

BLUE NOTES

BLUE MOUNTAIN CENTER'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER • DECEMBER 2021



Session 1 encounter choppy Eagle Lake waters.

A Labor of Love

AT THE OPENING OF THIS SEASON, there was no grand elbow-to-elbow first night dinner at the long wooden table under the chandeliers. Nor was there one the next night, or the night after. In fact, the dining table had shrunk; with just three chairs and turned sideways, it was situated to keep people apart rather than bringing them together.

Five weeks earlier, staff arrived at Blue Mountain Center and gathered in chairs spread throughout the boathouse, fans running and garage doors open, for a series of pre-season discussions on BMC's work in the world in this particularly challenging moment. Together, we imagined what a reopened BMC would be like.

One thing we knew was that our approach to safety and community would have to be different this year. As we monitored and incorporated research around proper Covid protocols, we reassessed our own ideas about care in the intimate environment of Blue Mountain Center. Without our usual work weekend volunteers, we knew it was our responsibility alone to roll up our sleeves and ready BMC for its first guests. With every windowsill dusted, sign laminated, table moved, and yoga mat deep-cleaned, re-booting became more real as the new systems we would rely on throughout the year emerged.

Soon, time was up and the first residents arrived. Mirroring our own methodical pace in reopening, guests agreed to mask and distance for three days upon arrival. On the third day we provided participants with at-home tests,

and proceeded to talk to them each about their level of comfort with the prospect of sharing space. That first group, and the three that followed, all arrived at a place of comfort and consented to return to the long dining table, voting to take off their masks and come back together ala BMC days of old.

This year we learned that new rules do not have to compromise BMC's spirit - if anything, they affirm that our community is composed of caring collaborators during vulnerable times. The season was full of logistical puzzles, laughter, thrilling encounters with the natural world, and many experiments. We ate outside when the weather gave us sunny days, climbed Castle Rock, told stories by the campfire, attended presentations, relished individually-wrapped homemade cookies from the bottomless cookie jars, swam across the lake, harvested from the garden, played ping pong, danced, star-gazed, rested, and created.

It was difficult work reopening BMC this year - such is labor in a labor of love. To all the residents who bore our strange and changing systems with grace, and to all in the wider BMC community who have been supporting us from a distance, we thank you for your part in bringing Blue Mountain Center back to life again.

BMC is situated on occupied Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe land, and is dedicated to honoring Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples of past, present and future.

New Board Members

AFTER OVER A YEAR of not meeting in person, BMC's Board of Trustees had a productive 3 day meeting in July onsite. The weekend consisted of rainy hikes, sharing stories, reflecting on the challenges and accomplishments of the last season, and strategizing about how BMC's work can continue to serve the moment. We were also thrilled to welcome two new members to the Board of Trustees, and are excited to introduce them to our community.

Preeta D. Bansal, originally from Nebraska, served as a clerk on the US Supreme Court for Justice John Paul Stevens. Preeta was a Solicitor General of New York state and a Senior Policy Advisor under the Obama administration, as well as a member and past chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. Preeta now focuses on ServiceSpace, a volunteer-run global platform of over 1 million users that leverages technology to encourage everyday people around the world to do small acts of service. She chairs Civic Nebraska, a grassroots progressive organization focusing on voting rights, civil discourse, civic education and health.

Deogratias "Deo" Niyizonkiza, a leading voice in global health and international development originally from Burundi, is the founder of Village Health Works, a joint American-Burundian non-profit and NGO whose mission is to provide quality, compassionate health care in a dignified environment. VHW's approach integrates clinical services with education, food security, economic development, environmental protection, music and the arts. A frequent lecturer on global health, Deo is the recipient of numerous awards. His story is told in Pulitzer Prize-winner Tracy Kidder's *Strength in What Remains*.



The BMC Board, from top left to right: David Hochschild, Deo Niyizonkiza, Chuck Collins, Staurt Clarke, Aaron Bartley, Preeta Bansal and joined by Ben. Not pictured: Kristin Kimball, Kirk Marckwald.

2021 Conferences

Hosting a slimmer conference season than usual this year, we were grateful to close out our programming with three gatherings organized by some of our alumni collaborators:

First, returning organization **Alliance of Families for Justice (AFJ)** departed from their past conference format to host a retreat centered around the healing, rejuvenation, empowerment and civic engagement of formerly incarcerated participants. The gathering was facilitated by licensed and certified social worker Rommell Washington, who has been leading AFJ's weekly Family Empowerment Circles, and senior AFJ staff. The conference was designed to explore "taboo" topics of trauma, fear, fragility and pain in a safe environment with other similarly situated individuals.

Next up, **Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (NAMA)** returned to BMC, this time with a small, focused group. Some participants met each other in person for the first time, which prompted the group to prioritize discussions that would benefit from sharing space. Together, participants worked to draft a "NAMA Organizational Culture and Community Agreement", overviewed current and future work in order to lay the groundwork for a strategic planning process, and reconnected around shared responsibilities and values.

The final conference of the year was a convergence of four publishing practices: **3 Hole Press, Wendy's Subway, Omnivore Press and Thick Press**. The presses were also joined by graphic designers and authors of forthcoming titles. Participants convened to reflect upon their missions, look to the future, focus on upcoming projects, and build community as an ecosystem.

In Search of Future Interns!

