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Salt Institute for Documentary Studies

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Salt

Explore.
Discover.
Capture.
Illuminate.
Salt is rising at the crack of dawn to sit in the branches of a Maine forest, zipped up in camouflage, smelling of doe urine buck lure, listening for the sound of cracking branches, and trying not to make a sound as you scribble notes in the darkness, hang from the trees to snap photos, and pray for a deer to approach so you can shoot it through the vitals—and have some grisly meat for your story.

Caitlin Van Dusen
Salt Writing Student

Our Purpose
To teach responsible storytelling.

Our Approach
Intense. Experiential. Collaborative.

Our Focus
People. Their stories. And telling them well.

Our Students
Are driven, passionate individuals who seek to immerse themselves in the documentary process. They struggle to find their own voice, to sit comfortably with discomfort, and to ask hard questions not only of their subjects, but also of themselves.

Our Program
Graduate and undergraduate students attend the Salt Institute to study documentary radio, writing, or photography. The program entails fifteen weeks of intensive, extensive field research coupled with workshops and seminars. Throughout the semester, students gather cultural materials and develop their craft in order to create documentaries of professional caliber. While the immediate focus and location is Maine, approaches and skills learned at the Salt Institute travel well to any regional study or to comparative studies.

Our Belief
Stories can foster individuality, honor commonality, and create awareness.
From the Mouths of Salties

Salt is a documentary boot camp. It's hard, it's intense, and it's a lot of late nights. But along with that, for me, came a lot of fun, camaraderie, and a purpose in being a photographer.

Shuva Rahim
Salt Photography Student

Salt is an opportunity in every sense of the word. Salt is an opportunity for growth, in a personal setting and an educational setting. Salt provides their students with the environment to take a new approach to learning, not only within their documentary craft, but also within the realms of the human condition. Salt stretches your skin beyond its limits. But, most importantly, Salt is family. If I took anything away from my time on the corner of Exchange Street and Federal, it was the experience of meeting so many intelligent, passionate, and talented individuals. If you let it, Salt can change your life in a very positive way. It can teach you about yourself, about others, and about finding the extraordinary in the everyday.

Caryn Turgeon
Salt Photography Student

Salt is an intense and unique experience that takes you out of your comfort zone and allows you to examine a story in-depth. Salt put me years ahead in my career. The months of intense focus and fieldwork helped me accomplish things that would have taken years had I completed just a straight journalism program.

Brandi Neal
Salt Writing Student

Salt is an unforgettable experience and one that has helped bring me to where I am today. Salt is a competitive, demanding, unique, high-level program that, I think, is one-of-a-kind in the country. At Salt, a student learns what it means to be a documentarian, and how to better your craft technically and conceptually. My fellow Salties/Saltys/Saltines (as you will come to identify yourselves) provided constructive criticism and, consequently, we pushed each other to do better, which ultimately produced more in-depth, substantial, conclusive documentaries. Salt creates an intimate community of people, all passionately committed to working for the same thing—to essentially tell stories through images, words, and sounds by making human connections.

Whit Fox
Salt Photography Student
Instructors

Michaela Cavallaro, Co-Director of Writing Program.
M.A., Emerson College; B.A., Alfred University. Formerly editor-in-chief of Mainebiz and an associate editor at Down East magazine, Michaela has spent the last ten years working as a journalist. In addition to her duties at Salt, she freelances for a variety of publications including TheStreet.com, Fidelity Online and Down East magazine, where she continues to serve as contributing editor. Michaela lives in South Portland with her husband, Darren, and their wild and crazy toddler, Skylar.

John Grady, Sociologist and Professor.
Ph.D., Brandeis; M.A., Yale; B.A., Boston College. A sociologist with wide ranging interests, Dr. Grady has particular research interests in visual sociology. He is the Hannah Goldberg Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College and an officer of the International Visual Sociology Association and the Multi-Media Editor for Visual Studies.

Neal J. Menschel, Co-Director of Photography Program.
Graduate Studies in Photography, Syracuse University; B.S., Mansfield University. Director of Photography of The Christian Science Monitor from 1991 through 1995, Neal Menschel has worked throughout the world, specializing in third world development and political issues as well as domestic and international environmental issues. He taught Photojournalism at Boston University. He is currently working on a photography book on traditional Appalachian music and culture called The Back Porch Music Project.

Kathleen Philbrick, Co-Director of Photography Program.
M.F.A., Art Institute of Boston; B.F.A., University of Southern Maine (to be conferred in 2008). Kate Philbrick grew up in northern Maine and has been a professional photographer since 1992. She currently lives in Gorham. She has studied with Mary Ellen Mark through the Maine Photographic Workshops and was named one of the top 100 photographers at the 1997 Golden Light Awards. Kate has exhibited her work at the 3rd Ward Gallery in Brooklyn, NY; at Snapper Bear Studios in NoHo, New York City; and at the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, Maine as well as in various local Maine galleries. Her photographs have been published in Yankee magazine, Readymade Magazine, Story magazine and in the television program Real Simple. To learn more about Kate, visit her website at www.katephoto.com.

Rob Rosenthal, Director of Radio Program.
M.A. in communication, University of Hartford; B.A., University of Hartford. Rob Rosenthal managed campus-based, community radio stations for 14 years. He also is an independent radio producer and adjunct faculty at the University of Southern Maine. Rob was honored in 2002 with a Golden Reel Award (first place) from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters for a documentary series on immigrant musicians in southern Maine, and a First Place Public Service Award from the Maine Association of Broadcasters for a public service announcement campaign on children’s health. He is currently working with Salt photo instructor Kate Philbrick on an hour-long radio documentary, gallery show, and website. The subject of the documentary is the state-sponsored eviction of the forty-five poor, black, white, and mixed-race residents of Malaga Island off the coast of Maine in 1912. He is also producing an hour-long documentary on Maine poetry with Maine’s Poet Laureate, Betsy Sholl.

Scott Sutherland, Co-Director of Writing Program.
M.A.T., Brown University; B.A., Grinnell College. Scott has been a journalist for nearly 20 years and has worked for a variety of publications, including The Boston Globe, the Portland Press Herald, and Mainebiz. His freelance work has appeared in The New York Times, Metropolis, Outside, Salon, The New Yorker, and elsewhere. He lives with his wife, Amy, on Munjoy Hill in Portland.

Patty Wight, Radio Instructor.
B.S. in Wildlife Biology at the University of Vermont. While thoroughly enjoying her major at the University of Vermont, Patty realized by graduation that she was not a scientist at heart. Post-college, radio piqued her interest and she enrolled in the Salt Radio program in Fall 2000. Immediately hooked, she subsequently interned and worked at Maine Public Radio. She has since worked as a freelancer for private projects as well as local and national radio programs.

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PHOTO ESSAYS

Island Time
A photo essay by Rebecca Stewart
On Eagle Island, the days pass essentially the same as they have for generations. Helene and Bob Quinn, and their grandson, Sam, spend their days cooking, lobstering, and exploring.

When Josh Got Sick
A photo essay by Kim Alexander
On June 17, 2004, Josh Howe collapsed in his living room. Later that day doctors removed a plum sized tumor from his brain that had been growing there since birth. Morgan, Josh's little sister, has often been upset, isolated, and frustrated, since Josh got sick.

Through the Body
A photo essay by Hannah Fox
At twelve, Karen Montanaro realized that she wanted to dance for the rest of her life. Since, then, she has performed and taught as a dancer and a mime, and her curiosity and enthusiasm are present wherever she goes.

To Love and to Care For
A photo essay by Christine Shanaban
Doris and George Castonia have been married for 63 years. They do the best they can to care for one another, but, despite their love and fortitude, life isn’t getting easier.

In Each Other’s Corner
A photo essay by Annie Reichert
Jay Jack and Amanda Buckner practice tough love. On any given day, they routinely kick, punch, and try to stranggle each other as the co-owners of the Academy of Mixed Martial Arts in Portland.

M.O.M.
A photo essay by Elizabeth Massa
Olivia Rynberg-Going lives with her Mama, Mary Going, and her Momo, Martha Rynberg in a green house on top of Munjoy Hill in Portland. This summer, Olivia, Martha, Mary, their cats, and Gracie the dog will pack up the house and move to Berkeley, California.

ALUMNI INTERVIEWS

COLLABORATIVE ESSAYS

Heart Full of Spirit, Shoulder Full of Steel
An essay by Bridget Huber
Photos by Amber Knowles
It’s Friday night at the Jesus Party, a kids’ church in Lewiston, Maine. Urban missionary Doug Taylor stands before sixty kids who are vying for the title “Best Worshipper” so that they can take home five pounds of gummy bears.

Mamma Bear Politicking
An essay by Beatrice Marovich
Photos by Elizabeth Massa
Pat LaMarche has run for Governor of Maine twice, and has been the Vice Presidential nominee for the United States Green Party. Her sense of duty to her country has driven her all the way across America, and her devotion to her children has always brought her back home to Maine.

Growing Up Little
An essay by Posey Gruener
Photos by Nayan Tara Kakshapati
Rick and Barbara Spiegel are little people. They are also the parents of a baby girl, and they’re bracing themselves for the day when they’ll have to tell her, “You’re different. Just like us.”

Preservation With Clapboard Gaps
An essay by Douglas W Milliken
Photos by Gabriel Caffrey
Scott Hatcher, self-proclaimed barn wright and owner of the Barn Wright, Inc., lets the barns tell him what they need. A barn wright must be proficient in rigging, excavation, stone masonry, and timber framing in order to realign, re-stabilize, and restore a barn. With these four trades, Scott and his crew can save any barn.
From Scratch: One Fifty-Ate Rising
An essay by Leah Bruns
Photos by Gabriel Caffrey
Allison Reid and Josh Potocki wanted to create a simple neighborhood bakeshop, baking and cooking from scratch. They have achieved this and more.

Swan’s Honey
An essay by Erin Post
Photos by Kelly Kilgallon
By returning to the lessons and the blueberry fields of his youth, Lincoln Sennet, beekeeper and owner of Swan’s Honey, has found success in a world that is hard on small business owners.

Sailmaker
An essay by Amanda Witherell
Photos by Michael Teuteberg
Nat Wilson is one of the premier sail makers in the country. Keeping his business small and personal is just as important to Nat as making his sails a kind of kinetic sculpture, as beautiful up close as they are from afar.

FROM THE ARCHIVE
An photo essay by Andres Gonzales

RADIO
One Huge Backyard
A radio piece by Samantha Broun
Photos by Tim Greenway

Sounds of Democracy
A radio piece by Elizabeth Chur
Photo by Cecilia Duchano

Bringing the Work into You
A radio piece by Megan Martin
Photo by Annie Reichert

What If?
A radio piece by Katie Freddoso
Photos by Kyle Glover

Front cover Annie Reichert. Inside front cover Gabriel Caffrey.
Back cover Hannah Fox. Inside back cover Elizabeth Massa.

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By Rebecca Stewart

Island Time

IT'S A QUIET morning on Eagle Island. A thick blanket of fog almost obscures the Hill House. Down below Eagle Light in Penobscot Bay, a dampened fog bell warns passing boats of the island's presence.

Inside Quinn House, Helene Quinn has just pulled a fresh batch of cranberry muffins from the oven. She offers one to her husband Bob, who declines. He already had his mid-morning snack on the lobster boat.

Terry and Avery Moore, the Quinns' hired mail boat captains, each take a muffin. Their young son, Eli, scoots his muffin around on a toy truck while the adults schedule the boat trip for the day. Eli slips down from his stool at the counter, leaving a trail of crumbs as he ventures out into the fog.

IT'S A QUIET evening on Eagle Island. Icy puddles reflect the Farm House in the final light of the sunset. A chill sets in and sends Sam, the Quinns' five-year-old grandson scampering inside from his afternoon on "Treasure Island." Sam finds his grandmother, Helene Quinn, inside stirring vegetables on the stove for dinner. She adds another log of wood to the stove before fixing Sam a warm cup of cocoa. Bob is already lighting the candles on the table for dinner.

Jaron Shaw; sternman aboard Bob Quinn's lobster boat, pauses for a moment as a Penobscot island emerges from the fog.
Even though he's only five years old, Sam Russo is already learning the ropes from his grandfather, Bob Quinn, aboard his fishing boat, the TM II.
Top: While the adults talk over tea, Sam Russo asks to be excused from the dinner table so he can go play with his trucks.
Bottom: A view of the Hill House through a frosted window in the entryway to the Quinns' Farm House.
Top: Bob Quinn lowers a crate full of lobsters from his morning haul into the water. Later in the day, the bait boat will come and pick up the lobsters to transport them to a mainland market.

Bottom: Bob Quinn measures a tarp that he intends to drape over the roof of the leaky boathouse to protect it from the winter elements.
Quinn House, the family's homestead for almost 200 years, during a late autumn sunset on Eagle Island.
Sam Rasso spends a quiet Sunday morning along the shore of the Orchard Beach, during a visit to his grandparents' house on Eagle Island.
Island Moon: Eli Moore on a foggy island morning.

After two years of teaching 8th grade in the Rio Grande Valley, Texas, Rebecca Stewart came to Salt to make photography more than just a hobby. After only one Maine winter, she migrated back south. Now in Washington, DC, Rebecca works in K-12 education reform, while continuing to collaborate with Salt grads in documentary endeavors. rstewart@philanthropyroundtable.org
By Kim Alexander

When Josh Got Sick

The day Josh got sick, I was with my friend Ashley... we went on her trampoline that is down her street a ways... and then her mom came down in her car and told me to call my mom... I don’t know why. I just knew something was wrong. So then I called my mom and she told me and I didn’t believe her. I thought she was saying the cat had a brain tumor and it was like, I wouldn’t let myself think that it was Josh.

Morgan Howe

Atop a hill, overlooking the small town of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, the Howe’s house sits nestled in between the trees. Inside, Morgan’s father, Brian, adds wood to the fire in an immense stone fireplace. The mantle is adorned with Josh Howe’s stuffed barracuda, a trophy fish from his trip to Florida with his dad months before he got sick. “It cost $800 to stuff that fish. Can you believe that?” says Brian.

On evenings and weekends, you can often find the Howes talking, resting, or fighting near the fireplace. Brian, his wife, Diane, and their two children, Josh, 16, and Morgan, 13, constantly jockey for the prime position right in front of the flames.
It was near the fireplace, in front of the living room table, that Morgan’s older brother, Josh, collapsed on June 17, 2004. He was home alone. “I got a hold of a phone that was on the table by where I fell and I called my father, my mother, my grandparents… anybody I could think of and they got progressively harder to dial. The last number I could think of was 911.” By the time Josh dialed 911, he was no longer speaking coherently. Instead a disjointed splattering of words spilled from his mouth. The operator traced his call and dispatched the ambulance to the Howes’ house.

That afternoon, Morgan’s brother, Josh, was diagnosed with a craniopharyngioma. The neurosurgeons removed a tumor the size of a plum which had been growing in his
brain since birth. Morgan’s older sister, took time off from her work in Boston and came to stay with Morgan while her parents slept at the hospital in Portland. During the months that followed, the entire town pitched in to help the Howes. Cards, flowers, and fundraisers filled the space and time for Josh and his parents. Josh remembers, “My younger sister, you know, for a long period of time didn’t get much attention because everyone was worried about me…she kinda got left out a little bit.”

When Josh finally came home from the hospital, weeks later, Morgan became a sister to a different brother. The brother who used to take her on whale watches and make dinner with her for their parents’ anniversary became a brother who needs a strict schedule of medications and two
years of neurorehabilitation. Due to the position and removal of his brain tumor, Morgan’s brother became prone to frequent emotional outbursts and meltdowns. Since the surgery, Morgan has witnessed her brother, Josh, throwing dishes at his father, screaming at his mother in public, and crying uncontrollably over the frustration of not being able to do things he used to do.

Since Josh got sick, Morgan has often been upset, isolated, and frustrated to the point that she provokes Josh in anger. She continues grieving the loss of the relationship she used to have with her brother. Morgan’s mom recognizes her struggle with the chaos Josh’s illness has created. “I think this is just part of her healing. . . she has a right to be angry. This turned her whole world upside-down but at the same time she has to be understanding that Josh is not going to be the worst person
she's ever going to meet in her life. I tell her after any kind of meltdown he has that you know, this is a part of life and it's making you a good strong person."

We have all heard stories of the tragedy and triumph of childhood chronic illness. Most residents of Boothbay Harbor, Maine, know the story of Josh Howe's tragic illness and his miraculous recovery. When Josh got sick however, it not only affected his parents and him, but it also affected his younger sister, Morgan. Within the stories of illness, the siblings of the ailing child are often ignored or painted with an angelic, self-sacrificing light. While these portrayals are valid, they only tell part of the story. They leave out Morgan's story. To enter the house of the Howes is to enter a space where grief, anger, and frustration mingle with appreciation, comfort, and love. For this family, all are necessary and all are inseparable.

Kim Alexander was born and raised in Gainesville, Florida. She graduated from Dartmouth College in 2001 and joined Teach for America before happily arriving at Salt. Immediately following her Salt semester, she worked as a photography teacher for the Youth Document Durham program at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University. She is currently living it up in Durham, NC, and studying nursing at Duke. kimalexand@gmail.com
By Hannah Fox

Through the Body

Karen Montanaro was born Karen Hurll in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, the eldest of three girls. She was raised in Western Massachusetts where, at the age of eight, she took her first ballet class. "I didn't take dance that seriously," says Karen, "I was just a dutiful kid — everything I did I did seriously. Then, when I was twelve, I remember being in a make-up class and the teacher put on very fast music and said 'okay, waltz turn.' I was really petrified and these older girls were flying across the floor... by the time I got to the other end of the room it was as if a light shone into the classroom, and I stood there and I still remember where everybody was standing and I heard in my head, 'I'm going to dance forever, I'm going to dance forever.'" Karen's eyes are very large when she describes things she is passionate about. Since her epiphany at twelve, she has performed and taught as a dancer and a mime, her curiosity and enthusiasm present wherever she goes.

Karen Montanaro's feet dancing in her studio. Casco, Maine
Left: Karen Montanaro dancing freestyle in her studio.
Top: Karen Montanaro warming up for a freestyle dance. This is part of the sun salutation.
Bottom: Karen Montanaro rehearsing a dance in her studio.
Top: Karen Montanaro rolling across the floor of her studio as part of her warm up.
Bottom: Karen Montanaro in her basement watching a robin through the window.
Right: Karen Montanaro stretching on the barre in her studio.
Karen Montanaro with her mother, Maggie Hurli, at the Comfort Inn.
Karen Montanaro in her living room, on the phone to a friend.

Hannah Fox was raised in Maine and currently resides in Maine. foxh2@yahoo.com
By Christine Shanahan

To Love and to Care For

It was a long time ago when Doris and George Castonia first met on a blind date. Their wedding was small with only a few witnesses present. Thirteen years ago, to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary, they renewed their vows at a community church service at Sacred Heart in Portland. Today, 87 year-old Doris and 92 year-old George have now marked 63 years of marriage. Doris and George live independently in their own home in Portland, Maine. They do the best they can to care for one another, but life isn’t getting easier. It is up to their three grown children and their respective spouses to be sure that they are taken care of. This often means sacrifice in their own lives, but that doesn’t stop them.
Doris and George Cassonia having supper in their home. Portland, Maine.
Top: George Castonia in the kitchen with his great-granddaughter, Faith Cook, on Easter Sunday.
Bottom: Doris and George Castonia in the kitchen of their home.
Top: George Castonia rising from his chair in the waiting room of his doctor’s office, with his daughter Cathy Cook reaching to assist him, as lab worker Erka Warren looks on.

Bottom: Dr. Mark Parker discusses George Castonia’s medical condition with him and his daughter, Cathy Cook.

Right: Doris Castonia sitting on the couch in her living room with her great-grandson Tyler Cook on Easter Sunday.
Left: George Castonia visiting his wife Doris in the hospital as she recovers from a fall.

Below: Doris Castonia under the hairdryer in her home, after having her hair washed and curled by her daughter, Cathy Cook.

Doris Castonia exercising during her dialysis treatment.

Christine Shanahan has an undergraduate degree in nursing from St. Joseph's College and a graduate degree in public health from the University of New Hampshire. Studying documentary photography at the Salt Institute allowed Chris to move towards her goal of combining documentary photography, nursing and public health. Currently Chris is photographing the friendship between two nuns, ages 96 and 75, a friendship that has spanned 50 years. Chris still visits regularly with Doris. shanahance@yahoo.com
Cathy Cook curling her mother Doris Castoria's hair in Doris' kitchen.
By Annie Reichert

In Each Other’s Corner

Jay Jack and Amanda Buckner practice tough love. On any given day they routinely kick, punch, and try to strangle each other. As the co-owners of the Academy of Mixed Martial Arts in Portland, Maine as well as each other’s coaches in their pro-fighting careers, Jay and Mandy’s time is devoted to the art of combat and to each other.

Mandy Buckner chokes husband Jay Jack in grappling, or Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, practice at the gym they co-own, the Academy of Mixed Martial Arts, in Portland, ME.
Like celebrities, Jay and Mandy have a larger-than-life presence. While not particularly tall, both have a tangible physical power that appeals to students and intimidates opponents. Both have developed a cold game face towards this end as well. Jay's scary visage is easily broken—a natural storyteller and easy to laugh, he loves to be the center of attention. Mandy is more reserved, a bit shy, preferring to let people come to her.

Through their contrasting yet complimentary personalities, they've attracted a diverse and loyal student body. Members of the Academy tend to be regulars. Jay and Mandy set the example of being friends before sparring partners and thus the gym has a strong feeling of community.

Despite being close to many Academy members, Jay and Mandy lead a secluded private life in their house in Poland, Maine, thirty miles from the Academy. They are strict vegetarians and politically far left, verging on radical. Jay has followed a hardcore straightedge lifestyle—adamantly drug-free—for years. They try to keep their personal philosophy separate from their fitness philosophy so their home is a bit of an oasis. They rarely have guests over. Their house is a small, cozy cabin with a training room in case they get snowed in, a darkroom where Mandy pursues a photography hobby in the summertime, and four dogs that they treat as children.

Beneath tattooed and muscular exteriors, Jay and Mandy are warm, loving people dedicated to each other, in the ring, the gym, and at home.
Jay Jack leaning on wife Mandy's shoulder on the porch at their home in Poland, Maine.
Top: Jay Jack and Mandy Buckner, married, laying down to take a break from household chores and packing for a fight in Iowa. In bed with their dog Simon in Poland, Maine.

Bottom: Jay Jack carrying a patron out of the Oasis, a club and bar in the Old Port of Portland, where Jay is the head bouncer.
Jay Jack checking on the new sign in the alley outside the gym he co-owns, the Academy of Mixed Martial Arts.
Annie Reichert swears she is from Seattle, New Jersey, and Ohio though she currently resides in New York City. She enjoys photography, eavesdropping, gold paint, fake blood, avocados, beekeepers, good storytellers, and building things – even though she's not very skilled at it. Professionally she keeps busy but rarely profits from it: her pictures have been published in USA Today and US News and World Report for free! Annie tries to take at least one picture every day and advises that you do the same. endannie@gmail.com
By Elizabeth Massa

M.O.M.

