

Maine > Ahead

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H₂O TO GO

*Why Poland Spring
is greener than
you think... 20*

PLUS

**Private Tour
McCain Foods ... 28**

**Vantage Point
Leonard Nelson ... 57**

NOVEMBER 2010



Contents *cont.*



J. DOE: Autism's Rain 72



CHEF TO CHEF:
Michael Gagné 62

LIFESTYLE

WORTH THE TRIP

Spaced Out in Orono . . . 46

Got a youngster who loves to gaze at the stars? Steer your starship toward the Maynard F. Jordan Planetarium.

DREAM HOME

If I Lived Here . . . 48

Some playgrounds are just too big and well-equipped not to share.

VANTAGE POINT

Bernstein's Protégé . . . 57

Leonard M. Nelson, founding partner of Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson, is no mere lawyer. He's a transformer.

CHEF TO CHEF

Another Bull's-Eye . . . 62

Michael Gagné, chef/owner of Robinhood Free Meetinghouse in Georgetown, has a gift for hitting the culinary mark.

OPINION

BULL PEN

Hurt by LURC . . . 68

Orlando Delogu understands that LURC has a job to do. But endless delays and elaborate rule making is not in the job description.

Potato Power . . . 70

What if potatoes could power our laptops and lights? They can. Perry Newman tells us how.

J. DOE

Autism's Rain . . . 72

The instance of autism in the United States has spiked alarmingly, and in Maine, it's even higher than average. Why, then, are so many Maine schools stumbling when it comes to proactive supports for kids with autism?

In Every Issue

BACK THEN

Wildfire Fighters . . . 9

In 1947, wildfires raced through Maine, but these broom-wielding Bates students helped calm the conflagration.

MAINE GOODS

Good Kids Toys . . . 14

Those wonderful, simple log building sets of your childhood are still here. They're even made in Maine.

STICKY BUSINESS

Research Engines . . . 16

Zip Kellogg reveals the diverse business intel that is yours for the taking, through a site called MARVEL.

THE WAY WE WORK

Music Marathon . . . 74

Mark Miller has been wowing guitar fans for over 40 years with his tasty take on rock, country, and the blues. And he's just getting started.

» Mark Miller

Professional musician

BRAD DELP, THE LATE LEAD SINGER of Boston, considered Mark Miller “one of the best bluesmen in the country,” and paid him to develop ideas in his Boston studio for three years. But most of Mark Miller’s life has been in Maine. And, apart from a few short-term jobs filling in during the Christmas rush, Miller has made his living solely as a performer, a career that’s in its 40th year. In addition to headlining himself, he’s opened for a cadre of legends like B.B. King, Waylan Jennings, Johnny Winter, and Jonathan Edwards.

His latest CD, *Whatcha Gonna Do*, features backup vocals by Delp, with most of the songs written and sung by Miller. Though he can sing with the best of them, Miller’s prodigious guitar playing is what captivates fans, many of them fellow players.

When did you learn guitar? What was your first gig?

I started picking up the guitar at around age 6, but I was probably about 8 before I could actually play anything. I started my first band when I was 11 years old, called the Stingrays. We played on the TV show *Spotlight on Youth* on Channel 2. I think our first paying gig was playing in Medway at Lennie’s for \$1.50 each.

Did you go to college?

Not till I was 30 years old. I got out of high school and got drafted. I joined the Air Force for a year and then got out with an honorable. I spent the next 18 years or so just playing in bands, in and around northern Maine. It was a pretty cool scene back then.

You had developed quite a following in Maine by the early 1980s. Why did you decide to move to Boston?

I met Brad Delp in 1980, and he hired me to rehearse with him in the studio, working out ideas. I did the country circuit on the weekends. He was best man at my wedding. Micki Delp has given me permission to post some videos of Brad and me working on my last CD, and I’m very grateful.

What are the best and worst parts of being in this business?

It feels good to get respect and recognition for what you do. There was a nice story this month in the *Boston Herald*. The weird thing is being known, but not making the money. But when you read about Nikola Tesla, he didn’t make a lot of money, but he invented things that Edison didn’t have a clue about.

I’m always hoping to do better. I’m working with an agent, and have got a chance to get into Halifax. There’s good money up there. But either way, I’ll always play. It’s what the Lord put me on earth to do. »

