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The

Charlotte News

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The Charlotte News seeks input on website improvements

The Board of Directors of The Charlotte News

The Charlotte News is all digital this week, and we want to know what you think and to learn as much as possible from the experiment.

We are in the middle of a major website overhaul, and when you visit our website, you will see an invitation to take a short survey. We're asking for your thoughts on our website—the content, the features, how easy it is to find your way around, and so on. We'd also love to know what

new features and services you'd like to see on the website—podcasts, videos, a community calendar? Is there anything you can think of that we haven't?

The survey is short and sweet. It takes a few minutes to complete, and we hope you'll take this opportunity to help us build and grow our digital offerings.

And remember, your printed paper will be back in your mailbox on August 6. As always, it will also be available on our website.

District announces school reopening details

Nancy Richardson

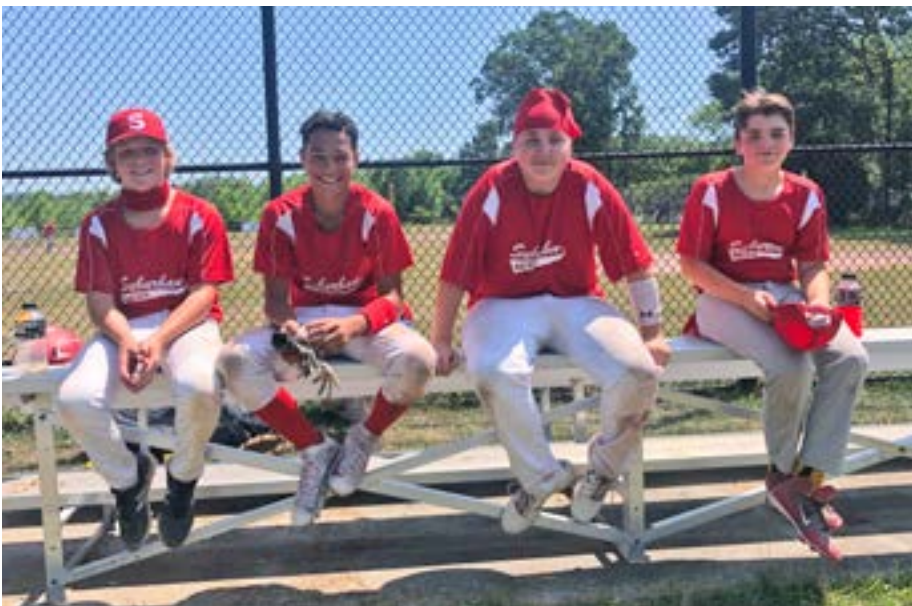
Superintendent Elaine Pinckney opened the Champlain Valley School District Board meeting on Tuesday, July 21 with the statement, "We are working from imperfect options and choosing the best of those options. We are focusing on two things: the safety of our children and the fact that they need to be in school." The plans described here have been developed by the administrations of the regional school districts including those in Chittenden County, parts of Addison County, and Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. CVSD

schools will open as a hybrid model: in school two days per week, home study for two days, and remote classes on Wednesdays.

The CVSD administration has been working since March to figure out how to open schools safely. One factor has arisen as the key roadblock to having a full-time school program, and that is the need to separate students by a distance of six feet. The findings that the disease can be spread through airborne particles means that the six feet distance is

SEE **SCHOOL PLAN** PAGE 17

The game goes on



The Suburbans Babe Ruth team is on a short but intense schedule this summer, playing three games a week over a five-week period. Missing is George Taylor; in the photo, left to right, is Ronan Evans, Daniel Tuiqere, Lander Magoon and Gabe Merrill.

Photo by Chea Waters Evans

Planning Commission holds Land Use Regulation hearing and hears Mt. Philo Road subdivision plans

Chea Waters Evans

Public comment was the theme at the July 16 Planning Commission meeting, where Charlotte residents had plenty to say about proposed changes for Land Use Regulations and about a sketch plan proposal for a four-lot subdivision on Mt. Philo Road.

After a delay because of the novel coronavirus, the Land Use Regulation change hearing was at the top of the agenda. Debra Kassabian, who owns Gemini Properties along with her husband Mike Dunbar, joined the meeting via Zoom to present their reasons for the proposed change. They own and manage the Charlotte Crossing property, which is the site of the former Vermont Wildflower Farm on Route 7 south of Ferry Road. They created and then submitted in

February of this year a petition to have a public hearing to repeal a portion of the Charlotte LURs that would reduce the standard for parking, loading, and service areas for site plan review under section 5-5. The rule prohibits these areas from being located in the front of a building. In February of this year, the PC issued a report saying that they do not support the repeal.

Kassabian said they suggested that the PC "remove the wording in its entirety" from the LURs. "The reason behind this is that we believe that the current regulation really limits the opportunities for utilizing land for property development and site design considerations...and inhibits ability to achieve maximum accessibility; this is not particularly for handicap access but accessibility in general," she said.

SEE **LUR** PAGE 8

Discussion heats up at Selectboard meeting

Chea Waters Evans
NEWS EDITOR

The bulk of the July 13 Selectboard meeting was taken up with two issues: one a highway access permit request dispute that just won't die and the other that has residents of Thompson's Point chasing their tails. The board also approved a salary for a new position in town and talked about some beach improvements.

Morningside HAP

Will Bown and Meghan Browning applied for a highway access permit for their property on Morningside Drive off of Spear Street. The Selectboard made a site visit in June and discussed the HAP at length; the discussion proved to last just as long during this meeting. At issue are concerns brought up by the Morningside Cemetery Association, a group that maintains the 150-year-old cemetery that is adjacent to Bown and Browning's property. The cemetery association maintains that the proposed access to the property could adversely affect water drainage in the area and cause damage to the burial ground.

Bown responded to these concerns with the assertion that the culvert he wants to install under the road would be an improvement to the current drainage situation. "We feel like we could actually improve water conditions," he said. Nancy Richardson, who is on the cemetery association board, read from a prepared statement, saying that there are three reasons why she and her fellow board members object to the permit: location and function of the highway access point, design and implementation of drainage system, and some trees and vegetation that were destroyed prior to a permit being awarded. Those trees were cut down by Bown's father; Bown said at the June 29 Selectboard meeting that it was done inadvertently and apologized.

Road Commissioner Jr. Lewis, who attended the site visit last month and reviewed the site plan, said he concurs that Bown and Browning's plan could actually help the drainage, and then brought up another issue: "Just so everybody knows," he said, "right

now we are not maintaining this road at all, and have not for the past 40-odd years, so I'm not sure why we the town would want to start taking care of it." Bown and Browning have offered to pay for road improvements and a culvert installation on their own, despite the road officially being a Class 3 town road, which means that the town is obligated to care for it. "If it's a Class 3 road then it's not Will's culvert, it's the town's," he said.

Peter Richardson, Nancy's husband, who is also on the MCA, said he was not convinced that water wouldn't be drenching the cemetery once Bown and Browning installed a culvert and graded the currently unkept dirt road. "We've got Junior saying no problem," he said, "we've got Will saying, 'We'll make sure it works.' Our position is, it ain't gonna work. We dispute your conclusions, and we have sought to persuade everybody who's got a hand in this thing that what ought to be brought in is a fresh professional examination of what's going on here."

He suggested that Bown and Browning hire an engineer to assess the situation; after much discussion it was settled that the Selectboard would approach a potential engineer to come to a site visit on July 27. Selectboard member Carrie Spear added, "These are two young people who are our future and will grow old together there...how incredibly lucky we are to have them as new neighbors, however it works."

Leash law on Thompson's Point

The Town of Charlotte does not have a leash law; the Thompson's Point Landowner Association would like for the Selectboard to create one in their neighborhood. Some Thompson's Point residents were at the meeting on Monday to discuss at length how unleashed dogs are wreaking havoc in the lakefront seasonal neighborhood, running into people's lawns, aggressively approaching walkers or people relaxing on their own property, pooping willy-nilly, and running over freshly paved driveways.

TPLA opponents to a leash law say there are

SEE **SELECTBOARD** PAGE 15

News from The News

Three Questions

The Board of Directors of The Charlotte News

Here at *The Charlotte News*, our goals are to produce papers that serve our community with local news and articles of interest and to give voice to the views of Charlotte residents. We're curious about what our readers value in the paper, so we asked three questions to several Charlotters.

Here are the questions:

- What's the first thing you look at in the paper and why?
- What do you think a community newspaper adds to a small town?
- Why do you read *The Charlotte News*?

Here are the answers:

Tom Scatchard

I always peruse the first page to see if there are any big local news issues I should jump into. After that, I'll look through the next couple pages, checking to see what else may jump out at me. The regular columns have changed over the years, but many of them grab my interest as I flip through the pages. The *News* does a nice job of highlighting town events, interesting local people and "breaking" news in Charlotte.

The paper provides insights into the school, Senior Center, Grange, etc. These town institutions have their own clientele, but those of us outside the groups would never learn of their worthy activities without the *News*. In addition to informing us about groups and events in the community, a good local newspaper (like *The Charlotte News*) brings people together by celebrating and explaining joyous, sad or momentous happenings within the community.

I read because I'm informed about things that have happened or will be happening in

town, I learn about people I've never met, or I learn things I didn't know about folks I do know, I learn about organizations within town and the cool things they're doing, and I'm brought up to speed on legislative, sports, outdoor, library and many other parts of small town life.

Louise McCarren

I always look at the ads, I am interested in supporting local business.

The paper is very important to the town. It provides a forum for discussion...perhaps we should have more of that?

I read *The Charlotte News* because I am curious about all the folks I live with and I want to be part of this community.

Margaret Woodruff

I look at the front page and local news. I always appreciate the updates on Selectboard activity as well as community projects.

A community newspaper adds invaluable connection between different groups in the town. Without a local paper, we would not know the finer details of everything from construction projects to bake sales. In addition to updates on the local news, it's always a delight to see the latest from local schools and learn about who is doing what and how to find out more.

I read *The Charlotte News* to find out what's happening in our town from the large to the small. I find that coverage of local news has fluctuated but has lately been a top priority and I value and appreciate that.

Carol Clay

I don't look for specific articles in the paper; I scan each issue, check out letters, and note articles to get back to.

The paper keeps us in touch with local news, activities and meetings. I appreciate reading about people and organizations I may not have known about. A community paper can provide a forum for Charlotters with a diverse range of opinions and viewpoints. I feel that this is important.

To stay in touch with the happenings in town. We live in an active, interesting, busy town. The *News* is an important connection to that larger community and has become a helpful way to stay informed of events from varied library discussions to town parties, lessons, local music and social connections. I look forward to reading Elizabeth Bassett's and Ethan Tapper's columns. I enjoy personal stories,

projects and reviews. I'm proud of the "kids'" achievements listed in the Around Town column. I appreciate the community calendar (and would love to see that expanded, perhaps on the website). I have lived in Charlotte for more than 35 years and have been an avid *News* reader all this time. Over the years, I've noticed that the paper has become better at representing the many voices of the town, a positive development in my opinion.

