

M A I N E C O A S T

John Cole's

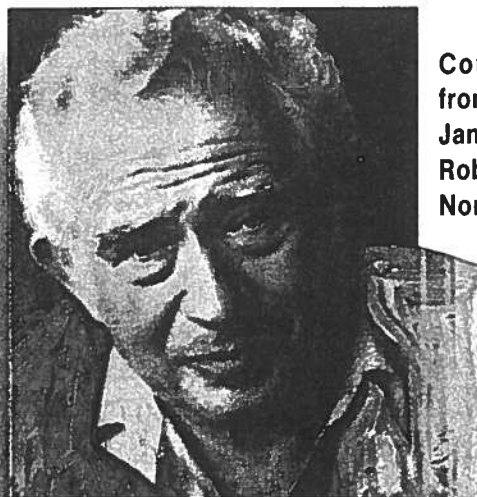
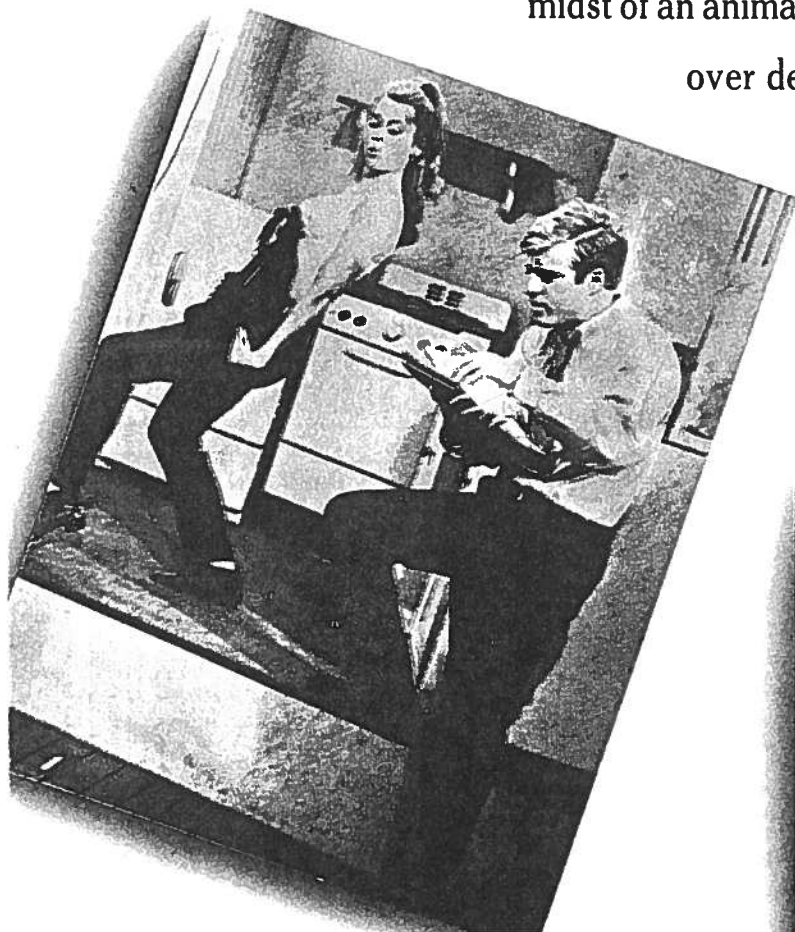
Guide to Summer Fauna

Maine resident John N. Cole
(right) prefers to winter in
sunny Key West.

