

BLUE NOTES

BLUE MOUNTAIN CENTER'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • NOVEMBER 2020



What Grew from the Quiet

A shuttered BMC.

IN EARLY SPRING, after a great deal of discussion with other residency leaders, our trustees and advisors, health officials, staff and the local community, we concluded that the best way to ensure the safety of our residents, employees and neighbors was to cancel our programming for the year.

This year was the first in 39 where no dinner table announcements were made - in fact, the dinner table wasn't used at all. Instead, it sat empty and gleaming, as if asking us: without anyone to host or feed or get to know, what will BMC be?

The most immediate answer to this question was to take the opportunity to care for BMC in ways not possible during the hustle and bustle of a normal season. Instead of a full staff, a small, part-time facilities and innkeeping team populated the grounds at a distance, taking advantage of the unexpected emptiness by tending to a backlog of projects. Meanwhile, our program staff worked remotely across time zones, conceptualizing how to best adapt our programming to fit the needs of a pandemic, and doing the legwork to ensure its future.

Given that we were unable to provide the two things - time and space - we are most in the habit of sharing, the year also challenged us to

radically shift our sense of responsibility to those we support. This year's issue of *Blue Notes* will not summarize the 8 conferences and 6 residencies we had originally intended to host. Instead, these pages reflect on what grew despite so many cancellations, constraints and shifts.

For us, that has included the creation of a local mutual aid effort, uplifting the work of our alumni (with particular commitment to supporting those at the frontlines in the fight for Racial Justice), and continued study and consultation around the decolonizing of BMC as an institution and physical space. It has also meant continuing to celebrate the many accomplishments of you, our community, in the world. (You can read more about these in our Resident Notes section, pages 5 - 9).

We never turned on the walk-in fridge this year, never baked cookies to fill up the cookie jars. But we felt connected to each of you, the work you are doing, the ways you are caring for one another and yourselves. As we all do this work of staying safe, creating truth and beauty, and confronting injustice, we are proud to be by your side demanding the world we collectively deserve. Thank you for sharing yourselves with us this year across so much distance.

Uncredited photos in this issue were taken by Azuré Keahi, Ben Strader and/or submitted by the BMC staff collective of past & present.

Feeding The Soil

ANYONE WHO HAS EVER attended one of BMC's work weekends is familiar with the cathartic effort we undertake annually to clear the lawn of a Fall and Winter's worth of leaves. Together we rally, rake for days, then haul the scattered piles via tarp and truck to greater piles in the woods.

This year, perhaps for the first time in BMC history (thanks to the nudging of Fall facilities crew member Christian), we transported much of the nutrient rich leaves from those piles back to the garden. Now the composted mulch, accumulated from so many years of raking, will work to feed our vegetable beds over the winter.

This return of leaves to soil is just one small thing, but a good example of the type of connection we often struggle to steward during the commotion of a typical season. As this year of pause has reminded us to slow down, it has also reminded us that our care for this place must be in reverent collaboration with the land - and oriented far beyond the default duties of maintenance and hosting.

Stepping back to examine our habits has led us to cut back on mowing by 60 percent this year, and to re-map our 14 acres into distinct sections with which we can ask: "What are the divisions and boundaries between what we "maintain" and what we leave "undisturbed"? What implications would shifting our approach have to all that live here? What does the land ask of us? What histories does it hold, and what stories have not been told?"



Field left unmowed.

As we continue to cultivate this relationship, through both small experiments and expansive reorientation, we would love to hear from you. We invite you to reach out to us, and look forward to having you back here for a Work Weekend soon.

Walking the Woods

THIS SUMMER BMC welcomed Kunovenu Haimbodi, an Africana Studies major at Brown University, who interned with us in partnership with Protect the Adirondacks, an organization dedicated to stewardship of the public and private lands of the park.



Kuno at the Lookout trailhead.

Kuno spent his days here traversing the underused trails of the Central Adirondacks. The result of his explorations will be a trail guide for DackMap - a mobile app designed to help new and seasoned hikers explore the Adirondack Park and prevent further overuse in the popular High Peaks region.

Rather than labeling trails as easy, medium, or hard, Kuno opted for an approach that aimed to empower individuals to make decisions for themselves about the outdoors, preparing them for what they will encounter without assumption, and taking into consideration the intersection of antiracist work and the outdoor world. As a gift to the BMC community, Kuno also created a new guide for our beloved Lookout Trail which you can experience for yourself on BMC's blog.

To see Kuno's trail guide and read other stories from 2020, please visit bluemountaincenter.org/blog for archival stories from our Vitamin BMC monthly newsletter. If you don't currently receive our newsletter, please email us at: bmc@bluemountaincenter.org.

BMC is situated on occupied Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe land, and is dedicated to honoring Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe peoples of past, present and future. We are deeply grateful to the Indigenous leaders in our network who continue to share their guidance and expertise with us as we deepen our care for the land.

Learning Local: Blue Mountain Center's Response to COVID-19 in our Community

ADIRONDACKERS ARE KNOWN for their willingness to lend a hand. For Hamilton County residents, the smallest, oldest and most isolated population in New York State, helping one another is essential to the wellbeing of all. This Spring, as BMC cancelled its programming and the region prepared for the impact of the pandemic, we felt called adapt to the needs of the moment and offer our hands to our closest neighbors.

Through conversations with local leaders and longtime community advocates, we launched the *Hamilton Helps* initiative - designed to assist local support systems during a time of increased vulnerability. Not wanting to side-step the infrastructure that had existed here long before us, we hoped to build something Hamilton County could rally around that would empower our region both immediately and post-pandemic.

