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The Charlotte News

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2020 | VOLUME LXIII NUMBER 04



Stopping for a bite to eat in Charlotte.
Photo by Edd Merritt

Charlotte real estate: it's all about timing

Chea Waters Evans

Have you heard the rumors? People from California are buying houses over FaceTime! New Yorkers want to get away from another winter on lockdown—they're buying places cash, sight unseen, for over asking price! Charlotte is the new Boston! There are no houses to buy in town because everything is going in a week with multiple offers! Are the rumors true? Three grande dames of selling houses in Charlotte gave their opinions on the state of real estate in these wild and unprecedented times.

First of all, the rumors are sort of true. "I sold four houses via FaceTime," Kathy O'Brien said. She and her son, Patrick O'Connell, are a team at Four Seasons Sotheby's International Realty. "It took confidence with the buyers," she said, noting that she had met them previously, so that once she "talked them off the ledge," the mobile phone showings went well and all were happy when they arrived.

"There's something to be said for making up for lost time this spring," Dottie Waller, who is with Four Seasons Sotheby's as well, said. Between July to July a year ago versus this year, the numbers are pretty much the same... but there's certainly a lot more interest in buying. There are fewer properties for sale,

SEE **REAL ESTATE** PAGE 13

Designing a successful school reopening in a short time

Nancy Richardson
CONTRIBUTOR

When Champlain Valley School District opens its schools on September 8 it will be among the very few districts in the country that will open with the low level of community spread necessary for success. At Monday night's CVSD school board meeting, Superintendent Elaine Pinckney moved down the list of essential elements for a successful school reopening: low level of virus in the community; the ability to social distance at six feet; stable staffing; school grouping matching thousands of students with appropriate teachers; complying with Health Department and Agency of Education guidance; and effective contact tracing and reactive measures for positive cases. Although last week Governor Phil Scott altered social distancing guidelines for elementary school students from six feet to three feet, CVSD is adhering to the six-foot guideline for all students.

SEE **SCHOOL** PAGE 7

Dispute over Morningside Drive access permit grows more complicated

Chea Waters Evans
NEWS EDITOR

A highway access permit application is a routine step for property owners who want to build a driveway. In the case of one such permit application this summer, filed by Megan Browning and Will Bown, there have been more than your usual number of snafus, lawyers attending Selectboard meetings, a Vermont Supreme Court decision is in the mix, and the Selectboard has dedicated hours to the matter. And it's not over yet.

HAP 20-03 was filed by Browning and Bown on June 4 to access their five-acre property on Spear Street via Morningside Drive, which they purchased in January of this year. Along with the application and a site plan, town records show Road Commissioner Jr Lewis' notes that accompanied the application: "Trees to the west should be cut for site distance 1 boxelder and 1 clump basswood trees include cutting brush." Also, in the section for culvert requirements, he described Morningside Drive as "town class 3."

Fast forward two months, two official site visits and several Selectboard meetings later, and this HAP, though it was actually approved at last week's Aug. 10 Selectboard meeting, has stirred up a controversy that doesn't seem to be going away any time soon.

Bown and Browning's property abuts Morningside Cemetery, a nonprofit, privately owned burial ground that is an active cemetery and is one of the oldest still-operating



The Morningside Cemetery and Morningside Drive are the focal point of a permitting issue that the Selectboard has been discussing all summer.
Photo by Chea Waters Evans

cemeteries in the state. It is maintained by a board, the Morningside Cemetery Association, made up of Charlotte residents Nancy Richardson (who reports on education for this newspaper), John Quinney (who is on the board of this newspaper), Sheila Burleigh, Cyndy Marshall and Janice Garen. Richardson's husband, Peter Richardson, is an advisor to the board.

Nancy Richardson said in the Aug. 10 Selectboard meeting that before the initial permit hearing, she encountered Bown's father, Eric Bown. He was removing trees; some of those trees, she said, were on the

cemetery's property. In last week's Selectboard meeting, she alleged that Eric Bown told her that Lewis and Town Administrator Dean Bloch told him that he could go ahead and start tree removal. Regarding himself and Browning, Will Bown said in an email to *The Charlotte News*, "We take full responsibility for the removal of these trees. Also, there was no one in the town that allowed us to start without the appropriate approvals, that was entirely our mistake." He also said that the trees were not on cemetery property.

SEE **CEMETERY** PAGE 16

Selectboard makes some decisions, looks ahead

Chea Waters Evans

The beach, a budget, and payroll: with the exception of the ever-changing Morningside Drive driveway dispute (see front page), the Aug. 10 Selectboard meeting moved things forward on issues big and small.

Recreation

Recreation Director Nicole Conley said that over 1,000 permits were sold for the Charlotte Beach this summer, and that all is going well there. Whiskey Beach—the dog beach, as some call it—on Thompson's Point came up with meeting attendees Dean Williams and Dick Tonino bringing up the dog poop/bacteria in the water issue.

Conley, or a beach attendant or volunteer, tests both beaches regularly for e. coli bacteria and cyanobacteria in the water. If there's an elevated presence of either, the beach must close. Tonino pointed out that a recent incident involved a high level of bacteria from a Friday test, but the results came back in time to close the beach on Saturday and Sunday, when the water was actually back to normal again.

Recreation Commissioner Bill Fraser-Harris offered to come help clean up any feces left by errant dog owners; though there are disposal bags and a trash can at the entrance to the beach, dog poop is still frequently left behind and can alter the cleanliness of the water.

CVFRS budget

Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services Corporate Board President Tom Cosinuke presented a wrap-up of the FY2019-20 budget. "It was a pretty good year from a revenue standpoint," he said, despite the fact that they ended up slightly over budget. "It's important to note that this report reflects the 25k pandemic concession as part of the overall town effort to reduce expenses," he said. He also noted that in addition to the town-wide effort to reduce expenses, the unexpected expense of hazard pay for EMS workers during the initial days of the coronavirus pandemic was something CVFRS "couldn't have anticipated."

Business Operations Manager Patrice Machavern also pointed out that over \$16,000 of COVID-19-response supplies such as personal protective equipment and

disinfectant were part of the overage, but that they are anticipating a portion of that to be recouped through FEMA funds.

Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow said he thinks it would be prudent to account for coronavirus expenses in the budget moving forward. "I'd recommend that CVFRS present this line item as something that might stay and propose an expense for the town to appropriate annually." Though it was unexpected this year, he said, it will "not be a surprise for FY21 and it would be wise to plan for it."

Other news

The Selectboard approved up to \$5,000 to be spent with human resources consulting firm Gallagher Flynn to help develop a system to reevaluate and reconfigure the way the town pays and evaluates town employees and to develop a custom evaluation and salary system.

With the current coronavirus situation and a lot of uncertainty about what the winter and following spring will bring, the Selectboard discussed March 2021 Town Meeting

SEE **SELECTBOARD** PAGE 3

Election Results

The results are in, and the town looks ahead to November

Chea Waters Evans

With the scent of hand sanitizer pungent in the air and voters politely nodding and maintaining distance in close quarters, voting in Charlotte for the 2020 primaries was certainly out of the ordinary. The Charlotte Central School multi-purpose room, the polling location in town for many years, was closed to voters as the school district prepares to teach students in coronavirus conditions. Ballots were cast at Town Hall this year instead.

Regardless of which party they registered in, Vermonters can vote in the primary of whichever party they'd like, as long as they stick with one. Voters on Tuesday were handed three pages—Democratic Party, Republican Party, and Progressive Party—and when they were finished voting, they handed the two blank forms back to Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Mead and put the completed ballot right into the box.

Charlotters voted overwhelmingly as Democrats in this year's primary: out of a total 1,498 voters, 1,126 voted in the Democratic primary, 309 in the Republican primary, and 3 in the Progressive primary.

Out of the total number of ballots submitted, 1,182 were turned in by absentee ballot.

