Greetings Friends,

In 2007-2008 the Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN) committed itself even more deeply to activist pedagogies, to educational methods that invite students to change their lives and their worlds. These kinds of methods are based on authentic collaborations between students and teachers. Network members believe that we must continue to invite students to join us in our work, bearing in mind Dixie Goswami’s oft-quoted statement: “Students are the most underused resource in education.”

In regard to activism, BLTN and Andover Bread Loaf (ABL) have been strongly influenced by our collaboration with Students At the Center, New Orleans (SAC). SAC is a powerful school-based organization, directed by public school teachers and activists, Jim Randels and Kalamu ya Salaam, that operates in several New Orleans public schools. Kalamu is also, of course, the renown poet, playwright and intellectual from New Orleans. Along with SAC, we been inspired by the New Orleans public school teachers and students we have worked with over the past few years.

SAC and the United Teachers of New Orleans have struggled to improve the city’s schools, before and after Katrina. ABL and BLTN have proudly joined them in their efforts in addition to bringing New Orleans teachers to the ABL in Andover every summer, over the past two years 10 different ABL and BLTN staff members have gone down to work in the schools and to begin to build a network in the city. Also for the past two years in June, ABL staff have participated in a 3 week professional development program for teachers sponsored by the New Orleans Public Schools, the United Teachers of New Orleans, and SAC. One final note, Ashley Jones, ABL 2007

New Orleans Teachers Inspire ABL

New Orleans teachers strike a pose in front of the Bread Loaf Inn during their visit to the Bread Loaf School of English, Middlebury, Vermont. Left to right: Joanna Welch, Jennifer Heard, DaVen Lewis, Deborah Johnson, Ashley Burton and Karen Trass Teamer.

Ashley Burton, from Students At the Center, New Orleans, preparing a savory dish for the Crescent City Party. Ashley will be attending the Bread Loaf School of English in the summer of 2008.

Because of Katrina

Because of Katrina the house I grew up in no longer exists. Gone is the plan to show my future grandchildren the place where I once lived and grew up as child. All I have left are the memories of my past neighborhood, its legacy and history. This realization makes me kind of sad. But the loss of that house does not compare to the sadness I feel about the realization that many of the people who once lived in that house and in the neighborhood are now gone. A treasured past and future washed away by the tumultuous floodwaters of the storm. Yet because of Katrina my reason for living and enjoying life more has a greater meaning. It has been like waking up to a brand new day, a new dawning, and just being grateful for the wonderful treasures of life.

– Shirley N. Reyes, teacher, New Orleans Public Schools

continued on p.2

more on p.3
Oakland ABL alumnae Ji Lee and Logan Manning organized and ran the first Oakland-Andover Bread Loaf Summer Writing Conference in June 2007 for high school students from the Oakland public schools. Twenty students attended the week long workshop. At the end of the conference, the students produced a literary magazine, “Slices of Expression.”

I Have the Power to Move Mountains

I have the power to move mountains
I said I have the power to move mountains

I work sixteen hours a day
In the sun with no breaks
At night the pale face man comes in and
say he wants to play
I lie down and do as masta’ say

I have the power to move mountains
I said I have the power to move mountains

Masta’ told me you’re getting too big
I must hide you away
I thought to myself
You didn’t say that when you climbed on
top of me
You made this life inside of me
You’re the boss
I’m just carrying your belongings
That’s what I been telling myself every day

By Tatavia Butler, Oakland, CA
NEW ORLEANS

Judge and Jury
We are the mothers and fathers,
Sons and daughters of the ghetto,
Our courtyards filled with beautiful,
bright, black babies.

Our hallways littered with spray-painted
remembrances:
Rest in peace Quintrell,
rest in peace Tyrone,
Rest in peace Pooney,
rest in peace Derionne.
We became the victims of the devastation.

We rarely thought about man-made
structures built for Category 3,
Levees made of concrete, dirt,
and mud that didn't last.

Katrina, Katrina, Katrina,
We know you've been falsely
accused and convicted;
We watched you as you came and went,
As God's awe-inspiring rainbow appeared.

We, the mothers and fathers, sons and
daugthers are the true judges and jury;
We all know and live the truth:

New Orleans Levee Board, Louisiana Levee
inspectors,
United States Corps of Army
Engineers...YOU FAILED!
And this on-going negligence is criminal.

We know you are the killers of thousands,
We know you are the kidnappers of our
future in New Orleans,
We know you are the rapists of
our hopes for improvement
You are the thieves of family relationships
and of donations.
Leeches, sucking the life from
too many to count—
You steal from the needy.
You are evil.

