

Our Focus Is Your Family's Vision



www.MaineEyeCenter.com

Cataract & Anterior
Segment Surgery

Retinal & Vitreous
Diseases & Surgery

Ophthalmic Plastic,
Lacrimal & Orbital Surgery

Corneal / External Diseases
and Surgery

Refractive Surgery,
Blade-Free iLasik

Pediatric Ophthalmology
Adult Strabismus

Glaucoma Management
and Surgery

Optometric Care, Eye Glasses,
Contact Lenses

MAINE 
EYE CENTER

(207) 774-8277 • (800) 545-6066

Lowell St. Campus - 15 Lowell Street, Portland, ME 04102-2792

Stroudwater Campus - 1685 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04102

ISN'T THAT...

Heather Hemmens kicks butt as mean-girl Alice Verdura on TV's *Hellcats*. But for the rising director/producer, this is just the beginning.

Think 'wounded baby tigress.' Because Alice Verdura's wrist is broken, she's going to miss the state cheerleading championships, so why *not* spoil them for everyone else?

The jealous teen played by Maine's **Heather Hemmens**, 22, isn't just a devil in a blue dress, she's a con-ning, well, hellcat on Wednesday-night's TV series *Hellcats*—submarining scholarships, switching up nude-photo scandals, exposing rivals' alcoholic moms, outing classmates, and generally getting into people's heads. Which isn't a

La Vida Local

INTERVIEW BY TARYN CRANE & ELIZABETH SCHLUGE

DECEMBER 2010 41

ISN'T THAT...

bad skill set if the actor who is playing you dares to dream of being a director, too.

The stunning Hemmens grew up off the grid in rural Waldo, west of Belfast, "without electricity—my parents were hippies." After finishing high school at prestigious Walnut Hill School for the Arts near Boston, she moved to Los Angeles to court fame on both sides of the lens.

Your fans may be surprised to know you're also a producer and director. Can you tell us more about that?

I've directed two short films: *Perils of an Active Mind* and *Designated*, which is about to be released. I acted in *Perils* as well, so I had the interesting experience of acting *and* being behind the camera; in the other I was entirely the director, which was an absolutely different perspective and dynamic.

What directorial work do you admire?

All of the Coen Brothers' films, particularly *The Big Lebowski*; Ang Lee's *Memoirs of a Geisha*; and any Spielberg blockbuster.

Do you feel entertainers *must* show talent in a number of dis-

ciplines these days?

Yes. I've always looked beyond being strictly an actress because of the type of career I hope to have. I always want to have a lot on my plate, because I love multitasking.

Who best exemplifies this type of multi-talent in the industry today?

Debbie Allen. She's an idol to me. She was a director on episode ten of *Hellcats*, so I met her then. As a fledgling director, I was sneaking behind the monitor to study her techniques while she was working. I saw some angles I hadn't considered before. She has such an eye for detail and dance scenes. Because she's a choreographer and dancer herself, she had cool, different lighting ideas—overhead shots we hadn't used before. She did a lot of camera movement, too following individual dancers. Another director might have left them stagnant.

Your mother is Costa Rican and your father English. How does your ethnic background enrich your directing and acting?

Being Latina represents a lot for me. I love to dance and eat. I have a little bit of sass. Growing up in Maine, there wasn't any Spanish

spoken. [My siblings and I] were the only ones from Costa Rican or African-American heritage in our schools, so it was about finding my own identity. Hey, that must be my director's vision coming through.