With these guiding principles, we tried to meet needs as they arose, especially when it came to food security. The only operational food pantry in the county is running out of produce? Fundraise and coordinate extra shipments. The senior center needs a way to store additional meals in case their only employee gets sick? Ask around Eagle Nest to see who won't need their chest freezer until June. No one knows which businesses are open or closed locally? Call each business, print up a flyer with updated information, and mail it to every P.O. box in town.

Along the way, we were reminded that good solutions are place-based and community-centric. We learned the importance of individual

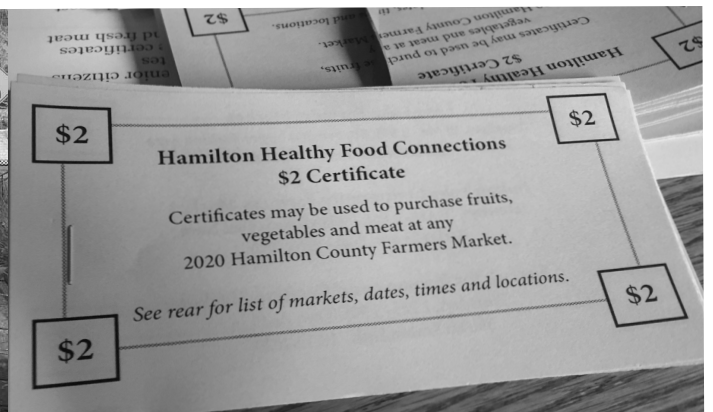
choice when it comes to food, and the impact that relationship building, sincerity, and diplomacy have when working with numerous partners during a stressful time. Alongside many others doing the same, we refocused our programmatic strengths to support initiatives ground-truthed and locally determined. We tried to examine our own biases to ensure we were listening rather than telling. As we enter the winter, *Hamilton Helps* remains



View from Blue Mountain Lake.

active and prepared to offer assistance wherever needed. We are working to translate what we have learned into flexible tools for an uncertain future - a future in which we know we will continue to need one another more than ever.

If you would like to help us support Adirondack communities, please visit our website at www.HamiltonHelps.org and click Donate.



Sawyer Cresap, originally hired to be a BMC innkeeper and cook for the 2020 season, ended up expertly coordinating the Hamilton Helps initiative; Coupon packets for use at the county farmers market.

Supporting Residents and Organizers in Place: BMC's Racial Justice & Resident Support Funds

IN 2017, Blue Mountain Center alumni and friends came together to create the Resident Support Fund (RSF), which provides stipends to accepted applicants of color in need of financial assistance to attend their residency.

While BMC remained shuttered this year, the RSF was distributed to 18 artists who would have otherwise joined us this season - a larger number of recipients in a single year than ever before. Our hope was that RSF stipends would support these applicants wherever they were by offsetting expenses and allowing them to carve out space for their work.

Our future Residents used the money for art supplies, living expenses, and more. Their enthusiastic responses were powerful reminders of the responsibility we have as an institution to pivot, instead of pause, our support during these times. "I look forward to collaborating with you and Blue Mountain in giving voice and manifesting a future where we can all Breathe", one future resident wrote. We feel the same.

In lieu of scheduled programming, BMC also launched the Racial Justice Fund this year, created to support organizers in our network during the sustained uprisings against systemic racism and state-sanctioned violence. The fund was designed specifically to reallocate financial resources to Black organizers, starting with BMC collaborators from the last two years, including those who were planning to convene conferences this season.

We look forward to hosting our deferred 2020 residents and conferees at BMC when it is safe to do so, and are committed to increasing opportunities for extended support in the meantime. But we need your help. The RSF is funded by BMC alumni and friends who are eager to participate in making BMC a more accessible space for artists and cultural workers of color. Please join us in ensuring that these funds will be there to assist with programming in 2021 and beyond.

*To find out more information about our funds
and to make a donation, please visit:
bluemountaincenter.org/support*

LOOKING FORWARD: A MESSAGE FROM BEN

Greetings from the Adirondacks.

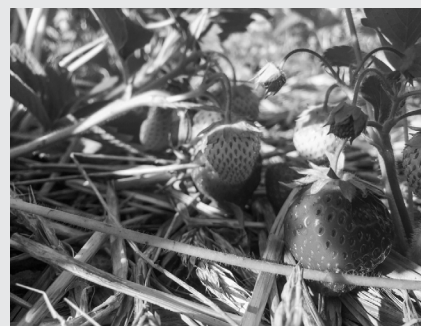
It saddens me to announce that there will be no application process this winter. Instead, we have assured all of the intended 2020 program participants that we are honoring our commitment to support their work, and plan to host them in 2021 or when it is safe to do so.

Meanwhile, our staff is down to the core. Assistant Director Nica Horvitz is working diligently from Seattle, overseeing our institutional planning projects and communications (thanks for putting together this year's Blue Notes, Nica!). I am here at BMC, keeping an eye on construction projects, supporting our local community, and consulting with Nica, our trustees and other artist and activist residency directors to assure that our eventual reopening goes as smoothly and safely as possible. Thomas Giardini and Sawyer Cresap also joined our Program team for portions of this season, and made many invaluable contributions. We wish them well on their exciting next phases and look forward to when we can reassemble a dynamic team of new and returning co-workers.

We know BMC will be different when we open our doors, but we are confident that with thoughtful planning and that ol' cooperative spirit we will be able to reopen as the generative and rejuvenating space BMC has always been.

