

1 Elizabeth Comeau

Million-Dollar Baby

The world's first *in vitro* miracle is the one asking the hard questions now.



10 Most Intriguing People In Maine

They're behind us in the checkout line, they're sitting beside us in PTA meetings, they're changing the way we live.

“I don't have wings or special powers. I'm just like all of my friends in that *I am who I am*. Reporters always asked me growing up if I felt special. I always said no. The only reason I have to feel special is, my parents went through so much to have me. I don't wake up every morning and say, 'Wow, I'm the first *in vitro* fertilization baby in the U.S.' It's just a part of who I am. I'm not ashamed and wouldn't trade who I am for anything. But then again, I didn't do much. I was just born. My parents and doctors did all the work.”

Now Elizabeth Comeau, 25, of Chelsea, is a reporter herself, at the *Kennebec Journal*. She paid her dues “as photo editor of the *Simmons Voice*, the campus newspaper at Simmons College, and at internships at the *Boston Globe* and the *Virginian-Pilot*. I also served as online editor at *Organization of News Ombudsmen* and Naughton Fellow / online reporter for *PoynterOnline*.”

“When I interview people, they often don't know I have my own story,” Comeau says. In fact, they can get a bit miffed once they find out

Elizabeth Comeau, dubbed the first “test-tube baby” – with her dog, Chase, at her Chelsea, Maine, home.

BEN CHEMELSKI

PEOPLE

the truth. "When people find out that I'm [America's first IVF baby], they ask, 'Why didn't you tell me?' I often forget to mention it. It's not something that gets brought up in everyday conversation."

Nor is her appearance, at 11 months old, on the cover of *Life* magazine's November 1982 issue. Sandwiched between October's Arnold Schwarzenegger lifting weights with Sandahl Bergman and December's Princess Diana in white pearl earrings, little Elizabeth's head is cocked at an angle, blue eyes large and staring, red hair longish and slightly messy, as if she's just woken from a nap.

Actually, the whole world was awakening. What was a boom in 1981 is an explosion today. According to IVF.net, three million IVF children have been born worldwide. The miracle is how common it's become.

"My parents knew couples [like themselves] were following their pregnancy." After it worked over and over again, "couples would come up to my parents and me and say, 'We remember watching the news and seeing you born,'" Comeau says. "Their kids kind of grew up with me.

"I never felt like I was 'under a microscope...' but sure, there were moments when I wanted to just be left alone..."

Still the reporters kept coming to check in on her as she reached each milestone. Talking about them, her words pile up quickly.

"Growing up, I encountered reporters who really wanted to get to know me, and better understand how to explain who I am to their readers. For others, it was just another assignment, and they didn't seem to care if they offended me by asking a certain question or assuming things about me that simply weren't true." The one that really gets her: "Do you feel normal?"

Instead of turning and running, Comeau has trumped serendipity by learning to ask the questions herself.

"As a reporter, I care about people's stories, and I want them to know I'll always treat them the way I'd like to be treated.

"Sure, my life wasn't like my next-door neighbor's life—but then again, who can say they live exactly the way someone else does?"

Which begs the question: Are you and your husband planning to have children? "Yes," she says, "but not anytime soon. I've only been married a year."

In the conventional way? "As far as I know." —James Bobseine



From power suit to flower power: Carol Sipperly gets in touch with her softer side at The Flower Shop at Winslow Farms.

2

Carol Sipperly

The Tiger is a Lady
The prosecutor in the Strawberry and Gotti cases now wants to help you stop and smell the roses...

It's the end of a long day. You just want to make a quick stop at Shaw's, get home to take off your shoes, make stir-fry for the family, and relax. You're not looking for confrontation. So when a fellow shopper—that 'flower lady' from The Flower Shop at Winslow Farms—closes in on the last decent cucumber before you can get it in your bag, you're determined to wrest it from her grip. After all, what's the worst that can happen? It's not like she was the prosecutor of John Gotti or Darryl Strawberry or anything.

"The baseball investigation that led to the Darryl Strawberry case was a wake-up call about the cash flying around back in 1995," Carol Sipperly says. "As an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Manhattan, I was working round the clock—I asked for a move upstate to White Plains so I could have some kind of family life."

Only to have the Strawberry tax-evasion case dropped in her lap.

"Darryl was considered a hero. As the investigation wore on, I found I could understand perfectly why he landed where he landed. His beginnings were tough: All of a sudden he's in the middle of baseball and some big money. Ultimately, he did try to work on cleaning himself up. He agreed to go to jail, but the judge didn't send him to jail. I think he thought what had happened already was enough.

"One funny thing I remember is that the media characterized me as 'short and compact,' because I was eight- to nine-months' pregnant. Darryl's wife was just as far along as

I was, and they called her 'lovely'! When it was all over, I took a deep breath."

But not for long—her next stop was the racketeering case against John A. "Junior" Gotti, who took over as head of the Gambino crime syndicate after his dad was jailed for life. In a crowd of news cameras, FBI agents, and courtroom rubberneckers, Sipperly successfully brought Gotti to justice, resulting in a six-year jail sentence handed down by White Plains Federal Judge Barrington Parker. A subsequent conviction keeps Gotti in the slammer to this day.