From Pati Naritomi

I used to look through all the ads (out of curiosity since I had been the advertising sales/design for *The News* for many years), but I don't bother with that any more! I now scan the paper and see what interests me the most and then go back and read the article. These days I tend to be interested in the library news or any nature or human-interest articles. I skim through the town meetings news randomly, depending on what's brewing at the moment.

I feel that a small community newspaper should spotlight local residents and their business, personal or travel adventures and town land issues. The paper should act as a forum/conduit for being informed and for discussion.

It's fun to see what's happening in my town—those things that I might not necessarily be involved in but still want to know about.

Carrie Spear

The first thing I look at is the front cover. It's always fun to see what's on it. From there I read pages one to three ... then quickly go through each page and the headlines until I have the time to read the rest.

That would depend on the agenda of a paper. Many sides to a story and lots to write about! How does one choose? In my experience pictures can make a million smiles and every one has a story.

I've read *The Charlotte News* for 25 plus years. Hardly missed an issue! There's something very special about a hometown paper and to be able to read local news with paper in hand.

I'd love to take the opportunity to thank *The Charlotte News* for 19 years of covering the Tractor Parade. The pictures and stories have brought great joy to those in and around the parade. Many thanks a hundred times over from all of us!

Another thank you for putting *The Charlotte News* out for the community to enjoy.



The Charlotte News

Mission Statement

The mission of *The Charlotte News* is to inform our readers about current events, issues and topics, and to serve as a forum for the free exchange of views of town residents and community volunteer organizations on matters related to Charlotte and the lives of its residents.

Editorial Independence

The Board of Directors retains full authority over all editorial and advertising content in *The Charlotte News*. While we are funded by advertising revenue and donor contributions, our news judgments are made in accordance with our mission and independent of all sources of financial support, including support given through our affiliated 501(c)3 organization, The Friends of The Charlotte News.

Letters, Commentaries and Obituaries

Consistent with our mission *The Charlotte News* publishes letters to the editor, commentaries and obituaries from our readers. All letters, commentaries and obituaries are subject to review and approval by the news editor of the paper and to the following rules and standards:

- Letters to the editor, commentaries and obituaries should be emailed to news@thecharlottenews.org as attachments in .doc format. All letters, commentaries and obituaries must contain the writer's full name, town of residence and, for editing purposes only, phone number.
- Letters may not exceed 300 words, obituaries 500 words and commentaries 750 words.
- The opinions expressed in commentaries and letters to the editor belong solely to the author and are not to be understood as endorsed by either the Board of Directors or the editorial staff of the paper.
- All published letters and commentaries will include the writer's name and town of residence.
- Before publishing any obituary, we will need proper verification of death.
- All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, factual accuracy, tone, length and consistency with our house publishing style.
- Whenever editing is necessary we will make every effort to publish each submission in its entirety and to preserve the original intent and wording. We will confer with writers before publishing any submitted material that in our judgment requires significant editing before it can be published.
- The news editor makes the final determination whether a letter to the editor, a commentary or an obituary will be published as submitted, returned for rewriting or rejected.

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Supercharger

Photo by Lee Krohn

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The Charlotte News

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SIGN UP ON OUR WEBSITE
CHARLOTTENEWSVT.ORG

News from The News

Around Town

New Publisher for *The Charlotte News*

The Charlotte News Board of Directors

On July 17, the board of directors of The Charlotte News announced that Claudia Marshall will replace Vince Crockenberg as the paper’s publisher and president of the board.

After almost six years in both positions, Crockenberg stepped down in order to “get some relaxation out of my so-called retirement.”

Crockenberg nominated Marshall as his replacement. The *News*’ board gave unanimous approval.

“It’s been a great run,” Vince said, “and it seemed like a good time to bring in someone new as president and publisher. Claudia has extensive and successful experience in fundraising, newsroom management and digital media, so I think she’s the ideal person to build on what we’ve accomplished in the last several years.”

To assist in the transition, Vince will remain on the board as a member until April 2021, when his second four-year term expires.

Marshall brings to her new role as publisher a rich and varied background in journalism both online and over the airwaves. Her early career included managing news coverage and anchoring the morning drive news broadcasts at K-EARTH 101 in Los Angeles and at

Local papers are a dying breed, and Charlotte is so very lucky to have an enthusiastic support group of donors and volunteers, who make it possible to keep *The Charlotte News* alive and well. The staff of very good writers makes sure the news is accurate and well written.

KXL-AM and -FM in Portland, Oregon. She moved to New York City in the 90s to become a network news anchor at CBS News, then ABC News, broadcasting nationally on both radio and television. From 2001 to 2012 she hosted a morning drive-time talk and music radio show on National Public Radio’s flagship contemporary music station WFUV-FM at Fordham University in the Bronx, hosting live music events and interviewing leading names in music and the arts.

She’s been recognized widely for her work: Claudia has earned local and national awards for reporting, writing, editing and producing, and won a global award for investigative journalism.



Claudia Marshall

Since 2012, when she moved to Vermont, Marshall has worked as an on-air fundraiser for Vermont PBS, produced and reported lifestyle and feature segments for VPR News, North Country Public Radio and the Burlington Free Press, and created, hosted and produced “Soul Shindig” for Farm Fresh Radio, 102.9 FM. Claudia also recently worked for three years as the Director of Good Works and Public Relations at Gardener’s Supply Company in Burlington. She is an active volunteer

in Charlotte and says she loves living here with her husband, Matt Zucker and her rescue dog, Trudy.

Despite a change of leadership, the *News*’s new publisher, Claudia Marshall and the board of The Charlotte News are committed to delivering on the paper’s current five-year strategic plan. The plan identifies four goals for the paper over the next several years: increasing fundraising, continued improvements in its digital offerings, building and maintaining stronger relationships in the community, and growing a more robust board.

According to Crockenberg, “Over the last three years, we’ve renewed the board and organized our work more efficiently, significantly ramped up our fundraising work, and increased and improved our digital presence. In the board’s view, Claudia has exactly the right set of skills to see that work through to a successful conclusion.”

Of her new role, Marshall says her primary goal is to be of service. “Vince is handing over the helm of a strong paper with a great staff and a terrific board, as well as the support of our community. With the pandemic, our work is more vital than ever. Vince has done a lot of heavy lifting and I’m lucky to have a clear roadmap in our strategic plan. My job is to execute on that plan.”

Congratulations: to **Carl Recchia** of Charlotte who has retired from the CVU faculty after teaching vocal music there for 31 years. He organized singing groups into jazz and madrigals that performed throughout the school district’s communities, its senior residence facilities and the Charlotte Senior Center. At each performance, it seemed that he managed to bring the audience into the concert as vocal members themselves. And he formed the South County Chorus for adults.

On to your life’s next keyboard, Carl!

Academic achievements

Staff report

Edward Kelly Shea was inadvertently omitted from the list of 2020 **Champlain Valley Union High School** graduates. So sorry, and congratulations on your achievement!

Wyatt James Shea graduated this spring from the **University of Vermont** as an environmental studies major with a minor in economics. He graduated in 3 ½ years.

Andrew Gay has been named to the **Champlain College** dean’s list for the Spring 2020 semester.

Celina Tong, majoring in game art & animation, and **Suzannah Zimmerman**, majoring in computer networking & cybersecurity, both made the president’s list at **Champlain College** this spring with grade point averages of over 4.0.

Caden Frost was named to the spring 2020 dean’s list at **Community College of Vermont**.

Letters To The Editor

The Charlotte News:

Going online will certainly help the paper move into the tech world that is ahead of us, so thanks to the board and employees of *The News* for giving us the pass card to the future!

Thank you, *Charlotte News*!
Hank Kaestner

Some things you just can’t replace

To the editor:

Many years ago I lived at the top of a winding dead-end road in Westford. Each morning I trudged down my pitted driveway to fetch a copy of the *Free Press*, which was still locally owned. I appreciated starting my days with a hot cup of coffee and a crisp new paper to catch me up on Vermont and the world. I’m afraid those days of the local daily newspaper are in decline as media mega-mergers and the internet have choked off revenue sources, and those familiar blue boxes that used to be our portals to the world have disappeared.

But hope remains! When we moved to Spear Street 25 years ago, we started reading The Charlotte News, and we never stopped. It was clear that this little gem was way above expectation for a “local paper” with timely features, school updates, newsy tidbits and town happenings. It even has a sports section with veteran reporter Edd Merritt, who doubles with witty reflections on life each week. The articles are well-written and whimsical with regular contributors who

understand the town. We realized how The Charlotte News is blessed by loyal patrons, supporters, writers and readers. It quickly became an indispensable part of our kitchen table reading pile.

With considerable ambivalence and sadness, we moved to a new community a couple of years ago. There are benefits and good reasons for the move, but part of my heart stayed behind on Spear Street. Happily, we have brought a piece of our former life along in the

form of *The Charlotte News*. Wendy and I appreciatively support the paper, and when it arrives in the mail, I grab my coffee, settle into a porch chair, and dive into the news of the day from our beloved former town. There are some things you just can’t replace, and this is one of them.

Tom Powell
So. Burlington

COVID-19

Together, moving forward in July



Trina Bianchi

It's alarming to watch the numbers of COVID cases increase exponentially in various parts of our country, and one can't help but wonder when all people will understand what needs to happen to bring this under control. We've seen it come under control in other areas of the world, but in this country the virus still rages. And the numbers of cases and ultimately, deaths, continue to rise. I heard an interesting analogy from Bill Nye, the Science Guy, on CBS This Morning about wearing masks. In his words, we do live by rules in this country; we all pay taxes to use the roads, but the rules say we can only use half the road at any given time. Why? For safety reasons! And people don't question that. So why the issue about the rule to wear a mask? Wearing a mask, same analogy! It does seem that it falls under whether or not one feels community and the common good outweigh one's own individual rights.

I happened on an interesting read by Colin Woodard, author of *American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America*. Woodard wrote that we are now seeing the effects of centuries-old regional differences in attitudes toward individual liberty, the common good and the desire for competent governance—and these differences can be now seen in the statistics coming over the news on a daily basis. Fortunately for us, Vermont is located in one of the areas of the country that places a greater emphasis on the common good and the need to protect the community.

Between the leadership of Gov. Scott and his team and the willingness of Vermonters to “follow the recommended guidelines and

rules,” we have managed, to date, to dodge the bullet, so to speak. We can hope that everyone, including all those who come into our state from elsewhere, continue to be diligent.

The Charlotte COVID-19 Assistance Team met again this past Monday, and once again, the focus of the meeting was on resilience. Mindy Blank from the Community Resilience Organization joined us, and we further discussed the possibility of asking our residents to take the assessment that would tell us how all of you feel about whether or not Charlotte, as a community, is doing enough to prepare ourselves for the future and in the event of a crisis in the various areas the assessment looks at. From the assessment, we could learn where, as a community, we need to focus on creating resilience and being better prepared.

