

Value-added scenery:

Photographer Paul Sanderson takes familiar sights and turns them into art

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Anyone driving by Wilbermere Lake would see a traditional Highlands scene: shimmering lake surrounded by lush green forests, docks extending into the water like a cottage's hand stretched out in greeting.

But when Paul Sanderson arrives at the shores of the lake to visit the cottage compound which was once his grandfather's homestead and tourist lodge, he sees everything with an artist's eye. With his camera, he is able to take a typical scene and transform it into something more, something that evokes a mood and, equally importantly, elicits an appreciation of his craft.

Sanderson was at the Rails' End Gallery on Saturday to open his exhibit of photographs called *Looking into the Past*. Lawyer, poet, musician, husband, father, photographer, Sanderson has combined his love for the place of his family's roots with an aesthetic ability to express that love in what ordinarily can be such a conventionally technical manner.

Many viewers will be surprised by the exhibit. Familiar and commonplace scenes take on an eerie,

dream-like quality thanks to Sanderson's use of an infra-red lens. An abandoned plough set amidst a forested valley first appears to have been photographed on one of those icy mornings of winter, when branches are crystal white with frost. Then you noticed there are leaves on the tree and the whiteness is the brilliance of a summer sun. In another photograph, a tilting stop sign on an abandoned road becomes a haunting memorial to the lives which have passed by this lonely junction. Did the road take them to someplace good? On the other side of the gallery is a photo of a curve in the highway, the sky matted with clouds, the trees shimmering with the promise that if you keep on going, if you round that corner, the dream will become a reality.

Of course, you don't have to read anything into the photographs. If you want, you can simply admire them for their simple beauty, and still leave the show equally satisfied. But see the show you should. It gives a new appreciation, a new awareness of the fact that all around us, beauty and art are within eyesight. The show runs until October 13.



Paul Sanderson's photo exhibit at Rails' End Gallery evokes memories of family and place