

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Counsel's

Office

Mixed this

WGS

We've had request before -
THE WHITE HOUSE very diff for
WASHINGTON still &
even non profits etc
limited
in how
we
can
help
business

Counsel's Office -
generate
Interest & support for
your private enterprise -

Restriction -

We cannot use public
Office for private gain -
very hard to have personal

Capacity -

not on WH grounds =

Support you but have the
rules restrictions and
prohibitively expensive

ask for more details
456.5388 Cabel

cannot use here name
to promote enterprise -
not for material or to encourage
people to attend event

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

wants to have access
to top publishers
to let them know of
the colony

Who pays?

Or to do remarks?

would HRC make remarks?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Crescent Dragon Wagon

501. 253 7389

(Inn in Europe)

HRC & BC have dined there

Dinner at WH

design menu & work w/
chef

AR literacy council

authors, books

closed Inn & formal non-profit.

Writer's colony -
retreat 1-3 months

Patricia
Bethany
Kelly
Arnold

Crescent Dragonwagon



1 Prisco Avenue, Route 4, Box 7
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632
Phone: 501-253-7444 • Fax: 501-253-7389
E-mail: 76500.3276@compuserve.com

FAX TO:

Ms. Missy Darwin Kincaid
202-456-6771

April 10, 1999

Dear Missy,

We --- meaning the Board et al --- are all keeping our fingers crossed on the possibility of some kind of Writers' Colony get-together with Hillary, either at the White House or elsewhere.

Just wanted to check in with you to 1) make sure everything got there, both by fax and overnight mail, and 2) let you know that we will be out of town next week, teaching at a conference. Didn't want to take the chance of missing a call from y'all! We will be in Phoenix, Arizona, staying at the Crowne Plaza (602-333-0000) in case you need to reach us. We're also taking our laptop so we can pick up e-mail; best address is frontdesk@dairyhollow.com.

We look forward to hearing from you and/or the First Lady soon --- we are very excited about the possibility and promise to do our part in providing an evening of good cause plus high entertainment value!

It's just beautiful here now. I send you, Hillary and the President a big psychic bouquet of lilac, dogwood, and flowering quince from the Ozarks.

Warmly,

Crescent Dragonwagon
Phone/Fax: 501-253-7389

KAY KELLEY ARNOLD
P.O. BOX 551 • LITTLE ROCK, AR 72203

2 April 99

To: Missy Kucaid
From: Kay Arnold

Missy, Crescent has sent me a
copy of her letter to Hillary. If
I can answer any questions, provide
background, add support, whatever...
don't hesitate to let me know.

Best to Bill & you! H

are both having a good time
and doing good!

W C

D H

**The Writers'
Colony at
Dairy Hollow,
Inc.**

515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, AR
72632-3032
501-253-7444
www.writerscolony.org
director@writerscolony.org

Board of Directors:

Kay Kelley Arnold,
Little Rock, AR

Donna Jackson,
Oklahoma City, OK

Mary Gay Shipley,
Blytheville, AR

Jonathan Lanman,
New York, NY

Crow Johnson,
Gravette, AR

Larry Stone,
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Eureka Springs, AR

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Ned Shank,
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WCDH provides temporary
residence for working
writers supportive & protec-
tive of their creative process,
enriching the cultural envi-
ronment of Eureka Springs
& NW Arkansas. Organized
as an IRS 501(c)3 charity,
all donations are tax
deductible.

April 1, 1999

Ms. Missy Kincaid
Office of the First Lady
The White House
East Wing, Second Floor
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Ms. Kincaid:

My wife, Crescent Dragonwagon, was very pleased from talking with you about the possibility of a function introducing our new endeavor here with the Writers' Colony. I've enclosed some information on the Colony for the First Lady's and your review. We've put in booklets on both the Colony, and our innovative Dedicated Fellowships program. And, some articles that have come out about our new endeavor.

Thanks -- we look forward to talking with again soon!

Truly,



Ned Shank, Interim Executive Director

encl: FAQ, DF, maps, articles

PS -- Spring has arrived here in Arkansas -- tulips, daffodils, forsythia, flowering almond -- hope you get a chance to see (and whiff) it soon...

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

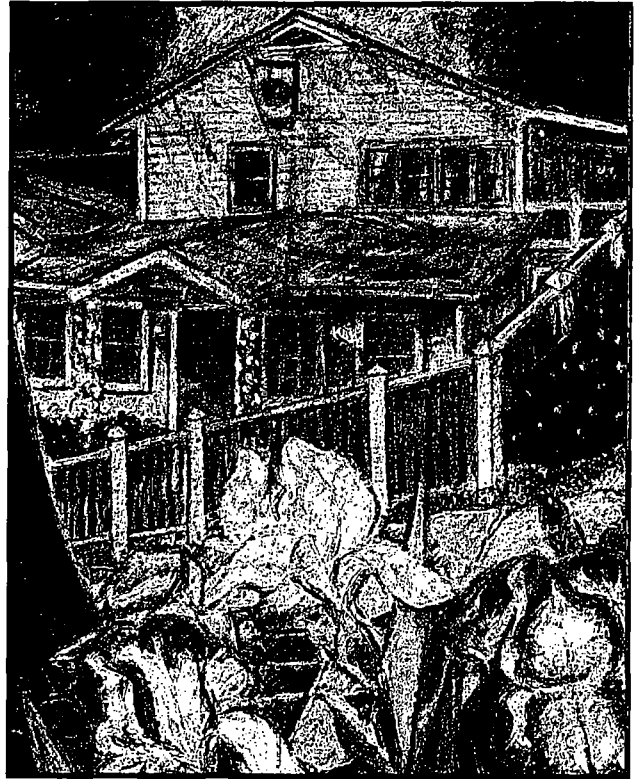
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A Country Inn & Restaurant



The Inn's Main House & Restaurant

515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

All major credit cards &
personal checks accepted

Ned Shank & Crescent Dragonwagon,
Owner/Innkeepers

501-253-7444/800-562-8650

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The
Writers'
Colony
at
Dairy
Hollow

Frequently asked
questions
& their answers

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

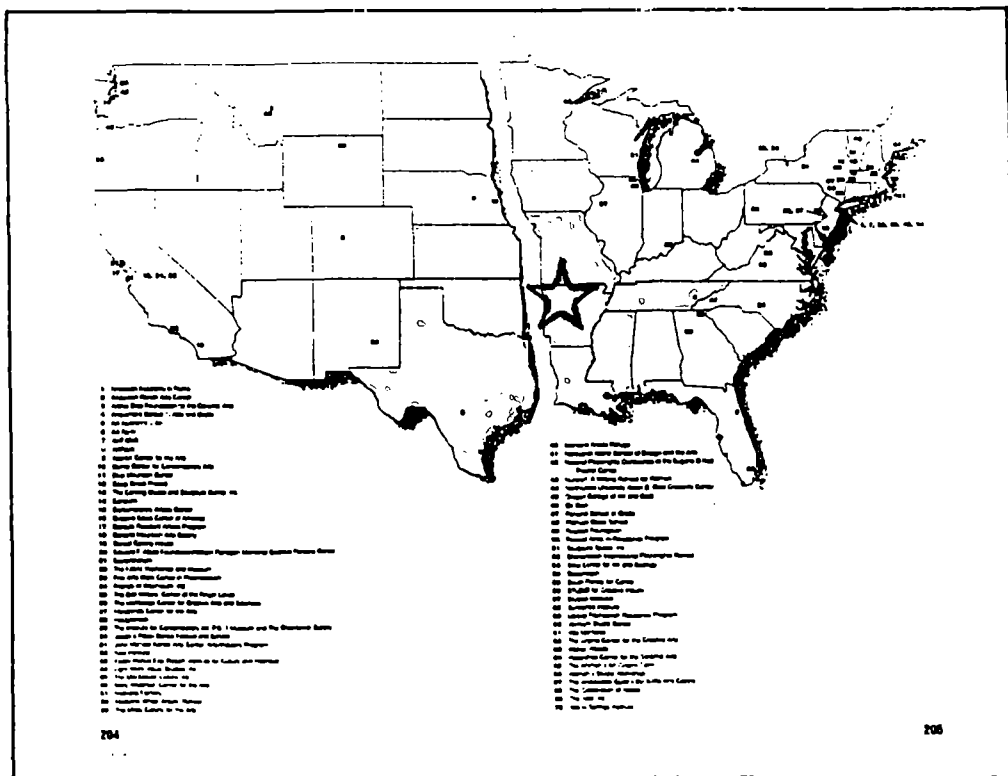
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The
Writers'
Colony
at
Dairy
Hollow

Dedicated Fellowships



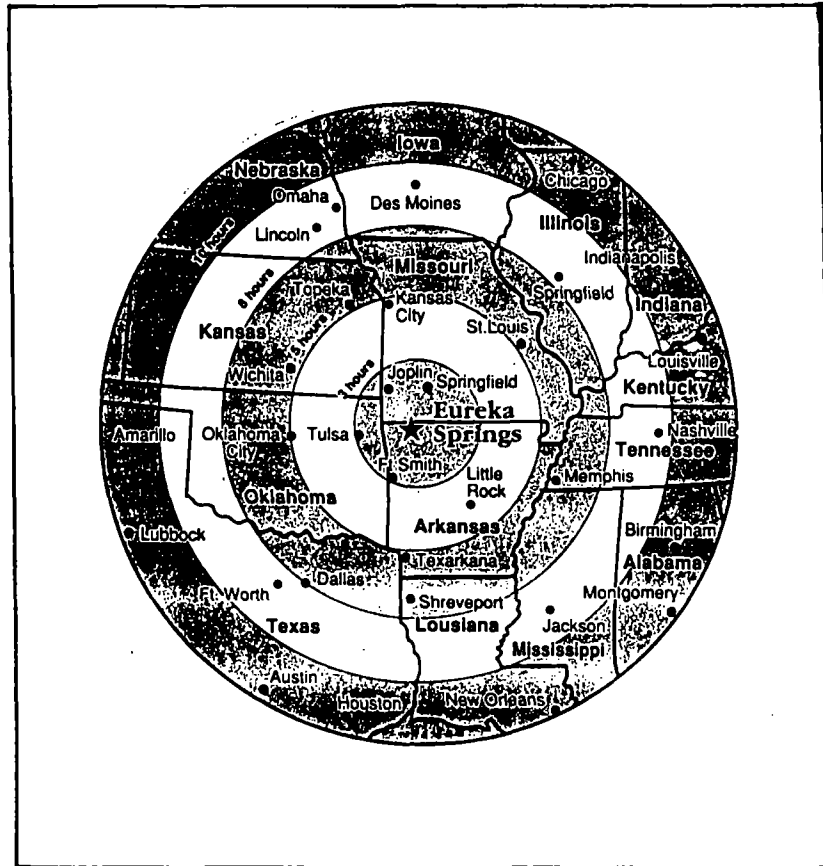
Locations of writers' colonies (highlighted)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 American Academy in Rome | 40 Montana Artists Refuge |
| 2 Anderson Ranch Arts Center | 41 Nantuxet Island School of Design and the Arts |
| 3 Arche Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts | 42 National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center |
| 4 Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts | 43 Norcross, A Writing Retreat for Women |
| 5 Art Awareness, Inc. | 44 Northwood University Alden B. Dow Creativity Center |
| 6 Art Farm | 45 Oregon College of Art and Craft |
| 7 ART/OMI | 46 Or-Bow |
| 8 ArtPlace | 47 Penland School of Crafts |
| 9 Atlantic Center for the Arts | 48 Pitchuck Glass School |
| 10 Benis Center for Contemporary Arts | 49 Ragdale Foundation |
| 11 Blue Mountain Center | 50 Roosevelt Artist-in-Residence Program |
| 12 Camp Street Project | 51 Sculpture Space, Inc. |
| 13 The Carving Studio and Sculpture Center, Inc. | 52 Shenandoah International Playwrights Retreat |
| 14 Caricum | 53 Sitka Center for Art and Ecology |
| 15 Contemporary Artists Center | 54 Skowhegan |
| 16 Creative Glass Center of America | 55 South Florida Art Center |
| 17 Derrasse Resident Artists Program | 56 STUDIO for Creative Inquiry |
| 18 Dorland Mountain Arts Colony | 57 Studios Midwest |
| 19 Dorset Colony House | 58 Sundance Institute |
| 20 Edward F. Albee Foundation/William Flanagan Memorial Creative Persons Center | 59 Ucross Foundation Residency Program |
| 21 Explorationum | 60 Vermont Studio Center |
| 22 The Fabric Workshop and Museum | 61 Vile Montavo |
| 23 Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown | 62 The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts |
| 24 Friends of Weymouth, Inc. | 63 Walker Woods |
| 25 The Gall Writers' Center of the Finger Lakes | 64 Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts |
| 26 The Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences | 65 The Women's Art Colony Farm |
| 27 Headlands Center for the Arts | 66 Women's Studio Workshop |
| 28 Hedgebrook | 67 The Woodstock Guild's Byrdcliffe Arts Colony |
| 29 The Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum and The Clocktower Gallery | 68 The Corporation of Yaddo |
| 30 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and School | 69 The Yard, Inc. |
| 31 John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Arts Industry Program | 70 Yellow Springs Institute |
| 32 Kala Institute | |
| 33 Kalam Honua Eco-Resort, Institute for Culture and Wellness | |
| 34 Light Work Visual Studies, Inc. | |
| 35 The MacDowell Colony, Inc. | |
| 36 Mary Anderson Center for the Arts | |
| 37 Mattress Factory | |
| 38 Medicine Wheel Artists' Retreat | |
| 39 The Milay Colony for the Arts | |

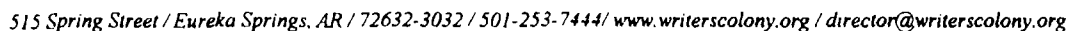
{Note: Of the 70 Alliance of Artists' Communities members in 1995, 40 accepted writers & songwriters; of these 40, only 5 were for writers/songwriters only. 67 of the total membership reported a total of 21,684 applications vs. 3,129 residents, a ratio of 7:1 applicants to residents, or a 14% chance of acceptance.}

W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.



