

As seen in the *Vermont Standard* – June 9, 2022

Congratulations to the Class of 2022

I dedicate this column to the 2022 graduates, including our amazing daughter Adi, who graduates from Woodstock Union High School on June 10th. It has been a challenging time for students as well as educators who faced the myriad of challenges posed by the pandemic. Missed were milestones, social interaction, and personal instruction.

Personally, I look forward to seeing the WUHS graduates receive their diplomas, especially those young adults to whom I coached lacrosse all through grade school, and our daughter's peers many we've known since pre-school.

On the heels of the graduation season arrives summer rituals that include Bookstock: Green Mountain Festival of Words, and Pentangle's annual *Music by the River Concert* series.

Pentangle is pleased to host several Bookstock authors Friday, June 24th and 25 in the Town Hall Theatre, and to present Pulitzer Prize winner Ayad Akhtar, Saturday, June 25th at 5:00 pm. His bestselling book *Homeland Elegies* offers -- as said by one my favorite authors, Salman Rushdie --

"An unflinchingly honest self-portrait by a brilliant Muslim-American writer, and, beyond that, an unsparing examination of both sides of that fraught hyphenated reality,"

There will be a free meet and greet reception for Ayad Akhtar at 6:00 pm. Donations to Pentangle Arts are gratefully accepted!

Also, on June 25th Pentangle presents Burlington-based spoken word poet and teaching artist Rajnii Eddins who will share his love of poetry, and the power of words and language to empower, and affirm our mutual humanity. Check him out at the tent behind the History Center at 3:00 pm.

In the spring of 2021 Rajnii engaged with and read poems from his book "Their Names Are Mine" to the entire WUHS student body and area elementary school students grade 4-6. So powerful was his message and his delivery that student's flocked to his side after each session to express gratitude and awe in his ability to craft a rap with random words they tossed out to him. Particularly moving was his reading of "For Trayvon Mike Brown and the Countless Unnamed" a poem that culminates with the recitation of over 100 names of known black and brown victims of police violence. Students' voices grew louder and louder as they repeated the names.

As there is power and positive affirmation in the spoken word so too is there with music. On July 8th we kick of the *Music by the River* series with Albino Mbie, who at the age of 16 in Maputo, the capital of Mozambique built

his first guitar from a 5-liter can of oil, scrap wood, and strings made from electrical cords.

While studying music education and performance at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique, he received a full scholarship to the Berklee School of Music through the African Scholars program. In 2013 he graduated from Berklee with a major in performance, production music and sound engineering and a minor in acoustics and electronics in 2013.

Today, Albino's music incorporates his musical experiences from Mozambique, the U.S., and around the world, combining rhythmic patterns and musical concepts to create a unique Afro-Pop and Mozambique-Jazz sound.

On July 15th MBR (Music by the River) musical influences move from Mozambique to Jamaica, with *Mystic Bowie and the Talking Dreads*. Charismatic Jamaican-born singer and performer, Mystic Bowie debuted the *Talking Dreads Project Live* at the High Times Music Festival on the beach in Negril, Jamaica in late 2015. Since then, he has electrified audiences across North America.

The road to the *Talking Dreads Project Live* began in 1996 when Bowie joined the *Tom Tom Club* and began a close personal and professional relationship with Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth, founding members of the *Tom Tom Club* and *Talking Heads*. He performed with them for nearly 20 years and appeared on their 2000 album *The Good, The Bad and the Funky*.

Talking Dreads is more than a cover band as it draws on musical culture while preserving the integrity of the *Talking Heads* songs. Bowie, kept the lyrics but replaced all the instrumentation with a blend of reggae and Caribbean music. To fully enjoy this evening bring your dancing shoes in addition to the picnic and lawn chair!

Watch this space for more in-depth information about our *Music by the River* artists!

On the Big Screen:

Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness
PG-13

Dr Stephen Strange (Benedict Cumberbatch) casts a forbidden spell that opens a portal to the multiverse. However, a threat emerges that may be too big for his team to handle.

Show times:

Friday, June 10 at 7:30 pm
Saturday, June 11 at 7:30 pm
Sunday, June 12 at 7:30 pm

Up Next: Top Gun: Maverick