We are the mothers and fathers, sons and
daugthers of the ghetto,
WE ARE SURVIVORS!

By Joanna K. Welch, teacher,
New Orleans, LA

A Portrait of Healing
One day I saw a portrait of pain
and I asked the question
what does the portrait of healing look like?
what does it feel like?

it's a movement, a stirring,
an uncontrollable cry
it's a transforming process asking the
question why

it's a holler from your belly as the spirit and
power does the work
like a river of living waters flowing through
your soul
washing away the hurt

a refreshing cleansing on a hot summer day
a time when all your troubles just roll away

like when you close your eyes
turn your face to the wind
and inhale, exhale, slowly, deeply,
completely
relax—release—relate

a picture or purging, a regurgitation
a fight to face our fears and face the nation
a time to give up the anger and pain and
begin again
healing is like when a single leaf is snatched
from a branch
as it flutters in the slow and easy wind
healing flows like the wind when it rolls
across a grassy meadow,
you can't see it, but it moves
everything it touches

sometimes gentle, cool, and refreshing
other times violent, rough, extracting and
snatching
pulling off deep layers of pain like
shingles blown off rooftops in a violent storm

sometimes we give away our pain
other times we hold on to it
and sometimes it holds on to us
but when we've had enough
and we're on the edge
it's time to look at the portrait of healing
and ask ourselves
what does it look like?
What does it feel like?
And wait for the answer to come for you
When it arrives
Open up, let go, and let the healing begin...

By Jennifer Heard, teacher, New Orleans, LA

Crescent City Party in Lowell

This summer 8 New Orleans Public
School teachers joined the ABLWW
summer workshop. As if the way their
charismatic presence enlivened the program
wasn't enough for them, they decided to
throw a real Crescent City party for
everyone associated with the ABL. Gerry
Hayes, a Lawrence teacher, kindly
volunteered his house in Lowell for the
event. The New Orleans teachers imported
most of their ingredients from stores back
home, assuring that the meal they cooked
was the real thing. The party had
everything from Ms. Gloria's gumbo and
strings of multicolored beads to jazz music
and the second line. Needless to say, we
danced late into the night. 😎

Dancing the second line: top: Ji Lee, ABL '06
Oakland teacher during her visit to the ABL.
Bottom: Christine Ha, ABL '07 from
Lawrence, MA.
ABL alumni David Wandera and Patricia Echessa-Kariuki are among the most active teachers in our network. In addition to the work they do in their classrooms, which includes their students collaborating in classroom exchanges with U.S. students over Breadnet, they offer several teacher and student workshops throughout the school year. On May 10, 2008, they organized their annual spring student workshop, bringing students from their two schools together to write for a day.

**The Creative Writing Workshop in Sagana**

By 8 o’clock, the Rusinga bus was firing up ready to whisk us away to Sagana on May 10th, 2008. Quite surprisingly, enthusiasm was reasonably high despite the fact that we were in school early on a Saturday morning. Soon, we were on the way. We met up with Aga Khan Academy students at Oil Libya fueling station on Limuru Road, and we continued our journey after stocking up on unhealthy junk food and fatty pizzas.

We arrived at the picturesque location, with birds chirping and the beauty of nature so evident. Aga Khan had already arrived and after getting acquainted with the resident canines, we were separated into groups. In these groups we were paired up with people we weren’t familiar with and spent a weekend attending a writing workshop! They write all week in school…why should this be fun? Well, the antithesis of this assertion was true on Saturday the 10th May, 2008 as 31 students from Rusinga School (Nairobi) who teamed up with 27 students from the Aga Khan Academy will attest. They went to the picturesque and serene White Water Rafting site at Sagana to take part in a unique outdoor Creative Writing venture. This was the Aga Khan Academy/Rusinga School Annual Bread-Loaf Creative Writing Workshop, an idea that was actualized by Mrs. Patricia Echessa-Kariuki and me pursuant to our wonderful writing experience at the Bread Loaf School of English (VT, U.S.A.) and our exposure to the benefits of the writing exchange process under the auspices of the Bread Loaf/Teacher Network. These students were going to spend the day in these stimulating surroundings writing in response to various stimuli as they enhance their abilities in Creative Writing… (excerpted from David Wandera’s essay: “The 2008 Rusinga School/Aga Khan Academy Annual Creative Writing Workshop.”)

Garbage

I am cold,  
I am clothed only by darkness,  
And I am fed with pain.  
I cry out,  
A representation of another dreary hour going by,  
As I wait patiently for death’s cold hand,  
my only recourse.  
But you don’t know me,  
Because my existence was hidden,  
Not only from you, but from everybody.  
So you don’t see my dress of blood,  
And you don’t know I’m missing,  
You don’t know….  
I am the newborn baby in the garbage.  