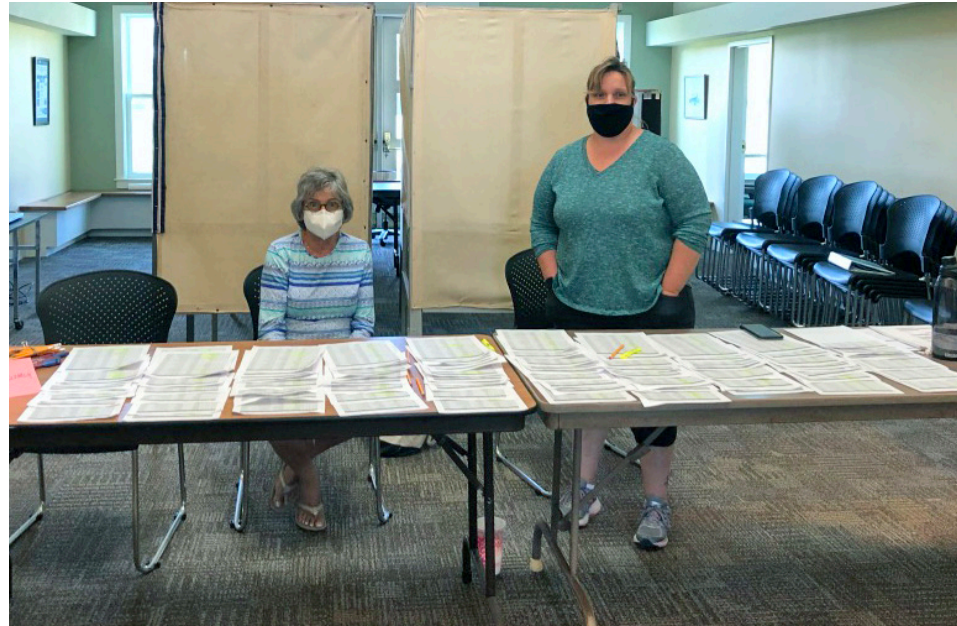
Highlights from Charlotte voters included:

Incumbent Congressional House Representative Peter Welch (D) won in Charlotte over opponent Ralph "Carcajou" Corbo, 1,061 to 32.

Current governor Phil Scott won the Republican primary in Charlotte with 254 votes; second place was John Klar with 49. On the Democratic side, Hinesburg farmer and current lieutenant governor David Zuckerman took 561 votes; Rebecca Holcombe was the next highest with 357 votes.

Charlotte incumbent State Representative Mike Yantachka (D) took 977 votes in his uncontested race.

Republican votes for lieutenant governor went to Scott Milne with 162 and the next



A masked volunteer and Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer Christina Booher, along with Town Clerk/Treasurer Mary Mead, checked in voters and accepted ballots at a table at the entrance of Town Hall on Tuesday.

Right: Voting usually takes place at the school, but school district rules limiting facilities access because of the coronavirus meant that this year's primary election took place at the town hall. *Photos by Chea Waters Evans.*

highest 69 votes. Democratic voters chose Tim Ashe with 546 votes; the next highest was Molly Gray with 399.

For state senator, the top six vote recipients on the Democrat side were Ginny Lyons with 769, Keshia Ram with 718, Michael Sirotkin with 614, Phil Baruth with 586, Christopher Pearson with 399 and Thomas Chittenden with 392. The Republican state senator candidates were Tom Chastenay with 165 and Ericka Redic with 137.

Looking ahead to November, with lots of national chatter about absentee ballots, mail-in voting, and post office woes, the Town, with Mead at the helm, is prepared for higher-than-usual participation and increased interest in voting by mail, in part because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mead said that though she's not yet sure of the exact date when November ballots will be ready, she believes they will be available



mid-September, "and they will be mailed from the Sec. of State's Office to all active voters on our checklist."

She also reminds voters, "As always, we need the ballots returned to us by the close of polls, which can be by mail or drop off in person, whatever is easier. Don't be mailing your ballot the day before the election." She did note, "I think people will have plenty of time to return the ballots to us in a 'TIME-LY' fashion."



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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SELECTBOARD
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Day. Town meeting is traditionally held in the school, but strict rules limiting access to the building because of the pandemic mean that the location will have to be elsewhere. Without knowing what infection rates will be like and whether an in-person meeting will even be allowed, the Selectboard is beginning the process to explore alternative locations such as a large event tent on town property, which could be a chilly, wet business during a Vermont March, or in the Old Lantern on Greenbush Road, which is the town's next-largest indoor space aside from the school. Plans for a virtual town meeting were also discussed, should the need arise.

Board member Louise McCarren also brought up her "pet peeve" that people are allowed to bring up issues with "no warning...and some of these are pretty controversial, and somebody will just read it and expect everyone to just vote on it."

She said she's not sure what the solution is, but said, "We need to get our arms around it." Board member Frank Tenney agreed and noted that these non-warned issues get voted on at the end of the meeting, when many Charlotters have already left, pointing out that those remaining and voting are a "small fraction" of the town.

McCarren proposed that the Selectboard investigate whether or not these advisory motions should or could be warned before the meeting. She volunteered to work on the issue and get back to the Selectboard with her findings.

After last year's twists and turns regarding town donations to nonprofit organizations, of which *The Charlotte News* has been a beneficiary in the past, board member James Faulkner came up with a list of questions for nonprofits, that will be under revision by the Selectboard, to assess whether or not an organization is appropriate to receive taxpayer money in the form of a donation.

Just Asking
Sweet or savory, preferably local

What is your favorite taste of summer? These Charlotters had some specific answers to this week's question.

Photos and interviews by Jim Squires



Tom White:

"Hmmm. I'd probably have to say fresh strawberries."



Finn White:

"Vanilla ice cream and bananas."



Julie Sulva:

"Oh, McKenzie hot dogs and my father's homemade relish on a bun. Yum."



Sisters Skylar and Cora:
"I love vanilla ice cream cones with rainbow sprinkles."
"I like blue popsicles."



Felicia Far:

"Fresh toasted Charlotte-made bread slathered with homemade herbed butter and fresh Stony Loam tomatoes with a sprinkle of salt."

Around Town.....

Congratulations:

to the **Clemmons family** who were featured in the August 10 *Burlington Free Press* as owners and operators of the Clemmons Family Farm in Charlotte. The article focused on the difficulty of diversity in education, remembering what the daughter Lydia's parents had to go through to share works by black artists and writers during their upbringing in the 1960s and 1970s. The Clemmons family emigrated from the deep south to Wisconsin in order to bring diversity to Fairbanks-Morse Corporation then headquartered in Beloit, with a staff and management that was almost entirely white. A retired member of UVM faculty of medicine, Lydia's father, Jackson Clemmons, M.D., worked with members of his family to supplement the lack of

diversity in this area by bringing Black scholars and artists to the family farm in order to display a possible interaction between their work and the largely white community.

Correction to obituary August 6 issue of The Charlotte News

We wish to correct the obituary for Mary Currier that appeared in the August 6 issue of *The Charlotte News*. Mary lived in Lexington, Massachusetts, at the time of her death. Although she lived in New York City and Princeton, New Jersey, for periods of her life, she was a native Vermonter, born in Burlington. She and her family spent summers in Charlotte. We apologize for our errors.



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COVID-19

Charlotte COVID Assistance Team resources provide information on financial, physical and mental health



Trina Bianchi
CHARLOTTE
COVID-19
ASSISTANCE TEAM

"If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up someplace else."

—Yogi Berra

The unofficial, but very creative and determined Charlotte COVID-19 Assistance Team met again last Monday, this time totally focused on

what this team could do to make sure our town is prepared to provide assistance to our residents when necessary in the future. Between the two churches, the school and the food shelf, both meals and financial assistance have been available to folks during this ongoing pandemic. But the question that this crisis has brought to the forefront is: "Is the Town of Charlotte prepared for other emergencies and/or for whatever might be down the road in future years?" Are we, as a town, a resilient community?

