



## What's Been Happening?

The ConVal Visual and Performing Arts team has been making great strides in meeting our goal of building a 500 seat theater and performing arts space at CVHS. Some recent milestones:

- Updated our Vision and Mission statements:

### **Our Vision**

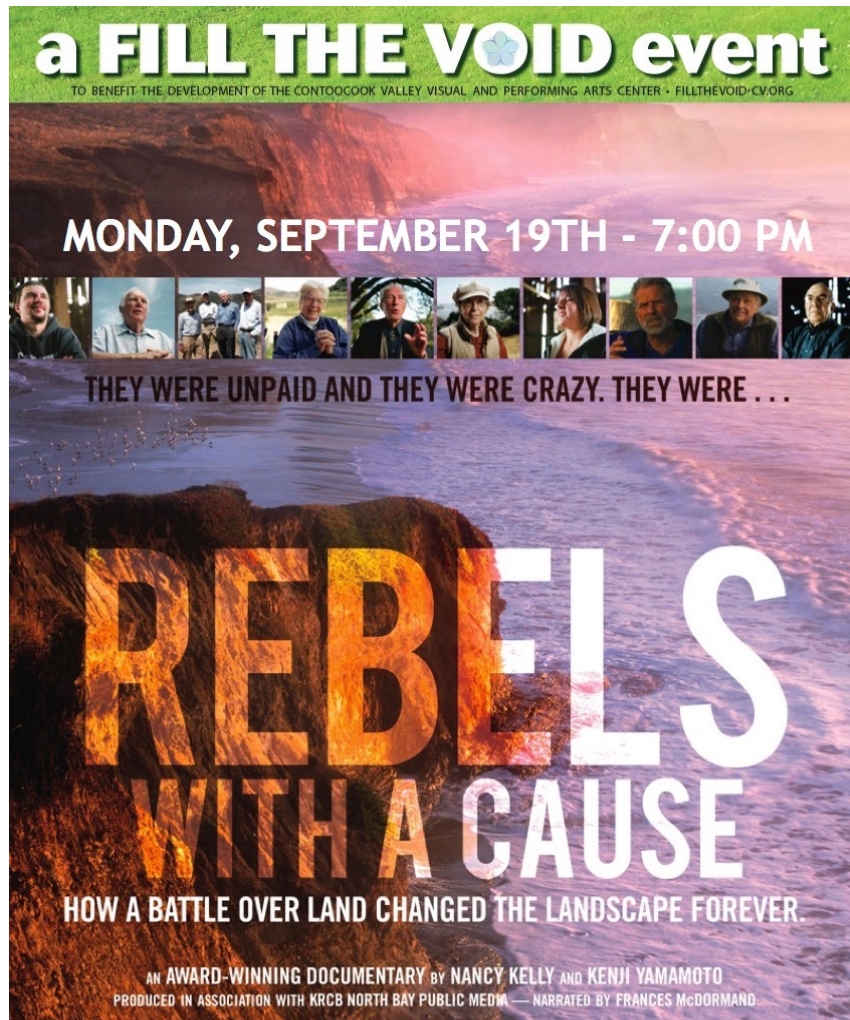
*A center for creative and diverse activities that enrich our communities.*

### **Our Mission**

*Contoocook Valley Visual and Performing Arts Center addresses school and community needs with a unique partnership that offers a public venue for music, theatre, dance, technical arts, presentations and exhibits, while contributing to the growth of the local economy.*

- Completed the business plan- an important factor in applying for grants and approaching potential donors.
  - Secured the services of a grant writer who is seeking foundation support.
  - Received a sample rendering from Petrovic and Associates of what the VPAC entrance could look like. [Click here to see it!](#)
  - With the help of Carol Nelson at the Peterborough Community Theatre, we have shown several well-received documentaries that have raised our public profile, as well as donations.
  - Thanks to emcee and workshop leader, Tricia Rose Burt, and ten talented story tellers, the Black Fly storytelling event earlier in the year was a big success – artistically and financially.
  - Reached out to other local non-profit leaders who are also trying to enhance the cultural and economic life of our community.
  - Organized a design committee that has begun to meet with school and community members to work out building design details.
  - Fundraising efforts have focused on the need to do both an architectural as well as a financial feasibility study.
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## What's ahead this quarter?



