when you first meet a person. However, most have been very forgiving of me during my six years there.

My students have taught me things too, such as how they like to be taught, how they prefer to learn. I believe that the traditional way the Yup'ik learn is by watching someone who is very good at the thing to be learned. There is very little talking involved in this, but a lot of very close observation goes on. Then the apprentice will try to mimic the same process. Only when you are a "pro," so to speak, do you experiment a bit. For example, when a man builds his first sea dory, which is a skiff used for subsistence or small-time commercial fishing, he'll build the boat in the same way that he's observed other men have built their boats.

This method of learning by observation is important for a practical reason: the sea can be a difficult place, and you don't want to make a mistake in design that could cost lives. Only when you have the basics down pat can you then experiment with the hull or other elements of design to make

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Teaching Out in the Middle...*(continued)*

the boat more efficient. Reckless experimentation is not just ineffective on the sea and tundra; it's extremely dangerous. I'm also learning from my new family in Tununak. My fiancée is from the village; and my future father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law give me a lot of advice. They enjoy teaching me things. When they first met me, I was just another *gussaq*, the Yup'ik word for "white person," and I didn't know much about living and getting along out there, but I've learned from them.

CB: Are there differences between adapting to the village and adapting to a Yup'ik family?

HD: You know, a lot of people talk very glibly about cross-cultural communication, but accomplishing that in a place like Tununak is, in reality, extremely challenging. The fact is, I have beliefs that are incongruent with Yup'ik practice. Having an extended family there really forces all of us to confront these issues and seek a way of coexistence and acceptance.

CB: What's an example of that?

HD: Well, to me, as an outsider entering this community, it appeared that when a community member did something wrong, the community didn't discipline the person or even acknowledge the wrongdoing in any way, or so I thought. I had thought the community would address the issue right away and give the person involved a talking-to or discipline him in some way so he'd quit that kind of behavior. But the Yup'ik in Tununak have another way of doing it. You see, the people of this community have to live with each other for a long time, a lifetime really, and they can't afford to start feuds. So it seems their way of dealing with a situation that is not terribly severe is to tolerate it. But the

offending individual will know that something is wrong because the community will not give him respect; it's a subtle form of encouraging the individual to adhere to community standards. These kinds of subtle social cues eluded me at first; I thought the community was just avoiding the problem. But I've observed that in such a close-knit community, where people live very close physically, such subtlety can work pretty well in many situations. I myself have been the beneficiary of the system many times. I know as a stranger entering the culture, I made a lot of mistakes and I've been forgiven for them all. People are very accepting and tolerant; they need to be, since they live in such a close-knit, permanent community.

CB: What are some goals you're working toward in the community?

HD: I want my students to know more than just basic levels of math and English. I suspect that a few people think that village children need only a rudimentary education. But I disagree because these students will one day have to deal with commercial fish buyers and doctors and lawyers who are not from the village, so they need to know how the rest of the world works. This knowledge is particularly important because the Yup'ik have not chosen to close themselves off from the rest of the world to the same degree as the Amish, for example.

The Yup'ik of Tununak do interact with the outside world in significant ways because it means increased business, more money, and certain improvements in lifestyle. But in order to control the rate of change, one must be able to compete with and have a deep understanding of the outside world. If you don't, it's very easy to become a victim of circumstances of outside economic and cultural forces.

CB: Do you think that the education you give your students creates an impetus for them to move away from their tiny isolated village in search of more "satisfying" lifestyles?

HD: I asked that very question of a village leader a number of years ago. He said that he'd been hearing for years that providing our youth with an education essentially prepares them to leave the village, creating a "brain drain" in the community. However, in his observation, this simply wasn't true. Young people are not leaving at an alarming rate. At first glance, leaving the village might seem attractive: there's no running water in Tununak, for example, and there are not many jobs. But people lose important qualities of life as well when they leave the village: they lose contact with their families; they lose the support of a close-knit community; they lose their cultural tradition, inevitably. It seems that there are more reasons to stay in the village than there are to leave. After all, if there are reasons that keep me there, at least for a number of years, a native to the village has infinitely more reasons to stay.

The education I attempt to give my students gives them a choice: they can choose to stay, but they are prepared if they choose to leave. The fact is that most choose to stay in Tununak. There are many who have gone to college and succeeded and are planning to come back to the village to teach or work in the tribal government. Unfortunately, there are quite a few who don't succeed in college and return to the village with a lessened sense of their own worth.

CB: Why don't they succeed in college?

HD: Well, first of all, some students in fact do, but it is true that many do not succeed outside. The reasons are complicated, and I don't understand all of them, but I do know that young Yup'iks become extremely homesick when they enter college. As a young white man, I was taught from the beginning that I would eventually leave home and make my way in the world. I looked forward to the day when I wouldn't be dependent on my family. In my observation, that's not the Yup'ik way. Yup'ik families are close

and intertwined, interdependent on each other, in part to ensure survival. So it's natural for them to be homesick. Another reason for their difficulty in college is that English is a second language for my students. The majority of students arrive at kindergarten speaking solely Yup'ik while some enter school speaking a patois of Yup'ik and English. But by the time I have them in high school, their conversational English is good. However, conversational English is very different from the academic English they encounter in college courses. This makes it difficult for them.

CB: Did government educational policies ever suppress the use of Yup'ik in schools? Is the Yup'ik language now sustained by the community?

HD: My understanding is that there were no overt policies to suppress it; there weren't enough outsiders around to do this anyway. However, in the past, schools did immerse the students in English. At the time, this was considered the best practice. We need to remember, 40 years ago there seemed no risk that Yup'ik as a language could ever conceivably die out. This created two lives for students: the English-speaking school life, and the Yup'ik-speaking home life. The result was that students' rates of learning in both languages slowed. As a result, our school district has changed its policies. Now, the idea is to strengthen students' use of their first language, Yup'ik, by using it in the classroom in grades K-6. During this period, English is introduced into the curriculum to a greater extent in each successive grade. By the time students reach eighth grade, they are being instructed about half the time in English and half the time in Yup'ik. In high school the ratio increases to three quarters English and one quarter Yup'ik. The data suggest that this type of bilingual education strengthens students' mastery of both languages. We hope that we'll no longer hear the elders' complaint that high school students speak a "baby Yup'ik," and students' English will be strong enough so they can in-

teract in a meaningful way with the outside world.

CB: Has Tununak ever been threatened by outside cultural influences?

HD: TV just came to our village about ten years ago. In my personal opinion, it threatens the village for the same reason it threatens all of America: it brings with it the worst of mainstream U. S. pop culture. Additionally, in the last 40 years, there have been huge cultural changes in Tununak because the economy has moved from subsistence through hunting, gathering, and bartering, to an economy based on cash. It's a fact of life now that if you want to be a successful subsistence fisherman, you need a small boat and a motor, which can easily cost \$8,000. So people now need to raise money for these things as well as fuel, equipment, guns, heating oil, electricity, etc. This need for cash has caused many people to need part-time jobs, and these jobs need to be flexible so people can come and go when they need to; you can't predict the weather or when the birds, fish, or animals choose to come and go. You have to be ready to hunt, fish, and gather food when the conditions are right. Jobs are scarce, and many have had to leave the village temporarily to find jobs, staying away for three months and then returning with cash; they live between the modern world and the traditional Yup'ik world.

CB: What seems to be the most important thing you've learned up there?

HD: Besides the importance of family and community, I'd probably have to say something about ideas of humility and moderation in the ways we go about living our lives. Of course, this is easier said than done. In retrospect too, the strength of forgiveness and faith are equally important things I've taken into my life. In learning to live in a very foreign culture, I hope that I'm able to appreciate and make use of the best of it. ☺

Orr, Ben, and Eliza Cingarkaq Orr, eds. *Qanemcikarluni Tekitnarqelartuq: One Must Arrive with a Story to Tell*. Fairbanks: Lower Kuskokwim School District and the Alaskan Native Language Center, 1995. The fourteen oral narratives in this book were told by elders of Tununak and are presented in the original Yup'ik language with English translations. Ben Orr, a Bread Loaf and longtime resident and teacher in Tununak, and his wife Eliza Cingarkaq Orr, born and raised in Tununak, transcribed the stories into Yup'ik and completed the translations. The elders' narratives include traditional stories received from the distant past, personal and historical experiences, recollections of real events, and instructions in cultural values given to younger people. This collection of stories represents the art of Yup'ik oral folklore and the lifeways learned over generations of living close to the land and sea. Two more collections of stories are due to be published this year.

Barker, James H. *Always Getting Ready: Upterrlainarluta: Yup'ik Eskimo Subsistence in Southwest Alaska*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993. This book follows the Yup'ik Eskimo of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta through their year's cycle. *Always Getting Ready* celebrates people who value close family and community ties and a culture adapted to its environment and coming to terms with vast changes. The Foreword is by a Yup'ik scientist, Mary C. Pete, a subsistence resources specialist for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game who writes: "It is a fascinating and provocative time to be a Yup'ik in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta."

Building Community through Parent/Student Writing

by Sylvia Saenz
Sierra Vista Middle School
Sierra Vista, AZ

It was a warm Arizona evening as I waited, wishing at least a few of my students would arrive for what I hoped would be an evening of getting better acquainted with them and their parents, and perhaps parents getting better acquainted with their children. In Sierra Vista, a small city located just outside Fort Huachuca, an army installation, the turnover of student population is extremely high—last year our school with a population of just over 900 students had a whopping total of 500 admissions and withdrawals during the school year. I have noticed during my years at Sierra Vista Middle School that there seems to be less and less a sense of community. Oftentimes, in spite of efforts on the part of the school, parents have seen the school as an adversary rather than an ally in helping their children through a difficult time of growth. When BLRTN Fellow Vicki Hunt suggested a parent/student writing project for building community in and beyond the classroom, it seemed worthy of trying.

At nearly 6 p.m., I began to wonder if anyone would show. Several students had returned the invitation saying they'd be there, and several more gave me a definite maybe. Only this morning I had realized that tonight there'd be a full moon; and more than that, tonight was the lunar eclipse, the last like it in this century—at least for us in Arizona. Who would want to miss that to go to school and write?

Always the optimist, my teaching friend Maria Winfield fussed again over a last-minute arrangement

of the food table, while I found myself wondering how I'd explain spending all that money on snacks if no one came to eat them, let alone write. We chatted about how we hoped the evening would go. First, we'd invite folks to help themselves to refreshments, knowing that many parents might just be getting off work. Then I'd welcome them and invite them to use the ideas and materials which were on each table in the library to write poems about names. There was a

comed everyone and introduced her, thinking how lucky we are to have her. After a few encouraging words from her, we introduced our main activity, the writing of a story about "names." I shared a personal story about my raven-haired father who had been "blessed" with the name Rufus (meaning redhead) Hayden Buchanan, how he'd changed his name but always remained Rufus to my aunts, uncles and cousins, and how the only other Rufus I'd ever known was the



Sylvia Saenz and Susan Jesinsky in the Apple Cellar at Bread Loaf, VT

pattern for an acrostic poem, as well as a form for a "Celebrate Myself" poem. Finally, students began arriving with their parents.

By the time everyone arrived, the room was nearly full, with at least seventy people, all chatting pleasantly with family, friends, or strangers. Even our new superintendent Dr. Renae Humburg was there. I wel-

lion in a zoo back in Kansas. Maria followed my story with a lively reading of a wonderful picture book entitled *When Joe Louis Won the Title*, which tells how a young girl with the unlikely name of Joe Louis comes to be proud of her name.

Everyone seemed really involved in talking about his or her name. Some students were writing;

some parents were. Even after a couple time-outs to dash outside and view the moon as a red shadow crept across it, they returned to their writing. Magically, all the food disappeared during the evening. As I moved from table to table, I learned that one of my new students was being raised by her aunt. Another parent shared her determination to raise her daughter free of the alcoholism that had plagued the family. One father joked about difficult choices that had been made in naming his sons. Everyone was open and friendly. Many students, as well as parents, eagerly shared their stories or poems with the entire group. There were funny stories, happy stories, and even a poignant one or two, each followed by applause. Students beamed as they shared their poems or the stories behind their names.

Ashia Taylor chose to write an acrostic poem about her name:

Artist
Sweet and kind
Happy
Intelligent
A good singer

Ashia's mother, Stacey, wrote, "Ashia's name began as a playful thought. My husband and I were living in Germany and were told we were having a baby boy. 'Lance,' we thought, would be a great name for our son.... A week prior to the birth, my husband Raleigh and I passed a Chinese restaurant called the Asia Restaurant. Out loud, together, we both said, "'Asia' if it's a girl!' We laughed and drove on. Little did we know we would really use that beautiful name in just a few weeks. Little did we know, that was the way the Lord planned it. You see, after a little research about names, I realized Ashia's and my name, Stacey, had the same root—Anastasia.... Ashia's name means life, but our beautiful brown baby girl had a very hard beginning, coming into this world. We wondered whether or not she would

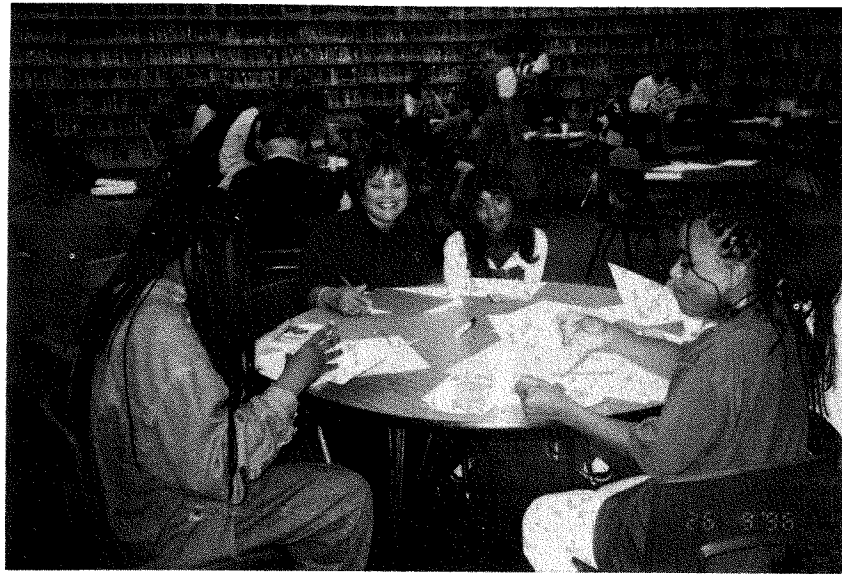
make it.... However, her name came through for her. Ashia—life. We thank God for her life and the joy she has given us every day of our lives. We can't even imagine another name for her when we look in that pretty little face. God sure works in mysterious ways."

With her mother's encouragement, Anna Trader wrote about her name: "Originally, my name was going to be Jessica. Shortly before my birth, my mom was looking through a family album and found my great-grandmother's name, Annie. That was her nickname for Anna. My mom could not decide which name she liked best. After I was born, friends from our church went out to lunch with my dad and voted on my name. Since all the people voting on my name were older, they decided on the old-fashioned name of Anna. Later, my mom admitted that she had secretly decided to call me Anna. My middle name, Christine, is my mother's name. It means 'fair Christian.' My last name, Trader, comes from England. The family was prob-

ably involved in the trading business, possibly even with the New World. My ancestors came to America shortly after its colonization and became farmers in Maryland. Some of my family still farm there today."

As they began to leave, several people asked when the next parent/student writing night would be. Some mothers even offered to help with refreshments next time. In the days that followed, I continued to get positive feedback about the evening I had been so concerned about. I'm beginning to sense more of a positive connection with my students than I've felt in recent years. And parents have readily volunteered to help with other school-related activities. Already we're planning a cowboy campfire where we'll share student-written cowboy poetry and reminisce about the Old West and our heritage.

I recently found the perfect book to lead us into our next evening of writing family stories. I won't share it yet, but I know it's going to be the opening for another wonderful parent/student school evening! 🍷



Stacey Taylor and her daughter Ashia Taylor (center) at parent/student writing night at Sierra Vista Middle School

Community Celebration: Folklore in St. Johns, Arizona

by *Risa Udall*

*St. Johns High School
St. Johns, Arizona*

It looked like a medieval street fair. Vendors hawked their wares, and craftsmen demonstrated wool carding and spinning, blanket weaving, metalwork, leather work, and pottery-making. Groups of adults jostled one another as they huddled around craftsmen or musicians playing various instruments. Bright-eyed children delighted in the juggling of a jester riding a unicycle among the stalls.