Martha. Olivia. Mary.
The Rynberg-Going Family

Olivia Rynberg-Going lives in a green house on top of Munjoy Hill in Portland. Her Mama, Mary Going, and her Momo, Martha Rynberg let her pick out the color for the house when they painted it last summer. The Rynberg-Going house is warm and thoughtful and full of colors. The books they read, the music they listen to, the little television and movies they watch are all chosen carefully.

It has already been a big year for Olivia. She turned five. Mary sold her business so that she could have a year at home with Olivia. And Martha started working outside their home. The three of them traveled to Florida this spring to meet Olivia's birth mother, and on top of that, this summer, Olivia, Martha, Mary, their cats, and Gracie the dog, will pack up the house and move to Berkeley, California.

This close and nurturing family has loved Maine, and they say that they will miss it, but they have decided to move to the Bay Area for the betterment of their family. There are many reasons for their move to California: racial diversity, more families like their own, and in California, their family as a unit can be protected under the law.

Martha Rynberg and Olivia Rynberg-Going play airplane.
Top: Mary Going and Olivia Rynberg Going ride their bike on the Eastern Promenade.
Right: Martha Rynberg talks with Olivia Rynberg Going about her hair.
Bottom: Martha Rynberg, Olivia Rynberg-Going, and Mary Going talk about the day to come.
Olivia Rynberg-Goings sits on her swing and holds the plant she grew at school after reading Jack and the Beanstalk.
Top: Martha Rynberg and her daughter, Olivia Rynberg-Goaing, have an early morning talk as Mary Goaing enters the room.
Bottom: Mary Goaing and Olivia Rynberg-Goaing discuss how to dye the eggs.
Mary Going gets a hug from Olivia Rynberg-Going while they shop at Wild Oats.
Elizabeth Massa is a freelance photographer and recently traveled to Spain and Morocco to photograph. Before coming to Salt, she studied photography and book arts at the Herron School of Art and Design and Scuola Interazionale di Grafica, Venezia. She is a graduate of Smith College.
elizabethmassa@mac.com
Caitie Whalen

Salt: What are you up to?

CW: I'm a senior anthropology concentrator here at Brown University. For the past three years, I've worked with Folk Arts Rajasthan, a US based nonprofit that exists in conjunction with Lok Kala Sagar Sansthan, an Indian based NGO to promote their mutual missions of empowerment for the lower caste Merasi (Musician) community of Jaisalmer District, Rajasthan, India. The Merasi are the creators and maintainers of a 37 generation-old repository of traditional folk music. With the onset of modernization, audiences' tastes are shifting away from the traditional and more towards popular, Western, or Bollywood music. The performance of traditional Rajasthani folk music, while never a secure means of income, is no longer a viable tool for economic sustainability. Consequently, as older Merasi die, they are taking with them songs and musical legacies that younger generations do not know because there is no economic impetus.

In response to an articulated community desire, I went to Rajasthan this past summer to begin work on the creation of the first archive of Merasi music. For two months, I traveled from desert village to desert village, recording music and documenting how these songs shape the Merasis' understanding of self and social identity. I have edited and organized the material in the foundation of an archive that the Merasi intend to use as a teaching tool for the younger generation. I returned for three weeks this past winter to continue work on the archive.

During this past trip, I was particularly moved by the Merasis' rising call for education. They are an illiterate community, denied from engagement with the social, political, and economic conversations that shape their lives. The Merasi have identified education as the primary means of improvement for themselves and the longevity of their community and music. I am presently in the process of designing a multi-phased micro school program that I will implement this summer as the first stage of building an art and academic school for the Merasi.

Kyle Glover

Salt: What are you up to?

KG: Right now I'm really into images that are not strictly the Salt style of documentary. There's some really cool stuff going on in advertising with digital post-production of images; turned into a storytelling device, those more controlled images become more subjective but also a powerful way of telling a story. One photographer I recently checked out is Erika Larsen. Very neat sense of space, clean composition, moody images. I also think that The Blue Room (www.blueroomproject.org) was doing something unique with its project to bring documentary imagery to the everyday consumer. Finally, it can be really cool to browse the photo sites popping up all over the web, like myartspace.com. The democratization of the image (along with video, etc.) is definitely one of the most significant changes of our time and will continue to surprise us with its effects, I think.

Salt: What is your most enduring and striking experience from your time at Salt?

KG: It was definitely working with a Sudanese family in Portland. I felt really challenged to drop some of my own expectations and presumptions and also felt that I was telling an important story. My experience at Salt was also really striking in the fact that I keep in touch with more people from Salt than from any other thing I've ever done and am constantly amazed by what my former classmates are doing. The skills I learned at Salt and the people I've met are still very relevant for me six years later.

Salt: What's your 5 year plan looking like these days?

KG: I'm really excited and occupied by my studies. Particularly, I'm working as a court mediator in Boston, trying to expand the legal curriculum to include more interpersonal skills training for lawyers, and planning to work in conflict resolution and legal services this summer. Assuming I continue to like what I'm doing, in the long term I would really like to work as a negotiator and mediator to help resolve individual and group conflict around the world. Salt's documentary training has been valuable in the interviewing, documentation, and international work I've done so far in pursuit of those goals.

Kat Baulu

Kat Baulu grew up in Barbados, on her parents' monkey and wildlife reserve. She moved to Canada to become a veterinarian, but after fainting at the first sight of blood, she ended up going to film school at Concordia University instead. Her first documentary, Havana Kids, about young people and politics in Cuba, was nominated for Best Short at the Hot Docs festival in 1996. The Rogers' Cable, a short film she produced through the National Screen Institute's Drama Prize program, was chosen for Cannes, at The Critic's Week in 1998 and was broadcast by the Sundance Channel and CBC. Kat went on to write and direct a biography in French about her grandfather, a radio announcer dubbed "The Golden Voice of Montreal." It was nominated for Best Short at the Gémaux for Best Television Biography in 2000. Reefs: Rainforests of The Ocean and Nomads Of The Ocean are...
example, fostering out the pup to another sea lion mother who didn't have extremely wrong with our sea lion pup. His mother went off feeding, which is quite normal, except that she never came back. Our pup was stranded for two whole years had ever done that type of observation. We were able that you can call on later. In the case of this sea lion film, we decided to film the birth and life of a rare New Zealand sea lion pup. It required about 16 hours a day of observation, and that can be pretty darn brutal unless you've been taught how to do great field notes, and so I kept a journal and then I taught my filmmaking partner, Alastair Jamieson, how to do this journal. We wrote these half hour increments of exactly what our pup was doing, pretty well every half hour from the time it was born... Nobody, not even the sea lion researchers who have been studying sea lions for upwards of twelve years had ever done that type of close observation. So we were able to contribute some interesting information to their general knowledge about these animals, but particularly about this pup.... Unfortunately things were extremely wrong with our sea lion pup. His mother went off fishing, which is quite normal, except that she never came back. So our pup was stranded on the beach and basically dying of thirst until the local department of conservation intervened and then tried a whole bunch of crazy things, like, for example, fostering the pup to another sea lion mother who didn't have a pup but who was lactating... field notes are extraordinarily important and helpful and they saved us, because we made huge decisions and contributed to exactly what the next step should be for that pup, in terms of medical care and intervention and so on. We knew the last time the pup had had a drink from its mother because we had written it down. Now at the time that we were doing these field notes, we certainly didn't think that they were gonna be critical like they were, but they were!

Salt: Who are you listening to/looking at/reading right now, in the documentary world?

KB: Hard to find time to read when your film premiere is in 24 days but your film is not finished! But, next to my bed I have two nonfictions and a novel. David Quammen's *Monster Of God* is about lions, and how people relate to animals as man-eaters. Also Amy Sutherland's *Kicked, Bitten and Scratched* about exotic animal trainers. The novel is Austin Clarke's *The Meeting Point*, a story about Barbadian live-in domestics who work for families in Toronto in the 1950s. Clarke is the most celebrated author from Barbados, the island where I grew up, and I am a big fan. Rangi Kippa is a hot New Zealand sculptor, he promotes some powerful ideas. For example, he cannot separate art and politics; for him they are the same. My favorite online comic is *Young Adonis’ Bacon Mangod*, about a hilarious guy who can't ask girls out on dates because he is so shy. And I am listening to Che-Fu, the prince of New Zealand hip hop.

Salt: Any advice for fellow documentarians, besides taking great notes?

KB: I have made so many mistakes! I have a list as long as my arm of things to share! One problem I struggle with is that I generate lots of ideas. But time is limited, so it pays to be choosy. I often ask myself two things. One is, why is this story important to be told? The second is, why am I the best person to tell this story? What is it about my background, my process, and my skills that makes me the only person to tell this story? Life is short. Select and execute every project like it's your last one.

Salt: What's your 5 year plan looking like these days?

KB: My ultimate goal is to practice narrative storytelling, preferably in writing and film. Ideally I'd like to do that in as many exotic places as possible. I'd like to finish my masters in Natural History Filmmaking and Communication, which would permit me to write my first book. I'm interested in putting cameras into the hands of people who need them to raise social issues, and helping tell those stories. That's about as far ahead as I can look today, because the rough cut of my film is due in 3 days and I am behind schedule!

David Y. Lee
Photographer David Y. Lee attended Salt in the spring of 2000. Last year, he worked with two colleagues on a project called *Yearbook 2006*, documenting the interrupted senior year of Benjamin Franklin High School in a post-Katrina New Orleans. The multimedia project – including student interviews – is available for free online at www.yo6.org.
We asked him to tell us about himself, and what he was up to:

Salt: What are you up to?
DL: I am a freelance photojournalist based out of Washington DC, I am working primarily for Time and Newsweek, covering the White House, Capitol Hill and other national news.

Currently, I am beginning to work on a project about a Washington DC charter school dedicated to teenage mothers and their children. Their first academic year is this upcoming fall 2007 and the administrative staff and teachers are busy finalizing details from securing the school and resident building sites to hiring additional personnel to the designing and preparing the curriculum.

I am also helping my friend Jody Sugrue with move30 (www.move30.com), an online community for storytellers and story makers—to share, to discuss, and to network.

I also have lots of other projects stuck in pre-production—one includes working with Salt alumni Emily Renard on a multimedia project called IF I WAS PRESIDENT, asking ordinary Americans “What would you do if you were President and why?”

Salt: Who are you listening to/looking at/reading right now, in the documentary world?
DL: The NPR program ‘This I Believe’ inspires me—it is such a simple concept and I’m always reminded that everyone has an amazing story to tell.

Salt: What is your most enduring and striking experience from your time at Salt?
DL: I collaborated on a project with then-24-year-old Adam Murphy of Wells, Maine, and a former fine arts student from California. He had overdosed on cocaine, which left him paralyzed and unable to speak.

I remember visiting with Adam at the Sanford nursing home he resided in. I remember him pointing down to a drawer in his dresser—inside was a videocassette. I remember putting it into his VCR next to his bed. On the television was Adam—before his stroke—hanging out with his friends, laughing, talking, doing these amazing stunt tricks on his bike. Outside his room, Adam was pacing up and down the hallway in his electric wheelchair, every now and then passing by the door.

I can never tell that story right, I’ve tried a few times before. It had a profound impact on me—Adam was sharing with me.

Salt: What’s your 5 year plan looking like these days?
DL: Honestly, I have no idea because new opportunities or ideas seem to present themselves to me every day.

Salt: Do you have any advice to offer fellow documentarians?
DL: Find your sugar mama (or sugar daddy). Or win the lottery.

Anne Glickman

Salt: What are you up to?
AG: Well, right now I am working in Chicago as a freelancer. I landed this summer job with the Illinois Humanities Council producing an 8 part documentary series about their most interesting grantees and programs. It has been a terrific experience because their work is super progressive and the stories range from hilarious (vintage baseball team) to extremely innovative (free college level courses taught entirely in Spanish). So I feel very lucky.

The main challenge is figuring out how to live a balanced life with so little structure. I think a lot of us freelancers feel that bind. And it can be a bit tough at times.

Salt: Who are you listening to/looking at/reading right now, in the documentary world?
AG: I am not listening to all that much lately. But I have been reading up a storm. What is the What by Dave Eggers was terrific, although HUGELY depressing. Truth & Beauty by Ann Patchett, I ripped through it and enjoyed it a lot. I just started reading David Lynch’s book on consciousness and creativity that is fanning some flames. Also, also there was Carl Bernstein’s Hillary Clinton biography. I really became obsessed with that one and not because I am a huge Hillary fan. I just knew very little about everyday life in the White House and he really takes you inside it all. One more because it is a documentary film and I LOVED it... Touch the Sound about this world-renowned deaf, female percussionist. It is brilliant.

Salt: What is your most enduring and striking experience from your time at Salt?
AG: I am going to get a little abstract here. But what I think is the most enduring experience was getting through all the doubt, worry, and sleepless nights and actually finishing the work. The whole experience was just so intense. I distinctly remember thinking very reasonably that I could not continue. I was too worried, too tired and not skilled enough. And then I kept going and got it done... somehow. So I think back to the fortitude I experienced.

Also, I just remember laughing a tremendous amount and thinking that I must have done something very good to have the fortunate experience of working with Rob and all of Radio Pie. It was really quite a blessing.

Salt: What’s your 5 year plan looking like these days?
AG: I hope to have created a lot more work I am proud of. And I want to take more pleasure out of the process of creating the work itself (even though that sounds lame, it is true). And I wouldn’t shrug off meeting a partner who was artistically driven, hilarious, single, had some disposable income and his own set of clean sheets. There is also the desire to go to better parties with creative, slightly irreverent but spiritually tuned in kinds of people. I would also like to have a child by that time and name it Rob (even if it is a girl child).

Salt: We know that you are involved in a talent contest at Public Radio, looking for the next great talent, and that you’ve gotten quite far. Can you tell us about the contest?
AG: Well, it has been a really peculiar experience. It feels like this part of your life that is totally surreal and somewhat disconnected to your everyday reality. I guess that is because this contest is almost exclusively being played out on the Web.

I must say that it has been really intense. For whatever reason, and there are probably lots of them, this experience awakened a lot of personal fears. I think it is really difficult to put yourself out there. Most of us spend our time producing pieces about other people and events. And although our voices are in them, they are not necessarily about us expressly. And this contest is about presenting myself as myself. So it just shook loose all these fears about really putting myself out there—fears of criticism, public failure, gossip, just plain sucking, success and so on.

So mostly it has been shocking, arduous and a HUGE learning experience.
What is Salt?

A school, a philosophy, and an intensive program. Salt enhances your senses.

A base from which you can explore the world around you.

Salt gives you the confidence to ask people, "what is your story?"
Heart Full of Spirit, Shoulder Full of Steel

"Well, boys and girls, if you're gonna shake it, you may as well shake it for Jesus!"

Written by Bridget Huber
Photographs by Amber Knowles
It's Friday night at the Jesus Party kids' church in Lewiston, Maine. Urban missionary Reverend Doug Taylor, 36, stands before 60 kids and slips a sheet of song lyrics onto the overhead projector. Stocky in a black t-shirt, jeans, and spotless black Reeboks, he looks like an off-duty security guard. The beat picks up steam and he starts to clap to the music, throwing his arms open wide, then bringing them together in front of his belt buckle.

*God's not dead, no, he is alive!* Brother Doug's favorite song comes on and soon the whole room is bouncing and smelling like a gym class. The kids' voices drown out a cassette of a wobbly voiced choir. Doug bellows, "Now let's sing it so all the angels in heaven can hear it!"

In the back of the room Doug's wife, Sisiter Sonia, swings her hips in a long denim skirt. Doug wags his shoulders and turns his broad face toward the ceiling. The beat rattles the shelves on the wall. One shelf holds boxes of crayons and safety scissors, the others are devoted to candy—big plastic bags of pink cotton candy and squat vases of caramels. Dishes of bright hard sweets glitter in a disco ball's roaming light.

The volume goes up a notch. Doug's loose and really dancing. The kids are too. Some twist and skip in place. Two girls in the back row hold hands and do a chubby-shouldered shimmy. Doug smiles, showing even, milk white teeth, "Now let's sing it so loud that all the devils in hell can hear it!" The kids go wild, pumping their fists in the air, singing at breakneck speed, stamping their feet to the careening beat, yelling, their voices hoarse and breaking.

The music ends and a flurry of chair-scraping follows as the kids take their seats. A little pinching and hair pulling are quickly quashed by a few stern looks from Sister Sonia. Brother Doug, flushed, raises the microphone to his lips. "Now, boys and girls, I'm gonna invite Sister Lisa up and she's gonna explain to you what this big, five pound bag of gummy bears means to you tonight."

Lisa, a former Jesus Party Kid who the Taylors now send to Bible college in Portland picks her way through the triangle of chairs. She's pale with stringy hair and a slouch but grabs the mic with all the gusto of a game show host, "Okay, how many of you like gummy bears?" Every hand in the room rockets up. "How many of you want to win these gummy bears?" The hands are still up, straining out of their sockets toward the ceiling. Lisa explains that the bag will go to the best worshipper of the night—the kid who stays quietest during the Bible lesson and praises Jesus loudest when the moment is right. Doug takes the microphone again and thanks Sister Lisa for her gift, reminding the kids that "Gummy bears have to be one of the most awesome snacks, and you can go home with five pounds of your own gummy bears tonight!"

Outside, black fibers of cloud stretch across an inky sky. Teenage girls gossip in a wedge of porch light on a neighboring stoop. A young man wearing headphones and pushing a baby carriage appraises the girls without breaking his slow, sneakered strut.

The Taylors' house stands dwarfed amidst tenements and looks like a child's drawing of home with its steeply pitched roof and a green paint job. The top two stories of the house are dark, but light and music pour from the first floor. On the front door is a round sticker with a clenched fist in the middle. Block letters around its edge read, "In your face with the Gospel."

The Taylors and their four children—Elizabeth, Danielle, Japheth, and Kaitlyn—are Pentecostal. With an estimated 500 million members worldwide, Pentecostalism is the fastest growing Christian sect in the world.

Inside, the Jesus Party marches on. After a Bible story, popcorn, soda, and an episode of *Bible Man: The Mighty Avenger of Truth*, the kids are in a state of wired exhaustion. Doug and Lisa confer, then call a skinny blond seven year-old up to the front. She smiles shyly when Doug announces that she's won the Gummy bears, but the other kids aren't paying attention. They squirm and tussle and kick the backs of the chairs. Sonia starts to gather the flock, leading them out to the Holy Roller Express, The Jesus Party's fifteen-passenger van that's parked at the curb. Batch by batch, she'll shuttle the children the few blocks to their homes.
THE TREE STREETS, as Lewiston’s downtown neighborhood is called, are framed by Ash, Bartlett, and Pine Streets. The Taylors live between Birch and Maple, on Bates Street, named for the owners of the now-shuttered Bates Textile Mill. Until the 1960’s, Lewiston was the center of Maine’s textile industry and the Bates Mill was the state’s biggest cloth factory and largest employer. It was among the last of the textile mills to close, holding on until 2003 manufacturing bedspreads. By then, most all of the other mills in this once-prosperous city had also closed, leaving behind a ghost corridor of brick and boarded windows that runs alongside the Androscoggin River, a few blocks north of the Taylors’ home.

The mills and the river divide Lewiston from its sister city, Auburn, where, in the manufacturing heyday, mill bosses built frilly Victorian homes. The workers, first Irish, then French-Canadian immigrants, called the wooden tenements of the tree streets of Lewiston home. Economic and cultural divides between the two cities persist to this day, with Lewiston—sometimes called “The Armpit of Maine”—cast, distinctly, as the wrong side of the tracks.

ON A DAZZLING Maine September day, Brother Doug stands smiling in the middle of a small knot of protesters outside of St. Peter’s Catholic Church wearing a brown suit and a straw hat. He holds the Bible in one hand; the other cradles his wedding portrait, taken with Sonia sixteen years ago. Sunlight filters through the hat’s open weave and falls in bright points across his nose.

This is the latest battleground in a war that’s stretched almost a decade. In November, Maine voters will decide whether or not to repeal a law that protects all Mainers from discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation. Brother Doug and other religious conservatives, the driving force behind the effort to repeal the civil rights law, argue that the current law opens the door to same-sex marriage. The target of today’s protest is a priest at St. Peter’s who recently spoke out in favor of keeping the law on the books.

Paul Madore, head of The Maine Grassroots Coalition, the political arm of the Christian Civic League of Maine, shepherds the eight or so demonstrators, arranging them and their signs for the benefit of a lone local news camera. One protester
Doug and Sonia balked but she insisted saying that there was no time to buy booze, he mugged a man. The judge sentenced him to ten years in prison. Doug's mother realized what her son was about to lose and "kicked in as Mom." She begged the couple to try church.

Doug and Sonia say that they turned themselves over to God. "We finally realized, you know, we're losers," says Sonia, "We can't do anything on our own that is good, and the reason that our lives are so screwed up is that we're screwed up and the only way out of this is by putting our trust and faith in Jesus Christ." Soon afterward, "a deliverance of power" came over Doug and he found the strength to quit drinking. The couple reconciled.

THE TAYLOR GIRLS sometimes go to Sunday night services at the church where Doug and Sonia were saved, though the family now attends church in Portland. Danielle, 14, and Elizabeth, 16, enter the cavernous sanctuary and sit in the second pew from the front. Like the rest of the female congregants, the Taylor girls wear long skirts and high-necked blouses. Both girls have their mother's pearly skin. Like the other women, their hair is coiled into glossy buns. Their faces are scrubbed and shining.

The church is little over half-full, but the sound inside is deafening. A band—complete with a drum set and organ—plays in front as the congregation sings along to lyrics projected onto the wall. During the second song, a middle-aged woman with the no-nonsense look of a schoolteacher begins to improvise in a soprano warble, riffing off the music. Then she starts to mutter a string of incoherent syllables with a breathy, shrieked refrain of "Thank you Jesus! Oh praise Jesus! Thank you Jesus!" She continues for several songs, then steps into the aisle and begins to lurch to the music's beat. She raises her hands above her head and turns her palms toward the altar.

Across the aisle, a stocky young man is getting animated. Like a frat brother at a keg party, he yells, "JEEEEEEEEEEEESUS!" He stomps his feet on the floor like a sports fan in the bleachers. When he agrees with the preacher he shouts, "C'mon now! You know it! C'mon now, it's true!" in a rumbling southern growl.

A FEW MONTHS after joining the church, Doug felt called to be a missionary. He wanted to help others so they wouldn't go down the same path that he and Sonia had. He imagined reaching out to addicts and alcoholics. Doug and Sonia sold their pretty house in the suburbs and moved back into the heart of the Tree Streets, or "Sodom and Gomorrah," as Doug calls the neighborhood. They rented an apartment next to a crack house and taped big signs in their windows advertising Bible study for adults. They also put up one small
flier advertising church services for kids on Friday nights, called Jesus Parties. Few adults knocked at their door, but fifty kids showed up at the first Jesus Party. Doug and Sonia took the hint: God wanted them to work with children.

