

AT PENLAND

Just before Thanksgiving, the last students leave and the Gallery and coffee house shut down for winter, but life goes on at Penland. In fact, if it weren't for winter, some things would never get done. This year it seemed like every other week we had to work around another snowstorm, and as we go to press the weather hasn't given up even though students have arrived for what we bill as *spring Concentration*.

A big job which comes around every winter is the summer catalog. Shortly after they are mailed we begin taking registration—this year we had 50% enrollment after the first three days. Handbooks and flyers get revised, and planning begins for the auction, upcoming board meetings, and other events.

The maintenance crew uses the time to make repairs and improvements which can't be done while classes are going on. This year, in addition to the usual minutia, the crew refurbished the back section of Bill's Place, making an elegant new Publication Center. The folks who produce the school's printed matter had been camping out in borrowed space, and they are enjoying greater efficiency and fewer interruptions in their new office. Work continues on the Integrated Craft Environment (ICE) house, a new home is being created for the Penland archives, and someone even fixed the decaf machine in the Pines.

In the office, new staff and Core students need to be trained, policies are reevaluated, and organizational changes are implemented. This is the time when stacks of paper left over from the summer get sorted and relegated to rectangular or circular files. Programming for fall and spring Concentration is a priority, and we begin to think about classes for next summer.

Winter is a time when studio coordinators, Core students, and even staff get some extra studio time, and at a place like Penland it's often the best time for a little vacation.

The weather always brings challenges and it slows things down—which can be a welcome change. But eventually the novelty of peace and quiet begins to wear off, but it's not long before we start to gear up for the heat and light of spring classes and Penland turns into Penland again. ✻



Jeff Byrd



Terry Gess working in his studio.

Dana Moore



Dana Moore

last day for work/study applications.



A view from the Pines.

Dana Moore

NY TO NC



Dana Moore

Erika Sanger, Penland's Director of Development, did not find out about her new job from a classified ad in a professional journal. She saw a notice announcing the opening on the Lily Loom House bulletin board while she was headed to the clay studio. Although she came to Penland from the education department of the Brooklyn Museum, Erika is a photographer and she's worked in clay for seven years. She was at Penland taking a class, and it occurred to her that her background in education, fundraising, and crafts might make her a good candidate for the job.

A born and bred New Yorker, Erika was finishing a Masters in Photography at NYU when she started working as an administrative assistant at the International Center of Photography in exchange for darkroom use. "One day someone said to me, 'You know you could go down the street and get paid for what you're doing; there's a position open.'" Before long she was organizing public programs for the Jewish Museum—which was literally a block away.

In 1989, she moved across town to take a position at the financially beleaguered New York Historical Society. "I learned a lot being in an institution that was in so much trouble. You learn how to make quick decisions, and how to take many issues into consideration," she said. At the Historical Society, Erika was involved in an array of museum-based educational projects, many of them reaching out to the city's ethnic groups.

Her most recent position was with the Brooklyn Museum where she developed and implemented interpretive programs and materials for museum visitors. She also organized public events, such as a very successful Arab-American arts festival.

Underlying all of the educational work at these institutions was a constant involvement with development. "In a museum setting," she explained, "the education departments develop programming, and then they work closely with the development officer to get the funding. Writing grant applications, meeting with funders, lobbying politicians—these are all done by the people who develop the programs, as they tend to be the best advocates."

So why leave the bright lights and all this exciting work for a craft school out in the woods? "Ever since grad school I had been looking for a situation where I could live in a beautiful place and still use my professional skills. Penland seemed like the perfect place. I also felt that there was a lot of potential for growth in new directions in development here. I appreciated the school's strong history in fundraising—that the school was solid and well positioned."

This isn't, however, Erika's first venture out of the big city. Twice, she worked as a volunteer at Acadia National Park in Maine, cataloging their art collection and working on a documentation project. "I knew from my experience there that I could live out of the city," she said, "And then in my interview, Ken Botnick said that in the three years he had been here, he had met more artists and was able to work with more people in a meaningful way than he ever had in other places."

When asked about new directions for Penland's development program, Erika answers in two words: arts education. "I think this school can position itself in the arts education arena in ways that haven't been tried before. While funding for the arts is drying up, there's still a lot of money out there for alternative education—funding that Penland's program is a perfect match for."

What else might Erika bring to Penland? "A lot of New York artists," she laughed, "because all of my friends want to come here." ✻

—Robin Dreyer