The only definite clues that this wasn't a scene out of the fourteenth century were the asphalt parking lot where the stalls were located and, in the background, the contemporary stucco buildings of St. Johns Middle School. The occasion was a folklore festival, the culminating event in a yearlong project in which teachers and students in the St. Johns School District had worked with community members to collect and document folklore of the area.

St. Johns is a small community of some 3,500 people located on a high plateau on the northeastern side of Arizona. The town's colorful and stormy history includes a number of distinct cultures: Native American (primarily Zuni, Apache, and Navajo), Hispanic, and Anglo (mostly Mormons with some other Anglo-Americans who settled in the area). Realizing that the oldest citizens in the community were passing away without records having been made of their lives, skills and talents, two teachers in the school district applied for and received a modest grant from the Arizona Humanities Council to initiate the collection of traditions and folklore in St. Johns.

What began as a nine-month project eventually expanded to four years, culminating this past school year in the largest outpouring of

volunteerism ever seen in this town. The grant initially brought Keith and Kathy Cunningham, folklorists from Northern Arizona University, to help in organizing and facilitating the project. During the first year, the Cunninghams involved students at the middle school, teaching them to collect from parents and grandparents information on traditions, crafts, and music. At the end of the year, the re-

sults were showcased in the "medieval" street fair held at the St. Johns Middle School. The festival brought together in one citywide celebration the town's leading citizens, musicians, craftsmen, parents, teachers and students. Approximately seventy-five people did hands-on demonstrations of processes still used in St. Johns today, everything from soap-making to cheese-making. It was a civic spectacle in which much of the town participated.

During the second year, the main focus of the project was the collection of stories, tales, songs, poetry, jokes, and other genres which

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Risa Udall assists elementary students in decorating their school for the community folklore festival of St. Johns

Bread Loaf Hosts Its First Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools

In June, 1996, before the commencement of the Bread Loaf summer session at the campus in Ripton, Vermont, the BLRTN hosted its first Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools. The three-day conference was attended by veteran Fellows of the BLRTN, the new 1996 Fellows just entering the program, and many national leaders in rural education (see list, page 35). In these pages (17–28), we present the writing of several of those in attendance.

Conversation at the Conference: Some Goals of the BLRTN

*by Jacqueline Jones Royster
Bread Loaf School of English
Ripton, VT*

Editor's Note—Jackie Royster is a longtime member of the Bread Loaf faculty and associate professor of English at The Ohio State University. She has been a member of the BLRTN staff since its inception. On June 23, at the introductory plenary session, Jackie articulated the mission of BLRTN as well as the goals of the conference itself. She inspired the ensuing conference discussion with the following words of encouragement.

We have both short-term and long-term expectations for what this moment of dialogue can bring. For the short-term, we begin with three general goals.

First and foremost, this is a moment to celebrate the remarkable achievements of teachers in rural schools who have demonstrated that they are master teachers of English and creative community builders. We believe that we are fulfilling this goal in the most appropriate way by having some of them to lead this conversation, to showcase their work, and to share their insights and experiences.

Secondly, this conference offers time to reflect critically on the past three years—to consider where we've been, what we've managed to do, what remains to think about. We expect this harmony of voices and confluence of ideas and experiences to create a critical view of the landscape of rural teaching as we move toward a clearer articulation of what needs to be counted, contextualized, and valued.

Finally, and perhaps most critically of all, we set as a primary goal for this conference the demonstration of our ongoing commitment to the teaching of English in rural schools. We are not here simply to celebrate and to reflect. We are focused also on what lies ahead. We hope that this conversation will help us to chart the next leg of our journey, to refine our thinking and our sense of the needs of rural schools, to anticipate appropriate action based on the substantive experience and expertise that we now have, and to lay out an agenda for the future. This third goal, then, will require our thoughtfulness and reflection as part of the planning for positive action.

Our long-term goal hasn't changed from the beginning of the project, and we continue striding toward it. When we think about American education, I venture to say that our default images, the ones that tend to be the automatic pictures that pop into

most people's heads when they hear the word "education," are images of urban and suburban schools. Unfortunately, we don't have movies or television programs about contemporary rural schools to counter or reset these images either for the general public or for ourselves. Teaching in contemporary rural schools is not recognized as a distinctive multivariant pattern in the whole cloth of educational experience. Rural concerns are still largely obscure, and viewed, if they are observed at all, essentially as "add-ons," or afterthoughts.

In the BLRTN, rural teaching is not an afterthought, and I have found my experiences here to be instructive. For example, working with this project has opened my eyes about my own workplace and so many others like it. The Ohio State University is arguably the largest public institution for higher education in the world. We speak quite glibly, as a matter of fact, about our dual identity as a research university and as an institution focused on agriculture. What becomes invisible in that dualistic vision is the overwhelming number of my students who hail from very small towns in Ohio and bordering states and whose total educational experiences are in rural schools. The common perception of Ohio is that it is an industrial state, but what I have come to notice is that Ohio is not just Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Akron, and Dayton. Ohio is also Pettisville, Willow Wood, Churchtown, Blue Rock, and Cherry Fork. Hundreds of small farming towns across the state account for Ohio's character, and the histories of

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Conversation...

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these small towns and their residents, like the histories of the rural communities in the six target states of the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network, define the broad human backdrop against which American education as an urban-suburban phenomenon is typically viewed.

We need to join a vanguard of educators in setting a clear national agenda that recognizes that rural schools and communities are sites of knowledge and wisdom.

A long-term goal, therefore, for the BLRTN is to bring the rural educational experience to the foreground, to lead the reform of the national agenda of education. We need to fine-tune our thinking about schools so that rural teaching assumes a rightful place. We need to refocus the national discourse about education so that rural problems and achievements become a part of the conversation. We need to change our policy-making and national practices so that rural children and their parents and teachers do not remain unseen, unheard, unconsidered. Ideally, we need to join a vanguard of educators in setting a clear national agenda that recognizes that rural schools and communities are sites of knowledge and wisdom. Accepting and meeting this challenge will affect untold numbers of students and communities.

Improving the quality of American education depends on what we are doing in the BLRTN and what other similarly committed educators are doing across the nation. We posit, unmistakably, that schools are urban, suburban, *and* rural, and variously so, and we underscore in fact that all of the nation's schools deserve our respect and attention. ☛

Rural Ways of Knowing

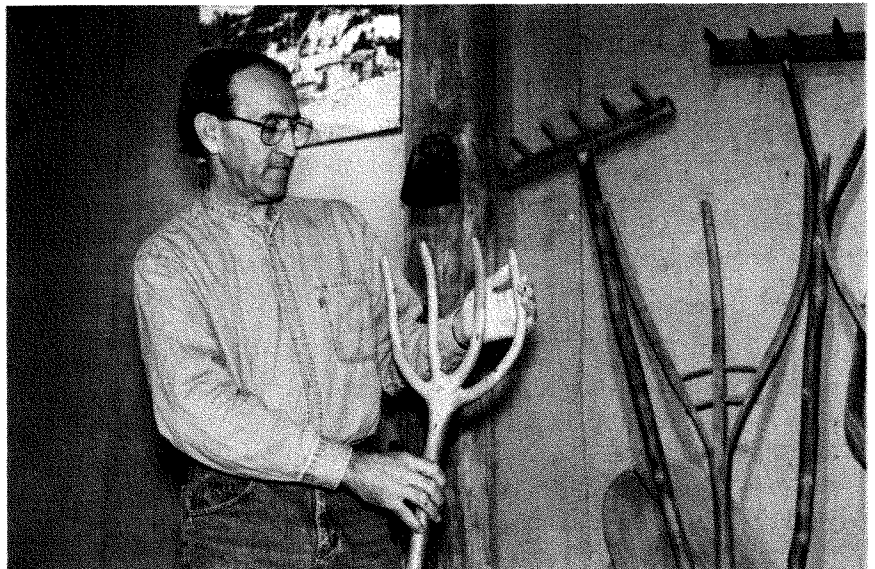
by Robin Lambert
 Program for Rural Services
 and Research
 University of Alabama
 Tuscaloosa, AL

Earlier this fall I had the privilege of meeting Richard Dillingham, Director of the Southern Appalachian Center at Mars Hill College in western North Carolina. As Mr. Dillingham guided us through the Center's museum, detailing where a particular cabin door frame came from and explaining the family histories of rug hooking in the area, it was clear that he wasn't just pointing out treasures of a bygone era. He was telling us the story of his place and his people, a story still in progress. Toward the end of our tour, Mr. Dillingham pulled a pitchfork from a collection of farm implements and held it out for us to see. It was a beautiful tool, one solid piece of cured wood curving gently from a long handle into four tines. Mr. Dillingham explained that it grew that way as a scrub sassafras sapling, but it took a mountain farmer, while

grubbing a new ground, to see something of value in it and make it into a farm tool. As Mr. Dillingham turned to replace the pitchfork he remarked, "Making something out of nothing is not considered an act of intelligence on an I.Q. test. If it were, I believe rural children would excel in areas of creative and adaptive intelligence."

I think Mr. Dillingham was getting right to the heart of what makes rural people smart. He was also implying the frustration that many rural people feel: what they know and how they know it are not much valued.

Unfortunately, schools have often been one of the forces which have conveyed to young people the notion that things rural are inferior to things urban, and that rural life and culture are best left behind. We have believed that teaching traditional rural skills is incompatible with teaching computers, advanced math, or great literature. We have thought that learning about the local place would make young people parochial and negate our efforts to teach them about the broader world. These dichotomies assume there is little of worth in rural commu-



Richard Dillingham holding a pitchfork created from the root of a sassafras sapling

nities, and so they blind us to the extensive learning resources which exist in communities precisely because they *are* rural.

For all their cultural, ethnic, and economic diversity, rural communities share common characteristics that make them rural. They are small—less than 2,500 people by census definition—so in most communities everyone pretty much knows each other. Rural places are distant from a population center. Often they are defined by what they are not: they are not cities, suburbs, exurbs, or county seat towns. Most have their origins in the land-based economies of farming, mining, fishing, timbering, and ranching. These rural characteristics produce ways of interacting with and learning about the world. Schools that incorporate these ways of learning can improve education for their students. But to do so effectively, schools must reflect the most basic characteristics of rural; that is, they must be small (no more than two classes per grade to my mind); they must draw their students only from the immediate vicinity, not the other side of the county; and they must be personal in nature, giving everyone a role and a stake in the school. Such schools can help reverse the degradation of rural places by strengthening the community as well as the student.

Engaging Body and Mind

The historical dependence of rural communities on the land necessitated close attention to and interaction with the physical environment. Although many people behaved in destructive and shortsighted ways, a strong tradition continues of rural people who physically engage with the earth in ways which sustain and preserve it. Good rural schools give students plenty of opportunity to learn from physical interaction with the environment, with community residents, with tools and artifacts. This is not a matter of designing hands-on activities for students to learn a predetermined concept. It is a matter of trusting kids to do real work that is needed in their

communities. In the PACERS Cooperative, a network of small K-12 schools in rural Alabama, students are engaging with their communities in a number of ways. They are publishing community newspapers to fill the void of media attention to rural communities and issues. They are building homes to address local housing needs and learning to garden organically.

When young people interact in a productive way with their physical and social surroundings, they learn environmentally important content that has traditionally been the province of rural people: plants, soils, water, migratory patterns of local species, ecology. They acquire aesthetic sensibility through participation in locally produced music, stories, arts, and home crafts. Even college-bound young people can learn to use and trust their

it, students must master sophisticated academic content and apply powerful intellectual processes. Their learning is contextualized in the physical world, where they must confront limitations and responsibilities and where they learn their efforts can make a difference.

Good schools don't create an arbitrary division between the physical and the abstract. They nurture whole, well-rounded, engaged students. They credit the intellectual capacity of young people to make meaning out of what they experience. Because small rural schools generally enjoy the trust of their communities and have easy access to the local environment, they can put their students in a safe and productive physical relationship with their surroundings.



Clay State, Robin Lambert, and Robert Gipe at the Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools, June 1996

bodies to build things or produce food, to be proud in their self-sufficiency.

In other work in the PACERS Cooperative, students are writing community histories, running local businesses, and monitoring the quality of water in local wells, creeks, rivers, and ponds. It's work local residents have determined is valuable. To accomplish

Observation

One of the smartest kids I ever knew lived in northeast Alabama near the foot of Lookout Mountain, where he spent as much time as he could in the woods. He knew all the rock formations, could identify almost every kind of indigenous plant life,

Rural Ways...

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and knew the site of every spring in his end of the county. Like most young people, he was naturally observant and, like many rural people, he honed his skills of observation on the physical environment. Yet my young friend found neither his skills as a woodsman nor his powers of observation honored in school. Because he spoke and wrote in colloquial language, his teacher chided him, "If you didn't spend so much time in the woods, you'd get your grammar exercise done." Too bad he wasn't asked to apply his powers of observation to local speech patterns and then compare and contrast them to the forms of standard written English. Instead, both his knowledge and his ways of knowing were devalued.

Schools nurture essential intellectual skills as well as the habits of citizenship when they ask students to observe and record what they see and to apply it in some purposeful work.

Handing Down

While few communities still hold barn raisings or quilting bees, many persist in informal cooperative arrangements for getting work done and teaching each other how to do things. This ethic is expressed in the teaching-learning process in the tradition of "handing down." In the mid 1980's I attended a celebration in which students in a small west Alabama high school demonstrated a skill they had learned in informal apprenticeship with an older member of the community. Students made soap, showed pictures of the hog they had butchered and smoked, created extensive taxonomies of native vegetation. In the PACERS Cooperative, elemen-

tary students interview community elders and, with musician Larry Long, turn the elders' stories into songs that they perform in a community-wide celebration (their songs and recitations are recorded on the CD *Elders' Wisdom, Children's Songs*, distributed through the Smithsonian Folkways label and nominated for a Grammy in both folk music and spoken word categories). These schools are using the natural teaching habits and the multi-generational context of rural communities to create opportunities for students to learn about the past and to create for the future. They recognize that learning is social both in nature and in outcome, and they work to create a socially appropriate context in which students can learn. When I

Schools nurture essential intellectual skills as well as the habits of citizenship when they ask students to observe and record what they see and to apply it in some purposeful work.

talked to students in these schools they mentioned with uncanny regularity the new respect they felt for people and skills they hadn't previously understood and a new appreciation for where they lived.

Making Do

When the PACERS Cooperative was getting organized in Alabama, Cedar Bluff School decided they wanted a computer lab. The Cooperatives grant, however, wouldn't fund exactly what they wanted, so after a brief period of frustration, Cedar Bluff decided they would just build their own computers. Now four years later, students run a thriving computer assembly and software development business which takes orders from the public, serves the other schools in the Cooperative, and recently won a grant to network the entire county school system. Their achievement is neither an excuse for underfunding nor a ro-

manticization of poverty. It simply demonstrates that many rural communities, like all places where financial resources are scarce, often possess a genius for making something out of nearly nothing. Schools that need students to develop their ingenuity will produce kids who are smart, creative, and adaptive.

The best rural schools know where they are. They take full advantage of the strengths and resources of their place. They value their community and honor the capacities of students by engaging them in its service and preservation. These schools imbue learning with an ethical purpose far greater than personal achievement. The best rural schools know who their students are and view ruralness as a

path to success. Such schools recognize that students possess knowledge and ways of learning born of their unique cultural experience in a particular place,

and they work to give expression to that culture and utility in school to those ways of learning.

It might be that a *rural* education is the most important kind of education for the twenty-first century. The rural characteristics of good schooling might help educate young people to a sense of wonder, an awareness of limits, a confidence in their own capacity, a sensitivity to the planet and its varied species and diverse human cultures. They might teach young people that they are valuable and efficacious and that knowledge is powerful. They might also teach them that they are not the center of the universe, that wisdom entails humility, that truth requires the admission of our own insurmountable ignorance.

