

La Gazette du Moulin à Nef

Number 8, April 2004

President's Letter

Dear Friends,

It is with some mixed feelings that I write this letter to you. We have been successful in our mission to create an exchange center in Auvillar. Folk dancers have come to Denver and filmmakers have come to Auvillar. The Auvillar Suite was written and performed by an American composer for the residents of our lovely village and we have opened a ceramic studio to share some of the old techniques of faïence with artists, children and friends. Along the way we have met many good people. This effort has been most gratifying.

However, part of our mission has always been to identify an organization that could carry on the work that we began. This could only be an organization that would both benefit from its relationship to Auvillar, and bring something of value to the village. We have been fortunate to find an organization that will be able to continue our efforts in its own way. Our success ultimately means that this letter, this Gazette, will be our last under the old program. Auvillar is becoming an interesting center for the arts, in many forms. Perhaps we contributed to this in some small way.

In any case, a new group of artists will be coming to Auvillar this summer to discover Auvillar, her people, and her charms. Like parents, we will remain supportive and interested in the Moulin à Nef for many years, but we will encourage a new group of artists to create their own vision in this very special quarter of France.

If you should stop buy to say hello, you may finally find us with more free time to share a glass of wine or a game of petanque with you under the chestnut tree!

Many thanks for your support and interest.

With kind regards,

Susan Saarinen



The Moulin à Nef, seen from the bridge.

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Unless otherwise indicated, articles have been written by members of the CECA Board

The Last of It's Kind?

In keeping with the new direction of the Moulin à Nef, this issue of the Gazette will be the last of its kind. The next newsletter will be conceived and produced by the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA) with the help of the Association Auvill'art.

We thank our faithful readers who have followed our adventures in these pages and have watched the Moulin à Nef and its numerous cultural exchange programs take shape over the past ten years. We invite you all to stay tuned for the next exciting episode which promises to be full of enthusiasm and joie de vivre!

La Gazette on the Web

The Gazette is published in French and English and printed in black and white. If you would like to see or print out the color version, it is available on our website:

<http://www.moulinanef.org>

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Eric Bergman, Editor

Contributions Welcome

Contact us at:

E-mail
CECA@moulinanef.org

Fax
(303) 722-3702

Mailing Addresses

**The Cultural Exchange
Center of Auvillar
3200 Cherry Creek South Drive
Suite 460
Denver, Colorado 80209-3246
USA**

**Centre d'Échange Culturel d'Auvillar
Le Moulin à Nef
Le Port 82340
Auvillar
FRANCE**

Websites
www.moulinanef.org
www.auvillar.com
www.auvillar.info

**The Moulin à Nef
in New Hands**

Welcome to Auvillar!

As planned and as announced in past issues of the Gazette, the Donnell-Kay Foundation accepted proposals in 2003 from candidates interested in taking ownership of the Moulin à Nef and continuing its original mission as a cultural exchange center. At the end of the year, the proposals were presented to the president of the Foundation and its Board of Trustees. Their job was not an easy one: they were asked to select from a list of highly qualified and motivated candidates, the one they felt could best carry on the spirit of exchange we have pursued since 1994.

The Foundation has chosen the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. The VCCA (www.vcca.com) will make its debut in Auvillar this summer. In June, The ceramics studio will welcome Joe Monk, ceramist and professor of art at Sweet Briar College (www.sbc.edu), accompanied by his wife Suny, Director of the VCCA. In July and August, Sheila Pleasants, Director

of International Exchange, will be in the village with her husband, Craig, who is also Program Director. They will be in charge of the Artists in Residence program and the artists recruited by the VCCA. In the meantime, we will pass along all the information we can to help them get settled. The CECA will be dissolved, its mission accomplished, by the end of the year. The official transfer of property will be made at the same time.

We know that everyone will welcome warmly our new friends from Virginia and do whatever they can to make them feel at home in Auvillar. (See in this issue two articles written by the VCCA.)

Who Are We?

