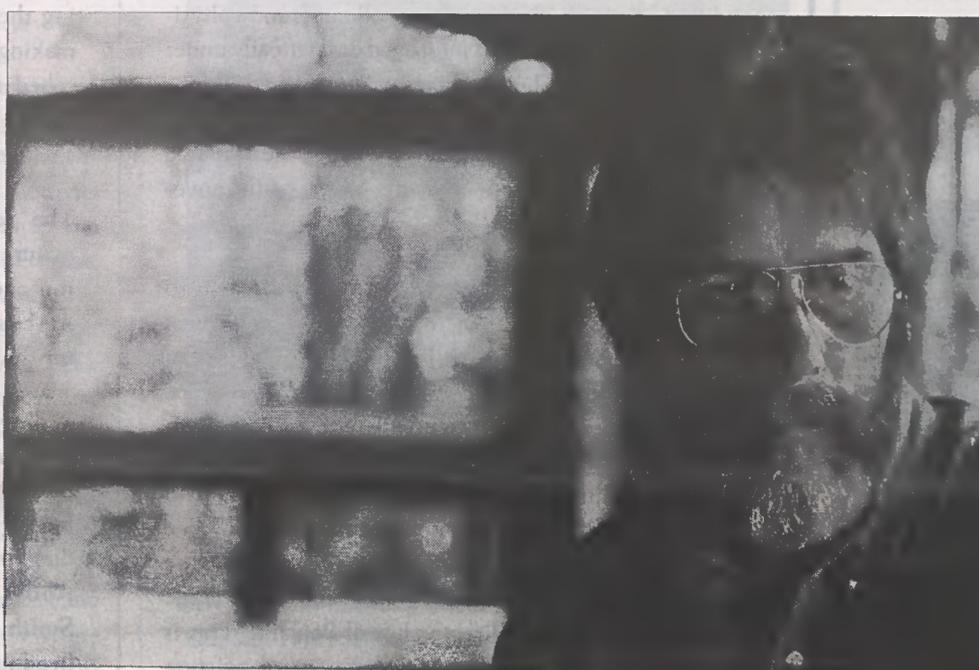


PENLAND LINE

PENLAND SCHOOL OF CRAFTS • PENLAND NORTH CAROLINA 28765 FALL 1992

TIME TO MOVE ON

Hunter Kariher has been closely involved with Penland School for fifteen years and has now decided it's time to move on. He first came to Penland as a wood instructor in 1977 and continued to teach three weeks each summer for eight years. In 1985, he joined the staff full-time as Assistant Director with responsibility for the studios, the Visitor's Center, the Supply Store, the budget, certain aspects of the program and supervision of all the buildings and grounds. Then in 1989, he was named Director.



One of Hunter's early decisions as Director of Penland School was not to hire an assistant director, but to reorganize the responsibilities around the strengths of the existing staff. This meant that he continued to carry most of his former duties and added to them program development and supervision, fundraising, and all the tasks that make up day-to-day administration.

Hunter and I sat together in his pristine office, now cleaned out and just about ready for his departure, and chatted about the past fifteen years and why he had decided to leave. He talked about the kinds of change that had taken place during this period and his sense that Penland School is quite stable, and that he himself is ready for a different pace and some different priorities.

"The School is in a good situation now," he said, "thanks to the partnership of the Board and the collaboration of the staff. Last spring the Board adopted a Five Year Plan which can be a guide to the next director. Personally, I've missed working with my hands. I think that being so close to all of this studio work has made me eager for a situation which will allow more time for that. I want to be able to set up a small studio wherever I go next. At the moment, I'm not sure where that will be, but I am investigating several options."

During these past fifteen years, the curriculum at Penland has expanded from six studios to fourteen. The size of the student body is about the same today as it was fifteen years ago with the result that class size is smaller and the student-instructor ratio is much more favorable.

UPGRADING THE FACILITIES

To support this change, there has had to be extensive work on the studios including new construction, renovations and rehabilitation. A capital campaign launched during Verne Stanford's tenure raised almost enough money for the construction of the NorthLight Building. Now completed, it houses book arts, drawing, papermaking, photography and printmaking in addition to a great-room for exhibitions, public gatherings and audio-visual presentations.

Some studio spaces were reconfigured and additions were built to others so that every studio has been upgraded, including new equipment. There are still major needs, but the planning process is completed and new construction or further modifications to studios are included. Housing has been the major priority and the long range plan for facilities calls for continuing renovation of all housing.

Another major portion of the work accomplished in the past three years is underground and not visible to the student body. The water and septic systems have been redone and much of the plumbing has been modernized.

Programmatically, Penland has a strong curriculum that is responsive to the changing needs of the student body.

Hunter established a system of studio coordinators who work closely with program planning and then serve as the liaison for the instructors during the summer. These coordinators are in a position to be advocates for the needs of their studios.

A BALANCING ACT

Hunter commented that he feels it is the responsibility of the director to maintain the balance, to see Penland as a whole. This, for him, has meant balancing studio needs with housing needs as well as responding evenly to all the disciplines. It has also meant careful attention to community relations which includes the local population as well as the art community.

Balance is also essential in striving for fiscal health, which has been perhaps the major turnaround in the recent past. While Penland will continue to need to raise money for capital improvements for the foreseeable future, there is now a healthy endowment for scholarships and the School's financial stability makes it unnecessary to borrow during the leaner winter months. Enrollment overall is at about 90%, but in general classes during the summer are full.

Hunter is not sure just what is next for him, but he does have some immediate plans. He is putting a camper on the back of his truck and leaving for an extensive cross-country trip visiting friends and seeing places that have interested him for years. "The best part is," said Hunter, "I don't have a 'long range plan' and will just go when and where I feel like it."

For the meantime, Ann Kariher will be living in Spruce Pine and will continue in her position on the office staff of a physician in Asheville. Two of their daughters are in Greensboro, where Heather is a freshman at the University of North Carolina and Gretchen is an RN at Moses Cone Hospital. Their youngest daughter Shannon is a freshman at Mitchell High School. 