These pages only begin to articulate all of the terrific work BMC alumni have been sharing with the world this year. You inspire us. To those of you who were considering applying to BMC this winter, we hope you will find peaceful and productive spaces to sustain your work in 2021. We look forward to seeing you in 2022, or when the stars align.

- Ben Strader, Executive Director



This year's epic strawberry crop.

RESIDENT UPDATES

● **Saida Agostini's** chapbook *Stunt*, about the life of freedom fighter and entrepreneur Nellie Jackson, is available from Neon Hemlock Press. ● **Olive Ayhens's** summer solo virtual show, *Ancient Critters*, was at the Russell Janis print space, Brooklyn, NY. ● In September, **Cynthia Back** had a show at the Manhattan Graphics Center. ● **Matthew Baker's** *Why Visit America* was published by Henry Holt & Company. ● **Aaron Bartley** opened Fitz Books and Waffles in Buffalo, NY. ● **Teresa Basilio** took part in "From Beirut, Boriken, and Brooklyn with Love," an interview in the September issue of *The Brooklyn Rail*. She has an essay in *Revolution Around the Corner: Voices from the Puerto Rican Socialist Party* forthcoming in February from Temple University Press. ● In *Creative Care*, recently published by HarperOne, **Anne Basting** chronicled her 25 years researching ways to infuse the arts into care settings. ● **Lance Sherman Belville**, playwright, theatre director, journalist, and teacher, died March 14, 2020 in his floating home in Sausalito, CA in the embrace of his wife and artistic partner of 42 years, **Lynn Lohr**. ● **Jen Blazina** participated in *Covid-19 Dialect*, an online exhibition created by Blue Spiral Gallery, Asheville, NC. ● **Rosalyn** and **Michael Bodycomb** have moved to a 122-acre family compound in Coarsegold, CA. ● **Larry Bogad** is sheltering with family in the Berkshires and finishing the book of scripts he worked on at BMC. He artistically directed *Delivering Democracy: troupes of dancing mailboxes across Pennsylvania giving out voter information to local communities*. ● **Katie Booth's** first book, *The Invention of Miracles: Language, Power, and Alexander Graham Bell's Quest to End Deafness*, will be published by Simon & Schuster in April, 2021. ● **Andrew Boyd**, **Gan Golan**, **Kristin Jones** and **Andrew Ginzel** collaborated to transform the

digital clock portion of the Metronome at Union Square South, NYC into a Climate Clock with a message: the numbers displayed in the countdown are a live read of the years, months, days, hours, minutes, and seconds remaining before the temperature of the planet exceeds 1.5°C. ● **Hannah Brancato** has received a Maryland Institute of Art



Henri Cole and Naoe Suzuki stopped by Eagle Lake to make sure that someone got to swim to the rock this year.

Brenner Grant for *Move Slowly*, an interview series featuring conversations between activists working to end sexual violence. ● In September, **Blair Braverman** published "What My Sled Dogs Taught Me About Planning for the Unknown" in *The New York Times*. ● **Alan Brown** is now a crisis worker at The Trevor Project, the nation's leading organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people. ● **Linda Burnham** co-wrote *Home Economics: The Invisible and Unregulated World of Domestic Work*. It presents the results of the first national survey of domestic workers in the U.S. ● **Andrea Clearfield** is writing a 3-part work on "what is home" to poetry by Sienna Craig for a consortium of treble choirs from around the country. ● "Just doing my little part to oust America's Mussolini," reports

MANSOOR ADAYFI WINS MARGOLIS AWARD

LAST DECEMBER, writer **Mansoor Adayfi**, who has turned his 14-plus years of captivity at Guantánamo Bay Prison Camp into compelling narratives of human connection and hope, won the **Richard J. Margolis Award**.

Adayfi's win marks the first time the prestigious award, established in 1992, has gone to a writer outside the U.S. The award honors the life of acclaimed writer and BMC alumni **Richard J. Margolis** and includes a BMC Residency.

Mansoor currently lives in exile in Serbia, and would have been unable to attain a visa to join our 2020 Residency program had we opened. We look forward to hosting him in person someday, and creating digital opportunities in 2021 for him to share and discuss his work with the BMC community.



Photo courtesy of Sundance Institute.