**Virginia Center for the
Creative Arts**

Situated in beautiful Central Virginia, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts is one of the United States' foremost working retreats for writers, visual artists, and composers, providing a supportive environment for the world's best artists to pursue their creative work, free from the distractions and responsibilities of day-to-day life. At the VCCA, "Fellows" receive three prepared meals each day and have private bedrooms in a modern, comfortable residence with separate studios. Residencies range from two weeks to two months.

Since it was founded in 1971, the VCCA has become the leader of international exchange programs among artists' communities in the United States. Currently, the VCCA participates in

exchanges with artists' retreats in Ireland, Germany, Malta, Austria and Argentina. Artists have come to the VCCA from as many as fifty foreign countries. The effect of encounters between artists from different cultures is often extraordinary and occasionally results in major collaborative projects.

VCCA Fellows are mature artists of noteworthy achievement, or the most promising younger artists. Many of them teach at universities, art schools, and conservatories. Because admission is highly competitive, the artists who come to the VCCA are often the leading artists in America. Among them are Pulitzer Prize winners, Guggenheim Fellows, and recipients of National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships.

The VCCA facilities—located on a 450 acre estate adjacent to a small woman's liberal arts college—are large enough to host 22 artists at a time: 10 writers, 9 visual artists, and 3 composers. Please visit the VCCA website at www.vcca.com for more information.

Suny Monk



Suny Monk, Director of the VCCA

Broadway Dances into Valence d'Agen

Since the visit of the Danseurs du Bruhlois to Denver in 1995, dance has not appeared in the Auvill'art programs. That first experience was a hard act to follow but at last this summer we have found a sufficiently motivated group of participants.

From the American side, we are pleased to welcome the Mendocino Ballet, a school of dance from northern California. Trudy McCreanor, director of the school, will accompany nine dancers between the ages of 14 and 25 as well as three instructors. They will arrive in Auvillar on June 29th, eager to show us their talent and eager to work alongside young French dancers who share their passion.

On the French side, Fabienne Luini-Rattier, an Auvillar native now teaching in the north of France, will represent the Jean Monet School in Caudry along with ten students from 12 to 14 years old. She will join Helene Darroman, director of the School of Dance of Valence d'Agen and a group of dancers from that program.

The three groups will waste no time getting started in morning and afternoon workshops beginning June 30th. For practical reasons, classes will probably take place in Valence. The evenings will be set aside to rehearse for the performance, planned for the 8th of July, which will showcase a wide variety of dance styles from classical to tap, from modern to jazz and hip hop. Using a mailing list on the Auvillar website (www.auvillar.com), Fabienne, Trudy and Helene are working together to iron out all the details including the possibility of offering a few classes for children and/or adults. Trudy has also offered to teach a workshop in Broadway dance open to participants from all three groups.



The Mendocino Ballet in performance.

A Quiet American

A lot of people in Auvillar know James Paradis and will welcome him back to the village in June when he will come again to work and to visit with his friends. Every day you can catch sight of him crossing the Place de la Halle, headed down the Peyrat to the Port, to his studio in the Moulin à Nef with view on the Garonne. He will spend the day mixing colors, juggling paintbrushes, wielding pencils, like an alchemist on a quest.

Tired and happy in the evening, he will make his way home along the Garonne. "Adichiatz" he will call out to the people enjoying the shade or playing petanque. Perhaps someone will offer a glass of wine in front of Susan and Eric's house or Juliette and Etienne's.

The VCCA Artists in Residence Program

In July 2004, la Cebo and la Cloucado will be full of activity. In an international residency program through the VCCA (the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts), seven artists and writers will be in the studios at Le Port. There will be three writers working in la Cloucado and four visual artists working in the spaces in la Cebo.

The VCCA artists and writers, known as VCCA Fellows, are professionals who will be in Auvillar to have concentrated time to do their creative work. Planning to be in residence in July are a filmmaker, two fiction writers, a maker of artists' books, two painters, and a poet who has translated the Occitan women troubadours.

There will be public readings and open studios during the month-long residency as the writers and visual artists hope to have some interaction with the people of Auvillar and the region.

VCCA Artists' Services Director Sheila Gulley Pleasants will also be in residence helping to guide this first residency program administered by the VCCA at Moulin à Nef. Her husband Craig Pleasants who is the Program Director at the VCCA, and their three daughters will accompany Ms. Pleasants. Ms. Pleasants will have office space set up in the first floor of La Cloucado. She welcomes visits from the people of Auvillar.