**PETERBOROUGH COMMUNITY THEATRE**  
EVENT IS FREE BUT DONATIONS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

REBELS WITH A CAUSE is the story of a regional California effort that grew into an astonishing system of fourteen National Seashores — the result of garden clubs, ranchers, farmers, conservationists, politicians from both parties, widows, and volunteers working together through compromise and negotiation, with the American public coming up as the winner.

Watch the trailer at <https://vimeo.com/47527324>.

**Save the date!** October 21st will be the date for another Black Fly story telling event at the Lucy Hurlin Theatre. We know, there are no Black Flies in October - but based on past success we are aiming to do two Black Fly events per year.

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## Alumni Spotlight: The Ahern Family by Jill Lawler

Some people are born to dance. In the case of the three Ahern siblings of Dublin, it was more like they were born dancing. Their mother, Christina, grew up in Pennsylvania where, starting at



age 11, she trained at the Philadelphia Performing Arts School on a full scholarship. She attended the University of the Arts and began dancing with the Pennsylvania Ballet Company and others. Christina and her husband Danny moved to New Hampshire and in 1990 she began teaching dance at the Well School.

By then, she had had three children and it was logical for her to bring Douglass, Shawn, and Riley along with her and they began to dance at the succession of studios she taught at or founded. All three children danced at Monadnock Performing Arts Academy and for New Hampshire Dance Institute, where Christina was also a teacher.

At ConVal, all three of the Aherns performed in musicals. Shawn and Riley were both in chorus and Riley often performed as a vocalist with the Jazz Band. Doug took courses in art and graphic design.

Shawn and Riley went on to study at Keene State with scholarships, obtaining bachelor degrees in Theater and Dance. Riley (Lynch) is teaching at Monadnock Academy of Movement Arts (MAMA) and choreographing for Keene State College's musicals and various projects. For the past six years, Shawn has danced professionally with Pilobolus Dance Theatre, travelling all over the world. Shawn is also Dance Captain for the 2nd year. Douglass is also teaching for MAMA, as well as other studios and is gymnastics and parkour coach at Ken-Gym in Hudson, NH. (Parkour includes running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling, quadrupedal movement.) He continued to study art with courses in glass blowing and drawing and painting techniques locally and in Maine. He does a lot of the web design for Christina's MAMA dance studio.

Before they hit the ConVal school system, all three Aherns were already committed to following their passions and improving their skills. But they took advantage of what ConVal offered and it

has served them well. All three siblings are now passing on a love of the arts to local children and to audiences all over the world. In the case of Riley Ahern Lynch she has continued the tradition her mother began: her year-old daughter Foster Lynch spends a lot of time at the studio and made a brief debut in a mother/daughter dance in this spring's company concert. We should look forward to the next generation.

2013 KSC interview with Sean and a video link to Pilobolus: <http://www.keene.edu/news/stories/detail/after-the-pilobolus-show-with-shawn-ahern-09/>

Picture of Sean above from <http://www.keene.edu/kst/2011Winter/dance.cfm@l=26.html>

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## Call for Alumni!

ConVal High School has long had a tradition of excellence in the performing arts. Many CV graduates have gone on to build impressive careers in music, dance and theater based on the passion that was fueled during their high school experience.

Our group working to bring a performing arts space to ConVal is planning to sponsor an alumni showcase next August (2017) to raise awareness about the plans for the expansion. Diverse acts are welcome: singing, dancing, instrumentalists, theatre: alumni may perform alone or in groups.

Please help us spread the word about this event by encouraging alumni to participate. Those who have questions about the event or want to express interest in performing should contact [Krystalmorin@gmail.com](mailto:Krystalmorin@gmail.com).

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## Sad News

We were saddened to learn of the death of Van McLeod on July 18th. Van was the long-time NH Commissioner for the Department of Cultural Affairs. Van also served ex officio on the ConVal VPAC Advisory Committee. He was excited to help make our CV VPAC dream a reality. His death is a loss for NH, and he will be missed by all whose lives he touched.

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## Get Involved!

If you are interested in being more involved with our efforts to build a new Performing Arts Center, please contact Krystal Morin at [krystalamorin@gmail.com](mailto:krystalamorin@gmail.com).

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