BLUE NOTES

Steve Cobble. ● Henri Cole's tenth collection of poetry, *Blizzard*, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in September. ● In April, *The Guardian* published **Chuck Collins's** opinion piece, "In a Pandemic, Billionaires are Richer Than Ever. Why Aren't They Giving More?" ● **Christopher Cook's** article "Killing Worker Safety" appeared in the October issue of *The Progressive*. ● **Meehan Crist's** nonfiction book about the climate crisis, *Is It Okay to Have a Child?*, is forthcoming from Random House in the US and Chatto in the UK. ● **Cathy Crowe** is in Toronto working to protect shelter and encampment populations during the pandemic. ● **Neil Curry** has published a study of the 18th century landscape gardener and poet, William Shenstone. ● **Ashley Dawson** published *People's Power, Reclaiming the Energy Commons*, co-wrote the pamphlet "A People's Plan for Climate Action," and co-edited a series of essays entitled "Hot City: Compound Crisis and Popular Struggle in NYC." ● **Carina del Valle Schorske's** profile article "The World According to Bad Bunny" was featured as the cover story of *The New York Times Magazine's* annual culture issue. ● **Sandi Dollinger's** review of *Bending the Arc*, entitled "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," will appear in *Voices for Creative Non-Violence* in Chicago. ● **Tamara Dragadze** is in London firing from all cylinders against the British government's signing of a deal with Trump that would destroy the British farming industry and National Health Service. ● In July, **Ben Ehrenreich** published *Desert Notebooks: A Road Map for the End of Time*. He became a father in January. ● On Earth Day, April 22, **Carmen Einfinger** installed her sculpture "Tule Tree as the Tree of Life" in Manhattan. ● **Jane Eklund's** novel, *The Story So Far*, was released in May by Bauhan Publishing. ● **Yalitza Ferreras** won a 2020 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award. ● In June, **Kermit Frazier** and his work as a playwright were featured in a full-page *New York Times* article. ● **Kenneth Gangemi** has published excerpts from his novel in *Vice*, *Confrontation*, *New Letters*, and the *Antioch Review*. ● **Alix Garcia & Naima Penniman** (Climbing PoeTree) decided just a few weeks before the pandemic shutdown to rest and take 2020 off from touring. How smart was that? ● **Joann Gardner's** 2019 chapbook, *The Deaf Island*, won the 2018 Poetry Society of America Chapbook Award. ● In August, **Amy Godine** presented a Zoom powerpoint talk entitled "The History of Blackface in the Adirondacks." ● **Nancy Graham's** recent projects include the premieres of *Orchid Receipt Service* at MITU580 in Brooklyn, NY and *100 Years* with Troy Foundry Theatre, Troy, NY. ● **Elizabeth Graver** continues to teach at Boston

College and to work on her sixth book of fiction, a novel with photos inspired by the migration story of her Sephardic Turkish grandmother. ● **Miriam Bird Greenberg** reports that she has spent the pandemic in fortunate domesticity: making sourdough and pizza. She is currently the Distinguished Visiting Writer at Cornell College, where she's teaching a course on poetry as a fieldwork-based practice. ● **Alexis Pauline Gumbs's** book-length meditation for the entire



Collaborative work by Juliette Majot, Beth Thielen, Rosalyn Bodycomb (visuals) and Nora Gallagher, Vincent Stanley and Debora Schupack (text) for Conduit Gallery's "Exquisite Corpse" exhibit.

human species, *Undrowned*, is based on the subversive and transformative lessons of marine mammals. It is now available from AK Press. ● **Terefu and Her Children**, a film directed by **Lowell Handler**, distributed by Boston's WGBH TV, is available on YouTube. ● **Marcy Hermansader's** work was featured in a three person show at Mother Gallery, Beacon, NY. ● Houghton Mifflin Harcourt published **Adam Hochschild's** latest book *Rebel Cinderella: From Rags to Riches to Radical*, the *Epic Journey of Rose Pastor Stokes* in March. ● **Robin Holcomb** is writing for the Philadelphia Orchestra and finishing a solo record. ● This year **Wayne Horvitz**

premiered his composition “188 Sullivan: Varèse Meets Bird” at the Royal Room (Seattle) and released, with his collaborator, the album “Cell Walk”. He is offering free downloads of his book of compositions, *Little Pieces for the Piano*, through his website. ● **Joyce Hwang** was awarded a 2020-21 University Design Research Fellowship for Exhibit Columbus. She will develop a project for Columbus, IN that will be installed in August 2021. ● **E. Dolores Johnson's** memoir *Say I'm Dead*, published in June, is the true story of family secrets, separation, courage, and transformation through five generations of interracial relationships. ● **Si Kahn's** song “Custodian”, honoring essential workers, can be downloaded from his website. ● In June, **Jennifer Karady's** short documentary film, *Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan: The Artist's Process*, screened online in the Fine Arts Film Festival. ● **Joel Katz's** film, *The #1 Bus Chronicles*, is now online as part of the virtual version of the Black Maria Film Festival. ● This fall, **Tana Kellner** exhibited work at 3Sartspace, Portsmouth, NH and at Russell Sage College, Albany, NY. ● **Ellen Kozak** was interviewed in April via Skype by the blog *Painting Perceptions*. ● **Margia Kramer's** work is on view through January 2021 in *News, etc.*, a group exhibition at Galleria MPA in Madrid, Spain. ● **Benjamin Krusling's** first book, *Glaring*, is forthcoming from Wendy's Subway. ● **Heidi Kumao's** solo exhibition *Real and Imagined: Fabric Works and Animations* appears through December 4 at the Stamps Gallery, Ann Arbor, MI. ● **Jim Lardner** will host a weekly podcast, *Feet to the Fire*, dedicated to helping the next Administration and Congress rise to the occasion. ● **Eric Laursen's** *The Operating System: Toward an Anarchist Theory of the State* will be published by AK Press next spring. ● **David Licata's** documentary, *A Life's Work*, was available for online viewing in September and October. ● **Brad Lichtenstein** co-

produced *Metcalfe Park: Black Vote Rising*, a 10-minute film that follows a mother and daughter as they organize their Black community of Metcalfe Park, WI to find a way to vote amid the challenges of reduced polling stations, job loss, furloughs,



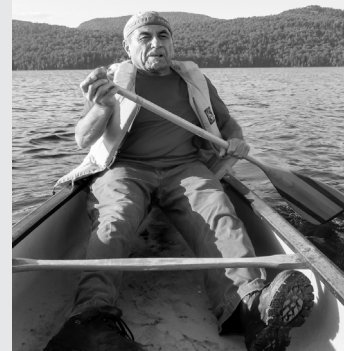
Marissa Williams, Miela Fetaw and Brad Lichtenstein on the shoot for *Black Vote Rising*.
Photo by Miela Fetaw.