For Sipperly, in spite of this professional validation, it was a more urgent signal of her need for a breath of fresh air. "I remember finally lifting my head up, realizing life is too short to not take charge of your own life." Like so many of us, Sipperly, her husband, and three children got in their car and headed up here.

"Maine is the perfect place to be content," she says, describing her life now as "three parts: family, flowers, and law."

As co-owner of The Flower Shop at Winslow Farms—"I lived on a 100-acre farm during law school in Springfield, Massachusetts"—she keeps a hand in the legal profession with The McCloskey Resource Group, an investigation firm that deals with complex corporate and municipality financial investigations. "I have a pool of former federal agents...we can perform any fact-finding operation."

Meanwhile, there are a lot of floral baskets to weave. She says, "There's a perfect balance here of pace and culture. It's special. Mainers make human interaction a priority."

So, what if fame follows her this far north? "Well, you can't plan on life," she laughs. "Next stop, Nova Scotia."

—Elisabelle Bocal & Staff

LEFT TO RIGHT: BEN CHEMELSKI; NIGEL PARRY

3
Chris O'Donnell
Robin Returns

Actor Chris O'Donnell keeps turning up in Maine.

The Dark Harbor retreat of über sports agent Lee Fentress must have been a place of enchantment for daughter Caroline during her visits across the last 20 summers. So when Caroline married Chris O'Donnell (*Scent of a Woman*, *Circle of Friends*, *Fried Green Tomatoes*, *In Love and War*, two *Batman* movies as Robin, *The Company*—next up is *Kit Kittredge: An American Girl Mystery* with Jane Krakowski, Abigail Breslin, Stanley Tucci, Joan Cusack, Julia Ormond), she undoubtedly felt the need to show him the magic of Islesboro, too. Recently the film star, with his wife and children, has been seen here more and more, between acting assignments.

"We've just driven in from New York," says Caroline's mom, Diane Fentress, 62, on a sunny fall day. "[My husband] Lee's bringing some baggage in." By the way, she says, "my father [millionaire Madison Avenue promotions wizard Jack Morton, who died at 94 in 2004, the same summer his opening and closing ceremonies of the 2004 Athens Olympics became his last grand gesture] didn't start the tradition of us coming to Maine...My husband and I just bought the house in the 1980s. It's a family thing."

Lee Fentress II, formerly of ProServe and now managing partner of Advantage International, Inc., in MacLean, Virginia—his departure from ProServe received coverage in *Forbes*—will be remembered by our readers as Boston Celtics star Len Bias's agent, who flew to Boston with his client on what would be the last day of Bias's tragic life.

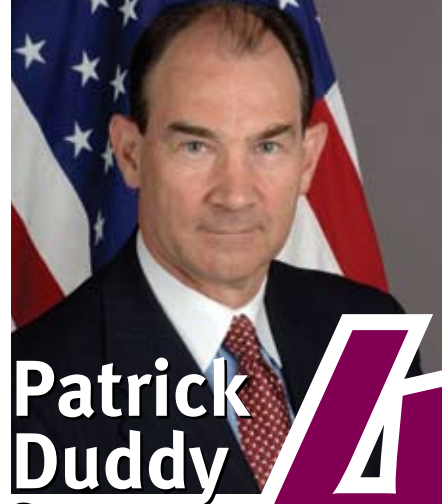
Caroline's brother, Lee Fentress III, took a shine to buddy Chris O'Donnell while the two young men were roommates at Boston College. According to answers.com, Lee III introduced Chris to his sister, a kindergarten teacher, and in 1997 the two were married at St. Patrick's Church in Washington, D.C., near the Fentress family fortress.

When weather permits, Lee III makes his mark in *Skylark*, a lovely Sparkman & Stephens yacht, in local yacht club events among the inlets and shallows of Dark Harbor.

With all the Hollywood talent in Islesboro today, from John Travolta ["The 10 Most Intriguing People in Maine," *Portland Magazine*, November 1995] to Kelly Preston ["What a Woman Wants: Kelly Preston's Maine," *Portland Magazine*, Summerguide 2003], Kirstie Alley to Parker Stevenson ["Paradise Found," *Portland Magazine*, February/March 2003], you don't have to look up to the heavens to see the stars.



PEOPLE



Patrick Duddy

Some Like it Hot

Our man in Venezuela, Ambassador Patrick Duddy of Bangor, is an expert at grace under pressure.

Who says a Bangor boy can't grow up to be "Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela" as the U.S. State Department puts it. Patrick D. Duddy, a 1972 Colby College grad, was sworn in this past summer by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as U.S. Ambassador to Venezuela.

The mideast aside, you must be the hardest-working guy in the diplomatic corps. Talk about a hot spot—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez is a stinging critic of U.S. foreign policies; ditto for Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was just in Caracas. Did you play any role in his visit? Our senior leadership has recently made clear what our position is with Iran. I took part in no ceremonies related to the Iranian president's arrival.

