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Notes from editor (not for publication):

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

Celebrating the real

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The Spotted Moth in Brattleboro cultivates community
connections through storytelling

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TEXT BODY:

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Everyone has a story to tell, but what about a time and
place to tell it?

Laura Lockie of Brattleboro has created such. Roughly
once a month since October, she and her husband, Ken, have
hosted the Spotted Moth at Brattleboro's 118 Elliot Street Gallery.
The next opportunity, open to all, is Wednesday, July 29, 6 to 8
p.m.

12 In a recent press release, people of all ages are invited to
13 “come tell your first person tru-ish story [...] without prizes or
14 competition, just [for] people who want to hear you tell your
15 story.”

16 Lockie offers a theme for each month’s session: July’s is
17 “Hidden in plain sight.” Participating attendees put their names
18 into a hat, from which Lockie, as emcee/facilitator, draws the
19 person to deliver the next narrative.

20 That person will speak for five to seven minutes and tell
21 their story.

22 Based loosely on the popular worldwide storytelling
23 program, The Moth, the local series is named after the six-spotted
24 Burnet moth that graced its first flyer and now its logo.

25 “I’d asked Daniel Hales, a friend who’s a talented writer,
26 musician, and collage artist, to do our first flyer, so it would really
27 stand out, and he delivered!” she recalls. “I thought ‘Spotted
28 Moth’ just sounded cool.”

29 **Stand up and tell your story**

30 For 27 years, Lockie lived in Atlanta, Georgia, where she
31 worked as a background actor in film with Central Casting and
32 Tyler Perry, and on other independent productions.

33 While there, Lockie became involved with a storytelling
34 group, Carapace (“the turtle shell”), which has welcomed
35 everyday people to “to walk in off the street and tell a story
36 without editing or judgment,” she says.

37 “In the time that I was in the group, I saw people’s lives
38 change and develop,” she explains. For some, they went on to
39 become writers or develop public personas. For others, “it just
40 allowed them to develop into who they were supposed to be.”

41 Lockie, originally from the East Flatbush neighborhood of
42 Brooklyn, New York, moved to the area several years ago. She
43 wanted to offer that same transformative experience in
44 Brattleboro — to offer a structure within which one could just
45 “get up in front of a room and tell your story,” unfiltered.

46 In response to an observation that society seems to be
47 turning more to storytelling as a vehicle for promotion,
48 education, and expression, Lockie says: "This is just a personal
49 theory, but what's held up to us in the media has become
50 unattainable for most of us. It's really pushed this kind of
51 conformity, like everybody has to look like a Kardashian or they
52 have to be a Marvel superhero: It's just so narrow. I think that
53 people who are real want to celebrate the real."

54 At a time when "AI is taking over and you don't know
55 who to trust or what kind of content to trust, I think people are
56 very hungry just for something that is relatable and real and
57 human," she says. "I think the humanity of that experience is
58 what is really lacking in our lives."

59 The Spotted Moth has been building, says Lockie. "We've
60 got some momentum."

61 She adds that it's important to have a "continuity of
62 image, a regular meeting, and a core group, which we seem to be
63 developing."

64 "And food — apparently, food," adds Lockie with a
65 chuckle: She's provided welcome fare for each event.

66 The regulars

67 Over the last several months, tellers have included
68 Lockie herself, Cyndi Cain Fitzgerald, Harral Hamilton, Tina
69 Olsen, Denise Evans, Tamera Stenn, Jesse Lepkoff, Donald
70 McCullogh, Alex Lockie, Lissa Weinmann, Chuck Collins, Mary
71 Collins, and Maureen Daylor.

72 Daylor, reflecting on her interest in storytelling, explains
73 that her grandmother "was born in Ireland and she told us stories
74 from the old country."

75 Coming from a "family of talkers," the Guilford resident
76 adds that "one of the things mostly talkers do is tell stories. I've
77 been doing this, you know, my whole life."

78 She describes herself as “a pretty animated kind of
79 person” who prefers to tell rather than read her stories. “It’s just,
80 viscerally, a very different experience.”

81 When asked of the value of storytelling, Daylor observes,
82 “as much as the internet has connected us, it’s still alienated us in
83 a lot of ways. So I think in-person interactions are so incredibly
84 different,” as is the difference “between live communications and
85 those done on a screen.”

86 Daylor grew up in Brockton, Massachusetts, “a very
87 tough town, famous for boxers” where “back in grammar school,
88 you could fight on the playground and nothing really happened.”

89 Given that and a rough family life, and with work
90 experience in human services, she’s collected some stories. And
91 even more with stints as a camp counselor, a playground
92 instructor, a paraeducator, a property manager, a recreation
93 director, a Tupperware warehouse worker, and an employee at
94 Northeast Cooperatives.

95 “And I pumped gas at a couple of different gas stations,”
96 she adds. “One of them was nicknamed ‘Gay Gas’ by the
97 community because the manager was gay and he hired a whole
98 bunch of gay people.”

99 Daylor has penned much of her experience as memoir,
100 and it’s that from which she draws stories to tell. She adds that
101 she has read up on The Moth and its storytelling technique,
102 which differs quite a bit from the writing of stories.

103 “The kinds of things you would say in writing, you
104 wouldn’t necessarily say in conversation. In telling a story, it
105 seems more like a conversation with people than something you
106 might write,” she says.

107 The benefit of the former is “that I can look at people, I
108 can talk,” Daylor adds.

109 For area artist Tina Olsen is a regular at Spotted Moth,
110 “it’s an opportunity to talk to a live audience: I’m older, and it
111 gives me a chance to remember things that were important in my
112 life. I spent a long time working in a psychiatric hospital doing art

113 and music, and had the chance to work with people who didn't
114 connect easily."

115 "I just learned a lot about the power of personal one-to-
116 one talking and sharing stories — and songs" and the like, says
117 Olsen. "It brings a feeling of communion with people as I
118 remember things I had no idea I did remember."

119 And "that's what I like about it," she says.

120 "I remember things from when I was a child, and I share
121 them," Olsen says. "Then hearing other people, it turns out that
122 they, clearly, share so much — that all of us are so much to all of
123 us."

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BIO/COATTAIL:

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124 The next Spotted Moth takes place Wednesday, July 29,
125 at 118 Elliot Gallery in Brattleboro. Storytellers, unless they
126 object, may be filmed to air on Brattleboro Community
127 Television's Spotted Moth program. Registration isn't required.
128 For more information, contact Laura Lockie at
129 spottedmothvt@gmail.com or 404-227-7957.

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