



# The Spiral

Twenty Years of Service for Aiken's Senior Community

January, 2011

## President's Message

Happy New Year!

The Winter/Spring 2011 course catalogs were mailed, as promised, in early December. Many thanks to Susie Sadowski and the Curriculum Committee for once again providing a wide range of subjects for our membership to consider.

On March 11, 2011 we will resume general membership meetings to hold elections for our Board and Standing Committee chairs. Anne Campbell will be our speaker. Please mark your calendars now as you will not want to miss hearing this engaging, fun and most gracious lady. While they met in Georgia, Cot and Anne brought the now iconic Dogwood Stables to Aiken in 1986 and the city has been much the richer and better since. Bring your friends!

*Glenn Knowles, Academy President*

## Robert Penland (Continued)

By Glenn Knowles

*[Editor's note. This article is a continuation of the information presented by Academy President Glenn Knowles in several issues of The Spiral during the Fall Semester.]*

This installment recalls a special person who most assuredly rode in one, or more, of Bob Penland's jeeps around Aiken.

In 1952 Amelia Knoedler was attracted to the Aiken area just as Bob Penland had been - by the massive nuclear facility being built nearby by the federal government. *The Augusta Chronicle* chose Amelia to open their new bureau office in South Carolina. The *Chronicle* had excellent reasons for selecting her for this position. She had a degree in journalism from the University of Georgia, and had nearly four years of experience. But it was the depth of her experience that made her a standout.

Upon graduation she was hired as editor of the *Unadilla Observer*, a small town weekly paper in southern Georgia. She also wrote all the articles and took all the photographs. "I was the paper," she is quoted as saying. After setting a homey editorial tone she was soon thrust face to face (or hood) with the Ku Klux Klan. She witnessed the beating of a black gentleman attempting to vote during an election. Horrified and incensed, Amelia reported on the event in *The Observer* and followed with several editorials. The Klan retaliated. Both she and her landlady received anonymous letters. The windows of *The Observer* office were covered with racist stickers. Anonymous threatening and harassing phone calls came. And her reporting and editorials continued. Flames swirled around crosses and threats to Miss Knoedler's safety escalated. Over time she was able to compile a list of those behind the white hoods, and while she never divulged the names, the Klan knew she could expose them. Public activity by the Klan in the area subsided for a time.

The one woman Unadilla newspaper drew state wide attention and awards and led to her Aiken, S.C. appointment. That Bob Penland and Amelia Knoedler found one another in the early 1950's in small but growing Aiken is not hard to imagine. They married in 1956. Bob had stipulated, and she agreed, to leave her position at the newspaper to be his wife and raise their children, a major change for a strong willed, independent woman. She became the counterbalance to his optimism and enthusiasm, adding a practical side to his life and business. She was the stay-at-home, always-available mother for their two children. Amelia looked after the household finances, decorating, and entertainment chores. Each day though, she dressed for his return from work.

As Houndslake grew she maintained a membership roster and sent personal notes for each family's births, anniversaries and milestone birthdays. Her daughter, Peggy, describes her mother as a model Emily Post, and she and her brother were well taught.

Bob Penland earned many honors, and we list a few:

- USC Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award

- Distinguished Service Award of the USC Education Foundation
- Man of the Year – Rotary Club of Aiken
- Man of the Year – Greater Aiken Chamber of Commerce
- Doctor of Public Service, USCA

Penland established two scholarship funds:

- The Isabelle Caldwell Penland Scholar Award, USC
- The Robert E. and Amelia K. Penland Scholarship, USCA

And the Steinway Piano used at the Etherredge Center for Public Performances is the Robert E. and Amelia K. Penland Piano. I prefer to think of it as the Amelia Knoedler Piano. It takes a team to have such a hugely positive impact upon a community, and she surely was one of two standouts on that team.

Robert died in 2005, and Amelia later that same year. An interesting note is that her obituary followed immediately behind Peter Jennings' on the AP wires and was thus seen by many Aikenites.

### Catalog Correction

Please make the following correction to your Academy Spring Catalog. The *Making a Poem* session with Mike Lythgoe on January 31 runs from 1:00 to 2:50 pm in Penland 110, not 1:00 to 5:00 pm in Penland 106 as is shown in the catalog.

### Courses Filled

The following courses which begin in February have reached their capacity limits: *Exploring the Heavens* and *SC Through Geologic Times*.

### Courses Beginning in January

Please see the published course catalog for course descriptions and additional information. (The Spring 2011 catalog is available on the web at <http://web.usca.edu/dotAsset/62353.pdf>). To enroll, return the form in the catalog along with any required payment. For questions, contact Laura Anderson at USCA (641-3563 / [lauraa@usca.edu](mailto:lauraa@usca.edu)).

#### **Opera** [M. Simpson]

Mon. Jan. 10, 24, 31, Feb. 7

#### **American Wine Tasting (special event)**

Riley's Whitby Bull

#### **Limited to 20 persons**

Tues. Jan. 11 - \$25/person

#### **Coinage & History of Ancient Greece** [J. Barry]

Wed. Jan. 26, Feb. 2, 9, 16

#### **Making a Poem** [M. Lythgoe]

Mon. Jan. 31

*The Spiral* is published monthly during the academic year by the Academy for Lifelong Learning at the University of South Carolina – Aiken, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801. 803-641-3587. Doug Wilson, Editor

**Academy Officers:** Glenn Knowles, President; Vince Coughlin, Immediate Past President; Richard Baxter, President Elect; Larry Peyser, Secretary, and Rick Arkin, Treasurer.

**Chairpersons and Other Members of the Academy:**  
**Board of Directors:** Susan Sadowski, Curriculum Chair; Gerald and Marsha McDonald, Curriculum Co-Chairs-Elect; LaVerne Speca, Publicity Chair; Kathy Schulz, Membership Chair.

**Non-Members:** Mary Anne Cavanaugh, Director of Conferences & Continuing Education; Dr. Elaine Lacey, Faculty Liaison; Dr. Deidre Martin, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement.

**Academy on the Web:** <http://web.usca.edu/conted/academy/>