The last few winters, Mainers have been enticed with low-priced Venezuelan heating-oil offers, some featuring Citizen's Energy founder Joseph P. Kennedy II in TV commercials. Should Mainers feel as though we're endorsing President Chavez's criticism of the U.S. by accepting this oil? Should we beware of Venezuelans bearing gifts? Shouldn't you ask those accepting the petroleum? Clearly the Venezuelan government is seeking to counterbalance the difficult political relations and rhetoric through the petroleum discounts they offer, but as for what customers feel, I think you'd have to ask them. Venezuela's intentions regarding the discount petroleum is a matter for the

Venezuelans to define. [We should consider that] the Venezuelan government is not just offering discounted petroleum to areas of the United States, but to all of the Americas. For example, there's a program, *Petro Caribe*, which offers discounts to Caribbean countries as well.

Obviously, you've had to hit the ground running. When did you become our man in Caracas?

I was sworn in on 9 August. After a couple of days to wrap up our personal affairs, I stayed with my parents up in Bangor before heading here.

So you're still very connected to Maine.

I have two brothers; one lives in Falmouth and the other in Cape Elizabeth. My sister lives in South Boston. They're all attorneys.

How do you describe our ties to Venezuela?

We have full diplomatic relations, [though] on a political level, relationships have been difficult. Our two countries enjoy a \$46 billion commercial relationship bilaterally [per year]. Effectively, we purchased something like \$36 billion in petroleum from Venezuela, and they purchased just over \$9 billion in goods from the U.S. So while it's a complicated relationship, difficult politically, [there are] robust commercial relationships.

At the personal level, there's a very strong bond between the people of our two countries. Hundreds of Venezuelan baseball players are in the U.S., U.S. companies are active in Venezuela, and *Time* magazine has documented flights full on every airline going to or returning from any U.S. destination.

For me, the city of Caracas is spectacularly beautiful, the Venezuelan people have been very, very friendly and welcoming, and...the traffic is more formidable than I'd have expected. And I've been working in Latin America for 25 years.

Any high anxiety from Caracas's 3,000-foot altitude?

I've worked in La Paz, Bolivia. That's 12,000 ft.

In superficial dinner patter, does Maine ever come up?

I was just speaking to an international association of university women the other day, and in the group was the daughter of a Colby classmate of mine. Maine doesn't have the natural link to Venezuela that one of the baseball cities of the major league or Florida perhaps would have, but [maybe because of that], it's considered a little exotic.

5 Jenny Bicks

Jenny Bicks may be a Los Angeles sophisticate who wrote and produced *Sex and the City* and now *Men in Trees* for television, but Maine runs deep in her blood. She never loses touch with family, friends, and childhood memories on the Blue Hill Peninsula. She built her own retreat in Castine three years ago and visits as often as she can. Her production company is named after the street her family's house is on up here, and a photo of Bicks at her fifth birthday party in Castine runs at the end of each *Men in Trees* program.

So what's the deal with you and Maine?

I first set foot in Maine before I could walk! My family rented a house in Sorrento for the summer. We landed in Castine when I was around two. My aunt's mother had a house on the harbor, and we've been there ever since. I got to spend every summer there, which was magical. I was this city kid—grew up in Manhattan—who got a chance spend three months out of the year in this magical town. I had all my formative experiences there—I learned to ride a bike, to drive a car (my first driver's license was from Maine—I carried it with me for years).

My uncle and his family came to Castine as well, and we were this big clan of kids—eight cousins altogether—riding our bikes all over town and playing flash tag at night. People still ask me, "Which Bicks are you?"

I love everything about Castine. The smell when it rains, the lobster rolls at Big Ern's, the Fourth of July parade (have only missed it once since I was two), all of my friends whom I grew up with who remain incredibly close to me as adults. My family's house got really jammed as we all got older and still demanded to show up (with everyone's extended family—now there are eight grandkids and three spouses!) But nothing is better than when we all gather around my parent's long dinner table and eat lobster and laugh.

I was able to buy land in Castine three

Maine in Trees

This Castine habitué is never at a loss for big ideas on the small screen.



Writer/Producer Jenny Bicks gave us *Sex and the City*. Now, she brings a taste of single life in Alaska with *Men In Trees*.

What was your earliest romantic interlude in Maine?

Not touching that one! My parents are going to read this! I will say that my family has a rule—you can't have a significant other who doesn't love Castine. Good news is my boyfriend Adam is a huge fan. So, he can stay.

The people who know me the best remain the people I grew up with in Maine.

To what extent is *Men in Trees* actually Maine in Trees?

I very much wanted to bring my experience of Castine into my show. I have been to Alaska, but knew that I wanted to write about the small-town experience of Castine. And putting Elmo on the water helped me to channel Castine as well. I wanted to capture the idea of humanity—that even if people don't like you, when the chips are down, people will rally and take care of one another. And that you really can't pretend you are someone else in a small community—people will call you on your BS. The people who know me the best remain the people I grew up with in Maine.

Where has Maine surfaced in your work, intentionally or not? For instance, in *Sex and the City*, Charlotte has a back story about having attended camp in Maine. How much of that reflects your own experiences and influences here?

