THIS is Walter. The bear is Cuddles. Walter’s struggling to overcome child abuse. He’s also trying to find a home. The two may be the same.
Salt Magazine is produced jointly by college students and professionals. It is a result of Salt's educational programs. Salt also maintains an archives of tape recorded interviews and photographic negatives.
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Cover photograph · Monte Paulsen.
Our list comes entirely from unassigned and utterly unpaid for reviews. We wouldn't pay a nickel for any of them. And though it was suggested, with merit, we've resisted mentioning Burger Kings. This is an informal guide to places where locals feel comfortable enough to sit, eat and talk and not have to worry about looking right, eating right or their wallet. We rely on suggestions from readers. We welcome others.

Tell us about the place, what goes on and how it came to be.

ALFRED
Leedy's. Route 202 in the center of town. Everyone takes their mother here on Mother's Day. It's mobbed. The two seaters at the counter are different. Avoid the pies.

ANDOVER
Andover Variety Store. "Can't understand why they call it that because it's a place to eat," says Monte Washburn, who tests his fishing stories at the counter every year. "Maybe it's that you can get a variety to eat." Addie Feener opens at 6, closes 13 hours later at 7 and does it all herself at age 70. Coffee and hot chocolate go for 25 cents. Ham, eggs, toast and coffee cost $1.40. There's one lunch special every day.

BIDDEFORD
Colonial Hut, 66 Alfred Road. Not what it once was or as popular. But the French Canadian Club Richeleau meets here weekly and the trademark of Greek food is still turned out. What the connection is to the restaurant's name is beyond us. Try their homemade spinach pie.

DANIELS
106 Elm Street. Brash Biddeford Democratic Party politics are argued here. Heaps of cheap food spills over the edges of your plate. Open for lunch.

BINGHAM
Thompson's Restaurant. In the center of town on Route 201. The kind of place where people still talk about the deer that broke through the front plate glass window 20 years ago and ran into the men's room sending the occupants out with their trousers down.

CAPE NEDDICK

EASTPORT
Waco Diner. (Pronounced Waa-co, not like that foreign place of Waco, Texas). Water Street. Originated as a lunch cart. Name comes from combining founders' names Watt and Cowell. The one place in town where a Budweiser beer can be bought during the day. Locals eat the food. Outsiders often don't the second time.

HERMON/ Bangor
Dysart's Truckstop. Just off exit 44 Interstate 95 in Hermon about three miles south of Bangor. See Salt issue number 28 for article about this place. Dysart's own their own fleet of trucks and truckers have their own tables. Breakfast is the deal here. One of Salt's trustees from Bangor says he has a sticky bun here before driving to a board meeting.

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VIEW FROM PIER ROAD

Some Things Stay the Same

Our resident expert of obscurity produced this copy of a drawing entitled, “Preparation of smoking of herring, France c.1770.” Readers will recall a similar looking drawing in the last issue of Salt, issue number 28. That one showed how herring were hung inside the McCurdy smokehouse in Lubec, c.1984.

The likeness of the two drawings is more than striking. Not only do they suggest that the technology of smoking herring came to North America from Europe, but that the technology has remained virtually the same, unchanged for over two centuries.

Stricken Limb

Harvey Bixby pulled into Salt’s driveway first thing in the morning the second Tuesday in May. Harvey lives just up the street from us and has been a continuing presence since Salt’s earliest days. In 1973, when Salt began at Kennebunk High School, he was the school librarian across the hall. A day or two previous to his arrival he informed us he was pushing 78.

His mission today was to take down a limb from our large old chestnut tree that swells up in front of our building. The late winter heavy wet snowstorm the last of April had ripped the limb partially off. Harvey has a landscaping background among other backgrounds. He has little tolerance for our lack of landscaping wherewithal. One of our staff members, less than half Harvey’s age, was pressed into service as an assistant.

Harvey, as usual for him, was well organized and prepared. He hauled out a ladder from the back of his car and two saws, a bow saw and a crosscut saw. And two lengths of rope. The rope wasn’t good rope, he said. It was the newer nylon variety and didn’t keep untangled when wound up like the traditional hemp kind. But it would do.

The ladder was extended upward, its upper end rested just the other side of the break on the solid part of the limb. Harvey climbed up and tied the rope in loop fashion around the broken side of the limb next to the break. Then he climbed down, threw the other end of the rope up over a higher limb. The broken limb, when cut, could then be lowered to the ground easily. Which is just what happened. Harvey did the cutting up on the ladder while his assistant down on the ground held the rope taut.

Not content with this success, Harvey eyed several dead limbs in the chestnut and pressed his assistant into further work. To get at one of the more distant limbs, Harvey had to fully extend his ladder and was preparing to crawl out on his belly to get at it. His assistant had balked at doing this job. Someone had to do it. “That’s the difference between brute strength and experience,” Harvey said as he ascended the ladder. It turned out he didn’t have to crawl out on his belly. He could lean against an upper limb while sliding his legs along a lower one. By extending his right arm as far as he could, he worked the end of the bow saw through the dead limb.

By the time the severed dead limbs were all cut up into transportable pieces and the lawn raked up, the noon whistle blew and Harvey had to leave for lunch. The next morning we caught sight of him, buried head first into one of our shrubs, pruning branches.

Sign of the Times

Portland is indeed changing. As if anyone needs to be told that one more time. But one of our prime chroniclers of gossip brought us these two stories. Two fishermen
Subscribe.

And get me as a bonus.*
There's no better deal... Bub.

*Subscribe to Salt by August 31, 1987 and we'll send you a copy of issue number 26 with the guy above featured inside. Free.
down at Cape Porpoise were overheard talking. It seems as though they had resisted carrying out a needed task as long as they could. They needed to get some ice for their boat before they put to sea. They could no longer continue to grumble and delay. And they knew it. Finally, with bowed heads they broke from where they were leaning against a rail on the pier and started the climb down to their boat to head north. One said to the other under his breath, “Well, I guess we’d better go up to Port Quaint.”

The other story involves the formation of a support group for those needing to shop in Portland. Traffic has increased greatly in Portland these last few years. For some it has become a difficult chore to plow through. But no longer. The support group offers to guide you into the Maine Mall, protect you the entire length of the trip and insure that you return home utterly unfrazzled—the way you used to all by yourself.

**End of an Era**

We were up to the Anthoensen Press on Exchange Street in Portland early this past winter. We were there to arrange to have a limited edition of an 1879 “Bird’s Eye View of Eastport” produced. Before climbing the stairs to the second floor where the offices of the Press are housed, we poked our head into the downstairs. Two young men were busy preparing to trim some stacks of freshly printed sheets. The large room was full of presses and related equipment.

On our next visit about a month later, we noticed that much of the equipment was gone. Upstairs we asked Bob Flynn, marketing consultant for the Press, what was happening. He told us the bad news. After practicing the art of fine printing for over a century since its founding in 1875, Anthoensen Press had decided to put an end to printing in-house. Oh, sure, the Press would still be offering complete publishing capabilities at its usual high standards—typesetting from its new laser generated state-of-the-art equipment, and design would remain in-house. But printing would be sent to outside firms. Competition from the changing printing technologies was given as the reason. We felt decidedly saddened by the change.

Two weeks later we were over to Francis O’Brien’s bookshop on lower High Street talking to Francis in his living room. He showed us copies of the last two books printed by the Press. One produced by letterpress. The other printed by offset printing. The latter was a lecture sponsored by the Press that Francis had given the previous spring at the Portland Public Library. He too expressed regret over the change at the Press.

Last week, we were walking down Exchange Street and happened to glance in through the window of the first floor of the Press building. It was almost bare.

**A Dose of Tradition**

HEATHER Coryell came to Salt from Harvard in the summer of 1984. Now she writes to tell us about her work in Bangladesh: “How does development work in Bangladesh resemble documenting the people that matter in Maine? Well, most of my time was spent interviewing villagers and field workers and documenting their work through photography. However, I found it much more difficult to shoot poor women and their children than stringers in a smokehouse. As a result, I don’t think the shots really capture the conditions I saw.

“I gradually noticed other similarities between development in Bangladesh and my experiences in Maine and through this reflecting I’ve learned quite a lot about myself. I’ve even found a little continuity in all my seemingly unrelated experiences and interests.

“In Bangladesh and in Maine, I was an outsider—trying desperately to be an inconspicuous one. In both situations (and here in China now, as well) I was attracted to the activity of the area because I would be observing, documenting and in some way participating in a process of change.

“In Maine, my objective was to document what had existed for a long time in hopes that some things wouldn’t change. In Bangladesh, my goal was to document what needed to change as well as a process of change—hopefully for the better. As I glance through the pictures in Salt and reread the articles, I now realize (and hope that) people like me who see Salt will want the people, the places and the traditions documented on these pages to survive.

“Unfortunately, in the U. S. the pace of change is too fast. We need to slow down in our country. In Bangladesh, especially in the conservative Muslim villages, “change” is a dirty word. It seems to me that if the Bengalis were given a small dose of Western optimism and ambition and Westerners, especially Americans, were given a shot of respect for the elderly and traditions and the past, both countries would be a little better off. Ah, I’ve drifted again.”

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Salt
BEING YOUNG IN MAINE

Having been a sickly boy . . . I was at first quite unable to hold my own when thrown into contact with other boys of rougher antecedents. Then an incident happened that did me real good. Having an attack of asthma, I was sent off by myself to Moosehead Lake. On the stagecoach ride thither I encountered a couple of other boys who were about my own age, but very much more competent and also much more mischievous.

They found that I was a foreordained and predestined victim, and industriously proceeded to make life miserable for me. The worst feature was that when I finally tried to fight them I discovered that either one singly could not only handle me with easy contempt, but handle me so as not to hurt me much and yet to prevent my doing any damage whatever in return.

The experience taught me what probably no amount of good advice could have taught me. I made up my mind that I must try to learn so that I would not again be put in such a helpless position . . . .

Theodore Roosevelt
An Autobiography
MacMillan Company, 1913
"You drive different from us," Laurie says. "When we see that light changing yellow, we just floor it." She laughs. In the back seat her sister, Anne, lifts my bag of groceries from the floor. Some of it has spilled. I picture broken eggs and muddied lettuce as we sit at the red light.

"How far to where you're going?" I ask. The light turns, and I pull onto Route 1. It is cold and dark.

"About a mile from here," Laurie says. Anne is mumbling something about long ways and short ways. I know that the ride will be well over a mile.

"You guys scared me back there," I say as I make the turn that Laurie and Anne point toward. "It's hard to see people in the dark."

Laurie agrees. "It sucks—thumbing on these roads at night. Cars just go right by." She pauses. "It's mega-cold, too." Laurie is wearing a sweatshirt, Anne a denim jacket spattered with pins and patches.

"Is it okay if I smoke?" Laurie asks. I tell her that it is. She unrolls the window, and a sheet of cold air claps the side of my face.

Anne leans forward and puffs out the window. Between breaths, she sings softly to herself.

"So, you went to Noble?" Laurie says. "No offense, but that's a wicked dump of a school.

Wicked. They're so strict, you can't do nothing."

"That's the way all high schools are," I say.

"Yeah, but at Noble, if they just suspect you of being high they give you five days suspension—automatic—and three days in-house." She drags disgustedly on her cigarette.

"You go there?"

"No, I used to. I go to Wells now. I can't wait to get out. Anne can't either."

Laurie finishes her cigarette and settles into the seat. Both girls sing, softly, under their breath, with a Scorpions song playing on the radio. I struggle to keep the tuner from wavering. We ride on.

Laurie stops her song. "You probly know my brother. Tom Waldford. He went to Noble."

"A pretty big guy?"

"Yeah, he's not fat. Just big and muscular."

---

**HITCHHIKERS**

By Stephen Donahue

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**STEPHEN DONAHUE** recently graduated from the University of Southern Maine. He attended the 1986 fall semester at Salt. He hails from Berwick.
“I know who he is.”
“He’s mega. He just does what he wants. Really cool. He was that way in high school, too. Teachers hated him.”

Anne lifts from her sing-song. “He ain’t my brother.”

“No,” Laurie continues, “he’s just my half-brother, too. But he’s cool. He’s decent to me. If any guys are giving me shit, they have to get through him first. I tell them that.” She laughs and tosses her cigarette butt; she rolls the window. “He’s taken care of a lot of problems for me. Anne, too.”

In the darkness, I can barely see her face as she speaks.

“Me and Anne get along pretty good. We’re sisters, but we’re friends, too. We go to the same parties, and we hang out with most of the same guys. It’s funny.”

The road stretches on. We’ve driven at least three miles.

“Could you do me a mega-big favor?” Laurie asks. “Could you shut that cold-air vent?”

I shut it. She continues.

“But sometimes we fight.” Both girls squirm and giggle. “Like last week. Our mother came into the room, and I was sitting on top of Anne, strangling her. Ma just grabbed onto my hair and pulled me off.”

“It’s bad when Dad’s home.” Anne lights another cigarette.

“Oh, yeah. One time he came in, and we’d thrown all our make-up and hair stuff at each other. The room was wicked trashed. But that’s not what he was really mad about. He was mad about the names we were calling each other. Especially me. Slapped me tight across the face and said, ‘Don’t you call her that!’” Laurie waggles her head from side to side. Then she giggles again.


She pauses and lights another cigarette. The window comes down again.

“I hate school. Anne hates it, too. I wouldn’t mind if it wasn’t so fucking boring. It’s just that you sit in a classroom and talk about the square root of six—who cares?”

“I didn’t like high school much either,” I tell her. “No one does. That’s why I want to get out—so I can do whatever I want—like my brother.”

“Whatever I want.” A girl in my sophomore class used the same words. She was eager to dump school and get a job at the shoe shop. “I’ll get $150 a week,” she told me. “I’ll be able to do whatever I want.” Lots of kids were like that.

“Most of the teachers are mega-mega-jerks,” Laurie says. “They’ll throw you out of class just for talking to your friends. And then they call your parents and say you’re not learning nothing. It doesn’t make sense.”

“Do you have any good teachers?”

“Yeah, a few of them are pretty cool. Like my English teacher, Mrs. Rand. One time she caught me drinking rum and coke in class, and she didn’t send me to the office or nothing. She was wicked cool.”

“What did she do?”

“Oh, she just yanked me out to the hall and made me dump it. Then, she said, ‘You get your butt back in there and you open a book and don’t you ever tell anyone that I caught you drinking.’ She said that I’d be in big trouble next time, but I doubt it. She’s wicked cool to me, almost like we’re friends.”

We must be halfway to Sanford by now. I keep driving.

“What do you think of the stuff she makes you read?”

Laurie hesitates. “Some of it’s pretty good. Like Romeo and Juliet. I liked that. Or Great Expectations. I really got into that book right away. A book’s gotta grab me in the first ten words or I just can’t get into it.”

Anne leans forward from the back seat. “I got to read a book by Danielle Steel for a book report. I like that when they let you read what you want.”

“I liked to read in high school,” I tell them, “but I didn’t think many of the teachers were very good. Some of them were okay, but—”

“No. Most of them are just boring.”

“They’re just people. Most of them can’t help being boring.”

“I wouldn’t mind being a teacher,” Laurie says, “but not around here.”

“Why not around here?”

“With kids like us?” Both Laurie and Anne laugh.

I drive a half-mile farther until we reach a small, dark house. The girls say their father lives here. I pull into the driveway. They climb out of the car.

“She. I don’t think anyone’s home.” Laurie fidgets with clumps of her stiff, blonde hair. Anne stands uncertainly in the driveway. I am already late.

I sit silently with the car in reverse, annoyed that I won’t be able to leave these people here, miles from town, on this cold, carless night.

They stand uneasily and look back at me, relieved that I haven’t driven away yet.

Laurie walks to the door and pounds on it with the side of a fist. She waits. There is no answer.

