



Martha Slater 767-3025 news@ourherald.com

The W.R. Valley Players To Celebrate 30 Years With Gala at Pierce Hall

By Martha Slater

The White River Valley Players will mark the 30th anniversary of their founding with a gala celebration costume and fancy dress ball Saturday, Oct. 17 at historic Pierce Hall on Main Street in Rochester.

The doors will open at 6:30 p.m., welcoming everyone to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and an elegant dessert buffet and program of music by the Rochester Chamber Music Society, followed by the lively music of Mango Jam for dancing or listening from 7:30-11 p.m.

Together 16 years, Mango Jam is a well-known Cajun Zydeco band based in Burlington, which has played in support of artists including Sheryl Crow, Blues Traveler, and Soul Asylum and at an Earth Day rally with the Steve Miller Band and Natalie Merchant.

The evening will also include a sing-along of favorite tunes from WRVP musical shows, community awards, and short scenes from shows produced in each of the Players' three decades.

This will be the first large social event to take place at Pierce hall since the restoration process began, and the fire marshal has stipulated that seating be limited to only 200 people.

The First 30 Years...

Founded by Dick and Dorothy Robson and their friends, Gary and Kathy Gaskill, in the Robson's back yard in Hancock, the Players' modest beginning has resulted in 30 years dedicated to perpetuating the magic of live theater, and far exceeded its founders expectations.

The Robsons have served on the WRVP Board of Directors for the entire 30 years (Dorothy is the current WRVP President), and have directed well over 20 shows together, with Dick as stage director and Dorothy as music director. They have per-

formed onstage together in many others.

A multi-generational community of people who work together to provide and promote something they love—live theater—the adults and kids in the Players work as a team and see each other in a different way than in their "everyday" situations. They learn to rely on each other and to appreciate and respect each other's abilities.

The Players have encouraged area young people to express themselves artistically, by helping to fund arts events in central Vermont schools and giving scholarships to students to help them pursue their artistic studies, as well as through their annual summer theater camp. At the opposite end of the age spectrum, 11 years ago the Players produced and presented seven one-act plays inspired by events in the lives of Park House residents.

The Players have produced more than 70 full-length productions, from Broadway musicals to Brecht, and sponsored workshops for directing, playwriting, acting, voice, improvisation, and lighting for teens and adults. They created the popular Harvest Fair 22 years ago, which takes place each fall on the Rochester park, as well as the annual Summer-night festival, which attracted crowds for a number of years, and has now evolved into an evening concert at the Gilmartin's barn.

Perhaps the most creatively ambitious project the Robsons worked on together was "Second Chance," a full-length original Broadway-style musical show that they created in collaboration with Ethan Bowen as writers, composers, and directors. How many community theater groups have had the experience of producing and creating their own original Broadway-style full-length musical? The world premiere production of that show was presented by the WRVP in the spring of 2000.

The Players also recorded a cast album CD of "Second Chance" with Roger Stauss' Noteworthy Studios in Granville; as well as a cast album cassette tape of the WRVP production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," for which Larry Hamberlin and Dorothy Robson collaborated on the musical score, using Shakespeare's text for the lyrics.

The Players members are grateful for the community support they've received over the past three decades and look forward to many more years of presenting live theater in the valley.

Tickets for the 30th Anniversary Gala may be purchased in advance at the White River Credit Union and Judy Jensen's Clay Studio in Rochester village. Any unsold tickets will be available at the door that evening. For more information call 767-3732.

Quin-town Senior Center News

The center is located at the Hancock Town Hall on Route 100. For more information about programs call 767-3763.

On Friday, Oct. 9, the center will hold a bake sale fundraiser at Mac's Valley Market in Rochester from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Lunch at the center that day will be roast pork, sweet potato pie, applesauce, spiced squash muffins, and upside down pecan pie.

Marian Levasseur will bring "Marian's Memories" to the center Monday, Oct. 12, and there will also be a board of directors meeting that day. Lunch will be turkey casserole, peas and carrots, rolls, and maple-walnut pie.

Interfaith caregivers will give a presentation on home safety Wednesday, Oct. 14. The lunch menu will include Spanish rice with hamburger meat, green beans, apricots, bread, and brownies.

On Friday, Oct. 16, there will be "breakfast for lunch," with western scrambled eggs, home fries, tropical fruit salad, blueberry muffins, and rice pudding.



Lots of Love and Cheer