

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ATTENTION: BUSINESS EDITORS, COMMUNITY WRITERS, PHOTO ASSIGNMENT EDITORS, and FEATURE REPORTERS.

FRANCO-AMERICAN HERITAGE FESTIVAL JUNE 18-20

After years of planning, the schedule of performing artists for the St. Albans Franco-American Festival is set. The list includes internationally-renowned, award-winning performers, talented student groups, venerable fiddlers, and cultural icons. The lineup promises to provide world-class, free, family-friendly entertainment, for which you neither have to speak french, nor share french lineage, to enjoy.

Headlining the event are La Bottine Souriante-frontman Benoit Bourque, as well as current and former La Bottine colleagues Andre Brunet and Eric Beaudry in their ensemble - De Temps Antan. Benoit, Andre and Eric have toured the world, are internationally revered and respected, and should not be missed. Joining them at the Festival is award-winning Maine fiddler Don Roy, who has appeared at the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and Lincoln Center, among other venues. Hometown chanteuse Michele Choiniere will play with her remarkable bandmates from Quebec. Michele is the winner of the 2007 Governor's Heritage Award, and is herself a seasoned performer at national folk festivals.

Headlining Friday night's festivities in downtown St. Albans is Cajun band Yankee Chank, with Josee Vachon appearing Saturday night at a ticketed Soiree at the St. Albans Knights of Columbus. Josee is well-known to Franco-Americans throughout New England. Rounding out the music are regional student fiddlers the Fiddleheads, accordion legend Sabin Jacques and his wife Rachel Aucoin, fiddlers Frank Heyburn and Roger Perrault, and harmonica talent Fabio Choiniere. Some local surprise guest performers are also expected to participate.

In addition to these musical acts, an historical theatre production from Chambly, QC will perform an hour+ show. The production casts Samuel de Champlain as emcee, with a

supporting cast of actors portraying other characters. The show highlights regional artistic, cultural, and historical achievements beginning with what Champlain would have experienced at the time of his voyage, through 400 years of history to the present day.

Kicking off the Festival is a ticketed Gala event held on Thursday night. The public can purchase tickets on or after Tuesday, May 25, by contacting the Franklin or Grand Isle Chambers of Commerce, at (802) 524-2444, or (802) 372-8400, respectively. The Gala will also feature the 2009 Vermont Quadricentennial inaugural viewing of the Lois McClure Schooner, music from the Will Patton Ensemble, and catering by Jeff's Maine Seafood. Regional dignitaries from Quebec and Canada have been invited to the Gala, with Governor Douglas slated to also attend.

After the Gala, the Lois McClure schooner will be docked at St. Albans Bay, and open for free, public viewing on both Friday and Saturday of the Festival. In addition to the schooner, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum will be bringing other exhibits and displays. Other planned attractions at the Festival include an art show organized by the St. Albans Art Guild, french genealogy exhibits, an historical lecture by Prof. Fred Wiseman at the St. Albans Historical Society, a walking tour of St. Albans City highlighting historically significant city attractions, other St. Albans Historical Museum events, a farmer's market, children's activities, a United Way food drive, a wine and beer tent, food from notable local restaurants, crafts, local vendors, and much more. Official Festival T-shirts with the Festival's logo are being sold by Kevin Smith's sports store in St. Albans.

All events are free to the public, with the exception of the Thursday night Gala and the Saturday night Soiree at the Knights of Columbus. The Festival will take place rain or shine under tents, and we do expect significant crowds. A free shuttle bus will be provided, running between parking sites and Festival venues at Taylor Park and St. Albans Bay. More information to be released on festival logistics in the coming weeks.

The Vermont Quadricentennial marks the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's exploration of the region back in 1609. The Vermont celebrations will span the breadth of 2009, with four signature events leading the way, taking place in St. Albans, Burlington, Vergennes and Crown Point. The St. Albans Franco-American Festival is a Vermont Quadricentennial Signature Event, and is the first Signature Event of the Summer. The St. Albans event is unique, in that all but 2 events at the Festival are free and open to the public.

The festival website is www.francoamericanvermont.org. The specific list of performance times and locations is attached at the bottom of this release. Information on purchasing tickets for the Josee Vachon Soiree at the Knights of Columbus Saturday, June 20, can be found by calling 524-1492.

Final Franco-American Heritage Schedule

Th., June 18 Gala - Will Patton Ensemble - 6-9pm, St. Albans Bay Park \$40 or 2/\$70

Friday, June 19

Bay Park:

11-11:45am Fabio + Michele Choiniere, and invited guests: Arthur Boulerice and Jeanne Begnoche
12pm-12:45pm Roger Perrault
1pm - 1:30pm Fiddleheads (www.fiddleheads.org)
1:45pm - 2:30pm Don Roy (www.donroyonline.com)

Taylor Park:

5:00-5:20pm Fiddleheads
5:20-6pm Family Dance, with Fiddleheads and Don Roy Ensemble
6:00-6:30 Don Roy Ensemble
6:45-7:45 Michele Choiniere et compagnie (www.michelechoiniere.com)
8-9:30pm Yankee Chank (Cajun Band) (www.myspace.com/yankeechank)

Saturday, June 20

Bay Park:

9:30-10:15am Roger Perrault
10:30-11:30am Don Roy Ensemble
11:45-1:15pm Chambly Caravane des Arts
1:30-2:30pm Michele Choiniere et compagnie
2:45-4:15pm De Temps Antan (www.detempsantan.qc.ca/)
4:15-5pm Ensemble Soiree

Taylor Park:

9am-2pm St. Albans Farmer's Market
9:30am-10am Fabio and Michele Choiniere, and invited guests
10:15-11am Fiddleheads
11:15-12pm Family Dance and City School students- with Benoit Bourque, Sabin Jacques and Rachel Aucoin
12:15-1:15pm Benoit Bourque, with Trish and Mike (www.bottinesouriante.com) (www.trishandmike.com)
1:30-2:30pm Don Roy Ensemble
2:45-3:30pm Frank Heyburn (Fiddler)
3:35-3:50pm Josee Vachon "KofC" Sneak Peak (www.joseevachon.com)
4:00-4:30pm Conservatory Ballet

Knights of Columbus - 6:30pm - Josee Vachon at Dinner/Dance - \$25

This event is brought to you in part by our collaborating partners, which include: the Lake Champlain Basin Program, Vermont State Department of Tourism, Saint Albans for the Future, City of St. Albans, Town of St. Albans, St. Albans Knights of Columbus, Franklin County Regional Chamber of Commerce, Grand Isle Chamber of Commerce, St. Albans Historical Museum, and the St. Albans Artists Guild.

Special thanks to our Gold and Silver Title Sponsors who helped make this event possible including: WOKO, KOOL105, WIZN, BUZZ, JOYFM, WPTZ, Champlain Tent Rental and the Chittenden Bank.

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St. Albans For the Future (SAFF) is an organization dedicated to highlighting the central role of Downtown St. Albans in commerce, culture and community life. SAFF seeks to ensure the vibrancy of Downtown St. Albans and the greater community through special projects, design work, economic development, promotions and the Vermont Downtown Designation Program.