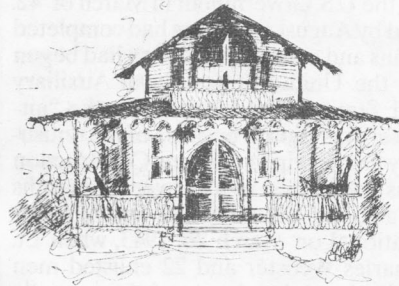


VINEYARD GAZETTE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS.

FRIDAY, JULY 30, 2010



## OAK BLUFFS

BETTYE FOSTER BAKER

Renaissance House, a retreat for artists and writers, will complete its eighth year this summer, providing emerging artists in need of solitude and work space a place to create. Many of the artists have been coming since the first year, and many are new. Renaissance House operates under the Helene Johnson and Dorothy West Foundation for Artists in Need. In 1945, Helene Johnson, the Harlem Renaissance poet said: "In order to write, a person must have time to stare at the trees and do nothing." The late Dorothy West, her cousin and year-round Island resident, also a writer during the Harlem Renaissance, was working at the Harborside Restaurant until Jacqueline Kennedy spotted her writing in the Gazette and gave her the opportunity to simply, "stare at the trees and do nothing," which resulted in the acclaimed best-selling novel, *The Wedding*, a novel based on the life of Helene Johnson's daughter, Abigail McGrath, who founded Renaissance House in 2002.

On Wednesday, August 4, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Shelley Moore Christiansen will cohost WCAI Radio's summer pledge drive. Please take the time to tune into 90.1 FM and help support our wonderful Cape and Islands NPR station. Shelley makes regular Vineyard commentaries which air every other Friday morning after the 8:30 news and again in the afternoon.