



# Cabin Journals

## living legacies

by Nancy Cain  
photos by Steve Burnmeister

More than a scrapbook,  
and not just a guest book

**T**he home rolls of the war in Stann of cool air on a late afternoon in July as Jean Gilbert, her husband and her four grown children gather in a knot on the sun-warmed porch of her Wilkesley Island cottage in Thousand Island Park, N.Y. It's not some white-bang, electronic media or mouth-watering desert that draws the family's attention, but something decidedly low-tech, Jean is reading (again) a favorite entry from the cottage journal she has maintained for nearly 15 years. The family draws together into a collective laugh as she describes the year she journeyed to the cottage with a friend to open it for the season and discovered twice

had "borrowed" the store's insulation and window cover in the tropics.

"To re-create experience in words is to live it twice," wrote an ancient Chinese poet. For Jean and many others who maintain cabin and cottage journals, it is an opportunity to relive the good times over and over and share those memories with family and friends.

"We can savor those memories and laugh," says Jean Gilbert. "The journal is a precious book that I know will be enjoyed for many years by our family."

Cabin and cottage journal keeps are recording their own personal histories, as well as the history of their extended family and friends.