Yep, that was my episode! I put Maine in there. I like to bring it up whenever I can. Of course, I never went to camp (except one three-week stint at a summer stock theater camp in New Hampshire). Why go to camp when you have Castine? —Amy Louise Barnett

(Continued on page 72)

PEOPLE

10 Most Intriguing (continued from page 31)

Point Guard

The former WNBA star brings luster to UMaine's slightly tarnished hoop dreams.

"I'm back." To the delight of Black Bear fans, five-foot-nine-inch powerhouse All-American basketball legend Cindy Blodgett has returned to UMaine as head coach of the women's basketball team with a four-year contract.

But can she hack it? "There are pressures with any job," says Blodgett, who's signed on at \$105,000 per season. "I'm not coming in anticipating failure. I don't think like that. Pressure means people

are interested—that's what you want. You want people to watch games. If that means there's more pressure, then it's a good thing."

As a UMaine icon, Blodgett broke 20 school records, led the nation in scoring for two consecutive years (only the second woman to accomplish such a feat), and ultimately inspired her team to qualify for three straight national tournaments.

"I can still hear the fans screaming during

6 Cindy Blodgett

the last 30 seconds of the last game that got us into the NAAs.

"Jamie Cassidy hit a shot against Vermont that put us ahead with four or five seconds to go, and Vermont in-bounded the ball and brought it down the court. We were all hanging on to the last seconds, and then we blocked the shot at the end."

No slam dunks or spotlighted free throws. Just plain teamwork. It seems her players have a lot to live up to.

"I wouldn't put that on any of them. If we can just maximize our talent, we'll be better off."

Building this talent may prove her biggest challenge, with the program hitting an all-time low after two sub-.500 seasons, but the diminutive Blodgett is used to having the odds stacked against her.

Dwarfed by her fellow players in the WNBA, her time on the court took a nose-dive after she left UMaine and went professional in 1998.

"The WNBA is much more individualistic," she says. "Being drafted was a special moment, not only for myself, but in terms of what it meant for Maine."

Will her experience in the WNBA affect her coaching? Will she have a soft spot for the vertically challenged?

"If anything, I'm more critical of guard play [traditionally the province of shorter players]. Being one myself, I have a certain standard. Our guards may actually be watched more closely."

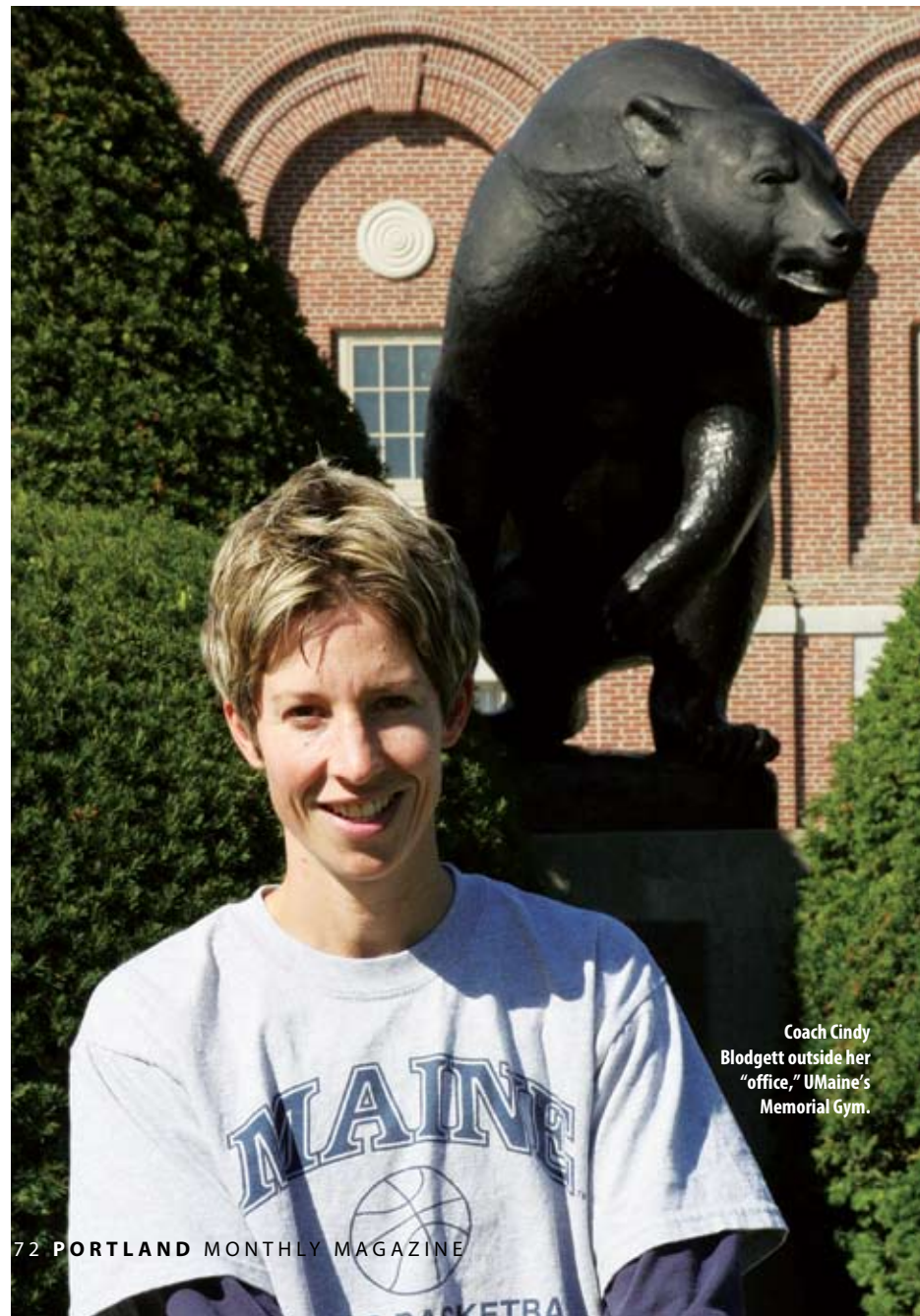
Blodgett's also no Joanne Palombo-McCallie clone. While recognizing her former coach's standards were very effective, Blodgett says, "I found her to be very... honest," and predicts "our styles will definitely be different in terms of dealing with players."