and COVID-19 sickness. ● **Antonio David Lyons** is completing his first poetry manuscript and is in rehearsal for his one-man show, *We Are Here*, streaming in October and November. ● Feminist Press has published a second edition of **Josh MacPhee's** *Celebrate People's History, The Poster Book of Resistance and Revolution*. ● **Gregory Maguire** and **Andy Newman**, having seen their three kids through high school, are busy: Gregory with a new book, *A Wild Winter Swan*; Andy with exhibits current (Powers Gallery, Acton, MA) and forthcoming (Le Gard, France). ● **Anne Makepeace's** short film about volunteer first responders in northwest Connecticut, *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*, can be viewed on Vimeo. ● **Sheila Maldonado's** second book of poems, *that's what you get*, will be published by Brooklyn Arts Press in February 2021. ● On the subject of virtuality in the pandemic, **Lenore**

IN MEMORY OF

Charles “Chaz” Tsyaktati Wheelock, who devoted his life to serving the Oneida and greater Haudenosaunee communities, passed away on May 23, 2020. He was a dedicated advocate for Indigenous agriculture and food sovereignty, a champion of the return of ancestral Oneida Land, a lifelong environmental activist, and an inspirational friend and teacher to Indigenous movements throughout the world.

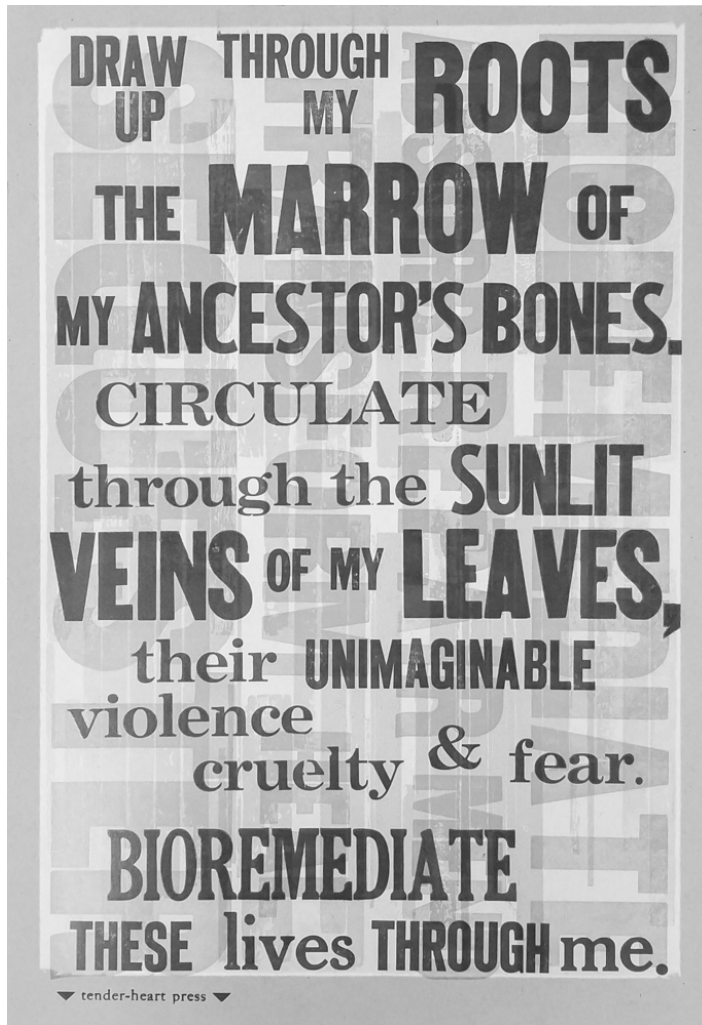
Chaz first came to BMC as a Windcall fellow in 2014. He returned last November for the Justice for the Land retreat, where his thoughtfulness, humor, and incisive questions were deeply appreciated. Just weeks before his sudden death he was planning a paddling trip through these Haudenosaunee lakes, now occupied by Eagle Nest.



Chaz on Eagle Lake.

BLUE NOTES

Malen created *Where from Here* with Samir Bhowmik, and will be releasing *Circe* in 2021. ● “Journalists Should Stop Relying on Cops’ Lies,” an article written by Ravi Mangla, appeared in the October issue of Jacobin. His memoir *Correctional* will be published by University of Wisconsin Press in 2021. ● Grace Markman has been painting, drawing, sewing collages, and teaching New York City ecology at Hunter College. ● Žibuoklė Martinaitytė was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship in music composition. ● E. “Oscar” Maynard bought a press in January 2019, which will be the site of Tender-Heart Press’s creative magic moving forward. ●



“Bioremediate” was created by E. “Oscar” Maynard in 2018 and is informed by research and work engaged in at BMC, including conversation with fellow resident writer Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Lost and Found, a retrospective celebrating the six-decade career of Baltimore based printmaker and sculptor Valerie Maynard, can be viewed at the Baltimore Museum of Art through January 3, 2021. ● Two redtail hawks, Eek and Geek, have taken over Anne McClintock’s garden in Princeton, NJ. ● Mary McDonnell worked with dancers at the University