Suny Monk

Director of the VCCA

(Brief biographies of the participants in the 2004 Artists in Residence program will be found on the following page)

Who Are They?

Artists in Residence 2004

Helen Benedict, New York, N.Y. Benedict is the author of seven books, including three novels: *The Sailor's Wife* (Zoland, 2000), *Bad Angel* (Plume, 1997) and *A World Like This* (Dutton, 1990). She has also published short stories and essays in *The Ontario Review* and *The Antioch Revue* among others and contributed to various collective works including *Feminism, Law and the Media* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Virginia Derryberry, Asheville, North Carolina In recent years, Derryberry has completed major commissions for the Atlanta International Airport (1996) and the Knoxville Convention Center (2002). She has taught art at the university level for the last 18 years. Her paintings are in numerous national collections including the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh and the Tennessee State Museum as well as various corporate collections.

Mary McDonnell, Brooklyn, N.Y. McDonnell's paintings have been shown in New York, Boston, Florida and Texas this past year and in public and private collections in the U.S. and

abroad. She has also done award-winning work designing book jackets for the publishing industry and even a beer label for a microbrewery in Michigan. She has taught drawing, design and printmaking at the college level and had a number of solo exhibitions throughout the country.

Stephen O'Connor, New York, N.Y. O'Connor is the author of *Rescue*, a collection of short fiction and poetry, and of *Will My Name Be Shouted Out?*, a memoir and social analysis of two years he spent helping a group of New York City public school students write and perform plays about urban violence. His fiction, essays, journalism and poetry have appeared in many publications including *The New York Times*, *The Nation* and *The Partisan Review*. He teaches writing at Columbia University and Sarah Lawrence College.

David Petersen, Brooklyn, N.Y. Petersen is a writer and a filmmaker. His film, *Fine Food, Fine Pastries, Open 6 to 9*, was nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Documentary, Short Subject category. The film won first

place in the American, Houston International and Cine Film Festivals. His poems and short stories have appeared in a number of literary reviews.

Anita Wetzel, Rosendale, N.Y. Wetzel's work has been shown in solo exhibitions in New York state and group shows in Washington (the National Museum of Women in the Arts), New York (Multi Media Arts Gallery and the Center for Book Arts), Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. Her artists' books are in the collections of the Brooklyn Museum, the Cooper-Hewitt Museum, the Walker Art Center and the Museum of Modern Art.

Sarah White, New York, N.Y. In addition to teaching French language and literature for 23 years at Franklin and Marshall College, White has collaborated on the English translation of Occitan poems by women troubadours (*Songs of the Women Troubadours*, Garland Press, 2002) as well as contributing essays and poems to a number of magazines including *The Paris Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Hanging Loose* and *Poetry New Zealand*.



The studio barns, part of the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts facility in Virginia

He's Still in Love!



C'est sur!! John Lencicki returns to Auvillar this summer with an enthusiastic group of students. After the cancellation of several exchanges with the village last year, 2004 sees a new spirit and the pent-up desire of many Americans to return to France.

John, a graduate of Pratt Institute in New York and a professional painter and teacher in Denver, Colorado since the 70s, will arrive on June 27th to spend two weeks in the town he visited many times in the mid-nineties. In recent years he has led groups deep into the Morbihan region of France, and last summer he and other veterans of Auvillar days (Carole Buschmann, Tim Flynn, Kim

English) rented a villa in the mountains of Corsica. (A major exhibition by this last group takes place in May at Denver's Abend Gallery.) The group (11 at this writing) includes two young men, ages 16 and 18, on their first trip to Europe, as well as much older veteran travelers. They will lodge at both the Hotel de l'Horloge and the Chateau de Lastours. You may encounter them drawing and painting under the Halle, learning to paint water by the shores of the Garonne, sitting in the middle of a field of sunflowers, and most certainly making art in the gardens and on the streets of Le Port. Francoise Bres will accompany the group as translator/manager.

