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We want you to read this magazine. Not just because the stories are real. Not just because the images grab you. Not just because you can hear the voices coming off the page. We want you to enter our world. We want you to journey across Maine with us as we meet people who have lived here all their lives. We want to tell you the story of someone who hasn’t always lived here. We want you to be as intrigued by this place as we are.

Every word, each punctuation mark, and every image has been carefully chosen and placed. Even those whose words and images do not appear on these pages have contributed their sweat and tears as well as their joy and laughter to this work. It is a true collaboration of community, the creation of a new family.

As soon as you begin to read this magazine we hope you will feel welcomed into our community, and come to understand what drives us to do what we do with such intensity, passion, commitment and love.

We have only one question for you... "Are you ready?"

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Reverence is not something easy to come by. In some cases, it's a slow-smoke lesson, in others, it elbows its way in all raw and hard-edged with ragged experience, and in still others, it comes in moments of quiet grace, of surprise.

For Havilah Hawkins, a carpenter at the Brooklin Boatyard, it’s come at the loss of tradition, the tradition of building genuine wooden boats. For Haddie, a purist, the introduction of epoxy to the building of more modern boats causes “rigid monocot construction that allows no give anywhere in the structure.” He says, “We don’t trust wood anymore…. There really is a rhythm and a cycle to the way the world operates, and to destroy that cycle and screw that rhythm by coating things with unnatural goos that have a half-life... it’s too bad to do that. I find that objectionable, morally repulsive, repugnant or whatever you want to say.”

And so, he built his own wooden boat, the Vela, a genuine, traditional wooden boat. It’s not about the epoxy. It’s about the breadth and shift of wood, its ability, like a living being, to move. “When you go into a very comfortable boat it’s like crawling back into the womb. There’s a warmth,” he says. “It brings you back to something basic we all need....”

For Chris Dingle, co-owner of Sanctuary Tattoo, it’s about creating art on skin. “I want to see all kinds of lines: broken, wiggly, bold, irregular lines that sing and dance and tell stories.” For Pete Hager, an inmate at Bolduc Correctional Facility, it’s about finding hope, a sense of self in work done well, behind bars and gates and fences—a slow-smoke lesson gained at the price of freedom. And one, he says, he’ll take outside.

For Diane and Vance Child, taxidermists, Reiki Masters and Eucharistic Ministers, it came through an unlikely marriage built on faith, a mutual respect and kinship to their work and each other; it survived a devastating fire endured raw-edged moments, and came finally to shape their beliefs and the want to share those beliefs with others.

And for Dave Isay, founder and Executive Producer of Sound Portraits Productions, it came through time spent listening to others tell their stories and the advent of StoryCorps, an oral-history project launched by Isay and his team at Sound Portraits. By providing soundproof recording booths across the country, along with facilitators to help with the technical aspects of recording, people can begin to hear and share and preserve their stories in sound. “To us,” writes Isay, “StoryCorps celebrates our shared humanity and collective identity. It captures and defines the stories that bond us. We’ve found that the process of interviewing a friend, neighbor, or family member can have a profound impact.... Listening, after all,” he writes, “is an act of love.”

This issue of Salt Magazine explores and listens and tells the stories of a people whose very lives and experience reflect and enrich our own. And in this, there is reverence. At the Salt Institute, each day is a study in listening, recording, and retelling those stories of lives unfolding before us. In this, and the act of giving these stories back through words, images and sound, there is reverence and, with great hope, a quiet grace.

Jennifer Andrews
Ride This Train

By Brendan Hughes
Photography by Tim Greenway

IT IS SUNDAY afternoon in the White Mountains. As the sun disappears behind the western hills, the hollows of New Hampshire become quiet. And there, in the hollows, Karl Smith gets ready for work.

Beside his train, the Downeaster, Rory O'Connor waits for passengers.
He puts a short, navy blue wool jacket over a striped blue shirt and blue jeans, then pulls his baseball cap with an interlocking blue and silver B and M over his thinning blonde hair. He wears the hat high on his head, the way that old-time railroad engineers did, then checks himself in the mirror. His blonde goatee is neatly trimmed, his hair cropped close above his round face and his eyes, deeply set among creases and circles, are engineer’s eyes. Deprived of regular sleep, they are accustomed to peering down mile after mile of dim, steel rail.

Karl says goodbye to Leila, his wife, and Mohammed, their two-year old son. He leaves them behind, along with his model train set and his collection of black and white photographs his father took of steam engines around New England. He also leaves behind a Master’s degree in Entomology from the University of New Hampshire. It is a reminder of a past life, when he didn’t drive a train for a living. Then, he climbs into his old silver Subaru hatchback, and begins the hour and a half drive to Portland.

IN OLD ORCHARD Beach, Rory O’Connor opens the door to his apartment as he returns from a walk along the ocean’s edge. Rory lives alone in a small condominium, a bachelor’s place. Two guitars lean on a couch, while a coffee table, littered with books about how to play guitar finger-picking style, takes up most of the room. Spread out across the table, lays Saturday’s sports page—Rory gambles on college football each week. He doesn’t bet a lot of money and sometimes he wins.

Rory wears his conductor’s uniform to work: a white collared shirt, blue tie, gray jacket and pants, a round, flat-topped conductor’s hat and ankle-high boots with a raised heel, polished not-quite-to-a-high-gloss, all per railroad regulations. He straightens the pins on his jacket and tie. One is a traffic light for railroad safety. On his right lapel, he wears a white International Transportation Worker’s Union pin, and on his left, his gold ten-year anniversary ITWU pin. The last pin is on his breast pocket. In blue lettering over a silver background, it reads: “Conductor Rory.” Looking in the mirror, he puts gel in his salt and pepper hair, combs it straight back, then checks his moustache. It is thick and parted in the middle, almost a handlebar, and above it, set behind wire rimmed glasses, his eyes are wide and blue and look just a little sad.

THE LAST TRAIN on Sunday leaves at 6:15 in the evening, and in late October, the sun is low. The Sunday night train usually isn’t crowded, maybe 30 or 40 people on a four-car train that can carry around 200. Rory arrives a little after five, pulling his brand new Subaru WRX into the parking lot next to the crew trailer. As he climbs the three steps into the trailer, Karl pulls in. He gets out of his car and glances at the train, which sits on the track behind the trailer, and then, at the station beyond. In the darkening twilight, the coaches reflect yellow floodlights from above, while the low-slung brick stationhouse radiates fluorescence from within. Rory waves hello, holding the door as Karl climbs the stairs into the trailer.

While Karl reads the railroad bulletins, checking for delays, construction, or anything else going on along the line, Rory sits at a table filling out his time card. Conductors and engineers have the potential to make a lot of overtime if they want to work. Rory works all of the holidays: Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Years. Rory says that he does it “for the guys that have family and kids. Not to mention, there is a little something extra in my envelope for showing up on Christmas day.” He doesn’t spend the holidays with his family. “I’ll call when I get home on Christmas Eve,” he explains. “I’ll go down the week before.” He likes the people who ride the train on the holidays, people who have somewhere else to go, and he likes being the man who makes their train run on time.

The train Rory and Karl make run is the Downeaster, which runs 365 days a year, five times a day. Station stops read like a Norman Rockwell itinerary of old Northern New England villages: Portland, Old Orchard Beach, Saco and Wells, Maine; Durham and Exeter, New Hampshire; Haverhill, Woburn and Boston, Massachusetts. A lot of people—over three hundred thousand last year—ride the Downeaster through those factory towns, college campuses, beaches and bedroom communities. It is the only passenger train in Maine, and one that operates on ancient tracks.

In its heyday, the late 1800s, the Boston-to-Portland run was the backbone of the old Boston and Maine Railroad. In 1960, with the dawn of the interstate highway system, the passenger trains disappeared and the B&M folded. But after ten years of lobbying by citizens and transportation experts, the State of Maine and Amtrak reinstated Portland-to-Boston service on December 14, 2001. Rory and Karl were on that first train.
Downeaster conductor, Rory O'Connor, directs passengers to the train in Boston's North Station.
Rory O'Connor, left, and Karl Smith sit in the cafe car as the Downeaster rests in Boston's North Station.

Rory O'Connor, right, and Karl Smith visit in the Downeaster's engineer cab on their way to Boston.
Now, the two men complete the pre-departure checklist printed on a green card. Rory checks his watch, an action he compulsively repeats until the train pulls back into Portland.

The coaches are Amtrak Metroliners, built in the '70s and made to hold just over 60 people. From the outside, they look like corrugated metal tubes flashing blue with little rectangular windows. Inside, they are carpeted from the floor to the overhead luggage racks. The seats, plush and blue, look lifted from a first class cabin in a 747. Rory checks his watch again and heads toward the station waiting room to begin boarding the train.

Most conductors make boarding announcements from the platform using the station's public address system. Rory is different. He stands in the waiting room, in front of the passengers. His gravelly Maine accent captures each rider's attention. “Folks, my name is Rory and I'll be your conductor today. Store your luggage above your heads or at the ends of the coach,” he says, “and save the rows of four seats for groups or people with kids.” Then, he mumbles, “All aboard.” On command, everyone stands and takes hold of their bags.

IT IS 6:15 on the nose and everyone is ready to go. Rory radios up to Karl. “Conductor to head, ready to depart Portland.” As the train lurches forward, the couplers between the cars make a metal on metal clanking sound and become taut. Rory walks along the aisles, taking tickets. He is not a big man, but he is built like a barrel, and when he strides down the aisles, customers make way. An older woman sits alone in a four-seat row. He asks her to move, but she refuses. “Don’t you tell me what to do,” she snaps. Rory does not stand for a challenge to his authority. “Listen to me ma’am, somebody has gotta be in charge here and that somebody is me.” She mutters something under her breath and moves to a two-seat row.

After the tickets are collected, Rory takes the stubs to Carmen, the snack bar attendant. Carmen, rotund with close-cropped hair and traces of a moustache, is part bartender, part soda jerk, and all wise guy. “Can you believe it?” Rory says. Carmen shakes his head, then throws a salt packet at Rory and asks, “Have you ever been a-SALT-ed?” Rory rolls his eyes, then turns back to his paperwork.

THE 6:15 out of Boston is the commuter train, populated by regular riders who travel from their jobs in Boston to their homes in New Hampshire or Southern Maine. The commuters, a dozen or so men and women, arrive for the train early and congregate on the platform, just in front of the sliding glass doors in the waiting area. Rory eyes them from the doorway of the café car; they watch him for the okay to board. They know that nobody gets on the train until Rory says so.

Ian Durham is one of the commuters. A physics professor at Simmons College in Boston, he is small with square-framed glasses and short black hair. “The commuters didn’t always get along with Rory,” Ian says. When commuters began riding, Rory wouldn’t let them sit in the café car, and he was strict about noise. Ian says that the Downeaster is not your average commuter train; it needs different, more flexible rules.

Now, Rory compromises with the commuters. He lets them sit in the café car, where there are booths with tables instead of regular coach seats. “Tables are a good thing,” says Ian, slapping his palm on the brown Formica. “Being on this train day in and day out, and the fact that it’s so long... most of us are on it for an hour and a half to two hours every day. When you’re forced to sit there for that long, you get bored if you aren’t forced to strike up a conversation.”

In the booth across from Ian, another commuter slices up a cake and distributes it throughout the car, even saving a slice for Rory. Behind Ian, two businessmen play poker. On a wrinkled and pockmarked piece of paper, they keep score. It’s the same piece of paper they’ve used for weeks.

Between stations, Rory slides into one of the booths in the café car, where he counts his tickets, makes notes in the delay log, or chats with the commuters about football or fishing. Day-trippers who walk into the café car for a sandwich or a cup of coffee stop and linger. The chatter and activity make the car warmer than the rest of the train. One of the card players listens to the Red Sox game on his Walkman and gives updates every few minutes—it’s the deciding game of a best-of-five series with Oakland and the whole car listens. When the Sox score, Rory jumps up and makes an announcement over the public address system. Cheers echo up and down the train.

Before Rory was a railroad man, he was a fisherman. “The train is a job, but the ocean... that’s, that’s something
Downsizer engineer, Karl Smith, waves to a passing train.
else," he says. He carries a dog-eared copy of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in his leather satchel, and recites passages from memory. Also folded inside, is a story his brother, Stephen, wrote about finding Jack Kerouac's toilet. Kerouac grew up in Lowell, not far from where Rory and Stephen grew up. Rory pulls the story out of the satchel and skims it. The last line of the story is from Frost, "We love the things we love for what they are." Rory remembers that line too.

IN BRILLIANT autumn light, Karl keeps his eyes on the track as far ahead as he can see. The train is speeding south through New Hampshire, passing farms, houses, towns, and dozens of little crossings where main streets, back roads and cow paths intersect the rails. At each crossing, he pulls the gray air horn lever to warn off anyone that might try to beat the train by crossing the tracks ahead.

Even though the Downeaster is short by most railroad standards, it takes three-eighths of a mile to stop. The coaches weigh a few thousand pounds each, while the locomotives on either end are even heavier. Emergency brakes can send a train off the tracks, so engineers avoid them. Instead, they try to anticipate what is coming around the next bend, or over the next rise, and they always, always, watch.

As the tracks leave New Hampshire, they drop into a shallow culvert. At the top of the embankment on the right side, the engineer's side, a road parallels the track. A few hundred yards ahead, the road descends to track level and then cuts sharply left across the tracks. It is a back road outside of Plaistow, New Hampshire, with little traffic; one Karl calls the *State Line Crossing*. When the crossing comes into sight, Karl blows the horn. He sees three kids riding their bikes along the road. As he blows the horn, the kids pedal faster. Karl sees they aren't stopping. He half-stands in his seat, his mouth open. He draws a breath, holds, then lays on the horn. At sixty miles an hour and less than a quarter mile from the crossing, it's too late to stop.

With the nose of the locomotive 50 feet from the crossing, two of the kids are in front of the train. As they cross, Karl gains 15 feet on them. Sitting high in the cab, only their shoulders and heads are visible above the hood of the engine. They are smiling, as if they don't see the locomotive only a few feet away. The third, a little behind, stops short of the crossing. Karl turns and looks out the window at him. He doesn't speak, but exhales slowly, then purses his lips. Hard.

Back in the coaches, no one, not Rory, not the passengers, knows what just happened. If the train hits someone, it is Karl's burden to bear. And he bears it alone. He doesn't think too much about it, he says. Karl can't control it if someone wants to step in front of his train, or if someone doesn't get out of the way after he's blown the whistle half a dozen times and he can't stop in time to save them.

Near misses like the one at *State Line* don't upset Karl much anymore. In 20 years on the railroad, four people have thrown themselves under Karl's trains. He didn't see the first one. The man stepped out of the bushes on the engineer's side of the train, and because Karl sits so high above the tracks, he never saw or even heard the impact. But Karl did see the second and third fatalities coming. In each instance, a man walked across the tracks from the left side and in front of the train. The last guy ran down an embankment, then laid his neck down on the tracks. He looked "like he was going to do push-ups," Karl says.

Engineers get three days off when there's a fatality. "The railroad sends grief counselors," Karl says. He didn't go for his first three, but after the fourth, he saw one because he didn't feel any remorse. Engineers relive the event for weeks afterwards. "We call it *The Movie*," Karl explains. It appears without warning "when you close your eyes, when you're not thinking about anything, when you're sleeping. You can't force *The Movie* out of your head," Karl says. "You just have to let it fade away."

IT'S THE END of the Southbound Thursday run. As the train snakes its way through Boston's northern suburbs, Rory stands in the doorway of the cafe car listening to Carmen complain about how much he hates a crowded train. For now, Rory doesn't have any tickets to collect or paperwork to complete, so he asks Carmen about the college football games instead.

Carmen is in mid-complaint from behind the bar when Rory's radio squawks. Carmen keeps on talking. "I can't talk now Carmen, I've got other stuff going on," says Rory as Karl's voice comes through the radio again, clear this time. "The engine has lost power," he says, "and the train is losing speed."

Rory walks quickly through the cafe car and into the cab of the engine, where Karl is trying to glide the train into North Station, a little over a mile away. Rory stands in the middle of the cab and looks at the track ahead. It's a long, straight line that disappears around a distant curve. Just before it does, though, there is a small rise, an old yard
Engineer, Karl Smith, checks in after a power loss at a station stop.
hump, used to push freight cars into the staging depots that once surrounded North Station. Karl doesn't think the train will make it over, but Rory is optimistic and keeps his eyes on the tracks ahead.

For Rory, the prospect of the Downeaster dying on the final approach to North Station is less of a safety hazard than a scheduling disaster. A locomotive will have to be borrowed from the Commuter Railroad. They'll have to wait for an open platform. None of the passengers know it, but the delay could be two hours or more, so Rory is all for gliding in.

"Dispatch has given us a 'clear roof,'" says Karl, meaning no switches and fewer turns that could slow them down. Karl pulls on the throttle, opening and closing it with no effect. Before the final approach to North Station, the track takes a wide turn, then goes up over Culvert Street. After that, it's all downhill to the platform. The train hits the turn at ten miles an hour. Wheels squeal. It's metal wheels on metal rails that make gliding a mile possible; minimal friction means even a thousand tons of steel can keep moving. The radio breaks the silence, as the dispatcher asks, "Portland, are you still moving?" Karl radios back that the train is down to six miles an hour. "How about that!" dispatch calls back, laughing.

But no one in the cab is laughing as the train inches up the hill. Rather, Karl and Rory lean forward, their foreheads pressed against the windshield, in collective thought and motion, enough, they hope, to carry them over the rise. The radio crackles again and the dispatcher asks if the train is still moving. It's down to three miles an hour now, and Karl, only half joking,
Above: Conductor, Rory O’Connor, helps first time rider, Owen Flanagan, off the Downeaster in Portland’s station.

Right: Downeaster engineer, Karl Smith, walks to his car for his commute home to New Hampshire.
tells dispatch to pray. Suddenly, the cab clears the top of the hill and begins to glide down. Both men cheer and sigh. “We’re back up to six miles an hour,” Karl says, while Rory, a half smile on his face, hands on his hips, nods and says, “I’m gonna get a nosebleed.” He heads back to the coaches to make the station announcement, checking his watch on the way back. The train is late.

