

A long, dark journey into light

Author, musician and teacher Juliet A.

Wright releases her book on codependency

By TELLY HALKIAS

PITTSFIELD — Juliet Wright lives in a remote log cabin in Pownal, Vt., but spends her work week in constant motion as the Traveling Elementary Orchestra Teacher for Pittsfield Public Schools. An accomplished musical artist with two CDs to her credit, she teaches violin, viola and cello in all eight city elementary schools. This makes her a peripatetic teacher, which means she travels from school to school throughout the week.

Wright's identity as a spirit passionate for knowledge is very much a reflection of this active pattern in her new book, "Everything is My Fault: One Woman's Journey Through Codependency" (2012, Hidden Angel Publishing, 305 pages). The story is part personal history, part meditation, part self-help guide and part therapy.

Wright said the process of getting it into print shed much light on her inner self. "It taught me, upon reflection, that I am not a quitter," Wright said. "I see things through to their completion and there were times I really wanted to quit. There were many, many occasions when I had to get down on my knees and ask God to help me to get in that chair and work on this book."

Dysfunctional relationships

According to Mental Health America, the nation's largest mental health non-profit organization, codependency is "an emotional and behavioral condition that affects an individual's ability to have a healthy, mutually satisfying relationship." People with codependency often are in relationships that are one-sided, emotionally damaging and abusive. Codependent behavior, which can be marked by traits such

as low self-esteem, is mostly learned from other family members who demonstrate it.

Given this disposition, codependents look for anything outside themselves to improve their outlook. Some are involved with substance or sexual abuse as well as compulsive behavior. They try to take care of a person who is experiencing difficulty, but the caretaking becomes fixated and defeating. Codependents often exhibit martyrdom

and are hooked on being needed. Then they see themselves as victims but are unable to break away from self-destructive behavior.

Wright, who spent much of her youth in central Vermont, tells a story which follows this path. Her musings weave in and out of an unsettling childhood from which she had to recover and reconstruct troubling memories, such as a vague but inappropriate physical interaction with her grandfather Roman, and several other similar times in middle school with Cain, a would-be boyfriend and tormentor from an equally dysfunctional family.

"I tried to skirt these issues in my first draft, using metaphors," Wright said. "Then my sponsor read it and she wrote to me and said, 'What are you trying to say here? You are being vague. Be specific.' So I let it out and told the plain truth."

The truth sets one free

Wright, who showed talent and achievement in all things musical from a young age, indeed leaves everything out on the pages of "Everything is My Fault." The story follows her life from early family moments to the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, to the University of Miami, and still fur-

ther to the Los Angeles club scene, all with failed relationships along the way. She offers these nuggets up to her readers in portions that last anywhere from a few sentences to several pages.

Yet in this fragmented maelstrom, one can't help but see how recovery has worked its way into her present tense. However random some of Wright's vignettes might seem, they are organized into neat sections of subject matter that readers can easily distinguish: family, school, friends, romantic relationships, social settings, and religious organizations.

Within those compartments, Wright pens her thoughts like the songwriter and composer she is. They are temporally ordered, and follow a certain independent rhythm — one not easily put into words, but the reader immediately senses it in her prose. This helps develop a counterpoint to Wright's memories, much as one would find in a fugue by J.S. Bach: The above polyphony brings

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 ▶

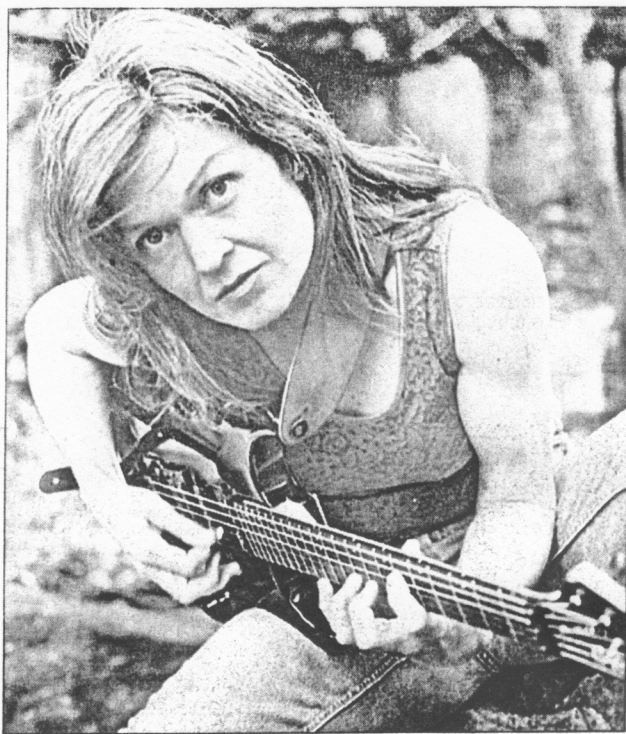
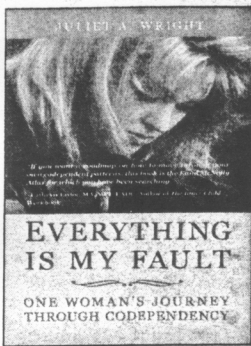


PHOTO ALICE GARK

Local teacher and author Juliet A. Wright, an accomplished professional musician and performer, has announced the release of her new book 'Everything is My Fault: One Woman's Journey Through Codependency.' The book chronicles Wright's past struggles along with her recovery into a healthy, productive lifestyle that can serve as assistance for others with similar experiences.



COVER PHOTO RAIKO HARTMAN

Outdoors this Week



**SATURDAY
JANUARY 5**

Berkshire Knapsackers

Hike 6.5 miles in Peoples Forest, south of historic Riverton, Conn., includes rock scrambles, stream crossings and steep ascents/descents; information: Jill Oneglia, (860) 309-4244.

**SUNDAY
JANUARY 6**

Berkshire Knapsackers

Kayak up Housatonic River for about 1.5 hours from Decker Boat Ramp, then back down; information: Joe Doboszynski, (413) 448-8359.



SKI TIME!

- Cross Country
- Back Country
- Touring Skis
- Kayaks, Bicycles
- Snowshoes

BERKSHIRE OUTFITTERS

SALES • RENTALS • TUNE-UPS
ADAMS, MA - (413) 743-5900