She turns back toward the driveway, her mouth moving silently, angrily. She pulls out a cigarette and puffs fiercely. She swears. Anne is silent.

Then, before the cigarette is half-spent, a light comes on and spills into the cold, onto the wild, uncut lawn. Laurie and Anne walk toward the house.
It sucks here . . . in the winter. But there are lots of things you can do, like ice fish. You take a case with you into the ice house in the morning and drink all day.” A moment’s distraction and the silver ball that has been ricocheting off mushroom lights, setting off bells and bouncing off sling shots, gets tunneled down the hole. Joe isn’t worried, not even annoyed the way I am when my four-for-a-quarter balls slide smoothly between the flippers. You see, Joe has rigged the machine, so he has unlimited games. One ball lost is nothing compared to the possible victories.

He reaches under the machine when he’s sure the bartender’s not looking and miraculously has four more games.

“Nancy from New York, eh. I went to New York once. This little black dude stole my wallet on the subway. Me and a buddy were on our way to the Virgin Islands. Man, I really like those buildings. We went to the top of the Twin Towers.”

His body bends over. The black leather of his jacket creaks as he looks down over his boots to the imaginary streets below. His perfect hair falls out of place and floats, the longer curls bouncing in the space around his forehead. The next moment he is composed and leaning against the machine. Hair still, thumb hooked in a belt loop and hand ready to pull the next ball into action.

“Ya been up the mountain? That’s pretty amazing, too. That cliff was cut by some glacier thousands of years ago.”

The mountain is part of Misery Gore that cuts east-west across the woods. Across the lower edge of the unorganized territory of Maine. Across the lake, the ridge submerged beneath its surface. The bar is only a hundred yards from the shore of the lake. Tonight it doesn’t really matter that the lake is so close, or that the woods lie just beyond the headlights of the occasional car. Joe and I are both absorbed in the blinking mechanical lights and the sounds of pinball.

It is a world not much different from the bars I play at in New York, The Marlin, Cannons. Only here when you leave the dimly lit lounge, you enter darkness and silence.

“I think people mature faster out here than in the city.” He flaunts his age. Only twenty.

You see, Joe is building himself a $100,000 house. He can because he started his own construction company five years ago and just this morning deposited a check for $4,000. All the money went to the company. He didn’t take a cent.

“I’d never work in the woods. Working in the woods is crazy. A friend just got caught by a chainsaw in the face the other day—72 stitches. No fucking way.”

Joe would rather bust his ribs and neck on his own motorcycle, on his own time. Last year was a bad one. He smashed up both his motorcycle and pickup. He bends his head down to show me the exact place his neck snapped.

His hands are delicate, protected from the
chainsaw. His fingers move over the flippers nervously and gracefully, syncopated like a good jazz piano man. The motion, the force of his hands pulling the entire machine from side to side, sends the ball from slingshot to flipper to slingshot. The jerks of his body are translated into bright lights and bells.

For a second the dark corner of the lounge becomes a fairground. Then the ball dribbles past the flippers and goes down inside the machine. The score tallies. Joe whirls out of my way. He can't play for shit tonight, not poker, not pinball, not pool.

He can't drink in the bar either. Tomorrow night he wants to go to a town like Greenville or Millinocket, where the action is . . . and where he can get served. Everyone here knows he's underage. Someone, someone shorter and fatter than Joe, comes over from the pool table and conceals a beer from the bartender's view, while Joe takes a hurried chug.

"Do you wanna go party at the cabins later?" the guy asks. He and his wife run them. He bitches for a few minutes blurrily about people who bang on his door early in the morning, demanding toilet paper or something. The beer consumed, the friend goes back to the little round table in the red-carpeted pool room. Not long after some kids come looking for Joe, red faced, bright-eyed and wobbly.

"Ya been drinkin'?"

They all nod their heads and you can feel their world blur around them. All the kids in town drink together. Anyone underage is a part of the traveling party. Every once in a while Joe disappears outside.

"The thing to do is to go away, make a lot of money, come back and retire. I'm going to retire at 35. Maybe then I'll go back to school. There's this man, from New York, he owns a goddamn seven story castle. A stone tower overlooking the lake. He comes up here summers.

"I've been shit on by guys like that all my life. You know, they shit you on and shit on you and make you . . . servile.

"I'm coming back here and I'm gonna make something, be rich as hell. I'm not gonna get shit on forever. . . . I got a brother, real smart, a genius. He dropped out too, to do surveying. He's got a job in Augusta now. He's gonna make it.

"I've got a little sister, she's all right, boy crazy. I mean it's cute, but after a while ya just want to punch her. There are five kids in my family. I figure about half of us will succeed."

He is leaning across the right hand side of the machine. I snap the ball up and it disappears under his body. By the time it reappears there is not a thing I can do to stop the ball, but I flip away and shove my hip against the corner hoping to force the ball off its course, against the rules of the game. Zerozerozero, zerozerozero.

"Wanna play some pool?"

I do, so we walk up some steps to the pool-lounge. After he has sunk all of his, he coaches me, pointing to the exact spot on the ball that I should aim at, telling me when to shoot English. Which I do, sending the white ball flipping into the air and bouncing across the table.

The next game Joe plays with a man almost three times his age who has his own personal cue. (The cue has a brass nob on the top that he enjoys getting the ladies to hold.) He tries to get me to rub it. He wants to leave his wife. They don't love each other. He has been fighting, leaving, getting thrown out for twenty years. He tells me to fall in love, to keep moving, that he just wants to meet someone special. He tells me the only permanent relationship you can have is with herpes.

Joe is almost beaten, but the private-cue-man sinks the eight ball one too soon. He says, "You never want to win the first game, 'cuz the sucker won't play you again." They play another game.

An impossible dream spreads out at the break on the table before them. They measure the incident angles. They intersect the pathways off the balls, call the pocket and shoot. The older man is declaring the freedom to fuck and a fresh sense of love while the younger shoots fast and hard trying to speed things to a conclusion, a winning conclusion.

While they play, Joe's friend tells me about a guy who went to college at Orono and got fucked up on acid. Tonight is homecoming there, that's where everybody went. He says a lot of coke gets dropped in up in the Great North Woods. But, Joe, you know, he doesn't touch dope or coke or anything like that.

"It's easy to become an alcoholic here (there's nothing better to do than drink)."

The game ends and Joe invites me to a party at his friends' cabins in the woods.

"Hey, Nance, I'll show you what real Mainers do." Several possibilities occur to me . . .

"What, drink?"

"Naw, go out in the woods with a flashlight and get a deer before the season opens."

Joe asks for my address, tells me to stop by the cabins tomorrow, not too early. The lounge is emptying. I walk out into the cold air, get into my car and follow a pickup onto the road.

In the dark night, on the edge of the lake and the woods, ahead of me the pickup wanders a little on the road. Drifting over and back across the double yellow lines. Headlights fall on the trees at the edge of the unorganized territory. The pickup pulls off at the billboard, "Mt. Kineo Cabins—Vacancy."
SATURDAY NIGHT AT THE CONDO

By M. K. Lewis

Last Saturday night I stumbled into an eye-opening situation. Actually, the situation itself wasn't extraordinary. My reaction to it was. We simply had dinner with the couple who live across the hall. It was the type of thing that had been in the works for several months—we’d bump into each other in the hall every other day, and agree that we should all get together “sometime”. At some point, “sometime” evolved into last night, and caught us all by surprise.

We live in a condominium that used to be a run down rooming house in the middle of town, and before that the home of a wealthy boatbuilder. We’re all in our twenties and have late model cars in the parking lot and compact apartments with the same floorplan.

I wasn’t too surprised by the wall to wall electronic gadgets that faced us when we walked into their living room. Jim had prepared us for his fascination with gadgets by his relationship with his cordless phone, which is permanently attached to his left hand. I guess we reacted enough that Jim felt encouraged to give us a tour of his electronic maze. He was particularly proud of his latest acquisition—a compact disc player.

What struck me during this whole scene was not the wonder of the compact disc player, but the animation and energy of its owner. He still can’t remember my husband Steve’s name, but he could probably name every bolt in the player which he’d bought only yesterday.

Before we had finished our first glass of wine, we had already learned about all the commercial real estate that our host owns. I got the feeling that Jim listed his acquisitions as a matter of course. It seems to be his version of an introduction. He didn’t belabor it. He simply stated the facts, and then we were all free to move on to other subjects. He even encouraged it by asking Steve about his major in college.

“So you studied the Russians. Ya know it’s my personal belief that if the Russian people knew what we have, there would be a revolution. All you’d have to do is drop a planeload of Lechmere catalogues over the country and they’d revolt.”

It wasn’t until we started talking about Maine that I began to get uncomfortable. Jim made it clear that he viewed southern Maine as an “inefficient tool to generate income.” Inefficient in the sense that he didn’t feel tourism and industry were promoted to the degree that they could be. He then went into a detailed account of his plans to build a mini mall in our town. This is what startled me. Not necessarily because I’m adverse to another mini mall, although the idea doesn’t thrill me.

What really astonished me was the thought that Jim had the power and resources to make that kind of impact on my newly found community. It’s frightening to think that a man who assumes the Russians would revolt for a compact disc player has the power to impose his values on my little corner of the world.

I was surprised to hear that Jim has lived a good portion of his life in Maine. He comes much closer to being a true Mainer in this respect than I do. But he mysteriously lacks any of the strong feelings about his state that I’ve come to associate with Mainers.

Last Saturday night I felt for the first time what I think many Mainers have been feeling for quite a while. It has something to do with fearing you might lose something that means a lot to you at the hands of a person who did it all for a compact disc player.

M. K. Lewis attended the 1986 fall semester program at Salt.
**King Spruce**

In the North Woods one heard men talk of King Spruce as though this potentate were a real and vital personality. To be sure his power was real... and viewed by what he exacted and performed, King Spruce lived and reigned—still lives and reigns.

Holman Day
*King Spruce*, 1908

Strange that so few ever came to the woods to see how the pine lives and grows and spires, lifting its evergreen arms to the light,—to see its perfect success; but most are content to behold it in the shape of many broad boards brought to market, and deem *that* its true success!

Henry David Thoreau
*The Maine Woods*, 1858

You know who I admire? It's not Thoreau, though I guess he was a pretty good writer. I admire the fellows that built those dams. They were geniuses! The fellows that came into the wilderness and knew how to do things.

Bert McBurnie
Interview at his Lodge
Cosuncook Lake, 1986
Fall of the Great North Woods
M AINE—THE MOST heavily forested state in the nation—but scarcely anywhere in the 17 million acres of woods can you find a virgin stand, a place untouched by harvesters, by roads, by people and their trash.

Yet the Maine woods are still vast enough to hold great ironies. If you were dropped from an airplane to any spot in the woods, you would always be within walking distance of a road. But if you are on Gero Island in Chesuncook Lake—eight square miles of bog, spruce and blowdown within sight of Bert McBurney’s hunting lodge—and you are a greenhorn, you can walk in circles until you lie down among the alders at nightfall, unable to find the shore.

What are the great North Woods today? Destroyed by overcutting and disease? A “trash forest” of inferior trees, as journalists Bob Cummings (Maine Sunday Telegram) and Phyllis Austin (Maine Times) have warned in foreboding articles? Or is this unscientific doomsday talk?

I have bushwhacked through a thicket of fact and opinion as dense as any clump of trees and puckerbrush, looking for the answer. There seem to be almost as many conflicting answers as there are trees in the unorganized territory.

“Never fall in love with a tree,” cautions Jere Daniell who looks like a lumberjack, thinks like the historian that he is (at Dartmouth) and speaks the gusty views of a Millinocket native. “Maine has more wooded land now than a hundred years ago.” As farms were abandoned in this century, trees reclaimed almost five million acres, so that Maine is close to 90% forested. Listening to him talk, a tree becomes merely a tall weed getting in the way of a ploughshare, so persistent that the briefest historical nod will bring it back.

For people who were here before the European settlers, the forests are a spiritual presence. “I am the trees and the trees are me,” Senabe Francis, medicine man of the Penobscot nation, told Salt interviewers in 1979.

This sense of the wilderness as a presence—sometimes dark and taunting, swallowing the strongest men in its maw—sometimes healing, sending healthy boys and girls back to their parents from summer camps among the trees—this sense of a wilderness bigger than man has continued well into the 20th century, says historian David C. Smith. It permeates the folklore and the literature of the region. But do we still believe it?
the forest tamed, defanged of its power for good or evil?

And what of the men and women who live in the woods, who thrive on its bounty? If the woods are threatened, are they threatened, too—just as surely as the wild species that inhabit the forests?

In my search for the “reality” of the Maine woods today, I have found what is to some a forest and to others a timberland. For 45,000 people in Maine, the woods are a job. For thousands of tourists and the people who service them, the forest is a temporary refuge from urban living. For more than 50,000 species of life, the woods are habitat and survival. And for homo sapiens who breath their clean exhaust, the forests are detoxification.

No one will deny that drastic changes are taking place in the woods today. Whether they are good or bad, whether they are necessary or not, whether other ways of making change should be substituted and what these changes mean for the future, these are areas of unending debate.

I had no trouble discovering the changes that are taking place. I had the help of expert guides like Buster Newcomb and Jerry Gartley who have worked in the great North Woods most of their lives and were witness to the changes. I had the help of forest scientist Harold Young and historian David C. Smith, both of the University of Maine, who have spent many years studying the Maine woods. And I had the help of written testimony published in the last five years.

The first big change that woods- men point to is the outlawing of riverdriving and the building of roads that slice through the most remote forests, opening untouched woods to cutting and to recreation. The end of river driving in the early 70s was championed by environmentalists and sports fishermen who took the credit and the blame. Not even token opposition was put up by the paper industry, which had its own reasons for moving to overland transportation.

While these new roads cleaned the connecting waterways of the trees they transported, unjamming them for recreationists, they also opened up vast new areas for cutting. And it was only a question of time before the new logging roads themselves became a conduit for the rising tide of tourists, who could now hunt and fish from a handy road instead of tramping in by foot. Soon they came in campers, bringing the comforts of the city to the wilderness.

Use of the woods for recreation is an explosion by thousands of times, not a mere doubling or tripling. On a hot summer day in August of 1986, over 20,000 rafters were out on the white waters of Maine’s rivers. Compare this with a dozen or so only a few years ago. The Allagash River had 1,600 canoeers paddling down it in 1985, more than the entire population that lives along its path.

The second big change people like Buster Newscomb point out is mechanical harvesting of trees. Mechanical harvesting came to the woods in the 70s and dominates in the 80s, replacing crews of men who worked with chainsaws and horses and peaveys. Huge machines now bite off a 50 foot tree in one mouthful, strip its limbs, stack it with others and haul it to a nearby chipper in a fraction of the time it used to take a 20-man crew to do the same job.

These giant machines demanded the gashing of roads to make them

Great dinosaurs take all, leaving a wasteland behind.
efficient. There is good reason to argue that machine harvesting brought an end to river drives, rather than environmental concerns. You can find plenty of old-timers like 83-year-old Jerry Gartley of Rockwood who will swear to you that the reason fishing isn’t so good as it used to be is because the fish thrived on the residue from those drives, “the bugs and the bark and all that.”

Mechanical harvesting brought the third big change: clearcutting. When men felled trees with saws and axes, they took only the biggest ones, leaving the rest to mature. The big machines, swaying dinosaurs of the landscape, took all, leaving only scrub brush and deep tire tracks behind.

One of the ironies of clearcutting is that it was first advocated by a brilliant Maine visionary, Harold Young, working quietly to measure nutrients and weight at the University of Maine back in the 60s. Long before there was the equipment to do it, he advocated “clearing the land” (a phrase innocent of today’s connotations) in selected areas of all fiber the forest can offer, including branches, roots and scrub brush.

