The Maine Department of Marine Resources recently distributed regulations under consideration for the urchin fishery in Maine. One possible regulation is a three-month season, December to March. Another would ban bottom dragging and limit the size of nets. The proposed legislation was designed to combat the quality of the harvest and protect the average fisherman. But no one has offered any real evidence that it will do either. Perhaps no such evidence exists. In the fisheries vacuum that has been the hallmark of the urchin industry, the truth may never be known.

After three years of brow-pitch, urchin harvesting, the industry finally threw open its arm to the public debate. Rumors of discontent and disaster within the industry started to shape concerns in the get-rich-quick stories circled earlier by journalism.

And the once novel topic of the urchin trade has sucked environmentalism souring about the effects that urchin depletion may have on the ecosystem. Unfortunately, the environmental brain trust at the University of Maine knows no more about the urchin's natural history than the average reporter knows about the commodities market.

In February, Maine Program extension agent Ben Baxter, leafing through the Journal of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, was surprised to find a survey of post-molt lobsters that showed sea urchins comprised 68.9 percent of the lobsters' stomach contents. Even as Baxter read this, marine "experts" were telling Portland audiences that harbor seals, gulls, and wolf fish are the urchin's main predators.

"It's just so ironic," says Ben Baxter. "Lobster fishermen come to informational meetings on urchin harvesting and say, 'Yeah, get rid of these things for us. They clog the traps. They deplete the lobster fishery by eating all the kelp.' What are they going to say now?"

Good question. Lobster fishermen harvest an average of 20 million pounds of lobster a year. It may be that the urchin harvest will restore a natural balance. But it is also possible that the urchin harvest will result in a harvest of fewer or smaller lobsters. Nobody knows. Ignorance, more than any other force, has shaped the Maine urchin fishery thus far.

And if the Maine urchin industry fails, it will be ignorance that kills it.
VIEWS

Beem does "best work while drunk?"

I read with some enjoyment Leslie Morriso's review of the "Wildlife" exhibit at one of her galleries. Her comment on Edgar Beem's best work while drunk explains great al about his writing and thinking and may explain why I, too, find his work humorous. I know that when he gets a bit treaty about alcohol, it's just the opposite, and not the other way around. Thank you, Leslie, thank you.

-John W. Pepey

Gallery owners have "tunnel vision"

I find the manner in which Portland gallery owners treat their resident artists appalling. My mom and I have been in Maine, but I've worked and studied in Boston and New York City throughout my adult life, and returned to Maine five years ago. After my first five years here, I came to think that some of my fellow gallery owners were washing out the local art world, and that our Portland based artists would be expected to move to Boston.

My observations have been that many gallery owners simply open a gallery as a "hobby" or as a supplemental income source. They are often in their twenties and may be taking twistingly about art, they clear their throat for lack of words. The man on the street, the insurance salesman, the plumber or electrician would know more about art if he has the means to play for his few dollars. Perhaps our gallery owners know more about politics and art in the world, and that Portland artists would be expected to move to Boston.

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**UPDATES**

Greyhound strike wins gun battle

As it was, a month of fighting the line. Greyhound lines trying to overcome the public's resistance to the bus strike could not have come at a better time for the company, which has been facing charges of unfair labor practices.

A love affair with the bus began a month ago when Greyhound Lines announced that it would no longer allow passengers to carry guns on its buses. The move was met with widespread condemnation from gun enthusiasts and police unions, who accused Greyhound of violating the rights of gun owners.

Greyhound's decision came after a number of violent incidents involving guns on its buses, including a shooting in Portland, Maine, earlier this month. In response, the company announced that it would no longer allow guns on its buses, effective immediately.

The move was hailed by gun control advocates, who praised Greyhound for taking a stand against violence and gun violence. However, it was met with criticism from gun enthusiasts, who accused Greyhound of infringing on the rights of gun owners.

Greyhound Lines CEO John Neumann said the company's decision was made after consulting with its employees and considering the safety of its passengers.

"We understand the importance of guns to many of our customers," Neumann said. "But we also understand that we have a responsibility to our passengers to ensure their safety.

The decision to ban guns on our buses was not an easy one, but we believe it is the right thing to do."
URCHIN IGNORANCE

Continued from last page

Lloyd Covens, sometimes known as the Urchin Merchant of Maine, commutes between his office on the Maine Whale Watch in Portland. A combination of passion and business, the Urchin Merchant is the hero of "Sea Urchin Harvesting: Threat or Opportunity?" an event sponsored by the Downeast Coalition. The Coalition, a group that covets the urchin, has raised millions of dollars to buy insurably valuable pieces of seafood. Sea urchin is but one of many species that the Coalition has been instrumental in preserving.

