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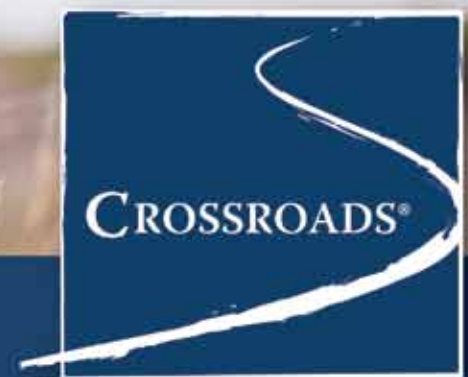
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Front Page

For only \$165 a night, book a room at the **Loon Lodge Inn** and channel the **Gannett Publishing** empire.

BY COLIN W. SARGENT

WHAT A BLAST—to rusticate or host a wedding at the mythic Loon Lodge Inn, created in Rangeley in 1909. Your guests will love tucking into craft cocktails at the Inn’s intimate Pickford Pub: “appetizers include calamari, mussels, crisp pork belly, flatbreads, and more.” Or maybe they’ll dream of tearing into ribeye, pan-roasted rack of lamb, or Atlantic salmon in the post-and-beam dining room, with everything made from scratch. This resort is classic Maine in the 21st century.

Every blast has a past. Gannett Publishing Co., the legendary former owners of the Portland newspapers, used to own this glamour retreat, along with the 4,116-foot Saddleback Mountain ski resort, so near the lodge the mountain is reflected in the same lake Loon Lodge faces.

Today, as vacationers, we can all channel the Guy Gannett empire by booking a room at the Loon Lodge, updated to rustic splendor and more exciting than the newspaper gals and guys ever imagined it.

Guy Gannett owned secret luxu-

ry hunting and flying camps in “Moosehead Lake and Ross Lake,” says his grandson, Guy Gannett Williams, the son of Jean Gannett Hawley—Guy Gannett’s daughter, who herself was the longtime publisher of the *Press Herald*, *Sunday Telegram*, and *Evening Express*. “Guy Gannett built Forest Park on Moosehead Lake. He also had a smaller fishing camp on Ross Lake.”

Let your imagination run wild. Up north, Gannett’s camps likely included famous Red Sox players like Babe Ruth and Ted Williams.

“Guy loved flying. He founded the Maine Civil Air Patrol and had two planes of his own,” Williams, an artist, says.

When Guy Gannett died in 1954, his

daughter Jean took control of the work and fun of running Guy Gannett Publishing. Outside of the boardroom, “My mother wasn’t a hunter,” Williams says. “You’d find her in the kitchen.” But her tastes did include ski resorts and Rangeley. “My stepfather, Richard “Dick” Arnzen, bought Saddleback Mountain.” Guy Gannett Publishing then became owners of the mountain and the lodge, an exciting prospect for young Guy Gannett Williams, who was just a teenager then, because it put a thrilling life of skiing at his doorstep.

“I taught skiing at Saddleback when I was a junior in high school, in 1967,” he says. This led to a skiing career that has landed Williams in the Maine Skiing Hall of Fame. “I’ve instructed at Telluride and Silver Mountain.”

When the Gannetts moved in, “Loon Lodge was called Davis Lodge. It was like a wind tunnel, with the wind outside shrieking inside” the rustic structure. So you’ll have it better than the Gannetts did if you stay at Loon Lodge. “It was cold. But that huge fireplace made up for it.” It’s the



ROAD WARRIOR

place that Guy Gannett Williams sees in his mind when he thinks of Loon Lodge and remembers his childhood.

“My stepfather, Dick Arnzen, ran Saddleback Mountain for two years.” The dream was sadly shortened because “Dick died of cancer.”

“**G**uy Gannett Publishing bought Saddleback.” As for the lodge, “My stepbrother had to sell it for next to nothing.”

“I sold the lodge the year after Dick died, around 1973,” says Williams’s stepbrother and Dick’s son, Breck Arnzen. “I was 19 at the time. I sold it for \$50,000.”

“My dad worked for Guy Gannett Publishing from the summer of 1964 through 1974,” says Bob Myers of Rangeley. “We moved to Maine for the position. He came in as controller and then treasurer. It was right around then that Jean Gannett Hawley bought Saddleback Mountain.” Bob remembers being a guest in the Gannett Lodge in Rangeley. “Of course I was only 11 or 12 back then, but it was beautiful—



a gorgeous log building right on the lake, with pine trees all around it. The lodge has fantastic views across the lake. It sits down from the road and is close to the lake, so it’s kind of back-to the Saddleback. In Rangeley, there aren’t many places where you can see Saddleback until it kind of sneaks up to you while you’re driving.”

Was it a wind tunnel back then? “My mother said it had icicles from the room and snow on the roof, ‘like *Dr. Zhivago*.’ It had a big stone fireplace, which is still there. There was a real bear rug” in the Gannett lodge. “I’d never seen anything like that. Once you stare into a bear rug, it’s the kind of thing you don’t forget.” ■

COURTESY PHOTO

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