Frankly, we don't know the answer to that question. It became way too apparent after the

devastation left by Hurricane Irene in multiple towns in Vermont that some towns were able to recover more quickly than others, and it became clear that some towns were definitely better prepared and more resilient than others in our state. Emerging from this learning has been the creation of Community Resilience Organizations.

Community Resilience Organizations or CROs are teams of local citizens that engage residents and town leaders in climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and hazard mitigation. Step one in the process is assessing town members. From this assessment a picture can be drawn showing areas from where a town is prepared in the event of an emergency to where a town maybe not even be close to being prepared.

The current assessment available is designed to be given in a public forum with discussion and instant results, which unfortunately, due to the coronavirus is not a possibility at this time. The good news is that instead of a public forum, we are in a position to do this assessment in another way.

The goal of the committee is to modify the current assessment, making it very user-friendly so that each and every resident of Charlotte is willing to take a bit of time to complete it. The plan is to have it available both online and on paper and to have the paper version available at multiple places in town for people to pick up, take home and complete.

The goal of the assessment is to garner a sense of how all of residents think and/or feel around the ability of our town to withstand and respond to various events.

As for resources available now:

Food and meals

Available to Charlotte school age kids: The school lunch program continues to be available. To access, go to the website cvsdvt.org, click on "District Resources," click on "Menus." Click on the link: <https://bit.ly/SummerMealInfo>. For further information, call Scott Wagner at 802-871-6198 as he is the contact for the summer for questions and any special needs.

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

From the Food Shelf: Grab and Go lunches available at Spear's Store, Charlotte Library, daily Monday through Friday. To register, call 425-3252.

The Charlotte Food Shelf itself continues to be open Wednesdays from 5–7 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.

Emotional and mental health

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

—Pathways Vermont at 1-888-888-2557 is free and available 24/7 to call or text. Talk with a peer who has dealt with issues in the past.

—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

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.

From the Department of Health

To stay abreast of the ongoing coronavirus news in Vermont, check on what is opening, find new regulations for traveling into our state, where to get a test if you need one, and how to remain safe and well; go to healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19.

Stay well, stay safe, and we will, together, get through this.

A beautiful view above Thompson's Point



Photo by Luka Mester

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COVID - 19

A teen’s take on quarantine: not that fun

Ella Caldwell
CONTRIBUTOR

Quarantine is not as fun as I thought it would be. When this whole thing started, I was actually somewhat excited. It sounded like a great excuse to sleep in, watch YouTube all day, and forget everything I learned in middle school math class. But you get tired of being stuck indoors with the same few people. I mean, I’m starting to get bored of being on my phone all the time, and I’m a teenager. Shocking, I know.

But there’s only so much you can do when you can’t be near anyone else, and at this point, I’ve probably done everything. Reading? Did that. Completely messing up my sleep schedule? Did that. Watching all seven seasons of Star Wars: Clone Wars? Definitely did that. I’ve gotten better at drawing during quarantine (which is good), been forced to go hiking by my mom (“forced” makes it sound bad; it was actually sort of fun), and spent a lot of time laying in my bed questioning just why this year feels like someone hacked the Matrix and switched it from easy mode to ultimate impossible challenge mode.

Seriously, with the way 2020 has been going, I would hardly be surprised if a zombie apocalypse started before the end of the year. Maybe we should start preparing for that possibly, just in case. There isn’t much else to do. Heck, a zombie outbreak might be a lot of fun. Unless I die. Based on what I’ve seen from zombie movies, I’d die pretty quickly. So maybe it wouldn’t be fun. I also get the feeling that if there really was a zombie apocalypse, there’d be a lot of people who wouldn’t follow the necessary safety precautions (*cough* the idiots who refuse to wear masks in public *cough*).

I’m sure that everyone feels like quarantine has been going on forever. My sister described it pretty well: “Feels like a longer summer vacation.” Although summer vacation is supposed to be fun, she’s right. Summer vacation really did start early for us students. And no matter how much I’ve complained about school in the past, I want to go back. I’m still going to complain about it, but it would be nice to get back to normal life soon.

At least, I can’t wait to see my friends again. We text sometimes, but I’d really like to actually hang out with them like we did before coronavirus (Gasp! A *teenager* would rather talk to people in person than text them? The world has gone insane!). I’m a bit worried that my social skills have completely deteriorated during this quarantine, though. I wasn’t really a social person to begin with, as anyone who knows me could tell you, but I haven’t interacted with anyone in so long, so I’m really out of

“I wasn’t really a social person to begin with, as anyone who knows me could tell you, but I haven’t interacted with anyone in so long, so I’m really out of practice.”

practice. I’ve also developed an obsession with horror movies, so that likely doesn’t help my social skills either.

Quarantine has given me a lot of time to think about a lot of various things, some good, some bad, some that are kind of in the middle. For instance, I’ve decided to declare war on creamed corn. I’ve never had it, but I saw a picture of it a couple days ago and decided it looked gross, so I hate it now. And that’s just what you do in quarantine, isn’t it? You’re so bored, you just... declare war. On inanimate objects and food items.

Overall, I’m giving quarantine a one-star review. The commercials made it look much better than it actually is. It was fun at first, but it gets boring quickly. Do not buy this product.

Town

Grange preservation work begins

Trina Bianchi
CONTRIBUTOR

The Charlotte Grange applied for and was selected to receive not one, but two grants this year. The first, from Historic Preservation of Vermont, is dedicated to taking the eight large schoolhouse windows on the main floor and restoring them back to functioning condition—adding new ropes and hardware, replacing panes, replacing and/or repairing sills and dividers, and painting. All the work is being done by local contractors: Slater Construction and Brian Slater are handling the entire project with the painting being down by local painter David Owen.

The windows have all been removed, the wood stripped and prepped, and are currently with a local vendor for necessary pane replacements and glazing. David has started the painting process of the window frames, and we are looking forward to seeing these stunning windows back in their rightful places sometime this fall.

As this grant is a 50/50 matching grant, we are in major fundraising mode as we need to be able to prove payment of the entire project before we can submit paperwork for the 50% grant reimbursement.

We would like to thank all those people who have already generously donated towards this project. Those wishing to donate or ask questions regarding the work being done and planned for this historic Grange Hall can write Trina Bianchi at alchemy@gmavt.net or Margaret Woodruff at Margaret.woodruff@gmail.com. Donations can be sent to P.O. Box 54, Charlotte, VT.

Our list of donors continues to grow; thank you to all who have contributed to date:

Elizabeth Bassett and John Pane
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<p>Charlotte - \$723,900 4 bed contemporary w/ mtn views! Wonderful private location on 4+ acres. Open floor plan w/ lg kitchen featuring natural cherry cabinetry. 1st floor bed w/ bath. 2nd floor master w/ full bath, walk-in closet & add'l bedroom. Walk out basmt w/ bonus room. 2 car garage.</p>	<p>Charlotte - \$434,500 Open floor plan colonial home to be built on 1.19 acres in popular country neighborhood. Features HW flooring & kitchen w/ granite countertops & stainless appliances. 3 bedroom home including master bedroom suite with bath and walk in closet.</p>	<p>Charlotte - \$140,000 Lovely south facing wooded lot. Private homesite with driveway in and home site cleared. Septic system designed with waste water approval; mound system with pump. New survey done in 2016, septic design done in 2019 and land cleared. This building lot is ready to go.</p>
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Hi, Neighbor!

Larry Lewack: Planning for Charlotte's future



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Larry Lewack has moved to the head of the table. This June, he was hired to be Charlotte's Town Planner with the role of facilitating the work of the Charlotte Planning Commission.