We are seeking self-motivated, kind interns for the 2022 season. Prior experience is not necessary, but a background in the arts and/or activism, experience working in hospitality, food service, and/or gardening, a love of the outdoors, and administrative/basic computer skills are all assets. Qualified applicants must display enthusiasm for and an ability to thrive in a communal living environment. Interested individuals should submit a cover letter, resume, and contact info for three references to bmc@bluemountaincenter.org.

Learning from our Adirondack Community

IN 2020, when Blue Mountain Center started the Hamilton Helps initiative in response to the impact of the pandemic on our local community, the most pressing issue we identified with our partners was food access and insecurity. We spent the season turning our attention locally - writing grants to buy refrigerators for food pantries, creating a food voucher program for seniors, and forging new relationships with the communities and organizations that care for our county. This year we tried to maintain and continue the emerging best practices we established last year. We are happy to report that our popular food voucher program helped seniors purchase affordable produce from local farmers markets, resulting in the distribution of \$1,200 in vouchers in 2021.

Throughout this work we've been reminded that the difficulties Hamilton County residents face existed long before the pandemic. With 84% of housing units owned by part-time residents, economic disparities between the local and seasonal population in the county are wide. Food access needs of year-round residents are exacerbated by the county's temporary, seasonal

In Memory of:

Jay Walljasper, a prolific writer and journalist, editor of the *Utne Reader* for many years, author of *All That We Share*, and long-time friend and collaborator with BMC. Jay recently worked with us to create the BMC Commons Magazine Project, a rich exploration of our Residents and their work. As Jay wrote about the endeavor, "Taken together, this work has touched upon hundreds of different subjects and raised thousands of ideas but all of it shares one thing in common - an enduring passion and purpose to create a better world."

Salvador González Escalona, known to all as Salvador, a celebrated Cuban artist and cultural promoter of the Callejón de Hamel Community Sociocultural Project. In 1990 Salvador started creating murals and sculptures on a Havana side street known as Callejón de Hamel, using scrap metal for sculptures, and whatever type of paint was available. Over time the street was transformed into a lively Afro-Cuban center that is still vibrant today. While at BMC in 1994, Salvador painted on whatever he could get his hands on - canvas, boards, furniture, even other resident's clothing. His love of art and culture was infectious.

Steve Cobble, a political strategist who got his start with George McGovern, worked with Jesse Jackson, and drafted Bernie Sanders into presidential politics.

infrastructure. There are only four businesses that accept SNAP/EBT within the county, and two of them are gas stations. Because of this limited selection, SNAP and WIC dollars leave the county to be spent at Walmart or large grocery stores outside the park and enrollment is low. Hamilton County's three farmers markets are also not currently SNAP or WIC vendors.

Following their lead and inspired by the resilience and care demonstrated by our Hamilton County communities, we continue to dream up cooperative solutions. Some of the ideas we are working on include supporting and expanding farmers markets, improving long term grocery options, SNAP and WIC access, and continuing to contribute to networking, capacity building, and leadership initiatives in the region.

Our residents this year have been distanced from the Adirondack towns that surround BMC, but we hope that sharing the stories of our work with Hamilton Helps has connected them to this place and the people who call it home. We look forward to sharing our progress with you in the coming years.

Please visit www.hamiltonhelps.org to make a donation to our local initiatives.



Steve served as political director for the National Rainbow/ PUSH Coalition. He later co-founded Progressive "draft Bernie" efforts, and the first national organization to endorse Sanders for President. Steve guided unlikely contenders to unexpected victories and helped take "protest politics" from the streets to the campaign trail. BMC Advisor **John Cavanagh** remembered him as "One of the country's leading progressive political strategists and visionaries. Cobble never stopped believing that a better world is possible."

Hubert Sapp, an organizer, educator, and the first Black director of the Highlander Folk School. He and his partner Jane Sapp advocated for marginalized communities, particularly in the South, and worked to empower youths and adults to engage in social and economic change through various initiatives and coalition work. Hubert and Jane organized a month-long cultural workers residency at BMC in 1990, and returned in 2016 for our Collaboration Focus Residency. Hubert is remembered as a thoughtful, visionary leader, leaving behind a lasting legacy in his work for economic and racial justice.

Top to bottom: Jay Walljasper, Salvador González Escalona, Steve Cobble & Hubert Sapp.

Coming Up: BMC's First Online Auction!

THIS JANUARY, BMC is excited to host our first-ever online auction to raise money for our **Resident Support Fund** (RSF). The RSF was established five years ago by BMC alumni and the Adirondack Foundation with the goal of making our residency program possible for more writers, artists, and activists of color. The fund provides small stipends to accepted applicants for whom financial support will help enable their residency. Since 2017, BMC has awarded \$24,000 to 70 residents of color.

This year we are hosting a virtual auction to raise \$15,000 to ensure the continued success of the fund and provide for its growth. We hope this event will provide a way to stay connected, circulate our creations and curious objects, and share the value of time at BMC with future residents.

We invite you to participate by bidding in the auction or donating directly to the RSF. The virtual auction will last a week (**January 31th - February 4th, 2022**). The form to donate to the fund is available on our website (<https://www.bluemountaincenter.org/rsf-auction>), or email bmc@bluemountaincenter.org for details. Come support by spreading the word and bidding – we hope to see you there!



RSF committee members/Session 3 Residents Kermit Frazier & Carla Murphy baking bread, Madeline Talbott on Eagle Lake, Laurie Sumiye recording fellow Session 3 Resident Aljosie Harding's oral history in the hayloft.