Community Resilience Organization (CRO) had its start in Vermont after Hurricane Irene devastated so many towns and areas in our state. What became apparent was the fact that some communities were able to rise to the challenges they faced, while others struggled. The apparent difference was the level of resilience in one community versus another. Some communities were obviously better prepared to deal with a crisis and met the challenges they faced. Others were not. The concept of how to build the level of resilience in any given community was born and helped determine how to discover whether or not a community was prepared for the future or a crisis. The mission became for CROs to help build strong, resourceful communities that can survive and thrive in the face of a changing climate and other challenges that lie ahead. Other towns in Vermont that have taken on this challenge and are doing the work can be found at this website:



Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

<http://www.gocros.org/teams-2#teams>.

The team has decided to move forward with this. At our next meeting, July 27, at 11 a.m. on Zoom, we will discuss the actual assessment and how to roll it out in our community, the goal being to hear from as many community members as possible. If you would like to be involved or learn more about this team, please contact Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen at rev.kemg@gmail.com. If you have suggestions on how best to introduce the assessment, please let us know.

As for resources available now...

Food and meals

Available to Charlotte school-age kids:

The school lunch program is available through the summer. To access, go to the website cvsdvt.org, click on “District Resources,” click on “Menus.” Click on the link: <https://bit.ly/SummerMealInfo>. Further information can be had by calling Scott Wagner at 802-871-6198 as he is the contact for the summer for questions and any special needs.

These lunches will be available at CCS on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Pickup is between 10 and 11 a.m.

And from the Food Shelf, Grab and Go lunches are available at Spears Store and the Charlotte Library, daily Monday through Friday. To register, call 425-3252.

The Food Shelf itself continues to be

open Wednesdays from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Charlotte Congregational Church. Kids' lunches will also be available at this time and will include a week's supply of lunches. Tenney's Snack Bar has added a voucher for a creemee to the summer lunch bags. Call 425-3252 to register.

CVSD is currently looking for volunteers to help with food distribution for the summer meals. Interested in helping out? Please email cvsdinformation@cvsdvt.org.

Emotional and mental health

Vermont 211 from your phone, available for referrals and questions.

Pathways Vermont 1-883-888-2557 is free and is available 24/7 to call or text. Talk with a peer who has dealt with issues in the past. This is an awesome resource available to all Vermonters.

NFI Vermont—access through nfvrmont.org. Serves Vermont families whose children are struggling with emotional, behavioral or mental health challenges.

First Call 802-488-7777 is for crisis situations. Available 24/7.

Financial assistance

Remember that emergency financial assistance is available through the Food Shelf, Charlotte Congregational Church and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Requests can be made by calling 425 3252 or 425 3130.

For the latest information from the Department of Health, Vermont

Stay abreast of the ongoing news in Vermont with respect to CV-19, learn how Vermont is opening up by going to the website, which is updated on a regular basis. Check on what is opening, new regulations for traveling into our state, where to get a test if you need one, how to remain safe and well!

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>

And together we will continue to move forward, continuing to value our community and the common good over the individual, being diligent, respectful of each other and taking care of each other and ourselves. If you have friends who are not following mask protocols, have the courage to talk to them about it. As we approach the start of the school year and our kids and teachers are back together in some way, shape or form, the use of masks becomes even more critical. Check in on friends, family and neighbors, make sure everyone in your circle of influence is okay. Just because perhaps your life may be seeing some signs of normalcy, it doesn't mean others are not still being challenged. And as we watch the numbers rise in other parts of the country and continue to see the disparity that exists around the country, spend some time contemplating how each of us can make our little world a bit better, kinder, more compassionate and more inclusive for all. Vermont is not immune from the racism we are seeing all around the country, and each of us needs to have the courage to address it when we see or hear it.

Town

Ceres Gardens farm stand is open

Vera Moroney

Social media? No. Web page? No. Great veggies, maple syrup and honey? Yes.

At the corner of Lake and Ferry Roads, Ceres Gardens is a cornucopia of fresh produce, thanks to Bud Ceres and Tim Hoopes.

To find out what produce is in stock they send out a weekly email on Mondays. You can join at: Bud @ceresgardens.net. Or just stop by 7-6 daily.

Tim is a UVM student in Agro Ecology. With great enthusiasm he pointed out that the word agriculture is rooted in the Greek word for love, and, as we all know, love is love. He observed that growing is the “easy” part. The hard part is getting the produce to folks. His goal is to own a farm. Now he works with Bud on producing the best produce for all of us to enjoy.

Talking with Tim was an introduction to talking with Bud Ceres. Bud has been gardening since he was 5. Like many gardeners he stated that one of the true pleasures of gardening is getting to know plants at a deeper level and observing whether they are happy or not. This is so true. A plant in the right place will flourish, but in the wrong place not so much. He spoke of the spirits of plants. Gardeners agree.

When asked of the challenges Bud said what all gardeners say: “Never perfect and never done.” Also, the challenge of drought and pests that all Charlotte gardeners know too well this year.



This sign leads the way to fresh organic vegetables on the corner of Lake and Ferry Roads. They are grown with love inside a greenhouse and out in the open.

Photo by Vera Moroney

When asked about the future, Bud said he can afford to continue to garden and have a farm stand. He observed that the common wisdom is “get big or get out.” Bud is not a common person, and though this is his first year, he will persevere.

Charlotte is so very fortunate to have Bud and the Ceres farm. A must-go-to this week.

Just Asking

The horses win

This week’s question is an important one in a farm town: What’s your favorite animal?

Photos by Jim Squires



Elaine Ittleman (Charlotte)

A horse, of course, because you can ride them. What’s better than that?



Rob Mullin (Monkton)

Probably a horse. They work, you can ride them, and children love them.



Nathan Cote (Charlotte)

Definitely cows because they give us milk and ice cream!



Sam Morley (Jericho) Horses because I love to ride them.
Heather Morley: Have to say cows because we really love our creemees.
Little Sister: No comment.



Early Riser (Charlotte)

Are you kidding me? Goats, hands down!

Bright smile, bright car



Moe Harvey enjoyed the Cars and Coffee event held at Spear’s Store last weekend. Over 70 car owners came to show off their brightly colored and cool-looking automobiles and enjoy a cup of joe.

Photo by Rik Carlson

Town

Food shelf news

Susan Ohanian

Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping. —*Fred Rogers*

The Charlotte Food Shelf is an all volunteer organization supported by the Charlotte Congregational Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church and the Charlotte Community. A big thank you to the helpers who make it happen. Their titles do not indicate the multitude of things these people do:

Food Shelf Board of Directors

Karen Doris, *president*; Nancy Bloch, *vice president*; Cindy Tyler, *treasurer*; Peggy Sharpe, *secretary*; Peter Richardson, *director*; Cindi Robinson, *director*; Michael Russell, *director*.

If you forget a phone number or the time of distribution or anything else, go to the website: charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

In praise of helpers

Calista, a thoughtful 3rd grader in our community, raised \$100 for the Food Shelf for her end-of-year project. Calista’s parents are Carina Cartelli and Joesph Lasek.

Thank you to Tenney’s Snack Bar for providing a big stack of vouchers for free creemees for the kids who use the Food Shelf.

Thank you to Wolfie Davis and his family for buying the many needed items from Hannaford’s.

Thank you to Claudia and the wonderful church members who donate items from our wish list every week.

Thank you to Back Door Bread for its ongoing offer of good bread to anyone who needs it. In the summer bread is available on Fridays—but get there early because it disappears.

Thank you to Rise ‘N Shine Farm for their continued support.

Food Shelf volunteers picked up 20 gallons of donated milk from Dairy Farmers of America at the Champlain Valley Expo. A big thank you for their 4,000-gallon donation to our northern Vermont nonprofits.

Thank you to Nan Mason and her son, Alexander (aka Oopey), for the brand new kitty litter box, scratch post and kitty litter for a lucky cat owner!

Fresh produce

Many thanks to Miskell’s Premium Organics for growing, harvesting, washing and delivering copious amounts of wonderful greens: baby lettuce, spinach, Swiss chard and Asian greens for weekly distribution. The fresh produce is greatly appreciated by families.

Seed Library Coodinators Linda Hamilton and Karen Tuininga are working to keep the Charlotte Library garden going and growing. This year they’ve planted potatoes that are thriving in these summer temperatures and ready for donation to the Food Shelf in the fall.

Please note fresh produce can be accepted on Wednesdays. Please call for specifics, 425-3252.

Food for the mind

As part of his Eagle Scout Project, Stuart Robinson is building a Little Free Library to hang outside the Grange Hall. Right now there is a bin of very attractive books on the ramp in front of the Grange Hall. There are enticing books for babies through teens. All the books have been disinfected, and each is in its own plastic bag. We hope every kid will find a book to enjoy—and keep—and after that come back and find another one.

More good neighbors:

Anne Castle (Co-op); Eileen Curtis; Heather Chambless Herrington, in appreciation of Maris Rose; Northfield Savings Bank on behalf of employee Ed Sulva; Kathleen Nolan; Mark Taylor, Fidelity charitable grant; Saarin Schwartz, in recognition of Susan Raber’s Bray bowl benefit, for her talent and generosity; and E. G. Kiley.

Summer Lunch Bags

Reminder: The Food Shelf provides non-perishable bagged lunches for children at three locations: the library, Spear’s Store and during the Wednesday evening distributions at the Food Shelf. **Please register to arrange pickup location and quantity.** Thank you to Charlotte Congregational Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel for the funds to purchase all of the items for these lunches and to the wonderful volunteers who assemble the lunches.

Needed: The Food Shelf needs brown paper bags and clean reusable plastic grocery-size bags.

Keeping safe

The Food Shelf continues to take precautions to help everyone keep safe. Anyone who has a fever or cough—or symptoms that might seem like a cold—should not come to the

distributions. Also, don’t come if you have been in contact with anyone who has these symptoms. Instead, call 425-3252 and leave your name and number. You will receive a call back to come up with a plan. We need to help families and volunteers stay safe.

We are open every Wednesday evening from 5 to 7 p.m. This is curbside service only. Cars pull up to a sign that says “Please wait in car.” A volunteer offers a checklist for patrons to select the items they need. A volunteer packs the items, and another volunteer carries the bags out, setting them beside the car.

Financial assistance

Reminder: The Food Shelf has some funds available for emergency assistance with fuel and electric bills. Call 425-3252 if you need assistance. For emergency food, call John at 425-3130.

Volunteers welcome

The Food Shelf welcomes volunteers to assist with:

- Food distribution
- Food shopping
- Special projects throughout the year

For information please call 425-3252.