While that honesty may not have always been appreciated, Blodgett's positive reaction to it sparked her success.

"I never ignored anything my coaches said and I hope what I have to say won't be ignored."

Blodgett is currently 32, single, and living in Orono. Her first game as head coach is November 9.

No pressure. —Abigail Parsons



Coach Cindy Blodgett outside her "office," UMaine's Memorial Gym.



Joseph McNulty, certified public accountant to the stars, and partner Mick Fleetwood are embroiled in a legal tussle with the BBC.

7 Joe McNulty

You Make Litigation Fun

The Cape Elizabeth resident and accountant to Mick Fleetwood shores up his case against the BBC.

Whether he's hanging out at Fore Street with best buddy Mick Fleetwood (who has a weakness for the blueberry cheesecake—"the most delicious dessert I've ever had in my life") or slamming it out in Maine courtrooms in a celebrated intellectual-property contest against the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), McNulty, certified public accountant to the stars, is planting deep roots in Maine.

At issue: a life-and-death struggle to stop the BBC from raiding exclusive archives containing rock and pop performances that McNulty and business-partner Fleetwood lay claim to.

"I met Mick in 1986 in L.A.," McNulty says. "Most people see him as a celebrity... I call him my third brother."

Fleetwood chimes in, "You should have seen him on the trip we took to Russia together—one of the wildest trips I've ever had!"

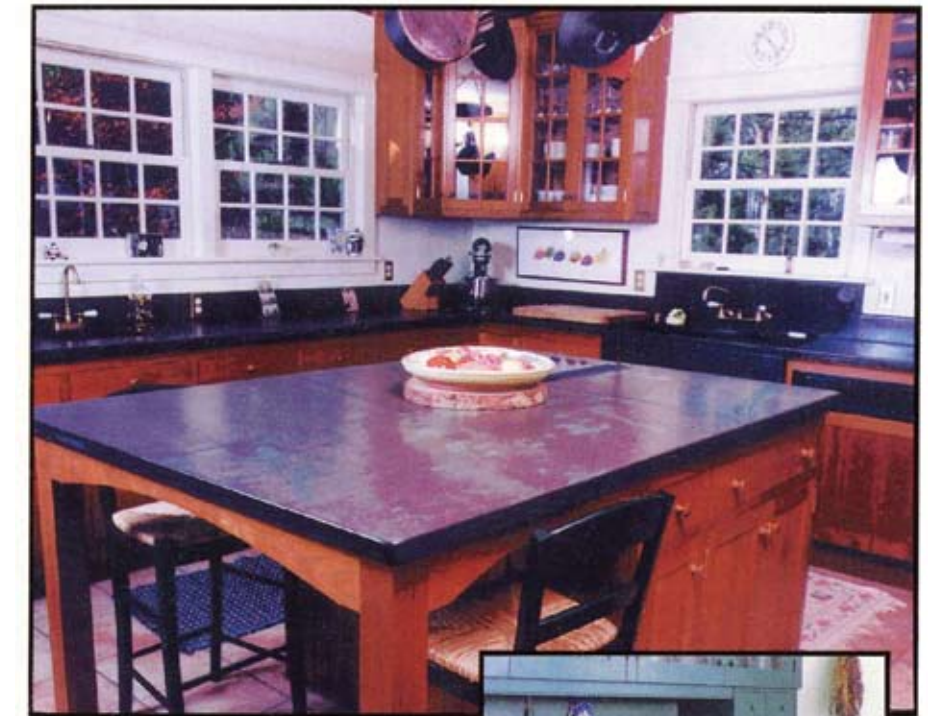
"Way back when," McNulty says, "I was an advisor to the prime minister of Tajikistan, where I learned 'taxicab

REBEKAH RHODES

BENZO HARRIS

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Rock star Mick Fleetwood stops in front of Portland's U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the lawsuit he and Joseph McNulty brought against the British Broadcasting Company.