This was not to leave the ugly wasteland of today’s clearcut, but to bring the agricultural revolution to the forest. What agricultural science had done for wheat and corn it could do for trees, with research about nutrients, genetics and good management, Harold Young argued. Intensive planting of improved breeds would take the place of random reseeding and the yield would be tenfold. Fewer acres could produce more fiber and the rest of the forest could be left wild for recreation and for creating clean air and water.

Today Harold Young looks with chagrin—but not hopelessness, because he is a man of the future—at the use of his concept of “complete tree” harvesting and intensive planting. Biomass harvesting is widespread. Replanting is not. In 1986, 120,000 acres of Maine’s spruce-fir forest were clearcut and 8,000 acres were replanted, according to a recent University of Maine report.

Clearcutting is the hotly argued issue of the great North Woods. As the woods are pushed back from forest communities like a receding hairline, they leave naked the people and animals dependent on them. Ordinances to stop clearcutting have been introduced in two towns. Proposals for regulation and required reseeding are debated at state and local levels. People who make their living from recreation fight to control the clearcutting. People who make their living from timber and pulp fight to extend it.

The fourth great change in the Maine woods today is the introduction of new players in the power structure: the deMaine-ing of the great North Woods. Unlike the forests of western states, Maine’s forests are privately owned. Massive tracts are owned and controlled by the paper companies, land bought in the 1800s when the state almost gave it away to encourage development. Until recent years, these companies were perceived as Maine companies, with Maine management playing a paternalistic, if omnipotent role.

As these companies have internationalized and become part of larger consortiums, their responsibility to the pressures of the stock market outweigh their responsibilities to the Maine workforce and to Maine communities. Millworkers and loggers, who used to talk about how “good to us” the paper companies were, now say “they just don’t care anymore. Someone in New York is calling the shots.”

Other “foreign” influences are coming to the woods. A real estate boom has hit Greenville. Land is selling like never before, largely to out of state buyers for speculation and for recreation. “Brud” Sanders, whose family has owned Sanders Store in Greenville for four generations, says the town has changed so much in five years he hardly knows it. “I used to know everybody in town. Now I walk down the street and don’t know more than half the people I meet.”

The fifth big change in the woods is the shrinking of jobs. As new labor saving equipment is introduced in the woods and the mills, fewer workers are needed. The Maine State Planning Office estimates that the number of jobs in the forest industries will shrink by 1,300 by 1995. That estimate is low. In this year and 1988 alone, Great Northern’s Millinocket mills are discharging one-third of the workforce, shrinking from 3,900 employees to 2,600.

People in Rockwood on the western shore of Moosehead Lake say there are no jobs for them in the woods today. If they want a job, they have to tend to the needs of tourists and summer residents.

Many millworkers will migrate south. Many loggers will join the growing ranks that service tourism, building summer homes, running camps, waiting tables, guiding hunters, tending bars.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT on the Maine woods of such vast change? Opinions range from rage to renewable resource. Timber barons and corporations have always had natural enemies, among them the poets, the muckrakers and the conservationists. The forest has been food
for some souls and some stomachs. All have fought fiercely for their share.

Since the mid 19th Century and Thoreau’s The Maine Woods, people have been outraged over the “destruction” of the Maine woods and the “butchery” of trees. All before the arrival of today’s heavy logging machinery. All in the days of the oxen, the crosscut saw and the misery whip saw.

But quieter voices have joined the outcry now, voices that once said the forest could hold its own against man. Historian David C. Smith dates the time when the balance shifted. You could “have your woods and cut them, too” until 1965, he says. From Yale University, another David Smith, a respected silviculturist in the School of Environmental Studies, has changed his mind about the ability of nature to recuperate from logging. He once considered natural regeneration sufficient to maintain the Maine woods. “I underestimated the impact that heavy-handed clearcutting with ponderous logging machinery could have.”

In February of this year, some strong warnings were sounded in a report compiled by the University of Maine’s Land and Water Resources Center and Cooperative Extension Service. A major decline in the supply of fir and spruce trees in Maine was predicted.

The Maine woods will produce only one-third of its present volume 25 years from now, according to one forecast quoted in the report. Others, like Harold Young, predict a decrease in the marketable bole which will affect sawmills, but not necessarily a decrease in biomass harvesting.

The reason for the decline is that the present forest has many young trees and many mature trees, but few trees 20 to 40 years old that will reach maturity in 25 years. “The increase in harvesting that has taken place since 1950 can be sustained for a decade or so, but it cannot continue into the early decades of the next century.”

It also predicts quality shortfalls in other tree species. “The looming quality shortfalls are masked by data on total volume. Too much of the volume of Maine’s tree supply will continue to be in trees that are young, are of poor quality, or have little commercial value.”

A major transition from an exploited forest to a “domesticated” forest such as exists in the Scandinavian countries is a prediction cautiously couched. This would seem to be the forest of Harold Young’s vision.

The great North Woods are balanced on a point. Ownership and usage patterns established over a hundred years ago may fall to pressures from Wall Street, from rafters, from foresters, and even from well meaning people like journalist Phyllis Austin, who came to Maine for its unspoiled wilderness. Jobs are on the line. New equipment works old soil.

We consume trees every day faster than they can grow, as packaging, lumber, fuel and even as fodder.

Since the glaciers left 15,000 years ago, it has taken a spruce tree 30 to 100 years to grow 40 feet tall. On the world market, paper company stock can be transferred from owner to owner by computer in a split second, 24 hours a day.

“You can’t get something for nothing!” says Harold Young.

“We’re changing. We can never go back.”

ALL ROADS LOOK THE same at night. The one from Greenville to Rockwood is no different. Our headlights reveal only the yellow center line and the trees at the edge of the road.

In Greenville we are given a choice between Lily Bay, straight ahead, and Route 156 north, a sharp left. At the last possible moment we make the right decision and drive 20 miles to Rockwood Village. The darkness is thick and encompassing when we reach our destination. A weak orange light reveals the Moosehead Motel.

I stand alone in the parking lot. The others from Salt have gone to check in. A thin empty wail swells, a single coyote. I can’t tell where in the woods the sound comes from.

We have passed into the unorganized territory of Maine and are somewhere on the edge of Moosehead Lake. The territory is the political designation for over ten million acres of woods and water with no local government.

Spread over the land like a wire screen, surveyors’ lines divide the area into six mile square townships. Under this grid flow the Kennebec, the Penobscot and the Allagash.

These townships are the legacy of the visionaries of the past who foresaw hundreds of New England communities springing up in the wilderness with churches, schools and meeting halls. Afraid, perhaps, that this inevitable growth would be disorderly and organic, they undertook to map it out, predestine each town. Every six mile square had an allotment of a thousand acres each for the minister and the town school.

Today townships are still unorganized and even un-named. They remain number coordinates on axes of township and range. Rockwood Village is located in Township 1, Range 1, NBKP, Rockwood Strip.

As the name implies, Rockwood continued on page 53
To Live Out a Fantasy

We are ending up with what I like to call suburbia in the wilderness. All year summer folk, who can have their computers and communicate with urban areas. Portland's filled with them. Portland's got more lawyers per capita than any city in the United States. To live out a fantasy of the young yuppies in America is to be able to commute to work by boat from an island. You can combine the Maine islands with high technology and where can you do it? You can do it in Portland, Maine!

Jere Daniell, Dartmouth historian and Maine native
Lecture in Cape Porpoise, Maine, 1986

Portland is a magnet—for poverty as well as wealth. I did a study that indicates there are more poor people in Maine now than ever before. It fell on deaf ears. People didn't want to hear it. Poverty like that in Maine?

Richard Barringer, former State Planning Director
Lecture in Cape Porpoise, Maine 1986
From his triumphant courtyard pedestal, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow watches the city of his birth changing before his eyes. Portland, Maine, is no longer a provincial backwater. It is mainstream America with condo dwellers, sushi and jazz bars and a swiftly developing skyline. Barely noticeable amidst the surge of vitality and progress, another part of the city quietly expands. A community as constant as the chilled steel skeletons assaulting the skyline. This is the community of the homeless.

GETTING OFF THE STREETS
BETWEEN 250 AND 350 HOMELESS PEOPLE ARE ON THE STREETS OF MAINE ON ANY GIVEN NIGHT. HALF OF THESE PEOPLE ARE IN THE PORTLAND AREA.

The figures of the homeless can be seen in any one of the city’s neat little parks, resting on benches or hunched over garbage cans collecting returnable bottles. The warmth of the public library is an attraction in winter months, and Dunkin’ Donuts is open all night.

According to a report published in February 1986 by the governor’s task force to study homelessness, between 250 and 350 homeless people are on the streets of Maine on any given night. Half of these people are in the Portland area. Over the course of a year, the task force estimates that 2,500 to 3,500 people in Maine will have experienced at least one night of homelessness. In the month of March alone, the Preble Street Resource Center, one of three shelter referral agencies in Portland, had 125 new cases of households requesting its services.

On any day of the week, 33 homeless people will file out of the Arnie Hansen Center at seven o’clock in the morning, and 25 more will file out of the Cumberland County Jail Shelter. Most of them will find their way to the Preble Street Resource Center for breakfast, where they will be joined later in the morning by those who sought shelter at the YMCA and the Friendship House.

The Preble Street Resource Center is housed in an old stucco chapel in a part of town where the street corners are punctuated by trash cans rather than trees. The backroom of the chapel is crowded and smoky between seven and ten every morning, as homeless people of all ages flock in for breakfast. Most eat in silence, a heavy wary silence. A few small groups gather in what seems to be the mysterious camaraderie of street life.

By ten o’clock, up to 150 homeless people will have eaten breakfast, and the staff will return to their offices across the hall. The chapel resumes its role as a shelter referral agency. Joel Rekas, the director of the Center, views its fundamental mission as assuring any homeless person who walks through the doors an immediate place to stay in one of Portland’s 13 emergency shelters.

After assessing the specific needs of each person, the staff can determine which one of the shelters is appropriate. The Arnie Hansen Center, for example, is the only shelter designed for alcoholics and drug abusers, offering a detox program, AA meetings and counseling. Eight of the 13 shelters in Portland will not house active drinkers or drug abusers at all. The Bridge Pro-
gram and the Bureau of Mental Health Crisis Stabilization are designed to meet the special needs of the mentally ill, a vital niche since deinstitutionalization.

Homeless families can be referred to the Bible Speaks Shelter, the Portland Family Shelter, the Cumberland County Shelter or the Family Crisis Center. Some of the shelters stay open 24 hours a day and others close in the morning and reopen at night. Each shelter has its own role in the city’s shelter network.

Almost half of the people that walk into Joel Rekas’ office are single, unemployed, and depend on the city’s General Assistance program. The General Assistance Program entitles a single person in Portland to $66 a week, barely enough to rent a room in a boarding house. The limitations of this entitlement program contribute largely to another growing problem in Portland—two or more families packed into a single apartment. Joel Rekas refers to this situation as the “invisible homeless.”

Families make up close to 40 percent of the Center’s caseload, the majority headed by single mothers dependent on the Aid to Families with Dependent Children [AFDC] Program. AFDC entitles a single mother with two children to up to $405 a month in cash, and an additional sum a month in food stamps—about half of the dollars necessary to cover their basic needs. This doesn’t go very far in a city where rental housing under $300 a month (including utilities) is virtually nonexistent, and waiting lists to get into subsidized housing are long.

A third of all cases of homelessness in Maine are psychiatrically disabled. In part, this large percentage reflects the 25 year old national and state policy of deinstitutionalization. Long term institutionalization is now virtually obsolete for people suffering from chronic mental illness. They are treated and released, rather than committed to the care of the state on a permanent basis.

The major flaw in this policy is that communities weren’t prepared to help the mentally ill make the transition back into independent living. Some excellent community based programs have evolved since, according to the task force, but many of the psychiatrically disabled still fall though the gaps and are left to wander the streets.

Joel Rekas suspects that the emotional and physical stress of surviving on the streets is enough to cause emotional breakdowns. Not knowing where the next meal is coming from, hoping that if you close your eyes for some rest, you won’t be awakened by an angry street gang, or a vagrancy charge. Weakened by malnutrition, isolated by fear, and in many cases, suffering from severe health problems, it is probable that many street people’s minds buckle under the constant struggle to survive on the streets.

Alcoholism and drug abuse afflicts another third of the homeless population in Maine. Some are lead to the street by the bottle, and others are lead to the bottle by the street—a vicious cycle of mutual dependence that causes brain damage and early death for those who can’t break it. The alcoholics’ burden is compounded by the inaccessibility of emergency shelter beds for active drinkers. Most shelters will not house active drinkers for fear they will disrupt the lives of the other residents and encourage reformed alcoholics to drink with them.

The remaining third of the homeless population is characterized by the Maine Task Force to Study Homelessness as “those in economic crisis.” Blue collar neighborhoods developed and renovated into high cost condominiums and apartments drive whole communities out of their homes. Low and fixed income families are often the hardest hit by the increasing rents in Portland.

Joel Rekas estimates that up to a third of his caseload are newcomers to Portland, getting off the bus with high expectations of “the city that’s too good to be true.” They are lured to Portland by the low unemployment rate, only to find that it is distorted with a high percentage of seasonal, part-time and minimum wage jobs.

Like the faces in the parks, the stories of the homeless become familiar with repetition.

MARIA HAZEN graduated from Skidmore College. She researched and wrote her article during this past fall and winter.

MONTE PAULSEN says he found Salt while looking for a drive-in movie. A graduate of Ohio University’s School of Photojournalism, he is a photographer for the Journal-Tribune in Biddeford.
his relentless charm luring the waitresses over to
coo at him.
"Oh, isn’t he adorable. Where’d you get
him?"
"I got him in Biddeford. Only paid $29.95 for
him. You know, in Portland I’ve seen them going
for $70."
"Oh, that is cheap, especially for such a beau­
tiful bear.”
"Ya, feel him. The fillers they use now are
really nice—really cuddly.” Walter seems to be
enjoying the conversation. He looks pleased as
he wipes the drizzle off of his glasses, handling
them gingerly so as not to disrupt the electrical
tape that binds each joint. After slipping the
injured glasses back onto his face, Walter lifts his
three foot friend out of the booth and into the
outstretched arms of our waitress. As Cuddles
disappears to the other end of the restaurant, his
large pointed face bobbing over the shoulder of
our waitress, Walter lights a cigarette with shaky
hands.

"I never had a safe place to go. From our
childhood the only thing that was normal was
abuse. So we get into abusive relationships. It’s a
horror show. Cuddles serves a million and one
purposes. I need the closeness . . . I just need
somebody to hold while I cry sometimes.”

Walter wraps his arm around Cuddles auto­
matically as our waitress returns the bear to his
seat. A crisp purple ribbon adorns the bear’s
generously stuffed neck, and his vacant eyes
stare across the table at no one—eternally
happy, kind and accepting. The robust bear
accentuates his owner’s long, lanky and
brooding body.

"We sleep together—I hug Cuddles while I’m
sleeping,” Walter told us laughing self­
consciously. "I gotta get one for my oldest boy
here in Portland—the only one I have contact
with. He loves Cuddles. Really identifies with
him. His Daddy’s got a teddy bear.” Walter
laughs again nervously, wondering whether he
should be telling two strangers armed with
microphones and cameras about his relationship
with his teddy bear.

"Do you people want some coffee?” our wait­
ress reappears to hand out menus. "What about
this one?” she cocks her pencil towards our
stuffed companion and grins.

Walter isn’t listening. He is too busy sifting
through the neatly stacked contents of a worn
briefcase, a companion as constant and neces­
sary as Cuddles. The briefcase holds precious
resources to guide Walter towards his
goal—recovery.

"This is my journal.” Walter fingers a stapled
pile of papers before pushing it across the table.
"It will give you an idea of some of the things I’m
working through. This is the most crucial and
painful thing in my life—recovery. I’ve got to
relive my childhood—remember and deal with
the stuff that I suppressed all these years. I came
from what they call a dysfunctional family. A lot
of child abuse, alcohol abuse . . . .”