Donations

The Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc. is a nonprofit organization, and all donations are tax deductible. Our organization is run by volunteers, and so all donations made to the Food Shelf go directly for nutritious food or assistance to our local neighbors in Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh. Should you wish to honor someone with a donation, a special acknowledgement will be sent to that person. Checks may be mailed to Charlotte Food Shelf, P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, Vermont 05445.

Call the Food Shelf number (425-3252) for a recording of the distribution times. Visit the website for information: charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

Town

Charlotte's first public EV charger



Cummings Electric built the base and installed the charger at Town Hall on July 10.

Photos by Dean Bloch

Charlotte Energy Committee

The Charlotte Energy Committee and the Charlotte Library, with the support of the town, successfully applied in April 2019 for a \$17,000 grant from the State Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Grant Program for a charging station at the library. Funded by Volkswagen's settlement agreement, EVSE is providing Vermont \$2.4 million in funding to expand its network of electric vehicle charging stations. The grant covered 90 percent of the cost of the two-port charging station. While the library was the grant recipient, we ended up locating the charger in the Town Hall parking lot for superior power access.

"The Charlotte Library Board was pleased to support the efforts of the Charlotte Energy Committee in obtaining an EV charger for the Town Hall-Library area," said Margaret Woodruff, director of the library. "The charger fits in with the library's overall mission to move toward net-zero energy use. The recent construction at the library included an overhaul of the HVAC system and added insulation to old and new parts of the building. An EV charger contributes to the sustainability mission of the Charlotte Library, with guidance from the Energy Committee."

Given that Charlotte has bragging rights as the town with the second highest number



of EVs per capita in Vermont, it's high time for the town to have infrastructure to support the move to EVs. Come check it out in the Town Hall parking lot!

Sports

Edd Merritt

Babe Ruth baseball swings summer bats

The Shelburne based Suburbans, a Babe Ruth baseball team of 13- to 15-year-olds, began a shortened summer season on July 1 that will run through August 6. The team has five Charlotters on its roster: **Ronan Evans, George Taylor, Lander Magoon, Gabe Merrill** and **Daniel Tuiqere**, all CCS 8th graders who are missing a school season and filling in with Babe Ruth League. Through last Saturday's game the Suburbans had three wins and three losses. Three other towns are sponsoring teams: Barre, Burlington and Essex. Essex has traditionally sponsored the Strikers as a traveling team. However, this year they will stick close to home to avoid exposure to the Corona Virus. Several rules apply to players in regard to Corona. During the game they are encouraged to sit throughout the bleachers at appropriate distances from each other. They are required to wear masks when they are on base or when, as infielders, there is an opposing team's runner on their bases. According to our editor, Chea Evans, whose son Ronan plays for the Suburbans, they are not doing a great job of spreading out—"Teenage boys, you know . . ." Chea says.

Two Charlotte girls are playing on the Shelburne Little League Softball team this year, **Apryl Tuiqere** and **Kaiya Galipeau**. Apryl is going into seventh grade and Kaiya is going into sixth grade. Apryl's dad Junior Tuiqere said the league is "very competitive" and that the girls are working hard.



Softball players Apryl Tuiqere and Kaiya Galipeau are swinging hard this season.

Photo by Junior Tuiqere

Vermont principals debate delaying high school sports

The Vermont Principals Association has been given a recommendation to delay the start of sports that are not high contact. However, they could, in turn, engage in youth and recreation activities at a earlier date. This guidance was shared by the *Burlington Free Press* and VPA Associate Executive Director Bob Johnson. The state's Agency of Commerce and Community Development specified the recommendation. The newspaper's Varsity Insider Facebook said that a number of its readers questioned the "VPA's move to hold off pre-season until at least the start of the school year in late August or early September." Nearly 1,200 signatories wanted the fall seasons to start August 10 as scheduled.

LUR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The current LURs state that the town is trying to protect against “strip-mall style development,” and Kassabian said they feel that if the parking-related language is removed completely, the town can still prevent that style of development through other sections of the regulations.

Dr. Andrea Regan is a physician and owner of the Charlotte Family Health Center, which has been trying to move their practice from an older house on Ferry Road into a new building in the center of the West Village. She commented during the meeting that the parking restriction regulation “has become a barrier for our project” and noted that Philo Ridge Farm, a new business in the last two years, has parking in the front, as does the Charlotte Children’s Center.

Nicole Ravlin owns Junapr Communications, which is located in the Charlotte Crossing building. She said that though her business doesn’t rely on foot traffic, others in the building do, like the Ellie Parr retail jewelry store and whatever eatery eventually fills the restaurant space that was constructed in the building. She said parking in the back gives the impression that the building is “a ghost town, and I think it does detract” passers-by from stopping.

Charlotte Robin Pierce joined in to comment that with land use regulations and a town and development situation, “there’s a little bit of give and take; code shouldn’t paint a municipality into a corner. With the best intentions the regulations can stifle something you want to have happen.”

Bill Stuono, the newest member of the PC, noted that South Burlington and Shelburne “no longer permit parking out front.” He also said that he thinks there’s flexibility in the current regulations and that the PC does currently have the ability to waive this requirement.

At this point in the meeting, Kassabian and PC chair Peter Joslin disagreed about the reason that Gemini Properties was required to resubmit a site plan for the property earlier in the year; she said it was because the town’s rules regarding handicap parking spots inhibited their ability to create spots that were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Joslin said that the parking issue was only one of several reasons they needed a new site plan, including an increase in the number of parking spaces, an increase in the square footage of the restaurant space, landscaping changes, and relocated parking spots.

PC member Marty Ilick said that the current regulations allow for wiggle room and there’s no reason to change the LURs completely. “I think the language in our regulations is very clear,” she said. “There is flexibility to negotiate what is the best way to keep the aesthetics—which is a very common Vermont principle. I feel like we’ve got the right language here; it’s the matter of our ability to be flexible with the applicant to solve the problem. I just don’t see the justification for deleting language from the Land Use Regulations—flexibility is already suggested.”

Ravlin joined the discussion again to point out challenges stemming from deliveries and brought up the Philo Ridge Farm parking lot as well—to which PC member Charlie Pughe responded that since Philo

Ridge Farm is an agricultural property, the town has no approval rights for their site. He also said that it’s important to remember the history of changes regarding the Charlotte Crossing project since “the plan and design evolved over time.”

Regarding the earlier-referenced parking spot that had to be moved, Kassabian said to the commission, “I’m a rookie, and none of you caught this and you’ve been through it many times. This was not caught.”

Pughe responded that it’s not the Planning Commission’s responsibility to point out flaws, and that the hired design professionals for a project are responsible.

Kassabian replied, “You’re approving the site plan, aren’t you?”

The public hearing ended shortly afterward and the Planning Commission will take comments into consideration regarding the petition.

After some paperwork and approving minutes from previous meetings, the PC tackled the sketch plan for a proposed four-lot subdivision at 4035 Mt. Philo Road, a property owned by Mitchell and Wendy Shifrin. Jason Barnard from Barnard & Gervais, which is managing the project, represented the couple during the hearing. After discussion with the Planning Commission regarding sight distances for proposed driveways, wastewater plan discussions, and other run-of-the-mill sketch plan topics, Ilick said she thought the plan was “generally a super concept, and you’ve done a nice job.”

The neighbors who joined the meeting, were less sure that it was a nice concept. Jill Wolcott and Alicia Eure expressed

concerns about the subdivision creating problems with wildlife in the area. Barnard said during his presentation that he had consulted wildlife maps and studies done by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and had taken care to locate the required open space for such a project in a place where any wildlife coming from nearby Pease Mountain could access a wetland on the other end of the property.

Eure said that it is “heartbreaking to see [the land] cut up like that...it’s a sad thing to see that beautiful property just divided up.” She said that she has seen deer, moose, bobcats and wolves (wolves are not thought to live in Vermont, though a coyote-wolf hybrid exists in the area) and other animals crossing through the property and that she does not support developing the land.

Wolcott said, “Maybe all this wildlife is more than we thought,” and suggested that further study be done. Barnard said that he consulted the required agencies to ensure that the wildlife is protected, and that in fact, “it was a big goal of the project, and in my opinion, it’s been met.”

Eure took issue with the fact that the Shiflins live elsewhere in Charlotte, and said to them, “You’re developers.” The Shiflins said that though they are not professional developers, they saw the land as an opportunity for a project and to help out the previous owner, who had been trying to sell the property for some time.

Joslin finished the discussion by saying, “Who lives there isn’t important. We need to move on.”

The next steps in project are two more public hearings and further development of the building site plans.

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Hi, Neighbor!

Wylie Garcia: Exploring creativity on many levels



Phyl Newbeck

Wylie Garcia is spending a lot more time at home in Charlotte these days. With the onset of COVID-19, she gave up her Burlington studio and is now making art from her bedroom, which gives her the opportunity to look at and revisit her creations throughout the day.

A native of Texas, Garcia moved to Vermont in 2003 and has lived in Charlotte for three and a half years. She is represented by Soapbox Arts in Burlington and Schoolhouse Gallery in Provincetown, MA. Garcia’s artwork runs the gamut from drawing and painting to mixed media, textiles, sound and performance. She describes her work as investigating “themes of identity and place through process and material-oriented projects.”

“There is a certain concept that I’ve worked with from the very beginning,” Garcia said. That idea was originally that “human beings aren’t placed, they bring place into being. It was a lot about how place-making is existing within a space and identifying objects and making them your own.” For Garcia, the idea behind a piece of art is more important than the medium used for the piece, which has allowed her to explore a wide variety of art forms over the years.

The mother of an 11-year-old and a five-year-old, Garcia also uses her art to explore “issues of gender, devotion and emotional spaces.”



Left: “Corsage for Social Distancing,” acrylic on birch plywood, 4”x6.” Right: “Come on Let’s Walk Outside, Clutching Our Blossoming Bulbs, Married to Newness,” 2020 24”x 36,” acrylic on birch panel.

One project that dealt with all those issues was called “Dress that Makes the Woman.”

“I grew up in Houston and there are specific cultural norms about gender and identity,” Garcia said. “I was making dresses which I referred to as wearable sculpture and decided to do a project where I took a garment from my closet and changed it every day. It was part performance art and part diary.” Every month for a year, Garcia chose a different dress and altered it on a daily basis. “It was also exploring the notion of how each dress adopted its own feminine persona,” she said. “It gave me permission to literally try on the different personas and explore who I wanted to be.”

Garcia’s original art medium was alternate process photography, which she studied at the University of Chicago. From there, she



moved to textiles and then painting and drawing. A decade ago, she became interested in performance art, starting with “Dress that Makes the Woman.”

“I’m pretty introverted and quiet,” she said, “so it was an experiment about how much to reveal.” Eventually, Garcia shifted her interest to film and sound, culminating in a California project where she was commissioned to do three pieces about hysterical women, which involved re-filming video until the pictures and sound became fractured.