Margolis, Barlow and Chertkov Award Recipients

Stephanie Anderson, 2020's Margolis award recipient, writes on rural life, environment, and agriculture, with an emphasis on women's unacknowledged role in making our food system more resilient and sustainable. Her nonfiction book, *One Size Fits None: A Farm Girl's Search for the Promise of Regenerative Agriculture*, won a 2019 Midwest Book Award. "I see my writing as a combination of art and activism much as Mr. Margolis likely did, a way to make our world more equitable by sharing knowledge and stories, especially those from rural America," Stephanie says. She will join us at BMC for her deferred residency in 2022.

Laurie Sumiye, 2021's Harriet Barlow award recipient, is an environmental artist and storyteller whose work about Hawaiian endangered species explores the interconnectedness of nature, place, and humans through her cross-disciplinary creative practice. Laurie, who was

born and raised in Hawai'i, currently serves as Assistant Professor of Film/Transmedia at the University of Hawai'i-West O'ahu. She spent her time at BMC during Session 3 painting, completing her film *A Paradise Lost*, and canoeing under the sun and moon.

Madeline Talbott, the 2021 Boren Chertkov award recipient, has been community organizing for 37 years, first with ACORN in Texas, Arkansas, Michigan and Ohio, and then with Action Now. She is retired, but still organizing within her neighborhood in Chicago. She joined us for Session 4 with her partner **Keith Kelleher**. Both wrote about their work organizing for workers' rights and shared their stories with fellow residents. Madeline says, "I learned early that we don't accomplish anything by ourselves, and we only know if we did anything worthwhile by taking a look at the shoulders we climbed onto and the folks behind us who climb onto ours."

RESIDENT UPDATES

Saida Agostini's first collection of poems, *let the dead in*, will be released by Alan Squire Publishing in March, 2022 ● **Nellie Appleby** is working on an Art in Public Places commission for the Miami-Opa Locka Airport. It celebrates the ecology and homegrown fruits of sub-tropical South Florida ● **Alice Attie** has a solo art exhibition at the Mignoni Gallery, NYC. Alice's third book of poems will be published with Seagull Books in 2022 ● **Olive Ayhens** has two shows coming up at Bookstein Projects, NYC and Bernay Fine Art, Great Barrington, MA ● *Indebted to Wind*, Poems by **L.R. Berger** was published in August by Deerbrook Editions ● **Anne Basting** is the Director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for 21st Century Studies. Anne's latest book, *Creative Care*, came out in paperback from HarperCollins, which also published the Creative Care Imagination Kit, a hope-filled resource for families with dementia ● Red Hen will publish **Helen Benedict's** novel, *The Good Deed*. Footnote Press will publish *Map of Hope and Sorrow*, a work of nonfiction. Both are about refugees ● Three monologues by **Barbara Blatner** were published in *She Persisted: 100 Monologues from Plays by Women over Forty*. Barbara's play, *Marilyn Monroe in the Desert*, was workshopped and presented by New Circle Theatre Company ● **Tem Blessed** put out his first book, a graphic novel called *Planeta Blu - Rise of Agoo* ● Thanks to **Katie Booth** for sending us a copy of her new book, *The Invention of Miracles* ● **Tom Boswell** published a volume of poetry, *Heart on a String*, with Grayson Books. He is leading a campaign to stop F-35 fighter jets from being based in Madison, WI ● **Hannah Brancato** is working to find permanent homes for the 750 pieces of the Monument Quilt. One hundred blocks have been acquired by the Baltimore Museum of Art, Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Ohio University, and University of North Carolina at Greensboro ● **Tracey Bullington**

has begun a PhD program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where she is studying how arts education promotes equity and student voice in schools ● When the pandemic shut down most of her work, **Carla Cantrelle** (Jablonski) co-founded EXACT Communication, offering workshops in various types of communication training ● **Wendy Call's** first book of poetry in translation, *In the Belly of Night and Other Poems* by Mexican-Zapotec poet Irma Pineda, will be published by Pluralia Ediciones ● **Ellen Calmus** is writing about her Mexican nonprofit Instituto del Rincón's grassroots-transparency-building method for preventing corruption in Third World communities ● Two years of isolation in Namibia inspired **Kristin Capp** to create a sustainable photo-based print series called *Desert Octopus*. A portion is in the virtual exhibition at FulbrightArt.com ● **Chris Carlsson** published *Hidden San Francisco: A Guide to Lost Landscapes, Unsung Heroes, and Radical Histories* with Pluto Press ● **Kristin Casaletto** is exhibiting nationally and loving being a full-time artist no longer in academia ● W.W. Norton published **Tina Chang's** third collection of poems, *Hybrida*, in hardcover and paperback. Tina returned to her alma mater, Binghamton University, as Director of Creative Writing ● Composer **Andrea Clearfield** will have eight world premieres this season including *Beyond the Binary (a meditation on humans and machines)*, a new cantata commissioned by Mendelssohn Chorus, and a quasi-sequel to Carel Kapek's play, *Rossum's Universal Robots* ● **Farai Chideya** continues to create and host *Our Body Politic*, a weekly nationally syndicated public radio show, podcast, and community ● **Dan Connell's** first book on Eritrea, *Against All Odds* (1993), was reissued by Red Sea Press with a lengthy update and reappraisal that includes an assessment of Eritrea's role in Ethiopia's ongoing civil war and reflections on how to find peace ● **Charles Conley** has created a series of six videos exploring and responding to



Resident Juliette Majot's open studio, Boathouse Yoga (photo by Daniel Lofgren),
Session 4 Residents out and about.