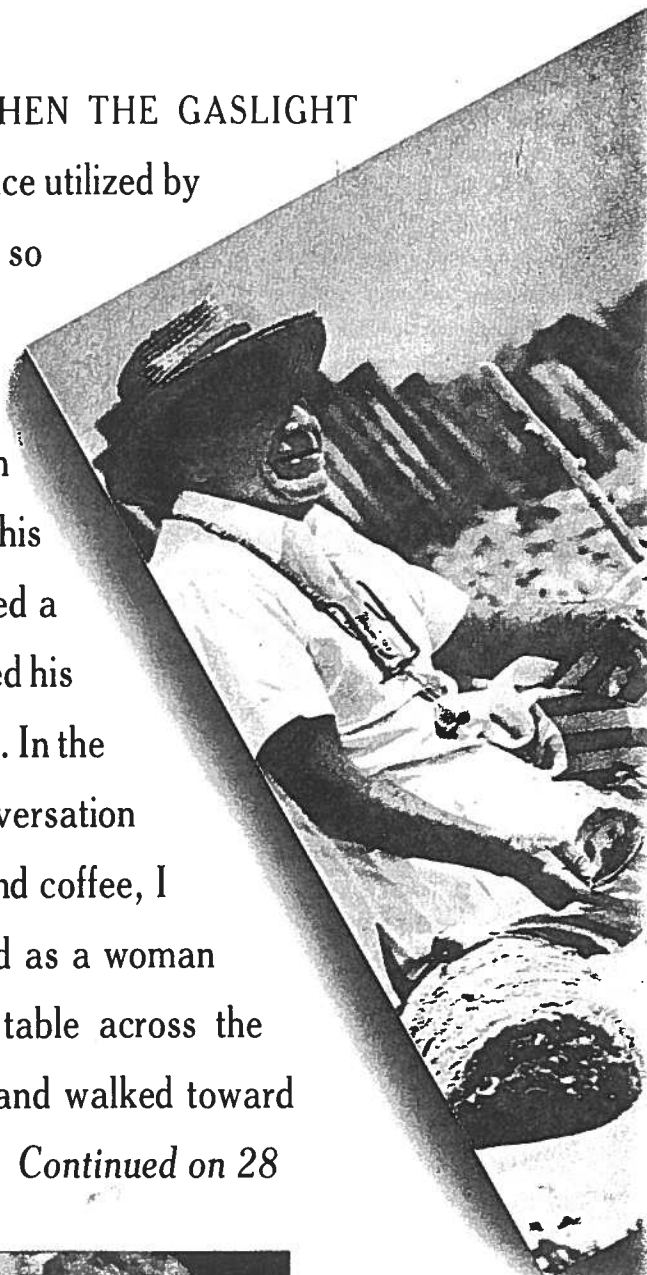
FIRST, THIS REPORT FROM MY PAST: WHEN THE GASLIGHT Restaurant occupied the Exchange Street space once utilized by Portland's Board of Trade, I lunched there every so often. Those meals were a civilized reminder of elegance not found at fast-food or health-food eateries. So it was the Gaslight that was chosen when Richard Goodwin invited me to lunch with him and his friend Norman Mailer. Dick recently had purchased a place near a mountaintop in Kingfield and had talked his pal Norman into buying a similar place in Rangeley. In the

midst of an animated conversation

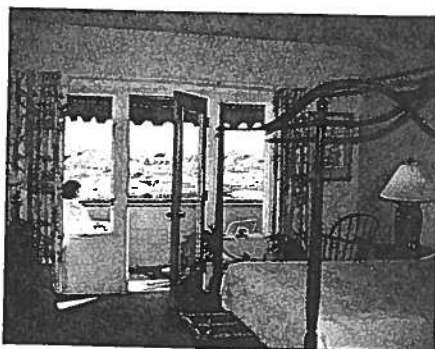
over dessert and coffee, I watched as a woman left a table across the room and walked toward us..... *Continued on 28*



Counter-clockwise,
from top: Gary Merrill,
Jane Fonda &
Robert Redford,
Norman Mailer.



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BRACED FOR THE INEVITABLE APPROACH TO one, or both, of the "famous" men at our table. But in one of those glorious quirks that is eternally recalled, she leaned past her cleavage and looked directly at me. "Aren't you John Cole?" she asked.

Fame is relative, it would seem. Lunching with a Pulitzer-Prize author at one chair and the articulator of the "Great Society" on the other did not diminish my local identity. But there are those Maine folk who command local and national, indeed international, stages. These are the men and women of ultimate identity. George Mitchell, Ed Muskie, Margaret Chase Smith and George Bush point to Maine with pride even as most of the nation knows them for their prominence in the highest echelons of government.

When Gary Merrill and Bette Davis lived at Witchway in Cape Elizabeth, they invited friends such as Jean Arthur and Claude Rains to bring a touch of authentic Hollywood stardom to Greater Portland, and it is those heady times that are still remembered whenever Gary is spotted on the Portland Country Club golf course. Actors and actresses, like politicians, have always been partial to this open, unaffected state that respects privacy and takes celebrities as they come. Andy Warhol may have said, "Everyone is famous for 15 minutes," but he could not have had Maine in mind. Here, no one is "famous" in the glitzy sense the word has recently acquired.

Sure, there are Andy Wyeth, Jamie Wyeth, Stephen King, David Rockefeller, Cap Weinberger, a bunch of Cabots, Lodges and Saltonstalls as well as visitors like Robert Redford and Lyndon Johnson, who once stopped an entire presidential motorcade so he could buy a frozen-custard cone at Topsham's Dairy Queen. Then there are quieter types like Cape Elizabeth's Harold Pachios, Johnson's former assistant press secretary who worked his White House days alongside Bill Moyers, a frequent visitor here. Texans like Moyers love Maine: Stanley Marcus visits Camden frequently; a score or more Dallas-Fort Worth types make their summer homes on Harpswell Neck.

There is a Rothschild on top of Tory Hill outside Strong whose fame as a writer of excellence is well established among Manhattan publishers; in Strong he is known only as a farmer. That's how fame is kept in balance in this splendid state and those on both sides of the phenomenon are eternally grateful.

—John Cole