*Location of and driving distances to
Eureka Springs in the mid-South.*





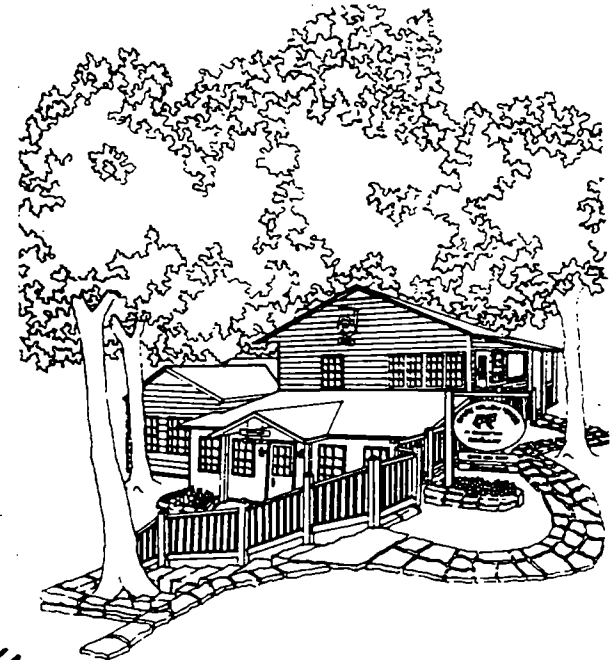
515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

501-253-7444
LOCATION
MAP



FARMHOUSE

To reach Farmhouse & hot tub from Main House:
standing in parking lot facing office door, turn
LEFT, exiting onto Dairy
Hollow Road (paved). Turn
RIGHT down the hill. At
foot of hill, curve LEFT,
staying on the pavement.
Travel approx. 35 feet to
the small unpaved road on



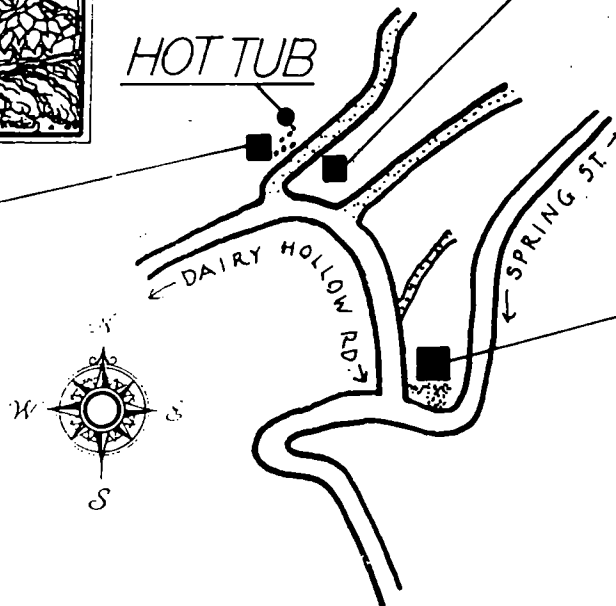
MAIN HOUSE, OFFICE,
RESTAURANT

right. Turn RIGHT on this
road. Farmhouse and hot
tub are about 100 feet up
and to LEFT; Innkeeper's
House on RIGHT.

Go up stepping stone
path towards Farmhouse.
Veer right and up to
reach hot tub (in
enclosure).

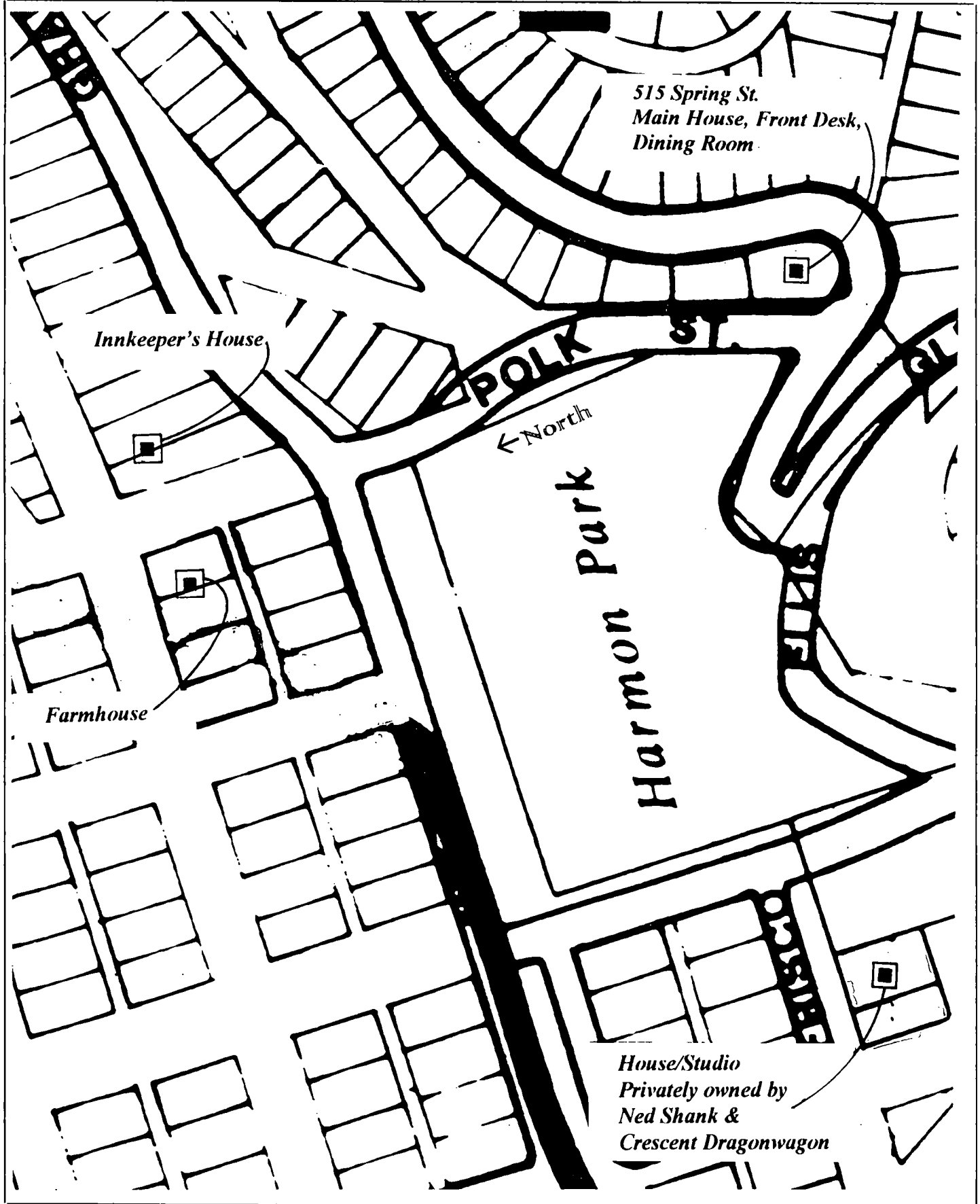
INNKEEPER'S HOUSE

HOT TUB



W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.



INSIDE

LensCrafters Vision Van, C4
Morning Star Baskets, C5

Business

SECTION C

Just-serve inclusive program, C8
School lunch menus, C10

THE MORNING NEWS OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

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http://www.nwonline.net e-mail: business@nwonline.net

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1999

Writers' colony will offer solitude and support

Abby Burnett
 Special to The Morning News

EUREKA SPRINGS — The town that made a name for itself with its healing, medicinal waters, then again as an artists' colony and finally as a tourist destination, may soon have a new claim to fame: that of nurturing writers and the creative process.

It will if the husband-and-wife team of Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon, writers and former innkeepers, have their way. The two conceived the idea of turning their award-winning bed and breakfast inn, Dairy Hollow House, into The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. To this end they have assembled boards of directors and advisers and are working to have the colony open for business early in 2000.

Although there was a summer writers' colony in Eureka Springs in the 1930s and '40s, it has long since closed and, according to Dairy Hollow's literature, there are no writers' colonies within a seven-state area surrounding Arkansas.

When The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow opens, up to eight writers, songwriters and composers at a time — each of whom has been accepted through a third-party application process — will be in residence for anywhere from one to three months, working in scenic isolation. Although the present facility needs few alterations, phones are being removed from the rooms; desks are being added. The inn's kitchen will reopen for evening meals and, eventually, a staff of five will be on hand to ensure that the operation runs smoothly.

"Eureka Springs has been a home for writers, painters and musicians from, as they say, time



Ned Shank, interim executive director of the newly-formed The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, is shown in one of the rooms that will be occupied by the writers, beginning next year. Shank was formerly co-owner of Dairy Hollow House with his wife, Crescent Dragonwagon.

immemorial," Shank says, "and because we're both writers as well, this seemed like a very beneficial next step in the evolution of the inn." (Shank, an historic preservationist, has a children's book and an essay about to be published; Dragonwagon publishes novels, children's books, cookbooks, poetry and freelance articles.)

After almost 18 years in the inn-keeping business, the two are turning over their six-cottage establishment to the colony in an installment lease-purchase. They will continue to live in the area.

Seeking funds

As with any start-up operation, funding — and keeping the operation funded — is crucial. Shank estimates that costs will average \$170 per individual per day, and

these expenses will be met through individual memberships, small fees paid by writers that go toward the colony's endowment, and dedicated fellowships endowed by corporations and foundations. The colony is organized as an Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 nonprofit, and all donations are tax deductible.

Shank is currently looking for companies willing to make five-year commitments to underwriting one- and two-month fellowships at \$5,000 per year. Donors may specify the type of writing the recipient does. (For example, a cookware company could sponsor a culinary writer.)

Once 50 to 70 dedicated fellowships are established, Shank says, and with writers paying an average of \$25 per day to live and work

at the colony, the operation's endowment would be fully funded in 10 to 12 years.

Keeping a writers' retreat operational is something that Roger Gross, a professor of drama at the University of Arkansas, knows inside out. Gross served as the director of the Mount Sequoyah New Play Retreat for seven years and, while the retreat is now on hiatus, Gross continues to seek grants in an effort to revive it.

"A colony needs money," he says. "The primary thing it does is cover people who can't cover themselves for going off into a haven. Most writers don't need a retreat unless they lack the money to provide their own peace and stimulating environment. That's all you're there to give them, to protect them."

Art for art's sake

Shank agrees. "What we'll provide is a fierce protection for the writers," he says. Beyond that, the colony will serve meals, a gathering space shared with other writers, a lending library, office equipment and staff.

"Two things have informed my adult life, professional and private," Shank says. "One is providing community public service — such as working with the local preservation society, local museums, helping found a statewide preservation group. The other is that I've always felt that making it possible for creative people to work is the most valuable thing I could do. A writers' colony is a natural progression for me."

Dragonwagon, herself no stranger to writers' colonies, wrote a brief essay in the colony's "frequently asked questions" brochure describing her reasons for wanting to found the colony.

"Writers have two residences. One occupies geographic space and is measured in ordinary clock-time. This outward-going life is interactive, shared with family, coworkers, friends, neighbors, editors, readers, and filled with the obligations, decisions, and pleasures of daily existence.

"A writer's second residence is invisible: inner, private, solitary. To enter it, he or she must be free not only from interruption, but even the fear of interruption. ...At my Eureka Springs studio, treetops,

valleys and solitude often conspire to work the out-of-time, trancelike state in which writing takes place.

...We hope that here, many writers will experience not only an outer world that is lovely, but the conditions whereby writers' timeless secret lives may unfold, where solitude and process are respected and what lies hidden within may begin, shyly and then confidently, to emerge."

Positive impact

Writers will come to Eureka Springs to produce creative work, but they will make a positive impact on the town and, ultimately, Northwest Arkansas. Each writer will be asked to do one day of public service (such as giving a reading or working with area schools) per month of residency.

"There's a less-tangible benefit in terms of adding cultural value to Eureka Springs and Northwest Arkansas," says Shank, estimating that there will be a clear economic benefit to the area from providing full-time jobs at the colony and bringing a total of 88 individuals to town per year, each of whom will make purchases and eat out.

"With the community service requirement on our resident writers, at full capacity that adds up to 88 events per year, spread out across the state.

"And there's a benefit which you can't put a direct quantifiable number on, but having writers become familiar with our part of the world will be a benefit. They're going to take knowledge and understanding of us out to the outside world, and other publicity will happen."

Gross describes a potential benefit to the writers themselves.

"The hard thing about getting funding is that most people don't understand what you do," he says. "It sounds like some kind of 'coddling' of people who should be out working, but we do it because we've learned that that's the best way to move people to success and skill in their careers."

Asked whether he had advice to give the fledgling colony, Gross has two points to make.

"Don't schedule it until you've got the money," he says. "Don't schedule it if all you've got is enough money to get through the

first round. Make sure you have a way of sustaining it for awhile.

"The second thing — and I've never said this before — is that one of the most important things is that it be possible for a writer to have as much isolation and peace as is wanted, but for there to be some opportunity when it's needed for them to have interaction and help.

"At a colony, a daily schedule would be a deadly thing, because people have got to produce when the moment is due. But there's got to be that opportunity to get stimulation when you need it and feedback to whatever degree you need."

Shank says that the board is currently considering hosting workshops at the colony, as long as they don't interfere with providing a protected environment for the writers.

Haiku to epic

Donations are being accepted, with contribution levels beginning with "haiku" (\$10 per year) and "sonnet" (\$18 per year) and going on up through "saga" (\$5,000-\$7,999) and "epic" (up to \$10,000). Applications for fellowships will be available on the colony's Web page at www.writerscolony.org or may be obtained by writing to 515 Spring Street, Eureka Springs 72632-3032.