THE SUNDAY night train pulls onto Track 9 at North Station. Two dozen people disperse quickly onto the dim and quiet platform, while a man with a broom and dustpan sweeps trash. Karl climbs out of the cab, then walks back to the café car to find out what the plan is. Rory is waiting for him with his hat and overcoat on. They leave the station together.

Meandering into the North End of the city, Karl and Rory chatter softly. Two blocks later, they are at their usual late night haunt, Bova Bakery, open 24 hours a day. Whoopee pies, tarts, calzones and sandwiches squat on fat haunches in the windows, while a sign boasts vitamin bread that will “make you stronger.” Inside the bakery it’s hot. An older woman with white hair in pigtails takes their order. As she brings out the food, Rory asks, “What time do you close up tonight?” A little annoyed, she says, “We don’t close.” Rory smiles. “He already knew that,” Karl says to the woman. “I know,” says Rory. The woman turns away. “I just like to hear them say it.”

IT’S LATE NOW. Mist blows down the North End’s narrow streets. Rory’s overcoat shimmers with beads of water under the streetlights. On the way back to the station, Karl stops at a little Dunkin’ Donuts and buys a small coffee. He met his wife, Leila, here almost three years ago. After months of flirtation, Karl asked her out. They were married less than a year later. He chats with the cashier, an Egyptian girl who is a friend of Leila’s. He tells her about their two-year-old son, Mohammed, and she tells Karl to give Leila her love. He promises he will.

Rory and Karl sit and eat on opposite ends of the café car. Rory reads the paper but loses track of time, and suddenly, it’s time to board. The crowd is small on the late train. They board quietly, most settling down to sleep right away. Rory writes their station stops on tags above their seats. He will wake them when it is time to get off.

When it’s time for departure, Rory looks up and down the concrete platform. He waves toward the engine where Karl is waiting. As he steps into the coach, he radios ahead. “Conductor to head, ready to depart Boston.”
Off the Maine Road: To be Raymond Strout

By Holly Wilmeth

JUST OFF Route 1, on Harrington's town line, a rustic polyurethane dwelling squats amidst four large boats, three refrigerators and an old pick-up truck named Henrietta. This is Raymond Strout’s Silent Prayer Ranch.

A carpenter by trade and a blood wormer by nature, Raymond lives off the land and the rhythm of its tides. In rural Maine, nature is a large part of people’s lives, of their survival. With a hoe and bucket in hand, blood wormers, like Raymond, work in time with the ocean’s heave and swell. Besides his patience, muscle and strength, a hoe, also known as a “man killer,” is a blood wormer’s only tool. For Raymond Strout, this is life on the marshlands.

"The ground has given me all I have.
Blood worming is not an easy life,
but it’s a hard, honest one.
You’re your own boss.
You get what you put into it."
“I’ve worked hard to have what I have. I’ve cut every piece of wood in this place.”
Above: Raymond Street and Roger Grant—old blood-wormers.

Left: Handful of blood worms on a cold day.
"This is my home sweet home. It's my own piece of the world. My sweet home on Silent Prayer Ranch."
For Raymond Strout

Raymond Strout is a man
of renown he likes to cut the big pine
down, and saw them up
with his Jonesered but the pride and joy
goes to his head.
Now Strout is only five foot nine
But he stands ten feet when
hees cutting pine.

-by Roger Grant

"Holding on to the light . . . "

(by Roger Grant)
“Blood worm diggers are mighty careful about sharing information on good coves. They like their elbow air; the freedom this job gives them.”
"It’s wild out here and it’s rough too. You have to know how to survive. Make a living from the land. Blood worming lets me survive. Life here in Maine is different; where there’s a dollar, you want to grab it. That’s what I’ve learned."
Bernie Sutherland, left, and Craig Tanner keep an eye on the water during an early morning ride to their mussel farm near Bangi Island. A "small craft warning" was issued earlier due to high winds.
ALONG MAINE’S coastline, fishing boats are beached in backyard lots, while rafts fashioned from wood and steel float off the shore nearby. Ropes, threaded with seed, dangle into the ocean’s depths and provide anchorage for Maine’s newest marine crop, a food farmed far from the high seas, a crop changing the way fishermen fish.
“MOTHER NATURE’S got a lot of curve balls to throw at you, and believe me, she’s not done yet after five years,” Tollef Olson says this, shaking his head and laughing. “There’s always something new.”

Tollef nods toward the horizon, his eyes fixed straight ahead. “There are the mussel rafts.” In the distance, two 40-by-40-foot rafts can barely be seen; they’re just shallow gray glitches on the sea. Up close, the rafts look like bobbing backyard decks of precarious design—two out of every three boards are missing. In actuality, the rafts are rigorously structured with horizontal rows of wood beams fastened to a steel frame. From these beams, hang 35-foot long ropes, seeded with mussels that feed off the plankton-rich waters below.

THERE ARE no roads to Tollef Olson’s farm. In fact, you’ll need a compass and a boat to get there. Separated by miles of water and a maze of islands, Tollef and his business partner, Craig Tanner, own two mussel farm sites in Casco Bay, off the coast of Portland, Maine. On clear days, they cruise to work in a northeast direction, zigzagging about the islands to reach the raft that serve as floating pastures. On foggy mornings—which occur frequently in Maine—they navigate more cautiously guided only by a compass and a few well-placed beacons. On this October morning, the clear, crisp air and starlit sky bode well for navigating their route.

It is before dawn when Craig pulls his black pickup into the empty parking lot of a South Portland landing, the 24-foot _Crack of Dawn_ in tow. He rounds the corner near the dock and reverses direction, aiming the craft toward the bay’s quiet black waters. Headlights from Tollef’s approaching truck light up the parking lot as he pulls alongside the boat.

The two men move quickly and quietly against the dark sky, their figures silhouetted by the twinkling lights from Portland’s Harbor. Craig, age 46, a tall, sturdy man with broad shoulders, short curly hair and a wide-open face, stands in the middle of the boat arranging the tools for their day’s work—rope, boots, gloves, and a bulging cooler filled with a half-ton of ice. Tollef, who at age 48, still has the slim muscular build of a swimmer and long wavy hair, pulls dozens of plastic fish totes from his truck and hoists them into the boat. Stars mingle with headlights, illuminating the early morning ritual, while music blares from the radio, waking tired surroundings.

Tollef plunks a white canvas bag containing lunch, a snack, a silver thermos and earplugs, into the stern and ambles up the ladder to the boat’s pilothouse. Then, the _Crack of Dawn_ lumbers into the quiet, black water as the sky turns a deep blue.

SHARP WIND cuts through Tollef’s hair, forcing it back, sideways and back again as he steers the boat toward the Clapboard Island farm site. This morning, Tollef is all smiles. Just four days ago, the crew was allowed back into their shellfish operation after a three-week shutdown caused by a bloom of toxic Red Tide. He’s glad to be back to his routine, but concerned about their fall schedule. The combination of cool weather and toxic algae has put them behind schedule, and he and his crew will be working up to 100 hours a week to make up the time.

Next to the Clapboard Island raft floats a processing barge, a 60-by-40-foot patch of working waterfront outfitted with an assembly line of machines. As the mussels are pulled from the ocean, they’re fed into a funnel-shaped bin and dropped like candy clusters onto a conveyor belt that carries them through the first machine. There, they’re bathed with jets of seawater and sent tumbling through rollers to break apart any clumps that have formed. Mussels often grow in clumps, using tiny threads called _byssus_ to attach to surfaces and each other. The mussels are then transferred to another machine where they shimmy over spiked rollers designed to catch and trim their byssus beards, leaving a clean, smooth line along their hinges. At the line’s end, the mussels emerge with shiny black shells.

From a culinary perspective, the best are blue mussels, *Mytilus edulis*, which never actually turn blue. Rather, the name and coloring are derived from the harsh environment in the tidal flats along the Atlantic, the habitat where these shellfish live. There, the shells are sandblasted at every turn of the tide and subjected to an endless bombardment of rock and shell fragments. Over the years, the process wears away their enamel shell, which begins as an iridescent mix of black, brown and gold. By the time the wild blue mussel shell turns its telltale hue, the animal has been badly battered for years.

Tollef kneels on the bobbing platform and reaches elbow deep into the steely Atlantic waters. His hand appears clenching a section of thick black rope, its end still dangling in the water. He hands the rope to Bernie, a crewmate, positioned on the nearby barge, and together,
Tollef Olson, left, pulls a 35-foot rope out of the Atlantic waters while his crewmate, Bernie Sutherland, helps pull the mussel-kilen rope onto their Casco Bay processing barge.
they work the rope—backs hunched, shoulders heaving, hands crossing over hands—which emerges 35 feet later, coated with a glistening brown glaze made of mud, seaweed, starfish and a variety of other marine free-loaders. Beneath this glaze gleam thousands of shiny black mussels, their oval shells strung in beaded spirals that swell as wide as a soccer ball.

It's harvest day. Today the crew will collect nearly a ton of blue mussels to be sold in Portland restaurants and fish markets, or shipped to other markets across the nation. As the rope is pulled onto the barge, Craig shakes the curling heap, spilling clumps of mussels onto the floor. When all the mussels have been freed, he tosses the rope into a box and looks back at Tollef, now working another rope. Eighty-five pounds down. Only 1,715 more to go.

WHETHER IT WAS working in fisheries or diving for sunken treasures, Tollef has been pulling his living from the sea for more than 30 years. As a treasure hunter, he salvaged gold, silver and various artifacts from shipwrecks around the world. A collection of Chinese porcelain—recovered from a Dutch ship that disappeared in 1752 in the South China Sea—now sits dry-docked in floor-to-ceiling cabinets in a corner of his South Portland home. If prompted, he'll tell you about the "one that got away." Downed in the Bahamas sometime in the 1550s, his
group found the ship's anchor but never located its body. He has an idea where the ship might be and says he may someday go after it. But now, with a wife and two children, he wants to build something sustainable on the water.

"After watching the natural fisheries become so depleted and seeing aquaculture in other countries, I came to the conclusion that we were missing the boat here in the United States. So I took the bull by the horn, so to speak, and started my own fishery."

With four rafts between their two sites, Tollef and Craig currently pull in about 200,000 pounds of mussels per year. They expect to boost their weekly harvest come November and hope to increase their annual production to somewhere between a half-million and a million pounds within the next few years.

"I know we could sell a million pounds, no problem," says Craig, noting the United States currently imports mussels from Chile, New Zealand and Canada. "Right now, the Canadians are producing almost 40 million pounds per year. Down here [in Maine], we're a day closer to the market. And in the shellfish business, a day means everything."

BY EIGHT, the cleaning machines on Tollef's processing barge are quiet. Calypso music fills the air as Craig pours a tote of clean mussels onto the grading table, an aluminum structure that bears some resemblance to a large pool table. Long metal rods run lengthwise along the table's surface and are spaced to allow broken shells and undersized mussels to fall into the bins below. The table smooths out at one end to form a flat surface with corner holes, where the mussels that pass muster are pushed like eightsballs into pockets lined with black netted bags. Bags that change sizes throughout the morning to fill two-pound, ten-pound and 30-pound orders.

"Here's a mudder," says Craig, plucking a lifeless specimen from the heap. "It takes just one of these in a pot of steaming mussels to stink up the whole bunch," he says tossing the decaying mussel into the bay.

Craig checks the remaining mussels, then slides them into a pocket lined with a 10-pound bag. Nearly full, he pulls it off the hooks that hold it in place, carries it to a red metal scale that hangs on a nearby pulley, then adds a handful of mussels to adjust the weight. Before tying it shut, he slips one of the tags Tollef printed this morning into the bag. The tag identifies the harvest date, its location, and includes the crew's state-issued license number.

The volume of mussels the crew can process has increased through the years. "When we first started, we would pull only 500 pounds per harvest," Craig says, "and it took us 12 hours to process them." Over the past five years, they've acquired additional equipment and streamlined their procedure to reduce the manual labor. Still, Tollef and Craig talk eagerly about acquiring a weigher-conveyor developed in Canada that would facilitate the process and make it even faster. Someday, they think. Someday.

"It has a huge hopper," Craig says, his eyes growing wide. "And once you fill it, the mussels go through the machinery and get bagged, tagged and weighed automatically." He pauses and looks across the table at Tollef. "The problem is, it costs around $30,000."

"For that amount we can put two more rafts in the water," Tollef says. He looks down at the table and continues sorting, then adds quietly. "We need to get the rafts in first."

GIVEN A CHANCE, the wild mussel does not want to settle on the bottom. Mussels free-float for the first four to six weeks of their lives, searching for a place to live as they get bigger and heavier. If they can find a place while still free-floating, they'll attach to anything—the side of a rock, a piling or a line thrown into the water. "They look for something to get a hold of and begin life," says Evan Young, who—along with Tollef and Craig—owns and operates the only other mussel seed farm in New England. The seed farm, located near Blue Hill, Maine, is designed to collect free-floating mussels and provide safe anchorage until they are large enough to plant on ropes that hang from the mussel rafts.

This morning, Evan is eager to check the size of the seed. An unusually cold winter and cool summer have conspired to slow the growth of the young mussels, pushing the seeding process back a couple of weeks. "We're essentially farming the ocean and it's just like the farmer on land, the weather plays the biggest part of everything and we're at that mercy," he says.

Today, the cool trend continues and the clear October morning carries a penetrating chill. Wearing two navy jackets, a long-sleeved t-shirt, faded jeans and green Wellingtons that stretch to his knees, Evan dresses to outwit the cold. His eyes are covered with dark wraparound glasses and the bill of his cap juts out from the hood of his outer jacket.
Despite this cold weather cover up, it’s easy to spot him among the handful of men leaving the dock for their workday routine—the light auburn bristle and a grin that perpetually covers the lower half of his face instantly tag him. In final preparation for his watery duties, he pulls on a pair of oilskin bib-pants, encasing himself in a waterproof shield. Joking with his crewmate as he casually steps off the dock into his 20-foot skiff, Evan appears as unsinkable as the orange and green buoys that dot the bay.

A two-mile, shimmering inlet, Salt Pond, where Evan farms, is cinched in the middle by a jetty of land that separates the north and south ends. Carpeted with pine, spruce, and blazing fall foliage, the surrounding shoreline reveals dozens of homes with great windowed walls that overlook the tranquil setting.

“If we were applying for a lease on the seed farm today, I doubt we would get it,” Evan says quietly. “People say they don’t want to see someone working out here, but once they’ve seen what we do and how unobtrusive it is, we generally don’t have a problem.”

The seed farm sites, one in the north Salt Pond and one in the south, were established in the mid-1990s. “It’s been hit-and-miss, people [in Maine] have started mussel farming and then stopped,” Evan says. “Now it looks like it might take off and grow as much as the state—or the people of the state—will let it grow. The big controversy on mussel farming now is the shorefront owners who don’t want to look out and see something on the water. They want to see pure, unspoiled water.”

The skiff slides past a score of white buoys, spread out over a dozen acres and spaced in rows as straight and narrow as those found in a Midwest cornfield. Stretched between the buoys are miles of white rope used like clothes lines to hold the eight-foot strands submerged in the water below, which provide a mooring for the young mussels.

Sidling up to a row of buoys that appear slightly more sunken than the others, Evan reaches over the boat’s side and retrieves a rope encrusted with small, black mussels. He pulls off one of the larger ones, a thumbnail-size sample, and holds it in his hand. “That’s the size we wish they were already, and usually they are this time of year.” He surveys the line again and looks back at his crewmate. “We’ll just get two totes today,” he says, turning to pull two gray containers from a stack in his boat.

CRAIG PULLS a cell phone out of his jacket to check in with his customers as Tollef and Bernie bag the last few totes from their harvest. “Browne wants 15 two-pound bags for the weekend,” he says to Bernie, still holding the phone to his ear.
Tollef Olson holds a cluster of blue mussels just culled near Range Island in Casco Bay.
Three days earlier, as the crew was loading their harvest onto the boat, they had to go back and pull an extra 300 pounds for a major buyer with a last minute request. Tollef made a midday run into Portland to deliver the order in time for shipping. "No' is a word that's simply not in our vocabulary," he explains. "We're a small business and we work hard to meet our customers' needs."

After icing down the last bag of mussels, the crew stops for a break, their spirits bolstered by a surprisingly warm autumn sun. Bernie pulls a silver thermos from his bag and pours a cup of coffee. Tollef leans against the grading table and peels a banana, while Craig gathers a few handfuls of mussels to take home to his family.

Surrounded by rippling, royal blue water and a wreath of islands, the crew works aboard their processing barge. Nearby is Clapboard Island, a tree-covered hideaway dotted with an occasional home. In the distance, the Maine coast wraps north to west, and a handful of other islands—Cousins, Great Chebeague, Little Chebeague and Long Island—encircle the area east and south. This view, while serene, also provides shelter from severe weather and ice.

Tollef says Maine's chilly waters and numerous near-shore islands provide an ideal environment for farming blue mussels. But finding a suitable lease site has proven to be a challenge. State regulations stipulate that aquaculture sites must not interfere with existing commercial or recreational activities—a constraint that limits opportunities in the heavily used coastal waters.

Once state and environmental requirements have been met, would-be farmers must gain approval from the local community. Some public hearings have been known to go on for as long as 20 hours, and are often contentious, as community members haggle over and assign rights to coastal waters.

The most frequent objections come from shorefront homeowners who don't want to see gear in the water. Others may express concerns about the environmental impact or ability to navigate around equipment placed near the shore. "Sometimes it's just a matter of educating them because they've heard stories about the salmon industry putting food into the water," Tollef says. "But mussels, with their filtering action, are actually good for the environment.

"We can grow so many mussels in a small area, and we have so many areas to choose from, that we're able to really keep our impact low on fisheries and on existing recreation.... And that's what we try to do," he says. "But there's no way you can pick a spot that somebody isn't going to be interested in."

THE MUSSLE RAFTS grow small behind a foamy white V as the Crack of Dawn scuds toward the harbor. Craig and Bernie rest against brimming blue totes and pull out paper bag lunches. A curl of salt spray licks the floor of the boat and sprays their backs, while Craig takes large bites out of his turkey-on-wheat. But despite today's easy haul, he looks weary, his dark round eyes and jawline sag with fatigue.