I believe Mr. Dillingham's pitchfork is not a relic of a dead rural past, but a kind of divining rod pointing to a more responsible and sustainable future for all of us. ☘

A Letter to Rural Schoolteachers

by Robert Gipe

Robert Gipe is a scout for the Annenberg Rural Challenge, a project supporting rural schools and communities. He is the former educational services director for Appalshop, a media arts center in Whitesburg, Kentucky. He is also a member of the Eastern Kentucky Teachers Network.

Most children want to connect to the place where they live. They want to know what it is made of, what has happened there, what might happen in the future. The best teachers nurture that native curiosity, to the benefit of the children and the community they serve.

One such community where a teacher is accomplishing this work with her students is Harlan County, Kentucky. Harlan is a coal-mining county where one can see firsthand how America's demand for cheap electricity has been rough on the people who mine its coal. Families in Harlan county fought bloody wars to gain fair working conditions in the mines, only to see coal mining become ultramechanized, strip mining evolve, and the number of jobs plummet. As jobs disappeared, a great many families, some that had lived in Harlan County for ten generations, moved away. Those left are mostly country people, with histories of logging, gardening, hunting, and fishing. But now the land belongs to holding companies; rural survival skills are eroding; and many streams and forests in the county are near ruin.

Judy Bryson, my friend and fellow member of the Eastern Kentucky Teachers Network, teaches fourth grade at Wallins Creek Elementary School in Harlan County. During the 1995-1996 school year, Judy's stu-

dents decided to study Harlan County's Blanton Forest, one of the few old-growth forests left in Kentucky. The students made repeated research trips to the forest, wrote plays with Blanton Forest as a setting, conducted letter-writing campaigns and collected money to expand the protected parts of the forest, and forfeited their end-of-year field trip to give their whole school a guided tour of their own Blanton Forest museum.

I wish that school projects like that of the 1995-1996 fourth grade of Wallins Elementary were a part of every classroom at every grade in rural schools because I fear not only that rural kids are at risk but that rural America itself is at risk. Incentives for business to create viable work for people who prefer working outdoors and/or with their hands are ebbing. Farm policy, energy policy, labor laws, health care laws, social policy, and occupational safety laws have tended to favor the few at the expense of the many, and the urban at the expense of the rural. As a result, rural towns and counties are emptying out. The people in our society who carry the knowledge of how to live in responsible and sustainable relationship to the land are dying out.

Technology is often touted as a cure for the social and economic ills of rural America. If it is, technology should make it easier rather than harder for individual men and women to sustain themselves, to grow their own food, to provide for their own health, to live near their loved ones, to live in a community where local culture doesn't have to fight for primacy with the mass media. As it is, technology has served to make rural people more dependent for their food, their health care, and their jobs on people who don't know them. Rural people are subject to television programming that ridicules their ways, and many are suspicious that they have been written off by the rest of the country, that they are regarded as a quaint relic of a dying past. As rural educators, I think we need to integrate technology critically, reflecting on costs as well as benefits, taking care that the cure does not kill.

I suspect that if rural people are to survive as rural people and rural places are to survive as rural places, the people living in the country will have to work to make that survival possible, and schoolteachers in particular will play a pivotal role. How do we teach children to survive and at the same time build rural communities that will survive?

I think we begin by placing a priority on teaching all boys and girls basic rural survival skills—gardening, carpentry, mechanics, cooking, sewing. The possession of such skills shapes the way children think about the world. This teaching should not take place to the exclusion of teaching academic skills, but as a method of teaching academic skills. Children with an integrated competence in academic and life skills are better able to think about caring for others. They have something to share. Rural school reform should create opportunities for children to share skills. Rural school reform should create opportunities for children to care.

As educators working in rural areas, we can enlist community people (young and old) with ties to their neighbors and the land to be with children during school hours and lend their skills and experience to our curriculum. We can connect our children to those people in the community who can share their reasons for living in the country and can share the skills that make staying in the country possible. We can teach children that those who know how to maintain their own cars or build their own houses possess more than simple, discrete skills. They possess an approach to living, a way of being in the world, which we need to understand and encourage.

We can integrate local history and culture across the curriculum, not just for the good of children, but also for the good of the community. As children learn about their own culture and history, we can teach them about other cultures, so they can appreciate the uniqueness of their own, and develop an understanding of how their culture is related and connected to others.

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A Letter...

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We can optimize one of the greatest advantages rural children have: the immediate presence of nature and people who work with the land and water. Our students have the opportunity to learn the lessons of nature—lessons of interdependence, appropriate scale, sustainability, and the importance of diversity—from the source. Our responsibility to children and the rural communities they represent is to create curricula that give children the skills and experience to take an active interest in understanding and sustaining their own habitat.

We can focus on providing children with work that calls on them to create and produce. Teaching art and creative expression, particularly when that work is grounded in the community, teaches children to solve problems with an eye towards a local audience and solutions that answer to beauty as well as function. As rural educators, we often have to fight off feelings of inadequacy in teaching the arts. We have to remind ourselves that the cities do not have exclusive license to produce and evaluate art. As rural

people, we know what beauty is, and what truth is—it's what makes us cry, what makes a knot in our throat, what makes us human. We need to remember that every rural community has artists and craftsmen and women committed to adding to the beauty of the everyday world who can help rural children produce creatively. Every rural community has a few storytellers, singers, carvers, seamstresses, and others who can help a teacher or a school bring a sense of the aesthetic to their children.

In the end we must carry out our responsibility to teach children how to make decisions—not make decisions for them. It is not our business to teach children that bigger is necessarily better, that success lies outside the place where they live. Children have to have their own minds, just as they have to have their own skills.

At the end of the 1995-1996 school year, the students involved with the Blanton Forest project in Harlan County wrote a rationale for their work and published it in *Harlan County Treasures*, a local history magazine published annually by Judy Bryson's students: "You may not get to come to Blanton Forest yourself,

but you can help keep the forests and land around you free of pollution and safe for the plants and animals that grow there. It is important to take care of the land around us because if we don't care about it, who will? If no one cared about the forests and the fields around them, then the animals and plants that live there would die. Going into the Blanton Forest has shown us what the forest can be like when it is not polluted and the trees are not cut down. While we are young and growing up, we have the opportunity to help save the forest instead of polluting."

Children prepared by schools to love and to care—and to know how to act thoughtfully on those emotions—are the best hope of the communities and the nation that bore them. ☺

Editor's Note—The story of the 1995-1996 fourth graders at Wallins Elementary is told by Judy Bryson in "Learning in a Forest: Children Use the Blanton Forest As a Classroom," The Active Learner (August, 1996) pp. 24-26.

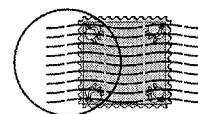
Dear Friends of BLRTN:

It was a great honor to be invited to your summer conference at Bread Loaf. I was deeply moved by the strong commitment shown by all of you to your students and to each other. The wonderful sense of camaraderie I experienced personally helped to confirm my belief that networks can transform the lives of all of us—the adults, as well as the students we teach. Networks such as BLRTN provide the kind of intellectual stimulation and social supports necessary to change classrooms and schools into exciting places. You clearly have the "right stuff" that makes networks work: sensitive facilitative leadership, activities and relationships that encourage openness and continuous learning; opportunities for members to help shape an agenda sensitive to the problems of practice; a growing body of knowledge

A Postcard from the City

about what it means to be literate; and a powerful way of using technology as a tool for students, providing an audience for their work, and a means for expanding their world.

But other challenges remain. BLRTN members need to think about expanding their influence by creating strategies for how to make their innovative practices an integral part of the work of other teachers and students in their schools and district. Inviting principals and superintendents where possible is a good start. In addition, coalitions with other networks can be made. To grow, the work of a teacher network must include building a professional community among colleagues and gaining the support of principals and district personnel. As the community grows, network influence grows; as the agenda for work grows, knowledge grows; and as teacher involvement grows,



teacher isolation becomes a thing of the past. BLRTN can play an important role in expanding the reach of teacher networks. These challenges are worth fighting for!

With warmest regards,

Professor Ann Lieberman

Ann Lieberman is coordinator of Columbia University's National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching (NCREST). Her recent book, with Maureen Grolnick, is Networks and Reform in American Education (NCREST, 1996).

New Reforms Require a New Kind of Teamwork

by Carol Stumbo
Department of Education
Prestonburg, KY

Five educators are huddled around a desk in an office at the end of a narrow hallway. It's an unusual team: a former middle school principal, a high school English teacher, a central office supervisor, a primary teacher, and the former director of a family resource center. There is a respect among the varied group for the knowledge and skills that each brings to the discussion. Before Kentucky's massive educational reform act of 1990, it was unlikely that such a group would have had the opportunity to work together. Now, in order to provide the expertise needed to make reforms, regional teams that cut across job descriptions, titles, and district lines are being formed within the Department of Education.

The team's voices are strong, urgent. Their perspectives are different. They are discussing a visit that they have just made to a rural elemen-

tary school located in one of our largest districts. The school is typical of those in the region: in an isolated location, its small staff and student population are accustomed to few visits and outside influences. To reach the school, visitors have to travel narrow mountain roads to a valley that is hours away from the central office and any large town. The school has been at the center of community activity for years. Parents and grandparents gather at the school for basketball games, graduations, and social activities. Most of the school's teachers live nearby and are well-known to the community. It is in many ways an ideal setting for collaboration and community building.

The team that is meeting this morning is from one of the eight regional service centers that have been established to serve all educators in the state. Although we are one of the smaller service centers, the fifteen districts served by our center are separated by mountains and narrow roads. It takes several hours to reach most of our schools. While technology has

begun to help provide for some of the needs of these rural school systems, in order for those schools to have equal access to assistance, materials, resources and information, the regional service center consultants must still travel to those schools and districts.

Assistance from the service centers is entirely voluntary. Consultants may not visit schools without an invitation. They must meet the requests and needs of individual schools, and often these are very different. The team's job this morning? To help the staff at the rural elementary school improve student performance. The problem? Communication has broken down among the community, the teaching staff, and the principal. Teachers are divided and polarized. Some have aligned themselves with the new principal; others are part of splintered groups that are working at cross-purposes. Parents and community members are also taking sides in the conflict. Blame is passed around like a hot potato: one group claims the school staff is burnt out; another says the new leadership won't lead; still another believes the principal isn't sensitive to the culture and traditions of the school. While there is debate about the cause of the conflict, no one denies the fact that students are being affected and that some corrective action must be taken. In the past in Kentucky, the principal alone would have made the decision about whether assistance should be sought out. That is no longer the case. Now the entire community (teachers, parents, and leadership) make that decision.

After some difficult discussions at the school, a team from the regional service center was invited to the school to help clarify the problem and to make recommendations. The team visited classrooms, talked to teachers, members of the school council, community, students and the principal. The team also examined the work of the school by looking at the curriculum, assessment data, and



Kentucky Regional Service Center Consultant Ogie Stone (center) working with a high school restructuring team

(continued on next page)

New Reforms...

(continued from previous page)

writing portfolios. Now the team has to offer some recommendations to help the staff solve its own problems.

None of the recommendations of the team are dictated. Decisions for solving the problems rest solely with the school and district. In 1992, authority for decision-making was moved to the school level in Kentucky. Professional development money goes directly to the schools. All schools, with the exception of those that have been extremely successful on the state assessment, have school-based councils composed of parents and teachers. The council makes policy decisions regarding the operation of the school. This approach honors the school community and its ability to solve the school's problems.

Out of necessity, these different approaches to assistance and work are being developed in Kentucky. There are not enough people employed by the state Department of Education to assist all of the schools that need help. If reform is to survive, we have to find different ways of working with one another. In order to establish those relationships, there are ongoing efforts to model collaboration and to create networks of teachers in the state. Some of these networks have been more successful than others in

that teachers across the state would contact and assist one another. It was not used as extensively as the designers had hoped it would be, but its goal of encouraging informal teacher networks was and is a worthy goal. Other networks that have been developed since then have adopted sophisticated practices similar to those of BLRTN: teachers selected to be Fellows of the Kentucky Education Reform Association attended intensive summer institutes and then met throughout the year at both the state and regional levels. The Partnership for Reform in Mathematics and Science (PRISM) has used computer technology to link science and math teachers across the state.

These networks serve a purpose: they add significantly to teachers' knowledge and experience. What is slower in occurring is a deeper sense of community at the school level. Although some people might expect collaboration and teamwork to be a matter of course in rural, small schools, we have found that is not always the case. There are examples in our own region where teachers have elected to operate their schools with-

other. Including the public in important school decisions is not always an easy task. The teachers at one school in our region voted to dissolve a school council this past year, but their decision was vetoed by the community. There are times when the school staff seems to fear the involvement of the community or is at odds with the community's vision. It is not surprising that when this is the case, the school begins to encounter problems with the state assessment. Lack of

The school is typical of those in the region: in an isolated location, its small staff and student population are accustomed to few visits and outside influences.

community is the problem; collaboration is the solution.

Despite the turmoil, our experience in building community in Kentucky has been an empowering experience. Two of our consultants who are retiring this year in their letters of resignation talked about their time at the center as the most "rewarding experience of their professional careers." Despite the fact that we deal daily with problems and frustrations, the opportunity to work together as a team, to make decisions, and to help teachers and communities is something that we have waited a long time to experience. We think the same will hold true for schools. Collaboration makes the demands of reform seem obtainable. While there are few places engaged in reform to the extent that is occurring in Kentucky, we know from personal experience that teachers who are involved in networks such as the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network are acquiring invaluable knowledge and skills that will serve them well, no matter where they teach. ☞

Carol Stumbo is a former Bread Loaf student. Her writing has also been published in the Harvard Educational Review and in Students Teaching, Teachers Learning (Heinemann, 1995).

Building community among school staff members is one thing; establishing community among parents, teachers, students, and citizens is another.

defining purpose and building community.

In the early days of reform, the Kentucky Education Reform Association developed a program known as Teachers to the Power of Two. "T2," as it was commonly called, asked teachers to identify their special knowledge or expertise; this information was then published in the hope

out principals, relying on one another and teacher leaders to guide the course of the school. In many instances, however, educators are still working on their own, struggling with reform efforts individually or in small groups.

Building community among school staff members is one thing; establishing community among parents, teachers, students, and citizens is an-

Public Schools, Libraries, and the Transition to Lifelong Learning

by Chris Benson
Clemson University
Clemson, SC

Peggy Stillman is Director of Libraries and Research Services of the Chesapeake Public Library in Virginia.

Where do kids go after 3 p.m. on school days? It's a question most parents and schools would do well to consider. The library seems to be the hot spot for Chesapeake's teens. So says Peggy Stillman, Director of the Chesapeake Public Library system in Chesapeake, Virginia. At the Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools, Peggy spoke about the traditional and emerging links among libraries, schools, and communities: "The library is the unofficial 'People's University,' and the people drive the curriculum. For kids in school, the public library is a traditional support to their formal schooling. For persons who have graduated from high school, the library may be their only source of continuing education." Peggy Stillman encourages educators and local residents to consult with their community librarians and become involved in their public library programs and collections.

The involvement of schools and communities in their public libraries is more important now than ever before. In this era when computing and information technology have become a means to social advancement, the library can be the great equalizer between the "haves and have-nots." Most libraries provide access to information technology for the general public; this service helps to ensure that all people, regardless of income level, have access to information.

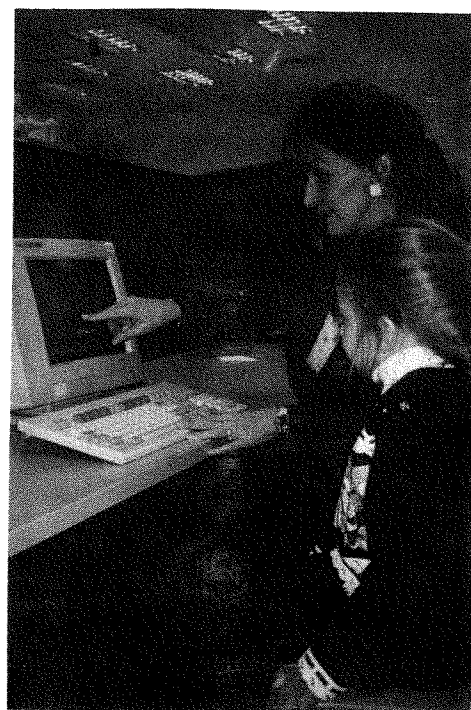
Many rural communities where the tax base is low, however, have difficulty equipping their schools

and public libraries with expensive technology; consequently, these institutions are beginning to extend their services to each other and share their resources to provide a comprehensive library service. Progressive systems like Chesapeake's utilize federal funding grant opportunities that actually reward collaborative efforts between school and community libraries.