"I'm really excited about the colony; I think it's something that will benefit everyone," says Shank, who will step down as interim executive director in the fourth quarter of this year. "I know I want to apply! I have three children's books that are batting around in my head and some non-fiction I want to work on. I'd love a month, holed up in one of our rooms, with good food being made for me."

The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.

WC DH provides temporary residence for working writers, songwriters & composers, supportive & protective of their creative process. Organized as an IRS 501(c)(3) charity, all donations are tax deductible.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1998

Eureka Springs Times-Echo

Serving Eureka Springs and Holiday Island

Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow House board meets

On Nov. 23 - 24, six board members gathered in Eureka Springs for the first board meeting of Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. The Colony is the nonprofit writing retreat center scheduled to open in 2000, one year after closing as Dairy Hollow House.

Kay Kelley Arnold of Little Rock, an officer of Entergy Corporation, was elected president. "I am elated not only that this project is being launched, but that it is being launched here," she said. A long-

time advocate for public policies that support the arts and the environment, Arnold has worked extensively with dozens of non-profit institutions, state and federal governments and corporations. She has served on many non-profit boards, currently including the boards of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation, the St. Vincent Development Foundation, and the Arkansas Orchestra Society.

"WCDH is close to my heart,"

she said. "Having been an enthusiastic visitor to Eureka Springs for the past 25 years, I know the fit is right. The Colony and Eureka will do good things for each other. This is a community already sensitive to the arts and how they benefit and shape a place, culturally, socially, and economically. WCDH will benefit all of Northwest Arkansas, and Eureka Springs most of all. And the writers, too, will benefit by time spent in this extraordinary



Room and the board— Recently the board of directors of the Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow met. From left are Larry Stone, Kay Arnold, Crow Johnson, Donna Jackson, and board of advisors members Crescent Dragonwagon and Ned Shank. (PHOTO BY ALLEN SMITH)

W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.

place.

"Being someone who's always loved reading, I like the idea of a working refuge for writers, where their creative process and need for privacy is respected. Writers may be among the most overlooked and under-served of artists. The process by which they create is invisible; no one sees them work. Yet one book can give thousands, even millions of people, pleasure or knowledge. Helping create a protected zone for working writers is one way to express our gratefulness that books, and their power to transform us, exist," said Arnold.

Other officers elected include CPA/Attorney Donna Jackson of Oklahoma City, who has been named vice-president; singer-songwriter Crow Johnson, of Gravette, who is treasurer, and Larry Stone, of Oklahoma City, who is secretary. Stone was part of the team which produced the first commercial CD ROM and created the first commercial hypertext system. He is heading up the WCDH Fundraising Committee, and will work with Board of Advisors members Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon in developing the Colony's website. Jackson, who recently won the Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma Pro Bono Award for her work on the AIDS Resource Project, will chair the building, grounds, and operation committee. Johnson will head up publicity, community relations, and events. Board members said they are actively seeking committee members. Anyone interested in serving should drop an e-mail to frontdesk@dairyhollow.com.

Attending the meeting via speakerphone were board members Antonia Allegra and Mary Gay Shipley. Allegra, who lives in Napa Valley, Calif., is a food, wine, and tourism consultant and past-president of the International Association of Culinary Professionals. She will chair the strategic planning committee. Mary Gay Shipley, owner of That Bookstore in Blytheville, is past-president of the Arkansas Community Foundation. She will act as a special liaison to

the bookselling and publishing industry.

Members of the community dropped by to wish the board luck including Lewis Epley, a member of the WCDH Board of Advisors; outgoing mayor, Barbara O'Harris and incoming mayor, Beau Satori; realtor Sid Boutwell; banker Gary Kleck; businessman Charles Edwards; Inspiration Point Fine

Arts Colony Director Jim Swiggart; woodworker/author Doug Stowe; and Chamber of Commerce Director Rick Murphy.

"The tradition of support for the arts is well established here," said Boutwell. "The Colony's potential contributions to the community are great. Not only will Eureka Springs be enriched by the readings and discussions and such in which writers will participate, but the venture will bring additional recognition of the city, undoubtedly broadening its tourism base."

W C

D H

The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.

515 Spring Street

Eureka Springs, AR

72632-3032

501-253-7444

www.writerscolony.org

director@writerscolony.org

WCDH provides temporary residence for working writers, songwriters & composers, supportive & protective of their creative process. Organized as an IRS 501(c)3 charity, all donations are tax deductible.

innkeeping

VOL. 17, NO. 2

FEBRUARY 1999

What innkeepers do when they retire

In the first such transition ever to take place in the innkeeping world, Dairy Hollow House, in Eureka Springs, closed its doors as an inn after the first weekend of 1999 to become the nonprofit Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. Writers' colonies—there are about 20 in the U.S., but none within seven states of Arkansas—offer professional writers uninterrupted quiet and solitude while providing the basic necessities of food and shelter. They offer time to work on designated projects. The project, like the inn before it, is being created by PAII charter members Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon.

Although the general public has little awareness of writers' colonies, they have a long and distinguished history. Many well-known writers have used them as working retreats. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* were written at colonies. Contemporary novelists like Marilyn French (*The Women's Room*), Vikram Seth (*A Suitable Boy*) and Allan Gurganus (*Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*), Margaret Atwood (*A Handmaid's Tale*) and Lawrence Sanders (*10 Million Ways to Die*) all use colonies regularly. Poets like Louise Gluck, Carolyn Forché, the late Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Gwendolyn Brooks and Denise Levertov have also been devoted colony users, as is playwright Edward Albee (who actually started a colony with the proceeds from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*).

The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow will offer year-round residency-fellowships in specific fields, of two weeks to three months' duration, to seven writers at a time. Would-be attendees submit applications, which are then judged by a third-party committee of their peers in the field. Sustained by business and corporate partnerships as well as individual contributions, writers stay for a nominal fee, far less than the actual cost of residence. WCDH

fellows will be asked to present one lecture, seminar, workshop or reading per month's residency in a northwest Arkansas venue, but other than that, their time is their own.

What led to this change? "Like many innkeepers, we were starting to get tired out," says Ned. "Eighteen years is a long time." But there's more to it than that. "Ned and I don't have children," says Crescent, "and we're at the age where one begins to ask 'What will my legacy be?' We loved sharing our lives, our town and our food with visitors—we loved the intimacy with which we were part of their lives. But we want to leave something behind of lasting benefit. A colony like this will serve and enrich two communities dear to our hearts, one geographic—Eureka Springs—and the other intellectual and artistic, that of working writers."

Not ones to be satisfied to quietly run their inn, Crescent and Ned have been active and awarded since they opened one of the first two B&B inns in Arkansas. Crescent is the consummate marketer, having been praised by the

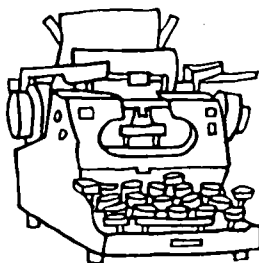
ist of the Year by American Inns, Bed & Breakfasts, & Historic Hotels.

Though Crescent and Ned plan to have ongoing and deep involvement with the colony, particularly in its first year, and to remain in Eureka Springs, they are also ready to segue out of the daily aspects of owning and managing an inn. Ned, whose first children's book will be published by Marshall Cavendish in 2000, explains, "Ultimately we do not see ourselves as co-directors of the colony. We hope that by transferring our inn to the colony and its Board of Directors, we will be able to not only create time and space for others to write but also to shift more fully into the endeavors which are beckoning us as writers ourselves."

Both Ned and Crescent say they are relieved to be completing this cycle of their lives, yet acknowledge a bittersweet quality. "Innkeeping takes a lot, but it gives a lot, too," says Crescent. They add that they will always be available to innkeeping colleagues. "Getting to know other people who are as idealistic as we are, who change the world one guest at a time, who try to give something intangible through the tangible things—and make money—we innkeepers are a rare, stubborn, creative breed," she says.

Partly because of PAII, Ned says he is able to reassure grieving guests. "I say, 'look, there are a lot of other great inns waiting out there to be discovered, in Eureka Springs and across the country—even around the world. Yes, we're moving on to the next venture—but we're leaving you in good, capable, loving hands.'"

To receive progress notes on the Colony's development, e-mail frontdesk@dairyhollow.net, noting "Writers' Colony" in Subject and "Friends of the Writers' Colony" in Message text. ✍



likes of *Gourmet*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Conde Nast Traveler*. One or both have been speakers at almost every international PAII conference and have keynoted at dozens of state-wide conferences. Crescent's *Dairy Hollow House Soup & Bread Cookbook*, which contains as many inn tales as recipes, has introduced more than 250,000 readers not only to Dairy Hollow and Eureka Springs, but to the pleasures of innkeeping. Ned helped to found the Bed and Breakfast Association of Arkansas and was named Historic Preservation-

The Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII) is the only organization whose sole objective is to advance, by education, advocacy, information and technical assistance, the international industry of B&Bs and Country Inns

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Crescent Dragonwagon



1 Frisco Avenue, Route 4, Box 7
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632
Phone: 501-253-7444 • Fax: 501-253-7389
E-mail: 76500.3276@compuserve.com

April 2, 1999

Ms. Hillary Clinton, First Lady
c/o Ms. Missy Darwin Kincaid
202-456-6771

Dear Hillary:

It is my delight to send you this slightly audacious welcome-home message, which falls in the Are-You-Ready-For-A-Could-Be-Big-Fun-And-Do-Good-Idea-From-Dragonwagon category? It follows a wonderful conversation I had with Missy, and includes greetings not only from Ned and me but from several of your other old (well, middle-aged) Arkansas compadres: Kay Kelley Arnold and Pat Lile. The other portion of this proposal is an express-mailed envelope, with info about the project all four of the aforementioned, and many others, are launching here in Eureka Springs. This is the nonprofit Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, at the site of the inn Ned and I ran for many years, and at which we did that brunch for the Arkansas Literacy Council where you and Dale Bumpers spoke.

We'd like to ask you to work with us on something loosely similar (*but not for fund-raising*) at the White House. We're imagining a dinner (I'd love to work with you and your chef on an Arkansas "Nouveau Zarks" menu) to raise awareness and gain attention for WCDH, with a guest-list drawn from the upper echelons of publishing, writing, and bookselling, plus our sterling Board. (It's our intention to follow up later with those guests who've expressed interest in the project, but *completely separately from you and the event*). We hope that you'd make remarks, as would I. Given your life as a writer and reader, longtime commitments to children, education, and literacy, and passionate involvement with the big ideas of our time, you would be an extraordinary voice for this project, as well as the necessity of nurturing creativity in general.

As you probably know, writers' colonies, which have been called "the nation's creative R and D laboratories" offer writers residency-fellowships, usually 1 to 3 months long, in an environment without interruption, where all basic needs for food and shelter are met. Thornton Wilder's Our Town, James Baldwin's Notes of a Native Son, more recently Alice McDermott's Charming Billy, are just a few of the works created at colonies; authors who use them range from Alice Walker to Edward Albee. Although there are 70 artists' colonies in the U.S., only 40 accept writers, and of those, none are in Arkansas, any of the seven adjacent states, the mid-south as a whole, or the additional 14 contiguous states in each direction of the compass. Not only will WCDH be the first in a 22-state area, but we hope to make the whole idea less elitist and more part of daily cultural currency: for each month's residency, we will ask writers to do one reading, lecture, demonstration, or workshop, either in Northwest Arkansas or one of its gateway cities (Memphis, Dallas, Kansas City, Little Rock; all of which have small, active Friends of the Colony clusters).

Of course there are a million details, alternate possibilities, and what-ifs to work out, but I hope this will be something you can look forward to not only as helping initiate something of lasting good, but an exhilarating, entertaining evening: stimulating, provocative, and fun.