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the *Absence* series of canvases by Minneapolis artist James Holmberg • **Kia Corthron** published her novel *Moon and the Mars*, an exploration of NYC and America in the burgeoning moments before the start of the Civil War through the eyes of a young, biracial girl • Saint Julian Press has published **Jane Creighton's** *Bone Skid, Bone Beauty*, a collection of poems • **Cathy Crowe** is editing a book with the working title *Displacement City, Fighting for Health and Homes in the Middle of a Pandemic* • **Neil Curry** has published a collection of prose poems titled *A Northumbrian Book of Hours* • **Mike Dibb's** film *Painted with My Hair*, about the art and writing Donny Johnson made during his 24 years of solitary confinement, aired on BBC in October and will be available on BBC iPlayer • **Stephanie Dinkins'** solo show, *On Love & Data*, was on display at the University of Michigan's Stamps Gallery this fall • **Sandi Dollinger** gave a virtual playwriting workshop called "Monodrama and Mood Board" for Pyramid Women Writers Retreat. She looks forward to a reading of her new play, *Encore, Encore, Missus Gefilte Fish*, in late fall • **Emily Doolittle** is living in Glasgow and working as a Research Fellow and Lecturer in Composition at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland • **Laurel Doud's**



Session 1 Residents & Staff harvest strawberry abundance from the garden.

short story, "The Bathroom", was published in the May issue of *Into The Void* • **Damian Dressick** published the novel *40 Patchtown* with Bottom Dog Press's Appalachian Writing Series. *Fables of the Deconstruction*, a short story collection, was published with CLASH Books • **Maggie Dubris** and **Andy Teirstein** are working on *Broke*, a choreographic opera based on Maggie's book *BrokeDown Palace* • **Virginia Eubanks** and **Andrea Quijada** met at BMC in 2015 and are now co-editing a book of oral narratives for Voice of Witness under the working

title *Global Stories from the Digital Welfare State* • **Sarah Farahat** recently joined the Justseeds Artists' Cooperative and is working on a new project called *Land Back Land Forward*. She welcomes your participation • **John Feffer** published *Right Across the World: The Global Networking of the Far-Right and the Left Response* and the novel *Songlands*. He debuted his one-man show *Clowntime* in DC and Edinburgh • **Rosmarie Fiore** participated in TED X TAMU Odyssey virtually at Texas A&M University and has an exhibition on view through January 2022 at the HUB-Robeson Galleries, Penn State University • In July, **Kermit Frazier's** play, *Modern Minstrelsy*, was presented online at the Road Theatre's Twelfth Summer Playwrights Festival • **Leslie Fry** had work in two 2021 exhibitions: *ISolation Portfolio: Drawings by Women Sculptors*, Zoller Gallery, Penn State University, and *Context 2021*, Filter Photo, Chicago • **Ellyn McCormack Gaydos** is looking forward to a baby due in February and her first book, *Pig Years*, to be published with Knopf in June • **Noa (Nancy) Graham** just completed shooting a short film in Colorado, *Elegy for a Glacier*, in which she plays an environmental activist opposing the construction of a ski resort • **David Goodman** and **Cynthia Back** moved to Caldas da Rainha, Portugal in 2020. Cynthia had a solo exhibit at the Studios of Key West • **Alice Gordon's** second pandemic year swallowed up beloveds (BMC, Texas, theater, swimming), but didn't mess with careful readings (Faulkner, Wm. Maxwell, Proust), or a summer crammed with trips to see friends in five states • **Claire Gorfinkel** is not doing much writing these days, but feeling very fulfilled as Chaplain of the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center • **Amy Grappell's** *Kinderland*, a documentary about rival Jewish summer camps, premiered at the Woodstock Film Festival and will screen at the Santa Fe Film Festival before its New York premiere at DOC NYC • **Anna Schuleit Haber** and **Yotam Haber** spent the first year of the pandemic in Harrisville, NH with their two daughters while finishing commissioned works for Teater Grob in Denmark, and the Azrieli Foundation, Canada. Anna is finishing a commission for a private collection in NYC and FL. Yotam is recording an album and teaching at University of Missouri-Kansas City • **Ann Hagedorn's** book *Sleeper Agent* was published in July • **Minal Hajratwala** is co-launching the Changemaker Authors Cohort, a year of coaching and guided support for full-time organizers and movement leaders writing books. They would love to see applications from BMC alumni • Fresh Air's Terry Gross interviewed **Daisy Hernandez** about her nonfiction book *The Kissing*