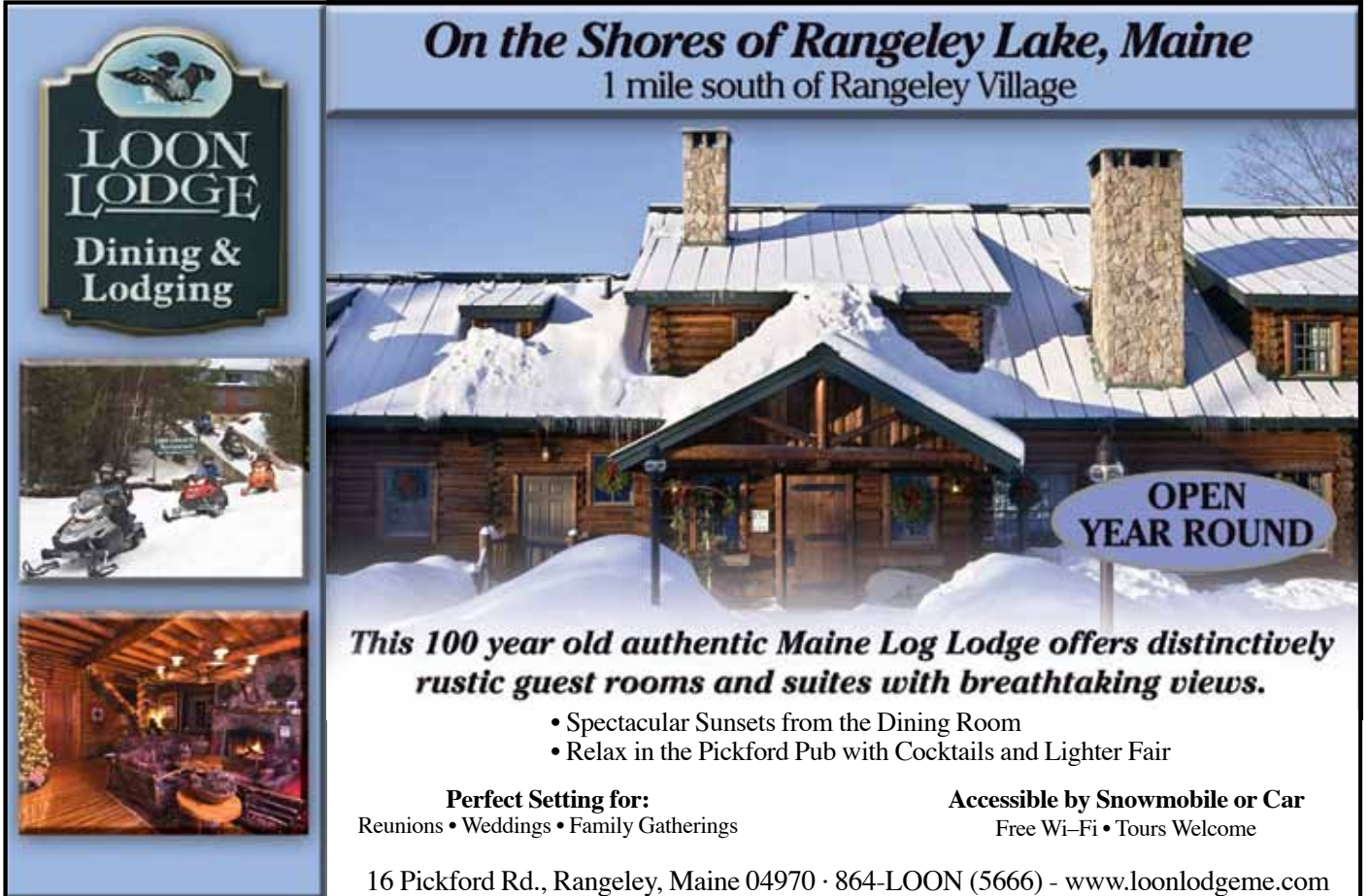
Has growing up in Maine affected you professionally?

Yes! People see my being from Maine as an exceptional thing, and they're always surprised. On *Hellcats*, I play a spoiled, bratty character, but I had very grounded, humble beginnings—I grew up in a serene environment. I'm not a big-city girl. What you see [on TV] is not what you get when you meet me. Acting is definitely required for me to play this character!

If you could shoot a film anywhere in Maine, where would it be? And how would the physical landscape of Maine influence how you'd shoot it?

I grew up way back in the woods [outside of Waldo], so it would definitely be filmed on my parents' land. It would be some horror flick like *Blair Witch Project*. There are acres and acres of beautiful land with wildlife, streams, and woods.

Maine is most beautiful in the winter,



LOON LODGE
Dining & Lodging

On the Shores of Rangeley Lake, Maine
1 mile south of Rangeley Village

OPEN YEAR ROUND

This 100 year old authentic Maine Log Lodge offers distinctively rustic guest rooms and suites with breathtaking views.