Truly, and always deeply fondly,

Phone & Fax / 501-253-7389

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Truly, and always deeply fondly,

Phone + Fax / 501-253-7389

Crescent Dragonwagon

CLASS FIRST • CLASS FIRST • CLASS FIRST • CLASS FIRST • CLASS

FIRST CLASS MAIL

W|C
D|H *The Writers' Colony at
Dairy Hollow, Inc.
515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, AR 72632*

MS MISSY KINCAID
OFFICE OF THE FIRST LADY
THE WHITE HOUSE
EAST WING, SECOND FLOOR
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20502

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The
Writers'
Colony
at
Dairy
Hollow

Frequently asked
questions
& their answers

Clinton Presidential Records Digital Records Marker

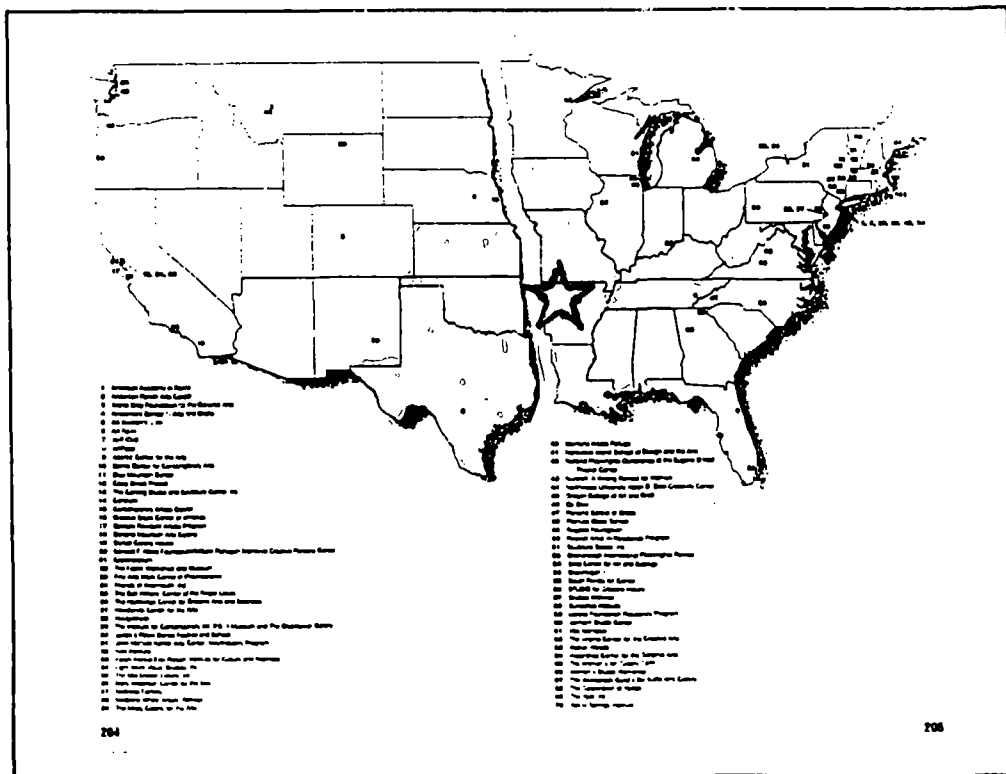
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The
Writers'
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at
Dairy
Hollow

Dedicated Fellowships



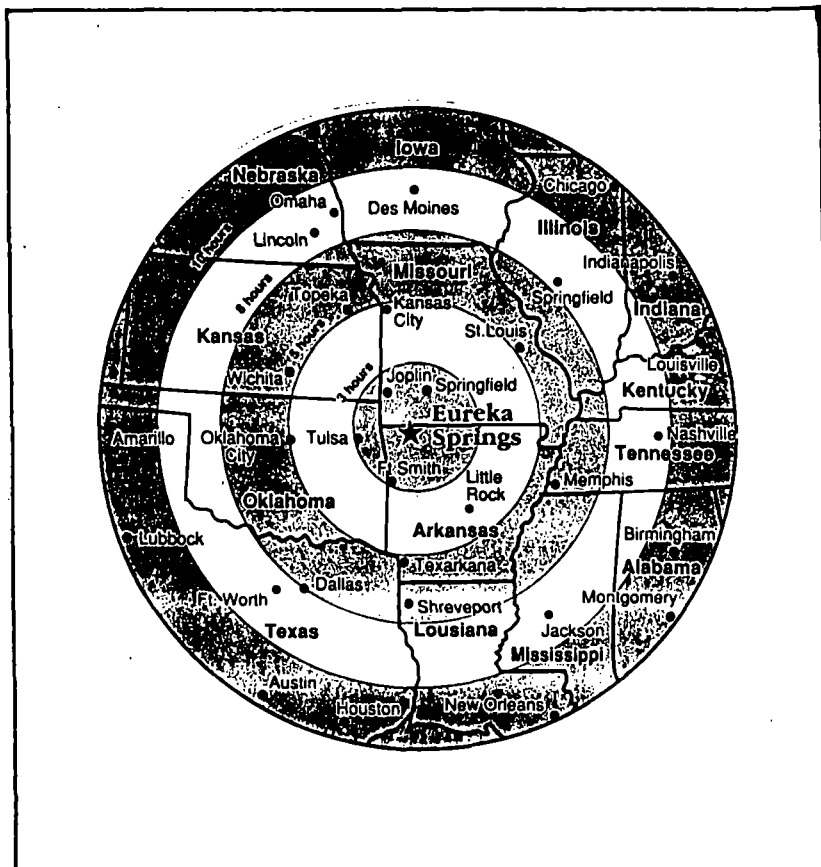
Locations of writers' colonies (highlighted)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 American Academy in Rome | 40 Montana Artists Refuge |
| 2 Anderson Ranch Arts Center | 41 Nantucket Island School of Design and the Arts |
| 3 Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts | 42 National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center |
| 4 Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts | 43 Norcott, A Writing Retreat for Women |
| 5 Art Awareness, Inc. | 44 Northwood University Alden B. Dow Creativity Center |
| 6 Art Farm | 45 Oregon College of Art and Craft |
| 7 ART/OMA | 46 Os-Bow |
| 8 ArtPlace | 47 Persimmon School of Crafts |
| 9 Atlantic Center for the Arts | 48 Pitchuck Glass School |
| 10 Barnes Center for Contemporary Arts | 49 Ragdale Foundation |
| 11 Blue Mountain Center | 50 Roosevelt Artist-in-Residence Program |
| 12 Canal Street Project | 51 Sculpture Space, Inc. |
| 13 The Carving Studio and Sculpture Center, Inc. | 52 Shenandoah International Playwrights Retreat |
| 14 Cerium | 53 Silva Center for Art and Ecology |
| 15 Contemporary Artists Center | 54 Skowhegan |
| 16 Creative Glass Center of America | 55 South Florida Art Center |
| 17 Denasee Resident Artists Program | 56 STUDIO for Creative Inquiry |
| 18 Dorland Mountain Arts Colony | 57 Studios Midwest |
| 19 Dorset Colony House | 58 Sundance Institute |
| 20 Edward F. Albee Foundation/William Flanagan Memorial Creative Persons Center | 59 Ucross Foundation Residency Program |
| 21 Exploratorium | 60 Vermont Studio Center |
| 22 The Fabric Workshop and Museum | 61 Villa Montano |
| 23 Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown | 62 The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts |
| 24 Friends of Weymouth, Inc. | 63 Walker Woods |
| 25 The Gail Winters' Center of the Finger Lakes | 64 Watershed Center for the Ceramic Arts |
| 26 The Hambidge Center for Creative Arts and Sciences | 65 The Women's Art Colony Farm |
| 27 Highlands Center for the Arts | 66 Women's Studio Workshop |
| 28 Hedgebrook | 67 The Woodstock Guild's Byrdcliffe Arts Colony |
| 29 The Institute for Contemporary Art, P.S. 1 Museum and The Clocktower Gallery | 68 The Corporation of Yaddo |
| 30 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and School | 69 The Yard, Inc. |
| 31 John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Arts Industry Program | 70 Yellow Springs Institute |
| 32 Kala Institute | |
| 33 Kulan Honua Eco-Resort, Institute for Culture and Wellness | |
| 34 Light Work Visual Studies, Inc. | |
| 35 The MacDowell Colony, Inc. | |
| 36 Mary Anderson Center for the Arts | |
| 37 Mattress Factory | |
| 38 Medicine Wheel Artists' Retreat | |
| 39 The May Colony for the Arts | |

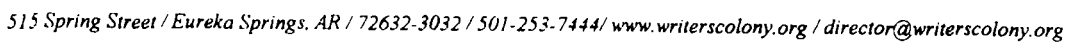
{Note: Of the 70 Alliance of Artists' Communities members in 1995, 40 accepted writers & songwriters; of these 40, only 5 were for writers/songwriters only. 67 of the total membership reported a total of 21,684 applications vs. 3,129 residents, a ratio of 7:1 applicants to residents, or a 14% chance of acceptance.}

W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.



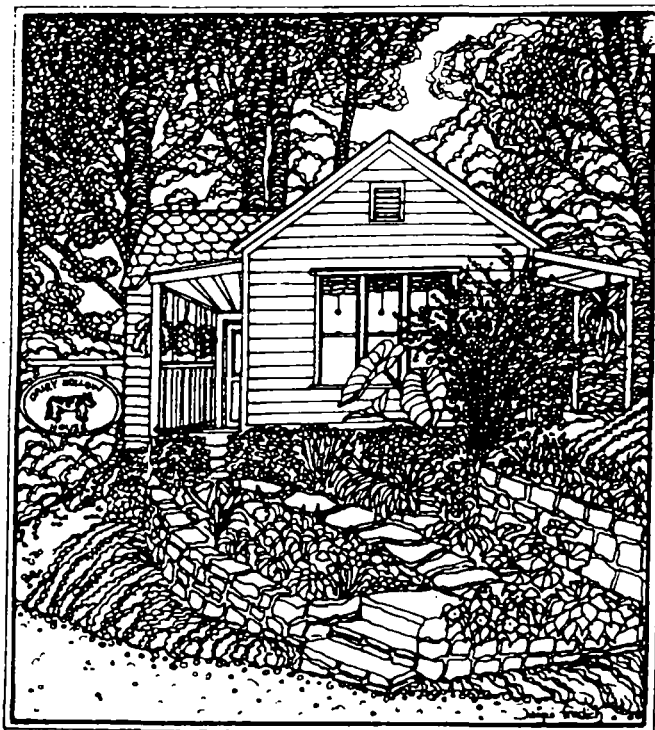
*Location of and driving distances to
Eureka Springs in the mid-South.*





515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632

501-253-7444
LOCATION
MAP



FARMHOUSE

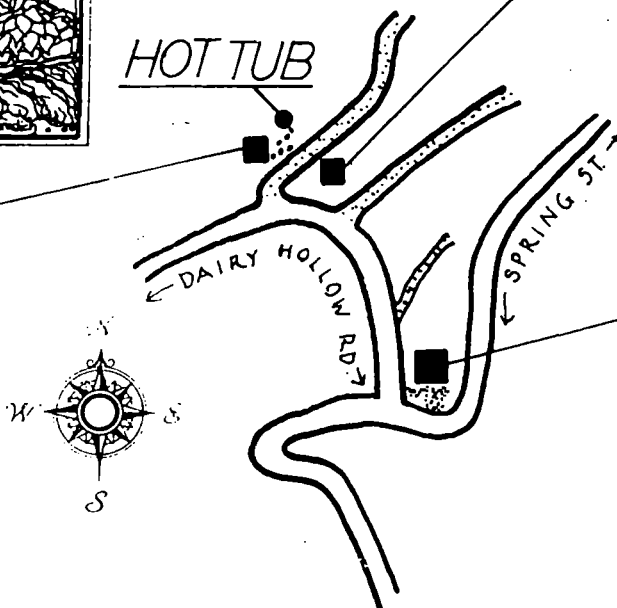
To reach Farmhouse & hot tub from Main House:
standing in parking lot facing office door, turn LEFT, exiting onto Dairy Hollow Road (paved). Turn RIGHT down the hill. At foot of hill, curve LEFT, staying on the pavement. Travel approx. 35 feet to the small unpaved road on

INNKEEPER'S HOUSE

HOT TUB



MAIN HOUSE, OFFICE, RESTAURANT

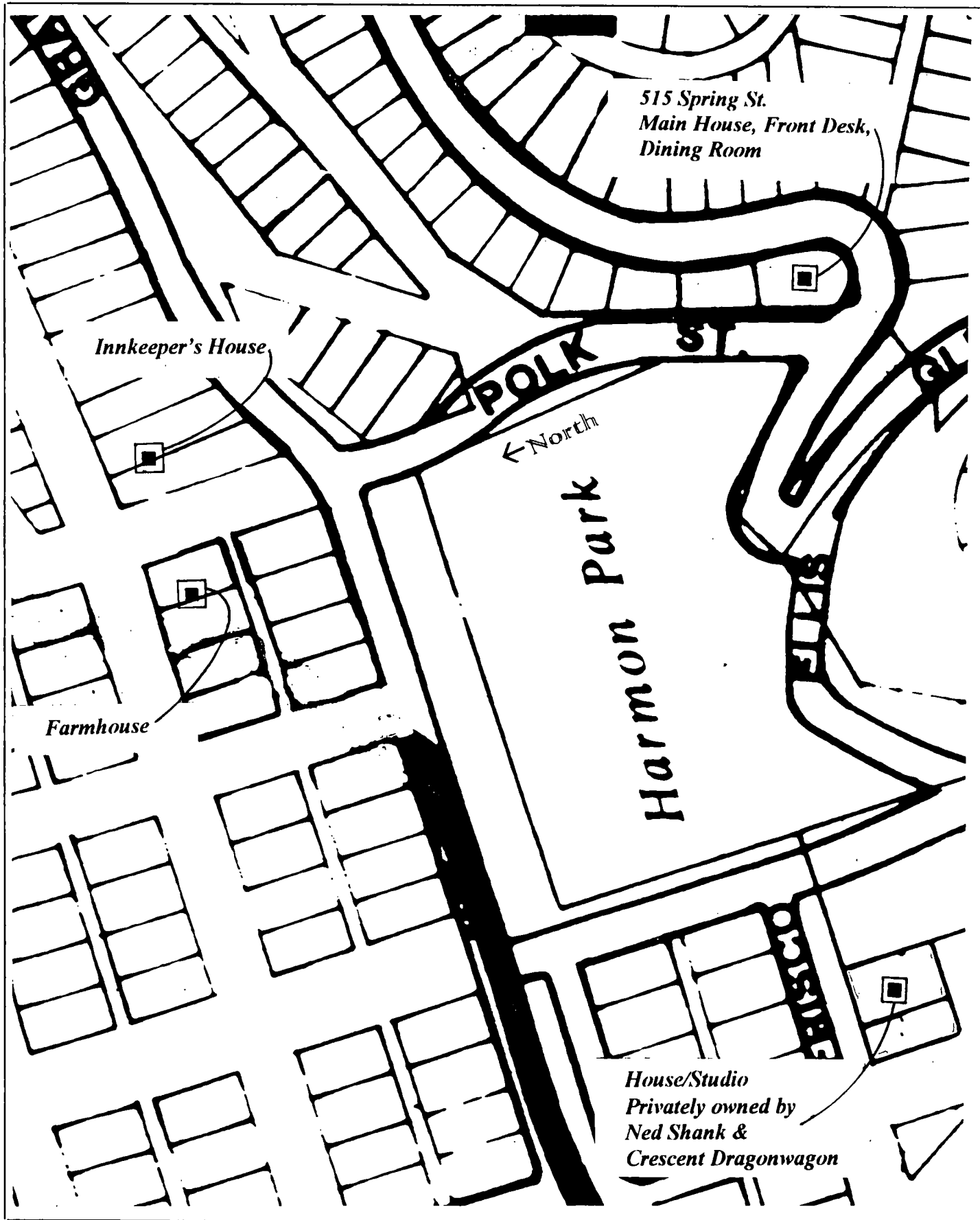


right. Turn RIGHT on this road. Farmhouse and hot tub are about 100 feet up and to LEFT; Innkeeper's House on RIGHT.