"The road hasn't been easy," he says. The mussel farming business comes with a 12-to-18-month lag time between startup and payoff. And a steep learning curve, combined with a few surprises from Mother Nature, can stretch that period to several years.

Eider ducks were their worst surprise. Told by a biologist they wouldn't need predator nets in the summer, Tollef and Craig put ten tons of seed on their first raft. Within a few weeks, eight tons of seed had disappeared. And, says Craig, "There went our first year's paycheck."

The recent bloom of toxic Red Tide has also taken its toll. When this happens, shellfish operations up and down the coast generally close for periods up to three weeks. "That's painful for a small company," Craig says. "I probably won't pay myself this month." He looks up to see the mussel rafts slip below the horizon. A smile inches across his face.

"This all started when we were diving for sea urchins off the Cape [Elizabeth] shoreline," he says, slowly reaching back to the time when their mussel farming began. "Tollef and I each put a tank on and went into the water. I came up with a single urchin and he emerged with only two or three golf balls." He laughs and cups his hands, holding them out as if to display their catch. "We looked at each other and said, 'We've gotta do something different. This just isn't working out.'"

Something different. A message from the depleted sea, delivered with the help of a near-shore duffer, called to them. It was a food farmed far from the high seas. And too, a crop that would change the way two fishermen once fished.

AT THE HEIGHT of lunch hour on a brilliant autumn afternoon, Tollef weaves his pickup through strolling tourists and willy-nilly traffic to make his deliveries along Portland's busy Commercial Street. The bed of the truck is stacked two-totes high with
ice-filled chests carrying bags full of mussels.

He maneuvers up to the loading dock at Browne Trading Co., a local retail business that also distributes seafood nationally, and wrestles five heavy totes onto a cart. He pushes the cart through a curtain of clear plastic strips into a room dominated by a curving conveyor system used to prepare orders for packing and shipping.

The room is empty, but soon a manager appears from his lunch break to usher in the order. He consults a stack of pink and yellow slips, noting that the mussels will be shipped within hours to customers in Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta and Virginia.

Tollef travels a mile down the street and backs his pickup into the worn, sloped loading dock at the Harbor Fish Market, a bright red building with green trim that marks the entrance to Portland's Custom House Wharf. The air is scented with fish and salt, while the late October sun casts a warm glow on the narrow black columns that line the market's windows and door. Bold white letters which read: *Fresh Seafood Packed to Travel*, shiver in the sun.

"We're a little early today," Tollef says to the attendant who meets him at the dock.

"What's the occasion?"

"Small order day."

"Great, let me grab the cart."

The two pull the order—nearly 300 pounds of blue mussels—from the back of the truck into the loading area. As they banter about the weath-
Tollef Olson and his crew use a grading table to sort and bag blue mussels harvested in Casco Bay, Maine. The sorting process will take place in their workshop on the Main Wharf in Portland.
er and upcoming weekend events, the attendant peels a white slip from a pad and hands it to Tollef, who folds it neatly into his shirt pocket. Walking onto the well-worn wooden dock, Tollef bounds down a single stair looking happy. He checks his watch—it's nearly one. He has only two deliveries left to make. His next stop: Street & Co., a high-end restaurant along Portland's cobble-stoned Wharf Street.

IT'S FRIDAY NIGHT. Hungry patrons at Street & Co. pour over menus loaded with seafood entrees: lobster, salmon, haddock and mussels. Mussels simmered in white wine with garlic and basil, served on top of mounds of linguini in red sauce, or used to flavor Lobster Diablo. At a table tucked against a brick wall, a couple mulls over the menu while sipping red wine. A waiter emerges from the kitchen carrying a steaming pan filled with the day's fresh catch: a light, flaky fish simmered in saffron and cream and rimmed with shiny, black mussels. The mussels follow the curve of the copper pan, wrapping around the fish like a curling rope, their plump, orange-colored meats bulging from open shells. A small cloud of fragrant steam swells above the table next to the couple. After the waiter wedges the dish between bread plates and glasses, he turns to address the captivated couple.

"Are you ready to order?"

"I think we need a few more minutes," says the man, his eyes still locked on the fare at the next table, "but we'll have the Mussels Provençal to start."

Tollef Olson talks with an attendant at the loading dock of Portland's Browne Trading Co., while delivering an order of mussels harvested earlier that day.
West Gardner Beef:
A FAMILY SLAUGHTERHOUSE
THROUGHOUT the year, farmers and families all over Maine are faced with the chore of moving their livestock from field to freezer. Fortunately for most, the slaughtering process need not extend beyond the offices of West Gardner Beef, where customers are greeted by Sharon Pierce and can place orders to the hum and crash of radio oldies.

Customers don't see the cutting floor, where meat is cut and wrapped, or the smokehouse, where pigs and birds hang in clumps, enveloped in hickory. And most of West Gardner Beef's customers never see past Sharon to the kill floor, where her son, Todd Pierce, works at turning livestock into parts, and then, into freezable meat.

On the kill floor, Todd is focused and efficient making sure to meet his customers' seasonal needs: barbequed pigs in July, Thanksgiving turkeys in November, or Christmas hams in December. He works seven days a week, rarely sitting for more than a half-hour in the break room with his mother or his stepfather, Earle Gilley. For Todd, it's pigs Sunday through Tuesday, beef Wednesday through Friday and poultry on Saturdays.

Todd kills the animals quickly; then moves to tie, gut, skin and weigh them in what seems like minutes. He doesn't complain when the saw breaks and he has to split 500-pound cows by hand, or when he stays late to catch up on some cutting.
sometimes spending more than 14 hours a day on the floor. "You know, well, some people will piss and moan, but the work's gotta get done so... you know, it's survival."

Todd grew up around the butchering business. When he was 15, he helped his father build the slaughterhouse in their hometown of West Gardner. Soon, he began helping his dad on the kill floor and his mother with wrapping. After working at the slaughterhouse for more than 27 years, and eventually taking over for his father, Todd has brought his own family into the business. His sons, Ben and Sam, work after school and on weekends, each taking on their own responsibilities at the shop.

Ben, the oldest, has handed off the job of wrapping and packing meat to Sam; now Ben mans the kill line. Every Saturday at dawn, Ben folds into the pickup alongside his brother and father. Together, they head to the slaughterhouse where they will butcher the day's turkeys hauled to the shop.
Left: Ben Pierce removes beef from the meat freezer for cutting.

Below: Ben Pierce moves turkeys from the scalding to the plucker while Paul Pease holds another turkey for killing.
On Saturdays, Todd and Ben work side-by-side, killing and cutting up the poultry while Sam bags and boxes the meat for customers. As Todd’s oldest, Ben takes on a lot of responsibility at the slaughterhouse. “If I want to spend money,” he says, “I have to earn it. That’s how I got my first snowmobile.”

It is late. Livestock orders lean in skewed stacks on Sharon’s desk, piles of salted hides hang like shadows in the barn, while pigs, that will become a Christmas ham or Sunday bacon, slow-smoke nearby. There’s still a lot to do. But like every day at West Gardner Beef, it’s one the family takes in stride.

On the killing floor, Todd Pierce kills one of his own cows while Paul Poase processes another.
Todd Pierce struggles to remove a stubborn pig from a customer’s trailer.
Fresh turkey for Thanksgiving dinner at the Pierce home.
Todd Pierce, at home after dinner.

Todd Pierce’s license plate.
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Photo by Shaleece Hass, 1999
The sinking of the Cirrus.
ROMANCE OF THE WOODEN BOAT

By Emily Funkhouser
Photography by Shikarro Sampson

If a man must be obsessed by something, I suppose a boat is as good as anything, perhaps a bit better than most.

E. B. White
JUST BEFORE SEVEN o’clock, forty men make their way through a small, white door of a grey-shingled building. They leave behind them the whistling gusts of wind blowing in from the waters of Eggemoggin Reach, and enter into the main shop of The Brooklin Boatyard.

The rectangular building is packed with stacks of pine, oak, mahogany and teak. On worktables, wooden toolboxes overflow with power tools, hammers, chisels and handplanes. As the men walk past two boats being constructed, each about fifty feet in length, brown slush falls from the cleats of their work boots and sneakers, their movements stirring the coat of sawdust that settled overnight.

Carpenters congregate in the L-shaped, third level of the shop. Some sit on a long bench with their backs to the workshop. Others stand by the windows, leaning against a table covered in maritime magazines and assorted papers related to current projects. The men talk about their families, sailing, and local news while they wait for their boss, Steve White, to come and start the morning meeting.

Steve’s dog, Lela, has already arrived. This ten-month old, knee-high, dark grey mop is the princess of the boatyard. During the workday, she prances around the yard, from building to building, as if she were the Chief Inspector. Greeting each man with a sniff, her ears perk to a point, displaying a splotch of orange primer paint under her left one. Even this early on a Monday morning, the men are cheerful and patient as Lela leans her front paws on their carpenters and nudges at their coffee cups.

Amidst the men is an empty wooden folding chair with a blue canvas seat. On the back, monogrammed in red, is the name, Joel White. It resembles a director’s chair, and for many years, it was.

Joel began the boatyard in 1960. And though Joel continued to design boats at the yard until his death in 1997, in the mid-eighties, he handed over management of the yard to his son, Steve White. Except for Bob Stephens, one designer at the yard who worked closely with Joel, workers don’t usually sit in his chair.

Shortly after seven o’clock, Steve enters the shop from his office. He lacks the layer of sawdust the others wear. Steve’s blue jeans are actually blue and his red sweater is clean. Even the tape measure at his waist looks shiny.

The din lowers. Steve’s deep voice resonates throughout the shop as he updates everyone on boatyard projects. By a quarter past the hour, the men disperse like stomping army ants, down the stairs and around the shop to begin their work. Soon, the sound of a band saw breaks the air.

HAVILAH HAWKINS is a carpenter on the crew reconstructing the Seminole, one of the boats in the main shop. Seminole, built in 1916, is propped on a combination of metal jackstands and wood supports. Cracked paint, chipped planks, dents on her hull and scrapes on her deck, all evoke her history at sea. Havilah says, “There’s nothing like true wear and tear to really bring life to something.”

Havilah is called “Haddie” around the yard. He has been working winters at the Brooklin Boatyard for the past few years. Haddie says he was “steeped” in wooden boats from the moment he was born. “My aunt teases me, because she says the first words I ever said to her were, ‘Aunt Dot, big boat.’”

Haddie doesn’t mind vocalizing his passion for his craft, and for this, he stands out. He wonders if the evolution of boatbuilding technology is destroying the honesty and romance of the process. He questions the waste stream that comes from the yard. He asks whether everyone who wants a boat deserves one. “People get judgmental and they think you’re opinionated. Well, of course you’re opinionated. But I’ve got a lot more questions than I’ve got answers right now.” He blames his multitude of questions on turning 50 years old.

THE RESTORATION of Seminole will be extreme. The first step was for a designer to take the boat’s lines. With these measurements, he created a new set of paper plans for the boat. Next, Seminole will be stripped down to her frames, planking and cabin top. Her belly will be sliced open and a newly constructed keel will be placed beneath her. Then, vertical slices will be removed, starting at her stern. In essence, she will be taken apart like a loaf of bread. As each slice is removed, new frames will be attached to the keel, so throughout the process, Seminole will maintain a boat structure, a requirement in order for a project to be called a “restoration.”

When the project is complete, the only pieces of the original vessel will be a few bits of hardware and the silver dollar found under her mast. It is believed, by placing a coin under a boat’s mast from the country it is built in and the year its keel is laid, that this will keep the mast from falling over. If Seminole’s plans are followed closely, the restored boat should look similar to the original. From the outside.

The Heilner 50-footer is a boat being constructed on the other side of the main shop. She is being called the Heilner 50-footer until her owners, Marc and Pam Heilner, christen

Pete Chae working on Cirrus.
her. The sleek boat was designed by the boatyard’s Bob Stephens, and is being built with modern cold-molded wood technology.

Traditionally, wood was steam-bent and materials like cotton, tar and pine pitch were used to waterproof a boat’s joints. The cold-molding process eliminates these materials so that the boat is comprised only of thin layers of wood, shaped and held in form with coats of various epoxy glues.

Sam Temple, a young carpenter on the 50-footer crew, is on the lofting floor, working on its cabin. Below him a concert of electric saw blades, pounding hammers, bristling sanders and the tings of recoiling tape measures play. Sam grew up around boats and worked summers in boatyards. He worked here last summer, then left to complete his last semester at Bates College, returning to the Brooklin Boatyard in March with an English degree. He says, “I think maybe there’s sort of a movement among younger people to go back to trades because they realize that half the people in the world don’t know what they do all day.” At the age of twenty-two, he thinks boatbuilding is the job for him. “I’ll never feel like I’m bored here. There’s always things to challenge me.”

SEMINOLE’S BELLY has been opened. Rather than ripped apart, she appears to have been skillfully cracked like an egg. Haddie sings a little ditty to himself as he squats on the floor by Seminole’s new keel and adjusts the cap that covers his remaining red hair. Rising gradually, he groans. Then he and another carpenter work to guide the completed keel into place beneath Seminole using a huge, mechanical lift that glides along the ceiling of the shop.

Haddie pushes a button to raise the keel. He looks upward, his thick fingers pushing buttons to move the lift, which guide the structure. It moves only inches at a time, as the men must occasionally stop to reposition the metal bars beneath the keel and roll it into place. With only a single incident—the keel nudged against Seminole’s hull—the mission is complete. Haddie takes a blue handkerchief from his back pocket and gives it a quick dusting. For the moment, the old hull and the new keel occupy the same space.

Haddie mourns the loss of the traditional boat shop atmosphere he grew up in. “There’s a real rhythm, a romance, to the simplicity and honesty about that kind of lifestyle that we’re missing here surrounded by screaming power tools and clouds of dust.

“To listen to a caulking mallet work,” Haddie mimics the curt tap, tap, tap, “there’s a ring that takes place. And I can remember working in yards where you had three or four of them going at once. Just the neatest tap, tap.” He moves his arms to imitate the smooth gesture of using a handplane. “The sound of a handplane going across the board is a neat noise. And the shavings that come off—long, skinny, swirly things—that’s missing when you put a router against something.” He holds an invisible router close to his chest and enacts the invasive vibration of the power tool. “EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEWWW... there it is, just dust in your lungs.”

Behind his glasses, which are held together at one joint with a knotted thread, his eyes glaze over in a moment of reflection. “The cedar and oak smell, the steam, the sounds, the ambiance of a wooden boat shop is not to be had in very many places anymore, but you can get a little bit of that by going up to the Cirrus shop.”

THE CIRRUS SHOP, in another building at the yard, is much smaller and more intimate than the main shop. Windows line the rear wall of the room, but most light comes from fluorescent fixtures along its ceiling. Boards of teak and pine are stacked along both lengths of the room, while pieces of Cirrus’s cabinetry are piled in the back, waiting to be reassembled. Shelves hold cartons of paintbrushes, plastic mixing containers, buckets of red-lead paint, respirator masks, and boxes of screws, nuts and bolts labeled “Cirrus.” Cirrus fills the room: 31-feet at the water line, 47-feet on deck. She is a Nathaniel Herreshoff Fisher’s Island class, built in 1930. The lower half of her hull is blue, while her upper portion is painted a dark maroon shade mixed especially for her. It’s named “Cirrus-red.” A gold leaf cove stripe divides her teak rim from her painted hull. In places where each bronze plank fastening was replaced, her paint has been scraped off and her yellowed cotton caulking hangs in long strands from her seams. Cirrus rests, landlocked, on blue metal legs and wood blocks.

The owner of Cirrus is getting ready to sell her. “She came in just to have her floor timbers and the bottoms of her frames replaced,” Pete Chase, foreman for the project, explains. “To do that, we had to take out her interior,” he says, “and once we’d done that, it made more sense to replace the whole frame. All of the frames from top to bottom and the keel needed to be replaced. We’re replacing that and we’re replacing about four planks on each side of
Paul Laudemam and Pete Chase add plank to Cirrus.
the bottom, and refastening the whole boat: new metal fastenings and plank fastenings. So, it's turned into a major project. It doesn't mean the boat's gonna be worth more when she's done, but she'll last."

No epoxy is being used on Cirrus. Rather, this is a wooden boat restoration using age-old building techniques. "I love traditional wooden boats," says Pete. "From a boatbuilder's point of view, it's the most interesting kind of boat work there is really." The type of work that Pete is doing with Cirrus is the envy of many at the yard.

Pete sits on a wooden milking stool by Cirrus, sealing bronze bolts the size of his pinky finger which fit through the keel. It's nine o'clock, morning break time at the yard, but Pete stays to finish his task.

The bottom planks of Cirrus have been removed, so while Pete is beside the boat, his strong upper torso and pale arms maneuver inside the hull. As he uses a piece of scrap wood to smear tar around a metal bolt, some of the black goo clings to his fingertips. After surrounding the bolt with tar, Pete wraps a strip of cotton, about two inches wide, around the bolt. He then takes a mallet and smacks the bolt into place. The shop resonates with metal on metal.

Pete puts down the plastic container of tar and wipes his fingers on its edge. There is still time enough during this morning's break for him to grab his jacket and get some coffee.

DURING ONE morning break, Haddie sits at his usual spot on the bench, waiting for his microwaved tea to cool off before sipping it from a glass jam jar. The morning sun shines through the thirty large square windows along the sides of the building, while Haddie talks with several coworkers about the Seminole project.

Haddie is irritated because he feels that Seminole is being disrespected. "You don't take your grandmother, chop her up into pieces and take her to the dump, now do you? No! You try and learn from her when she gets to be old." Haddie thinks the aged body of Seminole still has something to offer; she shouldn't be thrown away so thoughtlessly. "You talk to 'em, find out what they know. You don't just ignore it. The arrogance is just beyond belief." As Haddie begins to climb on his soapbox, his face growing red to match his well-trimmed beard, he is teased to take a sip of his Yogi "tension tea."