Unfortunately, schools and community libraries are often viewed as independent institutions that do not need to cooperate. Peggy says, "We do need to formalize the relationship between school and community libraries because a strong tradition of their working together will strengthen the community. Schools have generally focused on educating young people, while public libraries have provided much broader resources for lifelong learning. Schools need to work with public libraries in order to ease the transition between formal education and independent, lifelong learning. Libraries need to reinforce to young people that library use and independent learning continue after formal education ends. Schools and community libraries need to reach out to each other."

Public libraries ought to reach out, as well, to small businesses, the foundation of many communities, supplying the kind of resources that helps business flourish. Large corporations have the funds to access databases of information to ensure their competitiveness and success. Small rural businesses usually don't have such access. For example, libraries in rural communities can offer free local fax service, computers for public use, meeting rooms, copiers, and on-line resources. Public libraries need to contribute their resources to making the partnership for learning even stronger.

According to Peggy Stillman, "the public library has always been one of the most respected American institutions, probably because of the freedom and empowerment it offers citizens to control their own lives. And while this traditional view continues, the idea of the library as a mere repository of books is being erased. Recent studies suggest that sixty-seven percent of all public libraries are now hooked to the Internet. They're no longer places of silence and isolated study; they are proactive centers where people collaborate and share knowledge. Families can enjoy the pursuit of individual interests in a group setting. The average person uses the library to research local or national topics, to investigate consumer issues, to evaluate their business options, to enjoy recreational reading, to engage in lifelong learning. It's time for public libraries and schools to work together so their constituents—people of all ages—get what they can best use."



Peggy Stillman showing Laura Harris, age 8, the Internet

Navajo Ways of Learning: An Interview with Rex Lee Jim

by Chris Benson
BLRTN Editor
Clemson University

Rex Lee Jim is a Navajo man, a poet, and a teacher, and he lives in—and in between—traditional Navajo culture and mainstream U. S. culture. Though some might think it difficult to maintain this cultural balancing act, Rex Jim has developed a sure-footedness moving between varied cultures: from the Southwest, to Appalachia, to academia. Rex attended high schools in Rock Point, Arizona; Asheville, North Carolina; and Carbondale, Colorado. After high school he attended and graduated from Princeton University. Asked whether he felt culture shock when he left the reservation, Rex says, “What was there to be shocked about? Oh, maybe you could say I was ‘surprised’ but not shocked. In my experiences away from my native Arizona, I’ve been observant and aware of other cultures; I learned a lot about the world and as much about myself from studying the way others live.”

Rex Jim teaches Navajo college students at the Navajo Community College in Tsaile, Arizona. According to Rex, in Navajo education, the complex Navajo clan system, a method of codifying genealogy, is important. A Navajo is a member of four clans, which are determined by the clans of the person’s maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather, father, and mother. Navajo society is matrilineal, so every Navajo is born for the same clan as his mother and maternal grandmother. Typically, a Navajo introduces himself and establishes relationships with other Navajos by naming his clans. For example, if a Navajo meets someone who belongs to the same clan as his father, then they share a kinship. Relationships among Navajos demand respect and a certain way of interacting physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Teachers in Navajo culture can use the kinship of the clan system to develop special teaching relationships with students. In Navajo schools, a Navajo teacher will think of his Navajo students as his own children in a sense. And parents expect their children to treat their teacher as a kind of parent. In such a setting, the teacher assumes a greater responsibility for the health, education, and growth of the student than in mainstream American schools, where teachers are often viewed as conveyors of information. Rex Jim explains, “The kinship among the Navajo clans reflects the kinship found among members of a traditional Navajo family. That means that interaction among the community is much like interaction among the family. For example, I have a student whose grandfather is of the same clan as I am, and this student naturally treats me with the same respect as he does his grandfather. The fact that I’m only a few years older than my student doesn’t matter; I am treated like a grandfather, and for this student I base my teaching on this special relationship. What does that mean ‘to be treated like a grandfather?’ Well, in Navajo culture the grandparents traditionally have a very playful interaction with their grandchildren, and teasing one another is a part of that tradition. So with this particular student, I have a relationship that includes a lot of practical joking and teasing. And he expects that of me. My relationship with each student is based on the fact that many of the student’s family members—his uncles, aunts, grandparents, and parents—are members of my clan. In the Navajo custom, therefore, the teacher establishes a unique relationship with each student.”

The kinship that Navajos express toward each other also extends to the physical world. They speak of Earth as mother and Sky as father, for example. And these and other elements of the natural world are given the same kind of respect that Navajos give their own natural biological par-

ents. As Rex Jim says, “When we call the Earth our mother, it’s not a metaphor; we mean it literally when we say ‘*Nahasdzáán, shimá. Ba’álchíní niidlí.*’ (The Earth is our mother and we are the Earth’s children.)”

Rex Jim notes that strangers to Navajo culture are often confused by these complex customs of interaction among individuals. All they see, perhaps, is how different the Navajo culture is from their own. If visitors to Navajo culture stay long enough, they will begin to learn these customs, to respond to the social cues, and they’ll be treated as a member of the culture in many ways. Rex Jim says that such patient observation of other cultures is just good common sense for living well in the world: “If I go to Japan and visit the home of a Japanese family, they would expect me to take off my shoes before I enter as a form of courtesy. If I refused to take part in this custom, I would create an embarrassing moment. In Navajo culture, on the other hand, it would be very inappropriate to take off one’s shoes before entering the home of a family. Taking off one’s shoes in a Navajo home is a thing of intimacy and should not happen unless that intimacy has been established and honored already. So, you see, learning involves knowing not just one’s own culture but also knowing how and when to participate in other cultures.

“This give-and-take in learning is an important part of it for me. We all give and take in a learning situation. A teacher fulfills some part of his students, which they cannot fulfill without him; and in return, they fulfill a desire or need in the teacher. For example, though a vast age difference exists between a young girl and her grandfather, they can nonetheless fulfill and teach each other. With respect and care for each other in their interaction, the grandfather will show his granddaughter wisdom and knowledge, and she will in turn teach him with her spirit and vitality.”

The sad fact is that the traditions of the family are threatened, even in the very family-oriented Navajo culture, as they are in much of America. Rex Jim observes many people concentrating too much on work and losing necessary time with family, clan, and tribal communities. His response is to study the phenomenon and find ways of reversing it.

Story telling, Rex Jim says, is one part of the education of Navajo children that serves to unite family and community. Stories are not told indiscriminately, however. The telling of stories is tailored to the individual child's stage of growth at a particular moment. Two children may be the same age, yet their teacher or elders may tell them different stories so as to accomplish different goals. Rex Jim explains, "Navajo teachers try to get to know each student, to know his or her thinking at a particular time, and we make allowances for the differences between the stages of growth in children. For example, let's say I observe that a child lacks courage and is afraid in situations where he or she should stand up for himself or herself. I might tell this child a story that shows how courage is necessary to live well. This story, I hope, would give the student insight into himself or herself."

Rex Jim states that story telling is ongoing in Navajo education, and its goals are long-range ones. Educators don't expect the telling of one story to turn a student around overnight. Rather, the slow and continual accumulation of stories in the mind of the Navajo begins to inform and develop the person as an individual and a member of the community. "Sometimes," Rex says, "it takes 10-20 years before one can see stories taking root in the spirit of a child." The custom of telling stories to children is like a conversation that goes on for many years. Each new conversation picks up where the previous one left off, and the individual conversations, or stories, build on each other, creating a much longer dialogue that represents the education of the individual and the heart of the community.

In Navajo culture certain family members carry the responsibility for looking after certain parts of the children's education. For example, fathers and uncles will look after the boys' education regarding sexuality; mothers and aunts do the same for girls. Uncles and aunts are responsible for teaching the songs, prayers, and chants, and the grandparents take part in educating the children in many ways, as grandparents do in many cultures. These customs vary a little across the community, but most families practice them. Rex Jim explains, "In this culture, it is my responsibility as a teacher to observe the children, and if I see one acting badly, I will tell the appropriate family member, perhaps the parent or maybe an uncle or aunt. If I were to interfere without involving the correct family member, I would actually be betraying the Navajo family structure."

Rex Jim refers to teaching as an art form. In teaching, as in weaving or pottery-making, there are requisite techniques, including observing, communicating, and interacting. In the hands of skilled teachers, these techniques become intuitive, just as they are second nature to the artist. Once in a while, when a new challenge presents itself—for example, a difficult or reluctant student—the teacher might have to draw consciously on those techniques, or create new ones in order to help the student. For Rex Jim, "teaching is based on the Navajo idea of *k'e'*, which means respect for relationships, and the art of teaching is a letting go, where the art becomes artless and natural." Since relationships are always changing, the art of teaching is one that requires continual evaluation and revision. ♡

Between Sacred Mountains: Navajo Stories and Lessons from the Land, to which the young Rex Lee Jim contributed, was originally published in 1982 at Rock Point Community School, Chinle, Arizona. The third printing, in 1994, is part of the Sun Tracks American Indian Literary Series, University of Arizona Press. *Between Sacred Mountains* was originally written for the young people of Rock Point Community School on the Navajo Reservation. It was commissioned by the Navajo parents and grandparents on the Rock Point School Board because "they wanted their children to be aware of their own unique history and to understand its relevance to the problems and challenges of today. Both parents and teachers saw a need to help young people bridge the gap between their textbook and TV world and the thread of wisdom their grandparents carry on, unbroken, from the past.... Production of the book involved community people of all ages, from 80-year-old George Blueeyes, who still plants an annual crop of corn and melons with a planting stick, to Rex Lee Jim, who was 15 years old and a Rock Point high school student when he began working on the book during the summers." In *Between Sacred Mountains*, Rex Lee Jim is described as "a seeker who asked and understood." The authors of the book state, "The purpose of this book is not to 'fix one truth' but to encourage readers, no matter what their culture, to go out and actively seek many truths from the land and the people around them." The book itself, the process by which it was created, and the spirit that informed it illuminate the notion of community building that is at the heart of BLRTN.

Focusing on the Individual Strengthens Community

by Susan Stropko, Principal
Ganado Intermediate School
Ganado, AZ

Marlena looked out at me from a mask of scabs, squinting as if blinded by harsh light. Though eight years old and in the third grade, she was as tiny as a first grader who had never gotten enough to eat. Marlena screened her downcast face with small grimy hands, her fingernails darkened with dried blood.

"They're mean to me. They call me names," she said. "Scab Face. They call me Scab Face." Tears surged like sudden rain in a canyon wash through the crevices in her skin.

It was the fourth day of school last year and the fourth report about boys who made Marlena cry. I wondered how badly scarred her face would be if the scabs ever healed and how deeply she would feel those scars.

Ganado Intermediate School (GIS) and Sage Hospital staff members merged into a single community to help Marlena. They brought to her medical treatment, shampoo and showers, laundered clothes, home visits, counseling, and help in making friends. Marlena's face began to heal and other children stopped making her cry.

I thought of Marlena last June when we discussed communities and school reform during the Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools at Bread Loaf. Communities are anchored in place or purpose, we said. In organizing to help Marlena, we became a small community with the singular purpose of improving the quality of school life for one child.

When BLRTN editor Chris Benson asked me to reflect on the Conference and write about how to ensure that schools institute reforms and still remain responsive to future

needs for change, I thought again of Marlena. The way we made changes to help Marlena is the same way that we have made changes to improve learning in our school for 500 third through fifth grade children. In dozens of projects, we have recognized a need and a way to improve learning; we have worked together to make changes, and we have been rewarded through seeing results. Teamwork is the most important part of our reform process, and working together has made our school a close-knit learning community.

Our big project that brought teachers together to work with common purpose in the last three years is the Arizona Student Assessment Program (ASAP) which requires our children to take 20 performance assessments. The first year, our students failed badly. During the second year, teachers worked together to develop instructional units to teach the children the skills they needed. Teaching to the test made sense because the intent of the assessments was to measure students' learning of the Arizona Essential Skills, and those skills matched our local curriculum. In the third year, teacher teams revised the assessment booklets. We simplified the language of the questions, modified activities, and substituted culturally appropriate reading selections. Our children's scores on these assessments are now approaching our performance standards in reading, writing, and math.

Similarly, a need to make learning more relevant to our Navajo children inspired us to sponsor a Native American literature course for K-12 teachers last summer. Bread Loaf cosponsored the course, and BLRTN coordinator Dixie Goswami and telecommunications director Rocky Gooch joined us for an enriching week. Teachers have produced learning results with their students and have asked for a Bread Loaf Native

American literature course again next summer.

A new mentorship project was born this year when our classroom teachers agreed that students who were failing, in spite of all of our interventions, needed individual attention which teachers could not easily give because of time demands in classes of 20 to 25 students. A modified allied arts schedule now gives five teachers 90 minutes each day to mentor 60 students each six-week period. The teachers report remarkable, gratifying changes in the children.

A need to know more about how our children learn brought together another group of ten teachers under a Spencer Foundation teacher-researcher grant beginning just last month. The project is led by BLRTN Fellow Nancy Jennings with generous support from Bread Loaf. Dixie Goswami mentors the group. Already, wonderful discussions are emerging about our children's learning.

Teachers lead more than half of the 50 projects that are improving the lives and learning of children in our school. All of the projects have three things in common: a shared vision of a way to improve learning, a commitment to work together to make the vision a reality, and evidence that the work is producing results.

Weeks ago, on the fourth day of this new school year, I walked to the bus with Marlena. Her clothes were clean and her hair was brushed and tied back. Only pale shadows of the old scabs marked her upturned, laughing face. "I get to take a bath every Sunday now," she said. "They bring in the round tub and heat the water and pour lots in."

Marlena's self-portrait hangs in the hall gallery. She has painted her image with a clear, smooth complexion and a bemused smile. She gazes at me, wide-eyed and luminous. ☘

Ganado Intermediate School is a partner with the Bread Loaf School of English in a new, school networking project funded by the Annenberg Rural Challenge.

...Folklore at St.

Johns *(continued from page 16)*

constitute the "literary" tapestry of the town. In St. Johns there are individuals for whom oral performance of poems and stories is as natural as speaking, a gift inherited from parents or grandparents. Recitations were a vital,

paintings, and local crafts of all kinds was prepared by teachers and students who had spent many hours collecting the materials from their owners and preparing the display.

During the third and fourth years, the focus of the project shifted to gathering life histories and traditions from the oldest residents in town. At St. Johns High School, I worked with sophomores who had participated as eighth graders in the first year of

makeup of the place we share. With the passing of time, however, we are learning other important things: the wisdom of involving young people in small group work; of giving them real responsibility and real decisions to make; of producing something tangible that has value for students and that has an appreciative and grateful audience of community members; of uniting the community, the classroom and the curriculum. Students bonded with older people, sometimes their own grandparents. They developed an enhanced understanding of their own culture and lives as well as those of others. Perhaps one of the greatest bonuses of the project is the library of videos and audio tapes that the community now has of its oldest residents, particularly because a number of the elders who participated in the project have passed away.

Everyone involved in the project seemed to be convinced that this was something original and that no community had ever before been involved in such an undertaking. Virtually no one in St. Johns had heard of Foxfire, although Foxfire has been around for 25 years now. The folklore project has had a genuinely energizing, electric effect on St. Johns. First, the four years of community and

Teachers and students in the St. Johns School District worked with community members to collect and document folklore of the area.

natural, and widespread tradition of their childhood. Not surprisingly then, the final event of that year was a folklore festival held in the high school auditorium. Musicians played, storytellers performed, and dances were staged between the acts.

