

TRAVELERS' by Ann Hattes

WATERVILLE VALLEY, NH - VACATION HOME TO CURIOUS GEORGE



Curious George, the lovable monkey whose antics have delighted children for decades, was born in the imaginations of H.A. and Margret Rey. Curious George and the Reys spent their summers in Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, a place that epitomizes the spirit of fun and adventure.

The Reys came to Waterville Valley as H.A. was revising his popular astronomy book and needed to do observation away from city lights. H.A. was versed in history and natural history. Margret was a potter, photographer and expert gardener. Villagers and visitors were drawn to their little home, now known as the Curious George Cottage, to watch Hans draw new adventures for George or his other characters.

Sometimes Hans would take the children on nature walks, delighting them with his talent of throwing his voice. "We would have conversations with imaginary people as we walked through the woods," says Nat Scrimshaw who first met the Reys when he was 2 years old.

H.A. Rey also gave chalk talks, entertaining visitors as he drew. Now Nat Scrimshaw, resident artist and Executive Director of the Rey Center, continues the tradition working on a new series of books featuring one of H.A.'s characters, Whiteblack the penguin.

The spirit of curiosity and exploration lives on at the Margret and H.A. Rey Center with activities for

children, nature walks, writers workshops, art shows, and astronomy nights of stargazing sessions. The Curious Kids program takes children and families into the White Mountain National Forest for "walk-talks." "The recreation always has an educational component," explains Scrimshaw.

The Reys love of nature is reflected in the Center's strong environmental and conservation activities like volunteer work on trails with the United States National Forest Service. And as Margret Rey was an avid gardener, there are community garden plots next to the Curious George Cottage, and a Curious Gourds Garden cooperative farm just down the road.

Like the Reys, families return generation after generation to Waterville Valley for the love of nature and the outdoors and a retreat from the hustle and bustle of city life. In this community of some 400 people just over two hours from Boston, there are no stoplights, fast-food places or big box stores. Here locals and vacationers meet and join in the fun at the Rey Center's events. Waterville Valley welcomes the curious, the adventurous, and the inquisitive – young and old, human or monkey.

For more information on Waterville Valley call 1-800-GO-VALLEY, or go to www.waterville.com.



Ann Hattes has been published in English, Japanese, Arabic, German, and Chinese. Visit this award-winning writer at:
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