



PETER HAYES
Chief Executive Officer

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Dear Friends:

I'm happy to announce I've accepted the position of CEO at New River, a 10-year-old non-profit supporting playwrights and writers, financially and creatively. If you're unfamiliar with New River, here's what it does: selecting several talented playwrights, it transports them to a lovely country inn on North Carolina's New River where they're given room and board plus a \$500 weekly honorarium. They work on their plays — writing in the mornings and in intensive group sessions in the afternoon — with an artistic director, the other playwrights, and a group of hand-picked actors and actresses, who enact the roles and give their own feedback.

The result? Of the 345 plays that NR's 70 individual playwrights have created over the last ten years, *almost half have been either optioned or produced!* *Stone*, a screenplay by Angus MacLachlan, is currently being filmed by Robert De Niro. The first volume of a New River Drama Series will be published by McFarland & Co. this year.

New River writers are a broad array of men and women from young unknowns to National Medal of the Arts recipient, N. Scott Momaday; Denis Johnson, author of *Jesus' Son* and winner of the 2007 National Book Award; and Cassandra Medley, whose *Relativity* won the August Wilson Award for the best African-American play of 2007. The only criteria for participation is that each was willing to fully engage in the group process.

What's in it for us? How about great literature that speaks to our lives? Even as I write, public readings of New River plays and fiction, performed by some of the best actors and actresses in the business, are happening across the country. I invite you to watch and hear Dominic Chianese, Blythe Danner, Will Patton, Patricia Randell or Victor Slezak, among a host of other first-class performers, make a play or a story fly off the page, circle the theater and hit you between the eyes!

My job is to continue the New River tradition of supporting talented writers to produce their best work, which in the end, I think, uplifts us all. The poet Muriel Rukeyser writes: "The universe is made of stories, not atoms." This has certainly been true of my world: writing, re-writing, editing, reading, singing and playing, hearing, watching and contemplating stories in their many forms has always been my chief means of learning and of making sense of life. And I know I'm not alone. Ask any young child what he or she thirsts for most — after love, milk, and bread — and you'll find it's for you to *tell them a story!*

In days past, writers and artists were supported by patrons: individuals of taste and substance who recognized the importance of literature to society. With the economy requiring the scaling back of many government programs, your support can make a tremendous difference, one far beyond its size. Our storytellers need to be nurtured; not

for their sake, but for ours. And doing that is as easy as clicking the Donate button on the New River website. Or, if you'd prefer to personally support an individual writer, please give me a call, and I'll share with you a list of candidates and discuss the benefits to you both.

The links below will tell you more about New River, including a list of the many New River public readings and events to which you are enthusiastically invited.

I've sent you this note because you're either a friend of mine — or of New River's. If we haven't yet met, I look forward to it. And if we have, I hope to see you again soon.

Your own,
Peter

Peter Hayes
Chief Executive Officer
New River

Links:

[New River Brochure: September 2009](#)

[New River Events & Programs: August 2009 – January 2010](#)

[New River Website](#)

[Peter Hayes' bio](#)

[The Circle of Sacrifice: An Ancient Approach to Giving by Peter Hayes](#)

“Sacrifice is the quality that makes love real, that saves it from being just another four-letter word.”