The oldest citizens in town were honored as they performed dramatic, humorous, and emotional recitations. Every one of them was introduced by a school child who had invited that particular person to participate in the folklore festival. Elda Brown, 92 years old, brought the house down with her version of "A Son of the Beach." Delbert Lambson, a survivor of a German World War II prisoner-of-war camp, paid tribute to his father-in-law, Jake Neal, in an original poem describing how Jake was born, lived, and died in the same house. E. Z. Nielsen, a Scandinavian immigrant, entertained the crowd with "The Wedding Scaremony." Juanita Montoya performed a medley of Mexican songs, and Johnny DeHart performed a Zuni eagle dance. It was interesting to note a new fascination and esteem for the older people in town developing, especially among the youth. Popular and folk culture were united in the presentation and preservation of these recitations.

In addition to the pageant, an extensive display of quilts, woodwork,

the folklore project. With guidance and suggestions from the Cunninghams, I taught the sophomores how to interview the elders and then transcribe those interviews.

As students went out into the community with tape recorders and cameras, they learned what it means to be part of a community inhabited by culturally distinct groups of people. Students learned to communicate with people of different ages, races, genders, and ethnicity. Alma Patterson, a 90-year-old retired teacher, was one of the elders whose life achievements were highlighted at the festival. She was an Anglo teacher who had insisted on teaching at the Hispanic elementary school during the "segregation era" in St. Johns when two primary schools, one for Anglo children and the other for Hispanic children, existed only blocks from each other. Several generations of her students honored her, and the youth of St. Johns now see her as a person with a rich and varied experience rather than just an elderly curiosity.

Through the interviews and transcriptions the students completed, our community gained some appreciation for the history and cultural

Students learned what it means to be part of a community inhabited by culturally distinct groups of people.

school collaboration have offered an increased sense of continuity and belonging to us all. Second, it has brought together disparate elements of the community in a unique fashion. Finally, the students, teachers, and community members of St. Johns have connected, as they have come together to celebrate their lives, to affirm their respect and understanding for one another, and to create enduring memories. ☘

Taos Day School: A School-Community Reform Process

by *Juanita Lavadie*
Taos Day School
Taos, New Mexico

Taos Day School is located just east of the Taos Pueblo, a pre-Colombian village continuously inhabited for nearly 1,000 years. The pueblo is located at about 7,000 feet in altitude at the base of the Taos Mountain, which is adjacent to Wheeler Peak, the highest point in New Mexico. In these mountains, the Taos Pueblo River begins its course from the heights of the sacred sanctuary of Blue Lake, winding through the volcanic rock canyons among evergreen and aspen trees. The river eventually finds its way to the pueblo, where the old, five-story village plaza, baked in the Southwestern sunlight for many generations, is a stronghold in heritage for the 2,000 tribal members living in the vicinity. Taos Day School, a Bureau of Indian Affairs school on the Taos Pueblo Reservation, is nestled in this spectacular landscape.

The school's adobe buildings blend in with the rugged environment. Built during the early part of this century, the school's thick earthen walls support row after row of hand carved vigas overhead that form the ceiling and support the roof. The massive walls insulate the school from cold and extreme heat. Within these walls, cheerful voices of children and youth mingle with the voices of the adults working at the Taos Day School. Though the architecture of the school creates a sense of antiquity, what is happening inside the school is anything but antiquated.

When I first walked into the halls of this unique school in 1988, I kept hearing about the Effective School Project, a Bureau of Indian Affairs initiative for Native American school reform. Taos Day School was

one of the pilot schools for this reform effort. Part of the reform included school- and community-wide surveys and broad-based group projects. The project required an intensive effort at the beginning, and we have continued to work hard on it to this day.

During this process I've seen growing opportunities for community and parent involvement and a growing sense of teacher empowerment in the classroom and in school-wide issues. When the Taos Day School staff is mentioned in this article, it should be noted that the staff includes all employees of the school. Also, about two-thirds of the Taos Day School staff are Taos Pueblo tribal members.

Affiliated with the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network, Taos Day School is an unofficial partner in Bread Loaf's school reform effort sponsored by the Annenberg Rural Challenge. Two teachers from the Taos Day School staff are active members of the BLRTN, and our principal, Mr. Robert Martinez, participated in the 1996 Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools, which preceded the summer session at Bread Loaf in Vermont.

Mr. Martinez feels we are fortunate to have been invited to participate. "It was truly gratifying to experience the enthusiasm, dedication, and cooperative spirit demonstrated by all the participants and the staff of the BLRTN. I praise them for all their efforts in improving the educational standards for all students. We are elated that two Taos Day School teachers are participants in this exciting program."

For the Effective School Project, we conducted large-scale surveys of staff, students, parents, and community members. Assessments of needs was one focus of these surveys, but assessment of outstanding talents and skills was another. Our survey

showed we had a good grant-writing record established by a handful of Taos Day School teachers, and we used some of that money to create humanities curricula based on the local Taos Pueblo.

Inspired by this early success of integrating the culture of the Taos Pueblo into the curriculum, the school staff developed unit plans that allowed community members and parents to interact with the students in the classroom. A booklet compilation of local Taos Pueblo educational resources, and training on the local and regional history, created the possibility of adding a regional and multicultural perspective to the various disciplines taught to the students.

Our increased knowledge about the local and regional history led us to update our instructional materials and methods. The school curriculum was developed to reflect tribal interests. To accommodate influences in daily lifestyles from historical and contemporary events, community members have demonstrated their talents in the classroom. Presenters have included storytellers, songwriters, traditional clay artists, dancers, painters, drum-makers, farmers, and family cooks familiar with traditional food gathering and preparation. Many projects were initiated in conjunction with other programs, and this has been an exciting time of creative group collaboration.

At Taos Day School, parents share in school decision-making by serving on various committees and by participating in in-service and staff training sessions. In some cases, Taos Day School has set up in-service speakers with evening presentations for the community at large. The amount of involvement by parents and community members has increased. The idea to include parents in professional training or in broad-scale deci-

sion making is still novel in terms of national trends. Our goal is to encourage the distribution of ownership, responsibility, and the commitment to the process of educating the children of the community.

Parents have helped plan our school reforms and set benchmarks for accreditation changes. This past summer various members of the Taos Day School board, the staff, and parents met on a retreat to review the plan and make important adjustments. Also, community members and parents have made intergenerational presentations in many classrooms about traditional ways practiced by older community members. Much has changed since their childhood in areas such as language, diet, mobility, and volume of communication.

In spite of cultural changes, a strong pride in tradition is manifested daily in understanding of, and respect for, tribal doings.

In this fast-changing world, traditional tribal ways are at risk. Many of the Taos Day School parents have expressed concern and have participated as volunteers in various cultural projects and events that take place in the classrooms. We have an Artist-of-the-Month come into the classroom with presentations, thus using community members and parents. They have always been welcome.

The Taos Day School staff has planned different events for Parent Night. We have the school library, the only library on the Taos Pueblo Reservation, open on some evenings, and the computer lab open on others. Some evenings we'll have workshops sponsored by Family Math or by the CASM Science project, while other nights are reserved for the PTO monthly meetings. Attendance may be high, or it may be scanty, but parents know that we are making many efforts to include them. This has been important because, although the attendance

fact that Taos Day School is a reservation school also adds another dimension to communicating. Much is understood without having to be spoken. Even non-tribal members have developed cultural sensitivity. Respect, open communication, and commitment from the school, the families, and the community are important factors that establish good change.

I suppose that it is good to be able to generate funds by applying for special grants for these developments, but a school's outreach to the community should not be dependent on such



Juanita Lavadie (left) and Arlene Duran at the fall meeting of BLRTN at Laguna, New Mexico

may not be high at all times, parents know that the school staff has an open door for them. A reflection of this attitude can be noted in the 98 percent attendance for parent-teacher conferences.

One reason why collaboration among parents and teachers is so forthcoming is that we are a small, rural school where the community fabric is tightly woven. Of course, the

funding. Though we are fortunate to have had funds to cover costs of including community members in services and workshops, the various grants have been stimulants to projects that are always happening, that will continue happening, because they are nourished by interest and commitment rather than by funds. ☺

BLRTN: A Portable Community

by Prudence Plunkett
Houston Jr./Sr. High School
Big Lake, AK

Last weekend I attended the wedding of one of my best friends from high school. We hadn't seen each other in three years. I had only met her fiancé once, and the wedding was in Washington, D.C., over 4,000 miles away from my home in Alaska. Yet I felt a compelling need to be there, so I took two of my three precious personal days off from teaching and arranged to take the nine-hour, four-time-zone flight for the weekend.

At the reception, the groom rose to respond to his brother's toast. He observed that his guests had commented all evening about how happy he and Vikki looked. "Why shouldn't we be happy?" he asked. "When I look around the room, I see everyone who is important to Vikki and to me." He raised his glass to us and said, "You are our community." The idea of being part of their community pleased me, but it was not really true. We live too far away to be in regular contact, and although their friends were very nice to me while I was there, I did not really fit in. Vikki and I shared the past, but time and distance keep us from being active parts of each other's futures.

At the Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools held prior to the Bread Loaf session last June, educators from across the country met to discuss rural education. Again and again throughout the weekend, educators suggested that community is one of the unique features of rural education, and that rural schools often fail to take advantage of the communities to which they belong. "Community is the strength of rural education," the participants declared, and those of us who teach in rural schools received an implicit directive to begin looking for ways to integrate our communities and schools.

A Bread Loaf colleague who teaches in Canton, Ohio, mere blocks away from where she grew up, says, "You can't be a good teacher if you don't know your kids. You have to know where they are coming from and where they are going. I've lived the life my kids live, and that is essential to my teaching." Logically, that state-

ment makes sense, as did the statements made at the conference that rural schools should recognize the value of their communities. Yet it leaves me feeling vaguely inadequate and guilty, because I don't feel like an integral part of my community. In fact, I am not even sure that my remote corner of Alaska constitutes an identifiable community.

After nearly nine years in Alaska, I have a favorite line I like to recite when a person asks me for directions somewhere and seems concerned about being lost. "You can't really get lost in Alaska," I assure them, "There are only four roads." While that is a slight exaggeration, it is true that only four highways cover any real distance in the state. The George Parks Highway is one of these; it begins roughly thirty-five miles north of Anchorage and stretches north to Fairbanks, about 265 miles into the interior of the state.

Along the Parks Highway are several small communities scattered like berries on a stalk. These communities—Wasilla, Meadow Lakes, Big Lake, Houston, Hatcher's Pass and



Kathy Trump and Prudence Plunkett (right) of Alaska BLRTN on the porch of the Inn at Bread Loaf, VT

Willow—provide Houston Junior/Senior High School with its nearly 600 students in grades seven through twelve. Each small geographic area is a community of a sort; people who live near each other tend to associate with each other, but many students have friends who live at great geographical distance and consequently

A community can be electronic; it can exist among people without the usual geographic features that have traditionally defined communities.

see each other only during the school day or at sports, dances, or other school functions. Many of the people in the area share religious beliefs and/or political ideology, but there is no common sense of history, no community identity to tie the majority of the people together. Many Alaskans are transplanted from other locations, and the transience rate at the school is high. Typically only 40 percent of a given class returns to the school in consecutive years. There is not even a name for the community served by the school. The area closest to the school is clumsily called the "Big Lake-Houston area," but this awkward moniker does nothing more than name two of the particular places from which students come to our school.

While place is certainly a defining element of any community, it seems to me that a community must possess other characteristics. For a true community to exist, people must be connected by something other than geography; some shared experiences or common identity are required to connect people who care about each other. Teaching in an isolated place like Big Lake, Alaska, has made it difficult for me to have experiences that build connections among people. Yet I continue to seek ways to create these, both for myself and for my students.

The Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network has shown me that a community can be electronic; it can exist among people without the usual geographic features that have traditionally defined communities. This realization has come incrementally over the past two and a half years in a series of small incidents. When I first

went to Bread Loaf, I met many professional and collegial people; and through on-line conversations, I met many more. Back home, another Bread Loaf acquaintance

called me one afternoon in the fall and asked if I wanted to meet in Anchorage for dinner. We met, and over dinner she enlisted me to serve as secretary on the Board of Directors for the Alaska Council of Teachers of English. The eleven board members have a monthly audio-conference and meet several times during the school year. The Alaskan BLRTN also has several audio-conferences and meetings throughout the year. We have a reading circle, too: once a month we read a book and discuss it in writing on-line. These meetings and conferences have provided me with the essential foundation of community: people who share common experiences and ideas and who care about each other.

Last June at Bread Loaf, as our rural education conference progressed and we began to talk about the importance of community, I realized that BLRTN is my community. It has no physical landscape, nor can it be found on any map, but it is a community nonetheless. Those of us in the

network share experiences during the summers as we do graduate work and during the year as we work on-line with each other and our students. Although we don't embrace a monolithic teaching philosophy, we share a commitment to continued learning and to finding new ways for our students to learn. I find myself "saving" issues that arise in my daily teaching to share at audio-conferences, on-line, and at meetings. When I am feeling frustrated with my work or with students or colleagues, it is to BLRTN members I write—sometimes to talk about the problem, other times just to touch base to know that someone else who cares is out there. In short, these people, whom I rarely see, are my friends. While we don't spend time together in the traditional way, we still comprise a community—one that is as strong as any community defined by geographical features. No matter where I move or go, the BLRTN community goes with me.

In a very large state with only 500,000 people, I think it is critical that my students "meet" as many other people as possible, and BLRTN seems to be the best way to do that. I want to create electronic communities for my students, although I am still not sure of exactly how to do that. I can't say that all the kinks are worked out in the

BLRTN is my community. It has no physical landscape, nor can it be found on any map, but it is a community nonetheless.

system; I have had some trouble in trying to engage my students in these activities on-line, and I don't want to suggest to them that their community is not an important part of their lives. But I want to present the possibilities to my students so they see what is available beyond the place they live. ☺

Communities and Schools: Strangers in the Night

by *Bill Clarke*
Shivers Jr. High School
Aberdeen, Mississippi

Shivers Jr. High, a two-story, dimly-lit Mississippi school where I teach English, reminds me of an old cotton gin we used to haunt as kids. Or perhaps I should say it haunted us. The gin stood in the middle of a field of tall grass, and we observed it from afar. When the moonlight filtered through its shattered windows, scattering shafts of light through the abandoned structure, the light inside shifted (ghosts, surely, we thought) and our stomachs did too.

As kids we went to the cotton gin maybe twice a month. We decided it was haunted by slaves and their masters long dead. We'd sit outside, twenty yards of vacant property between us and it, speculating about what happened inside.

"There's a rope with a noose on the second floor," the story began. "If you hang it over the rafters, it'll be down the next morning!"

"Yeah, it's called gravity," said Nick.

"Nuhuh, it's real!" said Jarrett. "A friend of my brother's did it."

The moon sunk behind a cloud.

"Look! Something's in the window!"

"Naw, Man... wait. I see it. AHHHHH! LETSGETOUTAHERE!"

And so it went.

We didn't dare go inside because we were afraid of the unknown. We didn't even dare cross the field

because of its reputation for giant rattlers, though no one had ever seen one. The fact is, we didn't want to prove anything; we preferred not knowing.

A similar relationship exists between communities and schools. Resistance to becoming active in our public schools is created largely by a fear of the unknown. Unfortunately, much of the community simply doesn't know what goes on in school and feels uneasy trying to find out.