Bug: A True Story of a Family, an Insect, and a Nation's Neglect of a Deadly Disease ● **Dan Hernandez's** short story, "Flat Stanley & the Praying Mantis", appeared in *Guernica* ● **David Hill** is living in Kelford, NC. His short story, "Struldbrug", was named one of the top San Francisco stories of the year by *Tangent Online* ● While staying busy with live concerts at his venue in Seattle, the Royal Room, **Wayne Horvitz** accompanied (as husband and music copyist) composer **Robin Holcomb** to the premiere of her orchestra piece *Paradise*, about wildfires in California, a commission by the Philadelphia Orchestra ● **Arlene Hutton's** play *Letters to Sala* is being produced by educational theatres around the country and will be published by Overlook Press in a new edition ● **Joyce Hwang** completed an installation, "To Middle Species, With Love", in Columbus, IN as part of *Exhibit Columbus 2021* ● **Debra Jenks'** poem "P-Shooters" was published by *Maintenant 15*. Debra's work was included in *Up Against the Wall* at the Cope House Gallery in Philadelphia ● **Hillary Jordan** co-edited *Anonymous Sex*, an anthology of 27 erotic short stories to be published in 2022 by Scribner ● **Jennifer Karady's** short documentary film, *Soldiers' Stories from Iraq and Afghanistan: The Artist's Process*, won the Humanitarian Award at the Fine Arts Film Festival, an Honorable Mention at the International Fine Arts Film Festival, and screened at Le Festival International du Film sur l'Art. Jennifer was nominated for Best First-time Filmmaker at the GI Film Festival ● **Kim Klein** will bring out the 8th edition of her book, *Fundraising for Social Change*, which has been in continuous publication since 1985 ● **Ellen Kozak** is having a solo-exhibition of paintings, *Barges, Tugs and Tankers*, at David Richard Gallery, NYC in December. She was selected to participate in *I AM WATER*, a public art exhibition in Brooklyn ● **Heidi Kumao** had a solo exhibition of narrative fabric works and animations at Ceres Gallery in NYC ● **Jeffrey**

Lependorf is the Executive Director of The Flow Chart Foundation ● In 2022, **Liz Lerman's** new work, *Wicked Bodies*, will premier. Liz co-authored *Critique Is Creative: The Critical Response Process in Theory and Action*, which will be published in 2022 ● **Muriel Leung's** collection, *Imagine Us, The Swarm*, was published by Nightboat Books ● **David Licata's** documentary, *A Life's Work*, will be distributed by First Run Features in December ● **Brad Lichtenstein's** film *Messwood* premiered in November at DOC NYC. His Frontline film *American Reckoning* premieres in 2022 ● A temporary pandemic move to Williamstown, MA has become semi-permanent for **Jerry Lieblich**, who has been enjoying two excellent cats, and long days outside writing contemplative poems and practicing Taiji ● **Mark Lipman** received a scientific research permit from the National Park Service to plan and execute a soundscape mapping project in Point Reyes National Seashore ● In *Graphic Liberation*, **Josh MacPhee** continues to explore the terrain of political image making, expanding on his ongoing conversations series of the same name at Colgate University ● **James Magruder's** novel, *Vamp Until Ready*, was published in September ● **Anne Makepeace** is adapting a screenplay she wrote in the 1980s into a young adult novel, a very different animal from filmmaking! ● **Sheila Maldonado** published *that's what you get*, a book of poetry ● **Diane Margolis' We Built a Village: Cambridge Cohousing and the Commons will be published by New Village Press in 2022 ● Farrar, Straus and Giroux published **Maureen N. McLane's More Anon: Selected Poems** in July ● **Erika Meitner's** sixth book of poems, *Useful Junk*, will be out in 2022 with BOA Editions ● **Oscar Melara** and **Kate Connell** created their rolling cultural hub, *Chispa*, together with their *Portfolio of Southeast San Francisco Artists* in 2019; after morphing it to a Covid-times mail project, they are back out on the streets of San Francisco ● Island Press has published **Ken Meter's** new book summarizing his work in US food systems**



FORESIGHT by Session 4 Resident Naima Penniman. "We are descendants of futurists, carrying on the legacy of our ancestral grandmothers, who braided seeds in their hair before boarding transatlantic slave ships, believing against odds in a future of sovereignty on land."

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● **Amanda Michalopoulou's** play *Phaedra on Fire*, a reinterpretation of the ancient drama *Hippolytus* by Euripides, was commissioned and staged at Epidaurus Festival ● **Winter Miller's** play, *When Monica Met Hillary*, premieres in February in Miami. Winter's first picture book, *Not a Cat: a Memoir by Gato*, is available now for pre-order ● **Naeem Mohaiemen** is the Concentration Head of Photography and Associate Professor of Visual Arts at Columbia University ● **Jason Molesky's** creative nonfiction / photography essay on the Marcellus Shale was anthologized. He also published an academic article about hydrofracking literature ● **Beverly Naidus** will exhibit a series called *The Dead Ocean Scrolls and Other Possible Futures* and has started to write *Rewilding Our Muses*:

curated *Free Your Mind: Art and Incarceration* at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in Lansing, MI ● **Debra Pearlman's** solo exhibition of chromogenic and archival pigment prints, *A Kind of Language*, captures unguarded moments of children at play ● **Naima Penniman** has been writing poems, painting, leading programs, growing mushrooms and saving seeds at Soul Fire Farm in deep reciprocal love with her fam and the land ● **Micah Perks'** novella, *The Great Naked and Afraid Baking Show*, will be published by Ploughshares Solos in 2022 ● BMC helped **Tawana Petty** become more attuned to the ways her body responds to nature – an awareness that consistently nurtures her health and creativity ● **Amy Pleasant** showed *Deadlocked and Loaded: Disarming America* at Art Rage Gallery, Syracuse, NY. *Go Figure* showed at



Residents Nellie Appleby & Al Santana show new work made at BMC.