Russian," he laughs. "Just enough to get me in trouble."

An accountant since 1979, McNulty graduated from Santa Clara University. Since then, he has been involved in multiple business ventures ranging from the Boston Celtics to the Vatican music libraries.

As for the current case, with master rights to the unreleased archive material of over 100 artists, including the Beatles, U2, and the Rolling Stones, "The best scenario is justice being reached, with people get what they're entitled to get," McNulty says. "Looking at the

facts, things should work in our favor."

"This whole process is extremely convoluted," Fleetwood says. "It's hard to retain your dignity. [At least] we're blessed with being able to state our case."

Come what may, McNulty has already started thinking about tomorrow. A resident of Cape Elizabeth since 1998, McNulty and his wife, Paula, are proud parents to five children: Tony, 24, is a chef at the Boston Hyatt; Nick, 22, served with the 82nd Airborne in Afghanistan; Dakota, 16, goes to Cheverus; and Madeline and Seamus, both nine, attend Holy Cross.

McNulty maintains his business at full pitch "by telecommuting out of my house in Cape and from my small office in Scarborough. I love the pace here, my family loves it, and we plan to stay."

Whether or not the BBC stops the music. —Benzo Harris & Staff

Continental Divide

They got along fine for the first 10,000 miles or so. But the final 300 miles proved to be too much for their friendship.

It sounds like a movie starring one of the Wilson brothers and Vince Vaughan. Two BFFs teamed up to set a world record for the fastest, longest snowmobile crossing of North America last winter. But since you can't win for losing, they haven't spoken a word to each other since the record was set...

"The existing mark in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for a transcontinental North American crossing by snowmobile was 7,200 miles and 60 riding days," says Steve McKenna of Shapleigh.

"We thought, we can do this. We were 'best friends forever' and fellow business owners. I'm a general contractor [McKenna Brothers], and Tony [Wolfinger, of Waterboro] runs Sanford Radiator. For years, we'd gone on winter and fall fishing and camping trips in the Allagash, mostly the two of us, not really with our families," because of their shared appreciation for rough adventure. "He and I met through a mutual snowmobiling friend six or seven years ago. I liked him right away, and he drove snowmobiles like I did," way out of the comfort zone.

Lindbergh had already gobbled up the New-York-to-Paris route. Peary and Amundsen had sewn up the North and South poles. But for these guys, the glimmering route from Tok, Alaska, to Jackman, Maine, just lay there for the taking. "We authorized our record attempt with Guinness, froze a bunch of sandwiches," and took a deep breath.

"We talked about a bit," says McKenna. But he and Wolfinger are action guys. Leaving their businesses to chance, without a brass band playing, guzzling up their savings ("in the \$20,000 range"), they found themselves in Tok, zipped up their weatherproof jackets, and floored it through the eternal Alaskan twilight toward Maine.

Wolfinger says, "In those first hundred yards, I felt every emotion all at once: excitement, kinda scared about what we might run into, thoughts of people saying, 'You're

crazy, you're a nut,

you're gonna get eaten by a polar bear, you don't know what it's like at 40 below, you're not from up here'—just all sorts of emotions mixed up."
"The first 2,000-3,000 miles there was no trail, so we traveled absolutely alone," McKenna says. "There was an unreality to these dark stretches, especially because the sky was painted by the Northern Lights. We were just screaming across the ice when we hit a place we called The End of the World. The ice dropped off insanely and we went so fast it was hard to think of ourselves as being alive. Right about then, overspeeding with the bottom having dropped from under us," and during other lonely spots across the glassy vastness, "I wondered, 'Are we ever going to get out of here?' I missed my family."
For Wolfinger, "There was this funny, hazy, gray flat light. I just couldn't see anything—I didn't know if I was coming down on my tracks or on my side. It was like that first hill on a roller coaster, falling steeper and steeper. I remember cresting at 70 miles

8 & 9

Tony Wolfinger Steve McKenna



Tom Wolfinger (left) and Steve McKenna with their snowmobiles in Mont St. Pierre, Quebec

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per hour with all sorts of wind around me.”
 How did Dante put it? *Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.*

“We saw gray wolves all the time,” McKenna says. “Also moose and bison. Part of our route was along the Yukon Quest Dogsled Trail, and it felt weird when we passed them while they were actually running it. We blew by three to four dogsled teams,” like figures in a Smithsonian Institution diorama, with an eerie sense of technology on parade.

Then there was another stop in their Odyssey on ice, as strange as any distraction Ulysses ever faced. “On the Alaska Highway, just as you cross into the Yukon, when you feel like you’ll never be warm again,” the earth suddenly cracks open to lure the astonished with a hot spring. “Yeah, we swam in it! It was 26 degrees outside, and 104 degrees inside the spring!”