For ten years now, the Taylors have hosted a Jesus Party service every Friday night. On Saturday mornings Sister Sonia runs Health and Hygiene Class. Doug visits the homes of The Jesus Party kids most weekday afternoons. And, in the fall and spring, the whole family takes part in After School Evangelism.

When Doug pulls into a vacant lot just off the grounds of Longley Elementary School, Sonia and Danielle are already there, posted on opposite sides of the sidewalk with bags of lollipops. Sonia’s auburn ponytail brushes her waist. To Pentecostals, a woman’s hair is her glory, and to cut it offends God. Sonia greets most of the children by name as they bounce up the hill toward the Tree Streets wearing oversized neon backpacks. With a sweet, square-toothed smile and a honeyed voice, Danielle asks each child if they want some candy.

Nearly everyone, including many parents and most of the Muslim kids, take a lollipop, though a few children aren’t allowed to take candy from the Taylors. Japheth Taylor, 11, runs up the hill, slight and blond. At eleven, his features are shifting—some days he looks like Doug, others like Sonia. Today, his face is his father’s, though it’s narrower with delicate, whittled features. He grabs a lollipop and runs over to where Doug stands shouting into the P.A. like a Barker, inviting kids to the Jesus Party.

Kaitlyn Taylor, 5, climbs the hill with the last and tiniest wave of kids. She walks straight to Sonia and pushes her face into her skirt, “Momma!” she cries happily, her voice muffled by denim. She raises her face and looks at her mother with almond-shaped amber eyes. Fine gold hairs have escaped her braids and stand in a corona around her face “Can I have one?”

Brother Doug will tell you that candy is a blessing and that he distributes the sweets as a gesture of unconditional love, not a bribe. If he were to invite an adult for Bible study, he says, he’d offer them a cup of coffee. If he were making friends with a couple, he and Sonia might invite them over for supper.

A woman once asked Sonia if she was devoted or just plain crazy. Sonia laughs now but says that at the time she was insulted. “But, you know, come to think of it, I guess that it’s God just saying, ‘Well, you do it.’” Unlike many of their neighbors who are trapped in the Tree Streets by poverty and addiction, the Taylors live there by choice. Sonia says they are there to show others that it is possible to live for Jesus, even in the inner city. “You can live a victorious life... you don’t have to fall into the temptations, you don’t have to fall into the bad habits, you don’t have to fall into the addictions. It’s not where you live, it’s how you live.”

Because the Jesus Party isn’t backed by any church, money is a constant struggle. Sonia says that she still worries about finances all the time, though in the ten years of The Jesus Party’s existence, God has always pulled through with a check in the mailbox or an unexpected donation. Sonia says God tests her and is trying to teach her to stop worrying and just trust Him. The Jesus Party’s in the midst of a lean time right now, she explains. The TV broke and the van needs work. But Sonia’s trying to remember that God will provide, “Right now, right now is one of those times where I’m saying ‘I’m gonna pass, I’m gonna pass this test.’”

BROTHER DOUG BET the neighborhood kids fifty bucks that they’d never see him without a Bible, so he grabs The Good Book and a bucket of bubble gum and heads out for a round of home visits. Doug’s been called a gutter preacher because he ministers to even the most down and out. He says his mission is to bring Jesus to anyone who comes into his circle, rich or poor, child or adult. “What we have,” says Doug, “is too good to keep behind stained glass windows.”

Doug stops first to visit the mother of two grade schoolers, Jesus Party regulars. The front door of their building is unlocked and opens onto a dark landing. There’s no bulb in the light socket, the rug is worn through and apartment numbers are scrawled on the doorframes in magic marker. Doug knocks on a door, then takes a step back. A shout comes from the other side. A moment later the door opens a crack. A blond woman in her twenties peeks out, then, recognizing Doug, steps into the
hall, quickly closing the door behind her. Her eyes are sharp blue, and black roots sprout from her scalp. She and Doug chat about their kids and in a minute her boyfriend appears, holding their baby daughter, Cheyenne, in his arms. The woman takes Cheyenne, her sixth child, who gums on her freckly shoulder then lifts her face in a drooly, goofy smile.

The man points to Doug's bicep where tattoos peek from his t-shirt sleeve and says, “I see you ain't always been doin' this.” Doug pulls up his t-shirt sleeve, revealing a crude heart inked on his bicep. The colors have faded and bled a little, but “Sonia” is still legible, spelled out in curly script. Beneath her name is a dark patch where an ex-girlfriend's name was blacked out. There are hearts that say “Elizabeth” and “Danielle” as well. “Japheth and Kaitlyn never made it on, because I changed before they were born,” says Doug.

The man says that he doesn't really think there's anything too wrong with tattoos. Doug tells him that there are a million things wrong with them and he'll be happy to tell him all about it when there's time. Leaning toward him, Doug says that there used to be lots of freak shows in the country but that now only three are left. “Do you know why?” he asks, a smile starting on his lips. “Because today you only have to go to the mall to see all the freaks
you could want!"

Doug asks the couple if they'd like to join him for Bible study someday. The couple is silent for a minute. Finally, the man says that he's a Pentecostal, but that she isn't. "See, she don't believe in talkin' in tongues," he explains. Doug tells her that speaking in tongues is a manifestation of God, a spiritual gift that the Holy Spirit gives when someone's turned their life over to Jesus Christ. "But, see, that's why we need to study The Word. It's all right here!" he says, rapping his Bible with a fist. "I don't advocate that you trust in me—I'm just a man, don't put your faith in me!"

Doug asks if they have a Bible. They don't. He says that he'll bring them one next week. "What color do you want?" he asks, "Green or blue?" They choose blue.

On the sidewalk, a four-foot tall tomboy stands over a smaller boy, her fist cocked inches from his face. With her pointed chin and wispy hair she is a bad pixie in a fairyland of buckled pavement and broken trash bags. When she sees Doug she drops her arm and shoves the boy aside, "Hey Church Guy, can I have some candy?"

Doug gives her some gum, then crosses the street toward a five-story apartment building. It's dinnertime; the air smells of frying chicken and spaghetti sauce. A man wearing a leather Dale Earnhart jacket and pressed jeans jogs down the unpainted stairs. Doug calls, "How ya doin'? What's the good word?" They shake hands. The man, Joe*, smiles briefly, revealing a square gap where his front teeth should be. Then his face gets serious. "Hey can I talk to you a second about Howie? Has he said anything to you about what's going on?"

Joe's thirteen-year-old stepson is one of the oldest Jesus Party Boys. Lanky with shaggy dark hair and an easy grin, Howie's effortless cool sets him apart from the older kids who come to Jesus Parties, but he comes early on Friday nights sing and dance to all the songs then stay afterward to put away chairs and flirt with the Taylor sisters.

Doug clasps his red-knuckled hands under his belly and rocks back on his heels, listening. Joe tells him that Howie's oldest sister, who's been in foster care for years, was placed with a foster father who molested her. She told the state what was going on, but they didn't press charges, just moved her in with another family. There, she molested her foster brother multiple times. Now a registered sex offender, she's not allowed to have contact with anyone under eighteen.

"That means Howie can't see her for five years.... It's just crushing him." Both men stare at the same spot on the packed dirt yard. "So, you know... if you get a chance, ask him if there's anything he wants to share, okay?" Doug, silent a minute, looks up at the suspended maze of fire escapes on the side of the building, then meets Joe's eyes. He tells him how much he likes having Howie around. "When boys get to his age, they usually ditch on me—too cool, you know? They want to be out on the street. But I gave him a position—he's a worker now—he knows we can't make things happen without him."

Doug says he'll take Howie out for an ice cream after Health and Hygiene class on Saturday to give them time to talk about things. "Yeah, that would really mean a lot to him," says Joe, "I mean, he's got a counselor, sure... but that guy gets paid to listen, know what I mean?" Doug laughs and says, "Ain't nobody payin' me to do this!"

DOUG WORKS the graveyard shift as a janitor at Friendly's Restaurant from 11-7 each night and Sonia works as a receptionist for a frozen pizza factory. It's tough to raise four kids, pay the mortgage, and make car payments on their combined income. Lately the family has had a lot of extra expenses: school pictures, drum lessons for Japheth, piano for Danielle. Sonia needs work done on her teeth, Liz's birthday is coming up, and then the holidays.

"The Jesus Party kids don't pay tithes, there's no offering. Their parents are on welfare. So I have to work," explains Doug. Supporters sometimes donate food, money, and redeemable bottles to the Jesus Party, but it's the Taylors who finance the Jesus Party. One Friday night's party alone can cost $300 with snacks, drinks, prizes, and transportation.

"When you're working a job with no hope of advancement and you aren't up for a raise, what do you do?" Doug asks. He knows the answer well: get a second job, this time at a water bottling plant. This isn't the first time Doug's had to pile on hours—he worked in a nursing home kitchen for years holding down both a part time and a full time position there, averaging over seventy hours a week. But his job at the water bottling plant is altogether new—and physically exhausting. All day he hefts crates and large jugs of bottled water. Now Doug works at Friendly's, then goes directly to the factory where he works until 2pm. He tries to do home visits after work, but is often too exhausted.

Doug's had problems with the owner of the water factory, too. The plant supervisor interviewed Doug for the job and offered him the position on the spot. But as Doug started to pull out of the parking lot, a man came running out of the factory, flagging him down. It was the owner of the plant. "I know you Doug Taylor!" he said. Furious that the supervisor had hired him, he warned Doug that if he proselytized, or even spoke about his religion he would lose his job.

Doug assured him that he was there "to labor for a wage" and nothing else. Since then, he's been trying to prove himself by teaching himself to drive the forklift on his break and working extra hard. He swears that the owner watches him on the floor from his office, "That guy hates my guts! He hates me!"

SONIA PEELS potatoes over the trash can, rushing to get an early dinner on the table before Kaitlyn and Danielle leave for Missionettes, a kind of evangelical Girl Scouts held at The Assembly of God Church. Sonia and Danielle had to manage After School Evangelism alone today—Doug's in the bedroom, sleeping off another grueling work cycle.

The Taylors' family life centers around the kitchen, which* names have been changed
is located on the second floor of their home because the Jesus Party room occupies the first floor. Sparsely furnished with wood paneling and an old white gas stove, the kitchen walls are bare except for a poster of The Ten Commandments. The window shades are tightly drawn to keep the noise of the streets and the eyes of their very near neighbors out. A curtained glass door between the sink and the stove leads to Doug and Sonia's bedroom, where Doug's trying to sleep. Kaitlyn plays at Sonia's feet while Danielle goes in and out of Doug and Sonia's bedroom, doing her homework on the computer inside.

When dinner's on the table—chicken fingers, mashed potatoes, and green beans—Doug lumbers out of the bedroom wearing a sweat suit, his hair bristling. His face is gray and his eyes are swollen. He barks at Japheth then sits down hard, rattling the table. He hunches over his plate.

Kaitlyn kneels in the chair beside him, dipping her chicken into pools of ketchup. Between bites she gulps Nestea from a tall plastic cup. Doug and Sonia sit side by side in seats that are a little low for the shiny oval table. Doug angles his chair, dragging it toward Sonia's until their faces are six inches apart. In a quiet voice, Sonia tells him about her day. The kids butt in every few minutes, with homework questions and small disputes to settle. Doug tells Kaitlyn to lay off the ketchup twice. But Sonia and Doug's conversation is like a still pool that belongs to only them; the interruptions only ripple across the surface.

BALANCING the ministry and the family's emotional and financial needs is a constant struggle, Sonia says. "A lot of ministers have lost their own kids in the battle," she says, so she and Doug try to make the ministry as much of a family affair as possible. Brother Doug has the most public profile, but the whole family pitches in and makes plenty of sacrifices.
Sonia and the girls do the Jesus Party's publicity and keep the kids in line, Japheth helps with the sermons and washes out the redeemable soda bottles left over at the end of the night. All four children sing. Sonia says that behind every preacher on the pulpit is a whole family working just as hard as he is. She asks: "Do you think these ministers would even be ironed if it weren't for their wives?"

ELIZABETH, perched on a desk in the seven-person Pentecostal high school she attends in Portland, says that she loves her religion, but the Jesus Party mission gets overwhelming. "I come home Friday night: the Jesus Party. I wake up Saturday morning: the Jesus Party." Doug says that he wants the kids to take over the ministry. But to Liz, the Jesus Party is her father's mission, not hers. "My dad has said a hundred times that it's our ministry. We try to explain to him that it's his ministry," she says.

Elizabeth's eyes redder and a tear slides down her cheek. "My Dad hardly spends any time with us.... He's constantly trying to do something [related to the Jesus Party] on Saturday nights and Sunday nights." She says her mother tries to get him to slow down and have dinner or watch a movie with the family, but he always puts the Jesus Party first. "It's his life dream, which I understand, it's his ministry and it's the Jesus Party, but we, like, don't spend time together anymore. It's rarely ever do we just sit down and eat. It's like kids get
yourself something to eat. Mom and I have to do something
together on the computer. But, sometimes I just feel like I wish
I lived in just a regular family... who just goes to church.”

Elizabeth’s sister Danielle describes the Tree Street neigh­
borhood they live in as “Ghetto... definitely ghetto city... if my
family was not doing this ministry I know that we’d be in a
better neighborhood.” She calls her block “unsafe and dirty,”
and speaks with nostalgia about the pretty little house in the
residential neighborhood where her family used to live, even
though she was only four when they moved downtown. Dani­
elle says that the neighborhood isn’t a healthy place to live.
The entire family has caught the “pestilences” of ringworm
and head lice from the kids they work with. “But we make
do with it because we’re clean. And we can keep our house
clean and everything we touch is clean.”

“THEY THINK WE’RE wacked,” Elizabeth explains. Not
everyone likes her family and Doug’s stands on issues like
contraceptives, tattoos, and witchcraft have made life difficult
for her family. Opponents once plastered the Taylors’ home
in condoms and they’ve received burnt Bibles in the mail.
When Sonia was eight months pregnant with Kaitlyn a man
came after her with a baseball bat. “It’s understandable,” says
Elizabeth, “I’d probably think we were wacked too if I wasn’t
part of this family.”

“Our Harry Potter protest has been the most... draining of
them all," says Sonia, sitting in the Jesus Party office. The Taylors consider the series dangerous, saying that it introduces children to witchcraft and sorcery. On the eve of the release of the first Potter movie, The Taylors invited the entire community to burn Harry Potter books in a city park. They were denied a burn permit, so they hosted a "book cutting" instead.

"Harry Potter ain't real but witchcraft is," says Sonia. "I know people say there's no such thing as real witches. Well, when you say that to a witch you're insulting her, okay?" The night of the protest, Sonia recalls, a group of witches appeared at the park and slowly circled the demonstrators, chanting.

The book destruction attracted media attention from all over the world and thrust both the Jesus Party and the Taylor family into the spotlight. From one week to the next, the Jesus Party lost half of its kids. At school, the Taylor children found that friends they'd had since childhood would no longer speak to them. A group of kids backed Japheth into a corner and threatened to beat him up. "Unfortunately," says Sonia, "everyone cries diversity and acceptance of everybody. Except for somebody who disagrees with you."

Harry Potter continues to haunt the Taylors. A few months back, as the family waited in the checkout line at Wal-Mart, another customer recognized them and began to ask, loudly, where the Harry Potter books were. At first, they ignored the man, but he insisted, causing a scene and getting in their faces. Doug showed him his Bible, saying, "Sir, this is really a better book to read." The family left the store, but the man followed them to the parking lot, screaming obscenities. He told Doug that the Bible was a work of fiction. At this, Doug quietly said to him, "If it weren't true, you'd know it by now." When the man asked why, Doug replied, "If I didn't believe in the word of God... you'd be eating my fist right now! But, you see, God's taken me out of that."

Brother Doug doesn't mind being unpopular, even if the rest of the family suffers. In fact, Sonia says that conflict fuels him. "It puts a little more fire in his bones when he gets opposition," she says. Doug says that, like Jesus, he has more enemies than supporters, but, despite the hostility he inspires, he is confident in his mission from God. "To do this work," he says, "you've got to have a heart full of spirit and a shoulder full of steel."

IT'S OCTOBER 31st, Halloween. A pint-sized vampire with greasepaint sideburns studies Sonia's every move as she opens bags of candy and pours them into foil pans. Doug fiddles with the sound system he's set up outside the house. Sister Lisa heaves a box of freshly picked apples onto a table near the sidewalk. But make no mistake—this is not a Halloween Party. It's the Jesus Party's annual Holy Ghost Candy Buffet. A few weeks ago, Doug wrote his annual Halloween letter to the editor of the local paper. It opens: "Leave it to me to blow out the candle in the jack-o-lantern, so here it goes. Beneath Halloween's candy coating is a history of diabolical evil..." It explains that Dracula was a real person—a mass murderer
Amber Knowles came to Salt after completing her degree in Communication Studies at New York University in 2005. While still studying at Salt, Amber was given the opportunity to begin applying her education on the red carpet of the 2005 Vibe Awards. Her achievements at this event inspired her to continue photographing celebrity events with a documentary style. Once she returned to New York City, Amber was taken under the wing of renowned photographers who were appreciative of her work. A diverse mix of clients began to request her digital services for such event coverage as entertainment parties, red carpets, musical showcases and weddings. Amber continues to offer freelance photography services, while maintaining a full-time position with Wireimage. Her goals include developing more commercial photography work. amber.knowles@gmail.com

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MAMMA BEAR POLITICKING:
Pat LaMarche brings her maternal instinct to the public arena

ON A RARE, UNCLUTTERED, Sunday afternoon Pat LaMarche took the opportunity to cook a turkey. John—the younger of her two children—was leaving for college soon. Though her latest race for Maine's gubernatorial seat had all but begun, realistically, there was still time to be John's mother.

Written by Beatrice Marovich
Photographs by Elizabeth Massa
The post-dinner dishes were in the sink. The smoke from the singed skin of the bird still hung in the air, still stung the eyes. Crumbs were scattered on the red and white checkered tablecloth, a half-folded basket of laundry faced her from across the room. Pat sat down and put her feet up.

It was mid-spring, 2005. Pat had only recently wrapped up a campaign for Vice President of the United States, on the Green Party ticket. It was a small party: a gadfly in the two party system, attacked for "spoiling" the campaigns of Democrats like Al Gore. The chances of a Green victory—on both the state and national level—were slight. But for an outspoken American mother who believed the country's political situation was a mess that needed cleaning, it was a perfectly decent platform.

For months Pat had been flying all over the country, even sleeping on the floors of homeless shelters, to raise awareness about America's insipid income gap. She'd lost her job as the rousing, community-service-minded country music disc jockey Genny Judge (her mother's name, a pseudonym she adopted in honor of her passing), on Augusta's B98.5 because of the campaign. She used to pull publicity stunts for income—like living out of an army tank for days at a time, while she encouraged listeners on her broadcast to donate to the Tanks-giving canned food drive.

Now she was working two jobs to stay afloat. One, as an educational technician at Sabattus Elementary—a 45-minute commute from her home in Yarmouth, Maine. Nights she worked at the Curves fitness center for women.

She had a lot going on, to say the least. But when it came to her life in the public sphere, Pat was of the Elizabeth Cady Stanton variety. Whether she was making a living as a waitress, as director of the Children's Miracle Network in Bangor, as a disc jockey, or as a politician, Pat was always prepared to juggle. She's described herself—depending on the context—as a single mother, a broadcaster, an activist, a journalist, an educator. Although she was raised in a doctor's family she's never had deep pockets herself. She's prided herself on being just like the people she uses her (sometimes grizzly) political rhetoric to defend: staunchly middle class, no stranger to this peculiar breed of modern American suffering.

But she's emphasized, above all else, her role as a mother— who, for the most part, raised her kids without a partner in the home. Although she shared childcare responsibilities with her ex-husband, in her own home, Pat was alone. She thought about marriage, she said, about as often as she thought about parachuting, and she always called herself a single mother. "I say it because it defines me," she rationalized.

On that Sunday evening, hours after the bones of her turkey had been picked, John came padding down the stairs in his socks. Pat watched him from her post in the living room—the two spaces were divided by nothing more than a low counter. John walked into the kitchen, opened up a cupboard, and pulled out a box of Pop Tarts. He slid them into the toaster, and stared at the radiating wires with force and concentration.

"John," Pat called out to him. "Did you know that the Buddhists say you pick your parents?" This is the third time today she's found cause to mention this tidbit, passed to her in a telephone conversation with a friend the day before. Earlier she'd added a line about her own luck—that Becky and John had chosen her. But, this time, she omitted it.

John turned his face to the living room. He was without expression his shaggy bangs hanging in his eyes. The affection rolled off his seventeen-year old shoulders. "Oh," he said to her.

"Well. I don't."

End of conversation.

Pat laughed, closed her eyes, and rested her head against the back of her chair.

"I love my children but I don't know what to do now that they've left me," she said later, "which was their job—to grow up and make me less important."

It's the same conundrum that thousands of American women face as they cross the line into middle age, and the children are tucked safely away into fine liberal arts institutions across the country.

"I'm trying to transition from being the yuppie town mommy," Pat said. "My old life is stopping... and at the
same time, I’m trying to pay the cable bill. The transition’s not easy. Mostly because it doesn’t come with a map, you know, with the right steps to take.”

IT WAS MID-SPRING 2005 and suddenly, one evening, Pat’s eight most loyal campaigners were arriving at her side door to talk 2006 campaign strategy.

The guests left their shoes—covered with the mud soup of the thaw—on a welcome mat. They settled into a circle of chairs in her tiny living room and passed around a cut crystal dish filled with chocolate Easter eggs.

The preoccupied hostess was barrel- ing through the kitchen, pulling grated cheese, flat pans, green and red bell peppers, from their respective homes. “I’m going to make pizzas!” she informed them.

“Then who’s going to run the meeting?” her friend Tom mused, pulling back the foil layer of an egg.

In spite of the fact that Pat’s whirlwind lifestyle didn’t encourage a Donna Reed domesticity, she was in her element. She walked to the line where kitchen became living room. She was barefoot, her toenails red and a sterling silver toe ring displayed on one foot. She clapped her hands, covered with flour from dough-kneading, on the belly of her navy blue polo shirt, leaving behind two five-fingered handprints.

“Well,” she said in a reasonable tone, “I’m going to be cooking and talking at the same time.”

It was a crazy time to run again. Even Pat was unable to articulate what was motivating her. She just knew that it was in her nature to keep moving.

“I run. That’s what I do,” she said.

“And campaigning is the ultimate marathon.”

It would be Pat’s second campaign for Maine’s gubernatorial seat. In 2002 she ran, as a Green, on a mere $20,000. She still managed to secure 7 percent of the vote and gain ballot access for her fledgling third party. In 2006, she ran a more professional campaign on a fat check of public funding. Although she came in fourth, of the five candidates, she earned almost 10 percent of the vote.