- Spectacular Sunsets from the Dining Room
- Relax in the Pickford Pub with Cocktails and Lighter Fair

Perfect Setting for:
Reunions • Weddings • Family Gatherings

Accessible by Snowmobile or Car
Free Wi-Fi • Tours Welcome

16 Pickford Rd., Rangeley, Maine 04970 • 864-LOON (5666) - www.loonlodgeme.com

when the trees are covered in snow and you can ice skate on your pond. You'd see my film influenced by the need to show the beauty of the state.

When you come back here, how do you know you're in Maine?

I fly into Bangor, and you know you're home before you even land. Just *flying over* Maine is amazing because you can always tell what season it is. It's orange and lush or covered in snow or bright green. It's a relief to return. First thing, I take a deep breath. Then I have to get Greek pizza at Alexia's in Belfast to know I'm *really* home.

What do you like to do while you're home?

I like to cook with my mom, read books [favorites include *Teach Yourself to Think* by Edward de Bono and *The Celestine Prophecy* by James Redfield], and go for long walks with our dogs. I enjoy snowmobiling and four wheeling.

Where might we find you in the Old Port?

I'm not very familiar with Portland, but in
(Continued on page 63)

oriental | contemporary | sisal | broadloom | appraisals | cleaning | padding



Bradford's
Rug Gallery



Kazak

297 Forest Avenue Portland, ME

Monday through Saturday 9am to 5pm Just off I-295 Exit 6B

p: 207.772.3843 | f: 207.773.2849 | www.Bradfordsruggallery.com

Meet your friends at the playground

Your Maine Mountain!



Big Mountain
Skiing and Riding
less than 1 hour
from Portland!

Route 302 | Bridgton, ME | 207- 647- 8444

ISN'T THAT...

La Vida Local (continued from page 43)

Belfast, you'd find me at Chase's Daily eating a muffin or at one of the local brew pubs. I also love Moody's Diner.

After playing a cheerleader on *Hellcats*, do you worry future acting endeavors may have you typecast?

No, I don't think playing a cheerleader pigeonholes me at all. [Alice] is dynamic and complex—she's smart and strong, hides her vulnerability, and has a jealous streak. The layers of her character allow me to show a large range with my acting. I believe this role will bring more different and interesting opportunities than if I were playing the girl next door.

You weren't a cheerleader in high school, but if you could go back in time, would you try out for the cheerleading squad?

It would have been good for me. In junior high, when I was searching for my identity, it would have given me more confidence.

If your career as an actress had not been successful, what would you be doing instead?

Teaching. Working with kids and being an influence is important and needed...especially now, with cuts in funding. Behind every successful person is a mentor. Mine was and is my 5th-grade teacher, Mrs. Dale L. Breau, who still teaches at Morse Memorial Elementary in Brooks.

What's the best advice you've been given?

Someone once told me to be a black belt at *whatever* I do. My passion for acting motivates me, and every day I give it my all.

What actors do you feel you're learning from right now as inspirations? And (assuming it's not you) who would you choose to play you in a movie about your life?

Eva Mendez, Salma Hayek, Penélope Cruz, and [my costar] Ashley Tisdale. I'd want Keke Palmer [from Disney Channel's *True Jackson* and the movie *Spelling Bee*] to play me in a movie. Naturally, I'd direct. ■

▶▶ For more images, visit portlandmonthly.com.



CW NETWORK

**Dr. Nancy Sargent
Dr. Irina Babayan**
are pleased to welcome new patients

Falmouth Family Dentistry



Creating Generations of Smiles

251 U.S. Route 1 • Falmouth, Maine 04105 • (207) 781-4216
Insurance Welcome • Convenient Hours Available

Experience Counts



Mirle Kellett Jr. MD, Thomas Ryan Jr. MD, William Dietz, MD and Peter Higgins, MD

The physicians at Cardiovascular Consultants of Maine have over 80 years combined experience in Interventional Cardiology. Our board certified physicians are committed to providing quality and compassionate care to our patients. When it matters most, count on experience.

 **Cardiovascular
Consultants of Maine, P.A.**
Caring for Patients with Heart Disease

www.heartmaine.com