Walter’s journal documents his life in a child­
like scrawl, each paragraph accounting for
another source of the pain that he must wrestle
with before reaching “recovery”:

"[The] last time my father attacks me I’m lay­
ing in my crib and this time my mother is not in
the room He is standing over my crib looking at
me not saying anything he has something in his
hand big and shine rises it in the air Brings it
down at me at my stomach and then I feel great
pam.

The sentences of Walter’s journal run
together, uninhibited by punctuation, spelling or
grammar, like the stream of consciousness of the
frightened child. Walter pulls up his shirt to
reveal the remains of the attack, a slightly discol­
ored ridge running the length of his abdomen.

"The hospitals don’t have any record of this.
My real father did this. I was with them until I
was about a year old, and then I was in a couple
foster homes—put in custody of the state. When
I was 13, I was put in an institution. I went off the
deep end from being abused. They pump ya full
of tranquilizers—just keeps you out of touch
with your feelings so you don’t have to deal with
it. It’s a horror show.”

Walter pulls a bronze colored medallion the
size of a quarter from his wallet and places it on
the table in front of me.

"I got that from the program I’m involved
with—the ACOA [Adult Children of Alcoholics]
for 14 months of abstinence. I was using drugs
and alcohol to escape the pain of my childhood.

"All that abuse affects you as an adult. That’s
why I’m heavily involved with ACOA. I’ve got
four kids—I’m in the process of divorce with my
second wife. My eight year old is the only one I
see. My first wife is hiding in Washington
state—she shipped out because I was onto her
boyfriend abusing my children—now I never see
them.”

Walter’s language is saturated with clinical
terminology, picked up and wielded comfort­
ably through daily meetings with counselors at
the ACOA. Alcohol abuse, substance abuse,
child abuse, abusive relationships with women,
verbal abuse. Walter as the abused and Walter as
the abuser—the torture comes from every direction confusing and confounding me.

"I have the potential to kill people if put in the right place . . . ," Walter states as he pushes his glasses up on the bridge of his nose. His arms wrapped around his three foot teddy bear, the violence in his words is tempered.

"Basically right now I'm working on my recovery—I couldn't work right now if I wanted to. It takes everything I got just to get through this. I've been living in an old hunting cabin in the woods until Jeannine's place [Jordan House for Homeless Adults] opens up.

"If there were more people like Jeannine and my sponsor, Joe, the world would be a better place," Walter tells us as he gathers up Cuddles and his briefcase preparing to lead us to his "cabin" in the woods. Walter runs across the parking lot, his thin body bent awkwardly around Cuddles in an attempt to protect his companion from the rain which is clouding up Walter's glasses and splattering his briefcase in darkened rings.

"Even as adults we all need a special place to escape to—a safe place that's ours," Walter tells us as we walk along a muddy trail through the woods. Our host guides us around a mound of boards spiked with nails meant to deter trucks and dirt bikes. Within minutes the trail is obscured, and the only indication of our route is a single bicycle track that Walter had left early this morning through the thin layer of snow. Although we are no more than a quarter of a mile away from Route 22, the isolation in the woods seems complete. Other than the crackling of dead branches and twigs beneath our feet, we are surrounded by a thick silence.

I saw Walter's "cabin" before I knew what it was. More a part of the wilderness than a haven from it, the "cabin" is crudely constructed from whole tree limbs nailed together, and built into the side of a steep embankment for support. Walter has lined the structure with plastic and pinebrush to cover the gaps between the logs, leading me to mistake it for a large piney growth from the distance.

In single file, we slide down the embankment, grabbing onto tree limbs as they come into reach to get to the only entrance to the dugout—a small window sized opening in the side. One by one we climb through the opening and down the ladder on the other side into Walter's 20 foot living quarters. A small cot strewn with blankets occupies the far corner of the rectangular dugout.

"See this one?" Walter held up the corner of a
weary afghan. "I've had this for a long time. It's been everywhere with me. I found it at the dump."

Above the cot, a protruding log shelves a windup clock. The only other piece of furniture is an olive green car bench. Walter has covered the dirt floor around the cot with soggy cardboard, and put a piece of plastic over the entrance to help keep the cold, wet air out. Walter's only light source comes from this small opening, the cover flapping against the wood. The loneliness of Walter's "special place" is almost tangible, as the sound of the rain beating on the plastic covered roof echoes through the small structure.

"It gets pretty cold out here at night. I started a fire once right over there." Walter points to a blackened pile of sticks on the dirt floor. "But, it smoked me out. I was thinking about getting a heater, but no electricity. So I just have a lot of blankets. I leave early in the morning and go to someplace warm—usually the library, and I don't come back here until after dark. It's hunting season now anyway, so it's not too safe to be out here during the day."

Walter can't tell you anything definite about his future other than he will be devoting all of his time towards the recovery process and ACOA readings until he feels ready to move on.

“You, know, I’m only 29 years old, and I’ve already had a heart attack. If I’d kept on going the way I was, I’d be dead right now. It could take a long time—maybe three to five years before I’ll be ready—but I’ve got to do it.”

The only other aspect of Walter’s life that is certain is that he will be moving into the Jordan House Shelter for Homeless Adults when it opens on November 20th. Jeannine Jordan, founder and director of the Jordan House, handles the more practical aspects of Walter’s life right now—ones which overwhelm Walter. She is in the process of securing him Social Security disability income, and is concerned with getting him some job training so that he will be able to live more comfortably than his sporadic jobs at minimum wage have allowed in the past.

check comes in—all a part of the daily ritual of working with the homeless.

The news of the opening of Jeannine’s new shelter passed through the streets in a chain of whispers, and before long when Jeannine made her rounds she was continually approached by homeless strangers seeking refuge in Jordan House. Walter approached Jeannine when she was having breakfast at Denny’s. Two hours later, Jeannine led him over to the city welfare office, and guided him through the necessary paperwork to secure Social Security disability income as well as a voucher to pay for his stay at the Jordan House. Jeannine will repeat this procedure at least a dozen times before the shelter opens.

George approached Jeannine on the streets, asking for a cigarette before he introduced himself as "the former executive chef of the Eaton Rock Hotel in Miami Beach—but because of alcohol and a bad marriage, I just got out of jail." A few weeks later, Jeannine hired George as the official Jordan House chef in return for a room in the carriage house adjoining the shelter and a small stipend. Jordan House is full of surprises and small miracles—a house that offers Jeannine and her homeless guests elements of grace and moments of wonder. Marble floors were discovered in the bathroom after years of being buried under bland bathroom tile. Heavy oak doors and stained glass, a monumental staircase designed for grand entrances, and intricately carved fireplaces in each room. Jordan House speaks of history and "small kindnesses."

Like an old emperor in faded blue jeans, the building is mellowed with used furniture and faded rugs. It is planted quite firmly in the wrong side of town, the side where painted girls in short skirts and fake fur jackets wait on corners and where the bars are for getting drunk.

The immensity of Jordan House accentuates Jeannine Jordan’s stocky smallness. She is a woman with a magic duality. She can be as tough as a truck driver or as encouraging as mom. Her gravelly voice rolls and breaks in waves when she speaks of her passion—her life with the homeless. Laughter, excitement, passion and concern flicker through her face easily and unrestrained.

Jeannine and her house have lived in different worlds. Jeannine’s own story begins in prosperity living in a "hundred thousand dollar house up at Sebago Lake five or six years ago . . . and I’ve been single all my life, so every achievement I had was my own in a manner of speaking."

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I WOULD’VE RODE THE BIKE ALL THAT WAY, AND I WOULD HAVE STAYED RIGHT OUT THERE EVEN WHEN THE SNOW CAME, I WOULD HAVE STAYED RIGHT OUT THERE. I WOULD HAVE RODE THE BIKE IN THE SNOW IF I’D HAD TO, BUT I WOULD NEVER STAYED IN ANOTHER SHELTER. I COULDN’T TRUST ANYBODY.
A couple of the Portland PD beat cops walked towards me and one of them goes "you must be crazy" and the other one goes "either that or extremely brave."
I was walking around Portland with a teddy bear.
Even as adults we all need a special place to escape to—a safe place that's ours. Like everyone else I need my space to withdraw from everybody. Have time by myself. It's real important to me to have my own place... so I don't have to be ever dependent on other people.
All of a sudden I have a whole new life in front of me and I have a choice with what I want to do with it. Yeah it's all right. I have choices now. I can do a lot of things I wasn't able to do. Basically restructuring my life, start making new friends, new connections, more positive people. It's like learning everything I never learned as a kid.
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"And I got sick. I was down in Ogunquit, and I got really sick. I had to have an operation. I had a rare condition. They had to remove five and a half inches of bone tumor from my head. Then I turned up diabetic at the same time—I mean I had illnesses.

"And I'm sitting in Ogunquit. I've spent all of my own money. I have no insurance. I'm broke and I'm thinking I can't believe this is happening to me because I've always made plenty of money . . . every door everywhere I turned was shutting. So I came up to Portland, and I went to Social Services and I said, 'Here I am. I'm broke and I'm sick.' And they put me in a substandard building called the Trelawney Building here in Portland. Went on General Assistance. They paid the rent, gave me food stamps, and I got in the apartment.

"And I sat down and I thought, 'Son of a gun, I may as well laugh about this as cry.' But I never would have lived in that building by choice in my life. And there were 125 people in that building. And they needed help. And I was already at work right after I got in there. And I thought, 'Here it is.' I have been seven years trying to figure out where it was, and I can honestly say God pushed, shoved, kicked, booted me out of Ogunquit into Portland into substandard housing so that I could see it.

"Maine Times wrote an article about the Friendship House, and I thought, 'Gee, I guess I'll volunteer up there.' Never volunteered a minute in my life—not one minute. And I called her [Louise Montgomery] up and I said, 'What are you doing Christmas Eve? You probably wouldn't have anybody.' And I went up there Christmas Eve and shortly after the first of the year, I was the resident director there. And I was getting jobs for people. I was getting apartments for people. I was intimately involved with those guests, and I found I had a talent for it. And I loved it. . . . I'd had nice jobs [before]. I'd been an insurance agent and a real estate broker, in administration at the Maine Medical Center and so forth, and all of that came like a great puzzle together. . . . And here I am, knowing exactly what I'm supposed to be doing in life and I never would have come to this position if I hadn't been broke and sick."

Jeanne Jordan has the rare ability to be supportive without being sentimental. When working with the homeless, sentimentality is as useless as caviar. She has a keen awareness of the intricate politics of survival on the street. She knows that the gap between the homeless and street people can be as wide and distinct as the sun and moon. The cold winter months are the great equalizer. That's when the true street people like "Boxcar Sally" show up.

"Boxcar Sally" makes a mean ice cream soda, and Jeannine looks forward to her sporadic winter visits to the Jordan House. Jeannine never knows when to expect Sally or how long she will stay before she moves on to another shelter. She usually only stays a couple of days before she disappears. "Boxcar Sally" never over stays her welcome at any one of the five or so shelters she frequents in the winter months.

Sally's summer residence is in the freightyard. She lives in a boxcar. Her privacy is fiercely guarded, and Sally goes to great lengths to keep other street people from invading her boxcar. Three cars up from Sally's summer residence, she has installed a couch she dragged from the dump as a decoy. Anyone looking for a place to sleep in the freightyard will find that couch before they reach Sally's car and will leave her alone.

Sally is wary of strangers. It is crucial to Sally that her identity and life remain secret. Especially from old friends who last saw her when she was the wife of a prominent geology professor.

Boxcar Sally remains a mystery. Any one of a number of personal tragedies could have brought Sally to the street, but what keeps her there? Why won't she accept help from the city? Whatever her reasons, Sally has chosen to mold her life out of a strange and frightening substance, and I wonder how many others have done the same.

One day last summer, Sally's boxcar disappeared down the tracks. Concerned, Jeannine asked, "If you'd been in that boxcar, and they'd hauled you to Tuscon, Arizona, how would you feel?"

Sally replied wistfully, "I just hope I'm inside."

OPENING DAY AT JORDAN HOUSE resonates with the pounding of carpenters' hammers installing showers, and the relentless squeal of the telephone. Jeannine's small body is buoyed in animation as she greets Father Henderson and his enclave of parishioners.

"I think I'm going to be deluged because Tommy just called me off the street . . . Tommy's real street people, so if he knows how to find my number, he's telling everybody."
The anticipation mounts and focuses: Who will be sleeping here tonight? Who will Jeannine, George and Walter share the next few months of their lives with? It is unusual to get calls directly from people living on the street. When Jeannine was the director of the Friendship House Shelter, the majority of their homeless "guests" were referred through psychiatric facilities and halfway houses as patients were discharged, the shelter serving as a stepping stone towards independent living.

As the television crew arrives, I duck into the quiet dining room. The carpenters' hammers are barely audible beneath the chaos that the Channel Eight news team has inspired, and I welcome the silence of the dining room.

The high-ceilinged elegance of this room isn't diminished by three long cafeteria style tables. The dining room's architectural grace is a constant reminder of its affluent history, and I have to smile at the sweet irony of its present status as a sanctuary for the homeless.

"Maybe I'll be safe in here," a stocky, soft spoken man breaks the silence of my refuge from TV cameras. He is wearing an expensive looking suede, wool lined jacket, and cowboy boots so fresh and well polished that it seems unimaginable that they have trod on anything harsher than plush carpets. Jack introduces himself to me as a long time friend of Jeannine's.

"You're from which magazine? . . . oh, yes. Jeannine is a remarkable woman isn't she. I could tell you stories. You know, I've walked through bad, just really rough parts of the city with her—parts that make me a little nervous. Like one night we were walking through a really tough section of town, and there was this group of characters—I mean rough looking guys hanging out on the street. And I'll tell ya, I was scared. But, Jeannine, she walks right up to them—Ya!—walks right up to this mean looking group and tells them they better get to someplace warm for the night. Yeah, she's something.

"Oh, and another time, we're walking by this guy who's obviously very drunk. And he's being abusive—yelling all kinds of stuff at us. Well, she walks up to him—and I'm getting scared, you know, I'm figuring I'm going to have to protect her and have to fight this guy if he tries to hurt her. But, I don't know what she said to this guy—but he stopped—and Jeannine just walked on as cool as a cucumber, and we went on our way. Yuh."

Jack looks at me, his eyes wide with admiration for his friend, as Jeannine herself electrifies the room.

"I thought it might be a good idea to comb my hair before I go on camera," she laughs. "You know, I completely forgot to do it this morning." She's perched a hand sized mirror on the mantel piece, and is quickly pulling a pocket comb through her short curly grey hair. "A little of this, ya think?" she pulls lipstick out of a toilettry case. Without waiting for an answer, she is dabbing it on her laughing mouth. As she tucks her shirt into her practical wool pants, she mimicks her television routine. "We need lamps, we need food, we need beds, we need volunteers, we need blankets and boots. Just point me in the direction of the camera and SMILE," her freshly painted mouth pulls into a wide toothy grin. Then she's off to meet the cameras.

"Yeah, Jeannine is a remarkable woman," Jack resumes our conversation. "She's helped me through some hard times. Ya know, my wife left me a couple of years ago. I had a successful real estate brokerage firm, and I got her a big house in Falmouth. Gave her everything she wanted. But, I don't know, she's crazy. She just got depressed—ya know. Wouldn't get out of bed for days. She took the kids with her.

"After she left, I couldn't stand living in that big house all by myself—too many memories. I found myself waiting for the school bus to go by just hoping my kids would get off. I couldn't work—just couldn't handle it. I moved to a town house, but I can't bring myself to sell the house. It's been almost three years now, and I keep hoping she'll come back . . ."

For the hour or two that Jack and I hold vigil in the dining room, he quietly tells me his story—a story of a homeless man with a roof over his head.