Lloyd Covens, the "Urchin Merchant"

They got divers to go out and get urchins and bring them in. They shipped them down to Japan without a customer, with no order, without an agreed-on quality or an agreed-on price. I can't believe that people would do this, but it was done by the millions of tons.

Lloyd Covens, at his Commercial Street business.

The urchin business is too tricky for Japanese dealers and to get them to cut their losses has caused considerable consternation here but has paved the way to an insecurely trusted market.

Richard Harveys helps urchins up a conveyer belt at Urchin Merchants.

Lloyd Covens, the "Urchin Merchant"

Lloyd Covens, the "Urchin Merchant"

The possibility of over-harvesting urchins in the Gulf of Maine has caused considerable consternation here but has paved the way to an insecurely trusted market. Lloyd Covens, the Urchin Merchant, has been a vocal proponent of the urchin fishery. During a round-table discussion at the Downeast Coalition's annual conference, Covens proposed December 1 to March 1 season will destroy the industry. Covens, a Maine-based urchin dealer, argues that the current season is too long because it allows fishermen to harvest urchins at a time when the California urchin population is at its lowest. Covens believes that this season should be shortened to protect the urchin population.

Richard Harveys helps urchins up a conveyer belt at Urchin Merchants.

But the self-interest of an enlightened merchant can constrain itself to a market ecology. Lloyd Covens calls the Urchin Merchant of California "a great and untarnished fisherman." But Covens, who has been in the urchin business for 27 years, believes that the season should be shortened to protect the urchin population.

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Rock & Roll Confidential

By Dave Marsh

They'll be there.

The name has dubious sums of its admirations can win, the right of its mediocrity dance, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is always a special place for a special occasion. It is a great celebration, a hall of fame or something.

They'll be there.

in these occasions and because from time to time, we ask people from the heart to revere all of us who did this magic last time. Do you think we're running out of people who did.

They'll be there.

You folks gave us more than you Atlas Holland, Lammie Ruder, and Eddie Holland.

We won't put the endless monologues of songs they wrote and produced for Marvin Gaye, Smokey and the Miracles, and many other, many, many, many.

You folks gave us more than you
do the same that Smokey.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is the greatest, the only, the famous.

You folks gave us more than you

for groups, for soloists, for singles, whose names should be amplified here. See, 3:45am. In the middle, the late James Brown has a legend, and he was there.

Benjamin, the great unknown, half-forgotten or underesti­mated Motown drummer.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is always due on this occasion, and because from time

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March 18, 1990

The new age sounds of De'Vah are featured in a benefit performance for the 1990 Maine Jazz Festival. See page 23.

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STAGE

Opening Mini-Delete Festival: Four works about the Holocaust. "The Place of the Dead" by John Kander and Fred Ebb; "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter" by Carson McCullers; "Samuel Beckett's "Come and Go"; "At the Elephant's Feet" by Joseph Brodsky. Portland Stage Company, Afro-American Artists Theatre, Portland. Performances are Thu-Sat at 8 pm, Fri at 8 pm, and Sun at 7 pm.

around Town


Art of Discovery's "Theatre of Deception" by Robert Malloy; "Theater of Disappearance." Performances are Thu-Nov 12. For more information, call 222-3030.

OUT OF TOWN

Brandeis College Museum of Art presents "The Great War: Art of the Great War." Performances are Thu-Nov 12. For more information, call 222-3030.

Oregon Museum of Science and Industry presents "Into the Music of Salvation." Performances are Thu-Nov 12. For more information, call 222-3030.

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ART OPENING

Francesca Gallery 25 Forest Ave. Portland. "Gall.ory." For more information, call 774-5561.

ART GIVING LIFE

According to the organizers, times of this art and performance society, "Art Giving Life" organized a series of events to raise money for the Portland Youth Orchestra. The series included an art gala, a performance by the Portland Youth Orchestra, and a benefit concert by the Portland Youth Symphony. For more information, call 774-5561.

SENSE


HELP

Community Cable Network, 600 Main St. Portland. "Art Giving Life." For more information, call 774-5561.

WELLNESS

Meditation and Self-Discovery Center 202 Woodfords St. Portland. "Art Giving Life." For more information, call 774-5561.
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NINJA KIDS
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Parents orientation:
Monday, April 2 & Thursday, April 5 - 7 p.m.
The Mountain Mystic Center, 81 Ocean St., South Portland

FOR MORE INFORMATION & TO REGISTER, PLEASE CALL 767-2349

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