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By Leila Hawken

LAKEVILLE — There is a new idea afoot and a new organization to make it happen. Showtown is the brainchild of Lakeville residents Lloyd Barody and his wife, Zeina Mehio, who are responding to what they consider a dearth of area entertainment and cultural options between October and May.

Discussing the concept over coffee at Provisions at The White Hart inn on Saturday, Feb. 16, Mehio said, “We decided that the area needs more entertainment.”

Barody is a lifelong local resident, and Mehio hails from Beirut, Lebanon. Both agree that the film events offered by the entrepreneurial venture Boondocks Film Society provided inspiration for their Showtown idea.

Showtown will provide cultural entertainment, Barody said, that is intended to “fill a void” with events that will have interest to area residents, whether it is pre-packaged shows or speakers or panel discussions. The aim is to curate other people’s work and bring it here to venues convenient to local audiences at affordable prices.

The inaugural Showtown event is happening soon. TheatreWorks in New Milford has agreed to transport its fully staged production of David Mamet’s “Race” to the Seifert Theatre at the Salisbury School, offering three shows, March 22 to 23 (two evening performances and one Saturday matinee). Tickets are priced at \$25.

Agreeing to provide the venue for the show was Jordan Rochelson of the English department at the Salisbury School, in the spirit of community outreach. This production of “Race” is scheduled for the weekend following the conclusion of its scheduled run at TheatreWorks.

Future Showtown events being considered include the possibility of a trio of local chefs connected to local restaurants offering a panel discussion around a common theme such as culturally centered cuisine. Or, perhaps there could be a jazz ensemble performing, with the musicians discussing their musical lives and the intricacies of jazz.

Theater productions will be limited to serious, discussion-provoking plays, not musicals.

The concept of TED Talks is also of possible interest as a program idea.

“We don’t have one venue,” Baroody said of locales for the presentations. “We will seek pop-up opportunities around the area.”

Also being sought are volunteers who share enthusiasm for the Showtown concept, according to Mehio, who says that she and Baroody are looking for people with ideas for program development and execution, and ideas for future pop-up events for the cold weather months. Eventually, they would like to see an event each month.

More information about Showtown, and tickets for “Race” at the Salisbury School, may be found at www.showtown.org ^[2].

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