Go up stepping stone path towards Farmhouse. Veer right and up to reach hot tub (in enclosure).

W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.



Crescent Dragonwagon

Founding a writers' colony is special work: It takes vision, courage and a sharp eye for the possible. But it's a natural project for Crescent Dragonwagon, who at age 16 dropped out of school and got married; who at 18 was divorced and living alone in St. Louis; and who at 20 was working as a cook in Eureka Springs' famed Crescent Hotel.

Today, she is the author of more than two dozen children's books and another two dozen adult titles, including cookbooks, a biography of Stevie Wonder, a few novels and a couple of volumes of poetry. Not bad for a 10th grade dropout.

By Deborah Haller



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"I spent my time in school drumming my fingers, waiting for it to be over," Crescent recalls of her childhood in the town of Hastings-on-Hudson, about an hour from New York City. At home, her parents encouraged independent thought; but at school, teachers used recite-and-respond formulas and meted out punishment for wrong answers. School and Crescent were not a good match. So she dropped out and left home.

"It was more like home was leaving me," says 46-year-old Crescent, who rarely misses an opportunity to reach for precise language to frame her ideas. "I grew up in a family that was unusually literary and well-educated. It was a creative family environment." Indeed, two paintings by her grandfather, the late Harry Zolotow, hang in New York's Museum of Modern Art. Her parents' achievements would surpass even that, but at a price.

For Crescent, childhood held three distinct challenges. At home, creativity was countered by unpredictable violence and alienating silences. At school, she felt distanced from her peers in part because she was the only Jew among her predominantly Catholic classmates. In the neighborhood, her parents were sometimes considered odd, because while half the fathers commuted to New York City and the other half worked at the local manufacturing plant (few mothers worked), both of her parents were writers who worked at home.

Crescent was born Ellen Zolotow to Russian-Polish Jewish parents whose forebears had recently immigrated to the United States. From the outside, the family appeared to be accomplished and sophisticated. On the inside, however, life with her parents and older brother was unpredictable and lonely.

Maurice Zolotow was a well-known and highly regarded Hollywood biographer whose books on John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, Billy Wilder and others still hold a fascination for today's curious reader. "He invented what we now know as the celebrity interview. He was Marilyn Monroe's authorized biographer," Crescent says, looking at the shelf of books written by her father, who died in 1991.

Charlotte Zolotow is a children's

book writer in New York. "My mother is sui generis," unique, remarks Crescent. "She's a writer, editor, publisher." Her mother's bibliography suggests the work of a driven woman: 69 children's books, two volumes of poetry, two works of non-fiction, and two anthologies. And more than 100 books edited and published under the Charlotte Zolotow imprint.

Stephen Zolotow, Crescent's older brother, has homes in New York and Los Angeles, where he pursues his career as a card player. Specializing in poker and bridge, he is ranked high among world players. The two siblings didn't become friends until they were adults, a delayed bonding she also experienced with her parents.

"I now know that my family was very dysfunctional emotionally," Crescent muses of her growing-up years. "My father was alcoholic, although we didn't have that word for it then. He had to have electroshock treatments. My mother was so angry. She was holding the family together, and my father berated her for that." As Crescent matured, her father's mood swings and violence worsened. He would be talkative and happy one day, enraged and breaking things the next. Mostly, he was withdrawn. The worse he got, the more her mother grew quiet and unhappy.

When she recently mentioned to her mother that she had never seen a family photo that included all four family members, her mother responded that there were "lots of family pictures." Crescent challenged her to find one. "It took her two weeks, but she finally found one," says Crescent, holding up a small, scalloped-edged, black-and-white photo of a family on the beach. "Do you notice anything about the people in this picture?" she asks, looking at the photo, seemingly a metaphor for her childhood. "Every person in this picture is looking in a different direction."

During those years, Crescent began to form a sense of self that produced the woman she is today — strong and confident, but also introspective and careful. She continues her childhood practice of calling her parents by their first names. "Maurice used to keep gefilte fish in the refrigerator, and he would

fix his own lunch. We were told never to touch the gefilte fish," she laughs. Although it was permitted to interrupt her mother while she was working (it being more acceptable to interrupt a woman's work), Crescent was sternly warned against even talking to her father during the workday. Her growing sense of loneliness, of being on the outside, contributed to her capacity for the kind of pointed observation necessary for potent writing.

When home became unbearable, she moved into a Brooklyn brownstone with her fiancé, a curly-headed Texan. "He was an early environmental activist," she recalls, adding that she joined him in protesting the styrofoam packaging industry in the late 1960s. He was her mentor, an "older, sophisticated man," all of 28, who explained questions of justice and the meaning in life. Under his tutelage, she became a "radical."

"Being a radical was not the same as being a hippie," she cautions, acknowledging some disdain for the "hippie" lack of ideology or work ethic. The word "radical" comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning "root," and she was drawn to radical politics because it provided her with a framework for the world that was missing from home.

The young couple both believed that a wife should not have to take the husband's last name. Further, they were both uncomfortable with their own names. His first name, Mark, meant "warrior" (they were anti-war). Her first name, Ellen, meant "queen" (they were anti-authoritarian). Together, they would choose more appropriate names. For him, "Crispin" (curly-headed one); for her, "Crescent" (growing). As the wedding day neared, the couple still hadn't decided on a last name. Crescent said, "Maybe we're taking ourselves too seriously. Maybe we should pick something completely frivolous." And they did: "Dragonwagon." By the time she realized how "weird" and "ridiculous" the name was, her writing career was under way (she was published by Harper at age 18), and editors insisted she retain the name.

The young couple left New York and settled on a farm in Missouri.



Crescent Dragonwagon and Ned Shank high five one another after announcing their new venture, The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. Photo by Allen Smith

where Crescent felt more isolated than ever. When the marriage soured, she moved to St. Louis, where she wanted to make it on her own without relying upon husband or family. But during her year in St. Louis, she was the victim of a violent crime. Thinking she would be killed, she emerged from the incident with a heightened awareness of life around her. She noticed that people who did not even know each other were urging her to visit Eureka Springs, because it was her "kind of town."

On a cold January day in 1972 she did visit Eureka Springs, and it was indeed her kind of town. "Eureka" is Greek for "I have found it!" For more than a century, the town's mineral water and mountain air had been attracting visitors from around the world. Years later, she

would write, "I joined a long line of refugees to Eureka Springs," where the town motto is, "Where the Misfit Fits." She moved into a small house in a valley called Dairy Hollow.

"In some ways, I consider Eureka Springs where I grew up," she says. "As you age, your relationship with the past changes." Her teenage marriage behind her, Crescent was working as a cook at the historic Crescent Hotel, enjoying life as a "bee buzzing around the flowers" of male companionship, when she met the man of her dreams, Ned Shank. The dashing young man was an intern writing a history of Arkansas' Old State House for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"We had a potluck group," she says of the writers who met in the late 1970s at the historic Garland House in Little Rock, where Cres-

cent regularly visited. "But we had 17 women and one man. I said, we can either be a women's group, or we can bring in some men." Thus having commissioned themselves to integrate, the group's members vowed to recruit males. Sure enough, the next meeting included men, one of whom was "the most incredibly handsome man," Crescent smiles.

"I had brought an apple crisp, and I went upstairs to get whipping cream sweetened with sorghum," she recalls with typical attention to detail. "He followed me." Crescent was "an old 25, and Ned was 21, just out of college." She reminded herself that she "was not going to go on physical attraction," a vow containing more air than the whipping cream. "He was engaging, passionate, intelligent, respectful," Crescent begins, adding even more accolades to her husband of 20 years. "He's so handsome and funny, and he's one of the few people who gets my jokes."

Crescent and Ned had been married two years when a small farmhouse across the road from their Eureka Springs house came up for sale. The couple purchased the farmhouse, and in 1981 they opened it as a country inn and restaurant, which soon grew to include three houses. They were among the first to open a bed-and-breakfast in Eureka Springs, where folks weren't too familiar with the "B&B" concept that would later become popular across the country. Crescent laughs, "We had to tell our banker what a bed-and-breakfast was." Now, he owns one.

Crescent likens being an innkeeper to "being a professional fairy godmother," granting visitors' wishes. Indeed, Dairy Hollow House is known for its care for every detail, including fresh flowers in the room, a breakfast basket delivered just-so, and a hot tub tucked way into the woods. On the business end, the couple was instrumental in starting innkeepers' associations at the local and national levels, and their inn soon was recognized as one of the finest in the region.

Over the years, they've "become more integrated," as a couple, but Crescent points out that their married life has always been non-traditional. Ned has shown "reverence for what I did" as a writer, and Crescent has "valued his support

deeply," but after putting his own artistic aspirations on hold to run the inn and support her literary career, Ned is ready to pursue his own art. An illustrator and caricaturist, he has sold one book and is working on more. His mid-life call to more seriously pursue his art called for a change in the couple's relationship. Hence their newest venture: The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow.

Crescent talks about the new project from her deep-woods studio, where a beloved calico named Z-Cat guards the comings and goings of humans and wildlife, casting a cold eye on all interlopers. The studio was built after the success of her best-selling cookbook, "Dairy Hollow House Soup & Bread: A Country Inn Cookbook," a collection of 250 recipes that earned Dairy Hollow House three Uncle Ben's Best Inn of the Year awards. Crescent's culinary skill has been honored by Julia Child and James Beard, among many others, and "Soup and Bread" made the "10 Best Cookbooks of the Year" lists for the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

"I'm finishing a substantial vegetarian cookbook to be published in 1999," says Crescent, a vegetarian for more than 20 years. "I'm not evangelical about it, I just don't eat meat. So I have a lot of energy and stamina." She has worked out with weights since 1990 (in rebellion against the osteoporosis that runs in her family), she takes stairs instead of elevators, and she exercises to videotaped routines at home. But food and exercise account for only part of her endurance. The rest is strong self-discipline and total commitment to the lifestyle she has fashioned in the Ozark woods.

Centered among built-in bookcases and paned-glass windows revealing intimate textures of a wintered hillside is a well-used wooden table, upon which lays a dog-eared planning book. Its heavily notated pages boast shiny foil stars like the ones teachers give to students for work well done. Gold stars, red ones, and green — her self-reward system encourages activities to keep her body in shape, her mind sharp and her relationships nurtured. When she has met her self-defined criteria for the day, she places a colored star in her book.

"I enjoy every aspect of the work

I do," she says, "except trying to get paid by editors!" Noting that one editor has owed her many thousands of dollars for months, she says that getting paid by editors is "like trying to get state secrets out of them." In mid-sentence, she rises from her chair, walks to a rug and lowers herself to the floor, where she stretches without pause in her remarks. Reaching the close of a thought, she begins to recite rhythmic rhymes from a children's book in progress.

Crescent, herself, is a work in progress. "Yes," she muses aloud, "1999 is going to be a ding dong doodle of a year for Dragonwagon and Shank."

During the coming year, Ned and Crescent will raise funds, forge professional alliances and complete all the details necessary to run The Writers' Colony, which will be supported through a consortium of public, private and corporate funding. Attracting working writers to Eureka Springs for extended periods of time, she says, will help provide positive press and enhance community identity for the town, which relies solely on tourism.

Crescent's dual expertise as a best-selling author and an award-winning innkeeper promises to lend

a unique atmosphere to The Writers' Colony, scheduled to open in the year 2000. She and Ned are already planning ways to accommodate the needs of their future writer-guests. Work spaces with phone lines and modems, kitchen privileges, in-room breakfasts, buffet suppers with guaranteed-good company. And, once a month, locals can bring a dish and visit with the writers at a "Poetluck" dinner.

The Writers' Colony will provide time for writers to go inward, to explore their inner resources in solitude. There are more than 48 such colonies around the nation, but none within the seven states surrounding Arkansas. The project seems a natural for Eureka Springs, which has been attracting writers for more than a century.

The Colony's board of directors includes, among others, food and travel writer Antonia Allegra, "That Bookstore" in Blytheville owner Mary Gay Shipley, and World Folk Music Association award winner Crow Johnson. The board of advisors includes "I Love New York" campaign director Jane Maas, as well as poet and playwright David Mura.

But how will opening a writers' colony allow Crescent and Ned more time to pursue their individual



Crescent Dragonwagon's dual expertise as a best-selling author and an award-winning innkeeper will lend a unique atmosphere to The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow.

creative interests? "Ned and I want to get away from the den mother role," says Crescent, explaining that an administrative director will handle day-to-day operations.

She has a good role model for beginning a new life at middle age. Her father acknowledged his alcoholism and joined AA at age 57. "He sobered up the last 20 years of his life, and we got to be adolescents together. We became best pals, and I learned that my native temperament was so much like his." Crescent would later write, "At a time when most people are retiring, he was becoming a new human being ... and I was powerfully inspired by his example" of discipline and determination. On the day he took his last drink in 1971, Maurice Zolotow was \$30,000 in debt. Ten years after joining AA, he was debt-free.

It was more difficult for Crescent to make peace with her mother. In fact, the process didn't begin until Charlotte Zolotow was involved in a car wreck last year. "In some ways, both of us grew up after the car accident," Crescent says. "I went and took care of her, and we were able to spend time together." During that time, she began to appreciate the fortitude and talent of a woman she now calls "amazing."

Although she was unable to have children, Crescent got her own chance to be an "amazing" mother when she was 22 and working as a cook at the Crescent Hotel. A 12-year-old boy had been abandoned in Eureka Springs by his father, and a friend of Crescent's asked her to take him in.