"Planning and zoning has surprisingly emerged as a third career for me," Lewack said. "My first career was human services as a direct provider and then as a program director in the nonprofit sector." From 1988 to 1999, he served as a volunteer commissioner on the Burlington and Winooski Planning Commissions, and in 2018, Lewack applied for the position of Planning and Zoning Administrator in Bolton.

"I was very surprised when they called me for an interview," he said, "and even more when I got the job and found that I was good at it." The Bolton job was part time, so Lewack jumped at the opportunity to apply for the full-time position in Charlotte.

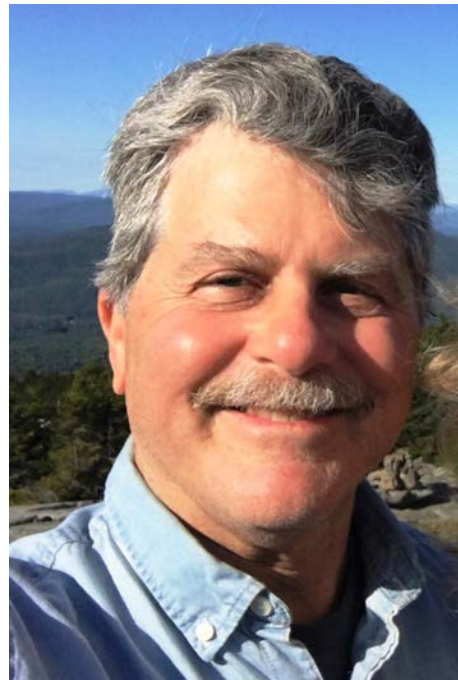
Lewack was happy to discover that the members of the Charlotte Planning Commission share his values. "The town has high standards on how projects get done in ways to preserve areas of high public value," he said. "That includes traditional agricultural uses and protecting the shoreline of Lake Champlain and streams and rivers. When I get home I feel as though I've done important work rather than just allow some developer to carve up farmland with cookie cutter houses." Although Lewack's career arc may not

seem like a direct path to Town Planner, he believes he has gained a lot from that early work, which included stints at the Vermont Department of Aging and Independent Living, the Vermont Energy Education Program, VSA Vermont, the Brain Injury Association of Vermont, and the Vermont chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

When he worked in the disability field, one of his jobs was checking to see if polling places complied with the Americans with Disabilities Act. "It was interesting to do the survey and present the results in a way that could be digested by the towns while also doing the right thing for people with disabilities," he said. "We needed to strike a balance."

Lewack believes his time volunteering on other planning commissions is beneficial for his new role. "I remember what I expected and wanted from staff," he said. "I remember how important it was to have a professional staff member. If you're only interacting with other professionals, it's easy to forget that you're dependent on volunteers." Lewack noted that volunteers in both the nonprofit and municipal sectors can be very passionate about what they do, so it's helpful that he understands what brings people to the table.

The Planning Commission is currently focusing on what Lewack describes as "small technical fixes" for the Town Plan, but a major point of contention is the commercial development slated for the Charlotte Crossings property. In November, citizens will have the opportunity to



Larry Lewack is the new town planner
Courtesy photo

weigh in on proposed changes to the regulations regarding parking that affect that development and other new businesses in town. "It's been an interesting process and I arrived in the middle of it," Lewack said. "There are strong feelings on both sides, and part of my job is to make sure proceedings are respectful and we follow the letter of the law."

Lewack's spare time is as activity filled as his day job. He plays the agogô bell, triangle and cowbell for the all-percussion Afro-Brazilian Sambatucada band, a two-decade-old institution that he joined 15 years ago. He regrets that this year all their performances have been cancelled because of the coronavirus. He and his wife, Peggy

"We want the process to be something that people can navigate and one that isn't overwhelming and bureaucratic."

MacDonald, have been married for almost four decades, and she recently retired after 33 years of teaching special education at CVU. They have two adult children. Lewack enjoys cycling, sailing, and downhill and cross-country skiing. For the last 38 years he has swam a half mile three times a week at the YMCA, a streak that was broken this spring by the pandemic.

Lewack believes many people see the job of Town Planner as heavily bureaucratic and technical, but he says that is not the case. "When I'm really doing my job well, it's about helping people and making the process super accessible," he said. "Not everyone has access to engineers and landscape architects, and we want to help applicants bring projects forward so they can be quickly reviewed and decided. We want the process to be something that people can navigate and one that isn't overwhelming and bureaucratic."

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Education

Back to school is going to look very different this year

Staff report

What will the school day look like for Charlotte students, whether they're at Charlotte Central School or Champlain Valley Union High School, this fall? Here's some information from the Champlain Valley School District reopening web site.

Drop-off and pick-up/Arrival and departure

Hand sanitizing stations will be set up at school entrances.

Pre-screened students arriving by bus will go directly to their assigned classroom.

Procedures for students not arriving by bus will vary by school. More information will be provided in August. In general, the following procedures will be followed.

- Multiple entrances will be used in order to maintain social distancing.
- All students must have a completed health screen and temperature screen prior to entering the building. Adults taking student temperatures will wear masks and gloves and use touchless thermometers.
- All students will sanitize their hands and must wear masks.
- Students should go directly to their assigned classroom once they have completed all required screening. (Alternate arrangement are being considered for those students who will be accessing breakfast.)
- Parents/caregivers will not be allowed to enter the buildings (see Parents and Caregivers).

Parents/caregivers

Parents and caregivers will not be allowed to enter the building with the student.

- Parents/caregivers should drop off their

child outside and leave as soon as their child has safely entered the building to avoid congregating.

- Preschool classrooms may need to identify a separate entrance and exit given the age of the student so the parent/caregiver may briefly walk the child into the classroom and leave.
- In the first few days of return to school, the parents/caregivers of younger students and students with anxiety may escort their children to the classroom in coordination with the school.
- If a parent/caregiver needs to talk with school personnel, they should make arrangements to do so in advance.
- All parents/caregivers who enter the school building must wear a facial covering, be screened upon entry (screening questions and temperature check) and must leave immediately upon completing drop-off.
- Individuals who are self-quarantining due to close contact with a COVID-19 positive individual should not do drop-off or pick-up.

Hand hygiene

Schools will put the following procedures into practice to ensure effective hand hygiene:

All students, staff and contracted service providers should engage in hand hygiene at the following times:

- Arrival to the facility, after staff breaks, before and after preparing food or drinks, before and after eating, handling food or feeding students
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom

- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- Before and after handling facial coverings/ face shields
- After handling animals or cleaning up animal waste
- After playing outdoors
- Before and after playing with sand and sensory play
- After handling garbage
- Before and after cleaning
- Prior to switching rooms or locations
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If hands are not visibly dirty, alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol can be used if soap and water are not readily available (monitor for ingestion of hand sanitizer among young children). Steps for proper handwashing can be found on the CDC website.
- After assisting students with handwashing, staff should also wash their hands.

Facial coverings and personal protective equipment

All students are required to wear facial coverings while in the building, as well as outside where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Staff will wear facial coverings inside and outside when with students. The CDC recommends facial coverings in settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. Adults doing drop-off and pick-up should wear facial coverings. Instructions for making, wearing and washing facial coverings can be found on the CDC website. PreK students require special consideration regarding age and child development.

The following stipulations are for students, as well as staff, where applicable:

- Facial coverings are developmentally appropriate when children can properly put on, take off, and not touch or suck on the covering.
- Students who have a medical or behavioral reason for not wearing a facial covering should not be required to wear one. These decisions should be made in partnership with the health care provider and school nurse.
- Students/staff should not wear facial coverings while sleeping, eating or swimming (or when they would get wet).
- Facial coverings with ties are not recommended for young children as they pose a risk of choking or strangulation.
- Facial coverings may be removed during outdoor activities where students and staff can maintain physical distancing and have ready access to put them back as needed when activity stops.
- Staff may take off their facial covering in select circumstances when physical distancing cannot be maintained, such as when a parent/caregiver is hearing impaired and reads lips to communicate. It is also recommended to use facial coverings with clear plastic windows to support communication when there is ongoing contact with individuals who are hearing impaired.
- The use of clear facial shields for students and adults is allowable as long as they meet all of the health guidance of the Vermont Department of Health. Face shields should extend below the chin and to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece.