Seminole is a wreck; her owner bought her in San Diego for a dollar. It would have been faster and less expensive to build an entirely new boat, but the owner is eager to preserve Seminole; she is willing to spend the extra time and money so
the project can be called a "restoration." Technically, it is a restoration, but few men at the yard are comfortable calling it that, since almost all of the original vessel will be taken away and replaced with new materials.

For some, boats can be more than just functional objects. "I think of them as living beings because certainly the older ones are," says Haddie. This is why many of the builders avert their eyes when Seminole's pieces are lowered into the dump truck with a crunch. "The older a boat gets," Haddie says, "and the more it's been around, and the more it does, the more it becomes an entity unto itself."

WHEN ELEVEN-THIRTY approaches, the men get ready to go to lunch. Most of them live some distance from Brooklin, so if they haven't brought something with them from home to eat, they either go to the General Store or the Morning Moon Restaurant for take-out. Lunch break is half an hour.

On this warm day, as the snow begins to melt and the ice breaks up in the Eggemoggin, most of the men sit in their trucks with the windows down to eat, while others meander to the benches at the rear of the main shop to look out over the water.

Because Brooklin is home to so many boatyards as well as Wooden-Boat magazine and its Wooden Boat School, the town calls itself the "Boat Building Capital of the World." And while in winter the water is nearly empty, come the first spring thaw, the Reach will begin filling with moored vessels. In the summertime, the population of Brooklin more than doubles. People return to the inns and summer residences. Bathers gather on docks and beaches. Then, Brooklin's lobstermen and fishermen must share Eggemoggin Reach with yachts and their boats.

Seminole is now only a shell. Several feet have been cut off from both her bow and stern. Her new keel sits on the floor beneath her, touching no part of her original hull. She is propped up on jackstands and braced with beams of wood. The structure should hold, but weakens as each cross-section of her hull is sliced and removed. There is also the chance her cabin top might split down the middle from the stress, causing her port and starboard sides to slide down together at her belly.

BOATS ARE feminized, and there are many theories at the boatyard about why that is. Some guess it's because fishermen considered their boats to be their maritime wives. Others suggest that it's a "beautiful product," all curves, like a woman. Pete says it's simply "because men fall in love with them."

Sam says, "It's probably a 'she' because mostly men build them and men don't understand women real well or are confused by them. A boat is a complicated thing and we don't really know why it's working.... We give the boats lives to compensate for our inability to figure out what we've done,"

Haddie begins, "Nobody looks at you funny if you admire a lot of different boats. So you have a freedom to express your appreciation for a thing of beauty in a boat. We, as men, are allowed to appreciate and fondle—if you will—or be a part of, and become involved with, all of these different expressions of beauty."

He then makes the point that, "You're actually protected by, surrounded by and completely dependent upon, this thing of beauty. It's only natural to call it a woman because where else do you get it?"

"When you go into a very comfortable boat it's like crawling back into the womb," Haddie says. "You listen to the water on the outside. There's a warmth. There's a darkness. There's a comfort zone there that's just to kill for, it really is.... It brings you right back to something basic that we all need: a warm, soft, fuzzy place to be."

SEMINOLE COLLAPSED. Two days after the men began removing slices of her hull, she split apart and fell to the floor. Crumbling wood shards, aqua green paint flakes, caulking cotton, and shining pine pitch chunks scattered across the shop.

Before the mess is cleaned up, Haddie takes advantage of the crash and searches for parts to salvage. "My boat needs a new exhaust system," Haddie says ripping into a fragment of Seminole with a hammer to remove some pipes.

Soon, the boat's large remains are lifted into a dump truck and driven to a landfill. The floor is swept and the Seminole crew returns its attention to getting new frames attached to the keel so the boat can maintain its "boat shape" and adhere to restoration rules. The workers are relieved; the boat will soon be out of sight—the deteriorating hull was a constant tug at the conscience of workers like Haddie, and a source of circular debate for everyone.

THE RESTORED Seminole will be traditionally planked, but epoxy glues are being used in her construction. "I really got a pretty unique upbringing in watching the old technology and
the new technologies interact," Haddie says. "And I’ve come to the realization that they shouldn’t."

He explains, “When a boat like Seminole down here was built, there weren’t any hard places in it; everything could sort of give. The whole thing was a basket. It would move infinitesimally.”

He gestures to the smooth, gray body of the Heifner 50-footer. “The modern boats that we’re building here have absolutely no movement at all.” His tone stiffens, taking on the character of the boat he describes. “They are solid. They are glued together as a rigid monocot construction that allows no give anywhere in the structure.”

For purists like Haddie, the introduction of epoxy to wooden boat construction creates a dilemma. Wood has character. It comes from a living tree. It has a desire to bend, to swell, to splinter, to shift. Haddie feels that epoxy contaminates the wood.

“We’re... shmoosing it just to death,” he says. “What we’ve done is reduced wood to the matrix for the glue and stuff that we put on it. We don’t trust wood anymore. We don’t trust it to be as precise as we want it to be.

“There really is a rhythm and a cycle to the way the world operates,” says Haddie, “and to destroy that cycle and screw that rhythm by coating things with unnatural goos that have a half-life, kind of like uranium, it’s too bad to do that. I find that objectionable, morally repulsive, repugnant or however you want to say.”

The questionable definition of “restoration,” the disregard for Seminole’s pride and soul, and the
Pete Chase on Carras.
merging of wood with epoxy, all challenge Haddie's beliefs. "The only way I can survive here is to ignore that process," says Haddie. "I'm tired of the discussion. I'm just sick at heart about the whole thing. It's made a long hard winter out of it for me."

SWEEPING UP piles of wood shavings that have collected beneath the Cirrus, and as the minute hand on the shop clock falls to half-past three, the men prepare for the day's end. Outside, men carry trash barrels to the dumpsters and dispose of the day's wood and metal scraps.

Pete admits, even though they spend a lot of time "grumbling and growling," this is one of the best boatyards to work at in the state of Maine. Haddie thinks so too. Despite his disapproval of the mingled technologies, he compromises because he enjoys the diversity of people who work at the yard.

BY THE END of March, Seminole's frames are all attached and her crew has begun the planking process. Haddie is itching to complete repairs on his own boat, Vela, so he can put her in the spring waters and shift his life from the land to the sea. Because Haddie lives on his boat during the summers, carrying passengers up and down the East Coast, he spends afternoons and weekends preparing Vela for the warm season.

Vela sits outside the shop by a storage shed. A grand sailing boat, her mast poised high, she is bare without sails. Haddie designed and built Vela himself. "I wanted to make something that was truly my own," he says. "It is me; that boat is me." He followed the rule: Never put anything on a boat that doesn't smell right. Vela is a genuine, traditional wooden boat. "It's not about epoxy," he says. "It's not about paint. It's about the wood."
MAINTAINING

IT'S 8 A.M. and Bonnie Dermody is on an intense scavenger hunt in her cluttered three-room apartment. The smell of cigarettes and dog urine hangs heavy in the air. The heat is cranked high. Clues are confused; they're mixed with previous hunts—out of sight, out of mind. This raw morning, she can't remember when or why or where she hid her methadone.

Bonnie has been on methadone for seven years now. The man-made drug is one prescribed by doctors and given out by clinics across the country to help addicts stay off heroin. Portland, Maine, where Bonnie lives, is home to two such clinics—the Discovery House and CAP Quality Care. The Discovery House is where Bonnie goes each week for her counseling sessions, her daily dose, and the support of other users.

The Discovery House sees eight to ten new patients a week. Nearly 500 patients—young people trying to fight fresh addictions, to women over 40 accompanied by their kids—show up everyday to down the sweet smelling liquid. A liquid that calms the want, that quells the need. Those, like Bonnie, who have proved themselves responsible, are allowed to take their methadone home and dose throughout the week.

AS THE HUNT continues, Bonnie searches beneath stuffed animals that litter a plush chair. She throws them aside, sweeps them off and away. Nothing. Thoughts are closing in. Her panic grows as each hiding place turns up empty. It makes her crazy.

It is a cold November morning, so Bonnie puts on her ankle-length fur, a blue stocking cap with large yellow stars, grabs her metal travel mug and
Bonnie Dennody spends a lot of time in her Portland apartment, watching television or reading. Happy sleeps close by.
her husband's Fender briefcase. She uses the case, one in which her husband kept his music and song lists, as a locked purse to carry six empty bottles of methadone, various lists, paperwork, and a picture of Vinnie with her grandmother, to and from the clinic.

Many patients take their doses home in brightly colored metal boxes with a secure lock. But Bonnie does so in a briefcase filled with old memories and new reminders of life defined by her addiction. Today, Bonnie leaves for the Discovery House early. She needs the counseling session soon and bad. In the seven years Bonnie has been a patient at the clinic, she's had nine counselors. And to each new counselor, she tells the same tired story, keeping the wounds fresh.

Born in Boston in 1949, Bonnie spent most of her life in Massachusetts. "I lived in very nice houses and very nice neighborhoods," she says. "I got everything I needed." Almost everything. Bonnie was an only child, and at five, her parents divorced. "I was very depressed about my father leaving. I didn't get it. When he would leave I would just scream and scream and scream, 'I want my daddy, I want my daddy, I want my daddy.' So they decided to send me to an overnight camp, so that they could get me out of the way. They tried to get me out of the way as much as possible. It was horrible."

BONNIE GETS on all fours to peer under her tall antique bed where Vinnie, her grandmother and grandfather, all passed away. Both Vinnie and her grandmother died in her arms. Today, Bonnie sees nothing but dust-bunnies. "The minute you know you can't get it, you start [to go] psycho," she explains. Her eyes shift. She looks some more. Where are they, where could they be? The last time, the hiding place was in a pair of cowboy boots. The clock ticks. "When I wake up, I want it in my system." Her eyes are small. Sharp. Shifty.

Bonnie is an old pro at the Discovery House and today she is pissed because her counselor has called in sick. Still, after paying the $2.50 for a week's worth of methadone, she gets in line to dose. A poster, encouraging patients not to share their methadone hangs on the clinic wall behind Bonnie. Locked glass doors separate the dosing lines from the dosing counters. A nurse buzzes Bonnie in. From behind a plastic window with a small hole, looking something like a high security ticket booth, Bonnie is given her dose and her week's supply.

Bonnie places her briefcase on the counter, takes out the six empty bottles and passes them through the hole. Then she grabs a small plastic cup filled with red liquid and throws it back like a shot. She wrinkles her nose. "Methadone has a nasty taste. It's like nasty cough medicine," she says. Six bottles filled with 120 milligrams of methadone are wrapped with a rubber band and passed to Bonnie. She places them carefully in her briefcase. As each bottle has a street value of $60, the bottles are hidden and her case is locked tight. Bonnie turns, walks past the security guard, through the doors of the Discovery House and heads home.

Bonnie doesn't often leave her apartment—she has little money and nowhere to go. Instead, she spends her time reading or watching television on
Right: In South Portland's Discovery House, Bonnie Dermody waits for the door to the methadone dosing room to unlock.

Below: At a required one-hour counseling session, Bonnie Dermody, left, meets with counselor Linda Welch, in South Portland's Discovery House.
the bed where people, who had once been an important part of her life, died. M.A.S.H. is the closest thing to a favorite television show; it reminds her of a gentler, easier time. Cigarette burns pierce her blankets.

BONNIE’S bed is huge, and sitting in its center, she looks like the lost girl in the painting above her bed. Alice talks to a caterpillar on a mushroom as he smokes from a hookah. Bonnie says she went down her own rabbit hole, “eyes wide open.” To Bonnie, the first few times using heroin felt like wonderland. But she knew it wouldn’t last. She knew when she started heroin it wasn’t going to be a good thing. “It has caused extreme pain and heartache,” says Bonnie. But in Bonnie’s world, there is no cast of whimsical
Bonnie Dermody places her fur coat on her English Bull Terrier, Happy.

Characters, no adventure without casualties, and no happy ending as yet. Besides a sick mother and a few friends, she is very lonely. “Sometimes I just curl up in a little ball and lie there because I don’t know what else to do.”

After high school, Bonnie attended Hartford Airline Personnel School. Soon, she began teaching classes there. In 1968, Bonnie enrolled at Boston University, where she studied photography. Then, after graduating in 1973, she landed a job with the Arlington Advocate as an editorial intern. All the while Bonnie was in school, working for the paper and up to 1994, Bonnie was also an on-again-off-again travel agent and taught the ins and outs of her profession at three different colleges.

In 1989, after living in Miami for five years, she moved to Portland, Maine, where, three days later, she met her future husband, Vinnie. “Oh yeah, it was magic. He reached out. He came in. He glinted at me,” she gushes.

Friends warned her about Vinnie. “I knew Vinnie because they had told me about this guy and they wanted me to stay away from him ‘cause he was ‘bad news.’ So, I went, ‘Aha, potential fun.’” In the car on the way to a party in Portland, Bonnie asked a friend if it was true Vinnie had AIDS. He did. He’d contracted the disease while sharing needles with a friend. After the party, Bonnie and Vinnie hooked up, and, as Bonnie explains, “We moved in simultaneously.”

Vinnie was and is everything to Bonnie. “Richard Burton once said of Elizabeth Taylor, ‘She’s the blood that courses through my veins,’ that was Vinnie.” Vinnie was a singer, composer and played the rhythm guitar. He fit the stereotype of a rock star—long hair, narrow cheekbones and a slender build. A front man. A poster of Vinnie hangs on the apartment door. He is a young Michael Landon with a cigarette.

In 1992, they married. Bonnie says they were in love. And while they fought, there were quiet times—walking along the ocean, staring out the window or watching old movies. In 1992, Bonnie’s occasional heroin use increased. After major surgery, and the progression of Vinnie’s AIDS, it was the only way to numb the pain. By then, she wasn’t using to get high anymore. By then, she was using to stop herself from being dopesick. “A hell kinda thing. You sweat, you puke, you shit your pants, you scream at people. Even your hair hurts.” So every 12 hours, Bonnie would snort the heroin to quell the pain and lose the sick.

ON THREE different occasions, Bonnie fell out of bed. She didn’t have any strength to pull herself up and doesn’t remember how she got back into bed. One morning her apartment was trashed, a wooden chair was broken and marbles were strewn across the floor. Bonnie thinks it may have been a seizure. It would not have been the first time.
While Bonnie was proud of herself, she couldn’t handle the dope sickness. But since she’s heard methadone withdrawal is worse than heroin, she’s sticking with the program. “I don’t think I am going to try and get off it,” she says. Bonnie knows it is a crutch, but she thinks it’s better than where she’s been—a life lived on heroin. So, Bonnie keeps her head above water. And though she doesn’t know what the future holds, she’ll keep treading as fast and as long as she can.

SHE BENDS LOW, searching behind the large pictures resting on her kitchen floor. She is running out of places to look. She stands on her tip-toes, sweeps her hand across the top of the refrigerator. And there, finally, in an empty biscuit box, she finds six small bottles of methadone. For today, she’s saved. Today, Alice has found her way out of the hole.
From the Archive

Sanctuary

by Kait Stokes

UP WORN warehouse stairs, past a shabby, dozing dog and an ancient bookstore, is a modest tattoo parlor opened by Jennifer Moore and Chris Dingle. Their shared space is painted in swaths of lavender and streaks of gold, while the warm smells of incense and the oddly soft lyrics of a local punk band fill the air.

Chris looks up from an intricate piece he’s working on, smiles broadly and says, “Hey babe,” just as Jen comes around the waist-high wall that divides the studio. She wraps me in a hug then pushes a glass of water with flower essence into my hands telling me I look peaked. I drink the water, which tastes of dandelions, settle into a cushy chair and feel better.

Despite the occasional customer who wants the requisite rose-and-dagger or butterfly, this is not an ordinary tattoo studio and these are not ordinary tattoo artists. Chris obtained both a Fine Arts degree and a Masters in ceramics before opening Sanctuary. His signature ability is to create pieces of fine art on skin. And because his work is uniquely informed by both art history and his work with paint, his pieces are textured, dimensional. They breathe. “I want to see all kinds of lines: broken, wiggly, bold, irregular lines that sing and dance and tell stories,” Chris writes on the Sanctuary website. “Colors of all kinds should mix and vary with textures and shades that bring them to life.”
Jen has a Fine Arts degree in photography and design and a Master's in religion and psychology; she is also a Reiki Master and an ordained Wicca High Priestess. Also certified as a Transformational Breath Facilitator, she is a graduate of Rev. Sylvia Brailier's School for Body Centered Spiritual Healing. For Jen, a tattoo of a well-chosen image can have the power to transform, empower, and heal a person who chooses to wear it. For Jen, the very act of creating a tattoo on the skin is a form of healing, one of the deepest forms of healing she can offer to another.

As if to bear witness and bless the pieces she creates, her many shrines, which include masks of Indonesian gods, Buddhas, Hindu gods and goddesses, as well as pre-Christian and New Testament deities, watch over her as she works.

The people who come to Sanctuary have done their research; they know what they want and why. On this early spring morning, surrounded by whirring needles, I move quietly around Chris' space with my camera to my eye. He is completing a piece that is based on the paintings of Gustav Doré on Kevin Rocray. On the other side of the studio, Jen tattoos a green dragon on Fred Parker's shoulder; it is a tattoo that will take many sessions to complete.

Fred tells me the green dragon symbolizes tranquility, a symbol that will guide him through the transitions in his life. Fred, who has studied Japanese Martial Arts for many years, has designated his right side for tattoos in an ancient Japanese style to honor his love for the arts. On his left side, he will create a pre-Christian Celtic theme to honor his family's origins.

Not all the tattoos done at Sanctuary derive from works of art or have healing power. Some tattoos are simply created to complement a persona. But whatever the purpose, at Sanctuary, people know the image chosen has been created solely for them. It becomes their story to tell. As the sign outside Sanctuary Tattoo reads, "Art becomes you."