Creative Strategies for Navigating the End of the World ● **Rachel Kauder Nalebuff's** *A Small Flood: Intimate Histories of Periods, Growing, and Changing*, which brings together 83 voices, will be published by Simon & Schuster in 2022 ● After a lifetime of writing short songs and poems, **Leslie Nuchow** is writing a book in her new home in Portsmouth, NH ● **Pat Oleszko**, aka Helen Highwater, led a parade of Bi-Polar Bears, the Weeping Whorl-d, Helen De Ploy and the sassy Brass Queens Band in an attempt to hold back the Writhing Tides Row v. Wade along the waterfront of Lowered Manhattans ● **Suzanne Opton** published *Into the Light Cellar*, a book of photographs and recorded stories from eight isolated Vermont families in the early 1970's ● **Karen O'Reilly's** memoir about working with refugees in Uganda, *Tell Me Why You Fled*, was released in 2019. It reached number one on Amazon's bestseller lists ● **Thomas Paquette's** exhibition, *From the North*, opened in Minneapolis at Groveland Gallery in October. He is working on a 5 x 10 foot triptych commissioned for a philanthropy's headquarters ● **Janie Paul** co-

San Juan Islands Museum of Art, Friday Harbor, WA ● **Gretchen Primack's** book of poems, *Kind*, was republished with new poems by Lantern Books ● **Andy Robinson** is semi-retired and looking forward to more opportunities to visit BMC as a volunteer ● **Denver David Robinson's** literary nonfiction will be featured in *Buckman Journal 007* in 2022 ● After much delay, Robinson & Rohe (**Jean Rohe** and **Liam Robinson**) expect to have their new record, much of which was written at BMC, out to the world in 2022 ● **Alex Rodriguez** is looking forward to publishing his memories when he turns 80 next year ● The cover photograph from **Sheron Rupp's** book, *Taken From Memory*, is in the exhibit *The Photographer in the Garden* at Alice Austen House Museum on Staten Island until December ● **Jon Sands's** latest collection, *It's Not Magic*, was a winner of the National Poetry Series ● **Al Santana** is developing a multi-media project tracing his family lineage to Mayaquez, Puerto Rico where his father was born in 1922 ● **Catherine Sasanov** worked on her first book of prose, *The Last & Living Words of Mark*, piecing together the life and community of the enslaved

man in 18th century Boston, Charlestown, and South Shore, MA ● **John Schlesinger's** *After the Fall*, which explored the narratives of trauma, loss, memories, and renewal through recycled materials, appeared at Philadelphia's Cherry Street Pier ● **Lynda Schor's** *Dearth*, a literary thriller about the Mexico/Texas border, was published by New Meridian Arts Press ● **Rachel Schragis's** poster, "Unraveling Antisemitism", was released by Jews for Racial and Economic Justice. Her poster from the Occupy Movement, "Flowchart of the Declaration of the Occupation of NYC", was added to the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art ● **David Schuman's** prose chapbook, *Best Men*, was published by Tammy Press. His essay "Model Homes", which appeared originally in the *Colorado Review*, was listed as a notable essay in the *Best American Essays 2021* ● **Tanya Selvaratnam's** book, *Assume Nothing: A Story of Intimate Violence*, was published by HarperCollins. Tanya became the first Senior Advisor at the Pop Culture Collaborative, where she focuses on Gender Justice Narratives ● **Sejal Shah's** essay collection, *This Is One Way to Dance*, was named an NPR Best Book of 2020. Sejal's second book, *How to Make Your Mother Cry*, is a multi-genre auto fictional story collection that utilizes objects, ephemera, imagined letters, and personal archives ● *Correctional*, a memoir by **Ravi Shankar**, is now available ● **Paul Shore's** solo exhibition of two projects, *ManhattoLand* and *Left-Handed Year*, was at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts' Blackburn 20/20 Gallery, NYC ● The exhibition *Migratory*, co-curated by **Elizabeth Shores**, opens in January at the University of Texas El Paso Rubin Center ● A special edition, with a handmade paper and letterpress cover, of **Holly Wren Spaulding's** chapbook *Fire*, was published by St. Brigid Press ● Thanks to **Vincent Stanley** for donating graduation regalia for an honorary degree from a university that will not be named. It will be a vibrant part of our costume box for years to come! ● **Martin Steingesser** was broadcast for a series called "Local Writers Read", spotlighting two 2020 Maine Literary Award poems ● **Kirsten Stolle's** mixed-media work is featured in Chapter 13, "Art-Science Collaborations, Complexities and Challenges", of *The Routledge Handbook of Public Communication of Science and Technology, 2021* ● **Sarah Sutro** had an ink drawing in *Remembering Together: Marking Lives Covid-19* at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in Cambridge, MA. She had work in the group show *Emergence* at the Eclipse Mill Gallery in North Adams, MA ● **Naoe Suzuki** had a solo exhibit titled *Layered Time: On Land* at SPOKE Gallery in South Boston