SCHOOL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Of the 4,000 students in the system, 3,408 students will select that hybrid model of instruction that includes two days per week in school and three days of varying remote learning activities. Three hundred and fifty students have selected the remote model. Pinckney stated that Jeff Evans, CVSD director of learning and innovation, is in the process of "designing an entire remote school program for 350 students and 19 teachers. The remote program will be 100 percent aligned with the curriculum." The most important element of a successful opening, according to Pinckney, will be building confidence that positive cases can be handled in a safe and efficient manner, with limited disruption to the system. With more rapid testing being developed, students in groups that may have a positive case may be able to get back to school more rapidly than is now the case.

The list of protective equipment that has been purchased for the opening is extensive and wide-ranging: plexiglass guards for students seated at round tables; air filters; masks and face guards; disinfectant and sprayers; temperature monitors at school and on buses, thermometers; and special disinfectant wraps for frequently touched surfaces. The district is in the process of purchasing new software and internet softspots to ensure effective remote instruction. To complicate the already

complex food service delivery, the district has purchased carts with warmers and coolers for moving food to classrooms where students will be eating. An entire new delivery system of food for students in the remote program is being developed.

A group of teachers and staff are currently working on the development of outdoor education capabilities and the equitable opportunities for all students to be involved.

The governor recently announced the development and funding of 18 childcare centers across the state for working parents. CVSD has developed a child care and instructional support system for school staff, and is working with several community organizations to provide day care for families in the community. That work is in progress.

The opening of the school board meeting was devoted to an overview of the special education system. The special education system is protected and prescribed by federal and state law and is based on programs designed for individual students. Yet, the philosophy of the delivery system in Vermont is that special education programs are a part of the general education programs and students must be provided services within the general system wherever possible. Some special education students must receive intense service and some students are not able to gain access to remote instruction, requiring that they attend school for more than the prescribed two days

per week. The provision of special education services during the pandemic was piloted in a program this summer and that program was a success, according to Meghan Roy, director of special services for the school district.

The entire reopening system has been designed with intensive focus, hours of meetings

around design and implementation, and in a collaborative creative effort. The emphasis has been on the provision of equitable and effective programs while maintaining the ability of the system to pivot rapidly if community virus becomes widespread.



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Into The Woods

Private forests, public benefits

Ethan Tapper
CONTRIBUTOR

Whether you realize it or not, the lives of Vermonters are massively enriched by forests, both aesthetically (we are the Green Mountain State, after all, and the green on the mountains is forests), economically and culturally (through our working landscape and our forest-based recreation industry), and physically; through the clean air, water and other fundamental resources that forests produce that support the life of every living thing.

I call Vermont's land ownership model an experiment—of the 75 percent of our state that is forested, about 80 percent of our forests are privately owned. If you, like me, own some forested land, you know what a joy it is, from being able to tromp around in your woods to being able to cut a little ultra-local firewood for your woodstove.

As a landowner I am also sometimes struck by the absurdity of private landownership. I wonder: "Can I own that cliff? Can I own that brook? Can I own that boulder?" I chuckle at how we draw a line through the forest and pretend that my land is separate from my neighbor's. We increasingly understand that forests are massively complex, interconnected systems and to pretend that a property boundary has any real meaning in an ecological sense is silly. Whether I like it or not, my forest is impacted by the management decisions of those around me, and my management decisions have implications that extend far beyond my boundaries.

Private lands produce public benefits.

"My" forest produces the oxygen we breathe while absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide, mitigating its effects on our climate. "My" forest cleans, shades and protects two small brooks, which contribute clean, cold water into the Winooski River on its way to Lake Champlain. "My" forest provides habitat for wildlife—from white-tailed deer to neotropical songbirds—that my neighbors and my community value. "My" forest produces firewood and lumber—local, renewable resources that help keep Vermont's iconic working landscape working and provides economic opportunity for my neighbors and my community. "My" forest is even a piece of the beautiful Green Mountains, which anyone can see and enjoy for free from the top of Camels Hump or while you drive down I-89 on your way to work.

While you can go to the town clerk and find a deed with my name on it, I think that we could all agree that these benefits, produced by "my" forest, belong to all of us. They enrich the lives of my neighbors, my community, my state and my world. While I love the feeling of isolation when I'm alone in my woods, I think that one of the great joys of land ownership is knowing that the sweat and energy that I put into keeping my forest healthy contributes to healthier communities and a healthier world. I will gladly pay my property taxes every year just to know that I'm doing that.

In the book *Braiding Sweetgrass*, author Robin Wall Kimmerer talks about how, when we purchase land, we purchase a "bundle of rights." The American idea of "freedom" is largely based on the idea that



Photo by Thiago Japyassu from Pexels

we can do whatever we want on our land, within the law and these rights. Weirdly, these rights also include the right to destroy the forest, subdividing or developing it, fragmenting it with roads and houses. While it seems ridiculous that one person, in a moment, for individual profit, could destroy a forest that could benefit everyone for thousands of years, this is one of their rights.

Kimmerer suggests a more robust interpretation of landownership, that perhaps when we purchase land we also receive a "bundle of responsibilities"—some obligation to our land, to keeping it healthy and caring for these public benefits that affect the lives and the quality of life of our neighbors. Accepting these responsibilities may mean *not* exercising

some of your individual rights to do something that is good not just for you, but good in the broader sense.

Being willing to forgo individual rights to keep forests healthy, protect our communities and make our world better is perhaps the most radical way to exercise our freedom as landowners. We can make hard choices to accept the responsibility, joy and of privilege being stewards of Vermont's amazing forests, both for ourselves and on behalf of our neighbors, our communities, our world, and future generations.

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

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Gardening

Renovating the strawberry patch

Bonnie Kirn Donahue

CONTRIBUTOR

Now that the June-bearing strawberry season has passed, there are things that we can do now to get ready for next year’s crop. If your strawberry patch is two years old or more, after harvesting the last of your strawberries, it’s time to renovate the bed. This means cutting back the foliage to three inches and removing the leaf debris.

This may seem counter-intuitive, but strawberries have a long list of diseases and pests to contend with and doing this will help keep those at bay. Don’t worry, the plants will start to grow new leaves before the fall.

Strawberries are aggressive spreaders. Cut back each row to about a foot wide. Another option is to pinch back the runners to the first daughter plant, keeping five daughter plants and discarding the rest. Daughter plants are new plants that are connected to the main, mother plant by runner vines.

By next year, the rows will fill out again. This is the time of year to fertilize or add compost to the beds. Mulch with straw between rows.

A sad truth about strawberries is that berry production decreases significantly after year three. Diseases are more likely to take hold,

weeds can be more vigorous, and berries tend to be fewer and smaller.

Some common strawberry diseases are leaf blight, leaf scorch, gray mold and root rot. Common strawberry pests are slugs, the tarnished plant bug and spider mites. Keep an eye out for these and use your local cooperative extension resources to help you determine an integrated pest management strategy.

If your patch is older and you have noticed a decrease in berry quantity and size and an increase in disease, consider starting a new patch next year. In year one, pick off any flowers so the plants put energy into leaf and root growth. This means that the plants don’t start producing berries until year two.

Be sure to rotate the location of your strawberry crop, just like you would with your vegetable garden. This cuts down on disease transmission and promotes healthy soil.

Although you may want to use your daughter plants to start a new crop, it is best to begin with new plants to stop the disease cycle. You can purchase strawberry plants as bare roots through seed catalogs or in containers at your local greenhouse. Strawberries should be planted in early spring.