FOOTNOTE: Sanctuary Tattoo has since moved from its Danforth Street address, where this piece was realized, to a space along Forest Avenue and into Portland's Arts District.
David Isay is the Executive Producer and founder of *Sound Portraits Productions*. Over the past sixteen years, his radio documentary and feature work has won almost every award in broadcasting including four Peabody Awards, two Robert F. Kennedy Awards, and two Livingston Awards for young journalists. Isay has also received the Prix Italia (Europe’s oldest and most distinguished broadcasting honor), a Guggenheim Fellowship (1994) and a MacArthur Fellowship (2000). He is the author (or co-author) of four books based on *Sound Portraits* radio stories: *Holding On, Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago*, *Flophouse* and *Milton Rogovin: The Forgotten Ones*. Isay is also creator of the oral-history initiative, *StoryCorps* which launched in October 2003.

For more about *Sound Portraits* and *StoryCorps*, go to www.soundportraits.org.
AND SO IT GOES, that one day in 1988, walking around in New York’s East Village, David Isay, then a med-school candidate, came upon the Museum of Addiction. It was a small storefront; a place that held in it memorabilia for 12-step programs, a place that celebrated addiction in an expressive kind of folk-art. And a place a couple, both recovering addicts with AIDS, hoped to turn into an important center for all people to come to. To understand, to acknowledge, to heal.

Young David Isay was so moved by this story of “perseverance against all odds,” he called every radio and TV station in the city to bring attention to their place, their story. The only broadcaster to respond was Amy Goodman at WBAI. But it wasn’t a story they could do. She suggested Isay do it himself. He did. As it turns out, the six-minute broadcast was heard by NPR producer, Gary Covino, who would later become Isay’s mentor, and who would also teach him to “break the rules.” And the rest, as they say, is history. “I knew,” Isay says, “in that one moment between pressing play and record, that this was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

SM: In the field, what are you most conscious of?
DI: In the field, I’m most conscious of not doing anyone harm. I try to be honest with my subjects and open about what to expect. Mostly, I try to treat people with respect, honesty, and a particular sense of transparency. Meaning, I’m trying to be completely clear and honest about everything—no secrets, no surprises, no short-cuts.

SM: When in the midst of creating, retelling or interpreting story, what’s the most important part of this process for you? Why?
DI: I try to make sure the spirit of the story is honored. That the story-telling is what actually happened, that I am as true to the subject matter as I can be. I need to be able to look myself in the mirror and know I told the truth... that I told the story in an honest way.

SM: In many pieces, you have your subjects tell, or narrate, their own stories. Why?
DI: I did this early on. As a narrator I didn’t like the sound of my own voice. I got in the way of the story. You see, radio, to me, is an intimate medium, and because I tend to choose insular stories in places where my voice would not ordinarily be, it didn’t make sense to have my voice there, so I mixed it out. With the subject’s voice, it’s a much more transformative experience. For twenty-two minutes in a flophouse or a prison cell, by keeping the story in the subject’s voice, we keep in that place and experience with them.

SM: What do you think of the term “objective observer?” Do you think there is a way to practice this with true objectivity and integrity?
DI: I don’t like to spend a lot of time on the philosophy concerning documentary work—the minutia of arguing ethics. If we scratch our chins and argue ethics, then nothing gets done. It’s paralyzing. The best we can do is to try to tell the truth. Make sure we are true to the subject and do them no harm.

Ask yourself, ‘Can I present this person in a real way in the story?’ I say, if you’re conscientious, if you are respectful of your subject and their story, then you will have done your work. Radio work, after all, is largely work of the heart.

SM: Do you ever wonder about the subject’s take on things as you’re producing a piece? If so, has this influenced your decisions in any way?
DI: I have the incredible luxury of doing stories about people I like. I get to celebrate humanity.... A lot of times I see a person as more incredible than they see themselves, and I get to show them that through the story. I’m constantly in awe of how generous each person is as a storyteller, so I never really worry about their take on things, because it is their take on things. I am moved by that. I also like to think the person has a stronger sense of self after they’ve heard their story on the radio, that they are conscious the story celebrates them.

SM: Have any stories or those experiences surrounding a story shaped who you’ve become? If so, how?
DI: Every story has. I am continually revived and awed by how the human spirit can rise above sometimes such tremendous odds. Every story makes me hungry to do more. This is what I like about StoryCorps. After a while, you’d assume stories would start to repeat themselves, but it’s not true. They flower. It’s just mind-boggling.

In StoryCorps, families communicate in a way that wasn’t available to them before... it’s a little miracle. Anyone can do an interview, but there is a particular intimacy forged between family members interviewing each other. There is so much power in this kind of interview, it’s a transformative experience.

SM: Is there one story you always wanted to do, or one you wish you’d done?
DI: I’ve done all the stories I’ve wanted to do. I’m so lucky, so privileged to do this. To me, each story is the most important story.

SM: At a conference, you once said, “If your heart is in the right fucking place, you’re okay.” Can you explain?
DI: I did? Well, I think I meant... I know I meant that because the kind of stories we do are about people, ordinary everyday people—the kind of stories that don’t tend to bubble up in the media—that they are so valuable. These stories we do are different, but they all celebrate humanity—the living, loving, dying, struggling part of humanity that is so amazing. I meant, find the stories that are real, that you are interested in, and tell them in a compassionate way. And that’s all you’ll need to do.

SM: You once said, “Salt is the epicenter of documentary studies in the U.S. It is the place that is spitting out crazy documentaryarians and spreading the Salt aesthetic. Salt is an American treasure.” Why Salt?
DI: I think the people at Salt are a self-selected group of people with a particular aesthetic and a big heart. There is a respect for the way you treat your subjects. The people who come out of Salt are good listeners; they have respect, compassion, and a wide-eyed acceptance of people. You guys are as crazy as we are crazy.
SMELLS LIKE MONEY

By Zac Barr

"Juan tells me that Americans don’t like the work because it’s really tough. It’s gross, the cold water hurts your hands, and it’s very demanding physically. But now that he has his wife here, things are a little easier. Together, they can make $500 a week. But if he wanted to bring his kids to Maine, he would have to spend $12,000 to smuggle them from Honduras to the United States."

To hear this story in its entirety go to:
www.salt.edu

Photo by Holly Wilmeth
TANGO!

by Evan Roberts

“My arm is up around his shoulder, his other arm is all the way around my back. My right hand is clutched in his right hand and it’s held close to his body…. Chest to chest they say, heartbeat to heartbeat.”

To hear this story in its entirety go to:
www.salt.edu
ELVIS COP

By Adam Allington

"I've seen bands say, 'We're gonna do a little tribute to Elvis.' And I hang around for that whole two hours while they do their regular thing, and the guy flips his collar up, starts wiggling, pulls out a guitar and does three Elvis songs. Whoo-hoo, whatta tribute. Y'know, thank you very much, save your, y'know, save it for somebody else."

To hear this story in its entirety go to:
www.salt.edu

Photo by Katy Gross
A FAMILY YARN

By Rupa Marya

"I like to watch the wool being worked by these old machines. Some of it flies off through the air and sits on top of the giant metal wheels and rubber belts. Looks like little angels or maybe snow and even poodles."

To hear this story in its entirety go to:
www.salt.edu
THEY COME HERE TO LIVE
By Ellington Miller
Photography by Katherine Gnecco

On "hair salon day" at Kaler-Vail, Marge Berry and Beatie Witherell have their hair dried.
Zella Morgan hugs her granddaughter, Reesah Morgan, during an April visit.
ZELLA MORGAN catches herself driving fast again, eager to get home. "It's the craziest feeling," she says, like she's off in space if she's not where she belongs, at Kaler-Vaill. A mid-morning trip to Ace Hardware for birdseed has become a leisurely drive down the coast, and though it's a nice break in her routine, she never strays too far because sometimes she forgets names and places. Zella giggles softly and lets up on the gas. A mile from where the land meets the Atlantic Ocean, she turns off Black Point Road into the driveway of a 19th century two-story house.

In the front yard, a white wooden sign faces the street. Bold letters, which spell out Kaler-Vaill, arch over For Women in straight, small letters. Some residents tell the story of a young man who once came to the door and asked, "What kind of home is this anyway?" He had seen the sign. "Is it a home for unwed mothers?"

The question still makes them laugh because the answer is yes; these women—most of whom are widows with grown children—are indeed unwed mothers. Fourteen unwed mothers who are sixty-five and older.

Zella moves toward the house in her tan winter coat, gently leaning forward, her knees slightly bent to receive the shift of her weight. With the bag of birdseed in the crook of her elbow, and a black purse dangling from her forear, she fills the feeder that hangs on a metal pole rising from a mound of snow near the house. Pulling a black plastic comb from her purse, she pokes the end teeth through the corner of the bag, ripping it so kernels of seed flow into the clear bin. She'll be able to see the feeder from her chair in the dining room.

When Kaler-Vaill first opened in 1961, it was described as a place for "elderly women who cannot fend for themselves." Today's residents would scoff at that definition. One woman just bought a new car. Another celebrated her ninety-fifth birthday. Some play the piano or read romance novels or rent movies. Although some pass the time in their rooms listening to the radio or reading the newspaper, others, like Zella, are busy with so many interests, they never know what the day will hold.

"LET'S MARCH," Sharon says, slapping her hands in time on her lap and lifting her feet to simulate marching. Sharon Hansen is the activities coordinator. It's ten on Monday morning. Time for exercise. A handful of residents sit in folding chairs facing her in the solarium, a large all-purpose room adjacent to the residents' hallway, clapping their hands, kicking their legs, and rotating their ankles.

Sharon stands, and the women follow, bellies protruding under sweaters and polyester shirts. Zella tugs her tan cardigan over her waist. She balances with her fingertips on her chair and lifts her leg behind her. Two years ago, Zella says, she felt younger than this. But exercise helps her feel more limber, so she makes a point to attend. Next, Sharon instructs the group to rotate their hips.

"Gimme a grass skirt and I'd do better," Marge teases, swiveling her hips. Marjorie Berry is tall and thin and wears large glasses. She moves easily and keeps good time with the beat bumping in the background. A self-described extrovert, Marge offers colorful commentary during most activities.

The women rock forward, up on their toes. Marge jerks up, mouthing "up" in time. Standing next to Bessie, her eyes are wide as she concentrates on imitating Sharon.
Bessie Witherell wears her leopard-print blouse and keeps up with the exercises. Her room is next to Marge's; the two are together so often, the residents and staff have nicknamed them "the twins." They take walks through the connected corridors of the house every day. Together, they attend Thursday night bingo, and arrive in the dining room for meals. A few months ago, they even got their perms done at the same time. Although they didn’t know each other until they moved to Kaler-Vaill, both women lived in the Cumberland area of Maine all their lives. Now, they’re like sisters.

Sharon passes around two and three-pound weights for arm curls. "Look at those muscles you're developing, Marge."

"Well I think so," she says, checking her biceps. Everyone giggles.

They rotate their arms in circles with the weights, then point their elbows into the air, lifting the weights above their heads. Most are limited in their movement, but Marge swings her weight effortlessly with a wrinkled arm, like a fly fisherman who has mastered the cast.

At the end of the session, the group dissipates. Zella sighs in a quiet "whooh" and straightens her cardigan again. Marge and Bessie exit together.

"There's my sidekick," Marge says to Bessie.

"There's my sidekick," Bessie replies.

ZELLA DRIFTS BACK to her easel near the front window of the solarium—the best place for natural light in the daytime. Like many of the women she lives with, Zella is a mother, a grandmother, and a great-grandmother. But she’s not ready to be called a senior citizen. For her, the term conjures images of nursing homes, wheelchairs, and incapacity. Because she is still able, Zella keeps moving—exercising, knitting, driving her car, writing letters, and painting. If a person has been active throughout life, she says, it's awfully hard to slow down.

Zella has clear blue eyes, white eyebrows, and a gentle smile that has etched lines around her eyes, lips, and cheeks. Her soft hair is wavy, not curly, wisping around her ears and covering the back of her neck in almost pure white, without a hint it used to be red. She can count on her fingers the times she's had it professionally cut; she usually trims it herself, cutting as far as she can to one side, then the other, then checking it with a small mirror in her room.

It was a stroke two years ago which affected Zella's ability to remember dates and names. She can't recall when her husband died exactly, ten or twelve years ago now. He was a good father and theirs was a happy marriage. She responded to his death with activity, planning, and a move from Texas to Maine. She recalls that period with unrehearsed but firm words. "I think I approached my widowhood with a feeling that”—she pauses to inhale deeply and exhale fully, filling the moment with the delight of spring after a winter indoors—"I'm myself. I'm Zella."

For Zella, a new season had begun. "I'm not 'Mrs.' I'm not 'his wife.' I'm Zella. And I began thinking things the way I would like to think, not the way I was expected to.... And it made my life a lot more interesting because I became Zella."

Zella began painting seriously after she'd had three of her six children. Her subjects are often single figures: a ballerina, a lighthouse, a Native American in headdress, a child in the grass, a profile of a woman. Over the years, her paintings have been reproduced on note cards and sold in galleries. Some now hang in the halls at Kaler-Vaill, and recently, she has been touching up old work, something she has been meaning to do for years.

Two plastic trash bags covering the Berber carpet crinkle under Zella's feet as she eases into the chair facing her easel. Next to her, a brown metal stand holds mixing trays, wrinkled metal paint tubes, and a plastic cup full of brushes. On the canvas in front of her, a red-haired child stands on a sidewalk, peering into the window of a building. Zella flips the brush in her hand and motions with the blunt end to the bottom left corner of the painting, where she signed and dated it in 1953.

Today, she brightens the green grass with yellow flecks and adds peach color to the girl's skin. "Skin is tricky because everyone has a different color," she says. "And the human body is round, not flat." Leaning forward and resting the heel of her palm on the scene, she touches the girl's leg with slight movements of the brush. Touch. Touch.

After her husband died, Zella decided Maine was where she wanted to be, so she made the move from Texas. "I came with the attitude that I was going to live in the present and enjoy life, have a happy outlook, and enjoy things as they come." But the house she purchased didn't afford her as much social time as she had anticipated, so when the opportunity to live at Kaler-Vaill came along, Zella was ready.

A soft giggle escapes from the back of her throat, almost in afterthought.
Like every other afternoon, Bessie Withell reads the newspaper by the window.
While other residents relax or read the paper, Barbara Morrison and Elizabeth Kempton often play Rummy-O in the evenings.
"I've been here two years, and it seems as though every time I go into that bed at night, I'm tired and I'm happy."

WEDNESDAY. Hair salon day. Bonnie Cliff arrives after breakfast, staying until noon to wash, cut, curl, and sometimes perm residents' hair. In the utility room, a salon chair and sink share space with the laundry facilities. The washing machine emits a faint bleach scent as it churns in rhythm next to the dryer, while morning sun warms the room, making it cozy for gabbing.

Marge has gone back to her room to put on a button-down blouse, saying, "I don't want to get my hair done and then pull a shirt over it—it's bye-bye hairdo." Then she pokes her head in to see if a chair is available. As she sits, Bonnie tents a green plastic smock over her and fastens it behind Marge's neck. "Down the hatch," says Marge as Bonnie tips the chair back, and Marge rests her head on the edge of the sink.

"Do you want your cold rinse today?"

Marge agrees to it. "Oh, what we won't do for beauty."

Bonnie rolls sections of Marge's gray and white hair into curlers and secures them with plastic pins. Any conversation with Marge inevitably turns to food; they chat about local restaurants and new places to eat. Bonnie recommends the Chinese Buffet. "You and Bessie'd have a ball. They have lots of desserts."

The housekeeper arrives to load the clothes into the dryer. She hears the discussion and tells Bonnie that yesterday's dessert was fruit and how she laughed when Marge exclaimed in dismay, "We're having fruit for dessert?" Today's dessert, to Marge's satisfaction, will be chocolate cream pie. Bessie, appearing for her turn in the chair, says she is looking forward to it, too. Marge is ready to sit under the dryer as Bonnie wraps a black net around her head and ties it in the back. "Out you go."

Bessie lies back for her wash. "Do I have dandruff?" she asks Bonnie.

"No. I won't allow it," Bonnie says, smiling.

By the time she leaves at noon, Bonnie has trimmed, curled, combed, and caught up with the latest at Kaler-Vaill. Marge, Bessie, and a number of other
residents have fluffy gray curls that will last at least until they pull a shirt over their heads. And if not, Bonnie will be back next Wednesday to do it all over again.

IN THE LATE afternoons or evenings, Zella often plays Scrabble with Elizabeth Kempton. Together, they sit in the solarium at the puzzle table, which is empty in a rare moment between the end of one puzzle and the beginning of another. They huddle over the board, not across from each other, but closer. Closer to one corner. “Doozy. We say that, but is it in the dictionary?” Zella wonders as she pages through The Scrabble Word-Building Book. “Yes, it is,” she laughs, putting the book down. She picks up her pen and records the score in her hardcover journal. Sitting open on the table, it is just over half-full. As Elizabeth contemplates her next play, Zella looks out the window. The enclosed courtyard is a wintry snow pen, its two solitary trees at opposite corners are gray and bare.

Next month, Zella will travel to Washington to visit her sister, then to Colorado for her grandson’s graduation. But first, she will drive herself to Connecticut for a burial service for her eldest daughter, Beth, who died of heart failure last month. The morning service marks the calendar above her bed.

At Kaler-Vaill, games and activities provide social interaction between residents, but conversations rarely extend beyond Scrabble scores and weather predictions. In the same way they keep their ailments to themselves, the women at Kaler-Vaill keep most of their personal concerns private. “We know very little about each other’s personal lives,” Zella explains. “In the two years I’ve been here, I really don’t know much about any one of them.” Elizabeth builds her word, and Zella records the score. After her turn, Zella reaches into the blue cloth bag to replenish her letters. “Oh no. You wouldn’t believe this. I’ve got five Es. Five Es!” She holds out the tiles for Elizabeth to see.

Meanwhile, Bessie has been moving around the room, trying out each chair—sitting chairs, rocking chairs, hard, and cushioned. Marge has gone out with the afternoon church guild, so Bessie is spending the afternoon alone. “It’s quarter past three already,” she says. “She said they’d be back four-thirty or five.” After a while, she wanders back to her room.

Zella draws three more letters from the bag. More Es. With her fingertips, she places them on her holder; they click as she sets them down. She makes the word “qat,” relieved to get rid of her Q, which is worth ten points. Elizabeth flips through her Scrabble dictionary. “Qat” isn’t there.