"He was so bright, but he was dyslexic, and he acted out," she recalls. After about six months, she found it necessary to give him an ultimatum: either straighten up, or move out. He chose to move out, and throughout his teenage years he was in and out of prison. Her memories of him are bittersweet, both because she was unable to rescue him from prison, and because he nonetheless regards her as a bright spot in his childhood.

Once, she was making cornbread on a national morning show in New York when, back in an Arkansas prison, the young man pointed to a television bolted high on the wall and said: "That's my foster mother!" Crescent laughs at the memory. "They didn't believe him."

But perhaps prison was fated for the young man, who is now married and caring for two young nephews, because it was in prison that he finally learned to read. He later told Crescent: "I never realized that reading a book is like watching TV in your mind." His discovery profoundly affected the writer whose words have reached so many people over the years. "We never know what effect we will have on people!"

Deborah Halter is a regular contributor to Active Years.

The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.

515 Spring Street
Eureka Springs, AR
72632-3032
501-253-7444
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WCDH provides temporary residence for working writers, songwriters & composers, supportive & protective of their creative process, enriching the cultural environment of Eureka Springs & NW Arkansas. Organized as an IRS 501(c)3 charity, all donations are tax deductible.

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THE MORNING NEWS OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1999

Writers' colony will offer solitude and support

Abby Burnett

Special to The Morning News

EUREKA SPRINGS — The town that made a name for itself with its healing, medicinal waters, then again as an artists' colony and finally as a tourist destination, may soon have an new claim to fame: that of nurturing writers and the creative process.

It will if the husband-and-wife team of Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon, writers and former innkeepers, have their way. The two conceived the idea of turning their award-winning bed and breakfast inn, Dairy Hollow House, into The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. To this end they have assembled boards of directors and advisers and are working to have the colony open for business early in 2000.

Although there was a summer writers' colony in Eureka Springs in the 1930s and '40s, it has long since closed and, according to Dairy Hollow's literature, there are no writers' colonies within a seven-state area surrounding Arkansas.

When The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow opens, up to eight writers, songwriters and composers at a time — each of whom has been accepted through a third-party application process — will be in residence for anywhere from one to three months, working in scenic isolation. Although the present facility needs few alterations, phones are being removed from the rooms; desks are being added. The inn's kitchen will reopen for evening meals and, eventually, a staff of five will be on hand to ensure that the operation runs smoothly.

"Eureka Springs has been a home for writers, painters and musicians from, as they say, time



Ned Shank, interim executive director of the newly-formed The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, is shown in one of the rooms that will be occupied by the writers, beginning next year. Shank was formerly co-owner of Dairy Hollow House with his wife, Crescent Dragonwagon.

immemorial," Shank says, "and because we're both writers as well, this seemed like a very beneficial next step in the evolution of the inn." (Shank, an historic preservationist, has a children's book and an essay about to be published; Dragonwagon publishes novels, children's books, cookbooks, poetry and freelance articles.)

After almost 18 years in the inn-keeping business, the two are turning over their six-cottage establishment to the colony in an installment lease-purchase. They will continue to live in the area.

Seeking funds

As with any start-up operation, funding — and keeping the operation funded — is crucial. Shank estimates that costs will average \$170 per individual per day, and

these expenses will be met through individual memberships, small fees paid by writers that go toward the colony's endowment, and dedicated fellowships endowed by corporations and foundations. The colony is organized as an Internal Revenue Service 501(c)3 nonprofit, and all donations are tax deductible.

Shank is currently looking for companies willing to make five-year commitments to underwriting one- and two-month fellowships at \$5,000 per year. Donors may specify the type of writing the recipient does. (For example, a cookware company could sponsor a culinary writer.)

Once 50 to 70 dedicated fellowships are established, Shank says, and with writers paying an average of \$25 per day to live and work

at the colony, the operation's endowment would be fully funded in 10 to 12 years.

Keeping a writers' retreat operational is something that Roger Gross, a professor of drama at the University of Arkansas, knows inside out. Gross served as the director of the Mount Sequoyah New Play Retreat for seven years and, while the retreat is now on hiatus, Gross continues to seek grants in an effort to revive it.

"A colony needs money," he says. "The primary thing it does is cover people who can't cover themselves for going off into a haven. Most writers don't need a retreat unless they lack the money to provide their own peace and stimulating environment. That's all you're there to give them, to protect them."

Art for art's sake

Shank agrees. "What we'll provide is a fierce protection for the writers," he says. Beyond that, the colony will serve meals, a gathering space shared with other writers, a lending library, office equipment and staff.

"Two things have informed my adult life, professional and private," Shank says. "One is providing community public service — such as working with the local preservation society, local museums, helping found a statewide preservation group. The other is that I've always felt that making it possible for creative people to work is the most valuable thing I could do. A writers' colony is a natural progression for me."

Dragonwagon, herself no stranger to writers' colonies, wrote a brief essay in the colony's "frequently asked questions" brochure describing her reasons for wanting to found the colony.

"Writers have two residences. One occupies geographic space and is measured in ordinary clock-time. This outward-going life is interactive, shared with family, co-workers, friends, neighbors, editors, readers, and filled with the obligations, decisions, and pleasures of daily existence.

"A writer's second residence is invisible: inner, private, solitary. To enter it, he or she must be free not only from interruption, but even the fear of interruption. ...At my Eureka Springs studio, treetops,

valleys and solitude often conspire to work the out-of-time, trancelike state in which writing takes place. ...We hope that here, many writers will experience not only an outer world that is lovely, but the conditions whereby writers' timeless secret lives may unfold, where solitude and process are respected and what lies hidden within may begin, shyly and then confidently, to emerge."

Positive impact

Writers will come to Eureka Springs to produce creative work, but they will make a positive impact on the town and, ultimately, Northwest Arkansas. Each writer will be asked to do one day of public service (such as giving a reading or working with area schools) per month of residency.

"There's a less-tangible benefit in terms of adding cultural value to Eureka Springs and Northwest Arkansas," says Shank, estimating that there will be a clear economic benefit to the area from providing full-time jobs at the colony and bringing a total of 88 individuals to town per year, each of whom will make purchases and eat out.

"With the community service requirement on our resident writers, at full capacity that adds up to 88 events per year, spread out across the state.

"And there's a benefit which you can't put a direct quantifiable number on, but having writers become familiar with our part of the world will be a benefit. They're going to take knowledge and understanding of us out to the outside world, and other publicity will happen."

Gross describes a potential benefit to the writers themselves.

"The hard thing about getting funding is that most people don't understand what you do," he says. "It sounds like some kind of coddling of people who should be out working, but we do it because we've learned that that's the best way to move people to success and skill in their careers."

Asked whether he had advice to give the fledgling colony, Gross has two points to make.

"Don't schedule it until you've got the money," he says. "Don't schedule it if all you've got is enough money to get through the

first round. Make sure you have a way of sustaining it for awhile.

"The second thing — and I've never said this before — is that one of the most important things is that it be possible for a writer to have as much isolation and peace as is wanted, but for there to be some opportunity when it's needed for them to have interaction and help.

"At a colony, a daily schedule would be a deadly thing, because people have got to produce when the moment is due. But there's got to be that opportunity to get stimulation when you need it and feed-back to whatever degree you need."

Shank says that the board is currently considering hosting workshops at the colony, as long as they don't interfere with providing a protected environment for the writers.

Haiku to epic

Donations are being accepted, with contribution levels beginning with "haiku" (\$10 per year) and "sonnet" (\$18 per year) and going on up through "saga" (\$5,000-\$7,999) and "epic" (up to \$10,000). Applications for fellowships will be available on the colony's Web page at www.writerscolony.org or may be obtained by writing to 515 Spring Street, Eureka Springs 72632-3032.

"I'm really excited about the colony; I think it's something that will benefit everyone," says Shank, who will step down as interim executive director in the fourth quarter of this year. "I know I want to apply! I have three children's books that are batting around in my head and some non-fiction I want to work on. I'd love a month, holed up in one of our rooms, with good food being made for me."

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1998

Eureka Springs Times-Echo

Serving Eureka Springs and Holiday Island

Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow House board meets

On Nov. 23 - 24, six board members gathered in Eureka Springs for the first board meeting of Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. The Colony is the nonprofit writing retreat center scheduled to open in 2000, one year after closing as Dairy Hollow House.

Kay Kelley Arnold of Little Rock, an officer of Entergy Corporation, was elected president. "I am elated not only that this project is being launched, but that it is being launched here," she said. A long-

time advocate for public policies that support the arts and the environment, Arnold has worked extensively with dozens of non-profit institutions, state and federal governments and corporations. She has served on many non-profit boards, currently including the boards of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Foundation, the St. Vincent Development Foundation, and the Arkansas Orchestra Society.

"WCDH is close to my heart,"

she said. "Having been an enthusiastic visitor to Eureka Springs for the past 25 years, I know the fit is right. The Colony and Eureka will do good things for each other. This is a community already sensitive to the arts and how they benefit and shape a place, culturally, socially, and economically. WCDH will benefit all of Northwest Arkansas, and Eureka Springs most of all. And the writers, too, will benefit by time spent in this extraordinary



Room and the board— Recently the board of directors of the Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow met. From left are Larry Stone, Kay Arnold, Crow Johnson, Donna Jackson, and board of advisors members Crescent Dragonwagon and Ned Shank. (PHOTO BY ALLEN SMITH)

W C

D H The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Inc.

place.

"Being someone who's always loved reading, I like the idea of a working refuge for writers, where their creative process and need for privacy is respected. Writers may be among the most overlooked and under-served of artists. The process by which they create is invisible; no one sees them work. Yet one book can give thousands, even millions of people, pleasure or knowledge. Helping create a protected zone for working writers is one way to express our gratefulness that books, and their power to transform us, exist," said Arnold.

Other officers elected include CPA/Attorney Donna Jackson of Oklahoma City, who has been named vice-president; singer-songwriter Crow Johnson, of Gravette, who is treasurer, and Larry Stone, of Oklahoma City, who is secretary. Stone was part of the team which produced the first commercial CD ROM and created the first commercial hypertext system. He is heading up the WCDH Fundraising Committee, and will work with Board of Advisors members Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon in developing the Colony's website. Jackson, who recently won the Legal Aid of Western Oklahoma Pro Bono Award for her work on the AIDS Resource Project, will chair the building, grounds, and operation committee. Johnson will head up publicity, community relations, and events. Board members said they are actively seeking committee members. Anyone interested in serving should drop an e-mail to frontdesk@dairyhollow.com.

Attending the meeting via speakerphone were board members Antonia Allegra and Mary Gay Shipley. Allegra, who lives in Napa Valley, Calif., is a food, wine, and tourism consultant and past-president of the International Association of Culinary Professionals. She will chair the strategic planning committee. Mary Gay Shipley, owner of That Bookstore in Blytheville, is past-president of the Arkansas Community Foundation. She will act as a special liaison to

the bookselling and publishing industry.

Members of the community dropped by to wish the board luck including Lewis Epley, a member of the WCDH Board of Advisors; outgoing mayor, Barbara O'Harris and incoming mayor, Beau Satori; realtor Sid Boutwell; banker Gary Kleck; businessman Charles Edwards; Inspiration Point Fine Arts Colony Director Jim Swiggart; woodworker/author Doug Stowe; and Chamber of Commerce Director Rick Murphy.

"The tradition of support for the arts is well established here," said Boutwell. "The Colony's potential contributions to the community are great. Not only will Eureka Springs be enriched by the readings and discussions and such in which writers will participate, but the venture will bring additional recognition of the city, undoubtedly broadening its tourism base."

W C

D H

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innkeeping

VOL. 17, NO. 2

FEBRUARY 1999

What innkeepers do when they retire

In the first such transition ever to take place in the innkeeping world, Dairy Hollow House, in Eureka Springs, closed its doors as an inn after the first weekend of 1999 to become the nonprofit Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. Writers' colonies—there are about 20 in the U.S., but none within seven states of Arkansas—offer professional writers uninterrupted quiet and solitude while providing the basic necessities of food and shelter. They offer time to work on designated projects. The project, like the inn before it, is being created by PAII charter members Ned Shank and Crescent Dragonwagon.

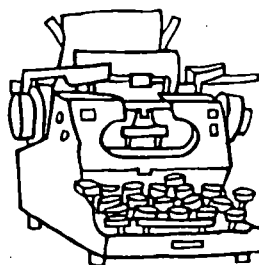
Although the general public has little awareness of writers' colonies, they have a long and distinguished history. Many well-known writers have used them as working retreats. Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* and James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son* were written at colonies. Contemporary novelists like Marilyn French (*The Women's Room*), Vikram Seth (*A Suitable Boy*) and Allan Gurganus (*Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All*), Margaret Atwood (*A Handmaid's Tale*) and Lawrence Block (*10 Million Ways to Die*) all use colonies regularly. Poets like Louise Gluck, Carolyn Forché, the late Allen Ginsberg, Robert Creeley, Gwendolyn Brooks and Denise Levertov have also been devoted colony users, as is playwright Edward Albee (who actually started a colony with the proceeds from *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*).

The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow will offer year-round residency-fellowships in specific fields, of two weeks to three months' duration, to seven writers at a time. Would-be attendees submit applications, which are then judged by a third-party committee of their peers in the field. Sustained by business and corporate partnerships as well as individual contributions, writers stay for a nominal fee, far less than the actual cost of residence. WCDH

fellows will be asked to present one lecture, seminar, workshop or reading per month's residency in a northwest Arkansas venue, but other than that, their time is their own.

What led to this change? "Like many innkeepers, we were starting to get tired out," says Ned. "Eighteen years is a long time." But there's more to it than that. "Ned and I don't have children," says Crescent, "and we're at the age where one begins to ask 'What will my legacy be?' We loved sharing our lives, our town and our food with visitors—we loved the intimacy with which we were part of their lives. But we want to leave something behind of lasting benefit. A colony like this will serve and enrich two communities dear to our hearts, one geographic—Eureka Springs—and the other intellectual and artistic, that of working writers."