Even though fruiting for the season has



Left: Strawberry beds that are two years old or older need to be cut back after the last of the season’s strawberries are harvested. Right: Renovating your strawberry patch now will ensure a good yield of bright red berries next year.



Right: Renovating your strawberry patch now will ensure a good yield of bright red berries next year. Photos by Bonnie Kirn Donahue

passed, keep your strawberry plants well watered. They need at least one inch of water per week as they are building up energy for next year’s crop.

Finally, cover your strawberries over the winter with straw. You can use hay, but it may introduce weed seeds into your garden. This practice will help protect the plants from winter damage. Be sure to remove the straw in early spring.

Growing strawberries takes a little extra time and care, but your efforts will be rewarded with bright red, juicy gems bursting with summer sweetness. What could be better?

Bonnie Kirn Donahue is a UVM Extension master gardener and landscape designer from central Vermont.

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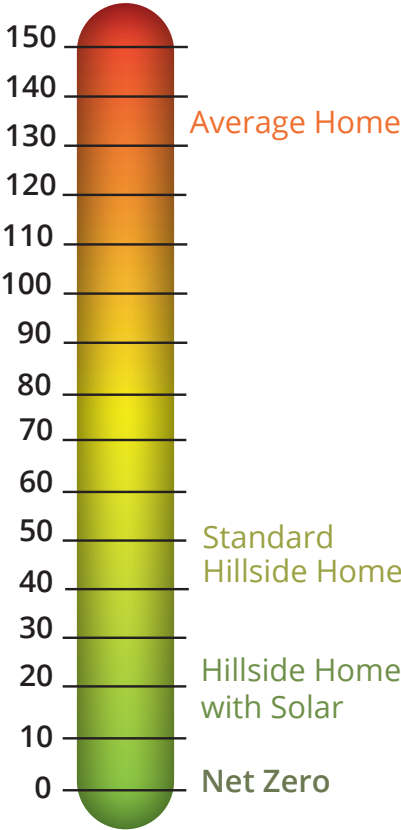
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Town

Scythe mowing workshop this month



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Transition Town Charlotte is sponsoring a hands-on workshop on scythe mowing from 10 to 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, Aug. 22, at the Bud Shriner farm at 1503 Ferry Road.

The workshop is limited to 15 participants, and seating and participation will be arranged to comply with COVID-19 physical-distancing requirements. You can register by emailing Louis Cox at jlouiscox@gmail.com or telephoning him at 802-922-6186.

Scythes are long, thin, very sharp blades with long handles that have been developed over hundreds of years as efficient and economical tools for mowing

grass and harvesting hay and grains on medium-sized plots.

The scything workshop will be led by three Transition Town Charlotte members: Louis Cox, Wolfger Schneider and Amos Baehr, who have extensive experience in using scythes instead of power mowers for various lawn- and field-management tasks. If you have your own scythe, please bring it.

The workshop will include instructions on how to sharpen scythe blades, demonstrations of how scythes are used for different kinds of mowing, and information about where to buy scythes. Workshop participants then will be guided in practicing grass mowing, invasive plant management and weed control on Bud Shriner's property.

Sports Report



Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

CVU Golfers go national

CVU men golfers traveled to Pinehurst, North Carolina, the first week of this month for the National High School Invitational

Tournament. Led by Alex Leonard, the Redhawk swingers placed 23rd out of 27 teams overall. Alex shot three rounds of 80, 75 and 73. Three other members of last season's Division I champions joined his effort—Cam Saia (88, 94, 82), Evan Forrest (79, 83, 82) and Kyle Rexford (96, 85, 85). Utah edged out Florida by a single stroke (903–904) for the team championship.

How will fall sports look this year?

Football, from its inception at youth levels, has always consisted of plenty of body contact—blocking and tackling—as well as high-speed offense by running backs accompanied by quarterbacks who could

throw the ball. Teams put 11 players on the field to accomplish their goals.

Well, those days are likely over, due to some degree by dangers from the corona virus pandemic. According to the Vermont Principals Association (the VPA), teams of seven on the field playing touch football are a good possibility this fall.

Face masks will be in abundance, with coaches and spectators required to wear them. Other highly active athletes—soccer players and field hockey opponents—have been directed to try to maintain safe physical distances in the course of a game and to wear masks whenever possible. Cross-country running, bass fishing and golf seem to be sports in which the athletes can compete unmasked since player contact and distancing are not issues.

Starting dates for fall sport practices have been moved back to coincide with school calendars. Schools are now expected to begin fall terms Sept. 8 with teams allowed to start practicing then and competition to begin the week of Sept. 21.



Plays like this one no longer go over in the game.

Photo by Edd Merritt




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Out Takes

Snakes and spiders and little suns

Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

*Well, have you heard the latest news?
Are you in the know?
It's in the morning papers,
and it's on the radio.
It's even going to make the TV news.
The white boy stole the blues.*

Mose Allison –
Ever Since I
Stole the Blues

This story begins with my liking a group of musical programs played on Vermont Public Radio every weekend. A couple of weeks ago I had run through Joel Najman's "My Place" as well as "American Roots" from New Orleans and was tuned to Robert Reznick's "All the Traditions" when it happened.

There they were—three white boys from Minneapolis, Minnesota (90 miles from where I grew up) singing "Blues, Rags and Hollers." Not only that, but they had taken the nicknames of Spider John, Dave Snaker and Tony Little Sun—Koerner, Ray and Glover.

It's a little hard not to think racist when you hear a fair-skinned Snaker sing about "Oh Black Betty, bam de lam" who had a baby and the kid went crazy.

Well, the memory took me back to my days as a resident of "Dinky Town" where I lived briefly after spending a summer as a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. I stayed at a friend's house—Pancho we called him—where Dave Ray played part-time resident too. He used to pass through, crash for a night or two and then move on to another "freebie."

It was also at this time that the Triangle Bar and Grill, located on what was called the "West Bank" area of the Mississippi River, opened up to John Koerner who, of course, corralled his friends Ray and Glover to bring music to that funky section of the Twin Cities. I would mosey in every Friday when at 9 p.m. the owners would cover its bumper-pool table, and Spider, Snaker and Little Sun would climb on it to finish the night with a few blues, several rags and every now and then a holler.

And the blues were not confined to a single spot in that area. A bar called the Saturday Scholar, located just outside Dinky Town, became one of the famous (or infamous) play stations for a fellow who had preceded me as a "Dinky Towner," Robert Zimmerman. Having dropped south from Hibbing to attend the University, he changed his name to Dylan and hung out at the Scholar to practice his new blend of music. He was kicked out regularly because the owners said, while his songs were noteworthy in their ideas and lyrics, his voice left a great deal to be desired. Monotone did not make

it for them, and eventually he moved to another village—Greenwich—in lower Manhattan.

So, why do so many white boys steal the blues? Does it have to do with the rhythm itself? Or does it have to do with a lifestyle that promotes a need to bring out through music, feelings that are commonly shared among racial groups of all stripes? Personally, I'm a fan of Ry Cooder's suggestion to "Get Rhythm When You Get the Blues." Apparently, he believes music can help cure what ails you.

I could bring more white musicians into the blues fold—Eric Clapton, Greg Allman, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Paul Butterfield, Mike Bloomfield, Jimi Page, Charlie Musselwhite, Johnny Winter, Peter Green, to name a few.

Perhaps the verb "stole" gives Allison's song more than a tinge of racism. Stealing what had traditionally been Black implies that up until then, music had been that group's way of rendering its feelings through words and melodies, and it could now be adopted by the white community as well.

And then there's this collection of music called "Dixieland Jazz." The Dixie of our land stood below the Mason/Dixon Line where it provided anthems for southern segregationists. Probably by chance, it was also my father's favorite genre. I'm not sure of the reason for the connection, but he kept his hunting guns, which he shot regularly, and his collection of Dixieland records, which he played regularly, next to each other in closet just off the living room of our house. Since to him, doctors represented the cream of the human crop, his favorite band was, of course, Doc Evans' Dixie All-stars.