“In the dictionary?” Zella wonders as she pages through The Scrabble Word-Building Book. “Yes, it is,” she laughs, putting the book down. She picks up her pen and records the score in her hardcover journal. Sitting open on the table, it is just over half-full. As Elizabeth contemplates her next play, Zella looks out the window. The enclosed courtyard is a wintry snow pen, its two solitary trees at opposite corners are gray and bare.

Bessie wanders in from her room next door and stops in front of the television, holding her hands together behind her back. Marge gives her a friendly glance. “It’s gonna be cold,” Marge says.

“Winter is far from over,” Bessie says, repeating the meteorologist’s message. They can’t wait for spring so they can walk down to the beach. Marge explains to Bessie that she keeps the shade half-pulled so the sun won’t fade her antique chair. She has explained it before, but they have both forgotten. After the weather report, Marge turns off the television and plops into her recliner with the newspaper.

“See ya later,” Bessie says to Marge. She walks back to her room, where she says to herself, “Well, I guess I could sit down again.”

In their separate rooms, Bessie and Marge sit in their recliners. A loud radio in a room down the hall sounds with the voice of a political commentator. Marge hums. Bessie looks out her window to the courtyard. In the dining room, ice cubes clink in drinking glasses. Fourteen minutes until the dinner bell rings.

ON SUNDAYS, a number of the women attend the Congregational church down the road. The pastor calls them the “Kaler-Vaill Girls.” Each week they carpool to the service, then sit in the same pew towards the back. But on this Sunday, the Girls return from church without Marge—she passed out in the pew and was taken by ambulance to the hospital. Concern for her spreads throughout the house, and as the women gather in the solarium for a two o’clock program, they have only heard that the doctors are doing tests.
Zella Morgan exercises at Kaler-Vaill.
Smiling and shaded, Zella Morgan drives to visit her daughter.
Zella’s granddaughter, Reaiah Morgan, arrives to sing and play her guitar for the residents. Rea is twenty-four, with long curly hair, a dark complexion, and a spray of freckles across her face. “It’s a bit sad around here now,” Zella explains to her. “Your thoughts go directly to people in trouble.” When Zella’s daughter Gayle, Rea’s aunt, arrives for the program, Zella explains to her that Marge “is the most energetic of us all. She can get down on her hands and knees and pick up puzzle pieces.”

Rea’s fingers glide up and down the strings as she sings, “Your life is up to you. You have to make what you wanna do.” The afternoon sun fades in and out, changing the tones of the room. “As we grow we become aware of a certain peace that’s always there,” sings Rea.

After the program, Zella and Gayle stroll down the hall to Zella’s room with their arms around each other. Gayle’s straight blonde hair is cut at her shoulders, while her face mirrors that of her mother’s, especially her smile.

As they sit on the bed, Gayle slides a sheet of paper out of a yellow envelope. It is a photo collage of her sister, Beth, who will be buried next month. Zella holds it and her eyes scan the black and white images of her daughter. It’s so lovely, she tells Gayle. “That’s how I want to remember her,” she says, smiling.

Gayle and Zella embrace at the door, and for a moment, tears come. “I love you Mom,” Gayle says. “I love you Mom.” Zella closes the door and stands with her hand on the glass pane, watching the car move down the driveway and away.

BY 9 A.M. MONDAY, Sharon has an update on Marge. She stops in Bessie’s room before exercise to explain that Marge is waiting for more tests. “How’s she feeling this morning?” Bessie asks. “They say she had three spells. I only noticed two of them. I was right beside her. I was scared to death. Suppose she’ll come back today?”

On her way to exercise, Bessie stops outside Marge’s room and wonders aloud if she should pull Marge’s shade down, remembering that she worries about direct sunlight on her antique chair. The note on Marge’s dresser is still propped against the mirror: “10:30 CHURCH.” She always leaves a note when she goes out in case anyone comes looking for her. After exercise, Bessie stands in the solarium, unsure of where to go next. “You look lost, Bessie,” Sharon says.

“I am lost,” Bessie says. “Without Margie here, I don’t know what to do.”
Zella Morgan paints in the Solarium.
THE HALLS are quiet, and bedroom lights glow beneath closed doors. Marge is home, and for now, the house is complete. Though the women of Kaler-Vaill don’t discuss it among themselves, health is a constant concern. Kaler-Vaill is a place of transition, and not everyone can stay as long as they want. Sickness can come without warning, and it is made clear that this is not a nursing home.

When she came to Kaler-Vaill, Zella told herself she wouldn’t become too attached. “I don’t think I’m afraid to get too close. It’s just a decision I’ve made that we all have to go sometime.” She speaks with experience and sentiment. “[I] don’t feel tragic about losing somebody. ‘Cause it’s life. You have to accept those things.”

Four weeks from now, Bessie will catch bronchitis, and her failing mental state will prompt her son and daughter-in-law to transfer her to a nearby nursing facility. She will move there directly from the hospital, without the chance to say goodbye to Marge or Kaler-Vaill. Bessie’s family will pack up her belongings, and when the room is empty, there will be a worn spot where her feet rested in front of her recliner. Before Bessie’s family leaves Kaler-Vaill, Marge will chat with them. “How’s my old pal doin’?” she will ask. “Remember me to her.” They will promise to take her to visit Bessie soon.

In Bessie’s absence, the Kaler-Vaill waiting list will shorten by one, and as a new resident makes her home there, the foundation of the place will shift and resettle once again.

ZELLA IS PLAYING Scrabble in the solarium. Her paints are set up near the window, and even though the sun has set, the shades on the three front windows remain open. Red tail lights pass by swiftly on Black Point Road. “Kaler-Vaill is an unbelievable place,” Zella says, “and people going by would never know.”

Waiting for her turn, she looks toward the new painting she’s propped on the piano. A sailboat emerges from crashing, white-capped waves. With one figure at the helm, its sails billow in the wind. Zella reproduced the image from a 1972 magazine cutout titled, Desperate Voyage. The original picture was dark, but Zella’s version is brighter. Her ocean is bluer. Her sails are whiter. Her sky is lighter. Cradling a cheek in her hand, Zella fixes her eyes on it. Perhaps she is off in space again. This time, though, Zella is home where she belongs. Exactly where she wants to be.
ESCAPING this prison would be as easy as crossing the front lawn, stepping off the property, and hitching a ride to Moody’s Diner down the road for a slice of four-berry pie and a phone call. At the Bolduc Correctional Facility, Maine’s only prison farm, the fences serve to keep the cows in the pasture and the porcupines out of the apple orchard, not necessarily the inmates in the yard. Rather, it’s Maine’s State Prison, better known to inmates as the “supermax,” which looms behind a chaos of chain-link fences and razor wire across the road, that reminds Bolduc inmates where they’ve been and where they could end up if they’re not careful. Because all of Bolduc’s inmates are less than five years from release and want to make it out, they decide to stick around. And behave while they’re at it.
IN A WOOD-SHINGLED workshop, where four prisoners in the Electrical Trades Vocational Program meet every weekday for class, Barry Thomas aims a heat gun at the end of a PVC pipe. He wears a mustard colored shirt tucked into Wrangler jeans and a Casio watch set on military time. His body bears several bluish tattoos—tattoos he gave himself when he was 13 with a mixture of toothpaste, cigarette ash, and the soot of burnt plastic. On the inside of his left forearm, a circled “Jean” reveals the first girl he kissed, and the “13 _” on the fragile skin beneath his thumb stands for 12 jurors, one judge, and a half-assed chance of getting out of trouble.

Barry has had plenty of chances to get his tattoos removed, but he has chosen to keep them. He says they made him more effective as a social worker and a licensed substance abuse counselor at the homeless crisis shelter where he worked for 12 years. Years before he ended up in prison. He believes they helped to convince struggling kids that he could understand them, that he had struggled too.

When the pipe becomes malleable, Barry carries it across the room to his lab space, where an electrical meter mounted on a vinyl-sided wall simulates a house's exterior. He fits the pipe into a hole in the bottom of the meter, bends it toward the wall, then clamps it against the siding. Barry insists on being good at whatever he does, and right now, it's electrical work. If he passes the exam at the end of the program, he'll acquire a state electrical license.

Medium-sized and muscular, Barry is not big enough to intimidate, but not small enough to be intimidated—a convenient stature he says, for avoiding fights in prison. At 44, and as one of the older prisoners at the facility, Barry says he has nothing to prove anymore and carries himself with the calm confidence of a man who knows who he is, what he wants, and how to get it.

"HEY, BOSS," Tobey Grip calls from under the husk of a 1970 Mustang the class is restoring. Brad, his instructor, crosses the garage and peers under the car where Tobey lies on a creeper, a drive shaft cradled in his left elbow. It's not fitting into place. After spending over three years in higher-security prisons around the state, Tobey arrived at Bolduc a year ago. He has already completed the six-month Auto Body program, but has stayed on to help the next set of students while he serves out the remainder of his sentence. Once Brad and Tobey agree that the drive-shaft is too long, Tobey scoots out from under the car.

Tobey is 28 years old. He has a young, clean-shaven face with prominent cheekbones, wears oval-shaped wire-rimmed glasses and spikes his short brown hair up and out with gel. And while his square jaw often works a stick of gum, his serious, focused expression softens into a boyish smile when he talks about his family.

Around the body shop, Tobey moves with purpose, striding from one side to the other to find a tool or consult the boss. He loves to work and always has. Having left high school early to install windshields and storefronts for Oakes and Parkhurst Glass Company, he says it's a job he'll return to after his release. At Bolduc, Tobey pursued the Auto Body program with such determination that the administration allowed him to skip the waiting list and enter three weeks after his arrival.

At the workbench, Tobey props the wall tubing of the ill-fitting drive shaft against the back of a yellow-bristled scrub brush. While a classmate steadies the shaft, Tobey runs a sander over the end piece to shorten it. Forked yellow sparks arc through the air, bouncing off his sweatshirt and face shield, but Tobey doesn't flinch or back away. A high-pitched grinding sound arises and the space smells of burning.

THE CAFETERIA is mostly empty, but behind the buffet counter that divides the room, six members of the Bolduc Culinary Arts program move from fridge to oven to counter in the metallic kitchen, preparing the annual Harvest Feast for their fellow prisoners. In the back room, Pete Hager spoons ham salad onto a baking pan covered with iceberg lettuce and aluminum foil. He looks across the metal counter at his instructor, Guy Lombardo, who is shaping the ham salad on his pan into a full body profile of a pig. Pete looks down at the shapeless pile of meat on his own tray. "I have no artistic ability," he notes. Guy, whose well-fed stomach bulges irregularly under his purple shirt and Halloween tie, explains that Pete just has to imagine the shape he wants to create. "It's got to be in your mind," he says, without looking up from his work. He adjusts the definition of the pig's back leg, then reaches for Pete's tray to help him out. "Peel a carrot and make a curly tail," he suggests.

Every day, the students in the Culinary Arts program prepare lunch and dinner for the 215 inmates at the facility. And each October, after the season's harvest, the class prepares an all-out buffet where they serve up one of the cows
Toby Grip in his cell.

Auto body instructor, Brad Davis, and inmate, Toby Grip, discuss repairs.
raised in the prison's pastures, potatoes grown in its fields, 20 types of salad, and 560 pieces of pie. Pete worked as a short-order cook before coming to prison and is one of the more motivated students in the class. At 33, he is a stocky man with rounded, muscular shoulders and thick arms. He has pale skin and a Fu Manchu mustache, which his mother encourages him to shave when she hears of it on the phone. After Guy carves each pig an eye and eyelashes from radishes, Pete slides both trays onto a multi-tiered cart. Then the two men start in on the chicken salad.

At 3:30, one third of the inmates enter the cafeteria for the feast. Teenagers and 50-year-olds, clean-shaven and whiskered, in t-shirts, baseball caps, tattoos, and nametags, form a line that extends out the door and up the stairs. Barry and Tobey each take a pre-served plate from Pete, choose one of the rolls spilling out from a giant aluminum foil cornucopia and receive a slice of roast beef from Guy. Each man picks his way down the buffet tables, take his seat in the dim, low-ceilinged cafeteria, and amidst the noise and movement around him, eats his dinner in silence self-contained. After finishing their meals, each man deposits his tray at the window by the sink, then returns to his room for the night's formal count.

THE WAY to the Bolduc Correctional Facility is along Route 1, a road that winds through downtowns and over tidal flats on its way up the Maine coastline. The thousand-acre prison property, complete with a white silo and peeling red barn, is a turn off of the coastal highway in Warren. Everybody at Bolduc has a job, whether it's cultivating crops on the farm, punching numbers into license plates, mopping the hallways, or cleaning the bathrooms. Some, like Barry, Tobey and Pete, choose to participate in one of the prison's six vocational trades programs. The three men are determined to take advantage of the opportunities at Bolduc so when their time is up, and they head out the door with $50 and their box of personal items, they'll have prospects for the future.

Though Bolduc is tamer and offers more programs than the "supermaxes" where some inmates were before, it is still a prison. You cross the front lawn, use the bathroom, attend class, eat lunch, and all the while, the guards watch. They conduct informal counts every hour on the hour, and formally count inmates six times a day.

BARRY HAS about a year left of his four-and-a-half year sentence for elevated aggravated forgery. After he discovered that his partner in a used-car business was cheating him, he signed his partner's name to a couple of state vehicle titles. He makes no apologies or excuses for committing the crime, and does not ask for anyone's pity. "If you do me wrong, and I attempt to rectify that, regardless of the consequences, then that's what I need to do as a person," he says, his voice coarsely mellow, calmly defiant. Barry justifies his prison sentence with the things he did and wasn't caught for.

Over time, Barry has learned to work the system so that his time passes smoothly. "They make the rules and you obey them," he says, "and that's not going to change. 'Yes sir' and 'no sir' and 'how you doin'?" to the guards. The less they notice you, the less likely they are to tear apart your room in a search. Do your own time," he says. "People in prison have problems, and you don't need more than you already have." Barry may greet a prisoner he passes in the hall or help another guy with his electrical work, but he keeps his exchanges shallow because he does not believe he can trust other prisoners.

While Barry avoids relationships on the inside, he also finds it hard to maintain the relationships he had on the outside. A year and a half ago, Barry's wife left him after 20 years of marriage and a son. He didn't talk to anybody about the loss. "You can't unload your emotions," he says. "You can't voice your opinion. So you just eat it." In prison, he explains, you try to disengage your feelings until you are in the position to do something more than just turn them over and over in your head. In prison, he concedes, loneliness is inevitable.

Every evening, Barry works out in the weight room. "It's a way of pushing some of the anger away from what goes on and makes you emotionally tired," he explains. "Push the anger. Push the world. Just see if you can." The weight room is a place of mirrors and metal and brute strength. Often, 60 men swarm through it, all lifting and groaning and yelling and cussing. In the front of the room, Barry positions a 315-pound barbell over his shoulders. He squats, staying down for a few seconds to prepare for the push up. His face strains as his legs power the bar up, up, and back onto the rack. "It's so easy in prison not to feel alive," Barry says. So he works out to hurt, because the pain assures him that he still is.
Barry Thomas in his cell.

Barry Thomas, inmate, in Maine's Bolduc Correctional Facility.
Pete Haqae, inmate, on his bed.
TOBEY IS 18 months away from going home. He’s serving a six-year sentence for nearly beating his uncle to death. Out of respect for the people involved, Tobey is reluctant to speak of his reasons and becomes subdued when he talks about the incident. “A few people know,” he says, “and that’s about it. I really don’t talk much about it.” His words come slowly. Silence creeps in between his sentences and sits a while. He crinkles his brow and looks down at his hands.

Tobey’s uncle—his father’s foster brother—sexually abused a member of his family. When Tobey found out, he confronted his uncle. “I went over there, got in a fight with him, and probably fought a little longer than I should have,” he recalls. “But it just happened so fast, and you get so mad, and the next thing you know, emotion just takes over. And before you know it, you’ve gone too far.” Tobey says that if he were in the situation again, he would most likely do the same thing. His uncle had molested somebody before, gone to jail, gotten out, and had done it again. “Somehow, you’ve got to break that chain,” says Tobey. “The system can’t do it, and there was no other way, and that was the only way I knew how to do it.”

Though prison has not affected Tobey’s sense of justice, it has changed his character in other ways. Working in the Auto Body shop, Tobey says, has “boosted his self-confidence.” It has given him pride in his work and taught him patience. And since he has taken on the role of shop assistant, he feels more comfortable interacting with others.

In the few-steps-wide cell that he shares with three other men, Tobey opens the doors of his locker and pulls out a photo album. He turns to snapshots of a bean1ing brown-haired boy—his five-year-old son, Matthew—born to his girlfriend a month after he landed in prison. Matthew runs jumps dances across the photographs, dresses like a lion for Halloween and splashes during his swimming lessons. “He’s my little pride and joy, my little buddy,” says Tobey, grinning. “He’s so full of life, it’s crazy.”

Tobey says that he and Linda haven’t yet explained the concept of prison to their son; they’re waiting until Tobey is out and settled at home. Meanwhile, Matthew thinks that his father is at work. “Last night, he was like, ‘How much longer are you going to work—a million-trillion hours?’” says Tobey. “He don’t understand why I can’t be at home when he wants me to be.”

At the end of September 2003, Tobey and Linda were married among stacks of paperbacks in Bolduc’s library. During the honeymoon furlough that immediately followed, Tobey stayed awake every hour, every minute. “She fell asleep,” he remembers of Linda. “I stayed awake and pretty much just held her and looked at her, you know. It was nice to have her fall asleep in my arms. She looked so peaceful, like a little angel lyin’ there sleepin’ and it was wonderful.”

Soon enough though, Tobey returned to his prison cell. To his lower bunk. To a boron-soaked foam mattress, and a clear plastic alarm clock, one that exposes its wires and anything else hidden inside. He returned to his world within the world, where rules and routines keep life constant. “I’m here, in one spot. Everything’s the same,” he reflects. “Out there, everything’s all revolving. There’s constant change. And when you go back, you’re just in awe.”