*By Njeri Muhia, Year 8*
First Time I Cheated Death

I was in Zimbabwe with my mother; a trip we took to get away from the hustle and bustle that was at home. Our tour guide took us to Victoria Falls; a place so beautiful, a place that was left untouched from man’s hands, a place Mother Nature had crafted magnificently.

We started scaling the area, I could swear to you now that I saw rainbows highlighted in every part of the landscape. I heard only the water hitting the jagged rocks many meters below, I was almost certain I had achieved euphoria.

We reached the top of the waterfall, where the water takes the long journey down to be splashed against the rocks. I looked down the edge, I wanted to behold the wondrous sight, I was feeling an inner peacefulness; my heart was tender and soft…. But then suddenly, the silky stone that my mud-stained sneakers were planted on slipped.

Instantly my heart felt like it was being tugged, as if someone was gripping on to it, like it was the only part of me worth saving. All the serenity I had felt began to drain, and the exquisiteness was fading, as if all I had seen was merely a sketch, and the artist was rubbing it away, leaving the eye to behold a blank canvas…

All this happened in a matter of minutes, and after I was pulled back to safety, reality hit me like a pile of bricks. I began shaking like an addict, and I barely felt relief.

It’s not true that you see your whole life flash before your eyes, or maybe it’s because I’ve barely lived it at all.

By Njeri Muhia, Year 8
Lee Krishnan, from Mumbai, India and the Aga Khan Educational Service, attended the ABLWW this summer. At the end of the program, Lee completed her MA studies, the second AKES teacher to receive an MA degree in English from Bread Loaf. Lee was the first Bread Loaf student to graduate from Andover Bread Loaf. In addition to all the work she does with teachers and students in Mumbai, Lee’s classes are often collaborating with ABL alumni in the U.S. on Breadnet telecommunications projects.

Three ABL alumni from Nairobi, Kenya will be attending the Bread Loaf school of English 2008 on fellowships: Reshma Charania, Patricia Echessa-Kariuki, and David Wandera. Patricia and David will be completing their Master’s degree this summer. David will be entering a PhD program at Columbia University in the fall of 2008. All three of them are active during the school year, organizing writing workshops for students and professional development programs for teachers in Kenya.
As toddlers, many Americans studying English learn “A is for apple;” however, children learning Spanish in Mexico may learn to associate “A” with amor (love) or aguacate (avocado) instead as these words relate more closely to Mexicans’ geographic region and culture. Alphabet primers like the ABC books and blocks we use in school remind us that the language we speak both shapes and reflects group and cultural identities. But what if we could rewrite the alphabet using words and images particular to our age, ethnic background, or community?

Student Photography Alphabets presents the creative work of young people who did precisely that. Fifteen classes in K-12 schools from Lawrence, Andover, and as far away as Mumbai, India have designed, written, and photographed their own alphabets in the forms of ABC books, painted photographs, and DVDs. This exhibition, in bringing together selections from these projects, reveals the extraordinary perceptions, ideas, and visions present in these students’ lives.

Though working independent of one another throughout the year, the classes were each inspired by the exhibition of photographer/educator Wendy Ewald’s American Alphabets series at the Addison Gallery of American Art in the fall of 2006. Between then and this spring, teachers and their classes developed their unique alphabet projects in collaboration with the Addison’s Photography & Writing Program, learning to use photographs along with words in expressive and educational ways.

Student Photography Alphabets features work by classes from the Robert Frost School, Henry K. Oliver School, and Lawrence High School of Lawrence; Doherty Middle School, Pike School, and Andover High School of Andover; and Diamond Jubilee High School of Mumbai, India.

Julie Bernson, Education Director, Addison Gallery of American Art.
How To Be Ecuadorian!!

Wear our flag free in display in your house, your car, even your underwear!
Sing the anthem with no shame, no one is going to hate your game.
Talk with the accent no one else has.
And last but not least
Feel the pain of the soldiers who fought
For the freedom of our homeland.

By Odalsy Tello

What are shadows?

Are they demons from a different world?
Are they the opposite of who you really are?
If you're sweet and kind
Is your shadow mean and nasty?
They may seem like you
But they will never be like you
Oops! The little hand and the big hand
strike midnight
The shadows start to disappear through the shadow world
Seem to be no more, just darkness
reflecting the moon
Through the never ending sky

By Luisa,
Lawrence, MA

My mind in a butterfly

My mind in a butterfly,
it thinks on its own.
My mind is a beautiful meadow where my butterfly runs free.
My butterfly flies to a big poem tree.
My mind is a wistful mind.