Museum of Southern Mississippi to create a collaborative work performed at the closing of her painting exhibition. ● Amanda Michalopoulou’s novel *God’s Wife*, published by Dalkey Archive, is shortlisted for the National Translation Award (ALTA) in the US. ● A September interview with E. Ethelbert Miller can be viewed online at 1455litarts.org. ● Rachel Kauder Nalebuff’s book, *Stages: On Dying, Working and Feeling*, chronicles her years as artist-in-residence at the Hebrew Home at Riverdale nursing home. ● Danica Novgorodoff’s graphic novel adaptation of *Long Way Down*, a novel in verse by Jason Reynolds, is available from Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books. ● Leslie Nuchow reports, “Life took me down the road of having to save my family and now that we are amidst the sanctuary, freedom, and beauty of the trees and ocean, I am starting to write again.” ● Pat Oleszko wrote that she was “circumambulating Manhattan in a costume with her loooooong Train of Thought flowing behind, a-dressing the need to get out the vote.” ● Cecilia Peña-Govea released her new EP “Algo Nuevo,” blending hip-hop, reggaeton and traditional Mexican and Latin American musical styles. ● A book launch was held in January in Toronto for *Where Angels Come to Earth: An Evocation of the Italian Piazza* - photographs by Vincenzo Pietropaolo. ● Lantern Books will reissue Gretchen Primack’s poetry collection *Kind* in 2021 with ten new poems, including three about COVID-19. ● Julie Quiroz is serving on the founding team of the Birth Center Equity Fund, a network of BIPOC-led birthing centers across the country that create a birthing infrastructure that will transform the culture of birth. ● Bruce Reilly, a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Research Leader, is working on health care in prisons, including issues surrounding the COVID-19 prison pandemic. ● In April, on his birthday, Paul Rucker streamed a solo cello concert via TEDSocial. All proceeds went to food insecurity organizations. ● In October, Erik Ruin debuted three short animations on Zoom, followed by a question and answer discussion with his musical collaborators. ● The Ric Burns’ documentary *Oliver Sacks: His Own Life* is available to rent online via Zeitgeist Films. ● Jos Sances’s *Or, the Whale*, worked on at BMC in 2018, was exhibited at the Lawrence Art Center, Lawrence, KS, through October 2020. ● Jon Sands’s latest poetry collection, *It’s Not Magic*, was released in 2019 from Beacon Press. ● Catherine Sasanov received an archival research fellowship from the New England Regional Fellowship Consortium for her book, *The Last & Living Words of Mark*. ●



"Stoke", by Pat Oleszko (photo by Erica Connerney).

John Schlesinger's installation "After the Fall" opened at Cherry Street Pier in Philadelphia, making reuse of salvaged and recycled material from the pier and nearby tram tower. ● **Tanya Selvaratnam** co-produced *Aggie*, a feature-length documentary film that explores the nexus of art, race, and justice through the story of Agnes "Aggie" Gund's life. ● **Sejal Shah's** *This is One*, a collection of essays on race, place and belonging, was published in June by the University of Georgia Press. ● **Katie Sharar** has spent the entirety of the last six months in the Sonoran Desert, and while she misses water and greenery more than ever, she's learning a lot observing the resilience and strength of the desert landscape and its creatures. ● **Leslie Sills'** painting "Le Marché" will be on exhibit in *Reimagining the Four Freedoms* at The Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, MA through January 17, 2021. ● In September, **Judith Simonian** showed paintings at the Sara Nightingale Gallery, Sag Harbor, NY. ● *Personal Pronouns & Broken Figures*, with poems by **Vincent Stanley** and ink drawings by **Ryk Ekedal**, was published this summer by 391 Books. ● **Martin Steingesser's** poem "Three Blows" appears in *ENOUGH! Poems of Resistance & Protest*. ● **Kirsten Stolle** participated as a panelist in *No Name is Innocent* during Vienna Contemporary in September and Barcelona Biennial of Thought in October. ● **Naoe Suzuki's** solo show *Mapping* opened in October at the Rivers School in Weston, MA. ● **Rev Billy Talen**, Preacher for the Planet, continues his important (and irreverent) podcasts, including an August episode entitled *We Americans Are Doomed by Products or God*. ● **Maureen Taylor** and **Bob Ostertag**, who met at BMC, have launched a podcast together - *What's Been Done and What's Been Won* - in which they discuss politics, environment, and culture. ● In June, **Beth Thielen** was featured in a podcast from *Change the Story, Change the World* entitled "Love and Freedom." ● **Sheree Renée Thomas** was named editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*. ● **Andrea Thome** and **Eddie Martinez** announced the arrival of

Aye on July 14! ● **Opal Tometi** co-wrote *Message from the Future II: The Years of Repair*, a short animated film produced by The Leap and Intercept. ● **John Trotter** had an exhibition of photos from his long-term project about the human alteration of the Colorado River, *No Agua, No Vida*, at the PhEST Festival Internazionale di Fotografia e Arte in Monopoli, Italy ● **Antonio Vega's** *Jango in Pain*, the project he started at BMC, is in a collaboration with NYC's PlayCo. ● In October, **Hal Weaver** published a Pendle Hill Quaker Center pamphlet, *Race, Systemic Violence and Retrospective Justice: An African American Quaker Scholar-Activist Challenges Conventional Narratives*. ● *Eminent Monsters*, the BBC-funded documentary on CIA mind control and international torture is based on the story of **Harvey Weinstein's** father. ● In April, **Adam Welz's** photographs and article "Decoy Tactics: Can Fake Concrete Penguins Help Save the Real Thing" appeared in *The Guardian*. ● **Lisbeth White's** poem "Myth, Seminal" was published in a recent edition of *Apogee*. ● **Tracy Winn** has been isolating in Vermont since the pandemic began, using the weirdness like an extended residency, albeit without the fine BMC company. ● Composer **Pete Wyer** offers his sound installation "The Sky Beneath Our Feet" recorded at Descanso Gardens, Los Angeles and using 72 speakers, as a tonic for the moment. ● In April, **Firas Zreik** released his debut record "Sentiments in Emptiness".

