

## Truth-Seeking Songster On North Country Tour

WEST LEBANON — A former seeker of women, Cadillacs, whiskey and money, singer-songwriter Townes Van Zandt at age 35 says he is searching for truth, preferably the painless variety.

Currently on tour from Nashville and scheduled to perform three concerts in the Upper Valley, the tall, gaunt musician in an interview this week spoke of his quest for "lay-down-and-die truth."

"There's gotta be some kinda truth that's painless," he says, suggesting that he might be looking for an ultimate truth, such as could be found in the poetic finality of an exploding sun that claims "all's well that ends."

Describing himself as "an Indian from Oklahoma who likes good whiskey," Van Zandt says that he has retired from gambling and now spends 50 percent of his time on the road.

Being a gambler, Van Zandt says, is a humbling experience "because there's always a loser." There is also, he adds, "a big body of law floatin' around out there."

Claiming that he now stays "straight as an arrow," Van Zandt says he considers himself a "pretty normal guy in a weird lifestyle."

His traveling life, he says, is in tune with the kind of old-fashioned, Spanish-sounding rhymes that are similar to Edgar Allen Poe's poem "El Dorado."

But he refutes the idea his songs and music are patterned after other musicians. "I'm just a good mountain man who likes road music," he claims.

### Local Appearances

In addition to road songs, his music also explores such themes as love, gambling, fast-living and goodbyes, themes that he will be presenting in concert Saturday at the Lebanon Opera House, Sunday at the Ritz Cafe in White River Junction and Tuesday at Our Place in Bradford.

Of his desire to deal with truth in spite of believing "somebody always gets hurt," Van Zandt says he has been influenced by several folk musicians as well as the lives of people like Albert Schweitzer, Vincent Van Gogh and St. Francis of Assisi.

VanGogh's life, particularly exemplified the "lay-down-and-die truth" that appeals to Van Zandt.

Of the famous artist's first acknowledged attempt at self-expression — preaching in a Belgium coal mining town — Van Zandt related that after a mine caved-in, Van Gogh donated all his clothing and food to the victims' families, becoming so enfeebled by cold and hunger that he "preached laying sideways."

Stating that Van Gogh knew nothing about violence, Van Zandt said that after the artist committed suicide by shooting himself "in the worst possible place, it took him 72 hours to die."

Although Van Zandt was characterized by one reviewer as a "singer-songwriter of the most woebegone variety," he avoids cynicism and plans to continue performing, traveling around and searching for truth as painlessly as possible.

"I feel real privileged to be doin' this. I see a lot of nice people and sometimes I'm in a position to help somebody," he said.



ON CONCERT TOUR — Nashville singer-songwriter Townes Van Zandt is currently on a North Country concert tour and will be performing with John Lincoln Wright and the Sour Mash Revue at the Lebanon Opera House, Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

## AVA Gallery Names Jury

HANOVER — A jury of professionals will select the membership for the new AVA Gallery of Hanover July 30.

George Tooker, painter, Beverly Zagor, director of Fischbach Gallery in New York City, and Arthur Blumenthal, curator of Dartmouth College Museum and Galleries, will comprise the jury.

All artists living or working in New Hampshire, Vermont or Maine are invited to enter. Painting, printmaking, sculpture, photography, and mixed media will be accepted for jurying.

Work should be delivered to the Hanover High School July 28 or 29 and should be picked up

as a cooperative effort of artists and friends to provide an outlet for the work of area artists.

In 1975, the gallery moved to its present location on Allen Street in Hanover and changed its name to Alliance for the Visual Arts at the request of the members.

The next few years were ones of steady growth and in 1979 a professional staff was hired.

The phasing out of the cooperative system and the incorporation of a board of trustees occurred this year.

For more information, persons may call or write David Messier, director, AVA Gallery, 3 Allen St., Hanover 643-2841.