PETE HAS a year and a half left to serve. His alcoholism brought him to prison. He has been drinking since he was nine years old, when he would open beer cans for his father and take a few swallows himself. “I caught on after that,” Pete says, “and it was about the only way I was happy after a while.” When he was 13, his father died in his sixth and last drunk driving accident. After the accident, Pete moved to New Jersey to live with his uncle, who was also an alcoholic. He fought in school and drank and attended two separate month-long rehabs when he was 15 that “didn’t do much good.”

Though he managed to hold jobs as a cook at Friendly’s and as a bartender at Applebee’s—a bad career choice, he cracks—he drank through most of his twenties as well. “After a while, I just wanted to basically drink myself to death ‘cause it was going that way,” he says wryly. “I was spending five to six hundred dollars a week on liquor. It was crazy, I couldn’t stop.”

Then one night at a bar in Bath, Maine, Pete pounded over ten margaritas while taking Vicodin for his neck pain. Then he blacked out. The police woke him at 2:30 in the morning. “You walked a woman home from the bar,” they said. “You hit her with a hammer and you left.” Elevated aggravated assault. Fifteen years in prison, all but six suspended. Pete doesn’t remember a thing—he barely knew the woman and can’t figure out his motivation. “All these years,” he reflects, “and it’s going to take that to make me stop. Up until then, you think, well, I’m only hurting myself.”

Pete thinks about his release a lot, and he is terrified
about it. "My whole life in here is scared about getting out," he reveals. "I'm scared about everything. I'm more scared about getting out than I ever was coming in." Pete wants more than anything to reclaim his life. He wants to put his prison experience behind him, but he knows he can't turn his back on it completely. "I don't know what I'm going to do with this experience," he says. "I want to forget it, but I can't forget it, because you've gotta remember what brought you here."

Though prison has jaded him and locked him away from outside living, Pete has grown stronger since he's been in. He has learned to recognize when he's getting hustled and to stand up for himself without getting in a fight. For the first time in a while, he has been able to learn while sober and has involved himself in almost every trades program offered by the prison system. "I want to be educated, so that when I get out, I'm stayin' out. I see too many people I like coming back three times since I've been in." Now, Pete says, he has hope. "When I came in, I was without hope, depleted. That's changed 100 percent. I've got a lot of hope."

AS THE SNOW falls, melts, and falls once more, the men move closer to what's out there beyond the Bolduc Correctional Facility, beyond Warren, Maine. They move closer to the houses they know, the families they love, and time all their own. Barry looks forward to riding his motorcycle over the straight, flat highways of the west. "That's the ultimate—motorcycling," he says, "that's when you're really free." Tobey can't wait to move in with his wife and teach his son to ice skate on frozen ponds near the house. And Pete looks forward to visiting his mother, tasting her Portuguese sweet bread, maybe her orange cake, as well. Until then, they stay put in prison. They connect the circuits, install the drive shafts, set out the salad dressing and avoid breaking the rules. They avoid being shipped back to the "supermax," a life without leave, a life without hope.
Joseph Grip and his son, Tobey, both inmates serving sentences for different crimes, walk the grounds of Bolduc Correctional Facility in Warren, Maine.
A Community
of Faith

By Annie Tselikis

FOR PARISHIONERS
at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church on 133 Pleasant Street in Portland, Maine, the word “faith” means much more than belief in a religion.

Narissa Koutrinos lights a candle.
During Sunday's coffee hour, Stephanie Bournas watches her son, Fischer, and talks to Lola Levers.

Bettie Moustrouphos jokes with her brother, Angie Karantza, in the Parish Hall.
Parishioners at Holy Trinity have faith in the education of their future generation, in the church, their fellow parishioners, and in their global community. Albanian, Ethiopian, Greek and Russian people step into this church each Sunday for two hours of worship, community, support and friendship. After mass, they gather in the church basement to talk with friends over coffee, to play with their Sunday school classmates, or to welcome new people into the folds of their church, their shared religion and their growing community. For parishioners at Holy Trinity, faith permeates all aspects of their lives.

For two weeks in November, parishioners bake or contribute time to the holiday bazaar. The Philoptichos, a women’s group whose mission is the education of youth, sponsors the bazaar, which also offers aid to orphanages and homes for young people.

It is an ancient Christian idea that faith influences life. It’s the faith among members of Holy Trinity that makes their lives rich and their community strong.
Mary Tohroe and Feven-T-Erez play after Sunday School.
James Kapothanasis leads the procession of the Eucharist.
Diane Child hugs her draft horse, Tyler.
DIANE AND VANCE met each other when they both needed something, whether or not they knew it at the time. He had been sober for a couple of months after living as "a practicing alcoholic for thirty-six years," and she was coming out of a long overdue divorce from her alcoholic, cheating husband. Neither of them was looking for a relationship; they were only trying to pick up the pieces.

He introduced himself at the time clock in the woodworking factory where they were both employed. Soon, they began spending lunch breaks together in her car. He told her right away that he was struggling with a drinking problem, and at first she thought, Oh great, that's just what I need. But he courted her with persistence, and after a few months, promised that he would get through a year without drinking, then marry her. Three days after the date marking his first year of sobriety, they were married in a civil ceremony. He's been sober ever since.
WITH VANCE, everything in Diane's life changed for the better, but still, she felt there was something missing. She had been brought up Catholic but had turned away from the Church during her first marriage, and stayed away for more than eighteen years. Finally, with a man who respected her and a job she loved, she was ready to return. Though Vance had never been a religious man, they joined the Catholic Church together, eventually becoming Eucharistic Ministers and active members of their congregation. Now they both have a deeply personal relationship with God, one that permeates their work and everything they do.

When Vance introduced Diane to taxidermy, she progressed quickly. Customers started bringing back his old work, requesting that she re-do it. It hurt his pride. "She got so good," he says, "it pissed me off, a little bit. I kept waiting for her to foul up, and she never did." Now, Vance readily admits that his early pieces are messes. "After all," he admits, "I was only doing the work for extra booze money.

Diane was the one who convinced him to quit his job at the factory and go full-time with taxidermy. She was the one who introduced him to new techniques and materials, and after having mastered the craft, she was one of the first women to be certified in Maine. Now, she is one of only a handful of women taxidermists in the state, a fact Vance points out proudly. "Diane led me to the church," he says, his voice filled with respect. "She led me to Reiki. She led me to changing the business. She led me everywhere."

VANCE AND DIANE Child are taxidermists. They are also registered Karuna Reiki Masters, Eucharistic Ministers, and husband and wife. For eleven years they've worked together at their own business—Fall's Taxidermy Shop and the Mainely Critters Wildlife Museum. Housed in a long, narrow building adjacent to their home, the house and shop are perched on a wooded hillside seven miles east of Dixfield, Maine. A white sign, shaped like the state of Maine, advertises the museum to the traffic speeding down Morrison Hill on Route 2.

There is not much north or east of Fall's Taxidermy Shop, save for a few ski resorts, mill towns, and hundreds of tree-covered mountains. Traffic along their stretch of road is thin, most times just the lumber and heave of logging trucks on their way to the paper plant in nearby Rumford. But all day long, big pickups slow and pull into the Child's muddy driveway, backing up to the garage door of the skinning room to unload. Customers bring all kinds of trophy animals for preservation: trout and salmon, moose, bobcat, bear, turkey, porcupine, the occasional possum, and dozens of deer, which they heave out of their truck beds like rolls of heavy carpet.

INSIDE THE SHOP, Diane stands at her workbench mixing epoxy in a small white bucket. She works with her back to the door, wearing a pair of headphones. Her gray hair is cut short to keep it out of her eyes, while her dental plate leaves two gaps at her eyeteeth that are visible only when she smiles. Even with headphones on, Diane looks older than her fifty-two years. And though it is lightly snowing, she has the window open above her workbench so she can talk to her four horses in the paddock outside. "I'm gonna spank somebody's butt!" she yells out, laughing, when they misbehave. Tyler, her favorite, a young, jet-black draft horse, swishes his tail and trots away.

The shop door opens and closes as customers enter, but Diane doesn't turn around. For the most part, she concentrates on the animals and lets Vance deal with the people. They have built up a large customer base over the past eleven years, and have become friends with many of their regulars. People like bringing their animals to the shop because it is apparent the couple takes pride in the work and has fun with it. "We love animals," Diane explains. "Not all taxidermists do, but you can normally tell by their work."

Diane crosses the shop to talk to Vance. As she passes a table filled with finished beaver, turkey, and other small animals, she grabs the raised front paw of a woodchuck with her thumb and forefinger giving it a friendly little shake. Vance's workbench is on the opposite side of the room, where he is fleshing out the recently de-thawed pelt of a deer's head and neck, called a cape. Most of the fat was removed before the cape was frozen, but Vance shaves off the remaining bits with a razor so the skin will dry flat once it is mounted.

Vance wears a denim shirt over sweatpants, a big baseball cap and a hearing aid in each ear. At sixty-three, his eyes have accumulated a liquid sadness, and when he takes off his cap, his bald head makes him look soft and exposed. Above his work bench hangs a simple computer-made sign, identical to one over Diane's: If you were on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

It is rare for Diane to be in her husband's workspace. "He's got his corner and I have mine," she laughs. "If I have any questions or he has any questions, we kind of meet in the middle and say, 'Hey, now, I need your opinion on this,' but we get along fine."
Above: Trapping the hide of a deer mount into place, Diane Child’s hands work with steady measure.

Right: Diane Child works on the form of a taxidermist’s deer mount.
Above: Diane Child chats with Anna Justard, at left, and Evelyn Aoeham, center, before church.

Left: Diane Child with her horse, Soot.
Though they work at a physical distance throughout the day, Diane and Vance closely share almost everything else in their lives. “There isn’t much that we don’t do together,” Diane says, recalling how they both came to be Reiki Masters.

When Diane was searching for a way to communicate with a problem horse, she became interested in ancient Eastern healing arts. She prayed to God for help and almost immediately discovered an article on Reiki—a practice in which a healer channels energy through her hands, transferring positive power to another being by touch, or simply intent. Soon, Diane found a Reiki clinic at a nearby high school, and invited Vance to join her. Both of them fell in love with the practice, and interpret their involvement as a way they can be conduits for Jesus’ healing power. To Diane, it is essentially a form of prayer.

In time, Vance soon began his own Reiki practice, meeting with clients weekly in a healing room he built in the basement of their home. Diane prefers to perform Reiki on animals rather than people. She suspects that people are not always honest about the results they feel. “My horses do not lie,” she explains. “They don’t know how.”

AT HER END OF THE SHOP, Diane works on another deer. She’s been doing a lot of them lately. This year’s deer season has only just begun, but she is working on orders backed up from six to eight months ago. She stretches the cape of an eight-point buck over a molded urethane deer-head form. She has already attached the antlers to the top of the form with epoxy, and now she tucks the cape around them, tugging at it to stretch out the skin. Her small frame brings her just about eye to eye with the buck as she readjusts its height on a metal stand. Grabbing the antlers and pulling at the head, her gold cross sways on its chain, its clasp slipping forward with the motion.

Her glasses hang from a cord around her neck and come on and off as she hammers small nails into the skin around the buck’s eyes. “You just think, he’s already felt his pain!” she laughs. She holds two or three nails in her mouth and smoothes the buck’s hair. “It’s not just to set his hair back up, but it is to stretch out the skin. Her small frame brings her just about eye to eye with the buck as she readjusts its height on a metal stand. Grabbing the antlers and pulling at the head, her gold cross sways on its chain, its clasp slipping forward with the motion.

Diane finishes the deer and rolls its stand to an alcove in the middle of the shop, where the mount will sit for a couple of weeks to dry. On her workbench, three stiff raccoons lie side by side, mounted in different poses. She likes to work on raccoons because they have so much personality and character. One of the raccoons is enormous, twice as big as the others on the table. She takes it down and cradles it in her lap like a baby to do the finishing touches. Pulling cotton from its nostrils with long pliers, she speaks to the big raccoon in a playful voice. “You probably got this big from eating everybody’s garbage!” she tells it.

Diane stops working on the raccoons around three o’clock to feed her horses. When she walks out to the small, muddy paddock, she takes her time to talk to all of them individually, calling herself “Mumma” and speaking in the high-pitched voice that she uses with the animals in the shop. She spends the longest with Tyler, hugging and doting on him. He is her big baby. A huge Percheron gelding, he was a Christmas present from Vance, and a dream come true for Diane. She has been training him to wear a harness, and on the next clear Saturday, hopes to hitch him to a cart and teach him how to drive.

People ask all the time if she’ll mount the horses when they die. She thinks that would be as ridiculous as mounting her mother and father. “You cannot bring them back that way,” she says. “Just keep them here, in spirit,” she says, pointing to her heart. “You don’t have to see the body.” When she prepares grain for her oldest horse, Cardigan, she adds pasta and a high carbohydrate weight gaining powder. He is losing weight and she worries that he may not have long to live. Though she would never mount him, she also doesn’t want him to be buried underground to be eaten by worms. Rather, she hopes to donate his body to the wild animal park up the road, where he can be fed to lions and tigers so that his spirit may live on in the bodies of these animals.

Diane believes that she will see all her pets in heaven. Even the spirits of the animals she has worked on in the taxidermy shop will somehow make themselves known to her.
up there. Though this goes against the teachings of Diane’s faith, she knows it must be true. “My Catholic upbringing says no,” she explains, “but my inner love for animals and Jesus says yes.” She has learned to question the tenets of her faith, to constantly search for her own truth. “Don’t be in such a little box,” she says, holding her hands together, then drawing them far apart. “Open up.”

A REGULAR customer comes into the shop with a small bear he wants mounted. He did not shoot this bear at a stand deep in the north woods; it had been stealing apples off the tree in front of his house, and he finally got fed up. He leafs through a catalogue with Vance, looking at different options for poses. Finally, he decides to have the bear sitting on its hind legs, so it can fit in a corner of his camp without taking up too much room.

“We’ll put an apple with it,” Diane says as she turns back to her work. For some time now, she has felt a special connection to the bears that are brought into the shop, as she believes the bear is her totem animal, a spirit helper that Jesus sends to guide her through hard times. When she is working with the horses, it is then Diane feels the spirit with her most strongly. “How come I haven’t ever been drastically hurt?” she wonders aloud. “I mean, I’ve had my ups and downs with them, but yet, I’m always safe... so what prevented me from getting hurt? And that’s when I feel, is when I’m working with the animals, that there is some spirit there.” The idea to pose the bear with an apple just came through to her when she saw the animal. “It’s like, bang,” she says, pointing to her temple. “It’s there.”

Though it can be emotionally challenging for her to work with the bodies of these animals—not only bears but all the wild creatures that are brought to the shop—she believes, foremost, that she honors them with her work. “I am helping to preserve them, to preserve their spirit, instead of having them being just slaughtered and thrown in the dump, so I put that first, see.”

She had a tough time working on the two baby bears that are on display in the museum. She couldn’t understand why someone would shoot such young creatures. When they were brought to her, she held them in her arms and thought, Why? Why so small? She mounted them so they’re climbing the branches of a small tree, forever reaching out to playfully bat at a moth, a bird, or a bee.

Eight years ago, Diane and Vance started the Mainely Critters Museum to share the beauty of Maine’s animals with the public, especially children and the handicapped. School groups, adult care centers, and curious passersby come to see the animals in the exhibit, set up in a long room they enter by climbing a couple of steps from the shop. The smell of the shop—mothballs, blood, and musk—lingers in the museum, masked only slightly by a fruity air freshener.
Moose, bear, deer, skunks, weasels and all the animals found in Maine’s wild spaces are displayed there, posed in life-like actions that sharply contrast the static poses so many customers choose for their mounted animals. The animals seem to stretch, sleep and play, surrounded by the leaves or snow or the branches of their natural habitat. Scenes of Maine forests and farms are painted on the walls behind them.

The wall of the museum’s entrance is devoted entirely to an 8’x12’ mural of The Last Supper. Robed figures, seated at a table are nearly life-sized, their faces olive-skinned, and full of compassion. In a room full of animals, this portrait of a dozen life-sized humans seems out of place. But for Diane and Vance, it makes perfect sense. The sign welcoming visitors to the museum ends with this line: What the LORD has so freely given us, we gladly share with you.

Diane and Vance believe they’ve received many gifts from the Lord and want to share these gifts with as many people as they can. This is why they opened the museum in the first place and continue to keep it open to all, free of charge.

DIANE AND VANCE worked hard to build the foundation of their life together. They have learned to rely on their faith in God and each other to see them through great challenges. But Diane feels that they’ve been tempted more than once by the Devil.

Three years ago, everything was going great—the business was expanding, the marriage was strong, they were going to church, performing the duties of Eucharistic Ministers, starting their Reiki practice and trying to help others. They had left their old, bad habits behind. This, Diane feels, made the Devil angry. And in order to try to draw them away from God, he burned down their home.

The fire started in the museum’s wood stove at 8:30 in the evening on February 17th, 2000. Though firefighters and neighbors rallied to help, everything was lost—the house and most of its contents, the museum, the showroom, the workroom and all their unfinished work. The Devil, Diane is sure, thought they would blame God, but she knows who was really responsible. “We never denied God. I blamed that son of a gun,” she says, motioning to the ground with two fingers. So God stayed with them.

They found a place to stay that very night and were able to set up shop there. Slowly, they reimbursed customers whose finished work had been destroyed. And with help from their community, they rebuilt the house, the shop, and the museum within a year. Then, they made improvements. “It was better,” Vance says, “because of God. He does everything better.”

FINALLY, A CLEAR Saturday comes along, and Diane has the chance to hitch Tyler to the cart for his first training session. It is an unusually warm afternoon for October, with flies
buzzing around the horse’s ears and no trace of the previous week’s snow. Diane catches and grooms Tyler, and as she leads him out to the small riding ring, Vance comes to help. When the cart and harness adjust to her satisfaction, Diane climbs in and takes the reins while Vance stands at Tyler’s head to lead.

But, as they begin to move forward, something spooks the massive horse. He wrenches free of Vance’s grasp and gallops uncontrollably around the small ring. Diane tries in vain to bring him under control. As Tyler runs faster and faster, one of the cart’s metal shafts gets caught in the fence and is wrenched out at a ninety-degree angle. Diane is thrown out, crashing through the fence to the ground.