One thing keeping parents and community members away is uncertainty about their relationship to the

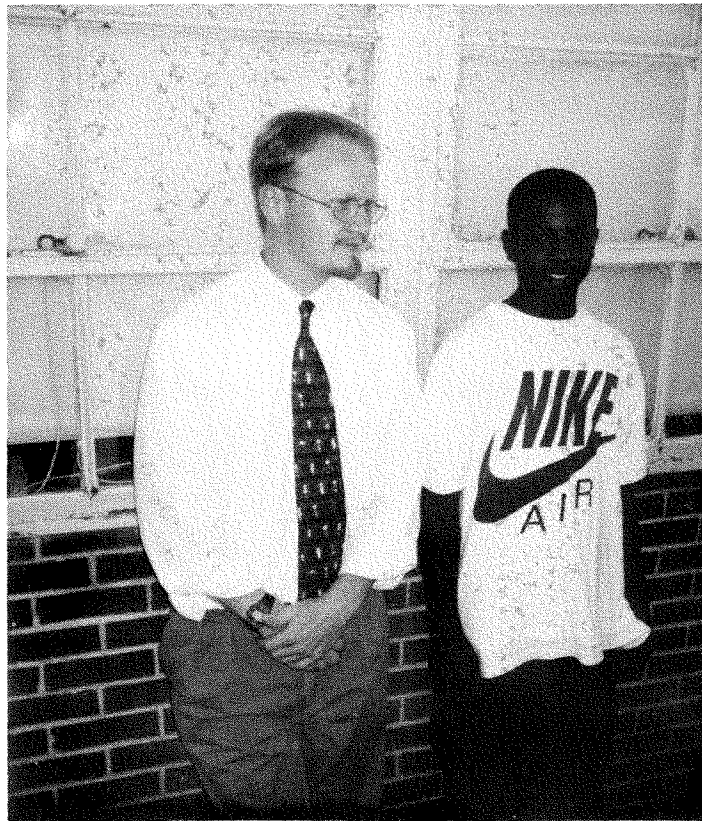
As outsiders, they don't know what to expect from themselves and others in this relationship.

That's where the relationship stands right now for many schools and communities. And who could blame community members for avoiding the schools? To parents, Shivers Jr. High seems a strange place with cement floors and long yellow walls where loud bells ring, lockers slam, and thirty kids crowd into each classroom. To the community, school is like the cotton gin was to us kids. The community stands at a distance, curious but afraid to enter.

The fault, however, doesn't rest solely with the community. Many teachers keep their distance as well. Responding to my suggestion that all our teachers should call 10 different parents inviting them to the Open House, a veteran teacher scowled, "Don't waste your time, Mr. Clarke!" We finally agreed to write invitations, to be returned with a parent's signature, and we distributed them in English classes. I can't speak for everyone, but I believe that schools have to reach out to the community and make its members welcome. Community members who

have gotten involved—and we've had a few—came because they were invited.

Teachers often blame the community for not doing its part. But are we doing ours? We must show parents that their involvement in the school will be rewarding and beneficial for them and the school.



Bill Clarke with student Eric Bell

school. School relationships are determined by a hierarchy of principals, teachers, staff, and students. What has yet to be resolved is the relationship between schools and parents. Parents take kids to school, pick them up, take them to football practice. But many have no other contact with the school.

Sometimes the invitation can work surreptitiously. If you place the kids in the community, then the community can't ignore them. For example, the local library and I will be inviting students to research archival photos of community members who have passed away. Their research will culminate in poems, historical fiction, and essays that will be displayed in the library and recorded in a community publication. Furthermore, some of my younger students will invite community members—the Mayor, members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Police Chief—to become pen pals.

The cotton gin mystery was destroyed for me during my senior year in high school. We invited some new kids out there, a couple of sophomore hotshots—"cotton gin virgins" we called them. Before going out, they drank a little more than the rest of us, and when we dared them to peer inside the broken windows of the gin, they actually went inside and took their time doing it. We lost them in the shadows, but we could hear their hoots and jeers. We thought for sure something bad was going to happen.

The daredevils ran back, still hollering, through the weeds. "There's all kinds of cool stuff in there," one gasped, feet on cement, hands on knees. "It's like a treasure chest. Old machines and tools and signs. Antiques probably."

Thus our fear and the mystery dissolved.

We visited the gin quite a few times after that. We began to see it for what it was. We saw that it suffered from neglect and age, but it wasn't strange anymore. The last time we visited was during Christmas vacation after our first semester in college. Someone had mowed the tall grass surrounding the building and begun painting the weathered siding. It actually looked friendly and inviting. ☘

Bread Loaf's 1996 Conference on the Teaching of English in Rural Schools: A List of Special Guests

Carla Asher	DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, New York, NY
Robert Becker	Strom Thurmond Institute, Clemson University, Clemson, SC
Lou Bernieri	Andover Bread Loaf Writing Workshop, Andover, MA
Nick Cheremiah	Laguna Middle School, Laguna, NM
Richard Clement	Schoenbar Middle School, Ketchikan, AK
Herbert F. Dalton, Jr.	Foundation for Excellent Schools, Middlebury, VT
Carolyn Dennis	Algebra Project, Jackson, MS
David Dennis	Algebra Project, Jackson, MS
Bette Ford	Jones Junior College, Ellisville, MS
Robert Gipe	Annenberg Rural Challenge, Brown University, Providence, RI
Eva Gold	Research for Action, Philadelphia, PA
Bianca Gray	Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence, RI
Geri Gutwein	Harrisburg Area Community College, Harrisburg, PA
Rex Lee Jim	Navajo Community College, Tsaile, AZ
Douglas Keel	South Carolina Educational TV, Columbia, SC
Anthony Kennedy	Ketchikan High School, Ketchikan, AK
Robin Lambert	Program for Rural Services and Research, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL
Gregory Larkin	Northern Arizona Writing Project, Flagstaff, AZ
Suzanne Bratcher-Larkin	Northern Arizona Writing Project, Flagstaff, AZ
Ann Lieberman	National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching, Columbia University, New York, NY
Robert Martinez	Taos Day School, Taos, NM
Joseph P. Macdonald	Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Providence, RI
Sheila Moran	Annenberg Rural Challenge, Providence, RI
Vicki Nelson	Center for School Change, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
William Reynolds	Kentucky Telecommunications and Writing Project
Clay Slate	Navajo Community College, Tsaile, AZ
Richard Sterling	National Writing Project, Berkeley, CA
Margaret Stillman	Chesapeake Public Library, Chesapeake, VA
Peter Stillman	Boynton/Cook Publishers, Portsmouth, NH
Susan Stropko	Ganado Intermediate School, Ganado, AZ
Carol Stumbo	Kentucky Department of Education, Prestonburg, KY

Working within the Community and across the Curriculum

by Jill Loveless
Globe Junior High School
Globe, AZ

It was a mystery. Just what did happen to the missing seventh grader? Could a principal commit murder? She had been walking close to the edge with her discipline policies. In a matter of 32 minutes the mystery was solved; the lights came up and the audience roared with applause. The debut of the Globe Junior High Players in front of their community in April of 1996 was a success. Okay, so they forgot two or three pages of dialogue. Only the director squatting in the corner knew *that* mystery. I happened to be that director.

Though our stage in rural Arizona is far from Broadway, I was

proud of my students, who worked hard to make our annual education fair a success. We attracted the largest crowd ever to attend our education fair, which celebrated several weeks of work investigating our communities of Globe, Miami, and San Carlos, Arizona. It wasn't clear that we would achieve this success when we first broached the idea of creating a unit of study focused on the idea of community. We didn't know just how diverse and exciting our communities really were.

The idea of an interdisciplinary unit on community began during faculty meetings we had scheduled to address our school's accreditation. During these meetings, discussion about the possibility of a school-wide thematic unit emerged. I was in a

group discussing math skills (so I'm an English teacher; I like a little challenge). Ellen Riley, one of the math teachers, was talking about giving students experience with practical applications of math skills when she hit on the idea of taking students on a field trip to our annual celebration of local history, The Historic Globe Days, to see the quilt show so students could observe the practical use of geometric patterns. I suggested that we expand the activity to include other academic areas. In science classes students might observe patterns that occur in nature; in art class they might draw patterns, and so on.

The excitement could not be contained. Instead of focusing on individual and separate units for each subject, we searched for a broad topic that could be shaped to fit the entire curriculum. We finally agreed to use the idea of "community" to link the curriculum. Like every faculty, we have a few old dogs who are not excited about new tricks. But I felt this new idea was more of a sure bet than a trick.

One teacher said, "I can't teach that in my field."

"How does that apply to PE?" another asked.

"What about the requirements the state mandates for vocational education?" still another wondered.

The group addressed those concerns by brainstorming ways of thinking about community. I knew it wasn't going to be easy, but I felt certain about the potential success of a thematic unit. It was also decided that we would have to ease the idea into implementation.

At a later in-service, more questions were raised about the thematic curriculum focused on the idea of community:

"What about my classes and state mandates?"

"Look at all the options under the topic of community. You already teach some of these ideas."

"How does PE fit this topic?"

"Look at the ways communi-



Jill Loveless directing a student

ties have to work together like teams, and how they have to follow rules to get along.”

“Yeah, I see.”

“I’ve never taught a thematic unit. What are we supposed to do?”

“Easy. We’ll use one of our in-service days next year to plan the unit.”

For every question, we were able to come up with a reasonable solution. Even the lack of available money to take students on field trips into the community was solved by inviting the community to our school for a Community Day instead. I was pumped.

One of my across-the-curriculum projects involved Mike O’Neil, the seventh grade history teacher, and Boyd Dugan, the other seventh grade English teacher. We worked on a project to study the mayoral elections in our community. Mike O’Neil invited the candidates to speak to his classes. In my class, the students wrote comparison-contrast essays about the candidates’ views, researching videos of their speeches. I was very pleased with the outcome. One candidate had remarked that girls need more recreational opportunities be-

him. They focused their essays on the water problem.

This was one of the few times when most of the students completed a writing assignment from start to finish. My students were enthusiastic to have a chance to voice their opinions concerning their community. Many took an interest in who won the election and shared their thoughts about the outcome, which, I assume, would not have mattered much to them were it not for our integration of the community issues into the curriculum.

Since we wanted the communities of Globe, San Carlos, and Miami to know what we were doing at our school, we used our annual education fair to showcase our projects to the communities. I suggested we get the students involved in the planning process for the fair. I had some of my students write the advertisements for the fair to be broadcast on the radio and local TV channel. We wanted to involve as many students as possible this year to help increase turnout and student support.

Besides our annual education fair, we planned a new event: we invited community leaders, artists, business people, mining experts, and citizens to come to our school for “Community Day.” One teacher played a key role in accomplishing this task. Karen Cooney-Gotto, an eighth grade English teacher, was able to generate much interest in the community to attend this event. I worked with Karen on a schedule to ensure that students had the opportunity to hear as many speakers as possible. Speakers would speak during a two-hour block divided into thirty-minute presentations.

On Community Day, our visitors were well received. My guest speaker was a local artist, Diana Tunis, the mother of a former student of mine. Mrs. Tunis not only explained her role in the community as

an artist and seamstress, she involved the students in creating art. It was fun trying to draw alongside my students. Al Binegar, a Cyprus-Miami Copper Mine employee, demonstrated the importance of correctly and neatly filling out an application for a job. He helped students realize they have to get involved in their community and school to have an edge over others applying with equal qualifications. The com-

Instead of focusing on individual and separate units for each subject, we searched for a broad topic that could be shaped to fit the entire curriculum.

ments of one student, who attended a hacky sack demonstration, perfectly summed up our goal for that day. This student said: “The man wouldn’t allow anyone to sit out. He encouraged everyone. He said, ‘You’ve lost if you don’t try.’ He taught me everyone can’t do everything, but everyone can try.” Indeed the cooperative “sport” of hacky sack, in which there seems to be only one team, may be an appropriate metaphor for community involvement.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Community Day. I would be remiss if I didn’t label our education fair a success as well. Our hard work paid off. We had a record crowd. *The Mystery of the Seventh Grader* was solved and was well received. The band performed to the crowd’s delight. Most importantly, I think the students felt a degree of ownership that they hadn’t had before.

To look back at all that was accomplished through everyone’s participation gives me great satisfaction. Our work paid off because we overcame our doubts and uncertainty and discovered we can work together across the curriculum and within the community. ☘

Our work paid off because we overcame our doubts and uncertainty and discovered we can work together across the curriculum and within the community.

cause boys already have plenty of opportunities. This comment sparked the interest of several students of both genders. My students were vocal and impassioned about their ideas; they wanted to get their points across. The other candidate also sparked some controversy when he stated that a water problem for a specific area had been solved. Some students who lived in that area strongly disagreed with

BreadNet: A Tool for Building Community

by Rocky Gooch
Telecommunications Director
BLRTN

Wednesday, 11/20/96, 8:30 a.m.
Message on BreadNet:

"Hello! Panic in the Southwest! We have been asked to present at our annual district in-service conference. Our topic is BLRTN. While we are ecstatic about doing this, we need ideas. There is already a panel presenting on computer use in the language arts classroom. Also a session on using the Internet. We'd like suggestions about focusing on BLRTN and how we can present our experience to our district. We need to submit a rough draft of our presentation on Friday. I know this is not much time. We'll meet tomorrow to do the paperwork, but the conference itself is not until the last week in January. Please send your ideas and suggestions to my box. Adios. Ceci."

By Thursday afternoon, the responses were coming in, and Ceci sent the following message on Thursday.

Thursday, 11/21/96, 3:58 PM:
Message to Jim Maddox's BreadNet mailbox:

"In true Bread Loaf fashion, I have already received three responses from Fellows who are willing to share their experiences, strengths, and hopes about presenting BLRTN to others. What a wonderful network: we hope to be able to use Fellows' words as well as their ideas. We'll keep you informed as to what is happening."

This on-line exchange is not unusual: it will probably continue until

after the in-service conference in January. BLRTN Fellows and staff regularly use BreadNet to ask for and provide information and support and to write to each other about the daily routines of teaching as well as moments of panic. We believe that small-scale networks such as BLRTN make a real difference to teachers who are changing their practice as they respond to the changing needs of students and schools. BreadNet is a key tool for building and sustaining the BLRTN community because it allows us to communicate for many purposes and in many ways.

It is important for rural teachers who work closely together at Bread Loaf for six weeks for several summers to be able to stay in touch throughout the year. While at Bread Loaf, teachers form relationships and develop a sense of community, which they take back to their classrooms, along with the new knowledge and skills they learned to improve their teaching. They use BreadNet to stay in touch

with each other and to exchange ideas, seek support, and plan projects to make teaching and learning more interesting and more participatory for their students.

About 70 percent of BLRTN Fellows and staff log in at least once a week; 25 percent of these users log in every day. Currently, over a hundred "conferences" (areas devoted to focused discussion) are active on BreadNet, and more are added as BreadNet users come forward with new interests and ideas. Students participate in many of these conferences and exchanges. BreadNet is used in nearly all 50 states and in an increasing number of foreign countries, most recently Japan and South Africa. Sev-

eral BLRTN Fellows are now teaching BreadNet courses (credit-bearing networked writing and publishing electives). Proposals for on-line courses that include teachers, students, and Bread Loaf faculty are being explored. In isolated rural communities, the collaborative studies that bring students into regular, sustained contact with their peers who have very different backgrounds are important features of BreadNet.

Because the BLRTN program emphasizes content knowledge of literature, theater, and writing, BLRTN Fellows have begun to develop new practices in response to technological possibilities. They are using the World Wide Web, literary hypertexts, and such technologies as interactive CD-ROM to extend student learning. They are designing and experimenting with pedagogies that invite students to explore new ways of reading, responding to, and creating literature. Many questions are emerging for us as language and literature instruction respond to technological change. BLRTN provides rural teachers with opportunities to enter into and shape the national

BreadNet is used in nearly all 50 states and in an increasing number of other countries.

conversation on literature and literacy in an age of technology.

BreadNet, the electronic network of the Bread Loaf School of English, was started in 1984 with a grant from the Apple Computer Foundation. The BreadNet server is housed at Middlebury College. BreadNet may be accessed by almost any type of computer, either over the Internet or via a modem. It is user-friendly, and even the most stubborn technophobe can learn to surf conferences with a minimum of time, trouble, and anxiety. Accounts are given, free of charge, to any student, graduate, staff or faculty member of the Bread Loaf School of English who makes the request. ☺

Building Community among School Staff: The Value of Conflict

by Anne Gardner
Georgetown High School
Georgetown, SC

Learning is not a static activity. It involves change, an evolution from ignorance to understanding to knowledge. In spite of this evolution, we resist change, not because we are satisfied with the way things are, but because change almost always brings conflict. For teachers and for learners, conflict, however intimidating, may be of immense value, for conflict provides an opportunity to work out our individual goals within the context of attaining the goals of the community. At Georgetown High School in Georgetown, South Carolina, a remarkable group of people is overcoming the conflicts arising from change.