● **Madeline Talbott's** article "Power, Control and Trust in Coalitions" was published in *The Forge*, an online journal ● **Jonathan Tasini** is focusing his research and writing on climate change. He recently completed an in-depth study titled "Just Transition in the U.S.: A Harsh Mirage Absent A Fundamental Revolution" ● **Lisa Teasley** has a short story in the Fall issue of the *Santa Monica Review*, an essay in the Fall issue of *Parabola*, a short story translated into Spanish in *Argonauta 16*, and a painting on the cover of *Kweli Journal* ● **Andrea Thome's** play, *Fandango for Butterflies (and Coyotes)*, was onstage in Brooklyn for a few performances this fall ● **John Trotter** traveled to Switzerland for an in-person meeting of the photo collective MAPS ● *Django in Pain*, **Antonio Vega's** uplifting puppet show about depression, is currently available for streaming at 59e59.org and playco.org ● **Mfundu Vundla** was awarded a D. Litt degree honoris causa by the University of Pretoria in recognition of his contribution to the creative industry ● **Scott Wallace** is teaching journalism as an associate professor at the University of Connecticut. He is still covering Indigenous people and the fight for the Amazon, and is working on two book projects about Central America and Brazil ● **Harold (Hal) Weaver's** publications during Covid included correcting-misinformation about African students in Moscow in the *Pendle Hill* pamphlet, *Race, Systemic Violence, and Retrospective Justice: An African American Quaker Scholar-Activist Challenges Conventional Narratives* ● **Joyce Wellman** had the pleasure of being interviewed by Celeste Crenshaw on ARTICO-TV, DC'S local PBS Station WHUR ● **Adam Welz** is working on a book about climate change and the natural world, due for publication by Bloomsbury in 2022 ● **Lena Wolff** had a solo show at Sarah Shepard Gallery, Larkspur, CA. She was recently awarded the Kala Art Institute Artist Fellowship ● **David Wright's** novel, *Black Cloud Rising*, will be published in 2022 ● **Firas Zreik** released an EP titled *Solo* in April.



Affirmative cookies for journeys ahead.

Director's Note: Reflections on 2021

ONE OF THE RESULTS of our unexpected closure last year was the chance to reflect upon and deepen our beliefs and vision. Our revised mission statement reads: *"Blue Mountain Center offers a unique refuge to artists, activists, organizers and cultural workers who produce transformative work for their times. We trust residents and conference attendees to choose the rhythm they need to counter the pressures of the world, whether through collaboration or solitude, work or rest, in a nurturing environment where they can connect to themselves, local and global movements, the land and story of the Adirondacks, and the growing BMC community."*

This year we worked to put these words into practice. I am proud of how, even under unfamiliar pressures, we collectively returned to these guiding principles as we worked to create a nurturing environment. Each day provided an opportunity to adjust how we welcomed, oriented and ushered our guests into defining the meaning of their time here for themselves.

We are especially grateful for our two lead hosts this year - Program Managers Merry Wang and Ryan Felder. Alongside Assistant Director Nica Horvitz, they worked tirelessly to design our policies and safety protocols, grounded in commitments of mutual dignity and care. Special thanks to Nica, our steady partner onsite and afar, for shepherding this edition of *Blue Notes*. Our operations crew were equally incredible, weathering the season gracefully with humor and warmth. Head Chef Intaba Liff-Anderson returned to provide nourishment without missing a beat, with steady support from Sandy Schmidt in the kitchen and garden. Breakfast Chef Louise Howard descended from her mountain-top home to hit the griddle in grand style.

Newcomer MJ Lang cooked delicious meals, and Jamie Strader and Mary Brandis joined forces and tackled innkeeping. We were thrilled to have Adam Bailey and Sawyer Cresap back for the summer to hand over their 2020 Facilities and Community Outreach projects. Midway through the season we had the good fortune of meeting Charlie Catacalos, who interned with us after closing out a diversity fellowship at the Adirondack Experience. Beloved volunteer Suzy Parker arrived in October with her signature morale and labor boost.

In this time when so many are holding layers of tension and stress it was profound to offer opportunities for artists and activists to reconnect with their passions. This was our great reward of 2021, and it showed through the powerful work created and relationships formed. Thank you to all our friends and alumni. Your letters, donations, and thoughts encouraged us, and have us looking forward to more togetherness ahead. We ask that you continue to support our work by donating. Regardless of the amount, your contributions are a valuable encouragement to all of us, and a way to share BMC with others long into the future.

- Ben Strader



Ben & Nica on the porch, photo by Carrie Marie Burr.

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/support) and by clicking on the DONATE button. You are also welcome to mail a check to: BMC at PO Box 109, Blue Mountain Lake, NY 12812.

We are grateful to our 2021 Donors & Volunteers:

Ann Bailey • Allison Barlow • Anne Basting & Brad Lichtenstein • Michael Bedford & Sarah Sutro • Helen Benedict • Charles Biggs • George Brant • Gray Brechin • Alan Brown • Jim Boorstein • Rosalyn & Michael Bodycomb • May Boeve • Lisa Borders • Leslie Brack • Robin Broad & John Cavanagh • Irene Buszko • Ruth Chertkov • Danielle Christmas • Chuck Collins • Ellen Collins • Dan Connell • Kate Connell & Oscar Melara • Kevin Connor • Alison Cornyn • Donald Creedon • Meehan Crist • Barbara Z. Cooley in honor of C. Ryder Cooley • Jane Creighton • Stephanie Dinkins • James D. Dobner • Corinne Donly • Dawn Dorland • Laurel Doud • Jan Dove • Robert Doyle & Mark Thompson • Carmen Einfinger • Kathy Engel • John Feffer • Yalitzza Ferreras • William Finnegan • Kermit Frazier • Susan Freireich • Charles Galt • Thomas Giardini • Mike Glier • Claire Gorfinkel • Amy Godine • Alice Gordon • Nancy Graham • Lisa Graves • Liese Greensfelder • Andrea Hairston • Ann Hagedorn • Karin Hayes • Marcy Hermansader • Rachel Herzing • Jan Hively • David Hochschild • Mimi Holmes • Wayne Horvitz • Laura Howes • Tessa Huxley & Andy Reicher • Susan Ito • Reginald Jackson • Chris Jerome • Conrad Johnson • Stan Kaplan & Joan Giannecchini • Annetta Kapon • Richard Kazis & Jill Medvedow • Tána Kellner • Sarah Khan & Henry Drewal • Sheba Remy Kharbanda • Robin Wall Kimmerer • Sheila Kinney & Chris

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

Facilities Improvements put to Good Use

IF 2020 WAS A YEAR TO REPAIR AND BUILD, 2021 was the year to enjoy the fruits of that labor as residents in four low-density sessions and attendees in small conferences arrived to occupy our spruced-up buildings and restored boathouse. Completed renovations on the Annex were an important step in making BMC a more accessible living space. For the first time, Blue Mountain Center could offer a room for guests that didn't require climbing multiple stairs.

