

The Arts

Wanted: 100,000 poets for change

Verandah Porche plans creative gathering at River Garden as part of international undertaking



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By Richard Henke/[Vermont Associates for The Commons](#)

BRATTLEBORO—Guilford poet Verandah Porche and singer/songwriter Patty Carpenter have joined forces to create a song about the impact of the flooding caused by Tropical Storm Irene.

“Waves in the Wind” is a meditation on the havoc wreaked on the Vermont landscape. But it is also about resilience and hope.

Porche and Carpenter will premiere their song Saturday, Sept. 24, at the River Garden on Main Street, where they will be part of 100,000 Poets for Change, a worldwide event described as the largest worldwide poetry reading in history.

Porche invites the community to join with them at this free event from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. and celebrate “the solidarity of worldwide words and resilience of our state in the wake of Irene by sharing an original poem, a chanson, a piece of music, a chant, a rant, or an incantation.”

The song vividly describes iconic regional scenes from the disaster: “Did you catch on YouTube: covered bridge went down/ Horse-and-rider brave the water to get medicine to town.”

Yet the song also suggests that this local tragedy might be the direct result of something larger changing the planet, global warming. “Waves in the Wind” also describes Vermonters’ faith in their communities and love of their land.

Porche quotes a local farmer who lost everything in the flood but still could express her commitment to where she lives: “Friends ’n strangers gather tryin’ to fix the harm/ It’s a funny thing to say, ‘This is the best place to lose your farm.’”

With the support of Write Action, Verandah Porche is pleased to sponsor 100,000 Poets for Change in Brattleboro.

The international poetry gathering will include more than 600 events in 450 cities, towns and hamlets in 95 countries.

On Sept. 24, all over the planet, lovers of language will gather “to read poems, sing songs, raise awareness, and metaphorically join hands to create a new dialogue for peace, social justice and sustainability.”

All the projects will be archived by Stanford University.

Local meets global

The event was the brainchild of West Coast writer Michael Rothenberg, who had become despondent seeing all the people he

knew feeling so disempowered as they faced the many trials afflicting the planet.

Porche explains that “while sulking in the redwood forest, Rothenberg came to realize what he had always believed: the power of words.”

From that epiphany, he envisioned a public union of writers all over the globe dedicated to social change.

“The first order of change is for poets, writers, artists, anybody, to actually get together to create and perform, educate and demonstrate, simultaneously, with other communities around the world,” Rothenberg explains.

“This will change how we see our local community and the global community. We have all become incredibly alienated in recent years,” he added.

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