

## Letter from the Director

When people still refer to me as the "new director" I tell them that Penland years are like dog years; one year here amounts to about seven anywhere else. The excitement and intensity of this school has a way of compressing time so that everything speeds up, while the remoteness of the place itself has the effect of making all the traditional time-marking mechanisms melt away.

This has been a challenging year, probably the most challenging one of my life. But I predicted that last year when, on the day that our household and studio things arrived, the moving van stuck at the bottom of the hill, its back end hanging off the road. It took tremendous resolve and quite a few people working together to put it right again and that day has become something of a metaphor for life at this school. Penland continues to be a place that says yes to the individual, to encourage new work, to take risks. But to make that happen, almost nothing can be done individually. I find myself feeling quite often like a midwife; helping in the delivery of the baby and then getting out of the way. My years of working collaboratively at Red Ozier Press have prepared me well for this experience. I love the process of collaboration, filled with its difficulties and struggles and have always believed there was something great to be gained by engaging with others in work we love. And I try, whenever possible, to promote that sense of work here, whether in the studios or in the administration of the school.

This past March I attended the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts conference in New Orleans at the urging of Stuart Kestenbaum, the director of Haystack. Stuart had arranged a meeting of the minds with Frances Chaves of Anderson Ranch, Marge Levy of Pilchuck, Bill Griffith of Arrowmont, Stuart, and myself, in order to discuss similarities and differences in our schools and things we might share. It was a very energetic meeting and we shared a great deal of information, surprised at how differently we handled very similar tasks and, also, the many things we had in common. We spoke about everything from student registration to the direction of our residency programs. It was acknowledged that Penland, with a program that serves the most people over the longest programmatic year, the widest variety of studio offerings, and the oldest infrastructure, probably represented the greatest administrative challenges within this group.

Oddly enough, instead of being discouraged by this, I left New Orleans feeling very content with this understanding, and even encouraged. The support for this school is deep, both in the immediate and extended Penland community, and has been displayed repeatedly this past year. The feeling that Penland offers a unique opportunity to both students and teachers to extend themselves and their work, to form bonds with each other and this place, to succeed or fail, that feeling is very much in tact, and is the fuel that we all run on, even when the challenges seem overwhelming.

-Ken Botnick

## Note from the Editor

As we were putting together this issue of *The Penland Line*, I kept thinking of the quote "The past is prologue" and wondering what that makes the present. My conclusion is that at Penland life is a continuum in which things constantly change but the essence stays the same. This continuum that is Penland is nourished by the lives and contributions of all the instructors, visiting artists, and students who sojourn on the mountain. But it is sustained by a group of people who choose to live and work in Penland for an extended period of time, often permanently. This issue is dedicated to the sustainers: Staff, Core Students, Resident Artists, and most especially the friends and neighbors who live close enough to drop by regularly and, like a family, come together to celebrate many holidays. We've included some reminiscences and some remembrances, some current news, a lot of appreciation for our donors and a look at where we are headed in the near future. Keep in touch! -Donna Jean Dreyer



Bill Daley's first session clay class had a visiting goat as subject which brought a focus on the artist as nurturer. It also brought out the dancer in each of them as one of the students Ann Robinson, a professional dancer, taught the class a Greek circle dance.

## Penland Line

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The Penland Line is published twice a year to communicate thoughts about the programs, people and philosophy of Penland and to keep in touch with several groups of people at once: craftspeople and friends living nearby, instructors, donors, and Friends of Penland. We invite you to share your news, opinions, and/or photographs with us. Write: Editor, Penland Line, Penland, NC 28765.

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