Then, with the cold freezing their beards, they zoomed across more miles of lonely ice, until “we pulled into a little town called Chicken. Chicken consists of a saloon, a restaurant, and a gift shop, with a gas pump on the side. We saw smoke from a shed out back and met a guy named Gary Adkins, who showed us the sights and offered to let us stay the night. He served us roast caribou and hard-tack biscuits. We were loving downtown Chicken. A few other families live there. There is no electricity. Gary keeps a little generator so he can watch VCR movies,” but, possibly tired of his limited selection, he didn’t fire it up for his guests. “In return for his hospitality, we gave him some breakfast—some of the egg-and-bacon sandwiches we’d frozen and brought on the trip.

“We also went through Boundary, Alaska,” truly a one-family town. “Their source of power is an inverter that runs off car batteries,” with only the stars and the unearthly greens and blues of the Aurora Borealis twinkling above.

“For a while we were on the Dempster Highway. It goes right up to the Arctic Circle. There’s a town called Eagle Plains—it’s like nothing. The next thing we hit was Inuvik, about the size of Sanford.

“We were having dinner when a local came up to us and said, ‘Hey, we just had a guy who went through here, and he’s breaking the world record.’” McKenna and Wolfinger did a double-take, but McKenna remembered that “when I submitted our trip to Guinness to get a claim, they said,

‘The existing record still stands to be broken, but we are aware of another attempt...’

So here this shadowy competitor was, playing Amundsen to their Peary! They didn’t meet in Inuvik, but McKenna and Wolfinger were told, “‘He’s a big guy, a Canadian named Yves LeBlanc.’ He had a web page, just like us,” McKenna says, “so I logged on and we introduced ourselves with an e-mail, saying, ‘hey, how are you doing, best of luck,’ and so forth” before heading out of town.

Fancy meeting you here...

“When we hit Dawson City,” McKenna says—straight out of a Jack London story—“we stayed in the Downtown Hotel, as if we were in an old black-and-white movie—14-foot ceilings, just a beautiful building, family-owned. The swinging double doors really gave us a kick as we went in.”

And once again, word came to them: “‘This guy’s here in town, looking for you.’” Finally Yves Leblanc filled up the doorway. Rough handshakes were exchanged. “He spoke great English.” To fill up the silence, “we talked about our gear.” Leblanc, from outside of Montreal, was clearly taking the express route. “He had just a small tent. He had no intentions” of touring the icy wasteland for its beauty. The race was on!

“We dropped down into Minnesota to sneak around Lake Superior,” McKenna says, “and then went back into Ontario. I had a massive exhaust leak since Minnesota,” and the irony that the new parts he needed “were only available at Fort Kent,” festered in McKenna’s mind.

More troubling, “Tony had a lot of problems with his sled, no doubt about it.” The pair began to travel more slowly, and possibly things got very quiet between them.

Undaunted, “Tony and I made the decision that ‘we’re just going to beat his mileage,’” McKenna says of LeBlanc. “Yves finished his trip ahead of us, claiming a final total of 10,770 miles upon his return to Montreal. We shouldn’t have been bothered by that, because there was a good chance Yves’s trip wouldn’t count because he’d been trailered four or five times when we hadn’t,” but in spite of that, “when friends met us in Caribou when we crossed into Maine, having covered 9,400 miles, Tony said ‘I’ve made it and that’s it.’ I said, ‘Look, maybe there’s going to be a little lady at Guinness who’ll say the mileage counts and we will have to exceed Yves’s even though

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he was trailed.' But Tony said he was done, absolutely through. I said, are you sure? Tony said he'd accomplished what he wanted and didn't make a move. I said, 'My machine will not see a trailer until it sees 10,800 miles.' I wanted my kids to be able to say, 'My dad *did* it, damn it!' Not, 'My dad came really close.' When I rode away from him, he was very solemn, very unhappy. I called my wife, and she called Tony's wife, Kim, and said, 'You need to tell Tony to stick it out,' but Kim told my wife, 'I'm going to pick him up.' 'Won't he regret this for the rest of his life?' my wife asked."

McKenna went on to make the 10,800.3-mile mark to break the world record—reluc-

tantly, alone. "I continued on for another 1400 miles on a round robin through northern Maine. I don't know what's transpired since then, with Tony, his kids, and his wife."

Meanwhile, McKenna is filing "all the paperwork, pictures, letters, and other documentation that Guinness needs." Does he dream of a reunion with Wolfinger at some point? Even Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis buried the hatchet after 20 years...

"You learn a lot about a person when you see him every day," says Wolfinger. "I haven't talked to [McKenna] since Caribou, and I don't care to."

McKenna shrugs. "I guess that's up to him."

10 Donna Loring



Donna Loring makes an address in the company of Barry Dana (far left) and Rachel Talbot-Ross (third from left).

Farewell to Arms

After a trip to Saigon, a former Vietnam Veteran proves the pen is mightier than the sword by writing legislation that aims to correct misunderstandings about Maine's Wabanaki legacy.