Growing up next to the Great Plains, I was tuned to music of other varieties—most often with a European bent. "Whoopee John and the Six Fat Dutchmen," a Scandinavian cast-off, Fuzzy Gretton, center of a show called "Swingin' and Sweatin' with Fuzzy Gretton," regularly played to a house packed with Midwest farmers—corn on their boots, not on the cob.

And bands like Cream, being "Born Under a Bad Sign," joined Mose Allison in stealin' the "Blues." Members of Cream moved on to become Blind Faith where they found themselves "In the Presence of the Lord," while Robert Plant and Allison Krause, through the words of Rowland Salley, picked heaven as a place for:

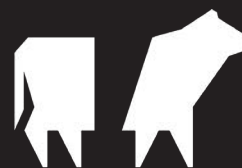
Swinging the world by the tail
Bouncing over a white cloud
Killing the blues . . .



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PHILO RIDGE FARM

Town

Food Shelf News

Susan Ohanian
CONTRIBUTOR

Rick Bragg's *The Best Cook in the World: Tales from My Momma's Southern Table* is a wonderfully poignant, funny and rollicking food memoir, as well as a loving tribute to his mother. It is available from the Charlotte Library as a book and as a CD audio. The book is heartfelt; it's hilarious and it's highly recommended. And to hear Rick Bragg read it is a wonderful delight.

Bragg writes about tomatoes in Chapter 18, which starts with Momma's complaints that tomatoes haven't tasted good for the last 50 years. Bragg notes, "It is understandable that she would feel that way about supermarket tomatoes, which are not actually food, and most likely ripened somewhere on a truck between here and Homestead, or Mexico, or in the hold of a tramp steamer. A supermarket tomato is food the way a frozen burrito is food: of last resort."

The solution is, of course, homegrown tomatoes. As Lewis Grizzard, another Southern writer, noted, "It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato." And that's what we hope for the people who visit the Food Shelf where tomatoes arrived—ripened on the vine by Charlotte sun, not while in a shipping container.

The Food Shelf is graced with the generosity of many gardeners who share their bounty—fresh produce from a number of family gardens as well as the work of David Miskell and Rick Tenney, the CCS garden and the Congregational Church garden. We offer them special thanks as well as thanks to Louise McCarren, Barbara and Bud Lawrence, Lori Racha Silverman, and Jennie MacDonough for sharing lettuce, sweet corn, tomatoes, Swiss chard, squash, zukes, cucumbers, green beans—and more—with our neighbors. Bethany Brightland and her daughter have designated veggie rows in their garden for the Food Shelf. An anonymous donor left eggs and vegetables.

Writing in *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 11, Elizabeth Bernstein notes that research links kindness to a wealth of physical and emotional benefits, helping the recipient as well as the giver. In her words, "Being kind is an excellent coping skill for the Covid-19 era. In a time of isolation, kindness fosters connection to others. It helps provide purpose and meaning to our life, allowing us to put our values into practice. And it diminishes our negative thoughts."

A big thank you to those anonymous donors who are filling the drop-off boxes with their kindness—crackers and other popular nonperishable items.

A special thank you to Jennie MacDonough for providing children's face masks and special birthday boxes, besides fresh vegetables.

The Food Shelf depends on volunteers who do a multitude of tasks. We want to give a grateful nod to helpers who have returned to the fold: Liz Foster, Louise McCarren and Pete Purdum. Thank you to Mark DesLauriers for helping at this week's distribution and to the Congregational Church volunteers and members who donate needed items every week.

More generosity

Following CDC guidelines, La Villa Bistro held an outside dinner with music at the Crossings and raised donations for the food shelf.

More donations came in from the Charlotte Congregational Church, Ann Castle, Robert and Marjorie Archer, Mark and Rachel Stein, Jeff and Irene Horbar, Benjamin and Josephine Kaestner, Aileen Kraus, Bruce and Linda Williamson, and Kathleen Nolan.

Reminder: To provide nourishment for children's minds as well as their bodies, books are available when the Food Shelf is open on Wednesday evenings. Book appeal ranges from babies to teens. Books for children are also available every day just outside the Grange.



The Food Shelf is graced with the generosity of many gardeners who share their bounty.

Photo contributed

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. It is located in the Congregational Church vestry at 403 Church Hill Road.

It is open Wednesday evenings from 5 to 7 p.m. for curbside pickup. Delivery is also available to those sheltering in place for health reasons. The Food Shelf contact number 425-3252.

Visit the website for more information on other assistance programs, such as 3 Squares VT: charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf

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.

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 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, VT 05445.

Call the Food Shelf number (425-3252) for a recording of the distribution times.



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Town Library News



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

We have enjoyed greeting visitors to the library since Phase 2 of our reopening plan allowed for limited access to library collection. In case you need a reminder of the guidelines, we've included them below.

- 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 the 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. The latest updates and information are available on the library website: charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Upcoming library programs and activities

Stay tuned for details about our upcoming September programs, including a kit to celebrate Vermont Archaeology Month.

Deadline extended! Cake Decorating Competition: Aug. 1–22. Monster or mountain? Maple leaf or ski run? We're looking for creative bakers out there to show us their fabulous cake creations, based on your favorite Vermont icon. This could be Champ, Mt. Philo, a sap bucket or your favorite winter activity. We'll provide the cake mix, frosting and selection of decorations. You add your own imagination and any other embellishments you like. Family efforts are encouraged and prizes granted for all entries! Email

School is starting! Whether you've got a kindergartener or are a grad student yourself, whatever your plans, we want to make sure that the library can provide the resources, information and kits you may need. Library staff are compiling our provision list, and we hope that our tech resources, learning kits and added inter-library loan capacity will help make the transition smoother to however you're learning this fall.

Library Guidelines

The Library is Open! As of 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 are allowed in building for maximum of 30 minutes to select and checkout books.
- 5 patrons are allowed in building at one time.



Driveway excavation for the library rain garden project is underway.

Photo contributed

info@charlottepubliclibrary.org to sign up!

Activity Kits: We've put together some fun and entertaining kits for all ages. Try your hand at knot tying, do a doodle with Zentangles, plant a shoebox garden or create a pet rock. All available for check out through porch pickup or the front desk.

Library Contact Information

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

REAL ESTATE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and people are buying not so much sight unseen, but because there's so little for sale, you have to jump on things."

So where are all these people coming from? New York, Boston and Washington, D.C., mostly. Waller said the appeal of "the mountains, the lake" and the progressive politics are all attractive to families who might have spent last spring on lockdown with their families in a small space arguing over who should be the next president. \$1,000,000 gets you a lot more in Charlotte than it does in Manhattan.

Nancy Farley, along with her partner, Jay Strausser, are also with Sotheby's. She said in recent months she's had "five closings because people have decided to get out of the city... The buyers that I've been working with, they've been thinking they wanted to move up here in three to five years, but COVID pushed that up much quicker."

"Charlotte, right now, is all about timing," Farley said. "In real estate, people say it's location, location, location, but right now it's timing, timing, timing." All three realtors agree that if a buyer wants a shot at a property, they have to move quickly. "There's such low inventory that that's part of the problem... anyone living in the city, they are pent up." She predicts that should the coronavirus situation remain the same, "There could be another push in the spring."

She did say that most of her buyers, despite the influx of city folks, are still local people, or people who grew up here and want to make the move back.

All three realtors pointed to low inventory as one reason for the hustle to snap up a new property, noticing that, though there's a lot of unexpected movement in the \$700,000-plus range, there isn't much to choose from in the \$300,000 to \$700,000 zone. "That price point doesn't exist right now," Farley said.