When I picture an executive chef at the Eton Rock Hotel, images of puffy, red faced people with tall white hats and sterile white gowns spring relentlessly to mind. Maybe that's why George makes me smile as I watch him mold meatloaves in a kelly green tee shirt with "Captain Munchies" inscribed across his chest. George is ironically lean, ruddy, and good natured, and fits my image of a fisherman more accurately. His large brown eyes are kind, and his face wrinkles with laughter frequently.

At this particular moment, he is scowling at the new oven which refuses to heat up.

"I may have to make it Salisbury steak for tonight," he mumbles to himself, shaking his head at the two long uncooked meatloaves.

George studied at The Culinary Institute and abroad before he became the head chef at Miami's most famous hotel. But, it's been a
while since he's cooked at all. Up until yesterday, George was living on the streets. Jeannine was initially wary of hiring George: "He has an alcohol problem. But he went on his own for four days, and stopped drinking, and then he came here... He certainly knows his way around the kitchen. He'll cook some meals that'll make your head spin."

An assembly line has formed to get twenty beds up from trucks in the driveway and into the bedrooms. Jack lifts the mattresses through the back doorway and up the back stairs, where Penny and I alternate dragging them into bedrooms. Walter is the official overseer of the operation, designating the appropriate spot for each bed.

For himself, Walter has chosen the smallest room, and assigned one perfect bed to it. After reclaiming all of his possessions from the woods, he is ready to set up housekeeping in his private room. One of the volunteers is amazed by the amount of cargo that follows Walter, and comments that she didn't think homeless people were supposed to have so much stuff. "Homeless people can have stuff too, you know," Walter responds indignantly, and then turns his attention to the matter of curtains in his room.

"What Walter's doing is very typical," Jeannine tells me later in her office. "They'll all basically be doing that... You know, it's kind of too bad to give them a whole lot of denial. So one of the ways you can correct it is just to pay attention to what's really important for him to understand from the beginning."

"So the last two days, he's been right heavy on, 'Can I have this room, I have so much stuff, and that's too small for two beds.' And he keeps on testing me. 'How do you feel about this, and what are you going to do.'"

"I said, 'Walter, that room is yours and yours alone until the 19th bed. And when the 20th bed has to go in, it's going in your room.' So now he knows right from the beginning what he can expect... When we get ready to make room for two in that room, some of his stuff is going in the attic, and it will be stored there until he leaves. That is how we will correct his overload... He lost that particular round, and tomorrow he'll be on to the next one. Then you multiply that by twenty, because out of the whole house, we'll probably have only three or four who can really move on their own, take their own action, go out looking for jobs, and get a job, and come and tell me they found a place to live... But, probably fifteen of them will need assistance all the way."
Walter has staked his claim to the small upstairs room. With every article of "stuff" he moves in, that claim is reinforced. The small room is as permanent a home as Walter has had in recent years, and a padlock for the door was well worth the investment to protect it.

Ralph arrives at Jordan House on opening day with similar assumptions. When Jeannine asks him where he is planning to move to when his first Social Security check comes in next month, Ralph announces that he will be living "here," at Jordan House. This is just the first phase in a cycle that Jeannine will encounter a hundred or more times this year. It is the stage of complete emotional dependence on Jeannine. When the cycle completes its course, Ralph and Walter will have an income, a home, and —hopefully—will be ready to live independently.

Jeannine’s initial priority is to secure an income for each “guest.” She spends hours on the phone setting up job interviews for those who are able to work. And for those who are emotionally or physically disabled, more than a third of her “guests,” she walks through the system to secure them Social Security Disability Income [SSDI].

“I've gotten so I can fill these papers out in twenty minutes. And then they [guests] complain about the length of time [it takes to apply for SSDI and get the check]. . . . I talk very straight about that. I say, ‘Keep quiet and sign everything they send you. I'd like to get an income for the rest of my life because I scratched my name on a few pieces of paper.’ And I don't hear it anymore.”

The next step is housing. Reasonably priced apartments and subsidized housing are scarce in affluent Portland, but Jeannine has contacts. The time lapse between applying for SSDI and receiving the first check is about a month. In addition, most landlords require a substantial security deposit, sums which take someone living on SSDI a while to accumulate. Consequently, guests could be in residence at Jordan House for several months before they move to a permanent home.

The interim, Jeannine devotes to “the healing process” and “listening for hours and hours. That’s part of the healing process, and that’s what this is all about . . . it’s giving them hope, and giving hope is healing. And that’s the true result of what you’re looking for . . . to take them by the hand, and lead them through some of that until they feel more stable is the secret of success for the homeless.”
In a year’s time, Jeannine may be the sole source of emotional support for a hundred homeless people or more—listening to them for hours, living intimately with their problems day in and day out. But she claims she never “burns out,” which she equates with “copping out.”

“I almost get an affirmation every day how much stronger I have become since I got in this work. Because every day I’m more positive that I would never suffer any emotional disturbances as a result of working with the emotionally disturbed all day. . . . I don’t know what they’re talking about with this emotional burnout. There are certain people here for this sort of life, and they never have emotional burnout.”

As early evening sets in, the furor of opening day settles into a comfortable afterglow. The phone has stopped ringing quite so often, the TV cameras have retreated, and the smell of roasting meatloaf signifies the resolution of the oven problem. A small group gathers in the living room to wait for dinner.

Christmas lights encircle a small wreath hung over the living room fireplace, and follow a careless course over the sides of the mantle. Chris, Ralph’s girlfriend, liberates a bulky Bible from one end of the mantle, and returns to her chair to flip through it. Ralph is engrossed in one of the many magazines which line the coffee table. A friend of Jeannine’s sits across the room, sipping coffee and smoking a cigarette.

Chris is the one who finally initiates sporadic conversation in the living room.

“What are the true facts?” the largest man in the dining room asks me ominously on my next visit to Jordan House. His longish black hair curls under a fluorescent orange cap, and he leans back in his chair commandingly. I glance back over my shoulder to see Jeannine disappear into her office, leaving me alone in the dining room with a group of five men sitting around the two long tables that run the length of the room.

“What are the true facts?” I stutter nervously as the group’s attention focuses in my direction.

“Never mind . . . everything’s okay about everything,” he replies disgustedly, getting up and moving toward the door.

“No, it’s not okay! There’s nothin’ okay! Okay!” an older man with glasses pounds the table in an explosion of energy that punctuates his words, drawing the larger man back into the room.

“It’s okay for some people, Fred. I know that,” the larger man’s voice softens.

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“There’s a few people who have gotten away with murder, and they’re going to get away with
it as long as they can.” Fred’s forehead wrinkles with agitation and anger.

“I don’t want to hear this now, buddy. I’ll see you later. No wonder you got your bald head—you’re gettin’ into everybody else’s problems,” the larger man rubs Fred’s head and roars with laughter.

“No, the whole problem here is,” Fred raises his voice several octaves over his tormentor’s laughter, “you got a certain amount of people who are going to stick it to the system as long as they can get away with it . . . bleeding the system.”

“It’s too early in the morning, Fred. Too early in the morning,” a new voice joins in. It comes from a short, broad man sitting directly across from Fred at the adjoining table. He is wearing a bright baseball cap with Ruski’s (a Portland bar) printed in bold black letters across the rim.

Fred adjusts his gaze to the man beneath the Ruski’s cap, and pauses briefly. “Well, let’s put it this way, Dana. If the system breaks down, what happens to you?”

“I don’t know, and I don’t give a shit.” Dana raises his eyebrows triumphantly and smiles before draining his coffee cup and continuing. “I got all I can do to worry about me—I don’t want to worry about the system.”

“Say there was no system like we have now where you can go down to the city and get money. Where would you be right now?” Fred persists. His voice has the exasperated tone of a teacher trying to get the right answer out of a reluctant student.

“I’m working, I get . . . .”

Fred’s eyes fly open wide and his body lurches in a delighted rage. “You weren’t working though, Dana!” he explodes, cutting Dana off in mid-sentence. “So don’t start handing me that shit—that you were working!” Fred’s fists are clenched, and his body is twisted so that he can glare straight into Dana’s eyes.

“Easy, easy, guys,” a small aproned man soothes from the side doorway that leads to the kitchen. As he wipes his hands on a stained apron tied around his waist, I make a mental note to ask about George.

Fred pauses momentarily, visibly straining to control his anger. “When you weren’t working, where were you if the system wasn’t there?” Fred tries again, drawing out each word.

“Oh, yeah, I went down to the city, sure,” Dana gives in. The lines on Fred’s face soften.

“If the system broke down, we’d have to go back to the old ways,” a timid voice ventures from the opposite corner of the room. I turn to face a younger man in worn Levis. Although a long beard obscures his face, I estimate he is in his early to mid twenties. He has an indefinable quality of gentleness and vulnerability—qualities I wouldn’t have thought could last for long on the streets.

“What were the old ways?”

“I spent two and a half years camping out, and if the system broke down, then I’d just go back to camping out again and depending on what I used to know,” he responds softly.

The room is silent for a moment while his words are absorbed.

“Yeah, I did it for four years,” Dana nods wearily.

“You lived in the park. You were a street person, so don’t say you camped out!” Fred shouts accusingly. “You were, by choice, a street person. What I’m saying right now, [the system] is breaking down because people are buying up these buildings and making condos out of them, and movin’ em out of their apartments. And where are they livin’?” Fred pauses and looks around the room before answering his own question. “Out in the streets. If it wasn’t for places like this helping out, we’d have nothing.”

“I don’t approve of what I’m doing,” the young bearded man turns to me and continues. I have to strain to hear his voice over Fred and Dana. “I know there’s a better life for me.” He pauses, struggling for the right words. “I like living here,” he gestures to the house, “and that’s why I’m here. But if I lost my opportunity to live here, I’d just go back to my way of life, because that’s a sure thing.” He glances around the room, noticing that Fred and Dana are listening. He turns his gaze back to me and continues.

“I’ve tried to see a lot of different places. I don’t consider myself a street person, but I can survive on the streets if I have to. I’m not one for asking for change, and things like that. Here I can collect cans.” He pauses and folds his arms thoughtfully, growing more comfortable with his audience.

“I got my GED [high school diploma] last year. But, again, circumstances. I was living in a house last year, and I got my GED, and I was going to brush up on some courses. And then there was a breakdown in the house and I was asked to leave amongst a couple other people. Well, I couldn’t find a place to live so I ended up giving up my classes.” He takes a deep breath. “So this is my second chance—and it’s a fight. You gotta fight for what you want.” He pauses, assessing his thoughts.
"You can do it the hard way and you can do it the right way, like anything. I tried working against society to get what I wanted—well, it worked but I had to work overtime at it. Then when I worked with society, I can stay in a place like this. It makes it a lot easier—so that’s the way to go."

"Dana, tell us how you survived out here for four years," Fred interjects. "How much panhandling did you do?"

"Twice a week. That’s all I had to do as long as I was sober when I did it," Dana answers.

"Yeah, sober, yeah. That was just to get the next bottle," Fred scoffs.

"No, sober too was to get enough money for the next couple of days, Fred," Dana defends himself. But Fred’s gaze has shifted toward the doorway where a scrawny young man has entered. His ragged jeans hang heavily around his small frame, and his stringy shoulder length blonde hair is held away from his face by a headband. His youth is exaggerated by a vacant smile.

"Some people choose to live that way because they figure what the hell, I might as well live that way and not even work. Then you have some kid like this," Fred throws his thumb over his shoulder at the boy, "who’s got mental problems. The federal government turned around a few years back and says the people in mental institutions, if they are harmless—aren’t hurtful to anybody or wouldn’t hurt themselves, turn them out on the street. They should be in a house where there’s some kind of medical treatment for them.

"He’s not going to get any better here. Look at him." We both look over at the boy who is staring numbly beyond us.

"You should have seen him about two weeks ago—he was a mess," Fred continues. "Because he was getting Social Security, he had his own place, and he took some guys up to his house and they beat the hell out of him. Not through his own fault—because he trusted somebody, and he’s not capable of taking care of himself. He should be in a supervised atmosphere, where maybe they can help him. Maybe they can’t. Maybe he’s going to be that way for the rest of his life. But he needs somebody to keep an eye on him and his money.

"The same goes for women—this girl," Fred pauses and looks around the room for the only female in the house. He spots her by the coffee pot and points her out.

"This girl got here the other day. Before she got here, she stayed up all night with no place to go. She’s pregnant . . . that’s a bummer."

The gap between the homeless and street people can be as wide and distinct as the sun and moon. The cold winter months are the great equalizer.
Without speaking or looking at anyone, the young girl pours herself a cup of coffee and heads towards the empty living room.

"It’s a cryin’ shame," Fred murmurs, shaking his bald head. "The next step for me?" He continues in a bolder tone, "I’m just waiting for the state to send back my road test. Then I’ll get a job driving a truck, and I’ll be out of here . . . six and a half bucks an hour. So at least I know what I’m looking forward to. What are some of these other people looking forward to with no training. They have to have a better training program—and make ‘em go into it. Make it where they have some pride in themselves again. That’s the worst part of it—losing your pride and dignity.”

Walter finally appears on the back staircase, groggy and wrinkled with sleep. His hair defies the laws of gravity, planes projecting from his head in all directions. Between yawns, he nods a greeting in my direction.

"Lemme get a cup of coffee and I’ll show you my room."

I follow him up the back staircase and into the small room at the top, wondering how he’s managed to keep his private room private. Walter closes the door behind us and confides, "I didn’t want to talk down there—you know, everybody listens."

As Walter makes his bed, I look around the small crowded room. His books neatly line a desk in the corner. Crates stacked against the opposite wall hold Walter’s stereo within arms’ reach of the bed. A perfect square of purple felt protects it from dust.

The walls are covered with various messages and collages Walter has made to remind himself of his recovery goals. His latest project, a collage entitled “intimacy” hangs above his desk. I recognize a few of the loving couples in the collage—one in particular from a toothpaste ad. Walter has surrounded himself with images of flawless love, one without abuse and pain.

A large white piece of cardboard with the message, "If you love somebody, set them free; if you need somebody, set them free" written in bold purple magic marker hangs on the one wall. Family pictures line the wall above the bed.

"Is this one of your kids, Walter?" I point to a shot of a posed blonde child.

"Yuh, that’s Walt, Jr. Wait a minute, I got some more pictures here.” He sifts through his desk and pulls out a stack of photos.

"That’s the wife,” he points to a shot of himself with his arm around his much shorter, blonder and plumper wife. As he tucks the stack back into his desk, it occurs to me that the period of Walter’s life that those photos represent—only a few years ago—was shaped by family, a job, drugs and alcohol. Everything Walter has refuted as detrimental to his recovery. I remember his bronze medal for 14 months of abstinence—abstinence from his previous life.

"Are you still going to ACOA meetings?"

"No, I haven’t gone for a while . . . I’m reliving a part of my childhood where my uncle raped me and I need a woman counselor.”

"Can Patti help you?"

"No—she . . . well, she’s into control trips.” Walter shrugs off my question. "I can’t deal with the power trips down there . . . I’m going through a rough time right now, but I’m hanging in there.”

"Where’s George, Walter? He’s still around, isn’t he?"

"Naa,” Walter looks at me wearily, "he started drinking again.”

I leave Walter in his room to wrestle with his memories, while I struggle with the fact that George is back out on the streets. I realize that I’ve begun to think of Jordan House as a home, Jeannine parenting her wards toward independence and a better life. At this moment, walking down the stairs, the odds against the people I’ve met seem overwhelming.

Dana—still in the embryonic stages of abstinence. Can he avoid old drinking buddies on the street who might weaken his resolve? His two weeks of abstinence all of a sudden seems hopelessly fragile next to the previous four years of life motivated by the bottle. Will the salary of his dishwashing job seem worth it?

And Fred—would anybody hire him considering his jail record and his age? And what about the young bearded man—his hard won GED may not be enough to get a job that will support him. Does a “better life” for the young pregnant girl mean living on AFDC checks that provide her and her child with only half the resources they need to live?