In the summer of 2013, Garcia created a 10-week performance piece called “Calling Hours” in her living room. She gave chamomile tea and ginger snap cookies to friends and strangers, serving as a hostess/moderator when conversation lagged. “The point of the project was to hold space for people when they showed up,” she said.

“The performance became a kind of a literal metaphor too.”

In her spare time, Garcia tends a rose garden and a vegetable garden. Although she hasn’t had the opportunity recently, she also really enjoys bowling. However, one of her favorite pastimes is connecting other artists to grants or residencies. Garcia has received a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, the Barbara Smail Fellowship and Award from Burlington City Arts, three Creation Grants from the Vermont Arts Council, and a St. Botolph Foundation Fellowship, and she wants to share her knowledge about these kinds of opportunities with others. “It’s something I love to do,” she said. “I like to keep tabs on what’s out there and people who could benefit.”

“My work is like a container,” Garcia said “holding space to help me process the day.” She noted that these days she is shifting more to painting because she would like a little more lightness in her life. “I look at my paintings,” she said “and I can tell you what was happening as each phase of the painting was developing.”

The amount of time Garcia spends on her art varies greatly. She spent ten minutes a day on “Dress that Makes the Woman,” but over half an hour daily on an ink drawing project that also lasted a year. “I look at art like going to church,” she said. “Art is in the process. The object is itself and people can enjoy it, but the art for me is in the making.”

Into The Woods

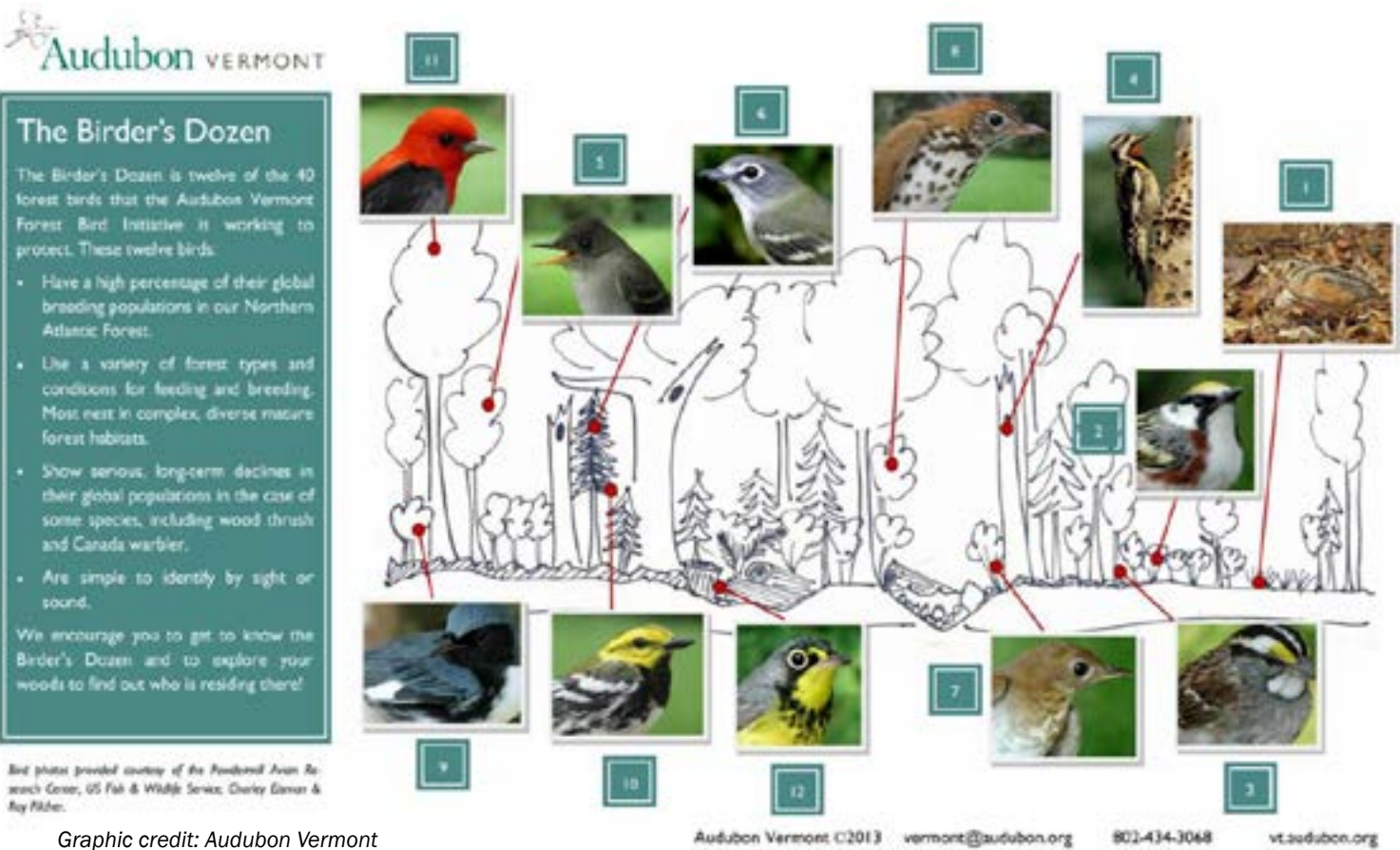
Foresters for the birds

Ethan Tapper

In 2008, Audubon Vermont and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation teamed up to create a program called “Foresters for the Birds.” The idea of this program was that, while there is a lot to love about Vermont’s forests—from the way they make our state so beautiful, clean our air and our water, and support our local communities and economies with renewable forest products and awesome recreational opportunities—many people especially love, value and connect with birds. Foresters for the Birds sought to highlight how forests support rich, diverse populations of birds and how good forest management can support and improve habitat for them. This program has been so successful that it has been expanded to other states in the northeast and is under development in the Southeast and Pacific Northwest.

As part of this project, a list of birds called the Birder’s Dozen was created. These are 12 charismatic and easily identifiable birds with a range of habitat requirements. Keeping an eye and an ear out for the Birder’s Dozen helps you identify whether or not your area features the diversity of habitat types and conditions required by most of Vermont’s birds. The list ranges from American woodcock, which need young forest, forest openings and alder wetlands, to scarlet tanager, which requires mature forest, to the eastern wood-peewee, which requires canopy gaps and a dense understory.

Vermont and the surrounding region host one the most diverse breeding bird populations in the United States—more than 80 species! This includes both year-round occupants and neo-tropical migrants—birds that overwinter in the tropics and migrate to Vermont to breed in the summer. According to a 2017 report by the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, bird populations in Vermont have declined by 14.2 percent over the last 25 years, including much more precipitous declines in several species. Forest fragmentation, parcelization and loss, invasive exotic species and climate change are among the



Graphic credit: Audubon Vermont

many factors contributing to this decline.

So how do we encourage great bird habitat? First, we protect our forests. Forest and ecosystem loss and the fragmentation of large areas of forest into smaller pieces by roads and development are fundamental threat to our birds. Conserving forests and protecting them with smart planning and zoning rules in your communities is a good place to start.

Next, manage for diverse, complex forests. As illustrated by the Birder’s Dozen, some species of birds need a dense canopy, canopy openings (gaps) filled with young trees and shrubs, large areas of early successional forest and forests with trees of all different sizes and ages. We call this type of diversity—trees growing in different ways—structural diversity. Species diversity—trees of all different species—is also critical, because different birds use different tree species for foraging, nesting, shelter and more.

Another thing we can do for our birds is to make sure we keep some big, old trees in our forests. Big trees have many ecological benefits, including providing habitat for all different kinds of birds, from those like nuthatches who forage for arthropods in their deep bark cracks to pileated woodpeckers and owls that nest only in cavities in trees more than 20 inches in diameter.

We also need to recognize the importance of dead and imperfect trees in our forest. Dead-standing trees (snags), cavity trees, fallen trees and dead wood on the forest floor all provide important bird habitat. The ruffed grouse, for instance, needs fallen logs to drum on, and many other bird species use downed wood for cover, foraging, nesting and singing perches. While you may curse the woodpeckers that put holes in your trees, these living and dead cavity trees are often called wildlife motels, providing nesting and denning sites for a wide range of birds and

mammals.

If you’ve read my previous articles you know that the value of complex forests with big trees and lots of dead wood is not limited to birds. Forests like this are also more like the old growth forests that once covered much of our state. They store lots of carbon and are resilient and adaptive to climate change. They provide habitat for a huge range of wildlife, from birds and bats to moose and black bear. Responsible forest management with birds in mind can protect and enhance the value of our forests for the birds that we love while making Vermont’s forests holistically healthier in the process.

You can learn more about Foresters for the Birds at: <https://vt.audubon.org/conservation/foresters-birds>.

Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester. He can be reached at ethan.tapper@vermont.gov or by phone at (802) 585-9099.

Fire safety: Rules and tips for summer and beyond

Rob Mullin
CHARLOTTE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES, INC.

Burn permits

Before burning any brush or yard waste, please remember to call Shelburne Dispatch at 985-8051 (7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) for a burn permit. The dispatcher on duty will ask what you plan to burn, your name and phone number and the location where the burning is planned. The dispatcher will tell you the rules and recommended safety precautions, and, if the weather conditions are favorable, a burn permit will be issued and the burn location logged. Then if a neighbor or passing motorist spots smoke or flames and calls 911 to report a fire, the dispatcher will see that a burn permit has been issued for the area in question and will not dispatch the fire department.

A reminder about the state rules regarding burn permits:

- Burn only untreated and unpainted wood, brush, leaves, yard debris.
- You must call for a permit whenever you wish to burn these materials in Charlotte.
- The burn pile must be attended at all times.
- Have plenty of water at the fire site before igniting the fire and do not leave the fire unattended even for a short time. Always extinguish the fire with water and stir the ashes to be sure it is completely out before leaving the fire site.
- Permits are not issued during periods of rain, low clouds or high winds.
- Fines can be imposed for burning without a permit, and the fire department can be reimbursed for costs to extinguish a burn pile that gets out of control.

Out Takes

Giving up muscles for brains I hope



Edd Merritt

I had a friend who was a big baseball player
Back in high school
He could throw that speedball by you
Make you look like a fool boy
Saw him the other night at this roadside bar

I was walking in, he was walking out
We went back inside sat down had a few drinks

But all he kept talking about was
Glory days well they'll pass you by . . .

“Glory Days” –Bruce Springsteen

Well, yes, you do think back over three-quarters of a century lifetime and remember how much of it revolved around a physical presence and how much, now that that physicality has receded, has turned mental—we hope anyway.

Physical often meant sports. I stumbled across the beginning of my sports career recently when I uncovered a picture of myself on my first hockey team hanging out on a frozen lake in southern Minnesota. This would have been in the early 1950s when I was around 10 years old. Looking around the crew, many of whom were at least five years older than I, I realized that I was seeing some guys (yep, not a girl in the bunch) for whom sports became a major part of their lives. Several of them elected football as their sport of choice and went on to play in high-level college programs. One even followed his All-American selection by becoming an Oakland Raider fullback. I ran into him many years later in a San Diego pizza place where we rejoined our friendship over a pepperoni and cheese.