She took plenty of heat. Some members of the Green Party lament the fact that Pat’s campaigns pulled the small third party—traditionally based in grassroots activism—into the competitive arena of electoral politics. She’s been criticized for emphasizing social justice topics, rather than pushing for a more environmental platform, as Greens have historically done.

But, Pat said, at her age she didn’t question her own motives anymore, and she was hoping that the people of Maine—after seeing her as the Green mast- head of several high profile campaigns—were starting to feel the same way. If not, well, she wasn’t afraid to cause trouble. It’s the wisdom, she mused, that a woman wins as she ages. Beauty
is no longer the “equalizing factor.”

“I like being so outspoken that I just don’t care if people still find me attractive when I’m done talking,” she said. “As your equalizing factor starts to bulge, or slip, or sag, I think you start feeling the strength that comes from needing to rock the boat.”

She used her platform to urge Mainers to think about their quality of life, how the government could take better care of them, how they could secure universal health care coverage.

“I believe in the people of Maine more than they believe in themselves,” she’s said. “You give people what they want, and what they want is to feel better about themselves, and the world in which they live, you know? I’m not going to take your kidneys out, because I know I can’t do it. But I’ll believe in you, because I know that you’re worth it. And to me, that’s what running for office is—believing in people, believing in the government.”

Her friend Karen D’Andre hosts a local radio talk show—“Sound Ecology”—that airs on Portland’s community radio station. She’s campaigned for Pat and—as a fellow mother—cannot separate Pat’s political world from her domestic one.

“It’s the mamma bear thing,” she said. “If you kind of feel the same way about the world that you feel about your kids, you have no other choice than to be there, to be protective, and to do what’s best and right.”

“Would I like the maternal instinct that I turned on my kids to be turned on my country?” Pat questioned. “Yeah!”

In the spring of 2007, Pat—still in recovery from the gubernatorial campaign the fall before—swore she was, “Never going to work that hard again.” She intended to run the Boston Marathon in the fall, rather than another political campaign. As far as getting her voice out there—she was turning to writing next. Her book, “Left Out in America,” detailing her national campaign through homeless shelters in 2004, came out in 2006. And she’s writing a column for the Bangor Daily News, to help fill the void left by Molly Ivins.

After graduating from the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, Beatrice Marovich moved to Maine for a semester at Salt. She fell in love with the city, stayed on, and makes her living as a newspaper reporter.

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A FAMILY OF DWARFS walks into Panera Bread, and the room ripples with hushed reaction. Students pay closer attention to their books. Teenaged employees lean further across the counter. Children openly look. Rick Spiegel, 42, picks a booth and his wife Barbara Spiegel, 31, follows, clutching a child carrier that hangs heavy at her hip. Inside, 13 month-old Alexandra Spiegel watches the colorful bounce of a mobile.

Rick and Barbara Spiegel are both less than four and a half feet tall, with average-sized torsos and short limbs.

Written by Posey Gruener
Photographs by Nayan Tara Kakshapati
Their wrists are level with their waists and their legs seem to end at the knee. Their foreheads are prominent and their noses pert. When Barbara walks, her rocking gait swings her ash-blond hair across her shoulders. When Rick hoists the car seat above his head and into the booth, his elbows are at his ears. But when they hop into their seats the difference disappears—they sit as tall as anyone in the room.

A week earlier, on September 3, 2005, the Spiegels were featured in the Portland Press Herald. The Little People of America had held a regional convention at the South Portland Sheraton and Barbara, who organized the event, invited a reporter into her home. The article, "No-nonsense advocate wants all to know: Little people are fitting in just fine, thanks," began this way:

"As a 4-foot-2 woman, Barbara Spiegel gets everything from furtive looks to flat-out stares, and questions. Oh, the questions. Those she not so much answers, as zings.

No, my house isn’t small. Wouldn’t that look funny on the block?

Sure, I can drive. How do you think I got here? Walked?

If only people would ask her what kind of dog she has.

The Spiegel Home lies on a meandering strip of Colonial style houses that cuts into the woods of Scarborough, Maine. It has a wide lawn, a two-car garage, and a brass knocker on a bright red door. This evening, as the air turns crisp and the trees turn to silhouettes, the windows glow yellow from the light within.

Inside, Barbara and Alexandra lie on the living room rug, surrounded by brightly colored tubs full of books and toys. Alexandra offers Barbara a toy, her small arm outstretched and her soft cheeks puffed into a smile. Barbara takes the toy and says, "Thank you!" with exaggerated gratitude, her blue eyes bright. Then, like a game of peekaboo, they do it again and again. The same delighted offering, followed by the same exaggerated thank you, as Alexandra’s pile diminishes and Barbara’s steadily grows. Gizmo, a silky white Lhasa Apso, scampers circles around the steep central staircase, skittering across slick kitchen tiles and over polished wood.

The front door creaks open and Rick enters, sets his briefcase on the bottom step, and slips out of his shoes. He’s dressed in khakis and a button-down dress shirt, home from eight hours of compiling statistics and setting rates for an insurance company a mile down the road. He slides against the couch and lands, with a groan, on the floor. Alexandra abandons her pile of toys and crawls toward him like an army grunt, pushing with the smooth berries of her toes, pulling with the dimpled balls of her fists.

At thirteen months old, an age when her peers are wearing their first sneakers and learning to walk, Alexandra wears pajamas sized for an infant and shimmies across the floor on her belly. She has a large head, short limbs, and soft muscles, and she finds creative ways to move them. When her head bumps into Rick’s leg, she clamps her tiny fingers onto his trousers, props her chin on his thigh, and muscles herself across his lap like a swimmer pulling out of a pool. When Rick looks at her, her smile breaks wide across the pink button of her tongue.

"Look at you," he says. "You’re making me forget my day."

After dinner, before Jeopardy, Rick changes Alexandra’s diaper while Barbara clears the table. When she reaches the kitchen she kicks a metal step stool sending it clattering across the tiles and against the cupboards below the sink. When she steps onto it and reaches for the faucet, her chest presses into the edge of the counter; as she fishes for the sponge, her armpits hug the lip of the sink.

Growing up, Barbara had no stools at home. Like most Achondroplastic dwarfs, she grew up in a family of average-sized people. Unlike many, her parents made no accommodations to her stature. Out of place among their tallness, she struggled to get plates out of too-high cupboards and to keep up with their long strides. Rick, also born to average-sized parents, fared better—he had one stool that he carried around the house, from kitchen to bathroom to bookshelf.

Alexandra, on the other hand, will
grow up in a home with three stools in the kitchen, plates and bowls stored in the silverware drawer, and towels and toothpaste placed on the lowest shelves of the bathroom cabinets. As a child she will have parents with firsthand knowledge of the physical and emotional challenges of growing up little. And as a teenager, she will be able to borrow her mother’s customized bike, surf the internet in an office chair designed for a little person’s body, and drive using the pedal extensions on her parents’ cars.

ACHONDROPLASIA, a genetic condition that causes the long bones of the arms and legs to grow more slowly than the rest of the skeleton, comes with a particular set of growing pains. Joint trouble, back pain, and ear complications are standard; the unluckiest endure a painful gauntlet of surgeries. When Barbara was six, she had surgery on her ear canals to prevent the frequent ear infections that are common to Achondroplastic toddlers. At nine years old, Rick had surgery to straighten his bowed legs, and spent an entire baseball season in two hip-to-ankle casts.

There are emotional growing pains, too. Barbara dreamed of being a teacher, but her parents discouraged her. Better, they said, to find a job where she could stay out of sight. And when she dreamed of weddings, they told her to get used to the idea of living alone—no one, they said, would want to marry a dwarf.

Rick’s parents carefully held him to the same rules and expectations as his siblings. But when he entered high school he was disappointed to discover how much his stature mattered. He joined the baseball team, but mostly rode the bench. And though he developed “crushes, crushes, crushes” on average-sized girls, he never had a girlfriend. “My mom would say,” he remembers “wait until you get to junior high school... and then, oh, no, freshmen, they’re more mature girls, and then, wait till you get to college, and it just never happened.”

SINGLE DWARFS searching for love anxiously wait LPA conferences—the local meetings, the regional gatherings and, especially, the annual national conference. For these romantic hopefuls, who begin searching for a partner the minute they walk into the hotel lobby, the dance floor on the last night can seem like a heated round on musical chairs—everyone scrambling to find a partner before the music stops. As Rick recalled in an article for LPA Today, a glossy magazine shipped quarterly to LPA’s 5,000 members, he was often the odd one out:

“Nearly every year, I would travel to the conference site as a single man. Nearly every year I would come back as a single man.... I will never forget those solitary cross-country flights home, feeling that I had failed.”

Then, on the eve of his 40th birthday, Rick met Barbara at a regional conference. In her own LPA Today article, Barbara described their first meeting:

“This guy approached and asked if I would like to dance.... Well, we danced once, then again and again. I think when the night was through we must’ve danced six times.”

They seemed an unlikely couple.
He was Jewish; she was Catholic. She taught pre-schoolers; he crunched numbers. He was a Red Sox fan; she loved the Yankees. But something clicked. Within months of their first meeting, Barbara quit her job, sold her Brooklyn condo and joined Rick in Maryland. Within a year they were exchanging vows in a gazebo. Soon afterward Rick was offered a job with Anthem/Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and the newlyweds moved to Maine.

IT'S AN UNUSUALLY warm fall Saturday in Scarborough. The breeze carries the smell of cut grass and the distant drone of a lawnmower. Barbara sits on her front stoop and blows bubbles that travel across the lawn and over her husband and daughter, who lie basking in the sun. Alexandra lies in the curve of Rick's arm, with her ear to his chest. When he runs a square thumb down her spine, she lays her hand on his shirt and spreads her tiny fingers like a star.

Near the bend of the road, a stick-legged Boy Scout tows a Radio Flyer up a path, raps the knocker, and shows a tin of popcorn to the open wedge of door. Closer by, two women approach, chatting as two preschool-age girls prance circles around them, their long hair bouncing and catching the light. When Barbara sees them she waves, and they cut across the lawn. The women sit beside Barbara on the low stoop, gathering their legs to their chest and draping their long arms across their knees; they look gangly beside Barbara, who sits with her feet flush to the ground, her palms propped on her level lap.

ON THE COVER of LPA Today's Spring 2005 issue, Barbara leans against a tree, proudly displaying the taut swell
of her stomach. She is nine months pregnant, with a belly so large she can't lace her fingers beneath it. Inside, she writes about the early weeks:

"I was excited to be pregnant, but at the same time I was scared. We had just moved... we did not know any doctors in the area, especially those who have experience with little people.... I have wanted a child all my life, but upon discovering I was pregnant, I wasn't so sure I was ready for it."

On top of everything else, she was afraid for the baby's health. As carriers of the dominant gene for Achondroplasia, she and Rick were playing genetic roulette. Any child of theirs will have a 50 percent chance of inheriting the gene from one of them and having Achondroplasia, a 25 percent chance of inheriting neither gene and being average-sized, or a 25 percent chance of inheriting both dominant genes—a fatal condition called double-dominant Achondroplasia. This was what she was afraid of—infants with double-dominant Achondroplasia never survive their first year.

Barbara and Rick decided to test for double-dominance and, if the tests came back positive, to terminate the pregnancy. Only a decade earlier, they would have based that life-or-death decision on the fuzzy shape of the fetus in an ultrasound. But Dr. John Wasmuth located the gene for Achondroplasia in 1994, making it possible to zero in on a specific gene and determine its status.

But Rick and Barbara never got to take the tests. One evening, early in the pregnancy, Barbara began spotting. By the time she got to the doctor, first thing in the morning, it was too late. She had miscarried. Upon hearing the news, Rick was "deeply saddened and somewhat angry," but Barbara tried to think positively. As she wrote in LPA Today: "...I felt perhaps the child was double dominant and God did not want to have us go through the testing, the waiting, and deciding what to do next. God took matters into His own hands."

BARBARA FACES a tall shelf stacked with tidy rows of cans, reading labels and comparing prices. Behind her, Alexandra reclines in a car seat propped atop the shopping cart, gumming a packaged toothbrush. Deciding against a can of diced fruit, Barbara ponders the snack-size version, which is stacked above her reach. She pauses, pushes her glasses onto the bridge of her nose. Then, decisively, she hefts two cans from the bottom shelf, clunks them onto the linoleum, and steps up. After grabbing the fruit, she tosses it in the cart, replaces the cans and moves on.

Barbara, whose eye level is barely higher than her cart handle, cranes to see as she navigates around a parked cart, narrowly skirts a Halloween display, and passes the long checkout lines. The lanes are clogged with shoppers and noisy with the beeps of scanners. As Barbara passes, a girl spots her, freezes, and yells "Wow!" As she recedes, the girl steps out of line for a better look, then points and says, "She's little!"

Barbara turns. "Yes!" she says, with the patient, bouncing cadence of a schoolteacher, "I am!" Then she pushes away down the aisle.

The girl's voice is loud behind her. "Mommy," she says, "why is she little?" Barbara looks into the car seat at Alexandra, still gumming the toothbrush. "Achondra," she says, "be prepared. This is going to happen to you."

ALEXANDRA WAVES her hands madly above the tray of her high chair, saying "Blat!" and "Aboo!" and "Ess! Ess! Ess!" as Barbara feeds her tiny pieces of toast. Barbara feels Alexandra's spine is kyphotic. Its outward curve will straighten as Alexandra develops trunk strength, but until Alexandra is strong enough to sit on her own, placing her in a sitting position might worsen it. It frustrates Barbara to watch other children Alexandra's age go to the lap-sit and learn nursery rhymes, or sit at low tables and eat with their friends, but still, she's careful. If the kyphosis gets worse, Alexandra might need a back brace.

On a whim, Barbara hands Alexandra the whole piece of toast. She waits. She's never done this before. Alexandra clamps her tiny hands on the crust, then jerks them apart. A flattened piece ends up in the palm of her hand. She looks at it, then pushes it into her own mouth. Barbara gasps. "I'm going to cry!" she says, wide eyes brimming. "You were paying attention."

Alexandra does something new every day, and Barbara usually sees it first. If it's a breakthrough—if she slides off the couch and stands while holding on to it, if she responds to "Where's your nose?" by touching her finger to its tip, or if she points to a banana and says "nana"—Barbara calls Rick at work. Feeling slightly cheated, Rick pays close attention when he comes home. Once in a while, he notices one of Alexandra's developments first, and when this happens, he gloats.

"She's our science project," he says.

THREE MONTHS after the miscarriage, after Barbara had found a job and settled into the house, she became pregnant again. This time, she felt ready—they just needed to get through the test. At twelve weeks, the geneticist took cells from Barbara's womb and sent them to the lab. After that, Rick and Barbara waited. And waited. Barbara wrote about that time in LPA Today:

"Every time the phone rang, we jumped. On March 22nd, we finally heard back from Rene [the geneticist]. She called me at work and I was immediately summoned from my classroom. The office staff knew I was expecting a VERY IMPORTANT phone call. I picked up the phone, praying it was Rene.

'Hi Barbara. I have some information for you.' I remained silent.

'The double-dominant test was
negative. Actually, the baby showed no trace of dwarfism.'

It appeared, Rene said, that Barbara was carrying an average-sized child. But until the written report came back, they couldn't be sure.

During the week of waiting, Barbara shuffled through a fresh set of worries. "How weird!" she remembers thinking. "But how easy." She wouldn't have to monitor for growth problems—there would be no kyphosis, or constant ear infections, or bowed legs. But there were other concerns. How, for starters, would she carry it? An average-sized one-year-old would come up to her waist; by the fourth grade, they would see eye to eye.

At week's end, the geneticist called to admit she'd made a mistake—their child would have Achondroplasia, after all. The mix-up made Rick and Barbara uneasy so they sent for a second opinion. When those tests came back positive for Achondroplasia, they were relieved. For the next six months, they prepared for their daughter's arrival. And then, in Barbara's words:

"On August 24th at 10:48 am, Alexandra Isabella Spiegel entered this world, weighing in at 7 lbs 8 oz and measuring 18 inches long. Our life has been filled with love ever since!"

"GIRAFFES ARE tall!" Barbara reads. She stands patiently above Alexandra, who plays with a fabric book, the chubby stars of her hands randomly turning the pages. "Turtles are short!" Barbara reads when she turns to a new one. "Elephants are big! Alligators are long!" When Alexandra flips to the last page, full of glow worms, Barbara reads, with a note of triumph, "Bugs are little, just like me!"

Barbara bought the book, she says, because Alexandra "needs to understand she's little." There are others, too, designed for when she's older. Upstairs, on the nursery shelf, tucked between The Cat in the Hat and Goodnight Moon, a slim blue book asks Why Am I Different?

THE FOURTH GRADE classes at Ashaway Elementary, in Ashaway, Rhode Island, are all gathered in Mrs. Ornburn's classroom. Sunlight peeks through the edges of the pulled blinds, and drawings on construction paper line the walls. Barbara paces in front of the blackboard and sweeps her eyes across a sea of ponytails and mussed hair. "Dwarfism," she says, projecting her voice so that the kids in the back can hear, "is a genetic condition."

The room is crammed with kids. Chairs spill into the aisle, circle across the back, and cluster at the sides, under tidy hooks hung with coats and backpacks. Close to the front, Taylor Merritt sits on her mother's lap. At nine years old, she is blond and stocky, and tall for a dwarf her age. She is the reason that Barbara has come today.
Barbara gives these talks in classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias all over Northern New England, as Volunteer Outreach Coordinator for District One of the Little People of America.

"What Taylor and I have," Barbara says, "is the most common form of dwarfism, called Achondroplasia." At this, she stops and clasps her hands at her collarbone. "Can anybody say Achondroplasia?"

"A-KON-dro-PLAY-sha!" the class responds in chorus. The kids are full of energy. Some fold their hands in their laps. Some prop their chins on their fists. Some squirm in their chairs. But all eyes are on Barbara.

"In Achondroplasia," Barbara says, "our limbs are shorter." She looks over her shoulder to a big oak desk lined with plastic apples. "Now, can I have a teacher volunteer?" Mrs. Ornburn, a petite, plump woman, walks to her side. They set two chairs in front of the class and sit down back to back, shifting their weight until their shoulder blades meet. The top of Barbara's head rises a full inch above the teacher's. Barbara turns to the class. "Now if you look at the two of us, who is sitting up taller?"

The children giggle and murmur. They say, quietly, "You?" Then, with delight, "You!"

"Who?" Barbara says. "You!" they yell.

"Isn't that odd?" she asks. "Yeah!" they laugh.

"But our arms," she says, "are shorter!" Barbara whispers to the teacher to spread out her arms, then stretches her fingers just past the teacher's elbows. "And our legs are shorter!" Barbara whispers again, and the teacher springs out her legs, her feet suspended a foot from her chair. Opposite her, Barbara twinkles her toes where they hang, a few inches past the edge of her seat.

Barbara sends Mrs. Ornburn back to her desk and looks at the class again. "How many of you have heard the word 'midget'? Please raise your hand." Two dozen hands shoot upward, a thicket of knobby elbows and stretched fingers. "How many of you have used the word 'midget'?" A few hands slink down. Barbara searches between the remaining arms and picks a blond girl in a purple shirt. "Go ahead! Purple!"

"Um, um," says the girl. "I'm in cheerleading and they have groups and they have mighty mite, pee wee, and midgets."

"Okay, go ahead! Green!"

"Um, my uncle calls me a midget cause I'm so small."

"Okay!" Barbara says. "Hands down. Now, let me talk about the word midget." She leans forward to catch their eyes. "The word midget generally is used to hurt someone's feelings. It's like name calling. Like calling somebody with braces 'brace face.' Like calling somebody with glasses 'four eyes.' Do you guys like it when people make fun of you?"

"No!" the class yells in chorus, shaking their fifty heads.

LPA WAS FOUNDED in 1957 as Midgets of America. At the time the name was appropriate, as pituitary dwarfs—then called midgets—dominated the organization. This type of dwarf—who has a growth hormone deficiency and reaches adulthood with a high voice and a small, proportional body—was highly visible in the early part of the century. Indeed, most of the earliest members of LPA worked in the entertainment industry, driving the Oscar Meyer Weinermobile, playing the Munchkins, or working as lighting doubles for children.

The name was later changed to Little People of America as the word midget, with its sideshow associations, fell out of favor and as the organization's demographics changed. Today, pituitary dwarfs make up a minority in LPA. Artificial human growth hormone was synthesized in 1985, and average-sized
parents of children with pituitary dwarfism now routinely seek hormone replacement therapy. As a result, the community of pituitary dwarfs is aging.

Achondroplastic dwarfs have replaced pituitary dwarfs as the new LPA majority, and they, too, may face a medically orchestrated disappearance. An Achondroplastic dwarf is born to average-sized parents once in every 26,000 births—at the current birth rate, once every four days. But pre-natal testing is becoming cheap, accessible, and encouraged. Unsuspecting couples routinely screen for a range of genetic variations, and now that the gene for Achondroplasia has been identified, average-sized couples will be able to screen for—and potentially terminate—dwarf fetuses.

Dr. John Wasmuth, who discovered the gene, anticipated this possibility. In 1994, at the press conference during which he announced his discovery, Dr. Wasmuth shared the podium with three representatives of LPA, and together they emphasized that this knowledge should only be used to test for double-dominance in Achondroplastic couples. If it were used in routine tests of unsuspecting couples, they feared, the future of their community would lie in the hands of average-sized couples who, perhaps, have never met a little person.

WHEN THE ANCHOR signs off for the night, Rick aims the remote and quiets the television. Holding his neck very still, he adjusts the couch pillow behind his head. He is so stiff
Barbara Spiegel boists Alexandra Spiegel off a shopping cart and into her car.

Tonight that he can't look down, but his eyes follow Alexandra as she plays on the carpet. Bracing her forearms against a low stool, she leans back, plops into a sitting position, and releases her hands. "Good Job!" Rick says. After fourteen months, Alexandra has finally learned to sit. Her trunk is upright and rigid above the wide splay of her legs, and she props her knuckles on her thighs as she surveys the room. Her smile, Rick says, looks proud.

Alexandra has been sitting for almost a week, but Rick and Barbara haven't exhausted their excitement for all the new things she can do. She can go to the lap-sit at the library, and she can sit up in the shopping cart. And now that Alexandra's back is strong and her hands are free, Barbara is planning to teach her to draw. Barbara looks at Alexandra from her perch on the lowest stair, just below the curving banister.

"Maybe Santa..." she says.
"Or Hannukah Harry!" Rick says.
"Or Hannukah Harry," Barbara continues, "will bring you some crayons."

Alexandra is growing fast. Already seventeen pounds, one day she will be so heavy that it will be painful to hold her. "We know those days are coming," Rick says. "But," Barbara adds, "but how do you not hold a two-year old?" Soon, they agree, Alexandra will stand. And after that she'll walk. Even now, she scares Barbara by leaning on empty kitchen stools and screeching them across the tiles, her feet pedaling fast behind.

As for the more distant future, they have simple expectations.