Not ones to be satisfied to quietly run their inn, Crescent and Ned have been active and awarded since they opened one of the first two B&B inns in Arkansas. Crescent is the consummate marketer, having been praised by the



likes of *Gourmet*, *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Conde Nast Traveler*. One or both have been speakers at almost every international PAII conference and have keynoted at dozens of state-wide conferences. Crescent's *Dairy Hollow House Soup & Bread Cookbook*, which contains as many inn tales as recipes, has introduced more than 250,000 readers not only to Dairy Hollow and Eureka Springs, but to the pleasures of ingoing. Ned helped to found the Bed and Breakfast Association of Arkansas and was named Historic Preservation-

ist of the Year by American Inns, Bed & Breakfasts, & Historic Hotels.

Though Crescent and Ned plan to have ongoing and deep involvement with the colony, particularly in its first year, and to remain in Eureka Springs, they are also ready to segue out of the daily aspects of owning and managing an inn. Ned, whose first children's book will be published by Marshall Cavendish in 2000, explains, "Ultimately we do not see ourselves as co-directors of the colony. We hope that by transferring our inn to the colony and its Board of Directors, we will be able to not only create time and space for others to write but also to shift more fully into the endeavors which are beckoning us as writers ourselves."

Both Ned and Crescent say they are relieved to be completing this cycle of their lives, yet acknowledge a bittersweet quality. "Innkeeping takes a lot, but it gives a lot, too," says Crescent. They add that they will always be available to innkeeping colleagues. "Getting to know other people who are as idealistic as we are, who change the world one guest at a time, who try to give something intangible through the tangible things—and make money—we innkeepers are a rare, stubborn, creative breed," she says.

Partly because of PAII, Ned says he is able to reassure grieving guests. "I say, 'look, there are a lot of other great inns waiting out there to be discovered, in Eureka Springs and across the country—even around the world. Yes, we're moving on to the next venture—but we're leaving you in good, capable, loving hands.'"

To receive progress notes on the Colony's development, e-mail frontdesk@dairyhollow.net, noting "Writers' Colony" in Subject and "Friends of the Writers' Colony" in Message text. ✍

The Professional Association of Innkeepers International (PAII) is the only organization whose sole objective is to advance, by education, advocacy, information and technical assistance, the international industry of B&Bs and Country Inns

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Crescent Dragonwagon

*Founding a writers' colony takes
courage and a sharp eye for the possible —
a natural project for this achiever.*



Crescent Dragonwagon

Founding a writers' colony is special work. It takes vision, courage and a sharp eye for the possible. But it's a natural project for Crescent Dragonwagon, who at age 16 dropped out of school and got married:



Founding a writers' colony is special work. It takes vision, courage and a sharp eye for the possible. But it's a natural project for Crescent Dragonwagon, who at age 16 dropped out of school and got married; who at 18 was divorced and living alone in St. Louis; and who at 20 was working as a cook in Eureka Springs' famed Crescent Hotel.

Today, she is the author of more than two dozen children's books and another two dozen adult titles, including cookbooks, a biography of Stevie Wonder, a few novels and a couple of volumes of poetry. Not bad for a 10th grade dropout.

By Deborah Halter



Photo by Allen Smith

"I spent my time in school drumming my fingers, waiting for it to be over," Crescent recalls of her childhood in the town of Hastings-on-Hudson, about an hour from New York City. At home, her parents encouraged independent thought; but at school, teachers used recite-and-respond formulas and meted out punishment for wrong answers. School and Crescent were not a good match. So she dropped out and left home.

"It was more like home was leaving me," says 46-year-old Crescent, who rarely misses an opportunity to reach for precise language to frame her ideas. "I grew up in a family that was unusually literary and well-educated. It was a creative family environment." Indeed, two paintings by her grandfather, the late Harry Zolotow, hang in New York's Museum of Modern Art. Her parents' achievements would surpass even that, but at a price.

For Crescent, childhood held three distinct challenges. At home, creativity was countered by unpredictable violence and alienating silences. At school, she felt distanced from her peers in part because she was the only Jew among her predominantly Catholic classmates. In the neighborhood, her parents were sometimes considered odd, because while half the fathers commuted to New York City and the other half worked at the local manufacturing plant (few mothers worked), both of her parents were writers who worked at home.

Crescent was born Ellen Zolotow to Russian-Polish Jewish parents whose forebears had recently immigrated to the United States. From the outside, the family appeared to be accomplished and sophisticated. On the inside, however, life with her parents and older brother was unpredictable and lonely.

Maurice Zolotow was a well-

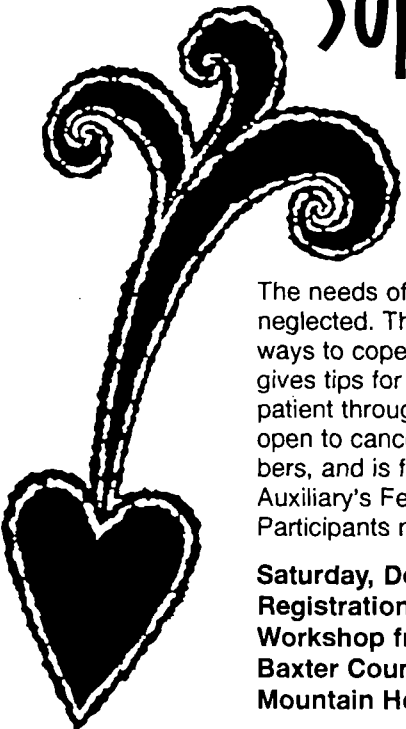
become friends until they were adults, a delayed bonding she also experienced with her parents.

"I now know that my family was very dysfunctional emotionally," Crescent muses of her growing-up years. "My father was alcoholic, although we didn't have that word for it then. He had to have electroshock treatments. My mother was so angry. She was holding the family together, and my father berated her for that." As Crescent matured, her father's mood swings and violence worsened. He would be talkative and happy one day, enraged and breaking things the next. Mostly, he was withdrawn. The worse he got, the more her mother grew quiet and unhappy.

When she recently mentioned to her mother that she had never seen a family photo that included all four family members, her mother responded that there were "lots of family pictures." Crescent challenged her to find one. "It took her two weeks, but she finally found one," says Crescent, holding up a small, scalloped-edged, black-and-white photo of a family on the beach. "Do you notice anything about the people in this picture?" she asks, looking at the photo, seemingly a metaphor for her childhood. "Every person in this picture is looking in a different direction."

During those years, Crescent began to form a sense of self that produced the woman she is today — strong and confident, but also introspective and careful. She continues her childhood practice of calling her parents by their first names. "Maurice used to keep gefilte fish in the refrigerator, and he would fix his own lunch. We were told never to touch the gefilte fish," she laughs. Although it was permitted to interrupt her mother while she was working (it being more acceptable to interrupt a woman's work),

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Maurice Zolotow was a well-known and highly regarded Hollywood biographer whose books on John Wayne, Marilyn Monroe, Billy Wilder and others still hold a fascination for today's curious reader. "He invented what we now know as the celebrity interview. He was Marilyn Monroe's authorized biographer," Crescent says, looking at the shelf of books written by her father, who died in 1991.

Charlotte Zolotow is a children's book writer in New York. "My mother is sui generis," unique, remarks Crescent. "She's a writer, editor, publisher." Her mother's bibliography suggests the work of a driven woman: 69 children's books, two volumes of poetry, two works of non-fiction, and two anthologies. And more than 100 books edited and published under the Charlotte Zolotow imprint.

Stephen Zolotow, Crescent's older brother, has homes in New York and Los Angeles, where he pursues his career as a card player. Specializing in poker and bridge, he is ranked high among world players. The two siblings didn't

Do you notice anything about the people in this picture?" she asks, looking at the photo, seemingly a metaphor for her childhood. "Every person in this picture is looking in a different direction."

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When home became unbearable, she moved into a Brooklyn brownstone with her fiancé, a curly-headed Texan. "He was an early environmental activist," she recalls, adding that she joined him in protesting the styrofoam packaging industry in the late 1960s. He was her mentor, an "older, sophisticated man," all of 28, who explained questions of justice and the meaning in life. Under his tutelage, she became a "radical."

"Being a radical was not the same as being a hippie," she cautions, acknowledging some disdain for the "hippie" lack of ideology or work ethic. The word "radical" comes from the Latin radix, meaning "root," and she was drawn to radical politics because it provided her with a framework for the world that was missing from home.

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Crescent Dragonwagon and Ned Shank high five one another after announcing their new venture, The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. Photo by Allen Smith

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polyester, \$125.

The young couple both believed that a wife should not have to take the husband's last name. Further, they were both uncomfortable with their own names. His first name, Mark, meant "warrior" (they were anti-war). Her first name, Ellen, meant "queen" (they were anti-authoritarian). Together, they would choose more appropriate names. For him, "Crispin" (curly-headed one);

On a cold January day in 1972 she did visit Eureka Springs, and it was indeed her kind of town. "Eureka" is Greek for "I have found it!" For more than a century, the town's mineral water and mountain air had been attracting visitors from around the world. Years later, she would write, "I joined a long line of refugees to Eureka Springs," where the town motto is, "Where the Misfit

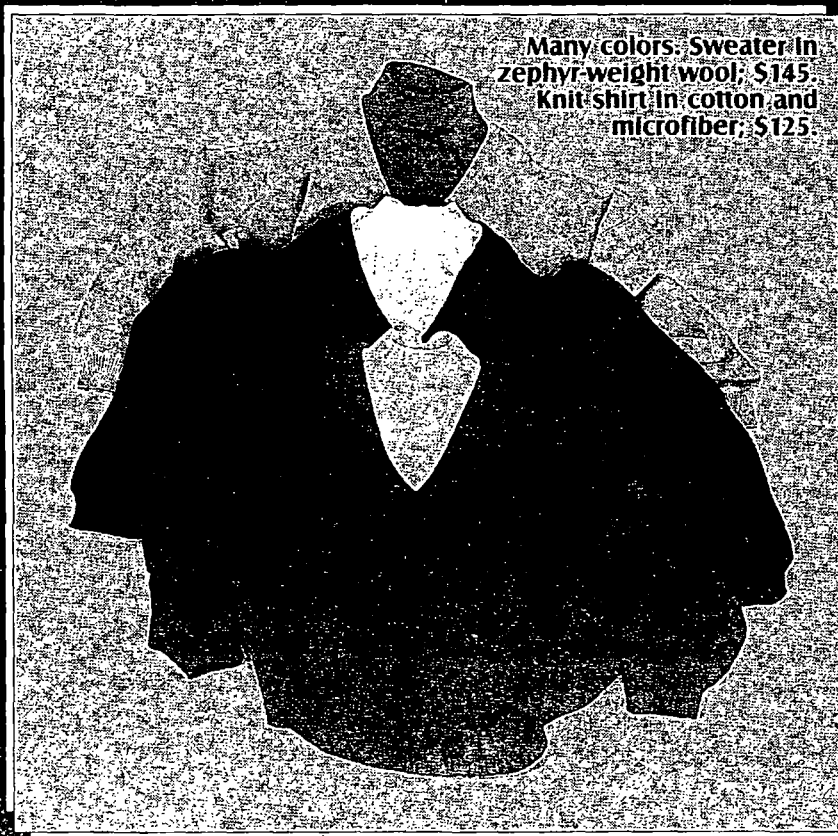
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Crescent Dragonwagon and Ned Shank high five one another after announcing their new venture, The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow. Photo by Allen Smith

The young couple both believed that a wife should not have to take the husband's last name. Further, they were both uncomfortable with their own names. His first name, Mark, meant "warrior" (they were anti-war). Her first name, Ellen, meant "queen" (they were anti-authoritarian). Together, they would choose more appropriate names. For him, "Crispin" (curly-headed one); for her, "Crescent" (growing). As the wedding day neared, the couple still hadn't decided on a last name. Crescent said, "Maybe we're taking ourselves too seriously. Maybe we should pick something completely frivolous." And they did: "Dragonwagon." By the time she realized how "weird" and "ridiculous" the name was, her writing career was under way (she was published by Harper at age 18), and editors insisted she retain the name.

The young couple left New York and settled on a farm in Missouri, where Crescent felt more isolated than ever. When the marriage soured, she moved to St. Louis, where she wanted to make it on her own without relying upon husband or family. But during her year in St. Louis, she was the victim of a violent crime. Thinking she would be killed, she emerged from the incident with a heightened awareness of life around her. She noticed that people who did not even know each other were urging her to visit Eureka Springs, because it was her "kind of town."

On a cold January day in 1972 she did visit Eureka Springs, and it was indeed her kind of town. "Eureka" is Greek for "I have found it!" For more than a century, the town's mineral water and mountain air had been attracting visitors from around the world. Years later, she would write, "I joined a long line of refugees to Eureka Springs," where the town motto is, "Where the Misfit Fits." She moved into a small house in a valley called Dairy Hollow.

"In some ways, I consider Eureka Springs where I grew up," she says. "As you age, your relationship with the past changes." Her teenage marriage behind her, Crescent was working as a cook at the historic Crescent Hotel, enjoying life as a "bee buzzing around the flowers" of male companionship, when she met the man of her dreams, Ned Shank. The dashing young man was an intern writing a history of Arkansas' Old State House for the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"We had a potluck group," she says of the writers who met in the late 1970s at the historic Garland House in Little Rock, where Crescent regularly visited. "But we had 17 women and one man. I said, we can either be a women's group, or we can bring in some men." Thus having commissioned themselves to integrate, the group's members vowed to recruit males. Sure enough, the next meeting included men, one of whom was "the most incredibly handsome man," Crescent smiles.