And Walter—he seems hopelessly locked into his childhood nightmare. Locked into a world that hurts him over and over again.

That’s why it’s so tough to look at the homeless for any length of time. Why it’s easier to look up at Portland’s glowing skyline than to look down at the homeless alcoholic sleeping on the grate. To look down is to stare the weaknesses and injustices of our society straight in the eye.
above: storefront on congress street, portland. photograph by Monte Paulsen.
SPEEDING AROUND A HAIRPIN CURVE and up through a tunnel of trees, the U.P.S. delivery truck never slows, never falters. Lee Hutchins, the driver, knows the bumps and potholes that litter these roads of rural, southwest Maine as well as he knows the faces that live along them.

Lee flicks on his left blinker. Turning from Route 203, the main two lane highway, Lee heads down North Road, lined with half naked trees and small wooden houses. Then he crosses to Whaleback Road where he is forced to stop for Wilbur Lewis and his ox-drawn wagon of hay, blocking the road.

"There's somethin' you don't see often," Lee laughs. He waits and watches.

The oxen slowly plod out of the way. Lee shifts his right foot from brake to accelerator and begins up Tucker Road, a stretch of rough dirt suggestive of days when delivery came by wagon.

"I pound the truck down through here, 40, 45 miles an hour," Lee explains. He imitates CAMILLE STURDIVANT graduated this spring from the University of Georgia. Her article is a result of her work at Salt during the fall semester in 1986.
the sound. "Boombidy, boom, boom, boom." He makes his delivery, turns around and heads back out on North Road, better only comparatively.

This is Lee's sixth year on his route through Sacopee Valley and its towns of Kezar Falls, Parsonsfield, Cornish and Porter—small villages of no more than 1,000 people, according to the 1980 U.S. census—that border New Hampshire. In those six years, despite heavy pressures from United Parcel Service schedules to get packages delivered fast and get out, Lee has come to know the people here better than he does his own neighbors in Westbrook, a fringe city to Portland 20 miles south of his route.

For a delivery man, in today's modern, no-nonsense, time-is-money world, to develop the same rapport with his customers as the local general storekeeper of fifty years ago seems unlikely. In many ways, though, that's what Lee has done.

"I've always liked the country. Of course there's good in the city and there's bad in the city and there's good and there's bad out here. There's people that would take advantage of you, but those people don't seem to fit in out here.

"If people out here are making a living and, you know, paying their bills, they're satisfied. They're not out to take you to the cleaners. Or to get everything they can outta you. And that seems to be the rule rather than the exception. Whereas in town, everybody ... . You go to a garage, they're gonna charge you for everything they can and some things that they shouldn't."

Later over lunch at the Peppermint Stick, he continues to tick off differences he perceives between the city and the country. He relates a story. "One time Wayne found out I was up in the woods stuck, snowstorm. [He] came up and pulled me out. But you know, that's the way they are. And in the city, they're liable to run you over if you get in their way. Up here they just don't seem to be able to do enough to help... . That's why I like it. That's why I've stayed on this route."

Driving around these hilly, criss-crossed back roads with Lee is like having a privately guided tour of the area, complete with curious and humorous details of the lives that go on behind the stone walls and trees lining the roads.

But my guide lives in a two-story suburban home, where he is usually upwind from an S.D. Warren paper mill. He drives by the giant piles of wood chips and tall smokestacks with its all-too-familiar foul smell to this relatively pristine, wooded area.

Sacopee Valley has its recluse, its tarpaper shacks, its millionaires and its back-to-earthers. The UPS man knows them all.

"This family here's the Whites. Boothbys are up on the left. They used to farm ... . Blakes are on the right. The Boothbys just sold all their dairy cows not too long ago ... 'cause it wasn't profitable. This is called the North Road ... it is good hunting. A lot of people hunt up here. This road here goes down into like a lake. There's a guy down there that raises rabbits. Fortin's his name. He's usually the one that gets stuff down in there.
There's another family that gets 'em occasionally, you know, once every couple months.

"These people here are Halls, these Morse. This next house is Halls again. . . . This next house on the left is an older lady. She lives by herself. . . . I'll tell you her name in a minute."

We drive by a pair of horses with hot pink stripes on their noses, legs, tail and mane. "Heh, heh, they decorated their horses for hunting season . . . Donnelly. Her son or daughter lives down in here. 

This house on the left is a Stubbs. I think this is her mother in this one now. People on the right just moved in. I don't know what their name is. I had one package for 'em and I filed it. They haven't been there long enough. There was a state trooper there before. These people here are new people, too. The people that were in there was an older couple and they've moved to Florida.

"This road is awful going down. It's just new a year ago. Sometimes I leave [packages] with Gram in the house there. She fell down right in the kitchen, couple of months ago, and broke her arm and her leg. . . ."

This next house, they go to Florida every winter and lock the place up. It's called Stonewall's farm. I don't know why. . . . Next house on the left is Stubbs and the house out behind them Farrington. And I think Pat Farrington used to be a Stubbs. I think this is her mother in this one now. People on the right just moved in. I don't know what their name is. I had one package for 'em and I filed it. They haven't been there long enough. There was a state trooper there before. These people here are new people, too. The people that were in there was an older couple and they've moved to Florida.

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"This brown house here. Her husband just quit teaching, I guess it's been two years now. Oh, he hated teaching with a passion. But he's retired now. Last year, he lost his leg from below his knee."

"But he's getting along. He had a jeep, four wheel drive, standard shift. He says, I'm gonna drive that jeep anyway. I don't know, I think he lost his leg two or three weeks and he's out there and he's driving the jeep. And he's got a stick in his left hand pushing the clutch down with, 'cause he couldn't do it with his foot. It cracked me up. He says, "They told me I can't drive this jeep,' he says. 'I'll show 'em.' "Lee laughs heartily. "But it tickled me to death."

"People here won't take you to the cleaners."

We drive by a man and woman standing in the Kezar Falls cemetery. "I wonder what McKenzie's doing out there . . . Oh, I know what he's doing, he's visiting his wife's grave, I betcha. Jim McKenzie. That's him and his daughter right there. Jim, the reason I give Jim a hard time . . . Jim is by himself now and when I meet people like that, that are going through some hard times, they're the ones I'd rather spend some time with. Jim is just a super guy."

"And he likes to be joked with and kidded with and given a hard time. You know, you just . . . you don't say anything good about Jim. You just tell him like he never does any work or anything. It's just kidding with Jim. But, he's just a super, super guy and very lonely. So, I always take a minute to say Hi."

Between 1:30 and 2:30, Monday through Friday, you can find Lee at the Peppermint Stick in Kezar Falls eating whatever Sandy serves him with his black coffee.

"I eat here every day," Lee tells me, "haven't ordered a meal in over a year. I just eat what's put in front of me and pay what I'm told. And it's good food. Never been served anything I didn't like."

Lee is just one of the regulars at Sandy's place, as the locals call it, along with Ken Day, Lorraine the piano tuner, and Arnie.

"Oh, everybody loves Lee," Lorraine tells me. Lee's round, animated face constantly changes shape as he talks about his feelings for Kezar Falls; laugh lines and dimples crinkle up his cheeks, his bright blue eyes narrow to small slits.

"If I had my way, I'd live up here," Lee says between bites of his heaping barbecue sandwich. "My wife doesn't think she'd like it. Tryin' to get her to teach school up here . . . She doesn't like teaching where she is."

"It's not a nice school?" I ask.

"It's in Portland. It's a whole different ballgame . . . It might be a nice school, but it's an open school—no partitions between the rooms . . . And it's noisy . . . She likes the lower grades, but I just think she'd enjoy it a lot more up here."

"She doesn't believe you?"

"Well," he swallows some soup and a sip of coffee, "the people are different up here. It's a whole different ballgame. It's not like it is in the city. To give you an example . . . Now she teaches kindergarten, she has two classes full. And out of about forty kids, she only knew of a couple that had both parents. And this is at kindergarten age, so . . . That's the environment that you're in. They're all—."

Arnie, a fellow counter customer interrupts, "Yeah, they gotta run 'em through a metal detector now before they go into the school."
Everyone at the counter laughs.

"You laugh, but it's a zoo," Lee protests.

"I think you'll find that the morals are a lot higher up here, when you get out of the city, than they are in the city. Like, for instance, you take and you go to a game at the high school, you'll find a lot more families there. There's a lot more families that are involved with things. They're more interested in the kids, what's going on in school, what's going on in the community. It's more like a family in the country. And—."

"Uh, oh, How ya doin', Everett?" A new customer enters.

"Good."

"And, there's more families that are together, too. There's a lot of areas you'll see three or four houses with the same last names and they're all related. You don't get that in the city. Families seem to work together a lot more out here.

"It's not just the country and city. I suppose there's less to do out here and maybe it's beneficial. You know, I don't know. I suppose out here you don't have all the movie theaters and you don't have the stuff to entertain kids, so they spend more time with their families and I think it's very beneficial. I think a lot of times we've, you know, gone down hill with all the new conveniences and stuff."

"A lot of people from the city are moving out here," Carol, a local, comments.

"That's right. And when they come out, too, you'll find that their whole attitude changes quite often. Somebody that's ugly in the city or uptight all the time, they come out
here and they start realizing and stuff and it's ... it's not that the people are any better, probably, out here, it's just that they're not pushed so and they're not up tight so much. You know, they're more relaxed.

"It's just like ... like when we go camping. You know, you go into a trailer park, everybody's on vacation, they're relaxed. They're having a good time. And you rather enjoy their company. The same person you might work next to on a job or something and you wouldn't be able to stand them. It's the same atmosphere and you wouldn't be able to stand them. It's the atmosphere and your surroundings. If you're pushed all the time, you're tired. And you're more irritable.

And I think that's the difference. I don't think it's the people that are any different so much as their surroundings.

"But a lot of people have moved down here from the cities and want to have some of the same conveniences and things that they had in the cities, but with the surroundings of the country.

"Yeah, which doesn't always work out. You give up some. To give you an example, now. I don't know. I just can't emphasize enough how much people are willing to take time for you. Now like I broke down one time in front of Dwight Mill's house. I don't know how much he's worth, but he's an easy millionaire.

"Mansion on the hill?" I ask,
remembering an elaborate, glass and wood house Lee pointed out on the route.

"No," he laughs. "If he walked in here now, you wouldn't think he could pay for his dinner."

"But I broke down in front of his house and he comes out and he shot me all around town trying to find me a foolish nut and bolt trying to put the carburetor back together so I can go on. You know, he took an hour and a half, two hours of his time. And he would for anyone."

Arnie chimes in about a not-so-nice neighborhood down the road a bit. "I'd like to know who did the landscaping over there—refrigerators, wires, tires. . . ."

"Where are you talking about?"

Lee answers, "Pantherville, or Pineland. In my files, it says, 'Second house on the right in the junkyard.' " Everyone at the counter laughs.

Still chuckling, Arnie adds, "Yeah, UPS drives in there, by the time he delivers the package, comes out, he's got no tires, no hubcaps."

More laughter from everyone.

"The kids come out and they're black," Lee explains, "not really black. From the soot. They burn rubber tires and everything else in the house. And all's they are is a series of tarpaper shacks. And it looks like a dump and there's people living in it. That's what it is."

Lee returns to his sandwich, leaving the subject alone. Arnie keeps going.

"Lee d'ya ever notice the second shack on the left's on rollers? D'ya ever notice it?"

"Naw, now, I know it's some kind of joke," Lee laughs.

"No, no joke. Serious. You look if you ever go in there again. If he's still there, he's got logs and the house is built on logs and I could never figure out why. What it is . . . I was in there one day and looked out the back window [of the car] and the garbage was right up high, to the window. What he does is throw it out the window. When it gets so high he can't throw it out anymore, he just pushes his shack. You'll see it now, there's piles, yep, there's piles right where he's been."

Lee looks at me with a don't-you-believe-it glance and murmurs, "Geez."

**WE DRIVE UP COL-**

cord Pond Road, a long, narrow stretch of blacktop closed in on both sides by half-naked trees, broken only by an occasional home tucked away in the woods.

At a small clearing with a log house and an area where lumber is spread out in rows alongside it, Lee says, "This is where Tim Thompson made his wood for his house, right here. Tim and Carol O'Neal, they're husband and wife, she kept her name. They're both college graduates. And he does brazing and tin work. I think he does some leather work, too. She does pottery. "Built their own house. They cut down their own trees and sawed out their own lumber a year ahead and made a post and beam house that is real neat."

**"If he walked in here, you wouldn't think he could pay for his dinner, but he's an easy millionaire."**

Tim is in old, faded overalls, just taking a break from framing windows inside the house. His pride in building this post and beam salt box—"our design in an old format," as he calls it—is reflected in his voice, which is resonant, yet almost reverent.

For Tim, this area in Parsonsfield is ideal for the life he and Carol lead. "I like to think of it as straddling civilization," he says. "Too far for Portland, and not yet in the White Mountains. Many people don't choose it because of an isolation feeling . . . but I don't ever feel isolated. It's intensified. Everyone knows what the heck you're up to."

Some people live in the country to escape modern civilization, but Tim says, "Because I live in Parsonsfield, I don't hate civilization."

Toward the end of the day, we make a stop by Stanton Pomeroy's old farm. "Stanton's kind of an interesting individual. He's a hermit that I don't think has left his house for years. I think his wife is still alive. She left him. My guess would be that no one could live with him anyway. But he's the type of guy that'd be very . . . actually he's an intelligent old . . . whatever you want to call him. I like Stanton, but you just, you don't rattle his cage."

The long, grassy drive up to the white farmhouse is virtually unmarked by tire tracks. Lee tells me his truck is the one that made the few tracks that are here.

Though it is early yet, dusk is falling and the moon is almost full on the horizon, which makes for an eerie atmosphere here in this cold, lonely yard. Stanton is a short, slightly bent man with torn, woolen mittens on his hands that flap when he gestures. He has small feet and wears myriad gray and brown layers. The knitted cap on his head comes down over his ears so as to hide his thin, white hair. The face is well-carved, with high cheek bones and deepset, untrusting blue eyes.

"Yep, well, I been outta circulation for 35 years now," he says in a high, solid, Mainer's accent. "I don't know what as you might want to say about me . . . just say as little as you can about this area. There's already enough people here. Any more'd spoil it for the reasons we're here."

Stanton is a loyal subscriber to
the Wall Street Journal. Neat stacks of old newspapers rest on top of filing cabinets just inside his front door. “The only way to keep up with the crooks of the world is to read the Wall Street Journal every day,” he says. By crooks he means the people who are out to get you.

He compares politics and life to a baseball game. Those nine men are after you, he says. “They’re throwing ideas your way. And here comes an idea, and it wavers and getting colder and later, but Stanton would talk until the coyotes howled if you let him.

“Outside again, Stanton talks on and on. He tells me, “Now, I believe in God, and I believe that Jesus was the second greatest man that ever lived, my father being the first.”

The dim light from the moon filtering down through the big pines in his yard becomes obscured by the clouds and a wind whistles by. It is raining that day. He’ll only stop if the signal is up.

Lee has a number of “red-flag pickups” he has arranged with customers who ship often. They fly a red flag out where he can see it as he drives by if they have anything going that day. He’ll only stop if the signal is up.

Lee has two volumes of files which he has compiled himself that list everyone on his run by name, street and postoffice box. Although he keeps the files in his truck, he only refers to them maybe two or three times a week. He knows the route well enough now; the only time he might need the files is for someone who doesn’t get a package but every six months or so, or for drivers who replace him when he’s on vacation. Lee has also learned where to go to “get rid of packages,” as he puts it.

“I have to laugh,” he tells me. “First time I met Sandy’s husband, the woman that owns this place, he was up shingling a roof. I didn’t know him from a hole in the ground, because I’d only been here four weeks.