"I hope she comes to peace," Rick says, "sooner than I did."
"I want her to be all that she wants to be." Barbara says. No more, no less. As for her own parents, Barbara tries not to resent their low expectations. "I've accomplished it all without their help," she says. "I have a beautiful daughter, I have a wonderful husband."

When Alexandra rubs her eyes, they return to the moment. Barbara bends to the floor, hauls Alexandra up to her shoulder, and heads upstairs to the nursery. The hardwood stairs are polished to a shine, and each step rises as tall as Barbara's knee. With Alexandra in her arms, she mounts them one at a time, swinging her legs wide from the hip, levering slowly, landing solidly. As they ascend, Alexandra nestles her cheek into Barbara's neck, her sleepy head nodding with each slow step upward.

Barbara remains very involved in Little People of America, planning District conferences, managing advertising for LPA Today and acting as president of LPA's Patriot Chapter. Rick continues to work as an actuary, and takes great pride in his "Daddy Time," which often includes breakfast on the weekends, bath time, and stories before bed. Alexandra has begun attending pre-school and, Barbara says, "loves it."

Before Salt, Posey Gruener lived in the Florida suburbs, the Utah mountains, and the Iowa cornfields. She also lived on a commune in Washington, on a boat in the Pacific, and in a log cabin by a river near Canada. All the while, she wrote lovingly crafted and laboriously revised emails, loan applications, and birthday cards. At Salt, Posey finally admitted that she was a writer. After Salt, she hopes to live anywhere that she can find a desk.

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Nayan Tara Gurung Kakshapati came to Salt with a bachelor's degree in International Relations from Mt Holyoke College, eager to shoot and tell stories but not sure where to start. While at Salt she spent many rigorous days and nights in the field and in the darkroom, learning that patience, hard work and positive collaborations are key to effective story-telling. Salt validated Nayan Tara's burning desire to put off grad school and go back home to Nepal to dig into issues that she cares most significantly about. At present she is staff photographer at Y! magazine, a monthly Nepali publication that addresses socio-political issues. She has also been shooting freelance stories for other local and regional publications. Nayan Tara plans to continue shooting at home and in the region until one day she has enough money to go to grad school to once again be inspired to come back home with new insight and energy.

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PRESERVATION WITH CLAPBOARD GAPS

THE COMPANY truck's bumper has a pink and black sticker that reads HAPPINESS IS BEING IN THE BARN, but right now there is very little barn left within which to be happy. Like an anxious patient on a papered bed, the barn in Hollis Center, Maine, waits on frosted mud with its broadside open and exposed, its old timber frame bathed in pale October light.

Written by Douglas W. Milliken
Photographs by Gabriel Caffrey
"This was a beautiful barn," Scott Hatch says from the yard, admiring the building's uncovered network of right triangles and hemlock. "A classic English barn, immune to gravity, probably outlived a dozen or more owners. Beautiful." Scott squints against the sun. "Then somebody built an addition to it and opened up a can of worms."

Stitched to the barn's side like an awkward new appendage, the shabby annex gradually sank in its foundation, wrenching the conjoined barn backward as it rotted, skewing it into a parallelogram. Scott turns away, settles stoutly into his excavator's cockpit, ignites the engine roaring. The addition has long since collapsed and been trucked away to the burn pile. But the original barn still stands a chance.

Guiding his excavator over rocks and mud to the rear gable-end of the barn, Scott, self-proclaimed barnwright and owner of the Barn Wright Inc., extends the hydraulic arm and nudges the bucket against the exterior wall. Near the machine's nest of levers, a red retractable leash hangs from the cockpit cage: Spencer, the crew dog, stayed home today. His lips curled as if to break into sudden laughter, Scott yells over the engine's drone, "Alright, let's put the pressure to 'er."

Spanning from where the barn's rear corner post meets the roof plate, two metal cables stretch diagonally like tendons across the open broadside, winding into the spooled bellies of two come-alongs, or hand-winches: one is bound to the base of the front corner post; the other is strapped to a tree. Hunching forward, Scott's apprentice barnwrights, Dave Rose and Joe Marshall, grab the come-along handles and crank.

The excavator bucket prods the leaning barn; the come-alongs gather the slack. Inch by creaking inch, the parallelogram becomes a square.

Calling for a halt, Scott shuts down the machine, hops to the ground, and checks with a speed-square the angle between corner post and floor. "Ninety-one degrees," he laughs. "A little overzealous in our approach, I think."

Joe chuckles and runs a hand across his premature bald spot, his blonde goatee. A smile hidden within his coarse black beard, Dave adjusts his come-along, barely slackening the cable's tension.

Checking again: "Ninety. Perfect."

In less than one minute, Scott, Dave, and Joe pushed and pulled a two-hundred-year-old barn and returned it square and plumb.

PRESERVATION can mean finding something precious from someone else's forgotten life, then saving it forever under glass. It can mean replacing a structure's every crossbeam and post until nothing original remains but its idea. Preserving can save for some what others might see as a roadblock in the way of progress, and it can also be a way of saving jelly in a jar.

Preservation can mean paying attention to your surroundings.

Preservation can be an act of memory.

"EVERY JOB I BID," Scott says, "comes with a free history lesson."

A sudden breeze tousles Scott's cap of brown hair as he hops out of his pickup, smiling and extending his hand to the white-bearded man standing in the dooryard: the owner of the Sebago barn. After a quick introduction,
the two walk the barn’s perimeter, from its stooped gable-end around its kinked broadside, down the slope toward the back where the foundation has collapsed. Quick repairs—wood-scrapes patching holes, shoring beams, doing nothing—are everywhere.

“This is common,” Scott says judiciously, “when somebody is really busy and doesn’t have the time to embark upon a full restoration project on his own.” The homeowner somberly nods. They walk around front and through the gable-end doors.

Bales of hay, piles of lumber, antique pie chests, dry-rotten cardboard boxes, and broken tools choke the interior; chaff dust hangs in a haze. Peering through the clutter, Scott examines the barn’s crippled frame.

“These repairs here,” he says, pointing at two oak posts, “have the up-and-down marks of a sash-saw, but you can see here that the original pine timbers were hand-hewn.” He points to the gouge marks where an adz chipped the logs into posts. “Sawmills typically sprang up around the same time that towns were incorporated, so given when Sebago was founded, I’d say the original frame was built, oh, around 1780 or somewhere thereabouts.” The repairs were probably made around 1830, he figures, before most mills replaced sash-blades with circular saws.

Splaying his thick fingers to encompass the upper framework’s posts and girts, Scott explains the evolution of barns from Europe to North America. “In this region you had English influences and French influences.” The English traditionally built roof trusses on box frames—that is, built triangles atop of squares—with the threshing floor, or central aisle, running from one broadside to the next. French barns had threshing floors stretching between the gable-ends and were built with central colonnades bearing the roof load: the gables were shaped like pentagons. The hybrid of the two—English trusses set above a French floor plan—became the New England barn. “What you have here,” Scott says, blue eyes wide as he slides his hands into the pockets of his jeans, “is an English barn that, for some odd reason, was converted into a New England.”

The homeowner scratches his white-haired chin, hides his awed smile behind his hand. “I had no idea.”

Glancing at the obscuring piles of antiques and junk, Scott shrugs. “I could be wrong.”

“ON A SCALE from one to ten,” Scott says, at home on the phone with a prospective client, “with ten being microsurgery on a hangnail, and one being a Band-Aid on a bullet wound”—he pauses for effect—“I’m about a seven.”

The phone squawks with surprise; Scott and his new client set a time to look over the barn in Rumford, then hang up.
As Scott defines it, a barn wright must be proficient in rigging, excavation, stone masonry, and timber framing in order to realign, re-stabilize, and restore a barn. “It’s a completely different ball game than new construction,” he says. With these four trades, Scott and his crew can save any barn.

Before Barn Wright Inc., Scott owned and operated Western Maine Tree, Landscape, and Excavation: excising trees, clearing lots, reshaping land. “Stone walls along the edges of fields were a big thing,” Scott says. “I would tear them apart, scatter ’em in the field, and then reset all the stone. I did miles, literally miles of stone walls. Completely rebuilt ’em.”

Late in the autumn of 1997, while re-grading a lawn to divert rainwater and snowmelt from a house’s foundation, Scott found himself talking with his client about the barn standing along the property line. “You’ve got a beautiful barn here,” Scott said, “but it’s got a few problems. If you get it fixed now, it shouldn’t be too big of a problem. Let it go, though, and she’ll snowball.”

The client nodded, staring hard at his weathered barn. “Sounds like you know what you’re talking about,” he said. “When can you start?”

It wasn’t long after Scott stumbled into his first barn restoration that Ice Storm ’98 whipped through Maine, downing power lines and shattering trees. “Everybody and their cousin,” Scott says, “had a pickup truck and a chainsaw. The tree business in Maine collapsed.” So with his recent barn restoration in mind, Scott took out an ad in the Portland Press Herald.

“I wrote the last hundred and fifty dollars out of my business checking account,” Scott says, feet propped up and crossed, “wiped the account out to pay for the ad, and rolled change for spending money. Within three weeks, I had ten thousand dollars in deposit checks. It was just like, okay, different direction.”

Even though Scott had landscaped since the age of fifteen—from harvesting trees in his hometown of Rhinebeck, New York, to hydroseeding lawns in Alaska—he’d always been immersed in the world of restoration. Throughout his childhood, Scott’s parents, John and Marilyn Hatch, devoted every possible evening and weekend to restoring historic sites throughout the Hudson River Valley. “We would just pull up in the van and the whole family’d unload,” Scott says; John and Marilyn standing walls, spreading plaster, and staining wainscoting while Scott and his older brother, Mark, played amid the construction. “I guess I just kinda picked it up through osmosis.”

STEPPING OUT into the morning sun, Scott stands alone for a moment.
before the basement entry of his home, the early October light warming his work-hardened hands, his flat, unlined cheeks. Behind him in the basement, his twin dirt bikes rest amid the tiers of this winter’s firewood. Before him, there are only trees.

Scott lives in a restored 1819 English barn with his wife, Jan, and their dog, Spencer. Standing like a hilltop citadel above the Crooked River in Harrison, Maine, Scott’s barn overlooks his gravel pit and pasture, Jan’s horse’s stable and Scott’s old boat, the Rosalie. For nearly two hundred years, the barn stood on a farm in Mechanic Falls; seven years ago, Scott disassembled it by hand and moved it here to his hill, rebuilt it piece by piece. Like a green blanket on an unmade bed, the land curls and dips around their home. In the pasture, Jan’s horse, Cassidy, nicker and kicks the ground.

At the base of Scott’s hill, the old Scribner family millhouse and farm, where Scott’s parents now spend their summers, lies alongside of the Crooked River. Across the road from the millhouse stands Scribner’s Mill: the blacksmith shop alone in the lawn, the mill proper sprawling from the land over the water, the sawdust-silo on stilts out back. What was once Scott’s childhood playground is now his permanent home.

Scott’s parents were introduced to Scribner’s Mill in 1975, when Scott was nine years old; a family friend, having just moved to Maine, saw the site and insisted that Scott’s father come see it. “It was an instant obsession, and here we are thirty years later.” The Hatch family began spending every August in Harrison, taking time away from their other restoration projects to camp along the Crooked River and work on the 1847 sawmill. “From the first time I ever set foot here,” Scott says, “this was home. Rhinebeck was where you had to suffer through eleven months before you could come back here for August again.”

Friday morning light glowing off his jacket, Scott tromps down the hill, past the birch lot to his parents’ place; Spencer scampers alongside, his wooly white coat dusted grey. Seasoned work boots crunching in the gravel, Scott crosses the road onto the mill site, past the blacksmith shop and up the ramp into the mill proper. Sunlight filters through the clapboard gaps, forming patterns on the floorboards, the barrel-stave saw, the adjustable dowel lathe. Scott runs a callused hand over the length of the lathe’s frame, admiring the lines through his fingertips.

“The Barn Wright, Inc. crew, Scott Hatch (R), Dave Rose (C), Joe Marshall (L), have a beer after a long day on the job.

“Scribner’s Mill is the only place in North America that has the complete picture,” he says. “There isn’t another early up-and-down water-powered sawmill in North America that is an original site with original buildings with original equipment.”

Crossing the mill floor, Scott leans against the banister overlooking the haul-in ramp—where logs were once pulled up from the millpond—and stares into the gurgling water below.

“But you have to understand that back then, you didn’t just have a sawmill. You had a community.” Below, a
tiny salmon turns its tail against the current. "All the men were working in the mill, all the women were working at the millhouse, and the kids were all hanging out and helping." Beside him, Spencer stands up on his hind legs and rests his muddy paws on Scott's knee. "The mill was the center of the community. Everything ran out of the mill."

In 1905, when a worker mangled his arm in a machine, Jesse Scribner—the last Scribner to operate the mill—supported his crippled employee, providing food and creating jobs for the man's family. Years later, when that same worker's house burned down, "the sawmill stopped producing for profit and didn't stop cutting lumber to rebuild this guy's house 'til they were done sawing it, and that was it." Light reflects off the water, filling Scott's eyes. "That was corporate responsibility."

LATE ONE EVENING, as autumn wind howls in the eaves and Scott and Jan prepare for bed, Scott says that they need to call their lawyer. "Dave needs our help."

Back in September, a night bicyclist slammed into the side of Dave's idling truck. The rider flipped over the hood and shattered his pelvis; he was wearing neither helmet nor road flashers. He was, however, a lawyer. Dave's court date is slated for early December. "I can't let one of my guys get screwed like this," Scott says.

Last year, Scott paid six-weeks' wages to an employee who hurt his back. "As an employer," Scott says, "I'm responsible for my crew's welfare. The least I could do was to keep sending
him a check." That employee used the money to finance his own welding company; he didn’t tell Scott that he’d quit, just kept cashing the checks. That was only months after Scott fell victim to insurance fraud, just months after finishing a farmhouse that his clients couldn’t pay him to restore.

“What’s the point,” Jan says, hip braced against the dining room table as she pulls off her shoes, “in contacting our lawyer on Dave’s behalf? Dave can’t even afford our lawyer.”

“No, of course,” Scott says, sitting down at the table. “We’d pay the bill.”

A gust of wind rocks the barn, sending a shiver through the model sailboat mounted above the fireplace. Jan gazes at her husband and sighs.

“You realize,” she says, “that Dave has no chance of winning his case, right? If he pleads not guilty, and we pay our lawyer to represent him, the judge’ll still find Dave guilty, and he’ll face an even bigger fine.”

Scott moves his hand from his lap and places it on the table, moves it back to his lap.

Lowering her eyes, Jan continues in a softer tone. “I know you want to help Dave, dear, but it’s just—You have to face it.” She leans forward, hands on the table, and stares Scott straight in his eyes. “You’re living in a fantasy world.”

Calmly, Scott nods and meets her gaze. “I know.” Another strong gust rocks the barn. “But I still want to help.”

JAN IS FIFTEEN years older that Scott. “What can I say?” He smiles sheepishly and shrugs. “I’ve always had a thing for older women.”

The January before the Barn Wright Inc. was founded, Scott and Jan were married in an ice palace in apples Maine, built by Scott with frozen slabs of Parker Pond. “It was a really warm night,” Scott says, “so the ice was wet and glistening. Then the next day, Ice Storm ’98 started.”

“Fourteen days without power,” Jan says of their home. “Fourteen days, no power.”

Tugging on his jacket, Scott follows Jan as she steps outside and crosses the driveway, from the barn to Cassidy’s stable—silver hair tucked under her black riding cap—calling out her horse’s name. A school nurse at Crooked River Elementary School, Jan is also a rider for Maine’s Equestrian Search and Rescue Team, but this morning she’s just going for a ride with the neighbors. Unhooking the fence wire gate she leads her chestnut Arabian to the horse trailer, dresses him with saddle and soft bridle, fits her foot in the stirrup and swings up onto his back. Hands pocketed in his jacket, Scott watches with quiet interest, then follows as they trot toward the neighbor’s stable, across the lawn and past the Rosalie.

In the warm Sunday sun, the Rosalie stands like a salt-dried chunk of driftwood on the pasture’s edge, weathered grey and rotten in her berth, flaking paint flares from her belly like a corona of colorless fire. Leaning against her hull, Scott rests his chin on her wooden lip.

“The Rosalie,” he says with authority, “is a gorgeous boat. A 1905 double-ended motor launch, twenty-two by six feet. Beautiful lines.” She looks like a baby whale. “The last people to use her were a barbershop quartet. They’d take her out on Bryant Pond and sing their way around the shore.”

Scott found the Rosalie while landscaping in Naples. The owner had all the paperwork, the history, and the passion to restore her. “He even had a letter written by the grandson of the Rosalie’s builder, thanking the new owners for letting him take a ride in the boat his grandfather built.” All the owner lacked was the know-how. “So he gave her to me. As long as I could fix her, he said, I could have her.”

That was fifteen years ago. The task proved greater than anticipated. “Well, I could do it,” Scott says, “if I did nothing else. I worked hard on that boat for two years to the extent I could. But,” he sighs, “I don’t have time to do it. I’ve got other things going on in my life.”

Like the previous owner, once Scott realized that he hadn’t the resources to restore the Rosalie, he started asking others if they’d take her, shelter her, bring her back to life. Many said yes. None followed through. He runs his hands along the old wood, feels each splinter beneath his palms. “If somebody doesn’t haul it out of here soon, it’s goin’ on the burn pile.”

Rapping his knuckles on her hull, Scott murmurs, “Poor old girl,” and turns to walk away. “There’s nothing I can do for you now.”

THE JACK looks like a dull metal thermos. Instead of coffee, it’s filled with pressurized oil. Instead of a cap a heavy bolt winds in through the top.

“I cannot dictate my will on the barn,” Scott says. “We’re having a discussion. The barn tells me what to do.”

The jack sits atop an eight-foot tall birch log standing on end in the doorway of the Buxton barn. Steady the log with one hand and gripping the jack handle with the other, Dave waits in the doorway while inside the barn, Joe fumbles with a new hemlock post. Scott sits in his excavator bucket, bucket butted against the wall beside the door. Nestled amid the dirt, Spencer watches shiny-eyed and intent, a curly white Muppet caked with mud.

Dave leans toward the dog—“Wha’choo doin’, Li’l Boy?”—and Spencer stands, pants, lets his pink tongue hang free from his mouth. Dave turns back to the log.

The Barn Wright crew was hired to fix the barn’s crooked sliding door, but this is holistic restoration: it’s the barn—not the door—that needs healing. As the foundation settled, roof load shifted toward the structure’s lowest point, causing a post to collapse, which buckled the corresponding wall. The end result was a door that wouldn’t open. To realign the wall, the crushed post needs to be replaced. To fit the new post, the roof load must shift off the wall. So Dave jacks the wall from the doorway, Scott straightens the bend, and Joe installs the new post. This is just one aspect of the total solution.
Positioning the post's base tenon into a mortise like a key into a lock, Joe hollers, "I'm all set in here, so whenever you guys are ready."

Dave pumps the jack and redirects the barn's heft as Scott's hydraulic arm presses gently into the wall. The framework rises in a tired, creaking rhythm. Dust puffs from joints. Joe shoulders the post in place.

"Ayuh," Joe says, stepping back. "She's in."

As Scott withdraws the excavator arm, Dave depressurizes the jack. The wall stands unbowed. Sliding open the barn door, Joe steps outside to stand beside Dave as Scott shuts down his machine. "Now that's progress, damnit."

"A timber frame," Scott later says at home, reclining on the couch in the fireplace's flickering glow, "is immune to gravity. It can sink in its foundation, and after two hundred years, be jacked up and it'll stand square and plumb. As long as it's not neglected, it will live for another two hundred years." Behind the cast-iron hearth figures—Hessian soldiers and glass-eyed owls—the green wood hisses and burns. "And it's strange that it takes a building—something built by men—to show someone their own mortality. It's so much bigger than any of us." Firelight wavers across his face. "If it's cared for, it can last forever."

AS A BOY, SCOTT played with his Tonka trucks in the sandbox behind his family's house, scooping earth with his bulldozer, pouring it into his dump truck, driving away to make a mountain somewhere else. When he was older, he'd walk around town with his ear to the air, searching for the diesel roar of a backhoe, an excavator, a crane on some construc-
tion site. "I would go sit on a stump somewhere and watch a guy run a bulldozer all day," Scott says. "I swear, by the time I finally sat behind the controls of a machine, I already knew how to operate it."

It's brisk when Scott steps out into the Sunday morning light, heads past the stable to the gravel pit behind his house. Cassidy munches hay in his bale feeder; the Rosalie rests dewy in her berth. Starting his excavator at the far edge of the pit, Scott rolls over to where the surrounding forest of white birch encroaches. For Scott, this is weed control. The bucket scoops earth, picks up rocks, clears away bushes like dandelions from a garden. His hands move the controls by muscle-memory; his eyes gaze abstractedly at the ground.

After an hour's work, the freshly turned ground lies in a wide, even swath, sloping gradually from the track to meet the forest in a clear and definite line. Maneuvering his excavator, Scott gathers the heap of weeded brush and deposits it on the monumental burn pile of dead trees and rotten barn parts rising from the middle of the pit.

Every year, after the season's first snow, Scott lights the annual mountain of junk lumber and debris igniting a bonfire that crepes the winter night sky. In a few weeks' time, this will be nothing but coals and ash—the black dust of old buildings, the bitter grit of roots and leaves.

Shutting down the excavator, Scott crosses the pit and hooks a wire-mesh harrow to the back of the lawn tractor he borrowed from his father, starts the engine with a cough and rides over the fresh earth, grading it smooth beneath the dragging metal frame. Alone in his pit, beside a towering burn pile and surrounded by dirt mounds and machines like oversized toys, Scott guides his tractor in an inward-turning spiral, drawing closer to the center where there's nowhere left to go, and he can stop.

"SOME HOMEOWNERS," Scott says, "they want me to do this or that or the other thing with their barns, and y'know, there are times when I refuse. I'll flat-out refuse, and I'll tell them, 'This isn't about you.'" And he thumps the table. "This is about your barn." Light from the lamp cuts through his right eye, illuminating his pale blue iris like a moon. "Usually, they don't argue with that."

Rising from his seat at the dining room table, Scott crosses the open threshing floor to the old wooden silo that stands between his office and the bathroom. Because of the immense pressure needed for silage to ferment into edible livestock feed, the silo walls were crosshatched tightly with supporting girts and braces; these now shelves Scott's Wall of Death.

"This is a mummified mole," Scott says, pointing to a small leathery body like a hairless, wingless bat. Near that squats the skeleton of a frog, stripped of flesh yet perfectly intact: tiny
skull plates, tiny flippers, tiny toes. On the shelf below rests a
robin skeleton, a blue egg nestled in its cradling ribs.

"If something dead is exposed, big animals will tear it
apart, and then it's scattered, so it's gotta be sheltered where
nothing big can get it," Scott runs his thumb lightly over the
skeletal frog's head. "If insects have free run with it, then you
just get a skeleton because all the soft tissue is gone. If it's in a
place where it's extremely dry and there's no insects even," he
smiles despite himself, "then it mummifies."