By Bryanna,
Lawrence, MA

Army Wives

We wake up in the morning
And kiss them goodbye
Hoping they will make it out alive
We are army wives.

We watch them depart with our hearts
Into scorching heat and war,
Trembling and wanting to see them once more,
We are army wives.

We get no credit for our pain, our heartache, our cries,
Scared and worried,
Another one dies.
We are army wives.

They suffer physically,
We suffer mentally
Knowing they are protecting our country,
No one knows how difficult it is
To be an army wife,
To worry each day and night.
The pain and suffering we endure, and will endure once more.
Unless they are one of us, they won’t understand
That we are army wives.

We wave goodbye,
Knowing the chance of death.
We yearn to hold them tight and stay by their side,
Knowing they may never return
We are army wives.

By Cassie,
Lawrence, MA

An Angel Will Shine

One day a shining bluish angel will
shine through the blue sky
with no possibility of stopping
and shine with the glory of the shining light
one day an angel will shine

by Chris, Lawrence, MA

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How To be a Fly Latina

Always wear your earrings bigger than your head.
Always wear your hair curley, tied back with a shoelace.
Always do your nails at least once a month with crazy designs.
Always call your man baby, papi, or mi amor.

When your man plays you, yell at him in Spanish and speak so loudly he can barely understand you.

Always have bachata, merengue, or reggeaton on when you’re cooking rice and beans.
If you have no booty, I would start eating platanos very soon.
Always wear colors that make you stand out when you walk down the street.
Always wear a bracelet with every saint your mother ever told you about.
Always have a picture of God in every corner of your house.
Always leave an impression wherever you go.

By Femary Rodriguez, Lawrence, MA

Melancholy

I like to sit by the beach to watch people go by
I like to read a book to become preoccupied
I like to write but words are so limited
So, I took my pencil and stabbed at it
I can be irresistibly charming
but I prefer to be honest
I wouldn’t want you to be so modest
The world disappoints me as I keep on living
So I escape to where I can keep on breathing
Take me as I am, for I am trying
To be myself so bad—I’m crying
Round and round the world goes around
Keep me sheltered, keep me sound
In due time the universe unfolds
As it should, so behold…
I’m coming to you, Mother, so take me in
My feet are bare and I can’t stop bleeding
Hold me, Father, for I am cold
The winter air has iced by empty soul
Round and round the world goes around
I will be happy when I reach the ground.

By Phuong Kim Nguyen, Lawrence, MA

Where the stars shine so serious

It really seems so glamorous
If you’re born with blue eyes
They will soon be jealous
Very soon they will start an invasion to steal them
And you will never get them back
The stars shine like a dark pool of silver and gold raindrops
Under the crystal moon
Soon, really really soon, you will meet them again
Again really soon

By Luisa, Lawrence, MA

A Mi Querido Puerto Rico

What can I say about “Mi Isla Encantada” with your beautiful beaches full of white sand and crystal blue water, the tallest palm trees and flowers as beautiful as the eye can see? What can I say of my Isla preciosa, the one that sees me grow every summer and caresses me with gigantic waves of salty water? The isla that adds color to my skin to make me look a little more like mami. And whispers in my ear at night that no matter what happens, I will always be a Puertoriquena de Corazon.

By Naed Morales, Lawrence, MA

Envy

Envy is jealousy’s best friend
It despises all that you do
It hates and dislikes
It shows its jealous pride
It’s unreasonable
Unlikable
And yet it satisfies and unsatisfies
All who it intrudes
It manipulates and emerges
Until it creates
The hideous monster within its victim

By Tanatri Valencia, Lawrence, MA

Ricardo Dobles, Professor of Education at the College of the Holy Cross, gives a workshop for Lawrence students.
On Saturday January 19, 2008, from 8:30-1:30, over 70 students (grades 2-12) and 25 teachers participated in the 19th Inspiring Writing Conference held at Esperanza Academy in Lawrence, MA. While most of the students were from Lawrence, teachers included people from New Orleans, New York City, Washington DC, Middlebury, and Haverhill. The conference, dedicated to BLTN Director, Dixie Goswami, was titled:

**Write to Change Right to**

The premise of the conference was that students and teachers can and should use writing to change their world and themselves. Dixie's mantra, "students are the most underused resource in education" was a defining principle of the day.