From that point on, much of my out-of-classroom time was spent in rinks, on football fields or baseball diamonds. The center of my hometown contained an area called Soldiers Field, which, in turn, held many of these facilities. Even a golf course, tennis courts and public swimming pool were not far away. To those of us that used it facilities, Soldiers Field was a hub of our city’s culture.

Some of this culture may have had to do with the fact that Rochester was home to the Mayo Clinic where physical matters predominated. Health care workers made up much of the population. In fact, each team I played on had a “Clinic” doctor on its sidelines during games or matches. Sports and town character fit together like nuts and bolts. I realized later on that a number of the Mayo employees came with impressive athletic backgrounds, including the person who hired me to serve on its educational staff in the 1980s. In addition

to being Mayo’s chief administrator, he was also the head of USA Hockey at the time and appointed Herb Brooks to coach the 1980 Olympic team to the “Miracle on Ice.” My “miracle on ice” often came in a shot glass.

Being an athlete seemed to prove advantageous in gaining stature in Rochester culture. Although the city sat in the middle of cornfields and dairy farms, sports seemed to predominate. It was “Friday Night Lights” in the truest sense, and I fell into it like a bee into honey. Although we also may have given ourselves more credit than we deserved, it seemed to produce a dating system that generated a constant girlfriend.

One’s physical ability in the sport of the moment influenced that person’s stature in town. Like a number of Midwestern cities, Rochester was divided into quarters—southwest, northwest, northeast and southeast. Each quadrant had its own sport teams until the players reached high school where they merged forces and became “Rochester Rockets” or “Lourdes Eagles.” I was a Rocket along with teammates, a number of whom carried animal names like “Elk” and “Moose.” Even these nicknames often referred to their sports’ attributes.

That culture required a physical prowess that I no longer have. The aging process has taken its toll. I can’t throw a ball overhand because of a damaged rotator cuff and a torn tendon. I can’t strap on skates because of an amputated lower leg, and my body generally would not allow me to block opposing football players or throw to second base. Age and malady have required me to move from body to mind in the way of promoting who I am.

Thus I render “OutTakes” rather than “trap blocks,” “Around Town” rather than “buck laterals.” However, the mind does come into play. I remember my old blocking assignments much better than foreign languages or calculus algorithms from the classroom even though I can no longer live up to my position as a spin back.

This process that I share with you every two weeks through *The Charlotte News* is my way of getting off the body bandwagon and onto the mind track, contributing to my community with thoughts rather than blocks or tackles. Unfortunately, I remember a former college girlfriend asking me, “When are you going to grow up?”

Despite my discomfort, she was probably right with the question. I haven’t. I’ve just opened a new door on life.

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On Books

The island calls you home



Katherine Arthaud

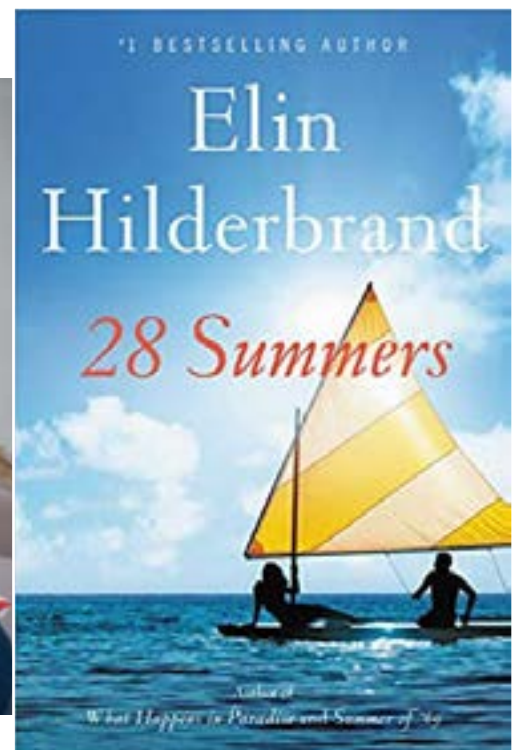
Hello, again. It seems like awhile since my last article, but who knows...time seems a bit hard to keep track of lately. I find that one day often kind of blends into another, and if pressed I frequently couldn't tell you the date or day of the week. This is not altogether a bad thing, perhaps, but it can be embarrassing. What have you all been reading? Like the days, it almost seems like the books I have read in the past few weeks are blending into one another also—titles, pages and characters mixing in a misty, green, cut-grass-scented summer haze....I really should keep some kind of list.

One book I read that does stand out for me—it helps that it happens to be sitting on my kitchen counter—is *28 Summers* by Elin Hilderbrand. Okay, okay, it probably won't go down in the annals of great literature, but I am not ashamed to admit that I am an ardent and devoted fan of not only this book, but all of Elin Hilderbrand's novels. I probably never would have picked up any of her books if not for Elizabeth at the Flying Pig, who many years ago found me wandering the aisles of her store and gently steered me towards the rack where a paperback version of one of Hilderbrand's many novels was sitting. She told me that though the cover might look beachy and frivolous and possibly a tad unworthy of serious attention, the writing is good, and she suggested I give it a whirl. I did and was hooked. As I have explained in articles past, most of Hilderbrand's books take place on the island of Nantucket (where I first visited in 1998 and instantly fell in love). Nantucket is once again the setting of *28 Summers*. I cannot begin to tell how much I enjoyed this book. I don't know if you have had this experience (it happened to me while reading the Harry Potter series), but I found myself enjoying myself enjoying it—if that makes any sense. Like an extraordinary dish of ice cream or a particularly spectacular sunset or a seaside outdoor lobster dinner, I savored it, every delicious page, every

beautiful paragraph, and loved the experience of loving it.

Mallory Blessing—whose eyes “were bluish green or greenish blue; they changed, like the color of the ocean”—is the heroine here, and, not to spoil it for you, the plot has to do with a secret romance that involves two individuals meeting once a year, for (you guessed it) 28 years, on Labor Day weekend, at a cottage on Nantucket, similar to what happens in the movie *Same Time Next Year* starring Ellen Burstyn and Alan Alda. There are many twists and turns, romantic liaisons, misunderstandings, tiffs and close calls to add spice and intrigue to the narrative. Oh, and by the way, you don't have to have read any of the numerous preceding Hilderbrand novels to enjoy this one. You can start anywhere, with any one of these books. And, really, they are all delightful.

So, if you love beaches and wholesome racy romance and easy, breezy, happy summer reading, and are looking for an effective escape from reality: don't miss *28 Summers*. Warning, though: this book really makes one crave the ocean. When I began chapter one, I had zero plans to go to Nantucket. “It would be insane to go during a pandemic,” I told people when they asked if I had any plans of making my yearly pilgrimage. There was no way. Not with COVID, I said. But by the time I had finished page 422, I had booked my ferry tickets and was looking into renting a Jeep. I couldn't resist. Those heavenly beaches...that oxygen-rich island air...those rolling waves...those Madaket sunsets...How could I not go? There is absolutely something magical about the place. Have you ever been? It's not for everyone. It's expensive and not easy to get to, and it can get mighty and maddeningly crowded in the summers. But love is love. At some point in this novel, Hilderbrand floats the idea that the island has a way of choosing its people. “The island chooses people, Aunt Great said. It chose Bo and me, and I think it's chosen you as well.” And for one of the characters, the island actually speaks to him, whispering to him, “Home, home,” reminding him where he belongs.



Courtesy photos

Another fun thing about this book are the chapter headers that list some of the things that happened that year. (The book starts in 1993: “Waco, Texas; the World trade Center bombing; Arthur Ashe; R.E.M.; Lorena Bobbitt; Robert Redford, Woody Harrelson, and Demi Moore ... Whitney Houston singing ‘I Will Always Love You.’” Apparently Hilderbrand got this idea from the movie *Same Time Next Year*, which has photo montages of news clips introducing each year. “I can do that too,” Hilderbrand said, in an interview with The Amazon Book Review. “I went back through the news, picked one movie, one TV show, one song, the food trends, the exercise trends, the people who died, the innovations.” Right before the final version was turned in, Hilderbrand was able to add COVID-19—she had anticipated that the only thing people would be talking about in 2020 was the election. Ha. I was particularly interested to hear her response to a question interviewer Sarah Gelman posed regarding the challenges of writing sympathetic characters who are committing adultery. (Adultery is a rather common theme in

Hilderbrand's novels.) “It's always the hardest thing,” Hilderbrand answered. “Sting (or someone like Sting) once said something like, ‘There are two kinds of songs. One song is ‘I love you,’ and that's a good song. The other song is ‘I love you but you love someone else,’ and that's a better song.’” It's hard to write a compelling novel without people behaving badly, Hilderbrand says. (She explained that she generally stays away from the murderers and rapists and sticks with the adulterers.) “The way to create sympathetic characters regardless of what bad things they do is to love them. Just love them and instill them with humanity.”

Well, whatever she thinks and however she does what she does and wherever she gets her bewitching touch, if you ask me, Elin Hilderbrand pulls it all off beautifully. She is truly the queen of the beach read. And this most recent novel does not disappoint. I will read and re-read her books forever, and as long as I am able, will likely return to the island that, summer after summer, seems to call my name.

Town Library News



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

The Library is Open

Beginning Wednesday, July 29, children may come into the library as long as they are accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Children over the age of 2 must wear masks and abide

by all library use guidance as listed below:

- Library Hours: Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- 10 to 11 a.m.: reserved for at-risk individuals
- 12 to 1 p.m.: library closed for cleaning & sanitizing
- Patrons allowed in building for maximum of 30 minutes to select and check out books
- 5 patrons are allowed in building at one time.
- Patrons enter through main entrance and exit on north end of porch (except those requiring ADA access, who may enter and exit through main entrance).
- Patrons are encouraged to limit number of family/pod members visiting library.
- All patrons must wear masks and sanitize hands when entering building.
- Patrons must follow marks on floor for social distancing while visiting the stacks and standing in line at the service desk.

Library staff will be on hand to assist with book checkout and location via computer. Staff will be masked at all times and wear gloves when handling materials for sanitizing prior to and during checkout.

We look forward to seeing you at the library at long last and to sharing our wonderful new building with the rest of the community, even in such a limited first start. We hope to move to subsequent phases as long as the COVID-19 recovery continues here in Vermont. This opening comes with the caveat that library hours and access could change at any time as the situation in Vermont warrants. The latest updates and information are available on the library website, charlottepubliclibrary.org.



New books at the Library

Now that we are reopening for business, we are excited to share new print titles that have just arrived here at the library.

Upcoming Library programs & activities

We may need to continue to limit access to the library building but the outdoor library beckons! Join us for these upcoming children and family programs taking place on the library porch.