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"I had brought an apple crisp, and I went upstairs to get whipping cream sweetened with sorghum," she recalls with typical attention to detail. "He followed me." Crescent was "an old 25, and Ned was 21, just out of college." She reminded herself that she "was not going to go on physical attraction," a vow containing more air than the whipping cream. "He was engaging, passionate, intelligent, respectful," Crescent begins, adding even more accolades to her husband of 20 years. "He's so handsome and funny, and he's one of the few people who gets my jokes."

Crescent and Ned had been married two years when a small farmhouse across the road from their Eureka Springs house came up for sale. The couple purchased the farmhouse, and in 1981 they opened it as a country inn and restaurant, which soon grew to include three houses. They were among the first to open a bed-and-breakfast in Eureka Springs, where folks weren't too familiar with the "B&B" concept that would later become popular across the country. Crescent laughs, "We had to tell our banker what a bed-and-breakfast was." Now, he owns one.

Crescent likens being an innkeeper to "being a professional fairy godmother," granting visitors' wishes. Indeed, Dairy Hollow House is known for its care for every detail, including fresh flowers in the room, a breakfast basket delivered just-so, and a hot tub tucked way into the woods. On the business end, the couple was instrumental in starting innkeepers' associations at the local and national levels, and their inn soon was recognized as one of the finest in the region.

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Over the years, they've "become more integrated," as a couple, but Crescent points out that their married life has always been non-traditional. Ned has shown "reverence for what I did" as a writer, and Crescent has "valued his support deeply," but after putting his own artistic aspirations on hold to run the inn and support her literary career, Ned is ready to pursue his own art. An illustrator and caricaturist, he has sold one book and is working on more. His mid-life call to more seriously pursue his art called for a change in the couple's relationship. Hence their newest venture: The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow.

Crescent talks about the new project from her deep-woods studio, where a beloved calico named Z-Cat guards the comings and goings of humans and wildlife, casting a cold eye on all interlopers. The studio was built after the success of her best-selling cookbook, "Dairy Hollow House Soup & Bread: A Country Inn Cookbook," a collection of 250 recipes that earned Dairy Hollow House three Uncle Ben's Best Inn of the Year awards. Crescent's culinary skill has been honored by Julia Child and James

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Crescent Dragonwagon's dual expertise as a best-selling author and an award-winning innkeeper will lend a unique atmosphere to The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow.

Beard, among many others, and "Soup and Bread" made the "10 Best Cookbooks of the Year" lists for the *Washington Post* and *USA Today*.

"I'm finishing a substantial vegetarian cookbook to be published in 1999," says Crescent, a vegetarian for more than 20 years. "I'm not evangelical about it, I just don't eat meat. So I have a lot of energy and stamina." She has worked out with weights since 1990 (in rebellion against the osteoporosis that runs in her family), she takes stairs instead of elevators, and she exercises to videotaped routines at home. But food and exercise account for only part of her endurance. The rest is strong self-discipline and total commitment to the lifestyle she has fashioned in the Ozark woods.

Crescent, herself, is a work in progress. "Yes," she muses aloud, "1999 is going to be a ding dong doodle of a year for Dragonwagon and Shank."

During the coming year, Ned and Crescent will raise funds, forge professional alliances and complete all the details necessary to run The Writers' Colony, which will be supported through a consortium of public, private and corporate funding. Attracting working writers to Eureka Springs for extended periods of time, she says, will help provide positive press and enhance community identity for the town, which relies solely on tourism.

Crescent's dual expertise as a best-selling author and an award-winning innkeeper promises to lend a unique atmosphere to The Writers'



Ice skating on an outdoor rink!

There's no better way to catch the holiday spirit than at Southwestern Bell's Miracle at the Market Ice Rink at the River Market, 400 East Markham, in downtown Little Rock. It's great fun for kids of all ages, and proceeds support Little Rock Mayor Jim Dailey's Christmas Tree Fund. You can also help "Put Hunger on Ice" by bringing nonperishable food items to the ice rink. They will be donated to the Arkansas Food Bank Network and distributed to disadvantaged Arkansans for the holidays.

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Centered among built-in bookcases and paned-glass windows revealing intimate textures of a wintered hillside is a well-used wooden table, upon which lays a dog-eared planning book. Its heavily notated pages boast shiny foil stars like the ones teachers give to students for work well done. Gold stars, red ones, and green — her self-reward system encourages activities to keep her body in shape, her mind sharp and her relationships nurtured. When she has met her self-defined criteria for the day, she places a colored star in her book.

"I enjoy every aspect of the work I do," she says, "except trying to get paid by editors!" Noting that one editor has owed her many thousands of dollars for months, she says that getting paid by editors is "like trying to get state secrets out of them." In mid-sentence, she rises from her chair, walks to a rug and lowers herself to the floor, where she stretches without pause in her remarks. Reaching the close of a thought, she begins to recite rhythmic rhymes from a children's book in progress.

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Crescent's dual expertise as a best-selling author and an award-winning innkeeper promises to lend a unique atmosphere to The Writers' Colony, scheduled to open in the year 2000. She and Ned are already planning ways to accommodate the needs of their future writer-guests. Work spaces with phone lines and modems, kitchen privileges, in-room breakfasts, buffet suppers with guaranteed-good company. And, once a month, locals can bring a dish and visit with the writers at a "Poetluck" dinner.

The Writers' Colony will provide time for writers to go inward, to explore their inner resources in solitude. There are more than 48 such colonies around the nation, but none within the seven states surrounding Arkansas. The project seems a natural for Eureka Springs, which has been attracting writers for more than a century.

The Colony's board of directors includes, among others, food and travel writer Antonia Allegra, "That Bookstore" in Blytheville owner Mary Gay Shipley, and World Folk Music Association award winner Crow Johnson. The board of advisors includes "I Love New York" campaign director Jane Maas, as well as poet and playwright David Mura.

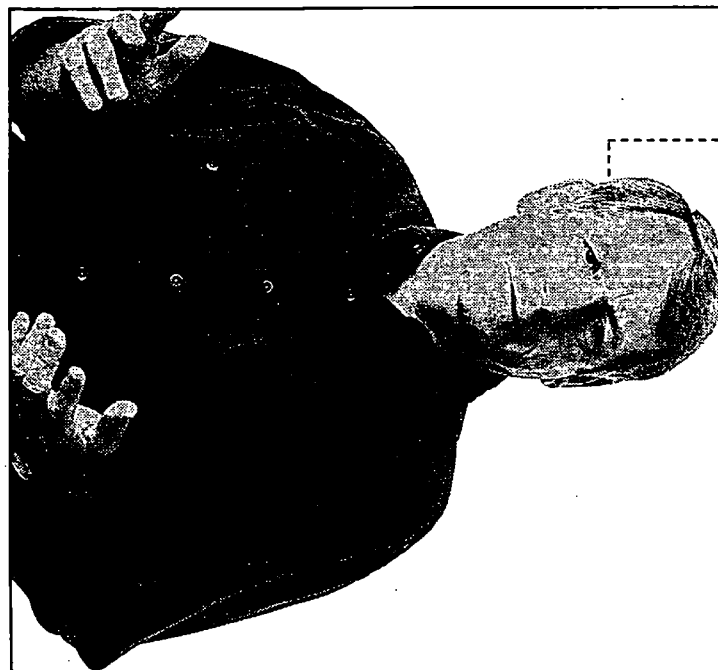
But how will opening a writers' colony allow Crescent and Ned more time to pursue their individual creative interests? "Ned and I want to get away from the den mother role," says Crescent, explaining that an administrative director will handle day-to-day operations.

She has a good role model for beginning a new life at middle age. Her father acknowledged his alcoholism and joined AA at age 57. "He sobered up the last 20 years of his life, and we got to be adolescents together. We became best pals, and I learned that my native temperament was so much like his." Crescent would later write, "At a time when most people are retiring, he was becoming a new human being ... and I was powerfully inspired by his example" of discipline and determination. On the day he took his last drink in 1971, Maurice Zolotow was \$30,000 in debt. Ten years after joining AA, he was debt-free.

It was more difficult for Crescent to make peace with her mother. In fact, the process didn't begin until Charlotte Zolotow was involved in a car wreck last year. "In some ways, both of us grew up after the car accident," Crescent says. "I went and took care of her, and we were able to spend time together." During that time, she began to appreciate the fortitude and talent of a woman she now calls "amazing."

Although she was unable to have children, Crescent got her own chance to be an "amazing" mother when she was 22 and working as a cook at the Crescent Hotel. A 12-year-old boy had been abandoned in Eureka Springs by his father, and a friend of Crescent's asked her to take him in.

"He was so bright, but he was dyslexic, and he acted out," she recalls. After about six months, she found it necessary to give him an ultimatum: either straighten up,

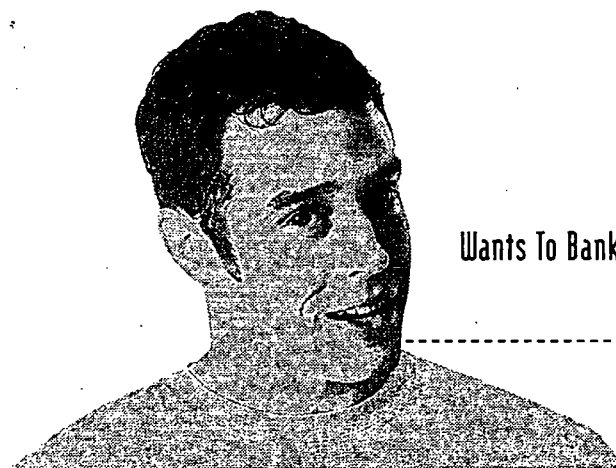


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"He was so bright, but he was dyslexic, and he acted out," she recalls. After about six months, she found it necessary to give him an ultimatum: either straighten up, or move out. He chose to move out, and throughout his teenage years he was in and out of prison. Her memories of him are bittersweet, both because she was unable to rescue him from prison, and because he nonetheless regards her as a bright spot in his childhood.

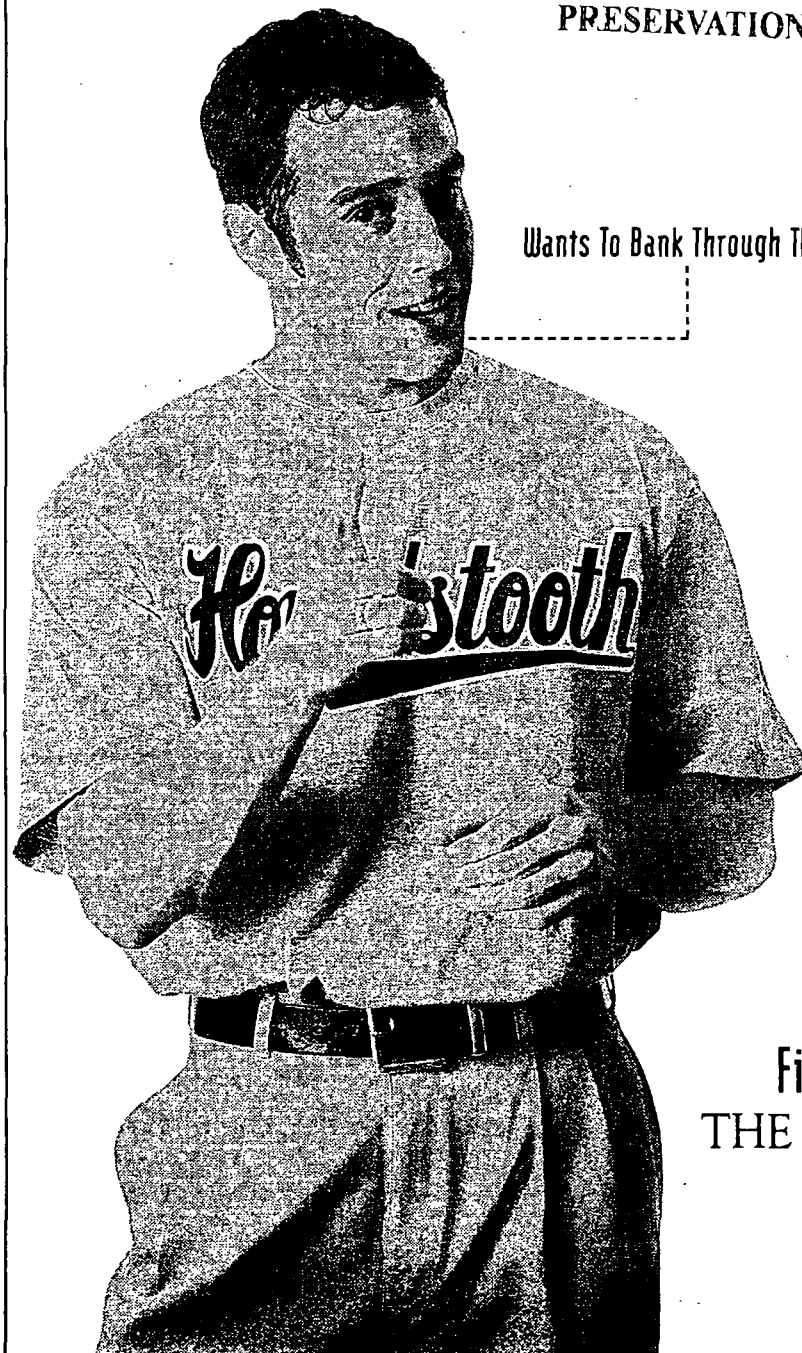
Once, she was making cornbread on a national morning show in New York when, back in an Arkansas prison, the young man pointed to a television bolted high on the wall and said: "That's my foster mother!" Crescent laughs at the memory. "They didn't believe him."

But perhaps prison was fated for the young man, who is now married and caring for two young nephews, because it was in prison that he finally learned to read. He later told Crescent: "I never realized that reading a book is like watching TV in your mind." His discovery profoundly affected the writer whose words have reached so many people over the years. "We never know what effect we will have on people." ■

Deborah Halter is a regular contributor to Active Years.

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