

Don't Think Twice:

Positively Front Street Jam, the music of Bob Dylan, rescheduled for Friday, October 14 at Front Street Gallery.

by **Jeremy Wolff**

It was my debut as an impresario and it didn't go well. Bob Dylan, the Poet, the old man, had turned 70 in May, and the idea was to get some friends and musicians together, to hang out at the gallery, eat and play. The Bob Dylan Family Music night was planned for June 9. But it was not to be; the evening that ensued was, in a word, Dylanesque: A change in the weather is known to be extreme. Beware of lightning that might strike. A fire out on Main Street.

We'd had our first family music night back in November, a sort of holiday potluck, and it went well, despite the overplayed Christmas jingles. With Tony you get to play good songs that many people already know and aren't too hard to play. Some of the first songs I learned on the guitar, and I'm getting them down at last. We also had Jay Erickson, a Gin-U-ine musician, who'd agreed to help. We had a website and xeroxes of songs and everything.

That afternoon, coming up from a swim with Julie at the lake, we could feel the low pressure building in and hear the thunder from 60 miles off. Tons of kids out at the rope swing oblivious, celebrating the end of the school year. I glanced at the radar online before I left to pick up Molly after school at Lakeside. There was a line of storms like I'd never seen stretching from Ontario to Pennsylvania. The forecast said it would pass through quickly...

Driving back, the air was greenish, there was plenty of thunder, and we were nervous gaining elevation to the top of the hill on Old Route 55. Already some branches down, but the rain held off till we got back, right when Joe's bus got in. Stepping out, he spread his arms to heaven and said "Rain!"--the heatwave had finally broken. From our front window about half an hour later we saw the bolt strike straight down that might have been the one.

The evening before, we'd had a rusty



rehearsal. One of our multi-instrumentalist, multi-talented pals, who we'd counted on, was not there, in London he said. We were out of tune and out of time. Started wondering how many people would show up the next day.

No need to worry. We've been calling it an "Act of Bob," the microburst that crashed though the valley about an hour before the show was to start. In Patterson that's just the way things go.

We set out to the gallery to prepare for the show not knowing. About a mile from the gallery, we were stopped by a line of cars and police tape, so we turned and headed up Mooney Hill. We would spend the next hour and a half driving around every possible back-road way to get to Front Street, and there are a bunch. Meantime, Jay, his truck loaded with his guitars and mandolin and chicken and shrimp kebabs he'd grilled in the gloom with a headlamp on, was trying to get through from the village. He lost four trees, big old oaks and ash that tumbled way too close to his house as he was getting ready to go. He and Julie were texting about the roadblocks we ran into.

Huge trees uprooted everywhere, chainsaw crews were working fast, but as we got close to Patterson we could smell and see black smoke rising straight up. By the time we made it around to the other end of Rt. 311 we could see the road blocked and filled with fire trucks. Lightning had hit the

wood furniture store around the corner and it was burning. The fire was so intense it burned out three businesses and most of a block even with the fire station was just up the road. One family was rescued and no one was hurt. Six towns responded and Rt. 311, from Rt. 292 to the fire station, including the Town Hall and Metro North on Front Street, was locked down. Power was out for 15 hours.

*The lightning strikes the lights go out
The desk clerk he begins to shout
Can you see anything?*

At that point we gave up on the show. There was no way to get there, though we heard that a couple of people made it at 8 pm on the first Metro North train to get through. We all ended up at Linda's, our accordion player's house, our cars full of food and instruments. While the kids crashed on the couch, with snacks but Wii-less, the grown-ups ate and sang Dylan songs by candle and lantern light. As Bob intended.

Now the show is back. The Positively Front Street Jam, Bob Dylan Family Music Night, has been rescheduled for Friday, October 14, from 6-9 pm, with potluck and playing. Please see www.frontstreet-gallery.com for more details. And check the forecast.

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