“Two days later, this woman comes up to me, says, ‘You got a package for Linda Day?’ And I says, ‘No, the guy shingling your roof paid for it.’ She says, ‘We didn’t have our roof shingled.’ He was shingling a Day’s roof and he thought their daughter was named Linda, but it wasn’t. She lived two, three houses down.” Lee laughs hard at the incident.

“I always kid Wayne, any time I got a C. O. D. I can’t get rid of, I’ll go see him.”

Lee Heads Out Through

the winding curves on “Mass Ave”—what the locals call it because so many wealthy Massachusetts people have moved onto it—then stops at Sacopee Valley Cold Storage to pick up L.L. Bean’s $14.95 a box apples, and right down the road for a pickup at the Bag Lady’s factory, and finally he makes a delivery to Friendly River Fretted Instruments. Then Lee speeds back through the bumpy, wooded mountain paths to Volcan Electric, in the heart of Kezar Falls, where an attendant waits to let him in after hours. A few red flag stops on the way out of his area, and it’s back to the building in Portland by 7:20. Next day deliveries have to be on the plane by 7:30.
Strip is not a six mile square at all, but a long thin rectangle. It and Misery Gore, a township to the south on Moosehead Lake, were pieces that didn't fit, leftovers or mistakes the surveyors left when they stopped using the north-south axis as a guide and switched to the east-west meridian.

Rudimentary equipment and a desire to return home from the Maine wilderness distorted and stretched the surveyors' lines, leaving skewed and misshapen townships permanently on the maps. Maine's mountains, lakes and rivers stand as witnesses to nature's unwillingness to conform to the straight line.

Moosehead, the largest lake in Maine, with a surface area of over a hundred square miles, is completely contained within the unorganized territory. Its waters touch 16 townships and the Days Academy Grant, stretching 34.1 miles from Greenville up to Mud Cove. Rockwood and the Moosehead Motel lie halfway up the western shore.

The next morning I walk across the parking lot and the road, down the steep slope to the shore of Moosehead, spread out like a body before me. The water is still this morning and reflects the early sun like pale skin. A loon moves over its surface, sending out small waves. Suddenly, like a breath of light, the bird dives into the lake and disappears. Moments later it surfaces thirty feet away. The ripples from the disturbance leave a dark stain on the dusty rocks that line the shore. Distance between trees and water seems abnormally wide, as though the lake contracted, leaving rocks once submerged now unprotected from the full sun.

Less than a thousand yards away, across the lake, Mount Kineo rises on the opposite shore. Trees grow along the ridge, but most of the mountain's rockface lies exposed, white, a backbone without muscle.

“Progress has been the ruination of this country.”

MALCOLM “BUSTER” Newcomb stands in the Rockwood post office with his hands in his pockets. He speaks to me quietly, no more than three words in one breath. His worn flannel shirt is completely bleached out by the strong morning sun that falls through the window.

He creates technical problems for me. Sunlight pours over the right side of his face, leaving the left side in shadow and making him difficult to photograph. The microphone barely picks up his "I dunno's" and unfinished sentences,
lost beneath shuffling feet and the slamming door.

It is near ten o’clock and the people of Rockwood drift in and lean against the wall, waiting for Dody Tormell, the postmaster, to finish sorting the day’s mail.

For Buster, the ruination of the woods is a simple question of supply and demand. The paper companies get what they need today by cutting near Rockwood and tomorrow when that’s cleared they’ll go somewhere else for their pulp. Buster keeps track of the trees around him. “In two more years there won’t be nothin’ left at all,” he sighs. “Course all the trees they’re plantin’ . . . it’s gonna take thirty years or twenty for ‘em to be big enough to start harvestin’ again. But there’s gonna be a long time in between. Then they’re gonna be doin’ nothin’.”

In thirty years that Buster worked in the woods he saw the crosscut saw surrender to machines that mow the trees like hay. For Buster, change in the woods was inevitable and legitimate. (Only later does he say that it happens too fast for a man to adjust.)

“The average man could see that it was goin’ to change in time, ‘cause they kept cuttin’ more and more and more . . . .” The age of chippers and trucks arrived, but the age of planting came late. Lumbering changed, Buster adjusted, but company policy remained “Let Mother Nature take care of it,” says Buster.

Ten o’clock arrives and Buster picks up a cardboard box filled with mail to drop off at the general store down the road. He lifts the box against his body and carries it to his dusty blue Ford pickup.

Buster says he can’t tell me about the woods, about how they log today. Words won’t do it and even if he tried, I wouldn’t believe him. He offers to show me a woods operation in Township 10. Scott Paper Company has contracted some independent loggers to cut company land north of Rockwood on the edge of the lake.

Ten miles east of the Moose River, Buster’s truck bucks to a stop. We stand aside as a giant skidder lurches toward us, breaking from the woods like a prehistoric monster dragging its prey. Black mud closes over my hiking boots. The longer I stand still the deeper I sink into the glistening ooze that rises from the rut left by a tire at least two feet wide. I pull with all my weight on my left leg. The mud finally releases the boot and I make some progress—one foot at a time.

Buster doesn’t make the same mistake. He walks forward easily, deliberately avoiding the deep fur-
rows left by the skidders cutting through the woods. Keeping to the high ground, he strides through the corridor of trees left to screen the clearcut from the road.

We can no longer talk above the roar of the machines when we reach the center of the clearcut. Trees are felled, dragged and chipped simultaneously by three men in three machines. Standing in the heart of it, I feel small but thrilled by the movement and the noise.

One machine limbs and bites off a full-grown tree at its base as easily as if it were grabbing a toothpick. The skidder scoops up a half dozen trees in one sweep of its claw. The trees are half floated, half dragged over hills of mud to the road, where a larger claw hoists them 20 feet into the air. From his suspended control box, the machine's operator swings the logs 180 degrees to be fed lengthwise into a hungry chipper that waits like a mammoth baby bird.

Above the sound of the machinery, I can still hear a single tree fall. No one yells, "Timber!" But Buster bars the way with an outflung arm. "Don't get too close to 'em now!"

The noise of the chipper never ceases. Nobody marvels at the size of the collapsed tree. Nobody can hear the smaller branches snapping from the trunk.

The skidder keeps coming, barreling through the stubble like a tugboat in heavy seas, rocking from rut to rut, faithfully pulling the trees behind.

I am standing in one of these ruts, imagining large insects taking nourishment back to a voracious queen bee when the skidder approaches pushing puddles out of its way. I leap to the side, to higher ground. It passes and I take pictures from an ice-covered stump, pictures of mud, of stumps and of single scrawny alders left to be blown down by the wind.

Buster has found himself a walking stick among the brush. A divining rod, it is forked at the precise height for him to wrap his hand around. He plants it firmly in the ground to steady himself as he watches the machines do in five minutes what took a dozen men a half hour when he worked in the woods.

Once he is certain I have seen the entire process, from tree to chip, and he has stood a moment looking straight ahead, he turns and walks back toward the road, not by the rutted path, but through the strip of remaining trees where leaves cover the unchurned earth.

Buster forges ahead, pushing aside saplings and twigs with his forked branch. He steps over fallen
half-rotted trunks. There seems to be nothing frail about this man, nothing he cannot endure.

Before we drive back to Rockwood, we agree about one thing. It is ugly. Later, at Bob and Debbie’s Restaurant, surrounded by mounted deer heads and one mounted deer-butt, we talk about the recent surge of development in Rockwood, of what Buster calls “transplants” from New York, Connecticut and Philadelphia.

I order a piece of strawberry-rhubarb pie that turns out to be very large and very bright red. I tell Buster my eyes were bigger than my stomach. He laughs, “Ya got to eat it. Live and learn.”

As we leave, Buster mumbles a few last words about the Maine woods today and the Maine woods of the past. Without judgment or nostalgia, but with the emotion of an average man who knew it would change and then saw it happen in his own time.

“It’s just like two different worlds, two different worlds.”

We agree about one thing. It is ugly.

We’ve gone too far. The road has turned to gravel. This is a private road, a Great Northern road. A large white billboard reads “This is God’s Country. Why burn it and make it look like HELL?”

We must have passed right by Jerry Gartley’s store in Beaver Cove. Right now we are in Lily Bay. We’re looking for Jerry because people have told us if we want to know about the woods we better talk to 83-year-old Jerry. He knew, personally, the boom days of logging for pulpwood by Great Northern. Besides he’s quite a guy and he had the first motorcycle around here.

Driving ten miles back, we finally see off the right side of the road two gas pumps and the ten by twenty foot building that is Jerry’s store. The four of us who have come to listen, record and photograph walk into the tiny, dimly lit store. A single refrigerator filled with soda, beer and milk and several rows of near empty shelves line the walls.

Jerry takes our arrival in stride, as if we had made an appointment to see him and not suddenly dropped in with cameras and recording equipment. He pulls out a photo album crammed with snapshots of logging camps, of great amoeba-shaped booms of logs floating and jamming in the river, and of young men grinning outside of Great Northern tents.

He sits down on his counter beneath a mounted marten, fisher, mink and partridge that run, peer and flit over a 14-pound trout in a suspended leap. He laughs at our ignorant city notions and seems pleased to have an audience to share the afternoon with.

With his arms crossed, his shoulders hunched and his dulled hunting orange crusher securely on his head—his unflailing trademark—he tells us about coming to the woods from Bangor in the 1920s.

At that time the Great Northern Paper Company was itself only in its twenties. It had been formed in 1898—a year I associate with the birth of my grandmother in Richmond, Virginia—by Garret Schenk of Trenton, New Jersey, and the Northern Development Company.

They bought land, huge amounts of land, from the state at around $4 an acre, until the name Great Northern became synonymous with the Great North Woods. In 1900 they laid the foundations of their empire in Millinocket, a city in the wilderness where they could mill paper from spruce and fir close to the resource. A hundred houses were built, schools, and churches as well as the mill, the hub of the Great Northern world.

By the Twenties, Great Northern was building as far west as Greenville. The Maine Central Railroad shipped in men and supplies by the carload to supply the private army of loggers. Greenville was a booming town, three times its size today. It was the day of the rail and the steamboats which went up the lake to Rockwood and to the north end of the lake near Seboomook Dam and Pittston Farm. The day of the Katahdin, the Twilight, the Comet, and the Margeritte. Today only the Katahdin remains docked at Greenville, waiting to carry tourists on rides in the summer for $25 a head.

When Jerry went to work for the Great Northern in 1922, they had their own fire department and ran Pittston farm, which raised “potatoes, grain, everything” and housed their 200 horses. In the winter the horses filled three huge barns, but in the summer they ran wild in the woods. There were no fences, only caretakers hired by Great Northern to watch them roam and forage.

“They had a crew that ran that barn, they had their own road crew, they had their own electrical crew, they had their own carpenter crew, they had clerks and auditors and paymasters—all Great Northern. In those days before the Depression, “millions of acres, board feet [were] being floated down to mills. Paper was in demand. And the trees had to keep going down.”

Everybody who worked for the Great Northern liked the company, according to Jerry. “Once a year they’d have a picnic up on Seboomook—all on Great Northern. There’d be hundreds of people there. It was just like a fair. I mean,
they had everything. Great Northern footed the bill.

"Everybody liked them and the funny part of it is—they still do. Moved out of here now and gone to Millinocket."

The first winter Jerry stayed in the woods he was at a camp at the end of Chesuncook Lake near Chesuncook Village. It was a long winter during which he learned what it meant to work in the woods. He retells the story of the moment he knew he would stay and work in the woods the rest of his life.

An old woodsman was sitting in the dingle, a small room outside the camp kitchen where food was stored in the natural refrigeration of the Maine winter. He was carving an ax handle. The old man smashed a whiskey bottle, took a shard of glass and scraped the wood until it shone. As he drew the sharp edge across the grain, he said to Jerry, "A boy your age oughta be in school. He shouldn't be up here with this gang." Jerry was polite, "I guess you're right." But he said to himself that you couldn't drive him back to school with a loaded gun.

Jerry got a job with Great Northern's fire patrol. One fire, a small one near Socotean Stream, took four days to find after the watchman at the fire tower sighted it. The problem, says Jerry, is that a fire will blaze all day, even in rain, but will quiet down between four o'clock and nightfall. Then you have to wait through the night until the sun rises and the smoke becomes visible. All through the night you hope the wind doesn't rise and feed the fire.

Jerry and "Arrow" Hilton, the state's fire warden for Seboomook, finally found the Socotean fire in the Toe of the Boot, Tomehegan Township. The Toe is a rounded chunk of land that juts into the lake from the northwestern shore. Because it is surrounded by water on three sides, it seemed like an easy place to contain a fire. So Hilton left Jerry there alone while he went to get a crew to fight it.

The wind came up. The next day the crew didn't show up. When they hadn't come by evening, Jerry walked two miles back to the main road. He found them setting up their tents and cooking supper right on the road. By this time the smoke was coming out of the woods so thickly they thought Jerry was on fire when he stepped out of the forest.

By the time the crew got to the fire it had grown so large and ravenous that it took 250 men three weeks to kill. Three weeks of banking the edges with shovels, stumping trees, and chopping to clear a buffer zone between the fire on the Toe of the Boot and the rest of the Maine woods. The black flies were so thick that summer that the men slept in the black smoke for protection, "right where the fire had burned over."

When you ask Jerry what he thinks of Great Northern Paper Company, he tells you about his Nash roadster. He and the roadster smashed into a ditch when a tire blew. The company pulled the roadster out, sent it by barge from Rockwood to Greenville. They fixed it up. New tire, new springs, new front-end and new mud guard, then sent it back to him by boat and "never said a thing."

For the annual picnics at Seboomook, the foot high piles of cookies at the logging camp and favors like pulling a Nash out of a ditch, the men and their families appreciated the Great Northern. "They're a
good company," says Jerry. "I always liked the Northern well. "Oh man, they used me awful well."

A hand drawn map on the wall of the store showing the depths of the lake was a gift to Jerry from a state transportation engineer in 1946. It was made at a time when there was no road to Rockwood or Jackman and the fishing was the best in the country. When the log driving companies floated pulpwood down the lake, you could catch all the brook trout you wanted by hanging a line off the back of the log boom. Jerry says you could catch fish "till hell wouldn't have it!"

The lake has always been near Jerry, reminding him of why he came to the woods. He came to find a place on the edge, a place where you could "be out of sight" and live off the woods. In recent years it has suffered from over-fishing, from meddling environmentalists (the fish thrived off the bugs and bark from logs in the river drives, Jerry insists) and from other people who don't understand.

The darkness outside is complete and it is time for us to go. As we walk out, Jerry warns us, "When you get up there [on the Great Northern roads] you better watch out, because they haul loads that are piled right up to the moon. If you don't give them the right of way they'll take it. And if they feel like it, they might pull you out of the ditch back onto their road," Jerry laughs.

"They've got a road 33 miles from here that runs from East Millinocket to Canada. They say it cost a million dollars a mile to build. I guess so. And that's their road. They call it the Golden Road, the Golden Road . . . ."

I walk out into the night half expecting to hear the thin wail of coyotes rise from the shadow of Mount Kineo. But there is only the sound of the door shutting on Gartley's Store as we drive off toward the Golden Road.

"He is the prophet in his own land. He is not widely regarded in Maine, but he is respected and regarded around most of the world."
Richard Barringer
Former State Planning Director
Talking about Harold Young

THE DRIVE NORTH TO see Harold Young was difficult. A single path through the snow was clear from Augusta north on the Maine Turnpike. Trucks gunned by throwing slush and sand across my windshield. Ice covered trees were caught in graceful tortured arches by the first real storm of the winter, their branches pressed to the ground.

Headed south were trucks hauling thousands of unfurled spruce and fir, the Christmas trees of paved cities. I drove past Bangor to Old Town to meet the free thinking forester of the University of Maine.