Not every mummy that Scott has found has been absorbed
into the Wall of Death. "You choose what you can save," Scott
says, "and the rest go in the burn pile." The calf he found
under the floorboards in the Sanford barn was too creepy to
keep; the line of birds trapped in the ridge cap of the Me­
chanic Falls barn—the barn that became Scott's home—were
too freshly dead, and stank.

From his collection, Scott withdraws a tiny black turtle—
no bigger than a nickel—from its nest inside an oyster shell.
"This guy I found on a tar driveway leading up to some job.
Thought he found a shortcut across the lawn." Scott gazes
down into his palm with casually mystified eyes. "Baked in the
sun." Its shell is thin as rice paper.

"History," Scott says, "is not about dates. It's not about
facts and numbers. History's about, what were people think­
ing. Why were they doing that? If you can figure out what
somebody was thinking and what it led them to do, then you
can start thinking, 'Okay, what am I thinking?'" Scott returns
the turtle to its appropriated shell. "That's where we get our
lessons from history."

THE SATURDAY before Thanksgiving, Scott drives to the
Public Safety Building in Naples, pencer perched in his lap
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THE SATURDAY before Thanksgiving, Scott drives to the
Public Safety Building in Naples, pencer perched in his lap
and gaping through the windshield at the scenery passing
by. An hour later, Scott returns home—down the driveway and
past the Rosalie—with a fire permit tucked into the front
pocket of his jeans.

Last week, the first dust of snow fell. Tonight, Scott touch­
es off the burn pile.

Stepping into the kitchen, Scott fishes a Geary's porter
from the fridge, pops the top and sits down at the dining room
and past the Rosalie—with a fire permit tucked into the front
pocket of his jeans.

Last week, the first dust of snow fell. Tonight, Scott touch­
es off the burn pile.

Stepping into the kitchen, Scott fishes a Geary's porter
from the fridge, pops the top and sits down at the dining room
table, stares at the bottle in his hands.

"I have to accept," Scott says, "that no one is ever going to
save that boat."

Beneath the table, Spencer lies on Scott's feet, curls into a
ball, bites the hem of his jeans.

"The last time I was about to burn the Rosalie," Scott says,
"the guy who gave her to me called me up on an unrelated
matter. Called me on the day of the fire." He laughs to his­
mself. "That bought her another two years." He rolls the bottle
between his palms. "I guess I'm sitting here waiting for him to
call again."

In the declining November light, the Rosalie sits in
her berth.

THE BURN PILE rises like a monument in the night. "This
isn't the equivalent to a barn fire," Scott says. "This is the
whole farm burning." Dead trees and bushes, stumps tum­
bling over floorboards, dry-rotten sills, and splintered bat­
tens from Ottisfield, Buxton, Naples; the collapsed addition
from Hollis Center and an entire wall from a barn in Oxford,
spread like a spilled deck of cards—a matrix of dead wood,
awkward angles, patterns and shadows.

As the first guests arrive at dark—some neighbors and
some Scribners, Dave and Joe from the Barn Wright crew—
Scott ignites the pile. Soaking his touchwood in accelerant, he
lights the brand and throws it into the stack. Some hundred­
year-old shingles catch first, spreading the fire to a desiccated
pine, spitting flames into a nest of split beams, convol­
ving and roaring like storm-waves at sea. Scott steps back from
the beat, opens a can of Bass, watches the column of smoke and
embers rise into the stark night sky.

"She's lit now," he says, face red from the billowing heat.

"She's catching."

At the fire's orange core, the shapes and angles crackle and
collapse, reform as new shapes, crackle and collapse. Coals
pulse like wounds. Beyond the pit, past the Hatchs' barn and
at the edge of Cassidy's pasture, the Rosalie sits safe in her
cradle.

"After this fire's burnt out," Scott says, "and it's safe to
start piling again, I'll bring her down and set her in the mid­
dle. Start next year's pile around her." Turning away from the
blaze, Scott takes a step toward his wife, among his friends
and crew. "Keep her out of sight."

Falling around them, cinders spiral like snow through
the sky.

Scott Hatch has gone on to found Partners for Recreational
Land Use, a non-profit aimed at maintaining favorable relations
between landowners and outdoor enthusiasts. Scribner's Mill is
one bureaucratic step away from becoming permanently opera­
tional. The Barn Wright Inc. is still going strong. In stasis, the
Rosalie remains in Scott's front yard.

Douglas W. Milliken lives and works in Portland, Maine with
his ladyfriend and a ghost. He writes stories and poems and
sometimes gets them published in The Rambler and Ghoti
Magazine. He claps his hands and sings lowly to himself. He
always ends up in Oakland. He is currently living and working in
Oakland, CA. His undergraduate degree is from St. John's College in
Santa Fe, NM. Recent work includes a series on reconstruction
work in New Orleans and an ongoing project documenting the
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From Scratch: One Fifty Ate Rising

THE CAFÉ BEGINS to fill as Allison Reid, 39, stands behind the counter reading the paper. Her cell phone rings, tinkling out a synthetic version of Handel's Messiah. She laughs, holding the phone up so the other staff can hear, biting her bottom lip as she rocks her thin frame and bobs her head of sprouting red cropped hair to the technotronic tune.

Written by Leah Bruns
Photographs by Gabriel Caffrey
Allison answers the phone, "What's up babe?" then leans her elbows on the counter beside the cash register, plastered with a bumper sticker that reads, "Lovin' from the oven."

Josh Potocki, 31, stares at a ticket he holds with metal tongs, inadvertently flexing his armful of tattoos. He raises an eyebrow, unable to read the handwriting.

Allison hangs up her phone and peering over Josh's shoulder she squints at the ticket in question. Deciphering it, she reads, "sesame bagel—herb. Rollin' into two more and egg and cheese."

"Work it out, girl," Josh says. "I'm on it, babe," she replies.

In the small aisle between the prep counter and the stove, Allison and Josh constitute "the line." They have been baking, cooking, and serving food together for the past four years at the cafe they have named One Fifty Ate.

Tickets begin to line up as the small 22 seat cafe begins to fill. With a line of patrons standing anxiously at the register, Allison continues expediting to Josh.

"Plain egg and cheese, plain egg whites and cheese," Allison says.

"Plain egg and cheese, plain egg whites and cheese," Josh repeats.

"Four sesame all day and a poppy," says Allison, pulling a shallow aluminum cake pan that serves as a plate from the tower in front of her. She lines it with a sheet of waxed paper, awaiting the order.

"I got three sesame down," Josh says.

"You need one more, babe. And I need a salmon on the poppy, if you would."

The walls of the small, subway-tiled kitchen are strewn with pieces of paper and photographs. The peeling linoleum floor is soft underfoot, and the staff can cover the length of the kitchen in ten strides or fewer. This cramped space once housed bakery ovens, a baking table, and a mixer; that was before the equipment was moved down the street, a little over a year ago, when the One Fifty Ate Bakery opened as an entity separate from the cafe.

Wearing a camouflage baseball cap backwards to secure his brown hair, Josh is an unlikely entrepreneur. He turns to the counter behind him to cut a completed bagel sandwich in half with his chef's knife. The bagel sandwich—thick-cut bacon, eggs, and melted smoked cheddar on the cafe's signature handmade bagel—accounts for a large chunk of the Cafe's revenue. Finished, Josh flips the knife like a cowboy, then slips it into the crack between the stainless prep-station and metal serving table where it comes to rest with a sch-ching.

Allison and Josh wanted to create a simple neighborhood bakeshop, baking and cooking from scratch. They have achieved this and more. They are now part of a successful collaborative of five owners and two locations, but it all began at the cafe at one fifty-eight Benjamin Pickett street. When they opened four years ago, the two first-time business owners had only a few couches, and a bagel recipe that was still in process. The Willard Beach community that surrounds the cafe appears to have been poised and awaiting its arrival.

With the demise of shipbuilding after World War II, and the introduction of the Maine Mall in the 1970s, this area of South Portland remained undeveloped. But now the neighborhood is experiencing resurgence, partly due to reasonably priced homes in a tightly knit community with a public beach. Real estate costs in the area are on the rise and a few developers have already sensed the trend building condominiums and a few out-of-place, oversized, newer homes on the edge of the beach.

On nearly every block of the Willard Beach neighborhood there is a house in some state of renovation. The neighborhood has been described as up-and-coming by working artists and residents, who occupy houses on the neighborhood's abundance of dead end streets.

BETWEEN THE CAFE and bakery, there are five owners now. The cafe is currently owned by Allison, Josh and Guy Hernandez. When Guy was first hired he had been working as an architect and had recently moved to Maine. He was considering a career change and had always felt drawn to cooking and baking. Allison and Josh, in desperate need of some respite and sharing a will-
Josh Potocki and Allison Reid work together in the One Fifty Ate Cafe kitchen.

ingsness to teach anyone who would like to learn hired him immediately. Guy proved to be a talented chef and baker and was eventually asked to become a partner in the venture.

Sonja Swanberg and Bob Johnson own the bakery at Willard Square. The bakery serves coffee, sweet treats, breads, bagels, and a variety of specialty sundries in a take-out fashion. It also provides the cafe with its fresh-daily bagels and baked goods. Following a visit from Vermont to see Josh and Allison, Sonja, who is a pastry chef, and her partner, Bob, an accomplished entrepreneur, became infatuated with the cafe’s venture as well as the Willard Beach neighborhood. Sonja and Bob moved to Maine shortly thereafter, buying and refurbishing a building in Willard Square. The two worked on renovating the bakery on the first floor of the building while living in an apartment above. They were able to open the bakery a year ago. In the beginning the cramped cafe housed the necessary ovens, cooling racks, and mixers for the bakery production. Now with equipment moved to the One Fifty Ate Bakery at Willard Square, some much needed space has been freed up at the cafe and the cooperative existence between the two spaces and five hard working owners has begun. The collaboration is unusual, perhaps even unprecedented. But they simply see it as an attempt to make the expensive venture of artisan baking and slow-food cooking sustainable.

IT IS EARLY morning for Josh, afternoon for most, after a late night dinner shift at the cafe. Josh has just awoken in his cabin, forty minutes from South Portland, in Cumberland, Maine. Josh, the grandson of a fur trapper, is from a small town in Pennsylvania. When he was young, Josh would follow his grand-
father around the woods, assisting him in his work. Leaving Pennsylvania, Josh traveled, cooking seasonally. The One Fifty Ate Cafe has forced his wanderlust to an uneasy standstill.

In the living room, Josh’s girlfriend and housemate chops wood for the woodstove with a small hatchet as Josh pours himself a cup of coffee in the kitchen and sits at the kitchen table, resting his tall, thin body on a wooden chair. Laid-back and bleary-eyed, he props an arm that’s sleeved in tribal tattoos behind his head and crosses a pajama pant leg across his thigh to reveal fuzzy black skull-and-cross-

bone slippers. His brown hair slips in front of his eyes to frame his boyish face and silver-ringed fingers encircle his coffee mug.

Josh talks about leaving North Carolina, where he worked at the Laughing Seed and met Sonja, one of the bakery’s new owners, and Allison. That is where Allison taught Josh how to bake bread, and Josh considers baking a gift from Allison. Following his stint at the Laughing Seed he moved back home to his parents’ in Pennsylvania to decide on his next move.

Leaning forward in his chair, with an unwavering green-eyed gaze, Josh explains, “So my sister and her boyfriend at the time were like, dude, we’re freaking doing the trail, the Appalachian Trail.” They had been planning it for a long time and Josh decided to go, too. “I was like, fuck it, man, I’m gonna go, I’m going.” Josh pushes his hair behind his ears and continues, “So I bought this ghetto back pack and freaking packed my shit, dude, and we rolled.” He made it all the way to Maine on the trail.

WHEN JOSH’S HIKE on the Appalachian Trail ended in Maine, he went to Street and Co., a trendy Portland restaurant where Allison worked as
the sous chef following her return from North Carolina. Josh arrived fresh from the trail in hospital pants and full beard, and attempted to get Allison’s phone number from her co-workers. Unsure of Josh’s appearance, they wouldn’t give it to him. So Josh returned the next day to find Allison. After another short bout of wanderlust, Josh returned to Portland to begin working with Allison at Street and Co.. There, they began to consider owning a business together. Josh was staying with Allison when he saw the little building for rent on Pickett Street and says he thought it would make a nice little coffee shop or a bakery.

DR. DRE RHYTHMS reverberate from the kitchen speakers as Josh pulls a cookie sheet laden with apple dumpings out of the stove.

“Those puffs sure do have some balls,” he says.

Allison stands behind him and laughs, her bright hair sprouting from the top of a multicolored headband, as usual. One hand on her hip, she examines the tray, smiles, and says, “That’s killer, Josh.”

The dumplings were a collaborative effort. Allison’s dough, from Sonja’s recipe, wrapped around whole apples Josh picked up from the orchard near his house. They both dip their ring fingers in for a taste and nod in agreement.

Josh and Allison are preparing for the Friday night dinner shift. Because she rises so early in the morning, Allison does not normally work at night. She is just filling in, preferring to leave the venture of tapas and wine dinners to Josh and Guy and devote her attention to the bread and the breakfast.

Josh says he got to a point not too long ago where he felt the business was reaching its plateau and he wasn’t sure he wanted to keep doing it. After what he refers to as a “three year egg intensive,” he felt unchallenged in the kitchen. Cooking foods from scratch and presenting foods in creative ways is a passion for him. The movement of the bakery equipment out of the Cafe has allowed Josh to build on some new ideas. He and Guy now serve dinner at the Cafe four nights a week and are considering other ways to increase revenue through wine dinners and private functions.

But tonight, Josh and Allison boil,
bake, chop and laugh side by side.

Surveying the stove, Josh taps tongs on his thigh in time to the music; he bobs his head and strokes the sparse scruff on his chin.

“All right, Ally,” Josh says, holding the first ticket of the night.

Facing Josh, Allison says, “Hit me bro, hit me!”

“Two cheeses all day, one trout, one charcuterie,” Josh expedites.

“Two cheeses all day, one trout, one charcuterie,” Allison repeats.

They rotate like synchronized swimmers from cutting boards to burners; Allison drags a small metal pan off the stove with her kitchen towel and sets in two pieces of French bread and a small slab of trout. Holding it next to Josh, she says, “Do you want to hit me with some olive oil, just on that fish?”

Josh obliges, splashing the trout with an aromatic stream from a bottle of olive oil.

Allison begins the charcuterie, platting thinly-sliced meats as Josh starts the next ticket. “Two cheese tastes,” Allison nods.

Josh takes a plate from the board and wipes invisible smudges off the edge with his kitchen towel, preparing it for a stuffed baked onion.

Watching Josh as he plates the onion, Allison smiles, “Now, who do you think you are anyway?”

Josh breaks into a grin.

“Rollin’ brother, we’s rollin’,” she says.

The waitstaff are busy serving wine and clearing courses in the candle-lit dining room. The dim light masks a multitude of spatial sins, transforming the room into an intimate dining space.

Allison wipes her hands on her towel, looks around for a waiter and shrugs, then walks the onion dish into the dining room. Standing tall with a sure stride, she will return tomorrow at 4 A.M. to individually shape, boil and bake the bagels.

Since the completion of “From Scratch: One Fifty Ate Rising,” many changes have transpired for the cafe, the bakery, and their owners. Josh Potocki is now the sole owner of Pickett Street Cafe, the former One Fifty Ate Cafe. Josh has also partnered with former cafe co-owner Guy Hernandez and former cafe employee and Fore Street chef, Christian Kryger in a new venture on Portland’s Eastern Prom known as Bar Lola. The space, well-suited for leisurely wine dinners and tapas, is run in partnership by the three chefs as well as Stella Hernandez, Guy’s wife. It has already received rave reviews for its slow-dining, intimate-night experience.

Allison Reid’s desire to be baking full time has been realized and she has continued her partnership with Sonya Swannberg and Bob Johnson. The One Fifty Ate Bakery in Willard Square is now Scratch Baking Company and is no longer affiliated with the cafe. The Scratch Baking Company has reinstated wholesale and bulk production business to a number of local area restaurants and the bakery and retail business for the three has continued to build. Allison and Josh both have seen these changes as an opportunity for the entire collective to focus their energies on their passions.

Prior to attending Salt, Leah Bruns, a Maine native, was a semester away from completion of a Sociology degree from the University of Southern Maine. She has since completed her degree and is currently working with the Peoples Regional Opportunity Program, a Portland based community action agency.

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Gabriel Caffrey came to Salt to develop his technical and storytelling skills. He is currently living and working in Oakland, CA. His undergraduate degree is from St. John’s College in Santa Fe, NM. Recent work includes a series on reconstruction work in New Orleans and an ongoing project documenting the lives of residents of live-work complexes in Oakland. His work is available online at www.photoshelter.com/user/gcaffrey.

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Swan’s Honey

A HANDFUL of beehives sink into a flooded gravel pit, cliffs of blasted rock looming above them. Lincoln Sennett grabs a box from the murky water, bees bouncing off his white suit. He knows this hive is dead; a week of early October rain sealed the entrance and sent a damp chill through the colony. These bees didn’t stand a chance.

Written by Erin Post
Photographs by Kelly Kilgallon
Carrying the wooden box like a lunch tray, he slogs over a bank so choked with mud he loses a rubber boot to the muck. Chris Heard, Lincoln's assistant, grabs the box—honeycomb frames line up inside like books on a shelf—and loads it into a pickup, then waits for Lincoln to bring him the other boxes that, stacked together, make up the hive.

"We've lost some real good ones," Lincoln says, barely looking up. "When they pack that much honey, you know they're good."

The hives that survive the flood will join hundreds of his other colonies on a tractor-trailer to Florida in a few weeks, where they will build strength, pollinating orange blossoms in the warm sun. In the spring, they will return to Maine.

Bees slip down Lincoln's arms as he lifts a comb from a hive near the truck. The cluster's still there, a tight ball of dancing bodies heating the hive, expanding and contracting with the temperature outside. Honey fills the combs beneath, each gold-tinged hexagon capped by thousands of workers who secreted wax day after day, driven by a pulse outside of their bodies, the pulse of the hive itself. Thousands more ripened the nectar into honey, still more collected the nectar, flying from goldenrod to aster to clover, their wings getting frayed and tattered, some dying in only a few weeks.

Now the colony's life hangs in the balance. Lincoln peers over the top of his glasses, searching the crawling bodies for the telltale rump of the queen, the key to the hive's survival.

LINCOLN STRIDES down the driveway from his house with a silver coffee cup in hand, rain whipping across his face on a mid-October morning. The remnants of a hurricane that just lashed Florida are still tearing through Albion, Maine. Trees crack and twist, the tall grass whistles. It's pitch black outside except for the porch light, and even that fades as Lincoln walks past the barn and down the hill.

The keys to the honey packing plant jingle in his hand—he's getting ready for the day ahead. Sloshing through a puddle, he opens the door, while over at the house, his wife, Karen, helps his twelve year-old son, Mac, get ready for school, while his daughter, eight year-old Abby, rolls out of bed.

Inside the building the light is dim; it smells like sugar and packing tape. Pallets of plastic-wrapped jars of Swan's Honey wait near the garage door. Today, lightly heated and filtered honey will be bottled, but Yvonne Carter and Lisa Waugh, the employees who run the bottling room, won't get in until around eight.

Rain pings against the windows as Lincoln kneels to unplug cords in a tangle near the wall. Since the weather prevents him from visiting the beeyards, he plans to get the bottling tanks set up, then finish extracting the last of the honey from the fall flow. He works quickly, his glasses slipping to the end of his nose.

Relying on his chemical engineering experience with oil corporations in L.A. and Alaska, Lincoln drew up the plans for the plant himself. He borrowed ideas from the huge honey packing companies in the Midwest and from Harold Swan, the founder of Swan's Honey. In 2002, Lincoln bought the business from Harold, who ran the plant next to his home in Brewer, Maine. Last winter, Lincoln finished construction on the new facility in Albion and the building, with its hot room, flash heater and bottling machines, is like a live organism itself—pipes and hoses connect to tanks in two rooms and everything can be shut off or rerouted at a moment's notice.

By next year, Lincoln hopes to have his employees manage more of the plant's daily operation, giving him more time to devote to his 400 hives. Yvonne has worked with Lincoln for over two years; she knows what orders go where, how the machines work. Karen manages the books. But with just three employees, there's not much time to rest.

"When you're the owner, you have to pick up the slack yourself," Lincoln says, reaching deep inside the barrel of the decapper, the machine that shaves the beeswax off the top of the honeycombs to scoop out the wax left over from the day before. He tosses the yellow chunks into a barrel and flicks his hand. Wax gums up beneath his nails.
and coats his palm almost to the cuff of his shirt. He shakes his hand again, but the wax is stubborn. He reaches in the barrel and grabs another fistful.

The challenge is to keep pace with what the business needs to stay successful. It’s a matter of constantly adjusting and re-adjusting priorities.

“Harold used to say ‘business never stays flat,’” Lincoln says, head cocked to the side, one eyebrow raised. “Either you’re losing business or gaining business. You’re never really staying in one place.”

Outside, the wind lashes the fields behind the building, rattling tree branches. Just before eight, Yvonne pushes open the door to the plant and sheds her powder blue hat and scarf. She says a quick hello, checks the phone for messages and grabs a bottle of mineral oil to clean the spigot attached to a tank.

“We may trip the plug if we run two extractors,” Yvonne says, striding past Lincoln, recalling how the bottling room went dark the other day when too many machines were running on the same circuit at the same time.

Lincoln leans over the barrel, peering in, wax buried between his fingers. “I guess we’ll give it a try,” he says, smiling.

AT THE END of a narrow dead-end road in downtown Brewer, just around the corner from an Irving gas station, Harold Swan, the founder of Swan’s Honey, ambles through his front lawn.
Passing a cluster of beehives, he points out the modest white building where his packing operation used to be, his cat-eye glasses glinting in the sun. Across the driveway squats the olive green house where he grew up, where he raised his kids, and where he still lives now, after eighty-one years, with his wife, Hilda.

Harold walked this same land as a child; he remembers picking bees off flowers and marveling over them. He'd sit in front of a hive, watching them for hours. "Some people are fascinated with other things," he says. "Just happened to be that I liked bees."

Before he was drafted into World War II, he ordered a hive from the Sears-Roebuck catalog. While he was in Alaska, coordinating re-fueling flights for planes coming in from Russia, his father looked after his bees. "When I came home, he'd built that one little hive up to about five," Harold says.

After the War, he came back to Maine, thinking that working for the telephone company like his father would be a sensible way to make a living. But his father—who grew up on a farm—had another idea.

"Oh no," Harold remembers him saying. "You want to be your own boss." So his father suggested the bee business. "You think we can make a living at that?" Harold had asked. He laughs when he thinks of his father's reply: "Well, we can try."

At first, Harold bottled honey out of the garage, but when his parents built the house next door in the early '60s,
Harold built the packing plant along with it. "The hot room was right behind those two windows," he says, gesturing towards the white building, his slight frame swallowed by oversized pants and a baggy sweater. Now he rents the home to three tenants and a cat named Spike.