John's classes will focus on concept, value, composition, perspective and above all, the use of color and the importance of drawing. He hopes to introduce his students to local artists working in Auvillar, who are invited to inquire about participating in the workshop. Each day at the hour of the apéritif, he will involve the other artists in a critique at the Moulin à Nef, to which the public is invited.

Some members of the group speak French. Their other interests include history, architecture, the route of St. Jacques, vineyards and horseback riding. Surely, they will return to America eager to share their memories of the town with which their professor fell in love way back in 1994!

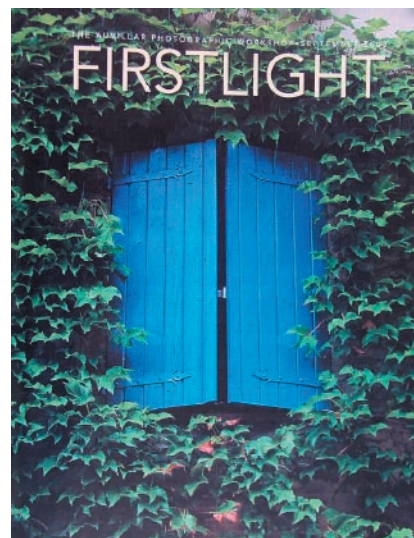
Barbara Lencicki

Images of Auvillar

We have recently seen the first draft of a very handsome forty-page magazine commemorating the FirstLight workshop held in Auvillar last fall. The photos are veritable works of art. The text celebrates the peace and harmony of everyday life in the village while underlining its rich architectural and cultural background.

The magazine, in English only, should be available sometime during the summer 2004.

Jay Dickman is currently exploring the possibility of a second workshop in 2005 which would focus on the festival of Saint Noé. Both the Association Saint Noé and the VCCA have given the project a green light.



The cover of the magazine. Photo by Barbara Bent.

Texas Lutheran University in Auvillar

Six students and two professors from Texas Lutheran University (TLU) will arrive in Auvillar on May 15 to begin intensive study of French language and culture through photography. Students in the group have various levels of experience in French, from no knowledge at all through several years of study at the college level.

The students will have French classes in the morning at the Moulin à Nef with Saúl Sanchez, who teaches French at TLU, and will spend their

afternoons studying digital photography with Robin Bisha, who teaches photography at TLU and attended the FirstLight Workshop in September 2003.

Students' assignments will help them develop their skills in French through interacting with the local community and taking photographs in the area.

The group welcomes interaction with local youth. Those who would like to improve their English through the

study of photography are encouraged to join the group at the Moulin à Nef.

After two weeks in Auvillar, the group will travel to Strasbourg and Paris before returning to Seguin, Texas, on June 7.

Students' photographs and their statements about them will be exhibited at Texas Lutheran University during the fall semester 2004.

Robin Bisha

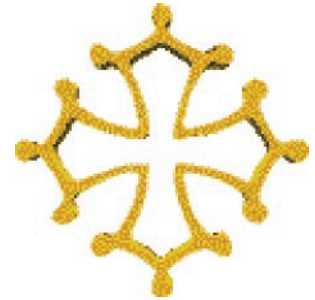


La Cloucado

The Moulin à Nef could not let the year go by without mentioning the 150th anniversary of the founding of the Félibrige by Frédéric Mistral and his friends, as well as the centennial of Mistral's Nobel Prize in Literature. Once again, let us honor the Auvillarais of that joyful "cloucado", the Marcabrun school known as "l'escola Marcabrun". Louis Verdier was the president, François Barrié, the "sous-capiscol". The names of

Pimpeterre, de Bressoles, Cavallès, often laureates in annual contests, are familiar to residents of Auvillar even today.

The Saint Noé, festival of the "félibres", is still dear to our hearts and the description of the procession by Cavallès rings true even in the present day. By happy coincidence, this summer the Moulin à Nef welcomes Sarah White as a poet in residence. Although she hopes to devote herself to her own writing in July, Sarah has translated the poems and songs of the women troubadours into English and looks forward to sharing her knowledge with others who wish to keep these memories alive.



Vive la Saint Noé!

**Cultural Exchange Center of Auvillar
3200 Cherry Creek South Dr, Suite 460
Denver, Colorado 80209-3246**