Summer Reading Activities:

Pelosi	Molly Ball
Outsider	Linda Castillo
Blacktop Wasteland	S.A. Cosby
Deadlock	Linda Coulter
Crooked Hallelujah	Kelli Jo Ford
Art of Her Deal	Mary Jordan
God's Green Earth	Noelle Kocot
Geometry of Holding Hands	Alexander McCall Smith
First Case	James Patterson
Silence of the White City	Eva Garcia Saenz
Order	Daniel Silva
Friends & Strangers	J. Courtney Sullivan
Too Much and Never Enough	Mary L. Trump
Or What You Will	Jo Walton
Lost & Found Bookshop	Susan Wiggs

Even though we can't get together this summer, we can still stay connected through a weekly summer reading activity. Check the Charlotte Library Porch every Tuesday for a new craft, project or reading adventure.

Online activities:

Wednesday, July 29, 10 a.m. How to Search for Books & Place Holds for Porch Pickup

Susanna, our tech librarian, will walk you through searching the library catalog, placing a hold, and picking up books on the library porch in a Zoom session. Registration is required.

Monday, August 3, 10 and 11 a.m. Project Micro with Jan Schwarz

Join Jan, the director of Project MICRO, to study the tiny particles that live among us. Using eye loupes, children will collect specimens around the library, and, placing the specimens in their own individual Petri dishes to further study, draw and learn about their structure. Other materials will be available to investigate. Registration and face mask required. Ages 5 to 7. eventbrite.com/e/project-micro-at-the-charlotte-library-ages-5-to-7-tickets-114123243694

Monday, August 17, 10 a.m. Mystery Book Group: *Magpie Murders* by Anthony Horowitz

When editor Susan Ryeland is given the manuscript of Alan Conway's latest novel, she has no reason to think it will be much different from any of his others. After working with the bestselling crime writer for years, she's intimately familiar with his detective, Atticus Pünd, who solves mysteries disturbing sleepy English villages. Conway's latest tale has Atticus Pünd investigating a murder at Pye Hall, a local manor house. Yes, there are dead bodies and a host of intriguing suspects, but the more Susan reads, the more she's convinced that there is another story hidden in the pages of the manuscript, one of real-life jealousy, greed, ruthless ambition and murder. E-book available via Hoopla and print copies available at the library circulation desk.

Library Contact Information
Margaret Woodruff, Director
Cheryl Sloan, Youth Services Librarian
Susanna Kahn, Tech Librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org

Town

Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER
DIRECTOR

“... Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing. . .”

T. S. Eliot, East Coker

At present

It is sad to say that the Senior Center building remains closed, but it's exciting to note that activities held outdoors can take place. The online Zoom courses will continue to be offered going forward. All of the Wednesday presentations/events will move to the online format. Any other courses or activities will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and will be announced only after they have been carefully considered. Please keep in mind that the state advises all those over 65, as well as those with underlying health conditions, to stay at home.

Updates

As yet, there is no news to report about when the Foot Clinics/Blood Pressure Clinics might be starting up again. (Those who signed up in the spring will be contacted when new dates are established.) Likewise, the distribution of Age Well's Universal Restaurant Tickets is currently on hold until further notice.

Of necessity, two more items from the Summer Schedule have been cancelled:

8/21 – Middlebury College Art Museum & Lunch and 8/26 – Trip to the Morgan Horse Farm. Although the trips might have been possible, the venues are not open at this time and are likely to remain closed.

And, the Senior Center Community Art Show, which is usually held in September, is now postponed to the fall of 2021.

Blood Drive

8/6: A friendly reminder that our Blood Drive is Thursday, July 6, from 2–7 p.m. at the Senior Center, although the building is closed for other activities. If you wish to donate urgently needed blood, platelets or plasma, please go to RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS. Peggy Sharpe, the Senior Center's volunteer coordinator, is collaborating on this event with Charlotte Fire and Rescue. If you have any questions, you can email her at srctrvol@gmavt.net or leave a message for her on the Senior Center's number, 425-6345.

New Zoom course

8/7: Writing Your Life Story – Online with Laurie McMillan Fridays, 11:30-1:00. Dates: 8/7, 8/14, 8/21 & 8/28. You've got your story to tell, but what to include and what to leave out? How can you make your memories interesting to a reader? Explore storytelling techniques and utilize in-class exercises to help launch your own meaningful and important stories. Returnees and newcomers welcome. The original fee has been reduced to \$30 for the 4-part series, with classes of 90 minutes each. Registration is required by 8/4. (See below for how to register.) Never zoomed? It's not hard. Honest. If you need help, please email CSCZoom@gmavt.net.

Online Registration: Register at CSCZoom@gmavt.net by emailing your name, address and phone number. The



suggested donation of \$30 is requested at time of registration. Please make checks out to Charlotte Senior Center with the course name on the memo line, and mail to Charlotte Senior Center, P.O. Box 207, Charlotte, VT 05445. Registration is required by 8/4.

Outdoors

Both the first Kayaking Trip for Women and the first Birding Expedition have successfully taken place this month with great weather for both days. All participants had their temperatures taken (forehead, digitally), dutifully answered the health screening questions, donned masks and responsibly kept that six feet of social distance at all times. Despite all the restrictions, everyone was so happy to be together and able to do something they love.

7/24: The next Kayaking Trip for Women is tomorrow to Eden Lake. Please register your interest with Susan at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com. Locations vary and are weather dependent, of course. Additional dates are: 8/14, 8/28, 9/11, 9/18 and 9/25.

The next Birding Expedition with Hank Kaestner is scheduled for 8/12 and already is only taking names for the waiting list. If you are already on the list and are not able to make it, please call so that someone else can have your spot: 425-6345.

Wednesday Events

All Wednesday events at 1 p.m. will take place only as Zoom meetings. You will not need to sign up in advance. In order to join one of these events via Zoom, access the link on the Events page of the Center's website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The specific invitation/link will be posted by the day before the presentation. As well, this link will be supplied in Front Porch Forum postings to surrounding towns.

7/29: A Mile of Ice Above Us with Craig Heindel
Learn about the most recent geologic history of Vermont and the Champlain Valley—from more than a mile of ice over us, to raging meltwater rivers, to a salty sea (home of the ill-fated beluga whose skeleton was found in Charlotte), and then, finally, to some large, higher-elevation lakes.

8/5: Demystifying Estate Administration with Suzanna Miller
Executors or Trustees often do not learn what is required of them before a loved one's death. This talk will be helpful for

those who may serve in these roles, or who may want to make their own estate plans easier for their Executors. Learn what is involved in administering an estate, as well as what probate is, when it is needed, and ways to plan for avoiding it.

Art Exhibits

The Senior Center's regular, monthly art exhibits have resumed—with an important change: They may be viewed only by prior appointment.

Since the physical building of the Senior Center remains closed until further notice, those interested in coming in to see an art exhibit in the Great Room will need to schedule an appointment at least 24 hours in advance. The days for viewing are Tuesdays and Thursdays between 1 and 3 p.m. Please leave a message at 425-6345, and include your name and phone number for a confirmation of your appointment.

For the remaining weeks of July, Our Wake Robin Neighbors Art Exhibit, originally hung in March, will continue to be on display. This is your last chance to view works by our creative neighbors—comprising nearly a dozen artists and 50 representational and abstract works. There are oils to acrylics, and more—with some for sale. Don't miss this interesting collection.

Coming next is the **August & September Art Exhibit: Bill Stirewalt—Large Format Photography**. During his long medical career, Dr. Stirewalt remained serious about his hobby of fine art photography. The work on display for these two months spans a time frame from the 1960s to the present. Subject matter is varied and includes rainforest, seascape, beaver pond, people, horses, kelp; locations range from New Zealand, to Yosemite and Vermont, and elsewhere. Many of these pieces are also available for sale.

The Senior Center's mission is to serve those 50 and up; if a course is not full, younger ages may also enroll. Residents from other communities are always welcome. There are no membership fees. Feel free to leave a message anytime at 425-6345; voicemail is checked daily.

Be careful. Stay well. We are all in this together.

Charlotte Senior Center
802-425-6345

Birding with friends



Good news from the Charlotte Senior Center, as some limited outdoor activities have taken place. One of the first is the monthly bird-watching trip. The group wore masks and socially distanced and still managed to see 32 species of birds at Shelburne Bay and the Ti Trail where this photo was taken on Wednesday, July 15. It was so good to be out again and birding with friends.
Photo by Alison Williams

SELECTBOARD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

few tenable ways to enforce it—Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow pointing out that the town’s animal control officer does not have the bandwidth to patrol the area, and some pointing out that an ordinance in town already exists and should be enforced more rather than creating a whole new ordinance. Selectboard member Louise McCarren said, “We have an existing ordinance and we have reinforcement [guidelines] in that ordinance, so we should get the animal control officer involved and control what we’ve got.”

After much discussion the Selectboard decided to give the association time to address it again at their next meeting and then bring their opinions to the Selectboard meeting on August 10, despite frustration from TPLA board member Ellen Postelwaite. “It’s ludicrous,” she said. “We’re looking for a rule and everyone knows what the rule is: you need to have the dog on a leash.”

Assistant town clerk/treasurer pay raise

At the top of the agenda was a potential pay raise for whomever is hired as the new assistant town clerk/treasurer. The board decided, with input from the Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Mead and current but departing assistant Christina Boohers, to raise the pay grade to \$19–\$22 an hour depending on experience, with Mead deciding the amount within that range for whomever is hired. For the past five years, the town has used the Palmer Method

to assess and evaluate town positions; there has been some dissatisfaction with the method over the years, and McCarren said this pay raise decision is essentially changing the system.

“If we do this, then we are buying ourselves into a different way of doing pay raises, which is fine with me, but I don’t think we should delude ourselves,” she said, noting that the current system is “a dinosaur that has consistently caused problems.” Until the new person is hired and Boohers leaves, she will receive the new salary. Gallagher Flynn and Co., a consulting firm that the town has worked with on numerous occasions, will be consulted by the board to potentially evaluate the current system and recommend changes.

Other business

A range of bids for sitework at the library to finish up its construction project raised concern among Selectboard members; they wondered if the low bid of \$31,570 from RJ Piche, as compared to the next lowest from Vermont Roads and Fields, which came in at \$34,602, was encompassing all of the work that needed to be done.

The Selectboard and Library Director Margaret Woodruff discussed the possibility that Piche didn’t understand correctly the scope of work required and noted that Vermont Roads and Fields is a local company; it is owned by Charlotter Chris Mack.

After discussing the fact that predictably awarding work to local contractors would

the hose from the tank to the grill for cracks, wear or other signs of aging. If necessary, replace the hose. Also, check to make sure there are no grease spots on the hose. With the grill off, check the tank fittings by tightening the connection and then, using a soapy sponge check all visible connections between the tank and grill. If soap bubbles appear, then there is a leak at the connection and the grill should not be operated until fixed. Many gas companies will inspect your grill and make sure it is safe to operate. When ready to light the grill, always open the grill top and stand back before igniting. If it fails to light, allow ample time for the gas to dissipate before attempting to light again. Always follow the manufacturer’s instructions provided with the grill.