When Harold’s sons were growing up and business was booming, the yard bubbled with activity. High school buddies would haul 60-pound cans of honey in the afternoon, happy to make a little extra money and spend time together. After his kids left home, it became harder to secure help, but Harold still managed to find people. One employee worked with him long enough to help Lincoln run the plant from Brewer until he finished the new facility in Albion.

At one point, Harold and Hilda had over 1,000 hives and trucked them south for the winter. It was long days filled with physical work. "We’re talking about working the bees all day long, just as tight as you can go," Harold says, remembering how he would often leave at seven in the morning to work the yards, get back at six to take a dinner break, only to head out again to load trucks. Everything was done by hand. "You’d say ‘Well, I don’t think I have enough money to buy a loader,’ because we were struggling. I had a family, and it was all I could do to keep bread on the table," Harold says, sitting in the front room of his house, overlooking his yard.

"So here we are, worked all day and then worked half the night unloading bees. Looking back, it wasn’t fun," he says, matter-of-fact, "but you know, that’s our business."

LINCOLN’S PICKUP is perched at the top of the hill, the driver’s side door open, and the keys in the ignition. A tinny ‘ding ding’ echoes over to the beeyard a few yards away, barely audible over the buzz of thousands of wings. Lincoln doesn’t notice his truck door; he’s already working. Kneeling in the grass, he leans in and cracks open a hive, popping up the wooden cover. Bees shoot out from beneath the stack of boxes, peeling out and bouncing against his veil.

"I wouldn’t call this a friendly one," he mutters to himself, squeezing the round tip of a metal smoker between the combs. Hundreds of bees crawl down his back, down the legs of his white suit, across the fingers of his gloves.

Clusters of Lincoln’s hives are tucked into quiet corners everywhere around Albion: among a stand of evergreen trees at Tuttle Tree Farm, just over a hill past the cows at Noyes Dairy Farm, in the midst of a raspberry patch or a clover field. The trick is to find a location—preferably with morning sunlight and not much wind—that has flowers the bees like within a mile or two. The bees take care of the rest: workers scout out blossoms to find nectar, gather pollen in the long, curved hairs near their hind legs, drop off their find, then tell others where to go to get what the colony needs. To do this, they
dance: their wings generating a sound inaudible to the human ear, passing on clues to food sources, using gravity and odor as guides in a way people don’t yet understand.

All it “costs” to put hives in a location is ‘yard rent,’ which means the landowner gets a steady supply of fresh honey every year.

AFTER WEEKS of rain, the sun has finally come out, so Lincoln is trying to visit as many beeyards as the day will allow. It doesn’t matter that it’s Sunday, the day before Halloween, or that he was at the plant melting down beeswax until three in the morning. He has to make sure the colonies are healthy enough to survive the journey to Florida, where they will build strength for the spring back in Machias, Maine, to pollinate his blueberry fields, the same land he worked as a child with his grandfather.

Lincoln spent summer vacations at his grandparents’ home, coming up every summer from Connecticut to harvest berries, go fishing, and tromp through fields with his grandfather. As an adult, he took over the blueberry land to keep it in the family.

Now, Lincoln trucks about 200 of his hives there in May, when every blossom, in order to become a fruit, needs to be visited by a bee bearing pollen. And because Lincoln wants as many bees as possible to do the job, he sends the bees to Florida to achieve that goal.

The sun is where it all starts: the queen senses the change from the short days in the north to the more direct sunlight in the south. She thinks it’s spring. So she starts to lay more eggs. Meanwhile, the workers start to collect more nectar and make more honey to feed more mouths. The population explodes; the bees come back to Maine ready to zip from blossom to blossom, creating the spark for blueberry after blueberry. It’s an ecosystem all its own: at harvest time, every plump, juicy fruit plucked from the plants in Machias has the warm glow of southern sunshine rippling beneath its skin.

“Look at those peppers,” Lincoln says, nodding towards the field out the driver’s side window. He’s headed to his third beeyard of the afternoon. First peppers, then gourds, then pumpkins pass as the truck trundles down a narrow dirt road at Johnny’s Selected Seeds. A bobble-head Chihuahua stuck to the dash nods violently. Lincoln inches around a curve and pulls up next to a beeyard with four palettes of hives. He takes one last swig out of a can of Mountain Dew, then jumps out of the truck to grab feed and a smoker.

Because Lincoln doesn’t travel south with the bees, he wants to make sure they have what they need to take care of themselves, and that means honey.

Most colonies here are healthy, but there’s one in trouble. He pulls out a honeycomb frame where a cluster of bees is protecting the brood; young bees developing inside honeycomb cells. Lincoln lifts the frame and tips it towards him—
the bees barely move.

Instead of scurrying up and over each other, they are lethargic—their bodies nestled next to each other, spindly legs gripping the comb. They’ve run out of honey in that part of the hive, but since they need to keep the brood warm, they won’t leave. Even though they’re starving to death.

Lincoln slips the frame back in the hive and grabs a hive tool, a flat metal blade with a handle to pry the covers off hives. It’s an emergency feeding. Leaning over the hive, mushing honey in every crack and crevice, Lincoln says he had colo-thargic—their bodies nestled next to each other, spindly legs gripping the comb. They’ve run out of honey in that part of the hive, but since they need to keep the brood warm, they won’t leave. Even though they’re starving to death.

When the bees got back to Albion, he’d crack hives open and see whole colonies quivering. And like this hive, he gave them food.

"It’s just amazing," he says, awe in his voice as he takes one last look and places the cover back on the hive. "Fifteen minutes and they’ll come back to life."

AS A YOUNG MAN, Lincoln stepped out of college and into a world in the throes of an energy crisis. Petroleum prices were so high that many families struggled to pay the bills. For Lincoln, a new chemical engineer, oil was the place to be—it was dynamic and exciting. So he went to work for an oil corporation on offshore rigs. The company sent him all over: to Alaska, to grad school in Pennsylvania, and to Los Angeles, where his son Mac was born. But through all the moves, Lincoln never forgot the blueberry fields in Machias he’d worked as a kid with his grandfather. When his father retired, Lincoln didn’t want to let the land go.

"You just hate to see, I don’t know, something die," Lincoln says. "It’s something my family was always involved in and if I didn’t do it, it would have died."

He had been overseeing the blueberry harvest for about seven years before he and Karen decided to move from southern California to Maine; they wanted their kids to grow up someplace rural. Lincoln’s family had a history on Bessey Ridge Road—his grandfather grew up in a farmhouse there; the family surviving the Great Depression by milking cows, growing potatoes, and harvesting apples. By the time Lincoln inherited the house from his great-uncle, the homestead was just a shadow of the past. The foundation had collapsed on one side, and water ran through the basement where barrels of apples were once stored. Lincoln spent summers during grad school rebuilding. He put on a new roof, new siding, constructed a timber frame addition, re-wired the whole building. Now he walks the same path to the barn his great-grandfather did; his son sleeps in what was his grandfather’s childhood bedroom.

Lincoln says he “learned more about being a person than anything else” from his grandfather, who served as President of the University of Maine at Machias for 40 years. Lincoln “Mac” Sennett was eccentric and outspoken—known to cut his meat at a fancy college dinner with a pocket knife covered in sardine guts—but he was always willing to give a person a leg up if they were willing to work. Lincoln remembers one of his grandfather’s favorite sayings: “If you’re of average intelligence, you can out-think half the people. Now all you have to do is outwork the other half.” Lincoln laughs. “There’s a lot of truth to that.”

Lincoln learned that lesson at twelve years old as he plodded through row after row with metal pails in Machias, raking for nine hours at a time. It was backbreaking labor, but he still remembers the pride he felt at the end of the day.

Last summer, Lincoln’s son worked the same fields he did as a boy. Mac, eleven at the time, stacked boxes of blueberries from four in the morning to six at night, seven days a week, for almost three weeks.

“I worked hard, but Mac probably worked harder,” Lincoln says. “We brought in, I don’t know, 250,000 pounds, and he stacked every box on the truck himself. Those boxes weighed twenty pounds and he weighed sixty pounds. So that was a struggle. Every box was a struggle. But he stuck with it, and he did really well.”

Even if his kids don’t want to take over, Lincoln says the land has served its purpose. Mac and Abby never knew their great-grandfather, who died in 1982, but through the land, they inherited his spirit.

“They may not want to raise blueberries, but it’ll still be a part of who they are,” he says. “I guess it’s partly a way to hold on to the past, pass on what we do... It almost gives you an identity.”

AS FALL gives way to winter, the sun casts longer shadows across the counter near the window, and the packing plant gets busier. Orders for Christmas stack up; Lincoln expects to bottle up to 14,000 pounds of honey during two weeks in November. He also has to get to the beeyards—about 25 scattered within 20 miles of the house—to pick up all 400 hives and truck them back to the house before they can leave for Florida. Everyone pitches in—Mac helps weekends and days off from school. Yvonne works some Saturdays and Chris often stays late at the bottling tank.

One mid-October day, a half-dozen different orders need to go out, while another will leave Thursday. It’s not yet nine in the morning, but the bottling room buzzes with movement. The tank grows each time Yvonne hits the button and fills another two-ounce jar with honey. Chris cranks out labels by the window, placing jars in a vise, smoothing the paper, and over by the door, Lisa wraps boxes with packing tape, the plastic snapping.

The crew sends Swan’s Honey to big name grocery chains, but they also cater to smaller health food stores and some gift shops. Despite the orders flowing in, Lincoln still rents out his bees for pollinations as a source of income; honey alone doesn’t make ends meet.

Due to the global economy and cheap foreign imports, “it’s nearly impossible to survive as a honey producer in the United States,” Lincoln says. The price of honey is just too
low. “You’re competing with Argentina and China and what those folks are willing to work for. If they can work for a few dollars a day, that’s what you’re competing against, so the price of honey is going to reflect [that].”

The Swan’s Honey label is what gives the business an edge. Customers see the name and they trust it. Without that identity, the company is just an invisible bottler—exactly the way the big players like it. Lincoln chalks it up to the nature of 21st century business.

“A Wal-Mart will come in and say, ‘okay, you package stuff for our own Wal-Mart label,’” he says. “Well, that ends up becoming 98 percent of that company’s business.” Then comes the mandate: make the product cheaper. If you can’t, they take their business elsewhere—the customer doesn’t know the difference. Lincoln tries not to get caught in that cycle by working with smaller companies, but packing honey on big volume jobs is still necessary to survive. And it’s a risk he has to take.

“That’s been a real problem in the United States with these big companies having so much market power,” he says. “They can really pretty much dictate to the producer right down to the point where the producer is barely getting by, or it ends up going overseas.”

HAROLD SWAN remembers when farmers would find him in the fields of Aroostook County and buy comb honey on the spot, right next to the hive.

“The air was full of bees and you could smell the honey,” Harold says, sitting near the picture window in his home, his blue eyes flashing. “These farmers would drive out in the field and roll down their window and say, ‘hey beekeeper, got any comb honey?’ And I’d say, ‘Yeah, I’ve got some right in the hive here…. I’d go over and shake the bees right off the comb and hand it to him. I didn’t have to go to the store at all.’

But Harold knew a business opportunity when he saw one.

“I said, ‘Man, this is a kind of a market. I better check this out.’ So I went into some of the stores up there and I says, ‘You interested in buying some comb honey?’”

Harold knew they were, and he knew he had them cornered. He made sure the stores bought liquid honey—his main source of income—along with the comb honey.

He leans back and laughs when he thinks back now.

“I sold right out,” Harold says. “I said, ‘Wow, what am I going to do about that?’”

He had a beekeeper he knew in Georgia send up a two-ton truck loaded with five thousand pounds of comb honey. He went around to all the stores and sold stacks of it, the shelves overflowing. “Right out in the aisle,” Harold says, awe in his voice. “I’d go back in a month and every drop of it was gone.”

But Harold knew it wouldn’t last. Soon, a honey conglomerate out of the Midwest swooped in. They flooded the stores with comb honey and undercut his profits.

“You know, I can’t blame them,” Harold says, speaking of his competition. “It’s the way business is, but it’s just a little tough on the little guy ’cause you have to survive. I thought I was so isolated up here they wouldn’t notice me.” But they did.
Soon, too, grocery stores started to consolidate. The guy down the street no longer ran the store. A corporate headquarters thousands of miles away did.

"You could talk to the store managers [at first]," Harold says. "You could say 'Hi Jim, Hi Joe,' but later as the stores got bigger, you could feel the pressure coming." He remembers walking into a store one day like he always did, through the front door to put honey on the shelf, when business changed in front of his eyes.

"I saw these two men standing there and they had suits on," Harold says. "I had this funny feeling." So he asked the store manager who they were. "They're big trouble for you and me both," the manager said. "They're from the corporate headquarters and they're going to remodel the whole store."

After that, Harold, like Lincoln, couldn't just walk in the front door. So he sent his honey through a warehouse, but his profits dropped. He had to change tactics. Gift stores and tourist shops became more important to Harold's business, but it was a hard way to make a living. For Harold, the bees kept him going. Just like when he was a teenager, sometimes he'd stand near his hives and watch the bees fly, the scent of honey in the air.

"You can smell it, you know," Harold says. "And you get pretty excited when you see all this honey coming in. It's not the money. The money's nice but you feel like you accomplished something because you kept the bees working and they're making honey and they're very industrious. It just gives you kind of a good feeling that you were actually part of this whole ecosystem."

Harold speaks of the decision to sell Swan's Honey to Lincoln without regret; he was happy to find someone who knew bees, and who had the drive to keep the business going. Harold's oldest son stuck with it until about seven years ago, but ultimately decided it wasn't for him. "Originally I planned to have my son do what Lincoln's doing; he had the ability but he didn't have the passion," Harold says. "You've got to have the passion in this business."

LINCOLN KEEPS Popsicle sticks behind the counter in the shop so he can give a dollop of honey to any customer who wants to try. All around, shelves are filled with beeswax candles, honey sticks, honey spreaders, books on beekeeping, even a moose made out of beeswax. A display surrounding the counter boasts bottles in neat rows, each a different variety of honey: raspberry, blueberry, cranberry.

These bottles are the soul of Lincoln's business—it's what makes him different from the big packers who send out millions of pounds of honey every year. To them, honey is a commodity: it doesn't matter which flowers the bees visited. For Lincoln, it's the dance between his bees and a particular blossom that keeps him in business. "It's your varietals and the fact that different honey from different places has different properties.... That's what makes it where a small company has got a chance at it," he says.

Lincoln talks about honey like fine wine. Wild raspberry pulls no surprises; it's easy to take. "I call it real light and smooth with a little fruitiness to it," he says. Wildflower is like its name—a little wild—a mix that depends on the progression of the season. Lincoln explains, "It's a blend. It varies from year to year. It's not as mild as raspberry but not as strong as cranberry. It's kind of the flavor of blueberry without the bite."

There's nothing subtle about cranberry honey—it's tart, it's direct. Then there's blueberry honey, which holds back until the end. At first taste, it's like any other honey, Lincoln says, but then "there's a little bit of an after bite. A tanginess."

The strongest honey is buckwheat. It's "very dark, between a caramel and molasses flavor." Orange blossom, on the other hand, is an enigma. "It's very aromatic. It really has the aroma of citrus flowers, the orange grove." Lincoln struggles to find the right words: it's not exactly right to say it tastes citrusy, it's more subtle, more like a mood, a hint of the past. "If you've ever been in the orange grove and you've smelled the blossoms and all that, it brings back that memory."

AFTER A DAY of getting hives ready for Florida, Lincoln washes his hands at the sink in the bottling room. The machines are quiet; Yvonne and Lisa left hours ago.

Grabbing a towel, Lincoln sits down near the honey tanks, his elbows resting on his knees. "This is a depressing time of year for being a beekeeper," he says, his voice low. "There's a lot of uncertainty at this point. You're just trying to save what you have."

It's looking forward to those first hints of April warmth—remembering the shoots of green, the buds on the trees—that
keeps a beekeeper going. Out in the fields on a spring day, bees swirling, flowers blooming, it’s easy to get caught up in the explosion of life.

“Everything’s building, the hives are building,” Lincoln says. “You kind of get the same feeling that everything else does.”

Standing up, he checks the tank as dusk fades the rolling hills outside the window into shadow.

A TRACTOR TRAILER with a green cab stretches the length of Lincoln’s driveway in front of the packing plant, its engine idling. Just beyond the bumper, Chris navigates through a sea of beehives with a drill and a bin of screws, the sun creeping over the fields beyond the barn. He leans in and screws the cover on a hive—a lone bee pops from underneath and buzzes off. The rest of the colony huddles inside; it’s ten days after Thanksgiving and barely thirty degrees.

Two days later than planned, almost two weeks after what he had originally hoped, Lincoln is loading bees for the trip to the orange groves of Wimauma, Florida. A mid-week rainstorm meant he couldn’t get all of the colonies back to the plant for Friday, then Cory Clarcq, the truck driver who hauls Lincoln’s bees, couldn’t come on Saturday. So on the first Sunday in December, Lincoln and his grandfather, and now his son, harvested the fruit in the late summer heat, berries filling pail after pail.

A sharp wind rustles the grass as Lincoln kneels in front of a hive, so close his breath curls around the wooden boxes. He uses his fist to knock a long, thin piece of wood into the entrance at the base, hooking two fingers around the edge, pulling to make sure it’s tight. Standing up, he tugs at the hive’s cover, then glances back at the idling truck.

The bees begin their journey before nightfall.

AS SNOW SPITS from the sky, a field mouse scurries through the labyrinth of wooden palettes on the trailer. Inside each hive, stacked higher than the truck’s cab, bees cluster body against body, keeping warm. In a few days, the queens that survive the trip will feel the southern sun and touch off a firestorm of new life. Those bees may not live beyond the orange groves, but their work will: the honey they make will reach back to Yvonne and Lisa at the packing plant, back to Harold in Brewer, back to the blueberry fields in Machias, where Lincoln and his grandfather, and now his son, harvested the fruit.

Lincoln’s bees have been unaffected by a mysterious ailment plaguing commercial hives across the country. Experts are unsure whether a new virus is to blame, or whether some other cause is behind what has been termed Colony Collapse Disorder. Lincoln said this winter’s trip to Florida went remarkably well. He lost only about 20 hives in transit.

Swan’s Honey also recently added one more employee to the roster of three—Yvonne, Lisa, and Chris—that keeps the honey plant running smoothly. Harold and Hilda Swan, founders of Swan’s Honey, continue to keep up with operations from their home in Brewer.

Erin Post, a native of Plattsburgh, New York, came to Salt after two years of working at a daily newspaper in the far northern reaches of New York State. She now writes for a weekly newspaper in Vermont’s Mad River Valley, where she also enjoys cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and otherwise wandering around in the woods. Erin graduated from Hamilton College in 2001 with a degree in English. epost@localnet.com

Before coming to Salt Kelly Kilgallon was a happy seasonal worker living in the majestic and forever wild Adirondack Mountain wilderness. She couldn’t bear herself away for too long, so after sadly leaving Salt she resumed residency in the forest where she now works as the Art and Production assistant and staff photographer for Adirondack Life Magazine.

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Sailmaker

IN AN OLD BARN in the small, shoreside village of East Boothbay, Maine, Nat Wilson sweeps aside a scrap of canvas hanging in a doorway and ducks into his second-floor sail loft. His tall, narrow body slips in as silently as a folded letter sliding into an envelope, and with a soft whisper, the fabric falls back into place behind him, closing out the winter draft from the unheated downstairs.

Written by Amanda Witherell
Photographs by Michael Teuteberg
The room hums with the music of production: the pounding of a mallet, the rattle of a sewing machine, the shushing of cloth along the floor. Nobody pauses in their work to greet him. Nat stands posture perfect, with his square shoulders high, as if holding back a shiver; the March air has pinked his thin cheeks on the short walk across the yard between his house and the sail loft.

He nods around the large square room, as if taking a head count of his sailmakers. Susannah, Dayle, Ren, and Eben are anchored among the furnishings of the loft: several industrial sewing machines, four long wooden hand-stitching benches, and a worktable littered with scraps and tools. Waves of cloth—brown and beige and cream and white—eddying around them, in the process of becoming sails.

Outside, white-capped waves curl into the ebbing tide of the Damariscotta River. Early afternoon sun slants in through the windows, warming the room. He slips off his wool overshirt and swings it onto a peg in a wall festooned with photographs of sailing ships—many with corners signed, thanking him and his crew for the work. He removes the baseball cap he always wears outdoors and tosses it onto a desk in the corner. It's as cluttered as the rest of the room; conversation in the loft often opens with: "have you seen..." or "are you using..." and "where is the..."

Nat picks up where he left off before lunch, cutting lengths of cloth at the worktable. A sail plan hangs on the wall nearby, covered with dimensions and calculations in his handwriting. The blades of the scissors already clinking in his large hands, he asks, "Any phone calls?" in a voice as calm as dawn, just loud enough to be heard over the sewing machine.

Murmurings of "no" flow back to him. And then it is as if a spell has broken. The questions call out across the room to him, one after another:

"Before I punch more holes, does this seem good?"

"It was gonna be a three-inch turn, right?"

"Can I use cream patches for the logos?"

Nat lays his scissors down and rounds the room like a mother bird feeding nestlings. His long, thin legs step over piles of sails, the worn-out soles of his shoes sliding along the varnished floor, his nose like a beak pointing the direction of his attention. He's been out of the loft for an hour and a half, and everyone has saved their question for his return.

"I enjoy teaching others as much as I enjoy doing the work," he says, although he moves briskly from employee to employee. "And I like people to learn to think for themselves. Get the concept of what we're trying to do. 'Cause when you can learn to work that way, it's spontaneous."

After thirty-five years as a sailmaker, the right answers come easily to Nat. His thin lips press gently as he listens to Susannah's question. He holds the corner of the sail she's working on in his large, dry hands, peering down at it through his bifocals. In and out of the loft since six-thirty this morning, his sapphire eyes are rimmed with red. As he gazes down at the sail, locks of hair, drifting from brown to grey, fall over his forehead, giving him a boyish look. It takes less than a second to decide: put the hardware a little closer to the edge, there's enough room. She nods okay and he turns away toward the next question.

Although his apprentices are capable of performing almost all the steps of construction, Nat has a hand in every sail—the design, the choice and cut of cloth, the particular slant of a patch, and the stitch after stitch of thread. "In a way, I've always looked at sails as sort of kinetic sculpture. That's why I like them to not only look nice at a distance—there's a certain aesthetic and balance to the shape and form—but they should reflect that up close, too. You know, when you look at a painting and it's wonderful and you stand back and boy, it's great. But then you go up and you look at the detail, you look at the way it's done up close, and you get a whole different appreciation."