As we go to print this publication a few weeks after the election, we would like to extend our gratitude and admiration to the many dedicated organizers, cultural workers and communities in our network who have worked tirelessly in the name of democracy. Recalibrating and bracing for the next phase, we are excited to continue our support of the many movements they represent.



The lonely dining room.

BLUE NOTES

We are grateful to our 2020 donors

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The Clubhouse painted in Black Walnut ink by Azuré Keahi; some of the alumni works donated to BMC this year.

If we have accidentally omitted your name from this list, please let us know so we can properly thank you.

DONATE ONLINE

This year and moving forward, we encourage you to make your contribution to the Blue Mountain Center online. You can find the link to Blue Mountain Center's PayPal account on our website (BlueMountainCenter.org) and by clicking on the Donate button. Or you can also mail a check to BMC at
PO Box 109, Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812.
We greatly appreciate your generosity.

Closed for the Season: A Caretaker's Opportunity

WHILE 2020 WAS dissapointing for most of BMC's staff, for the caretaking crew it was a rare window of opportunity - eight months to make some noise and get things done without anyone to work around.

The season was defined by constant painting, roofing, banging and clanging from top to bottom. Carpenters were crawling under the annex and wading beneath the boathouse. Painters and roofers were hanging from the windows and roped into scaffolding. The dining room may have been empty, but the rest of the property was as busy as a construction site.

In last year's *Blue Notes*, we asked for your help living in harmony with the caretaker's challenge - water - from above and below. The boathouse was rotting and sinking into the lake, and the skylight roof over the living room had begun to leak. This summer, thanks to your generous donations and the gift of time, we were able to repair them both. Rest assured - the ping pong table will stay safely three feet above Eagle Lake, and the skylight will only be letting in light when we reopen.

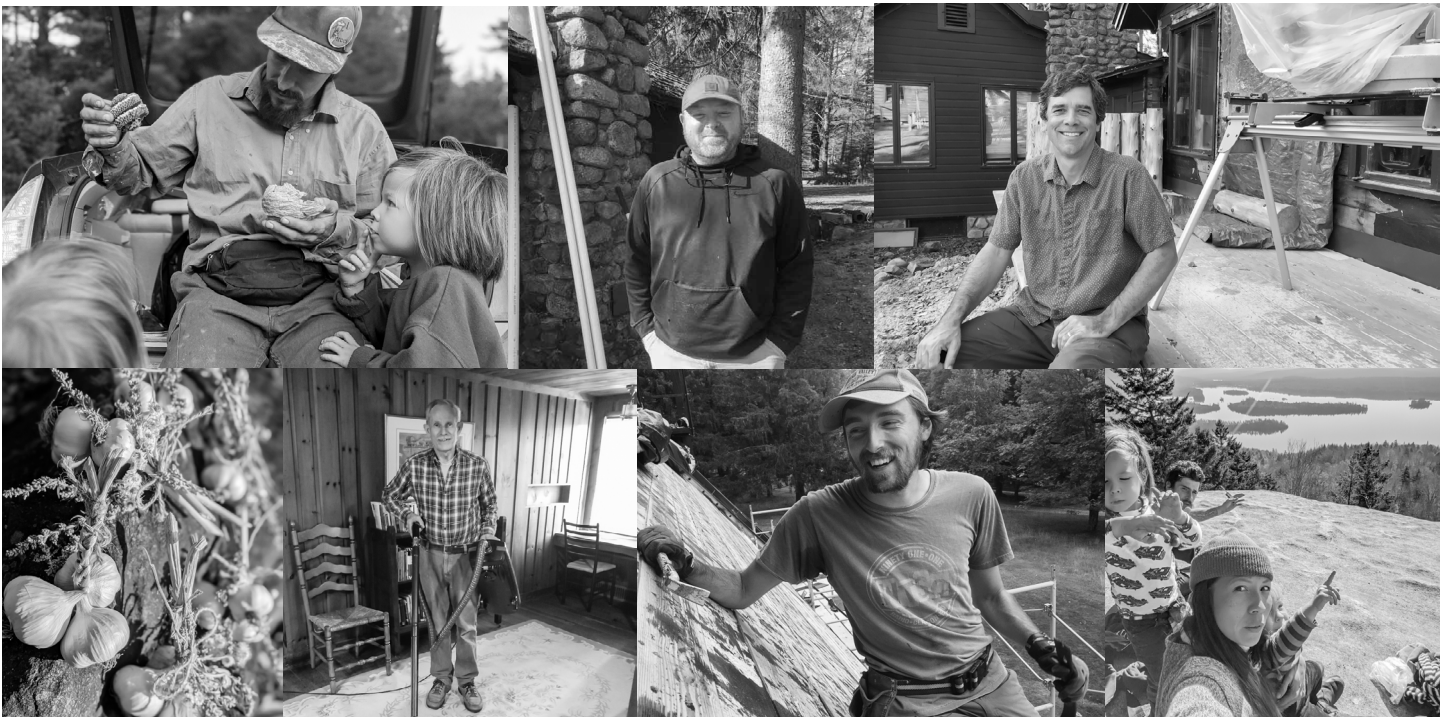
And, after years of planning in fits and starts, we have started work on constructing a wheelchair

accessible cottage. What better way to reopen next year than to finally be able to welcome artists and writers previously unable to stay at BMC?