Charcoal grills: Make sure it is clean inside and the rack is clean, and the vents are operating properly. As with a gas grill, check for any nests. Always keep the top open when using charcoal starter or lighter fluid and make sure to stand back when lighting it. Never pour an accelerant onto hot coals. When finished cooking, pour water into the ash bed, and stir it around, ensuring that the coals are thoroughly

Classifieds

Reach your friends and neighbors for only \$12 per issue. (Payment must be sent before issue date.) Please limit your ad to 35 words or fewer and send it to The Charlotte News Classifieds, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte, VT 05445 or email ads@thecharlottenews.org.

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eventually deter others from bidding, the board decided to approach Piche to clarify that he knew what he was bidding on, and Town Administrator Dean Bloch said he would check references for both companies.

After a quick interview, Jacqueline DeMent was appointed to the energy committee for a term ending April 30, 2022.

Fog lines, the white lines on the side of a roadway, will be installed in both villages. “If someone goes over the white line then state

police will know someone has swerved,” Krasnow said. The lines are for traffic enforcement and safety.

Recreation Director Nicole Conley said she is testing the beach water regularly for blue green algae and E coli bacteria, and that so far all is well. She said over 900 beach passes have been issued this summer. She is going to do further research on an ADA-compliant beach step and dock that will make the beachfront more accessible.

FIRE SAFETY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Campfires or other recreational fires

Please call for a burn permit prior to having any sort of recreational or open cooking fire, so that the fire department is not called to respond. If a passing motorist or neighbor spots your fire and calls 911, the fire department will be dispatched unless you have a burn permit on record with Shelburne Dispatch. Try to clear the area of any other combustible materials.

Have plenty of water at the fire site before igniting the fire and do not leave the fire unattended even for a short time. Always extinguish the fire with water and stir the ashes to be sure it is completely out before leaving the fire site.

Outdoor grilling safety tips:

Gas grills: Precautions before lighting your grill. First, check inside the grill under the lava rocks and cooking surfaces to make sure there are no nests. Second, inspect the condition of

soaked, close the vents and then the lid.

All grills: Move the grill at least 10 feet away from a building or deck before using it. Never use a grill indoors or under an overhang. Make sure the grill is cool to the touch before covering or storing it. Do not store against building walls or wooden railings. Do not leave a lit grill unattended at any time, and keep all children away from the grilling area.

Fireworks: All fireworks displays must have a permit (this is a state requirement), which must be applied for at least 15 days in advance of the event and will be approved by the fire chief or his designee only if the fireworks are being done by a professional pyrotechnics company. Finally, when considering a fireworks display, consider the winds and the intended audience and have an extinguishing agent nearby.

Charlotte Fire and Rescue highly recommends using these tips to keep yourself, your family,

your friends and your home safe during the summer season. There have been quite a few preventable fires in Charlotte in the past years resulting from improper grill use, some of which have resulted in severe damage to property.

If there are any concerns or questions, you can call Charlotte Fire and Rescue at (802) 425-3111.


TOWN OF CHARLOTTE ASSISTANT CLERK/TREASURER JOB OPENING

The Town of Charlotte is currently accepting applications for the Assistant Clerk/Treasurer position. The selected candidate will be under the supervision of the Clerk/Treasurer and will carry out the same statutory responsibilities and duties. Specific duties include assisting in the management of elections, tax billing and collecting, daily financial transactions, monthly bank reconciliations, bi-weekly payroll processing, recording and maintaining land and vital records and processing licenses.

Experience with accounting practices and competence in using office software (Word, Excel) preferred. Candidate must have strong organizational skills, high attention to detail, excellent written and communication skills and excellent customer service skills.

This is a permanent full-time position approved for 40 hours per week. The position is hourly and is non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act. Some evening hours are necessary. Pay range is \$19-\$22/hr depending on qualifications. Benefits include health and dental insurance, vision plan and participation in the Vermont Municipal Retirement System.

Please submit a letter of interest and resume to mary@townofcharlotte.com or mail to Town of Charlotte, c/o Mary A. Mead, P.O. Box 119, Charlotte VT 05445. Application deadline is Monday, July 27, 2020 at 9 a.m.



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Town

It's not a Harry Potter problem, you're just home more

Chase McGuire

Several Charlotte residents have mentioned to *The Charlotte News* that they have been noticing barred owls more than usual this year. Bird Project Leader for Vermont Fish and Wildlife Doug Morin shared some of his knowledge as to why this could be. “The barred owl is our most common and widespread owl. It’s a forest bird, primarily. Populations appear to be stable or increasing in Vermont and across its range. I’ve seen a few reports recently of folks seeing birds. I would suspect this every year around this time, as juvenile birds leave the nest and begin exploring the world—they can be relatively visible compared to wary adults.”

While it’s unclear if an increase in sightings is due to there actually being more barred owls in the area, the population is healthy in Vermont, and environmental conditions have been ideal for a healthy and successful breeding season.

“Last year was a good ‘mast’ year for acorn and beechnut production, so it’s possible acorns allowed small mammal populations to do well over winter, which have supported more owls this spring/summer. That’s speculation, but the cycles of mast production, herbivore population increase, and predator population increase

are routine,” Morin said. The barred owl has a diverse diet mostly made up of small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. The increase in food supply for their prey would eliminate some food competition amongst hatchlings and juveniles that are less skilled in hunting than the mature owls.

“It is currently the tail end of the barred owl breeding season and the time during which babies are leaving the nest for the first time and branching out on their own, if you’ll pardon the pun!” said Anna Morris, a master of raptor biology at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science. “These young fledglings are the same size as their parents and roughly the same color pattern as well, so it is hard to tell them from adults. It may be that you have several nests that have fledged out in your area at approximately the same time. They may be more vocal because they are begging for food from their parents, or adults are having renewed territorial disputes. I also like to remind people—owls do exist in the daytime! It’s not all that unusual to see an owl during the day, they just tend to be more active at dawn and dusk.”

Barred owls prefer thick tree groves and low wet forests, of which Charlotte has plenty. For the best chances of coming across one of these beautiful creatures spend some time around dawn and dusk

quietly observing forests and fields, as well as other places that smaller creatures can be found.

Sightings in broad daylight are not that rare. “This is not an unusual occurrence. Barred owls tend to be more crepuscular in their behavior than some of our other owls, which increases one’s odds of seeing them,” said Craig Newman of Raptors in VT. “They also are tending to youngsters who are fully flighted and starting to become more independent but still require supervision from adults. The third contributing factor is there are a lot of people spending more time outside and suddenly becoming aware that there are other living critters out there going about their lives unaffected by COVID-19. Last season was also not very severe weather wise, so presumably barred owl production was high, resulting in more individual birds for us to see.”

Hotter weather will generally push barred owls higher into the foliage as they are



This owl was hanging around Charlotte last week mid-day.
Photo by Rich Ahrens

able to get cooler air, and be sure to note hollows in trees as they are cavity nesters. Also listen for the “Who-cooks-for-you?” sounding call, as they are more commonly heard than seen.

SCHOOL PLAN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

critical. No matter what configuration was imagined, there was no way that the administration could create the safe distance required with a full student population. The model chosen will be in alignment with Phase 2 of the Vermont Department of Health guideline. This model means that there will be fewer students in classrooms and more room for the 6-foot requirement.

CVSD Superintendent Elaine Pinckney wrote in an email to families on Wednesday that though details, particularly for grades K-8, are still in development, the general plan is that students will be in school twice a week and teachers will be there full-time.

Schools, she said, “will be reopening in a hybrid model. This means that students will be in school in person for two days per week and will access instruction remotely on the remaining days... We are also working to develop a fully remote model, a centralized option for families to select, that would provide a rigorous opportunity for students to access their education from home without accessing our school buildings. We believe our remote model will be far superior to the traditional homeschool option offered through the Agency of Education and are hopeful that our families will choose this option if their students are not able to participate in our hybrid model.”

To illustrate how this system will work, the Champlain Valley Union High School schedule and model was explained in detail by Adam Bunting. Students will be in school either Mondays and Thursdays or Tuesdays and Fridays. Wednesdays will be a remote learning day. Instead of 7 or 8 courses, students will take four courses a semester and



Champlain Valley Union High School is opening with a modified schedule in the fall.

File photo

will be doing work every day on those four courses.

In-school classes will be small, entrance and exits will be assigned, and hall passings will be regulated. Although all of the details of remote learning have not been worked out, at least some of the Wednesday remote learning classes will be taught in real time with teachers who are part of the students’ program on the in-school days. Breakfast and lunch will be in the cafeteria, but students will be six feet apart. Advisory sessions will take place during lunch. Clubs and intervention sessions will take place at the end of the day and there may be early and later buses. It appears that most sports will take place as usual.

The matter of personal protective equipment was not addressed in detail but all students and teachers will wear masks or head coverings and hand washing will be frequent.

Classrooms will be cleaned after each session.

Members of the Board and public participants had many questions. Among them was the question of how students will be grouped, since the group will be the main social contacts for students for the year until a vaccine is produced. Grouping methods have not been decided upon. Another question had to do with the possible occurrence of a positive case. Elaine Pinckney stated that all of the guidelines and practices around the virus will be directed by the Department of Health. One positive case will not shut down an entire school. The new system of student grouping and contacts means that all student school contacts will be known and can be available immediately for contact tracing by the Public Health Department. Consideration for closing schools may be precipitated by a wide community outbreak, not usually by one

case.

There are several aspects of this plan that have yet to be worked out, but the main points of the presentation were these: 1) the safety of students is the primary driver of the plan; 2) the curriculum will be rigorous and the remote learning will be enhanced over the program that was delivered in the midst of the outbreak as spring; 3) the social/emotional needs of the students will be addressed; 4) the needs of families navigating this interrupted program will drive the scheduling.

Some students with special needs may have to be in the building for more time than others. Elaine Pinckney stressed that if families are reticent about sending students to school, they can choose an all-remote program. In any case, the curriculum delivered by CVU will be more rigorous and provide more opportunities than a homeschooling program. Adam Bunting said, “I hope people will understand the fluidity of the situation. Everything is new.”

Three days of school at the beginning of the year will be devoted to professional development focused on enhancing remote instruction. Those student instruction days will be added on at the end of the year. Transportation by bus will continue and students will be seated well apart from one another, wearing masks. Parents may choose to drive their children to school.

The design for the K-8 students in the district will be announced on August 4. A website containing information on CVSD school openings will be up on Friday, July 24. Information on the elementary and middle schools will be posted there on August 4. In addition, newsletters describing these new systems and preparations will be sent regularly to parents during the summer.