Struggling to her feet, her mouth is bloody and her upper plate is broken in two. She limps over to where Tyler has stopped and strokes his neck to calm him. She is okay, but Vance snaps in fury, screaming obscenities about the horses, claiming that he wants to shoot them all. When he quiets down, Diane says nothing to him, and instead, focuses her attention on the horse.

But before she has led Tyler out of the ring, Vance struggles to bend back the twisted shafts of the cart, looking at the spots he will need to re-weld so she can use it again. And before she has a chance to ask him, he goes inside to make phone calls to the dentist and another Eucharistic Minister to administer the reading Diane is to do at church that night.

Later in the afternoon, as Diane sits in an easy chair in the living room with a cold pack on her rapidly swelling chin, Vance lumbers up the hill with the wheelbarrow to muck out the horses’ stalls. “Leave it to Vance to pick up the pieces,” she sighs, watching him in the window. When it is time to get ready for church, she feels stiffer, reluctant to get up from her easy chair. “We don’t have to go, you know,” Vance says, almost tenderly. But she wants to.

A few days after the accident, Diane and Vance have a conversation and begin to iron out their differences. Diane comes to understand that he was scared to death for her, and that this is why he lashed out in anger. She communicates with Tyler, too, and he tells her that he was afraid of Vance, not the cart, and that’s why he took off. With this information, she decides that sometime soon she will try again, starting over with Tyler’s training. She confesses that a few years ago, she wouldn’t have had the courage to confront this kind of problem with a horse. “I wasn’t really brave enough. I had no faith in myself, no confidence.... It took quite a few years for Vance to convince me that I could do things. That I was smarter.”

In the thick blues of that early autumn evening, they go to church. They go swollen with bruises they can’t yet see, to worship, to forgive, and to pray for a future that includes their want to share their talents, beliefs and comforts with others in ways that are free, freely given.
Dr. Phil
Dr. Phil Thompson prepares for a medical staffing at Maine Medical.

by Molly Myers
FOR DR. PHILIP Thompson, Jr., every day begins the same. Wake up, do Tai Chi stretches, prepare breakfast, jog to pick up the paper, then home again to a triad of whole grains waiting on the kitchen table. As monotonous as this may seem, the life of Dr. Phil is anything but dull. The world is his laboratory, after all, and he aims to understand its properties.

Dr. Phil is a Portland native whose days are scheduled to the brim with board meetings, lectures, plays, cultural expositions, social entertaining and physical activity. A retired physician and rheumatologist, Dr. Phil plays tennis every Thursday, rows in the summer, and often walks Portland’s many trails. All the while, Dr. Phil also finds time to address
his philosophical, social and political concerns. Alternative transportation, low-income housing and sensible community planning are at the core of Dr. Phil's interests and passions, while politics, art and culture also find a place in his jam-packed days.

In an age of apathy, a conscious and participatory life demands much praise. Dr. Phil does not let the world pass him by. Rather, he finds a way to get involved and make a difference. Serving on the board of Portland West, he attends patient staffings at the international clinic in the Maine Medical Center, and writes letters to political representatives and newspaper editors most every day. Currently, Dr. Phil is writing an autobiography, one already at 2,000 pages depicting his research and life experiences. And, amidst all this, he continues his studies in religion, science, medicine and social issues. At 85, Dr. Phil's passion, his zeal for life, serves to enrich our own lives and the laboratory of a world in which we live.
At the Portland Athletic Club, Dr. Phil Thompson plays his weekly tennis match.

In the Reiche School in Portland's West End, Dr. Phil Thompson speaks at a neighborhood meeting.
Dr. Phil Thompson watches a Portland High School football game.
Dr. Phil Thompson, deep in research at the Maine Medical Center library.
Dr. Phil Thompson getting breakfast ready.
Andrea Maio ('04) left Salt in June. She's now making a documentary film about a flotilla of homemade Punk Rock houseboats (and one rowboat) navigating the length of the Mississippi. She hit the river in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in July and has been at it ever since. The following is an excerpt from her travels: “The filming goes well. It occurs to me that all the really dramatic stuff, the trials and tribulations, have happened to the filmmaker-boat. In Wisconsin we narrowly escaped being run over by a barge, in Missouri my co-director’s dog got run over and killed by a freight train; in Illinois our steering cable snapped, setting us adrift in the main channel, and rocking our boat to forty-five degree angles in the high winds. My co-director is dead-set against including our experience in the film, so I’ve started to make audio recordings of my own. I consider myself hopelessly mixed up in this experience and unable to extricate myself from the story at this point. And it feels good. The struggle to figure out where the story ends and I begin is one that I hope I never settle.”

After Scott Gurian ('02) graduated from the radio program at Salt, he moved back home to New Jersey and worked part-time jobs until he accidentally stumbled into a job as producer of a daily, national news program on Pacifica Radio in DC: “When I started out, I was slightly over my head, the pay was bad and the hours were ridiculously long, but I gained a lot of great experience. I also learned to write and edit really fast on deadline, and I made tons of contacts with reporters and producers in places like Baghdad, South Africa and The Netherlands—many of whom I’m still in touch with. I’ve been working as News Director at KGOU in Norman, Oklahoma, for six months now, and it’s actually refreshing to live in a place without a lot of daily, breaking news, so I have the opportunity to find my own stories. Here’s a recent example—it’s a piece I produced on the traditional sport of catfish noodling: http://snipurl.com/8dri. I’m eager to hear from other Salt alums I’ve lost touch with—I can be reached at sgurian@earthlink.net.”
Post Salt, **Tim Greenway and Brandi Neal ('03)** struggled to find jobs waiting tables and selling shoes before they began collaborating on a monthly island series for *The Community Leader*, a weekly newspaper in Falmouth, Maine, where Tim is currently the Photo Editor. The stories provide an in-depth look at rural, island life in Maine. Over the course of five months, Tim and Brandi documented blanket weaving on Swans Island, a pastor and church on Islesboro, a lighthouse keeper on Arrow­sic, a bird restoration project on Outer Green and a small family grocer on Isle au Haut. As well as being a photo editor, Tim also enjoys an active freelance career. In October 2004, he had his first solo show in Portland, showcasing his abstract nature photography. His work can be viewed at www.timgreenway.com. Brandi is currently an Assistant Editor at *CommonDreams.org*, a progressive news website based in Portland. As a freelance writer, her work has appeared in *PortCity Life Magazine*, *The Community Leader*, *The Takoma Voice*, and *MovieMaker Magazine*. She can be contacted at brandilneal@commondreams.org

At Salt, **Stefan Milkowski ('04)** documented Western Maine's Endless Energy Corporation: "I'm halfway through a Masters at Columbia's Journalism School, in a fast-paced program that throws us parachute-style into both the South Bronx and the media frenzy of a press conference. I've covered, among other things, Donald Trump introducing a 12" talking doll made in his image and voice; a Bronx teen studying pre-engineering whose dream in life is to work for NASA, and the introduction of fully-electric postal delivery trucks in a neighborhood with terrible air pollution. I'm writing my Master's project on (surprise!) a massive power plant proposed in a fast-changing Brooklyn neighborhood. No, not wind turbines."

Since her Salt semester ended, **Jen Dean ('02)** has continued work as a wedding photographer. She also started a photo documentary which highlights the relationships between child and teacher in a preschool classroom: "My goal is to evoke an emotional response through visual art, to issues endemic in early childhood education and thus motivate the nation to recognize the amazing work of teachers." Her work can be seen at www.artisticimages.us.

Salt Photo alumna, **Liza (Elizabeth) Semler ('03)** also a student at Wheaton College, has been awarded a Watson Fellowship for 2005-06. She will be putting her photography skills to use as she pursues the following project: *The Last Morning Milking: Aging Dairy Farmers on Dying Farms in Switzerland, Ireland, Sweden, New Zealand and Canada*. To see the list of Watson Fellows past and present go to: www.watsonfellowship.org/site/fellows/05_06.html

Pasion James, photo by Tim Greenway
Adam Allington is a freelance producer for various public radio organizations. He is also the marketing assistant for "Voices of Our World," an activist radio program based in New York. Currently, he lives in the upper Hudson River valley where he produces historical features, radio magazine stuff, documentaries and audio postcards. Previous work has been aired on WNYC's, The Next Big Thing, Maine Public Radio, Weekend America and WMPG. Previous day jobs include ski-instructor, carpenter and PR writer. Adam got his start in radio at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies and Studio 360.

Zac Barr currently lives in Red Hook, an old Brooklyn neighborhood once populated by longshoreman and gangsters. He works as a facilitator for StoryCorps, an oral history project that encourages people to record interviews with loved ones. He also works as an independent producer.

Christina Cooke grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina and graduated from Davidson College in 2003 with a major in English and a minor in Spanish. After completing the writing program at the Salt Institute, she worked for Port City Life magazine, also located in Portland, then headed to the opposite coast to lead groups of teenagers on extended trips through the backcountry of Washington state. She plans to pursue a career in magazine journalism and travel as much as possible.

Kate Fox is a senior at Bennington College in Vermont, where she studies visual art and literature.

Emily Funkhouser returned to New York City after Salt. In the spring of 2004, she graduated from the Gallatin School of New York University where she studied anthropology and art history. Emily spent several months working at nest Magazine and continues to write, but mostly grant proposals and artist statements for her artwork. In addition to painting in her studio, she teaches at The Little Red Schoolhouse and is the Creative Consultant for the Legitimate Theater Company.

Susan Gaidos is a freelance journalist who writes about science-related topics in basic research, medicine and the environment. Inspired by Salt’s documentary approach, she now looks for ways to incorporate this element into her writing. Currently, she lives in Cape Elizabeth, Maine, and enjoys eating muffins.

Tim Greenway was a photojournalist for eight years in the Midwest doing work for newspapers and magazines throughout the country before attending Salt. He is currently the photo editor for a local newspaper and continues to do freelance magazine work and art photography. He received a degree in Photojournalism in Minnesota.

Katy Gross is from Santa Fe, New Mexico. She will graduate from Brown University in May 2005 with a BA in Development Studies — the study of international development. She has been interested in photography since she was 15. After a trip to Hawaii to work on a farm, Katy took a year hiatus between her sophomore and junior years at Brown to attend Salt. She plans to pursue a career in photography.

Jessica Hasslen, a former newspaper photographer and college instructor from Minnesota, came to Salt to hone her photography skills and liked Maine so much she decided to make Portland her home. Jessica currently works for a photo agency in Portland and has recently completed her first solo photography project, "Pull Up A Stool, Revelations from the A1 Diner," which was on exhibit in a local coffeehouse.

Lars Howlett currently teaches black and white photography at a high school in the San Francisco Bay area, and continues to work on professional and personal art projects out of his newly remodeled home-studio. He can be reached at www.findlars.com.

Brendan Hughes is a native of Dorchester, Massachusetts and a graduate of Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. He is currently living in New York City, writing and working on his MFA in Creative Writing at Columbia University.

Rupa Marya went to medical school at Georgetown after pursuing theatre, biochemistry, and philosophy as an undergraduate. After graduating and returning home to do a residency at University of California, San Francisco, Rupa took a hiatus to focus on her love of sound and people's stories. She went to Salt to do just this. Currently, she is finishing her residency in Internal Medicine at UCSF while continuing to make radio documentaries for local and national shows. Her next project is developing a class in radio documentary at UCSF's School of Medicine where medical students will learn to understand their patients first as human beings with stories.

Ellington Miller is a Rochester, Minnesota native who took time off from her technical writing job at SPSS Inc. to attend Salt in 2003. Shortly after her semester, she became editor of Rochester Women magazine and is now balancing technical writing and magazine work. Ellie has a writing degree from Wartburg College. She married Warren Bandel in 2004.

After leaving Maine, Molly Myers ventured to Mexico for five months to explore the culture of rural Mexico and to better prepare herself for teaching in an inner-city public school. Currently, Molly is teaching autistic children in New York City under the New York City Teaching Fellows program and loving every minute of it. She is living with a former Salt student and continues to develop her passion for people and their lives.

Lydia Peele recently moved from Nashville, Tennessee to Charlottesville, Virginia to begin the MFA program in Fiction Writing at UVA. Her fiction has appeared recently in the journals, Pindeldyboz and Epoch.

Evan Roberts studied photography at the Rochester Institute for Technology and abroad in England and Israel. An oral history project with Palestinian refugees sparked an interest in radio, which he pursued at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies. He lives in San Francisco.

Shikarro L. Sampson is a 1997 graduate of Southern Illinois University with a BA in Art History. She is currently residing in Framingham, Massachusetts, and working at a non-profit energy company in Boston.

Liza Semler took leave from her studies at Wheaton College to attend Salt. Thereafter, she went on to conduct Cultural Anthropology Field Studies in South Africa through the School for International Training. Liza is now a senior a Wheaton, where she continues with research for her thesis on Cultural Tourism in Black Townships. She is also exploring options for more experience in photography after graduation.

After finishing her studies at Salt, Kait Stokes graduated from Connecticut College with a BS in Sociology-based Human Relations. Today, Kait works as a finance accounts manager at an international educational travel corporation in her hometown of Boston, Massachusetts. Even while working 9 to 5, Kait keeps her camera well oiled by doing freelance photography for various Boston based non-profit organizations as well as for friends and family. Attending Salt fundamentally changed her experience of the visual and relational world. And when she can, one of her favorite road trips is Portland, to visit old project sites and reconnect with the unique and inspiring people she came to know during her time at Salt.

A Maine native, Annie Tsiklis graduated from Connecticut College in 2004. She spent a semester in South Africa studying multiculturalism and social change, living with host families and learning Xhosa, an African language. While there, she "missed the smell of the darkroom more than anything."

A former English teacher in Hong Kong, Danee Voorhees continues to take photographs. More of her work can be seen at www.dannevoorhees.com.

After teaching science for five years, Kate Walker decided to do what she REALLY wanted to do: become a photographer. After attending Salt in the fall of 2003, Kate moved to Brooklyn, New York. There she works as a production assistant on Frontline and American Experience films for PBS. She is also continuing to work on her own documentary photography at the ICP.

Holly Wilmeth was born in 1977 in Guatemala, studied languages and politics in university, taught in Japan for two years on the island of Hokkaido, then ended up at Salt. She is now living in the Catskills shooting for a paper and assisting several photographers. She also takes on freelance projects, some of which have included recent trips to Haiti.
NEWS AND SHOWS:

BEYOND SALT

What Salt faculty are up to.

Jennifer Andrews is both a writing instructor at Salt and Salt's magazine editor. She is also an Assistant Professor of Writing at Berklee College of Music. Currently, she is working on a book, entitled Parts, for which parts of Parts have won several literary awards. The book is a cross-genre work in which the story of her sister unfolds in poetry and prose. This summer she also plans to shamelessly take up both the saxophone and Flamenco dancing, and enjoy the hell out of it. Polly Bennell, Director of Writing, is working on a book-length work of Creative Nonfiction. A multi-disciplined storyteller, Polly had a film she directed, Baby It's Cold Outside, featured in this spring's Maine Girls and Women Film Festival. This summer, she'll teach a workshop for college level instructors about Creative Nonfiction writing. Kate Philbrick, a photography instructor at Salt and Salt Magazine's Photo Editor, is currently editing new work for a show featuring selections from an ongoing project documenting her children's lives. Kate is also shooting digitally and looking forward to producing her first digital photo story. Rob Rosenthal, Director of Radio, just finished a series of commentaries on civil liberties issues he produced with Salt graduate, Kerry Need and the Maine Civil Liberties Union. He's producing an hour-long audio tour of the Kennebec-Chaudiere corridor from the Canadian Border to Popham Beach, Maine, and another hour-long radio program based on a book of environmental essays published by the Wilderness Society. Rob's also starting research for an oral history of South Bristol, Maine, based on the book Down on the Island, Up on the Main by Ellen Vincent, and engineering two programs: "Maine Roots" for the Maine Folklife Center and "Sea and Shore" for Coastal Enterprises, Inc. Last but not least, Rob's been recording his ten-month old baby, Gwen, and loving that his sixteen-year-old daughter, Chelsea, works with Blunt/Youth Radio Project at WMPG.

Upcoming, Summer 2005, in the Salt Gallery

HEATHER PERRY

In addition to an upcoming show in the Salt Gallery, Heather Perry will release two photographic books to be published by Down East Books in the spring of 2006. The first is about Maine boat builders (author Michael Crowley) and the second is about Merrymeeting Bay (author, Franklin Burroughs). Her stock image file is currently represented by the National Geographic Image Collection.

Fieldnotes

For the past two summers, Neal Menschel, Director of Photography at Salt, and his daughter Molly, a Salt Radio alum, have been rattling around West Virginia working on a book project entitled, "The Back Porch Music Project." It has taken them into the lives of loggers, churches of all types, coon hunting, coal mines, music halls, kitchens, and yes, onto back porches.

Old time country mountain music abounds in a state made up mostly of mountains and valleys. The pace and lifestyle are unique as are the families who live up in the narrow "hollers."

The project's focus has been on eight different families and the way they represent the character of the land in their work, music and religion.

The summer of 2005 will complete the gathering of materials, then the project's focus will shift to publishing. The final product will consist of a book which will include between 80 to 100 photos, an introduction, interviews and observations, along with a CD of music and stories.

Fall 2005: Inside Bath Iron Works:
A black and white photography exhibit serves as an uncommon glimpse into the Yard, its people and the ships they build.

May 20, 2005: Spring 2005 Student Show:
A group exhibit of documentary radio, writing and photography.

Winter 2005: Fall 2005 Student Show:
A group exhibit of documentary radio, writing and photography.
The Salt Institute would like to acknowledge and thank the following individuals, businesses and foundations for their generosity and financial support this past year.

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See. Hear. Learn.
Experience Salt

"Life is hard. Radio is harder. Study both at Salt."
-Rob Rosenthal, Director of Radio

"One of the joys of teaching at Salt is being part of a faculty that is totally immersed, professionally, in what they instruct. The students sense this enthusiasm and commitment and respond to it in positive ways. We teach and critique, but a lot of what we do here is share."
-Neal Menschel, Director of Photography

At Salt, students come to learn the ordinary is extraordinary.

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