This season we were also able to stain the outside of the clubhouse, remove the circa 1982 defunct solar panels and restore the roof underneath with salvaged historic copper shingles. The last of the buried oil tanks have been removed, trees have been pruned and bushes and flowers have been transplanted.

In sum, it has been a highly productive year. We are completing a long list of projects that have already renewed and restored BMC, preparing us to get back to our most important work: hosting and welcoming the next wave of Residents.

Special thanks to George McCane, Adam Bailey, Christian Grigoraskos, Azuré Keahi, Sandy Schmitt, Jack Hall, Hailee Salvesen and Eagle Nest Superintendent Wes Keays and assistant Bryan DeRusso. Together this rotating and residential crew formed a good-humored, hardworking team, wrapping BMC in their care and helping us to make the most of this strange year.



Left to right: Christian examining wasp nests with the youngest members of 2020's crew, Wes appeases Ben for a portrait, Ben on the newly accesible Annex porch, garlic from the garden, Jack in his element, Adam on the roof, Azuré and family crest Castle Rock.

Harriet Barlow wrote: “The realities of Covid and wildfires tamped but has not eliminated my use of the word ‘Paradise’ to describe Northern California. The election absorbs most of my time and psyche. How could it be otherwise?” ● During their six months working at BMC through the pandemic, Sawyer Cresap and Adam Bailey never did get their landline working. But they did receive plenty of loon calls. ● Having recovered from Covid, Sis Eldridge is busy bossing people around at The Landing care facility in Glens Falls where she now lives. ● Ryan Felder is in the last year of his Master of Divinity program at Union Theological Seminary, teaching theology at a church and working with the Kairos Center. ● After a winter of California gallivanting and a spring full of yard work, crocheting and virtual hugs Thomas Giardini is settling back into NYC and simultaneously missing life at BMC. ● Zohar Gitlis is Zooming into graduate school classes on theology and capitalism from her Adirondack barn-loft apartment and eating BMC currants in her oatmeal (almost) every morning. ● This summer Alice Gordon and scores of locked-down alumni celebrated the 50th anniversary of the U of Texas’s Shakespeare at Winedale class by crowd-sourcing a smart-phone movie of The Winter’s Tale. For a little while, Shakespeare gave the pandemic a fat lip. ● After spending time at BMC this Fall, Nica Horvitz was accompanied by former co-worker Lizzie Hessek on a surreal and life-affirming cross-country journey to Seattle to finalize her move back West. ● Louise Howard writes: “I’m quickly approaching a full year of isolation on the mountain top.” She also shared pictures of kittens, baked goods, gardens and sunrises. ● Sophie Kazis, a lifelong tea drinker, is learning to love coffee. She’s currently holed up in Brooklyn, NY, where she produces documentary podcasts. ● Having experienced both peak foliage, summer heat, and snow during autumnal months, Azuré Keahi, Christian Grigoroskos and their sons Ember and Thasos punctuated their time in Blue Mountain Lake processing the last of their green tomatoes and black walnuts. They’ve since transitioned



their maintenance duties from BMC back to Troy, NY. ● Sheila Kinney is working on the logistics of a safe reopening of the public library in Worthington, MA. ● Kei Kurimoto is continuing to deprogram herself from everything in this lifetime and past lifetimes... #shadowwork. Hunting for sticks with Cedar is still one of her greatest joys! #miniskirts. Hannah Lee is still in Minnesota, still writing, and still growing ADK Blue potatoes. ● Sara Lepkoff spent an (unplanned) but treasured summer in Vermont with family. Now she is living in Philadelphia, where she is forming new community. ● Intaba Liff-Anderson found herself unexpectedly sheltering in place in her previous home of Corvallis, OR, where she found joy in reconnecting with old friends and family. In October she took her vows to become a practicing Buddhist. ● This summer, Diane McCane sewed for a community mask-making effort with Hamilton Helps, and George McCane cared for the grounds at BMC. ● Darren Miller curated a 3-person exhibition of lens-based work, Flickering at the edge of the Anthropocene, which explores the urgency of our climate catastrophe. ● Laurie Murdoch and Alan Stafford got together this summer for a socially-distanced visit in Inlet to rehash their times in the kitchen. ● At press time, Luke Nathan and his now-wife Sam are chasing a rowhouse in Albany, NY. Somehow, well before the closing date, their one-year-old daughter Paloma had already claimed the largest bedroom. ● Suzy Parker spent a great deal of time during the pandemic teaching her niece and nephew how to drive over bridges, through tunnels, and along jammed freeways throughout Northern California (and missing her annual volunteer gig at BMC). ● Sandy Schmitt has been busy transplanting ferns and flowers in the BMC gardens and Zooming to Florida in order to be with her new granddaughter. ● Ben Strader is facilitating a community effort to address racial justice issues in Indian Lake. He thinks about reopening BMC everyday. ● Blue Mountain Lake’s matriarch Evelyn Thompson died in August at the age of 92. Evelyn was BMC’s first head cook and innkeeper, helping Harriet Barlow open BMC in 1982.

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From top: Luke & Sam get hitched, Intaba at her restaurant in Oregon, Thomas learns to surf in Maine, Louise’s cat Cici, Lizzie & Nica stop in the Badlands, SD, Kei & Cedar send love.