Once upon a time not so long ago, Maine schoolchildren were heard to recite, "Where we walk to school each day, Indian children used to play, all about our native land, where the shops and houses stand..." Thanks in large part to State Representative Donna Loring, the Penobscot Nation's sole legislative voice in Augusta, a deeper understanding of Maine's true native Wabanaki heritage is sweeping across the K-12 public school curriculum to improve upon the "token Indian projects" of the past, as Old Town Elementary School librarian Lynn Mayer has described them in the *Portland Press Herald*.

The first wave of L.D. 291 that she wrote "created the 15-member Maine Native American Culture Commission, eight selected by the tribal chiefs, six by the commissioner of education, and one by the chan-

cellor of the University of Maine." It also awarded a 2005 grant to the Penobscots to generate "We Teach"—programming and educational resources designed to institute, if not revolutionize, Wabanaki instruction by the state's elementary-, middle-, and high-school teachers statewide.

Last month, a second grant for workshops, two of which attracted crowds in greater Portland, added perspective and momentum to the effort. "I specifically wrote the law not to mandate the teachers to teach every part of the curriculum at a certain time, leaving them flexibility to choose some of these things in the way they thought appropriate at their grade level. You wouldn't ask for grade 2 to teach about the Native American economic system, for example."

A UMaine-Orono grad with a degree in political science, Loring served as "police

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chief of the Penobscot Nation from 1984-1990 after graduating from the Maine Criminal Justice Academy," making her "the first female police academy grad to become a police chief in Maine. From 1992-1997, I was director of security at Bowdoin College"—the first female to hold that position, as well.

But before all that, she fought in the Vietnam War, with a tour of duty in the communications center at Long Binh Army Base northeast of Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, from November 1967 to November 1968, during the Tet Offensive.

"That long ago, my God!" she says. "I was 19 then. In 1997, [Portland NAACP President] Rachel Talbot-Ross invited me to go to Vietnam with [attorney and former political candidate] Severin Belliveau to attend an international French business forum.

"Landing at the airport, I didn't know how I'd feel. I stayed five days in Ho Chi Minh City. I looked around and didn't see any real old people. I saw people maimed by the war. Kids followed us for money. Then Rachel and I stopped in the War Memorial Museum. They'd changed the name from the War Crimes Museum to the War Memorial Museum. They had more American military paraphernalia than you could think of...insignia, lighters with squadron insignia, old tanks...evidence of *me* intruding on *their* culture. I saw an old tiger cell where they had a replica of a prison, and it looked real...Rachel nearly jumped out of her skin when she saw them! What got me, I guess, was that these people whose country we'd invaded were treating us very well, even though they couldn't have had a favorable memory from that period. It was instructive for me. It helped me close that door."

The difference of perspective was so acute, Loring found, that her museum guides refused even to acknowledge the place where she'd been stationed, verbally or otherwise. "Long Binh was the biggest Army base in the world. I couldn't find it on the maps. 'Where's Long Binh?' I asked. 'Long Binh doesn't exist anymore,'" they told her.

Cultures silkscreened upon one another. "We stayed at the old Continental Hotel, where Graham Greene had stayed" in the 1950s. "Here we were in Ho Chi Minh City, but there were Greek pillars, marble all over the place. I turned on CNN and saw the LBJ Tapes, with in-depth coverage of *his* views of Vietnam. How ironic that was!

"Being a Native American person who'd

had my country invaded, I thought, 'Here I am an invader as well. We used to call the Vietnamese 'gooks.' We were the foreigners; they weren't the foreigners. It took me all this time to get it. I promised myself I'd put this in the back of my mind and hope to do something about it someday."

As in right now? "Yeah!"

As for murmurs that the law is lip service if there's no clear funding base to support it, she says, "When someone wants to get rid of this thing, they bring up the idea of a money barrier. I think I'm being baited on this. It's a Maine law. The Department of Education was supposed to help with some money, and the university system, and the tribes would kick in when they could.

"The burden should not be on one entity to make this happen. This project transcends money. Grants have come in from the tribes, from the Maine Humanities Council for these workshops, and in the past, the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) provided funding for the Abenaki Center at the University of Maine in Orono. The Passamaquoddys have developed an award-winning [educational] kit. The Penobscot kit is wonderful. The Department of Education has kicked in some money, the University is providing space, there's all kinds of movement." Loring recommends well-wishers visit www.umaine.edu/ld291, penobscotnation.org, and the Abbe museum's popular www.abbemuseum.org.

As for her legacy, Loring's online bio notes that she "was appointed Aide de Camp to former Governor Angus King on March 17, 1999, and was commissioned with the rank of colonel by the Governor. She was advisor to former Governor King on women veteran's affairs...Donna conceptualized and advocated for the first 'State of the Tribes Address' in Maine history. Tribal chiefs addressed a Joint Session of the Legislature on March 11, 2002. The event was carried live on Maine Public Television and Radio."

"Tilbury House will be publishing my insider's log to my 10 years in the Legislature," Loring says, "tentatively titled *In The Shadow of the Eagle*. It's always been my goal to make people visible. When they become visible they become human. In war, when you use a word like 'gook,' it's to make them non-entities. You can't recognize people as humans if you're going to kill them. The Maine Indian History Law is to make us visible and keep us visible." ■

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