This academic year we have adopted the four-by-four block schedule. Students complete a total of eight courses a year, taking ninety minutes a day in each course for one semester. The adjustment for teachers and students has been relatively easy. Many of us already wonder how we used to complete any meaningful task in the constraints of a fifty-minute period. Our initial anxieties about pacing, discipline, and materials were alleviated in the process of working together to adopt the new schedule. Bryan was a case in point.

On the first day of school, my students and I were talking about the new schedule. Bryan, his jeans belted almost at his knees, his gold earring flashing, said, "Man, they shouldn't do this to us. We can't take it. They just wanna see us fail."

"Bryan, you ain't gonna pass no way, so what are you worrying about?" another student taunted.

"What are we gonna do for an hour and a half in English?" Bryan asked. "I'm gonna fail for sure. Teach-

ers are just gonna lecture. It ain't gonna change nothing."

I saw Bryan's concerns as a challenge to create a cooperative classroom environment where my students and I could adapt to these new changes. Bryan didn't finish his homework very often, but in a collaborative classroom setting he did everything. He directed his group with an expert hand, and often recruited other groups: "You got that sonnet thing? Bring it here...."

Sometimes he stayed after class or sought me out at lunch to talk. "Can we read that story tomorrow?" he'd ask. Or "That plot made sense. I told my math teacher about it. Can I take it to her?" Every day was something new and different. We made connections between math and science and English.

We recently read "The Rights to the Streets of Memphis" by Richard Wright, and a heated discussion followed. Students talked about respect and fear, and the relationship of money to love; they talked about experiences with gangs; they talked about learning to survive. The bell rang, and the class stayed. And stayed. Finally, they filed out, still discussing, still arguing, and last out was Bryan. He bent his six-foot-six self down, hugged me, and said, "That class was the best!"

Our school community has had other concerns this year, too. Georgetown School District has instituted standardized testing of all students in core subject areas twice during each course (four times annually). The Instructional Information System (IIS) requires that students be tested on the mastery of specific objectives determined by the company from which this system was purchased. We've made many changes to the IIS system to meet the needs of our students and teachers, but there is con-

tinuing controversy over the tests' effectiveness, the use of the tests as a tool for evaluation, the advisability of standardized testing as an educational practice, and the ethics of such practices. Many members of the Georgetown High School community feel torn between complying with district policy and expressing their concerns for the well-being of the students.

At four-thirty on a Monday afternoon not long ago, teachers gathered in the Media Center to discuss the IIS materials. "I need to know how much time to spend on this, making tests, and grading, and the things you need to know to get the job done. Does it take you an hour or two, or more?" The discussion meandered around to all the points of frustration: the hours of computer use, the breakdown of the copy machine, the lack of paper, the class time spent covering material which was two or more grade levels beyond the students.

"I have to teach British Lit just to get them through this—and they're freshmen."

"I don't even have any questions. I have to write them. How can I record mastery?"

"When are we going to get some help? We can't keep doing this to the kids!"

Several Mondays later, the word came. This would be a trial year, a year to adjust, to edit, to revise, to regroup. The teachers, the students, and the administration breathed a collective sigh of relief.

Though we recognize the challenges facing us, we are finding that working out solutions as a community helps to ensure the greatest good for all. The concerns of the individual have become the concern of the community. Without the change and the conflict that has faced us, it is possible that we would not have forged such a bond. ☘

When Class Work Meets Community Work

by Robin Pete
Ganado High School
Ganado, AZ

“**W**hat effect does the environment have on a local community?” This was the guiding question from a unit of study that led my Native American students on a search to rediscover unique aspects of their culture such as silversmithing and weaving. It also led to *new* discoveries, including observations about traditional religion, politics, unemployment, and health problems in this coral-colored land of mesas, sagebrush, and piñon pine.

Ganado High School, where I teach, is located in Arizona on the Navajo Reservation about 60 miles west of Gallup, New Mexico. Approximately 98 percent of our 700 students in grades 9-12 are Navajo, and integration of traditional Navajo culture is a very important part of the school's curriculum.

In keeping with the school's philosophy of integrating Native American culture, students in my sophomore language arts class spent nine weeks investigating the environment through both traditional academic activities and community-based projects. In following the guidelines of the school and state curriculum, for example, the students studied and wrote poetry, summarized articles, wrote reports and persuasive essays, using their own community as the main resource for topics.

In addition, with a small grant from Write to Change, a non-profit supporter of community service school projects, I asked students to participate in a project in which they could learn about their environment and give back what they learned to their community. Students were required to develop two separate presentations, including a visual, to present to an audience outside of our classroom.

In these projects, students found themselves teaching elementary students about the uses of corn in Navajo culture, and about traditional wedding ceremonies. At the intermediate school level, gang prevention and silversmithing were popular topics. At the middle school, such topics as teen pregnancy prevention and the historical and geological wonders of Canyon De Chelly, a place revered in Navajo history, were presented by my students.

Moved by the isolation of the elderly at the nursing home, the two students returned to school in tears. These girls then presented a plea to our entire class: “Let's do something for them!” I, too, was moved by the motivation of the class to participate in such a caring, community-minded activity.

Christmas break was soon to arrive, so we planned quickly. Students purchased toiletry items, stuffed bears, and brought “goodies” along to celebrate. I scheduled a bus to take us



Robin Pete (left) and Nancy Jennings of Arizona BLRTN

One of the most unusual projects was the design of an informative brochure on the “SafeRide” program in our area. “SafeRide” is a mobile service provided by the state in order to help persons with no transportation get to medical appointments.

Clarissa Williams and Bahe Nez researched the SafeRide program, created the brochure, and presented their information to the staff of our local nursing home, who were unaware of this service. During their presentation, the girls were able to spend time with the elderly at the home.

to the home, located down a long dirt road. Because a light snowfall had made the road slick, we had to take a four-wheel-drive bus.

At the nursing home, my 25 sophomores sang traditional powwow songs with the members of the home, played string games and cards, and listened to the many stories these elders told. Remarkably, some students even found relatives among the residents and declared that they would be sure to bring their families back to visit.

Students talked and wrote about this experience for many weeks. As their teacher, I often marveled at how these projects in general affected their performance in and out of my classroom. For the first time ever, I had 100 percent participation from students. Previously, when I had assigned presentations to the class, students lacked enthusiasm and motivation. "Giving a speech" took on new meaning because the students had chosen whom they would speak to and what they would talk about.

Students took great care in creating the visual elements of their presentations because they had real audiences and they cared about the opinions of this outside community (one group even started over from scratch as they neared completion because they felt they could do a better job—I wasn't used to this careful attitude toward class work, but then this was more than class work; it was community work).

And finally, students were elated when they returned from their presentations. The community audience was interested in what they had to say. The feedback to the presenters boosted their self-esteem and motivated them to continue learning. Most of the students openly reflected on what they could have done to improve their presentations.

What I learned while my students were involved in these projects surprised me. Not only does ownership in community projects elevate student performance, but the knowledge they gain about their communities is powerful. 🐣

Bread Loaf Courses—Summer, 1997

At Bread Loaf in Vermont

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)

Writing about Teaching and Learning: A Seminar (Dixie Goswami, w/ Jacqueline Royster)
Poetry Writing (Paul Muldoon)
Fiction Writing (David Huddle)
Playwriting (Dare Clubb)
Voices of Self and Others: Tensions in Writing and Teaching (Courtney Cazden)
The Sense of Language: Structure, Function, and Display (Shirley Brice Heath)
Teaching As Action Research (JoBeth Allen)
Literacy Education for Social Justice (JoBeth Allen)
Writing, Discourse and Culture (John Hardcastle)
Writing in the Light of Imaginative Texts (John Hardcastle)

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)

Chaucer (John Fyler)
Shakespeare, Comedy, and Desire (Emily Bartels)
Shakespeare's Tragedies (Robert Pack)

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)

On Looking: Victorian Literature and the Visual Imagination (Jennifer Green-Lewis)
Modernist Literature in England and Ireland (Victor Luftig)
Fiction of Empire and the Breakup of Empire (Marjory Sabin)
Victorian Heroines and Other Exceptional Women (Margaret Homans)
Romantic Lyric and the Styles of Moral Thought (William Jewett)
Lyric Traditions in Early Modern England (Kevin Dunn)

Group IV (American Literature)

Contemporary American Short Story (David Huddle)
Modern American Poetry (Robert Stepto)
Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Faulkner (Stephen Donadio)
American Women's Fictions (Harriet Chessman)
American Civilization and Its Discontents (Bryan Wolf)
Modern American Drama (Oskar Eustis)
Native American Literature (Lucy Maddox)

Group V (World Literature)

Studies in European Fiction (Stephen Donadio)
Literature, Culture, and the Ethics of Reading (Jennifer Green-Lewis)
Classical Backgrounds to English Literature: Vergil and Ovid (John Fyler)
The Literature of Double Heritages (Shirley Brice Heath)

Group VI (Theater Arts)

Acting Workshop (Carol MacVey)
Directing Workshop (Alan MacVey)
Dramaturgy: Analysis and Collaboration (Morgan Jenness and Oskar Eustis)

At Lincoln College, Oxford

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)

Thinking about Narrative (Michael Armstrong)

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)

Shakespeare in His Time (Dennis Kay)
Shakespeare's History Plays (John Wilders)
Seventeenth-Century Poetry (John Wilders)
The Major Poems of Geoffrey Chaucer (John Fleming)
Shakespeare: On the Page and On the Stage (Robert Smallwood and Nigel Wood)
Drama before Shakespeare (Douglas Gray)
Reading Elizabethan Culture (Dennis Kay)

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)

Wordsworth and Coleridge (Stephen Gill)
Nineteenth-Century Fiction and the Meaning of Space (Isobel Armstrong)
James Joyce (Jeri Johnson)
Romanticism and Modernism in British Poetry, 1910-1965 (Seamus Perry)
Virginia Woolf (Jeri Johnson)

Group V (World Literature)

Colonial and Postcolonial Fiction (Robert Young)

In New Mexico

Group I (Writing and the Teaching of Writing)

Poetry Writing (Carol Oles; 2 sections)
Cultures of the American Southwest (John Warnock)
Rewriting a Life: Teaching Revision As a Life Skill (Tilly Warnock)

Group II (English Literature through the Seventeenth Century)

Contemporary Critical Issues in Shakespeare (Bruce Smith)
Teaching, Reading (and Enjoying) Poetry (Bruce Smith)

Group III (English Literature since the Seventeenth Century)

Narrative and Identity (Kate Flint)
Fiction into Film (Kate Flint)

Group IV (American Literature)

Literature and Culture of African-American Migration (Valerie Smith)
Rereading Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Valerie Smith)
American Literature: Rethinking Community (Hertha Wong)
Native American Literatures: Writing and the Natural World (Hertha Wong)

(no Group V courses in New Mexico)

For information about the Bread Loaf School of English, please write to Ms. Elaine Hall, Administrative Associate, Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury College, Middlebury VT 05753-6131.

BLRTN State Meetings

Alaska

Members of the Alaska BLRTN continue to be active collaborators. Most of them were on-line by the end of September. During Labor Day weekend, BLRTN staff members Dixie Goswami, Jim Maddox, Jackie Royster and Rocky Gooch visited schools in several rural Alaska locations, including Ketchikan, Juneau, Wrangell, Haines, the Mat-Su Valley, Shishmaref, and Kwethluk. Eighteen members of the Alaska BLRTN joined in an audio-conference on October 20th to discuss current projects. Alaska's annual student newsletter, *What's Happening in Alaska*, edited by Sandra Porter, promises to be rich with student writing this year. The Alaska Reading Circle, an on-line discussion group, has discussed two Alaskan novels. A middle and high school project, called the Alaska Battle of the Books, is an on-line discussion of controversial books in the curriculum. The first-ever BreadNet elementary literature exchange centered around Juneau author Jean Roger's book *The Secret Moose*. Other projects underway by Alaskan teachers address the following topics: persuasive writing, descriptive writing, writing in the natural world, poetry analysis, and cultural study.

Arizona

The electricity generated by 17 Arizona BLRTN Fellows at the state meeting held September 21, 1996, at Vicki Hunt's home in Phoenix could have generated power to light homes in the entire Southwest. Veteran Fellows met new members of BLRTN. Bread Loaf Director Jim Maddox joined the meeting after touring schools in southern Arizona. A main topic of the evening was the new English standards being imposed on Arizona teachers. Risa Udall is on the state committee to examine standards and is keeping Arizona BLRTN informed on this issue. Fellows have been involved in collaborative work on a range of topics on BreadNet: Chaucer, Shakespeare in Performance, Anne Frank, *Macbeth*, *Beowulf*, *Animal Farm*, linguistics. Other student-centered topics include dress code, teen parenting, and cross-age tutoring. Nancy Jennings is training teachers in the use of Internet, publishing teacher stories through the Northern Arizona Writing Project, and

coordinating a teacher research project funded by the Spencer Foundation at Ganado Intermediate School. After the meeting, Vicki Hunt and Erika Brett entertained the group with slides from their summer of study in Oxford.

Mississippi

On October 25, 1996, members of the Mississippi BLRTN met in Jackson at the Mississippi Council of Teachers of English conference to conduct a two-hour presentation of their telecommunications projects. The presentation offered an on-line tour of BreadNet, and participants enjoyed viewing the contents of the network and a live telecomputer "chat" with BLRTN editor Chris Benson. The presentation provided an overview of past and present BLRTN projects. Participants discussed the impact that on-line exchanges have on students, and Betty Lou Pigg, of the Office of Technology in the Mississippi State Department of Education, endorsed the work of the Mississippi BLRTN as she outlined the state's school technology plan. After the MCTE presentation, MSBLRTN members planned a presentation for the Mississippi Education Computing Association conference to be held in January in Biloxi. Students will attend and participate in this conference. The meeting concluded with an update on the production of *Southern Slices*, the annual newsletter of the Mississippi BLRTN, which will be published in the spring semester.

New Mexico

The fall meeting of the New Mexico BLRTN on September 21, 1996, hosted by Laguna Middle School (LMS), was the biggest state meeting ever held, with over 35 members and associates attending. Some guests at the meeting included principals Susan Stropko, Ganado Intermediate; Nick Cheromiah, LMS; and Charlotte James, Los Alamos Middle School, Grants, NM. Jim Maddox announced a school networking project, funded by the Annenberg Rural Challenge, which will include LMS (NM), Pojoaque High (NM), Ganado Primary (AZ), and Schoenbar Middle and Ketchikan High (AK). Several others had short announcements for the

group. The large group in attendance broke for small group discussion on the following topics: Writing for Publication, Writing for the Community, BLRTN: the Next Generation, and Increasing BLRTN Participation in Schools. Later, the entire group reconvened to share discussion highlights. The meeting provided us with a great opportunity to meet each other, reconnect following our summer experiences, share ideas and plans, and establish some direction for our group's efforts in the coming months and years.

South Carolina

On October 5, 1996, the South Carolina BLRTN met at the South Carolina Arts Commission Building in Columbia, SC, for their fall meeting. Attendance was good. Michael Atkins reported on his telecommunications poetry writing exchange with six students across the country. Ginny DuBose, Janet Atkins, and Priscilla Kelley, each teaching a telecommunications class, presented guidelines for integrating computer technology and writing. Janet Atkins, a member of the state department committee to revise the SC Exit Exam, recruited SCBLRTN to help design the new test. Plans were made to hold the spring meeting of SCBLRTN in April 19, 1997, at Penn Center, the oldest normal school for African Americans in America. South Carolina Educational Television will tape part of the spring meeting for its documentary special on the Bread Loaf Rural Teacher Network.

Vermont

Vermont BLRTN held two meetings during the fall of 1996 to plan to publish a journal of their students' nature writing, an outgrowth from last year's project "Wild Places." Vermont BLRTN is continuing another project, started last year: "Why Read Lit?" in which students survey each other, their parents, and community members, gathering data on who is reading and what they are reading. Students will present this data in town reports, to school boards, and other interested community members. At the meetings, the Vermont BLRTN continued to plan their presentation for the spring Council of Teachers of English Conference on the integration of literature and computer technology in the classroom.

Announcements

Kurt Broderson and colleague Linda Genier were awarded an Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union Executive Board Award. The award comes with a \$500 grant for classroom use.