Before half an hour has passed in Harold Young's present office in the modern Sewall Company Building in Old Town, he has corrected several of my "wrong ideas" about the Maine woods. He does it methodically, with lots of diagrams and a touch of condescension. I have come here to learn and Harold Young will not let me leave with any ideas about the forest and forestry that are naive, ignorant, unscientific, irrational or not "quite right."

For a while, I feel pretty stupid —like all the reading and learning I had done before I came was worthless and had only confused me. I try to steer the conversation toward Harold Young and away from the complexities of the Maine woods.

To be a good forester, to "husband the forest in perpetuity" is Harold Young's vocation. To do this, he says, you must balance the art, the science and the business of forestry on awareness of the basic human requirements from the forest—clean air, clean water and recreation. The most difficult part of doing this is not having your boss say, "Good-bye, Jack!"

But something pushed Harold Young beyond simply being a good forester, pushed him beyond the conventional ideas of good forestry, pushed him beyond forestry itself.

"Women talk about a lot of things, but not necessarily philosophy. We men talk about philosophy and probably don't do it. I'm sure that observing the way my wife lives influenced me because I am interested in forestry in the same way." His wife is a "frugal New England housewife" who never buys anything she doesn't need, uses everything up in its original capacity and then uses it for something else. He calls this the "elegance of frugality" and he has applied it to the trees in the forest.

In the 1960s he began pushing over trees, pulling them out of the ground with the help of his forestry students at University of Maine and bulldozers. When the trees were lying on the ground, roots exposed to light, Harold Young and his students cut them up in pieces according to origin.

Then they weighed the needles and leaves, the bole (the trunk from a foot above ground until it tapers to four inches in diameter) the large branches, the small branches, and the even smaller branches. After that they weighed the stump, the large roots, the smaller roots and the even smaller roots. Back in the laboratory they broke the tree down to its elements, weighing even the trace metals.

At the university he made tables from the weight and nutrient data for 26 species in Maine, from spruce to cherry. Trees of all sizes. He found that only 35 percent of the tree's weight was in the merchantable bole, the conventionally used part of the tree, while 25 percent was in the branches and 20
percent in the stump-root system. Almost half of the tree’s weight was not being utilized.

For twenty years now, he has been the “fortunate custodian” of this knowledge and a “missionary spreading the gospel of the scientific part of forestry.” He has left the conventional world and entered one much more real.

“As far as foresters, conventional foresters, were concerned, doing weight on merchantable trees was foolish, doing weight on the smaller trees of the merchantable species was foolish, doing the non-merchantable species was ridiculous, and then doing shrubs was assinine.”

His solution to leaving forestry was to redefine it. His solution to moving outside of the woods was to redefine the forest.

From this came his “Complete Tree Concept,” whose aim is to produce more trees on fewer acres. By 1965, Harold Young was shocking his fellow foresters by claiming tree production could be increased tenfold from the current rate of one cord maximum per acre to ten cords per acre.

The agricultural revolution that dramatically increased the yield of wheat, corn and tomatoes could be extended to trees, he said. With that claim he coupled his radical notion that the “complete tree” should be harvested—roots, branches, leaves and all—along with the woody shrubs, clearing the land.

But the use of the complete tree, leaves, bark, roots and trunk, creates a drain on the soil. The nutrients in the stump root system and the branches which were once left in the soil would be removed.

The application of the “Complete Tree Concept” requires a total reevaluation of the way that forests are husbanded. Eventually, if you’re Harold Young and you are always looking for what is wrong with what you’re doing in the present and what should be done in the future, you envision greenhouses filled with trees, like the greenhouses he saw outside Moscow and Leningrad that grow vegetables and flowers.

These greenhouses would sprout up in Maine around the mills and factories that would produce new forest products such as lower sulphur fuel and cattle fodder. Around them they would sustain complete communities.

He draws a diagram of the theoretical boundaries that would surround each mill. The largest of the concentric circles has a diameter of a hundred miles. This is the distance a company travels to harvest enough pulpwood to run the mill, using the merchantable bole. The next circle is the 20 miles the company would have to go using the complete tree, “jurik” wood and puckerbrush. The smallest circle, three miles in diameter, is the land around the mill that would be covered with greenhouses to grow the necessary amount of fiber.

Another plan might be permanent communities in the Maine woods built at the intersection of two to four townships. A program of clearcutting, replanting, selective cutting and thinning in the forest would provide enough jobs to sustain a year-round community, with schools, businesses, homes and people coming home from working in the woods each night. Seasonal, highly specialized jobs would be replaced by diverse, year-round jobs.

Harold Young’s work with biomass in the forest, some say, has led to the ruthless clearcutting Buster Newcomb showed me on Scott Paper Company land. He is a controversial man. But he argues that man has turned knowledge and inventions to “evil” purposes. “Gun powder was a toy. And the Wright brothers never thought about having fighters and bombers. Never.”

“I’m not trying to make up for having evolved something that may be evil to some people.” He believes
“Complete Tree Concept” can be used for good forestry, not just to destroy the land.

“Right now utilization is going far, far ahead of the biological knowledge and that worries me.” There is a particular sadness in his voice because he has been called a utilization specialist.

Harold Young is disdainful of what he calls “Big E Environmentalists.” He himself is a “little e environmentalist.” The Big E’s see the forest as “something loggers and foresters are determined to destroy—maliciously. As far as I can figure out, they don’t relate trees to paper products. They relate paper products to stores.”

The talk turns to clearcuts. The metaphor he uses for what he feels is simply a method of harvesting is open heart surgery. After the surgeon closes the body, a scar remains.

“Trees heal,” he says. You could clearcut the entire state of Maine and it would be ugly, he says, but it would grow back in 200 years.

“I’m not going to say that loggers and foresters are perfect. We’re all imperfect human beings. There are lots of things I don’t like. From time to time I fly out West and there are places that I’ve seen that I shudder at—on a clear day at thirty thousand feet and they’ve stripped the mountains right up to the top. It’s red clay.” Seeing these things is traumatic, but Harold Young reminds, so is all change, whether from forest to clearcut or crosscut saws to harvesters to greenhouses.

“So we’re changing. We never go back. The combination of the complete tree concept, land management and genetics will eventually provide the maximum amount of fiber possible per acre. I am advocating that forest research and development be aimed at the future and not at the present or past.”

The future he proposes is one which restricts commercial production of forests to 5 million or fewer acres, leaving 13 million or more “for recreation, aesthetics and the production of clean air and clean water.”

Harold Young is an enigmatic man, a complex man. Why he has chosen to be an agent of change, why he quotes the futurologist, Alvin Toffler, author of Future Shock in his scientific papers, why he has lifted the name of his concept from Sir Isaac Walton’s The Compleat Angler, and finally, why he talks for more than half the time I’m in his office about the past—why this curious mix of vision for the future and lingering on the past, I can’t say.

Back on the road, something Harold Young said keeps coming back to me. “If they had the imagination, there would be room enough for everybody.”

NANCY SHANNON JESSER just graduated from Barnard College in New York. She participated in the 1986 fall semester at Salt.
MARK TWAIN USED to tell the story of how ingeniously and heroically he had acted at one of his home town fires.

"There was a fire in Hannibal one night, and old man Hankinson got caught in the fourth story of the burning house. It looked as if he was a goner. None of the ladders was long enough to reach him. The crowd stared at one another, nobody could think of anything to do.

"Then, all of a sudden, boys, an idea occured to me. 'Fetch a rope,' I yelled, 'somebody fetch a rope,' and, with great presence of mind, I flung the end of it up to old man Hankinson; 'Tie it around your waist,' I yelled. The old man did so, and I pulled him down."

I thought that I could be a better fireman than Mark Twain as I entered my first week as a member of the Atlantic Hose Volunteer Engine Company.

Our fire company works like many volunteer departments throughout Maine. Buildings are located in various parts of the town which house fire trucks and equipment. In case of a fire, a siren blows which alerts the townsmen to the emergency. Department members then hurry to the nearest fire house to man the trucks. They are told by radio where the blaze is located, and then respond in that direction in high hopes of putting it out.

This system works best on weekends and in the evenings because at those times most of the volunteers seem to be home. Unfortunately, my first call came on a Wednesday about noon. It was a sunny day. The lobstermen were lobstering. The teachers were teaching. Everyone else just seemed to be gone.

Undaunted, I ran to the station, rolled up the door and climbed into the driver's seat of the nearest truck. Surely someone would come. But as the minutes passed I began to worry.

Worry turned to panic when I saw who finally did show up. It was Harvey Stiles. In all probability, Harvey was the only person in the southern half of the state that knew less about fire fighting than I did. Never-the-less, it was any port in a storm.

"Climb aboard Harvey," I cried, "it's time to go!"

A fire truck does not ride like a sports car. I never expected it to. But why couldn't I get it out of second? Any dreams of glory quickly vanished as I slowly jerked the truck out of the firebarn and onto the road.

Harvey was having a great time. He had found the floor button for the siren, and as I desperately tried to build up a speed higher than ten miles an hour, he supplied us with a continual blast of noise. The cars that were in the area responded beautifully to this by pulling off the street. What was embarrassing though was that most of them had time to get out and stare at us as we crept and grinded down the road. Some people laughed. I hated them for that.

At length, I began to get the knack of it.

There was, however, a problem. It was my first week. I didn't have the slightest idea how to get water out of the truck once I got to the fire. There were so many dials and gadgets! But what was worse, I didn't have the slightest idea as to where the fire was! In my excitement I had completely forgotten to turn on the radio. I had merely headed out in search of smoke. It was a small town. I had figured that it was worth a shot. "Perhaps," I said to myself, "Harvey knows more than I give him credit for." But one look at him trying to find the "yelp" and the "high-low" buttons of the siren convinced me that he didn't. First things first though, I had to turn on the radio.

I looked across the interior of the cab and managed to locate the proper switch. I flicked it on just in time to hear a voice saying, "I repeat, all units return to station."

This was beyond belief. Return to station? I've gone through all of this for nothing? I've made myself look like a fool in front of the whole town for nothing? I couldn't help myself. I took out my anger on the nearest person to me. "Harvey!" I screamed, "would you please take your foot off that God damned siren!"

It's funny how these things work out. When I left the station not a single able-bodied man was in the neighborhood. But when I returned, the whole town was there. As I awkwardly attempted to back the truck into the station I knew that I would never—ever be able to live that day down. What's sad is, I was right.

To this day, whether there's a fire in our town, New York, or Hannibal, Missouri, someone always turns to me, smiles and says, "It's too bad that you and Harvey weren't there to fight that one. They sure could have used you!"

I guess Twain was better after all. At least he got there.

THOMAS BRADBURY is a native Mainer whose family has lived in Cape Porpoise since 1730.
THE SALT PILE
Back Issues, Books & Binders

The Salt Book (hardbound, 430 pages) sells for $10.95 plus $1.00 for shipping. Salt Two (hardbound, 433 pages) sells for $14.95 plus $1.00 for shipping. The cost of back issues is $3.00 each plus $.50 shipping, with the exception of No. 21 & 22 (Eastport for Pride) that costs $6.95 plus $1.00 for shipping. Library rates for back issues are available. Binders (each holds 8 issues) are available for $9.25 including shipping cost.

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No. 2: Sold Out.
No. 3: Maine Barns, Shrimping with Dave Burnham; Arundel Town Meeting; Restoring Ship Models (William Whorf); Smelting (Bert Graves and Harvey Bixby); Fishing Off a Sailing Vessel (Kenneth Hutchins).
No. 4: Farming with Clifford Jackson; How to Build a Lobster Trap (Stilly Griffin); Dowising (Gordon MacLean and George Martin); Wildwood Chapel; Blueberry Hill Ghosts; Wild Honeybee Hunt (Monty Washburn); Charcoal Making (Ava Ross); Cottage Cheese (Eleanor Nedeau); Masonry (Willie MacLean and George Martin).
No. 5: The Forks; Bear Trapping (Russell Kennedy); Old Bottles (Ted Towne); Willis Gowan’s Drugstore; Making Flintlock Guns; Arthur Fretwell’s Wooden World; Gooch’s Beach.
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No. 13: River Driving (12 chapter series); Cider Making; Old Time Christmases (interviews with scores of Salt’s people about Christmas 50 and 60 years ago).
No. 14: Grandfather’s Golden Earring; Marie Gallaros: 50 Years in the Mills; Felling a Tree; Paddle Making; Cod Liver Oil; Ken Berdeen’s Lilacs; Swan’s Island (Part I); Maine Diner.
No. 15: Fish Cutting; Laying the Keel; Swan’s Island, Part 2 (Ruth Moulten, Walter Stinson, Basil Joyce and Edwin Goot); Country Sawmill.
No. 16: Indian Island, Madasa Sapiel, Clan Mother of the Penobscots; Medicine Man (Senabeh Francis), Part 1; Ships in Bottles; Fishermen’s Superstitions; Fire of ’47; Metal Spinning.
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No. 23: (I Could Never Call Myself a Yankee) Five Immigrant Experiences: Italians (David Breggia); French Canadians (Antoinette Bernier); Russians (Ilsa Pasechnik); Greeks (John Anagnostis); Japanese (Suzuko Laplante).
No. 24: Shakers at Sabbathday Lake; Fitzhenry’s Store; Weaving (Bessie Swain); Blacks in Maine (John Gaskill and Geneva Sherrill).
No. 25: Waitressing (Glady McCulley); Island Shepherdess (Jenny Kirone); Island Sheep Drive; Lobstering (Casey Stender).
No. 26: Quilting; Salt Marsh Dikes; Wild Blueberry Harvest; French Canadian Musician (Toots Buthot).
No. 27: Beal’s Island Storyteller (Avery Kelley); Fencing the Sea (Lobstermen vs. Musselmen); Maine Says No to Nuclear Waste (photographic essay); One Room Island School (Cliff Island); One Room School Teacher (Ruth Jackson Pinkham).
Put it all together—what they know, what you know and what the professionals you work with know. Right through publication. That's what we do at Salt. When we cover a story, college students work with professionals. We have writers working with photographers. Graphic designers working with oral historians.

Some people compare what we do to the Farm Security Administration documentary photographers of the Depression. People like Walker Evans or Dorothea Lange. Only we work in the 1980s. Others point to the sense of regionalism that pervades our work. The same regionalism that flows through the work of writers like William Faulkner. Only we're non-fiction. What John McPhee calls the literature of fact. Even sociologists and historians think we might be okay. We're interested in change. We're interested in tradition. In the region of Maine.

Boston is 90 minutes to the south of us. Bangor is two and a half hours to the north of us, Portland 40 minutes. We're right on the coast.

Nancy Jesser from Barnard says she came to Salt "Because I wanted to take something all the way to the end. I got papers back in class with criticisms or suggestions, but I never took it the next step."

We filled that need. We run a semester program in the summer and fall when students can earn up to 12 to 15 credits. We also offer two shorter programs for part time or commuter students. Credit is awarded through the University of Maine system along with cooperating colleges and universities. The courses we offer feed off each other to work as a unit. They range from The Oral Interview, to a declared semester Topic in Research, to a student's own Independent Research, to interpretive courses like Writing and Editing for Publication, Photographic Documentation, and Design.

When Nancy Jesser was at Salt, she earned the maximum of 15 credits. We put her through the paces on how to conduct an interview and how to come back with the goods. Professor David C. Smith, historian from the University of Maine, oversaw the semester research topic on “Maine: Myth and Reality.” Which provided the context for Nancy's own independent work on Maine's great North Woods today. No small topic. She took that work, along with other of her shorter writings, through the workshops and individual conferences of the Writing and Editing for Publication course.

For more information, call us at (207) 967-3311 or write us at Salt Center for Field Studies, P.O. Box 1400, Kennebunkport, Maine 04046. A scholarship fund is available to help Maine students in need of financial aid. Non-Maine residents may be eligible for financial aid as well.
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The Great North Woods of Maine have held their own against man for centuries. Now the scale is tipped.