Nat Wilson's sails are known well beyond this little cove in the Damariscotta River, beyond the hundreds of bays up and down the coast of Maine. Ships have steered across every ocean by sails stenciled with his name. After
many lean years, after fluctuating crews of employees more in love with sailing than sailmaking, after sea changes in the economy and a revival of interest in old wooden boats, Nat now has a waiting list of work. Many potential customers are turned away. “I’d like to stay small,” he says, as he considers the unceasing number of inquiries he receives for the hand-finished, traditional-style sails he makes. “The size of my loft, and the number of crew I have working, I just can’t get much bigger.”

NAT WILSON was born in Massachusetts, grew up in Michigan, and learned to sail on his family’s property in Maine, tacking around the bay in a Nutshell pram. He was an art major in college—visual arts, photography, graphics, and painting were his interests—and he never had any sailmaking aspirations. But in 1969, when he graduated from Miami University, in Ohio, he was immediately drafted. “The Vietnam War sort of changed the direction of my life. I felt that I should serve the country, but I was definitely against that war,” he says of his decision. Instead of combat, he was able to join the Coast Guard, and shortly after training camp was sent to New London, Connecticut, the home port of Eagle, a 295-foot traditionally-rigged sailing ship used for teaching seamanship and cooperation through the rigors of sailing and maintaining such an enormous vessel.

Aboard Eagle, scaling the sky-high rig, sweating in lines, and unfurling enormous sails, Nat truly fell in love with sailing. Eventually he was assigned to the sail loft, where he learned how to stitch from Vern Vernott, a civilian employee for the government and twenty-year veteran sailmaker. When Nat wasn’t in the loft, he was making and repairing sails on deck as others were puffed full of wind above him, the ship voyaging up and down the East Coast and across the Atlantic Ocean.

After the service, Nat decided to return to Maine and start his own sail loft. In 1979 he moved into the 150 year-old farmhouse where he now lives, and used the accompanying barn for his business. Today, his girlfriend, Rhonda, and his eldest son Nathaniel Wilson Jr. (known only and ever as Natty) live with him.

His three sons grew up here; the remnants of a fort are still nailed to an enormous tree in the yard. They’ve all spent time in the loft learning how to make sails, but are doing other things now. Natty, 27, is a carpenter for his stepfather; Eben, 25, fishes for lobster during the summer and stitches for his dad during the winter; and Nick, 22, is at university in Halifax—his absence represented by a Canadian flag hanging in an upper story window of the house.

ON HIS BENCH, Nat sits with his back straight, his legs tucked under sailcloth, like an ivory-colored blanket thrown over his lap on a cold night. His eyes watch his hands as he stitches, his fingers skilfully guiding the needle, piercing the cloth, and pulling the thread tight. The long wooden surface of his bench is darkened with pine tar and scarred with generations of knife marks. Round brass rings, different knives with different blades, needles as small as toothpicks and as long as fingers, balls of Nat’s special blend of pine tar and wax for greasing thread—all litter the narrow space where he sits. To his right, tools in fitted slots dangle toward the floor. Everything is immediately at hand so Nat is free to stitch without interruption.

National Public Radio’s familiar Saturday morning voices banter out from the small radio on a shelf overcrowded with...
CDs of Bob Dylan, Willie Nelson, Ramblin' Jack Elliot, and other singer-songwriters. Sails slump in piles around the room where they were left on Friday afternoon. None of his employees are required to work weekends, and it's a time when Nat is usually in the loft alone, catching up on projects without distraction.

Like so many crafts, making a sail requires a certain amount of design and engineering, coupled with the inevitable tasks of construction. "There's this monotonous everyday stuff of seaming and patching and roping." He gestures to the sail in front of him that he's hand-stitching rope to, a task that will take days to finish. "And then there's this creative side to the whole thing. You want it to look beautiful.... You want it to reflect the quality of the workmanship and the design intent of the vessel that it's going on." Whether it's a ship for Mystic Seaport Museum or the U.S.S. Constitution or someone's homemade sailing skiff, Nat promises a sail that's strong enough for the weather it will meet, that will last the life of the materials, and will hold the wind in a graceful arc of cloth. Those willing to lean in and look a little closer will be
rewarded with the minute details nearly unique to Nat’s loft: brass rings lashed to the sail with stitches as trim and balanced as the petals of a daisy, rope plaited as perfectly as a girl’s hair, and everywhere the evidence of a practiced human hand. “I like the tactile qualities of working on the sail. That, to me, is what it’s all about.” He shuffles the sail, rubbing the smooth cloth between his calloused hands. “Money’s part of it, but part of it is the satisfaction of doing the work properly and having it reflect what you want it to.”

Though Nat has continued to learn more over the years since he first began and has incorporated some modern conveniences into his operation, for the most part, he sees no reason to change the way he does things. His sails are unique, handcrafted, and appeal to something of a niche market. He pauses to pull a stitch tight, his arm reaching out its full length. His eyes follow his hand toward the windows where mid-morning light streams in. “Materials have changed, but nothing else has. The wind is still there and the water is still there.” His gentle hands return to the sail to encourage another stitch through the cloth.

AT ONE TIME, nearly every little cove along the coast hosted a shipyard and a sailmaker—East Boothbay itself once had three sail lofts. Until proper roads were established, wooden hulls and canvas cloth were the only way to move cargo up and down the coast.
Her large green eyes brighten as she thinks.

“Yeah, most of them.”

“Yeah, most of the boats I’ve sailed on have them.” Dayle sips her beer and nods, her long blond hair shimmering in the dim bar light. Since their teens, the two have sailed several seasons aboard traditional ships working for educational programs. Dayle, 26, “basically ran away from home to go sailing,” and Susannah, a 25-year-old Portland native, spent summers and vacations between semesters at Colby College sailing small boats and schooners.

Susannah met Nat on a dock in Baltimore, while she was in port with the schooner Westward and he was delivering sails for Pride of Baltimore II. Five years earlier, during her first voyage aboard Picton Castle, she’d learned a little sailmaking and was curious about the trade. Because of Nat’s reputation, she was intimidated when she first met him. “I was like, ohh, Nat Wilson,” she leans across the dark table, whispering his name. “Oh, I don’t know if Nat Wilson would want me to work for him.” But he offered her a job if she could commit to a year. She’d never had a nine-to-five lifestyle, so she thought she’d give it a try. Now, like Dayle, she can’t imagine working for another sailmaker.

THE SQUARE-RIGGED ships and schooners that once carried cargo now sail for other purposes: as tour boats for certain stretches of coast, or educational ships, offering the character-building experience of life at sea for troubled youth or well-to-do adults with romantic visions of sailing. Like Picton Castle, a few of them still carry a sailmaker, but these days most call Nat. Among his hundreds of small-boat customers, there are about sixty of these sailing schooners and square-riggers that look to him when it’s time for new sails.

He prefers to work for them because, like him, they’re attempting to keep a tradition alive and make ends meet. “If anybody comes in that’s making money with their boat, I’ll kick the yacht sail over to the side. ‘You’ll have to wait.’ We do a lot of work for Harvey Gamage, Spirit of Massachusetts, and Westward,” he counts off the three schooners owned by Ocean Classroom Foundation, the same Maine-based organization Susannah worked for. “If they need a sail, if they need something done, I stop what I’m doing, no matter what it is, and take care of them, ’cause they’re running a program.”

In the last few weeks, he and his crew have been making sails for Eagle, the same ship where Nat learned sailmaking. Eagle has over five miles of rigging supporting her three masts and 23,000 square feet of canvas sails (the equivalent of more than 500 king-sized bed sheets stitched together). Though the enormous sails are heavy and hard on the body, demanding of time and space (the mainsail alone is twice the size of the loft), and require two long drives to Connecticut for deliveries, Nat completes endless amounts of paperwork to secure this contract with the government, to keep a connection to the ship and support its mission.

Nat believes perspectives change when you’re aloft on a ship. When you’re sixty feet above the surface of a storm-crazed ocean, the wind whipping at a thin, spindly mast swinging back and forth like a pendulum, and you’re just trying to furl an enormous sail before the canvas blows to shreds. “The ocean knows no favorites,” he says. “The ship requires your attention all the time. It gets priority over everything else. It’s your world.” He explains that “on land you might have a better car or nicer clothes... but a ship is a very humbling experience. Everyone’s needs are all the same. Gotta work together, and you gotta share. There’s no better training for life than a sailing ship.”

These days, Nat doesn’t get much time to sail. There used to be a slow season when he could join his tall ship customers for races or cruises, sometimes with one or two of his sons along with him, but work doesn’t really slack off anymore. His last trip was aboard Mariette, a 120’ schooner, in the 1997 Atlantic Challenge Race from Sandy Hook, New Jersey to the Isle of Wight, off the coast of England. “But I was fifty. I was the oldest crewmember. Everybody was half my age, and it was a pretty tough trip for me. I thought I was in better shape than I was.” His dry voice chuckles and he looks down at his arms, folded across his broad chest. “Sometimes you learn the hard way, getting older....”

His own boat, the one his family’s always known as “the Kathy boat,” isn’t going to make it into the water this year either: too many repairs, too much money.

IN THE LAST thirty years, most small sail lofts have merged with large international corporations, which dictate design, style, and materials and are primarily concerned with offering the newest, most technological advantages at cut-rate prices for the competitive sailor. In these modern lofts, sails are sold and serviced, but rarely made. They’re designed by computers and often mass-produced overseas in the factories of developing countries.

Even though Nat knows he’s an ideal candidate, joining a franchise is out of the question. “They do all the marketing under one umbrella and basically become a car dealership, you know? What you eliminate then is all these individual sailmakers—-independent-minded people thinking and designing and doing stuff innovatively... I get calls periodically from these bigger lofts, and they don’t have a clue how to do some things. ‘We’re sending this to you because we don’t really know how to make a sail here like that.’ Because there are no sailmakers anymore.”

NAT STRIDES across his driveway, his hands tucked into the pockets of his jeans. Sun slants against the side of the barn, casting his shadow over the large white doors. A late afternoon northerly blows in off the water, luffing the edges of his shirt. He passes Natty, home from work, tinkering on his car in the driveway. Everyone else has left for the day. His workers are filtering away. Susannah departs for the ship next week, Eben’s gone back to lobstering and Ren’s scaling back slowly,
Susannah Clark works at seaming a sail meant for the Eagle.

ready to take over his father-in-law's stained glass business. Dayle, too, has asked if she can work one less day a week to focus on her own pottery business. Nat's looking for an experienced sailmaker to fill in the gaps, but someone like that can be hard to come by.

He has other worries as well. The land he owns has become too valuable—the view too expensive—because of the soaring property values for coastal real estate in Maine. He can get cynical, saying of the sail loft, "It'll probably make a better yoga studio in the future, because that might be able to pay the taxes on it." Generations of his family have owned land around Boothbay, down the road on Ocean Point, and just offshore on Fisherman Island. But when taxes peaked to unaffordable levels nearly everything had to be sold. Nat fears the same fate may befall the loft and his home and worries out loud about the next tax evaluation of his land. "I'd always hoped to keep this space. It's the only real asset I have for my family."

At the barn entrance, he turns toward the water and tugs open the door to the basement. Cold air breathes from the dim interior. Sun follows him as he ducks into the dark room. He flips a switch and a light comes on as a radio crackles to life. Two 1931 Model A Fords are parked side by side, like quiet sisters on a front porch swing.

Nat sidles between them. He lays his large hand on the black hood of the one to the left, a convertible coupe. "It's the first car I ever drove," he says. Dropping his head, obviously proud, he swings a long leg, tapping the back tire with his toe as if gently nudging a puppy out the door. The car is pristine—no scratched paint or dented metal, no rust-pocked chrome or cracked glass under the grey convertible canvas top. "Someday, I'd like to do one of those coast to coast tours, on the Lincoln Highway or something," he continues. There's a rumble seat he would remove to make room for luggage. "But..." his voice trails off for a moment. The veins bulging under his skin like tree roots pushing up through the earth, he removes his hand from the hood. "You got to have the time and the money," he says, gazing down at the elegant hip of the front fender. Even in the wan light of the old barn's basement, the black trim shines and the yellow stripe across the body of the car has a warm creamy glow. Standing beside it, surrounded by the pine walls and old log beams in the ceiling, the damp cellar air sweetened with motor oil, the transistor radio tinkling old-timey blues in the corner, it's possible to imagine a time when Nat could have fallen in love with a car like this, long before sailing or sailmaking.
Natty steps into the basement to ask his dad a question. His tall frame fills the stooped doorway and casts a long shadow across the floor. He looks enough like his father that strangers in harbors as far away as Antigua throw an arm around his shoulder and ask him how his dad’s doing. Unlike his father, though, his hair is still a tawny blond, and his complexion is ruddy, windburned from working outdoors.

Natty never required that his sons work in the sail loft, but they all came to him at one point or another. Natty’s first job out of high school was building the topsail for USS Constitution. He has fonder memories of growing up in the sail loft: crushing marbles in the Nicopress machine, playing hockey on the wood floor, and making big sail tents for sleepovers. “That was my loft experience,” he says resolutely. “I just hate…. I can’t stand being inside that long. Like Susannah, I look out at all the boats and think, I could be out there.” Natty spent a few years sailing traditional vessels and private yachts and even ran his own canvas bag-making business for a while. Now he guides sea kayaking tours during the summer and is listening carefully to hints his stepfather is dropping about taking over the carpentry business. He’s not sure if it’s what he wants, but he knows how he feels about the sail loft. “It’s kind of unfortunate, because I’m sure my dad wants one of us to take it over ’cause I think he’s getting tired of it.”

THE HAND-CARVED wooden headboards, intricate weavings of rope, hand-casted bits of iron and brass hang just inside the front door of the sail loft. They look like a display...
from a historical society or a maritime museum. "I keep old parts of sails," Nat explains. "What was intriguing to me at first, and has always left a lasting impression, was the visual aspects of these hand-built sails. It was just... it was art to me. And I still think it is." He reflects that he has always wanted to turn it into art somehow. "Cast it in bronze or transform it in some other way because it is beautiful."

Although Nat would like to return to other art forms—the photography, drawing, and painting he set aside when he became a sailmaker—it's difficult to find time. "I can't make a living doing that, and I need to still make a living. At some point, when it's right and I have the time and energy... I try occasionally, take an afternoon off and go somewhere, off away from everything else and see what I can remember."

DEEP INTO APRIL, the loft is starting to buzz with phone calls and customers wandering in, looking for sails they dropped off way back in September. Working alone on a Saturday, sitting on his sailmaker's bench, Nat is roping yet another new sail. He tries not to work more than the morning, reserving the rest of the weekend for tinkering on the cars, spending time with his family, and caring for his ailing parents. The loft is becoming more and more demanding of his time and he'd like to cut back, but it's hard to find a balance between enough work to accommodate himself and his employees, but not so much that his free time is sacrificed.

He pulls an arm-length of thread off a spool, carefully wetting the tip before poking it through the eye of his needle. He thinks about his sons taking over the business, but he knows that may not happen. "If they want to and it's their passion and it's something they really want to do, then the opportunity's here." He runs his thread over a ball of wax in his hand, preparing it for stitching. He knows that not everyone shares his passion for the craft, that he, after all, is Nathaniel S. Wilson, Sailmaker. "As long as I'm still alive, I'm gonna continue to do this, in some manner. So, here I am." He settles into the pool of cloth around him, the layers shifting like sand on a tidal shore. The tip of his needle to the edge of the sail, he begins to stitch again.

Amanda Witherell attended Salt in Spring 2005, while on hiatus from her own career as a sailmaker. She traded the sailmaker's palm for the reporter's pen and is now a writer for the San Francisco Bay Guardian, the oldest, independently-owned altweekly in the country. She covers city politics, freedom of information, environmental issues...and anything else that comes across the desk. awitherell@gmail.com

Mike Teuteberg came to Salt from Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He has plans to learn to sail, bike across the U.S., go to Sri Lanka, and ride an elephant. He hopes the pictures he takes will be good. miketeuteberg@yahoo.com
Dennis McLaughlin in Westbrook, Maine

From the Archive

A photo essay by Andres Gonzales
Andres started taking pictures while teaching environmental education in Namibia as a way to preserve his memories, and to share with friends and family the experiences he was having while living abroad. Upon returning to the United States, he was turned on to the Salt Institute where he found a community of artists, documentarians, historians, and just all around amazing individuals that embraced a passion for documentary in a way that he had never known. The experience inspired him to pursue a career in photography. Since then, Andres has acquired a masters degree from Ohio University in visual communication, and has won awards from the Alexia Foundation for World Peace, Magenta Foundation for the Arts, Eddie Adams Workshop, and in 2006 was selected by Photo District News as one of 30 emerging photographers to watch. He currently lives in Istanbul, Turkey, where he is working on a Fulbright fellowship. andres@andresgonzalezphoto.com
One Huge Backyard

A radio piece by Samantha Broun
Photos by Tim Greenway

Ten year-old Connor Lent lives with his family on Cliff Island, off the coast of Portland, Maine. He attends the island's one-room schoolhouse, has explored almost every inch of the island, and is learning to tie knots from a local lobsterman. There used to be over 300 islands in Maine with year round communities; now there are only 15.

Childhoods like Connor's are increasingly rare. "And oh my gosh! This is a buoy stick. We use these as swords and when we're playing in the woods. We play goblins and stuff. And I think this is the nicest one I've seen ever. We find lots of cool stuff on the beaches."
Samantha Broun earned degrees in Sociology and Education and worked with youth for 15 years before coming to Salt. She now happily lives and works in Woods Hole, MA where every day is a radio day. samanthabroun@gmail.com

Tim Greenway has made a name for himself as a successful photojournalist. He has crisscrossed the country with his camera, from the Everglades to Olympic National Park. In 2003, he moved to Maine to attend the Salt Institute where he studied documentary photography. Tim was instantly romanced by Maine lighthouses, seduced by the smell of the salty air and awestruck by the unparalleled beauty of the rocky coastline. He decided to make Portland his home and is currently maintaining an active freelance photography career. twaygreen@yahoo.com
Sounds of Democracy

A radio piece by Elizabeth Chur
Photo by Cecilia Duchano

In a closet-sized basement room in the Portland Public Library, an upright piano pours forth a river of music: Chopin’s Raindrop Prelude, “Hey Jude,” “Daddy Sings Bass.” Anyone can come and play for an hour a day. While most libraries offer free access to information, this library piano offers free access to expression. Under the fingers of various musicians, these 88 keys unlock places beyond words. Sometimes studded with wrong notes, other times swelling in a voluptuous arc, the music intertwines with the pianists’ stories of loss, discovery, and connection.
Elizabeth Chur has always been intrigued by the interweavings of sound and story. Currently an independent radio producer in San Francisco, she attended the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies, and has degrees in English and music from Oberlin College. She has written for the Chicago Tribune and The Seattle Times, and studied development of free press in Eastern Europe as a Thomas J. Watson Fellow. Elizabeth interned with the Kitchen Sisters, and has also worked with Sandy Tolan of Homelands Productions and the UC-Berkeley Graduate School of Journalism. Her recent documentary about a compulsive hoarder is featured on Transom.org. elizabethchur@gmail.com

Cecilia Duebano grew up in Deerfield, New Hampshire. Before attending Salt, she earned a BA in Sociology at the University of New England. She hopes to continue her education in the field of Macro Social Work, while using her photography as a tool for public education and social change.
Mike Luce is building his mother’s casket.

After struggling with dementia for years, Ruth Luce passed away in February of 2005. Rather than turn away from the sadness, Mike chooses to draw his memories, difficult and happy alike, closer to himself. He takes two months to complete the casket, calling up the story of his parents first date, remembering how he teased his mother that she had “tough old bird syndrome,” even thinking back to the moment she passed away. The work helps him to say goodbye in the most truthful and personal way he can. It is his gift to her; it is his gift to himself.
Megan declares herself an Independent Radio Producer on her tax returns. She likes turkey club sandwiches, prefers letters over phone calls and frequently sneaks into a second film at the AMC 25. Megan studied at Salt in 2005 with six of the best radio chums a girl could ask for. Now she uses what she learned to make stories for radio and podcasts for cultural institutions. Every Wednesday she performs with her improv group Big Black Car. Megan lives in Brooklyn, NY with her fisb, Doug. megs_mail@yahoo.com

Annie Reichert swears she is from Seattle, New Jersey, and Ohio though she currently resides in New York City. She enjoys photography, eavesdropping, gold paint, fake blood, avocados, beekeepers, good storytellers, and building things — even though she’s not very skilled at it. Professionally she keeps busy but rarely profits from it: her pictures have been published in USA Today and US News and World Report for free! Annie tries to take at least one picture every day and advises that you do the same. endannie@gmail.com
What If?

A radio piece by Katie Freddoso
Photos by Kyle Glover

Teenage brothers Kevin and James Hatch are losing their hearing; if the doctors are correct, Kevin and James will be completely deaf by the time they graduate from Biddeford High School.

Kevin sometimes wonders why he and James are the only ones in their family who have this hearing loss. No one is sure of the cause, Kevin says, "It's probably random ... I just have to deal with it."

The Hatch brothers have begun participating in soccer tournaments with the high-school team at the Governor Baxter School for the Deaf. Having the opportunity to practice Sign Language and to interact with deaf peers is helping to ease the brothers' transition from the hearing world into the deaf world.
Katie Freddoso came to Salt after studying philosophy at the University of Notre Dame. She now works at AudioFile magazine in Portland, Maine, and does a little radio work in her free time. She recently collaborated with Salt alum Rebecca Stewart on a multimedia project for Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine (check it out at www.saxsmm.org). kfreddos@yahoo.com

Kyle Glover is a current joint degree candidate at Harvard Law School and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. His interests include conflict resolution, legal systems, and communication, particularly in the international context. He is a graduate of the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Photography. Though a southern transplant, he loves New England. kglover@law.harvard.edu
In January of 1974, the first issue of Salt Magazine was printed. It was, "published quarterly as a special project of students at Kennebunk High School, Kennebunk, Maine." A single issue sold for $1.50, a year's subscription was $5.00, and the entire publication was 40 pages in length.

The inaugural issue was dedicated to the people who adorned its pages—all Mainers. They spoke of lobstering, clamming, harvesting sea moss, farming, knitting trap heads for lobster traps, and surviving winter storms at sea off of Maine's rocky coast. And the very first editor's note, belonging to Salt's founder, Pamela Wood, read, "We're new, we're young and we're feisty.... But we bring you what is old, mellow and wise."

"Why the name SALT? Because salt is a natural symbol for the magazine— the salt of the sea... salt marshes and salty people, the kind that won't use two words if they can get by with one."

This issue, number 63/64, arrives almost 34 years later. We are no longer a high school project, prices have changed a bit, and our publication's length is more than three times what it was back then, but there is much about Salt that hasn't changed. The stories of Mainers still adorn our pages, while the faces of Maine have become much more diverse. This issue tells stories of sail making and making honey, but it also tells stories of a dancer, a Green Party Vice Presidential nominee, a family of little people, and two moms who are redefining our notion of family.

We aren't new but we bring you a fresh perspective; we aren't necessarily young and feisty, but we are passionate and dedicated; and our name still suits us beautifully... we are Salt.

Donna M. Galluzzo
Executive Director