Dorothy Brooks received a \$900 grant from the Indian Education Office in Shiprock, NM, to design creative writing workshops for her elementary students. The grant will support collaboration by fellow Bread Loafers Vicki Holmsten, Tim Dorsey, and Theresa Melton.

At NCTE in Chicago in November, **Mary Burnham** presented "Wild Places: Vermont Students Connect to Each Other through Readings and Writings about Their Natural Environment." Others on the panel included **Sally Zitzmann** from Peoples Academy, **Mary Ann Cadwallader** from Mill River High School, **Carol Zuccaro** from St. Johnsbury Academy and **Bill Rich** from Colchester High School.

At the New England Association of Teachers of English Fall Conference, **Kate Carroll** presented "Literature through Telecommunications," outlining goals and methods of using telecommunication conferences with a specific focus on teaching literature. The presentation was based on an independent study course offered last year at Middlebury Union High School.

Scott Christian was named Outstanding Educator for South Central Alaska by the local chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. He also received the David Jaynes Memorial Award for Outstanding Teacher of Writing by the Alaska State Writing Consortium. Scott presented a workshop on Teaching Writing through Telecommunications to the summer institute of the National Foundation for Improvement in Education. His book *Exchanging Lives: The Emergence of a New Literacy* will be published by NCTE in spring of 1997.

Anne Gardner will contribute to a book provisionally titled *The C. S. Lewis Companion*, to be published in 1998 by HarperCollins, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Lewis' birth.

Jane Harvey completed a master's degree in Education at the University of Connecticut.

Vicki Hunt presented "Crossing Borders: Using Telecommunications to Connect Classrooms in the Teaching of Multicultural Literature" at the NCTE Southwest Regional Meeting. Vicki published "Long Distance Teachers Don't Need to Choose Loneliness" in *A Work of ARTE*, the newsletter of the Assembly of Rural Teachers of English; and "Finding the Horizon: An Oxford Memoir" in *AETA Connections* (a publication of the Arizona English Teachers Association). Vicki was elected AETA Secretary for 1996-98.

Jill Loveless was recently appointed Eastern Arizona Regional Director of the Arizona English Teachers Association.

Philip Sittnick and Lauren Sittnick conducted a workshop, "Peer Telecommunications Projects For Reluctant Readers and Writers," at the New Mexico Classroom Teachers of English Conference on October 5 in Albuquerque.

Many Bread Loafers are involved in the Alaska Council of Teachers of English (ACTE). **Claudia Wallingford** is co-president; **Prudence Plunkett** is recording secretary. **Linda Volkman** is corresponding secretary. **Karen Mitchell** is a board member. **Sandra Porter** is newsletter editor. Prudence will serve as chairperson for the upcoming ACTE state conference in February; the conference features BLRTN consultants **Andrea Lunsford** and **Jackie Royster** as speakers.

The Nearness of You (1996), a book about students and teachers using telecommunications in the curriculum, contains chapters by several Fellows or associates of the BLRTN: **Bette Ford, Linda Hardin, Scott Christian, Doug Wood, and Vicki Hunt**. The book is available through Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003-3306.

DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellows

The following rural teachers from six target states have been awarded DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Fellowships and have attended the Bread Loaf School of English. The Fellows and their associates are currently working on collaborative projects to improve students' experiences with literature and writing.

Alaska

Fellow	School	School Address
Robert J. Buck	Wrangell High School	P.O. Box 651, Wrangell AK 99929
Patricia Carlson	Lathrop High School	901 Airport Way, Fairbanks AK 99701
Scott Christian	(formerly of) Nikiski High School	Pouch 10,000, Nikiski AK 99635
JoAnn Ross Cunningham	Haines High School	P.O. Box 1289, Haines AK 99827
Hugh C. Dymont	Paul T. Albert Memorial School	P.O. Box 49, Tununak AK 99681
Pauline Evon	Kwethluk Community School	Kwethluk AK 99621
Allison Holsten	Palmer High School	1170 W. Arctic, Palmer AK 99645

(continued on next page)

Alaska (continued)**Fellow**

M. Heidi Imhof
 Danielle S. Lachance
 Sandra A. McCulloch
 Rod Mehrtens
 Karen Mitchell
 John Morse
 Natasha J. O'Brien
 Mary Olsen
 Prudence Plunkett
 Sandra Porter
 Rosie Roppel
 Sheri Skelton
 Janet A. Tracy
 Patricia A. Truman
 Kathleen Trump
 Linda Volkman
 Claudia Wallingford

School

Ella B. Vernetti School
 Hydaburg City Schools
 Chief Paul Memorial School
 (formerly of) Dillingham High School
 Harborview Elementary School
 (formerly of) Brevig Mission School
 Ketchikan High School
 Sand Point High School
 Houston Junior/Senior High School
 Susitna Valley Junior/Senior High School
 Schoenbar Middle School
 Shishmaref School
 Rampart School
 Palmer Junior Middle School
 Susitna Valley Junior/Senior High School
 Colony Middle School
 (formerly of) Gruening Middle School

School Address

P.O. Box 70, Kayukuk AK 99754
 P.O. Box 109, Hydaburg AK 99922
 P.O. Box 19, Kipnuk AK 99614
 P.O. Box 170, Dillingham AK 99576
 10014 Crazy Horse, Juneau AK 99801
 Brevig Mission AK 99785
 2610 Fourth Ave., Ketchikan AK 99901
 P.O. Box 269, Sand Point AK 99661
 P.O. Box 521060, Big Lake AK 99652
 P.O. Box 807, Talkeetna AK 99676
 217 Schoenbar Rd., Ketchikan AK 99901
 General Delivery, Shishmaref AK 99772
 Rampart, AK 99767
 1159 S. Chugach, Palmer AK 99645
 P.O. Box 807, Talkeetna AK 99676
 HCO 1 Box 6064, Palmer AK 99645
 9601 Lee Street, Eagle River AK 99577

Arizona**Fellow**

Priscilla Aydelott
 Timothy Aydelott
 Sylvia Barlow
 Sabra Beck
 Celia Concannon
 Jason A. Crossett
 Chad Graff
 Amethyst Hinton
 Vicki V. Hunt
 Beverly Jacobs
 Nancy Jennings
 Mary Juzwik
 Cecelia Lewis
 Jill Loveless
 Jody K. McNelis
 Kevin T. McNulty
 Janet Olson
 Robin Pete
 Sylvia Saenz
 Stephen Schadler
 Jim Schmitz
 Karen Snow
 Nan Talahongva
 Edward Tompkins
 Risa Udall
 John Zembiec

School

Monument Valley High School
 Monument Valley High School
 Chinle Jr. High School
 Marana High School
 Nogales High School
 (formerly of) Douglas High School
 (formerly of) Monument Valley High School
 Douglas High School
 Peoria High School
 Marana High School
 Ganado Intermediate School
 (formerly of) Ganado Middle School
 Buena High School
 Globe Junior High School
 Academy at Santa Cruz Valley Union High School
 Calabasas Middle School
 Chinle Elementary School
 Ganado High School
 Sierra Vista Middle School
 Rio Rico High School
 Hopi Junior/Senior High School
 Ganado Primary School
 Hopi Junior/Senior High School
 Lake Havasu High School
 St. Johns High School
 (formerly of) Chinle Junior High School

School Address

P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
 P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
 P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503
 12000 Emigh Rd., Marana AZ 85653
 1905 Apache Blvd., Nogales AZ 85621
 1500 15th St., Douglas AZ 85607
 P.O. Box 337, Kayenta AZ 86033
 1500 15th St., Douglas AZ 85607
 11200 N. 83rd Ave., Peoria AZ 85345
 12000 Emigh Rd., Marana AZ 85653
 P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
 P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
 3555 Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista AZ 85635
 501 E. Ash St., Globe AZ 85501
 9th and Main St., Eloy AZ 85231
 1220 Lito Galindo, Rio Rico AZ 85648
 P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503
 P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
 3535 E. Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista AZ 85635
 1220 Lito Galindo, Rio Rico, AZ 85648
 P.O. Box 337, Keams Canyon AZ 86034
 P.O. Box 1757, Ganado AZ 86505
 P.O. Box 337, Keams Canyon AZ 86034
 2675 Palo Verde Blvd., Lake Havasu City AZ 86403
 P.O. Box 429, St. Johns AZ 85936
 P.O. Box 587, Chinle AZ 86503

Mississippi**Fellow**

Mark B. Busbee
 William J. Clarke
 Leslie Fortier
 Carolyn Hardy
 Myra Harris
 William E. Kirby
 Sharon Ladner
 Renee Moore
 Terri Noonkester
 Patricia Parrish
 Patsy Pipkin
 Peggy Turner
 Penny Wallin

School

Ocean Springs High School
 Shivers Junior High School
 Stringer High School
 R. H. Watkins High School
 Pascagoula High School
 Hawkins Junior High School
 Pascagoula High School
 East Side High School
 Hawkins Junior High School
 Sumrall Attendance Center
 Oxford Junior High School
 Saltillo High School
 Jones Junior High School

School Address

406 Holcomb Blvd., Ocean Springs, MS 39564
 P.O. Box 607, Aberdeen MS 39730
 P.O. Box 68, Stringer MS 39481
 1100 W. 12th St., Laurel MS 39440
 2903 Pascagoula St., Pascagoula MS 39567
 523 Forrest St., Hattiesburg MS 39401
 2903 Pascagoula St., Pascagoula MS 39567
 601 Wiggins Ave., Cleveland MS 38732
 523 Forrest St., Hattiesburg MS 39401
 P.O. Box 187, Sumrall MS 39482
 409 Washington Ave., Oxford MS 38655
 Box 460, Saltillo, MS 38866
 1125 N. 5th Ave., Laurel MS 39440

New Mexico**Fellow**

Wendy Beserra
 Erika Brett
 Dorothy I. Brooks

School

Deming Public Schools
 Hatch Middle School
 Ojo Amarillo Elementary School

School Address

501 W. Florida, Deming, NM 88030
 P.O. Box 790, Hatch NM 87937
 P.O. Box 768, Fruitland NM 87416

Arlene Duran
Ann Eilert
Emily Graeser
Annette Hardin
Susan Jesinsky
John Kelly
Roseanne Lara
Juanita Lavadie
Carlotta Martza
Theresa Melton
Susan Miera
Gary Montañó
Jane V. Pope
Virginia Rawlojohn
Stan Renfro
Dianna Saiz
Norma Sheff
Philip Sittnick
Lauren Thomas Sittnick
Bruce R. Smith
Marilyn Trujillo
Michelle Wyman-Warren

Bernalillo High School
Los Alamos High School
Twin Buttes High School
Truth or Consequences Middle School
Santa Teresa Middle School
Shiprock High School
Gadsden Middle School
Taos Day School
Native American Preparatory School
Tse'Bit'ai Middle School
Pojoaque High School
Carlsbad High School
Lovington High School
Estancia High School
Wingate High School
Gadsden Middle School
Hatch Elementary School
Laguna Middle School
Los Alamos Middle School
Crownpoint Junior/Senior High School
Taos Day School
Mountainair High School

P.O. Box 640, Bernalillo NM 87004
1300 Diamond Dr., Los Alamos NM 87544
P.O. Box 680, Zuni NM 87327
P.O. Box 952, Truth or Consequences NM 87901
P.O. Box 778, Santa Teresa NM 88008
P.O. Box 6003, Shiprock NM 87420
Rt. 1, Box 196, Anthony NM 88021
P.O. Drawer X, Taos NM 87571
P.O. Box 160, Rowe NM 87562
P.O. Box 1873, Shiprock NM 87420
Pojoaque Station, Santa Fe NM 87501
408 N. Canyon, Carlsbad NM 88220
701 W. Avenue K, Lovington NM 88260
P.O. Box 68, Estancia NM 87016
B.I.A., P.O. Box 2, Fort Wingate NM 87316
Rt. 1, Box 196, Anthony NM 88021
Hatch NM 87937
P.O. Box 268, Laguna NM 87026
111 Mt. Taylor and Elm Drive, Grants, NM 87020
P.O. Box 700, Crownpoint NM 87313
P.O. Drawer X, Taos NM 87571
P.O. Box 456, Mountainair NM 87036

South Carolina

Fellow

Janet Atkins
Michael Atkins
Polly E. Brown
Victoria Chance
Raymond Cook
Ginny DuBose
Monica M. Eaddy
Barbara Everson
Doris Ezell
Anne Gardner
Joyce Summerlin Glunt
Linda Hardin
Tracy Hathaway
Priscilla E. Kelley
Nancy Lockhart
Robin McConnell
Carolyn Pierce
Betty Slesinger
Elizabeth V. Wright

School

Wade Hampton High School
North District Middle School
Belton-Honea Path High School
Pickens High School
Socastee High School
Waccamaw High School
Mayo High School for Math, Science and Technology
Belton-Honea Path High School
Chester Middle School
Georgetown High School
(formerly of) Hunter-Kinard-Tyler High School
Beck Academy of Languages
Robert Smalls Middle School
Pelion High School
Homebound Tutor, Colleton School District
Calhoun Falls High School
Cheraw High School
Irmo Middle School
Ronald E. McNair Junior High School

School Address

P.O. Box 338, Hampton SC 29924
P.O. Box 368, Varnville SC 29944
11000 Belton Hwy., Honea Path SC 29654
111 Blue Flame Dr., Pickens SC 29671
4900 Socastee Blvd., Myrtle Beach SC 29575
2688 River Rd., Pawleys Island SC 29585
405 Chesnut St., Darlington SC 29532
11000 Belton Hwy., Honea Path SC 29654
112 Caldwell St., Chester SC 29706
P.O. Box 1778, Georgetown SC 29442
Box 158, Norway SC 29113
302 McAlister Rd., Greenville SC 29607
43 Alston Rd., Beaufort SC 29902
P.O. Box 68, Pelion SC 29123
P.O. Box 290, Walterboro SC 29542
Edgefield St., Calhoun Falls SC 29628
649 Chesterfield Hwy., Cheraw SC 29520
6051 Wescott Rd., Columbia SC 29212
Carver Street, Lake City SC 29560

Vermont

Fellow

Kurt Broderson
Mary Burnham
Mary Ann Cadwallader
Katharine Carroll
Moirá Donovan
Jane Harvey
Margaret Lima
Suzane Locarno
Judith Morrison
Bill Rich
Ellen Temple
Vicki L. Wright
Carol Zuccaro

School

Castleton Village School
Waits River Valley School
Mill River Union High School
Middlebury Union High School
Peoples Academy
Brattleboro Union High School
Canaan Memorial High School
Barre Town Elementary School
Hinesburg Elementary/Middle School
Colchester High School
Came!'s Hump Middle School
Mt. Abraham Union High School
St. Johnsbury Academy

School Address

P.O. Box 68, Castleton VT 05735
Rt. 25, East Corinth VT 05040
Middle Road, North Clarendon VT 05773
Charles Ave., Middlebury VT 05753
Morrisville VT 05661
50 Fairground Rd., Brattleboro VT 05301
1 School St., Canaan VT 05903
70 Websterville Rd., Barre VT 05641
Hinesburg VT 05461
Laker Lane, Colchester Vermont 05446
Brown Trace Rd., Richmond VT 05477
7 Airport Dr., Bristol VT 05753
Main Street, St. Johnsbury VT 05819



New and returning members of BLRTN on the porch of the Inn at Bread Loaf, Vermont: (front row) Victoria Chance, Kevin McNulty, Kathy Trump, Bruce Smith, Janet Tracy, Ceci Lewis, Doug Wood, Rob Buck, Brad Busbee, Vicki Wright, Bill Clarke, Monica Eaddy, Hugh Dymont, JoAnn Ross Cunningham, Marilyn Trujillo; (back row) Michelle Wyman-Warren, Dorothy Brooks, Sandy McCulloch, Anne Gardner, Sylvia Saenz, Patricia Parrish, Mary Burnham, Renee Moore, Natasha O'Brien, Pat Truman, Leslie Fortier, Heidi Imhof, Jody McNelis, Suzane Locarno, Juanita Lavadie, Susan Jesinsky.

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Bread Loaf School of English
Middlebury College
Middlebury, Vermont
05753-6115

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