Last year we replaced the badly compromised cribbing that held up the boathouse. To celebrate, we brought in a new ping pong table to upgrade from the rickety one that was as wobbly as the building - and with it brought a much needed spirit of fun to BMC 2021. With its large, open doors to the lake and ventilating windows, the boathouse is the perfect adapted common room. We hosted several first night welcoming orientations there and it became a popular sanctuary throughout the season. Regardless of weather, everyone tried to make it down to the boathouse to work, play, meditate, enjoy the view, and commune with the lake.

We always encourage our guests (and ourselves!) to get out and enjoy the waters, woods and open fields of Eagle Nest, and this year we could not have been more grateful for the opportunity to share our gorgeous sanctuary with one another. To help orient newcomers, our facilities coordinator Adam Bailey drew new trail maps to replace our fading ones. Residents greatly appreciated Adam's handiwork, although

that didn't prevent some of them from getting lost! But when they did wander off trail, Eagle Nest Superintendent Wes Keays was always ready to assist us in bringing them home. He and his helper Justin Lamphear were ever-present, caring for the buildings, grounds and community. We'd be lost without them!

As the season ends, we're looking ahead to improve BMC's facilities further. Future projects include roofing and adapting current structures to be more sustainable and accessible. We're excited about our 2021 progress as it blooms into 2022. Thank you to everyone who has continued to support BMC's physical longevity.



Boathouse party.

*Willing workers — join us for Work Weekend 2022, April 28 - May 1!
BMC alumni are also invited to enter the lottery for the 2022 Memorial Day Alumni Residency, May 26-30. We are optimistically holding these dates, but may have to cancel if the state of the pandemic interferes. To indicate interest in attending either, email bmc@bluemountaincenter.org.*

Staff Updates

Harriet Barlow was reunited with her flesh and blood (Toby and Allison) along with Carol Downs in Vermont in August • After their first (amazing!) season as an intern at BMC Charlie Catacalos is looking forward to visiting friends and family up and down the East Coast this winter • Sawyer Cresap and Adam Bailey spent a great summer working at BMC while also pursuing other Adirondack-focused internships • Sawyer Downey is now living in southern California, where she is not quite getting the hang of surfing, and working for Tompkins Conservation, an organization dedicated to rewilding our planet • In the off-season Ryan Felder will be at Yale Divinity School pursuing a Masters of Sacred Theology, attending the opera, and working on the perfect fishing cast • Thomas Giardini is settling back into NYC and working toward becoming a licensed mental health counselor • Zohar Gitlis left the ADKs for NYC this fall, where she is continuing her graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary. Overwhelmed by city life, she's always down for a cup of coffee and BMC nostalgia so don't hesitate to reach out! • Lizzie Hessek gave into her Sagittarius moon this year: after a decade of cheesesteak and Tastykake, she's hitting the poutine joints of Montreal as she attempts a doctorate in geography • Nica Horvitz remains starstruck from seeing her first Adirondack Moose last Spring! • Sophie Kazis continues to tell stories through sound, and misses the loon calls on Eagle Lake • Sheila Kinney is still president of the board of the Worthington, MA public library • Kei Kurimoto is living her most recent mantra, "healing ourselves is the frontlines" • Michelle Markely is the Chair of her department at Mount Holyoke College • Darren Lee Miller is in Columbus, OH working to decolonize the photography program at CCAD • Sara Lepkoff is living her best, queerest, happiest life in Philadelphia and can't wait until you all can come visit • Intaba Liff-Anderson is thrilled to be back in the kitchen this season! She is grateful to be able to walk in the woods, explore wild mushroom lore, get her hands on the earth and support and be supported by the deep kindness and vast vision of BMC • Luke Nathan has laced up his soccer cleats after a decade-long hiatus • In November, Suzy Parker was gifted a pair of well-used Carhartt trousers in the appropriate size and now feels very much a part of The North Country • Ben Strader was put to the test this summer as the auctioneer at the Raquette Lake Fire Department Auction and the moderator for the Indian Lake town government Meet the Candidates night • Stuart Remick bought an old house in the mountains of Niigata, Japan and plans to turn it into BMC Japan • Jessie Wick misses you all, even those of you she's never met! She's busy setting up her woodshop and living by a raspberry patch in a seaside town with her wife and 4 year old son, their 10 chickens, 1 kitten, 6 fish and 2 snails • Merry Wang is excited to have canoed Eagle Lake through spring, summer, and fall - and is flying back to California for the winter to spend time with family • Holly Wollan's City Arts and Letters kept its members entranced throughout Covid, as did Malia Wollan's "How To" column in the NYT Sunday magazine •



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From top: Merry, Charlie & Intaba preparing freshly caught mackerel provided by the NAMA conference, Ryan's remote spring 2021 graduation from Union Seminary Graduate School, Louise channeling her Go Go NYC days with the walk-in refrigerator, spruced up signage made by Resident Erica Harris.