The conference featured keynote speaker, Anthony Morales, a well known New York Spoken Word artist who teaches at El Puente school in Brooklyn. After Anthony rocked the house with his performance and workshop, 6 Bread Loaf Teacher Network regulars offered separate workshops for the participants. Sheila Barry, Julie Bernson, Noelia Bare, Roberto German, Jackson Garcia, and Sean McCarthy inspired the students and teachers to create original poetry and prose.

After the 6 workshops, the participants had lunch (pizza and salad from Sal's) and mingled. At 1:30 everyone gathered to hear people share the work they created during the day. The sharing went on for an hour, with many students and teachers stepping up to the mikes to read. The 2nd and 3rd graders were particularly impressive because of the quality and quantity of their writing and the poise with which they delivered it to the audience.

Everyone who attended the conference spoke of how inspiring and joyful the day was. From Anthony's keynote to the sharing at the end, it was an unforgettable experience for all of us who were there.

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**Trip Inward**

Hesitant and bashful at the beginning, I was asked to remove all my outside layers, one by one.

Gradually getting naked, losing my ambitions, trying my hand at writing from my emotions.

Hiding the scars of my failures, trying to highlight my ounce of virtue, trying to hide my pound of flaws, but the voices keep demanding, keep it going, keep it real.

Peeling my layers one at a time, not ashamed, more and more exposed, vulnerable, and yet accepted.

Free fall to my core to grab The ideal that one day stirred me to teach, Holding to whatever honesty is left Before it goes beyond my reach.

*By John Mendoza, teacher, Lawrence, MA*
Professional Development Conferences

2007 Andover Bread Loaf Writing Workshop for Teachers

The 2007 ABLWW for Teachers featured 15 public school teachers from the U.S. and one teacher from the Aga Khan Diamond Jubilee School in Mumbai, India. 8 teachers came from New Orleans, Louisiana; 5 from Lawrence, Massachusetts; and 2 from Oakland, California. The program was similar to past years, with workshops given by teachers, writers, poets, artists, actors, and university professors, all of whom are part of the national Bread Loaf Teacher Network. As in past years, the evaluations from the teachers were excellent, with most saying that the ABLWW experience was transformative, and was “among the best, if not the best, educational experience of our lives.” While teachers across the country dread the end of their summer vacation, all of the ABLWW participants stated that they “cannot wait to get back to our students and use what we learned during the program.”

ABL’s 2007 Lawrence Student Writers Workshop:

Over 65 students, grades 5-12 were enrolled in this summer's LSWW. As in the past, the workshop resembled an artist colony more than just a writing workshop. In addition to writing every day and creating a literary magazine, the students did theater, music, dance, photography, sculpture, collage, painting, drawing, and several other kinds of visual arts. As with the teachers, workshops in each art form were given by teachers, students, writers, poets, artists, actors, and university professors all of whom are part of the national Bread Loaf Teacher Network.

Led by 14 Writing Leaders, high school seniors and college students, the LSWW students culminated their summer with a talent show on Thursday, July 19th and an Exhibition on July 20th, the latter held at the Community Room on Island Street in Lawrence and drawing over 100 people.

The LSWW continues be a flagship program for ABL. As teachers and students from other sites have understood, a student workshop is a key to catalyzing change in a school or school system. In addition to the remarkable benefits it offers individual students, such a workshop allows teachers, administrators, and other adults to witness the talents and potentials of young people. Moreover, the student workshops help teachers develop curriculum and projects that can be brought into the schools in the fall.

Barry Press and Annie Scurria, actors from Living Literature in Providence, Rhode Island, offer ABL teachers a “page to stage” theater workshop.

Cathy McLaurin, from the Essex Art Center, gives an art and writing workshop for the LSWW.

ABL’s 2007 Lawrence Student Writers Workshop:

Tribute

Hloy Peña was a dear friend of ABL. As one of the Executive Directors of the Plan for Social Excellence, Inc, she supported ABL through grants from the PFSE Foundation and through her wisdom and caring for our organization and its members. Hloy’s passing in 2007 was a great blow to us and to the other organizations she nurtured through PFSE. We will always be grateful to her for all she did.
The ABL is a collaboration between the Bread Loaf School of English, a graduate school of Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont and Phillips Academy, an independent, residential high school. A number of ABL alumni have gone on to Bread Loaf to earn their Master’s degree or to continue the work they began at the ABL. Bread Loaf strongly encourages ABL teachers to apply and offers financial assistance for those who need it. We welcome letters and responses to the ABL newsletter. Please address all correspondence to: Andover Bread Loaf, 180 Main Street, Phillips Academy, Andover, MA 01810 978-749-4386, e-mail: lbernieri@andover.edu

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