Waller and O'Brien think that if you've been thinking of selling, particularly with a house in that price range, now is a great time to take advantage of the hot market—granted, a backup housing plan or a contingency worked into the contract that doesn't render you homeless is recommended. Farley said she sees things a little differently. "If you're looking for something else locally, if you don't have a place to go, you might be setting yourself up for disappointment... There are not a lot of places for you to go."

Even with eager buyers from out of state and the potential for a long, lonely winter indoors on the horizon, all three realtors cautioned that you can't make the real estate equivalent of a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

"You can't go berserk," O'Brien said, noting that staging, landscaping and touch-ups are still necessary for sellers to put their best foot forward. Farley said that an overpriced

property is still an overpriced property, and that anything languishing on the market is probably there because the list price is just too high.

Waller said her professional strategy at the moment is the traditional realtor's philosophy: "Make hay while you can." Faced with grim prospects in March, she said she is making up for lost time from the spring, when real estate agents were not allowed to show houses because of the coronavirus. When commerce opened up again, she said, "It was like whoooooo! The hysteria kind of built up."

O'Brien said Sotheby's is cautioning agents to temper their expectations; with COVID-19 still in play, mortgage rates that are currently low but could go up at any time, and a presidential election coming up in three months, the economy could take a turn again. "There's gonna be a correction," she said, but for now, the market remains hot, and, she said, "Real estate is a great place to plunk money. You should always have some real estate in your portfolio."

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Town

Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER
DIRECTOR

There is no living thing that is not afraid when it faces danger. The true courage is in facing danger when you are afraid.

~ L. Frank Baum,
The Wonderful Wizard of Oz

At present

The Senior Center building remains closed, but activities, art exhibits, presentations and courses are continuing—and expanding. Activities held outdoors, namely Kayaking for Women and Birding Expeditions, have started up again and participants have enjoyed some great weather.

But the Boating on Lake Champlain with Al and Nancy Martin—the very popular and beloved trips of summer—cannot take place this year due to Covid concerns. For 18 years, the Martins have probably taken around 1,500 very happy guests from the Senior Center out on their trawler. Al's sense of fun (complete with wigs) is only matched by his extensive and entertaining knowledge of the lake and local history. Someone said, "It's like a party boat—but without the alcohol."

Aside from the joy of being out on the water and having the wind in your hair, part of the fun was seeing the birds and wildlife, especially during the trips to Otter Creek. Then, there were the stories of Commodore Thomas MacDonough's fleet being built in the Vergennes Basin in 1812, and how subsequent naval actions led by him concluded in the Battle of Plattsburgh, which halted British advances in the Mid-Atlantic states during that long-ago war. Lake Champlain was a very different place then; imagine tall masts and canon fire.

Back on the *Nancy Ann* at the Champlain Palisades—in a modern variation of the letter in the bottle—the idea was to leave a piece of paper with the cell phone number of a fellow passenger, asking the finder to call. (Alas, there are no records of calls ever being made.)

Being a daylong excursion, the mid-day break was a leisurely dinner at a big family-style table at the Red Mill at Basin Harbor. By then, the group was feeling like family. While Al kept spirits high, Nancy's relaxed graciousness and welcoming manner helped transform strangers into new friends.

In fact, Al reports that many times, upon returning to Point Bay Marina, the passengers didn't want to go ashore because they were having such a good time. Great memories for those lucky enough to make a trip or two; meanwhile, we can all dream of next year. Thank you, Al and Nancy!

And that leaves open the story of Shirley's Cove. Does anyone know about that?

Outdoors

The next **Kayaking Trip for Women is 8/28. Please register your interest with Susan** at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com. Locations vary and are weather dependent, of course. September dates are 9/11, 9/18 and 9/25.

Birding Expeditions with Hank Kaestner will continue into the fall. Please note that registration for that season begins after the Fall Schedule is posted on the website on 9/1. After that date, please call and leave a voicemail message at 425-6345.

Events

All Wednesday events at 1 p.m. are now taking place only as online gatherings. In order to join one of these events, download the Zoom app, and access the link on the Events page of the Center's website at CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The invitation/link for that week will be posted by the day before the presentation. As well, this link will be supplied in Front Porch Forum in Charlotte and in surrounding towns.

A morning at the beach



With good weather, the Gents Breakfast group decided to meet at the beach and take a break from Zooming.

Photo by Mike Yantachka

The events for **Friday, 8/21, to Middlebury Museum College of Art** and the **Wednesday, 8/26, Trip to the Morgan Horse Farm** have both been cancelled, because the sites are currently closed. The following online Wednesday event is the first one of the Fall Schedule:

Wednesday, 9/2, at 1 p.m.: Putting the "Public" Back in Public Higher Education with Tom Streeter

Prof. Streeter will discuss the changing role of universities in society and argue for a return to the concept of higher education as a public good—as something that serves the entire whole of society, rather than solely as a private benefit. Formerly a professor and president of the faculty union at UVM, Tom Streeter now teaches at Western University in Ontario, Canada.

Fall Schedule

Have no fear—it is coming soon and will be posted on the Senior Center website on 9/1. It will be an insert in the 9/3 issue of this paper and will be mailed to those outside Charlotte and Shelburne that week. The new courses will only begin in the middle of September, which allows plenty of time to register.

One old favorite is coming back—Fall Road Hikes in the Champlain Valley—and they are another chance to get outdoors while it's still warm. Two intriguing first-time courses are Civil Discourse with Stephen Joyce and Script Writing with Mark Williams, which will help keep the little gray cells active, as Agatha Christie's Hercules Poirot would say.

Another exciting new entry is **The Basics to Better Balance presentation on Wednesday, 9/9, at 1 p.m.** This will serve to introduce two online courses, Better Balance I & II, which are aimed at improving balance and reducing fall risk. The introductory one begins Tuesday, 9/15, and both are generously offered by the doctors of physical therapy from DeePT as a community service.

Art Exhibits

The Senior Center's monthly art exhibits have resumed, and visitors are very welcome. Anyone interested in coming in to see an art exhibit in the Great Room is asked to schedule an appointment at least 24 hours in advance. The days for viewing are Tuesday and Thursday between 1 and 3 p.m. Please leave a message anytime at 425-6345—include your name and phone number for a confirmation of your appointment.

The current show is the **August & September Art Exhibit: Bill Stirewalt—Large Format Photography**. During his long medical career, Dr. Stirewalt seriously pursued his hobby of fine art photography. Although most pieces depict the natural world, the subject matter is very varied, and spans a time frame from the 1960s to the present. Two stunning pictures are of the moss-covered vines in the Hoh Rain Forest on the Olympic Peninsula, Washington. But the most spectacular photograph is the 6-foot-long Lake Champlain Panorama with peak autumn color and purple mountains. It is really breathtaking.

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

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.

Charlotte Senior Center
802-425-6345



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Charlotte Fire and Rescue Log

July 2020

Wednesday, July 1, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Thursday, July 2, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Friday, July 3, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Canceled (Prior to Arrival at Scene)

Sunday, July 5, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)
Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

Standby-Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided

Thursday, July 9, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Evaluated, Released (AMA)
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required

Friday, July 10, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Saturday, July 11, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Monday, July 13, 2020

Patient Refused Evaluation/Care (Without Transport)

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

Standby-Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required

Friday, July 17, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Canceled (Prior to Arrival at Scene)
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required

Sunday, July 19, 2020

Canceled (Transferred to Mutual Aid)
Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Monday, July 20, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Agency Assist

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Friday, July 24, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)

Saturday, July 25, 2020

Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/
Transport Required

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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Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

Sunday, July 26, 2020

Canceled (Prior to Arrival at Scene)
Standby-Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit
Patient Treated, Released (per protocol)
Standby-Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided
Standby-Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided
Standby-No Services or Support Provided

Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Intercept
Canceled (Prior to Arrival at Scene)

Thursday, July 30, 2020

Canceled on Scene (No Patient Contact)

Friday, July 31, 2020

Patient Treated, Transported by this EMS Unit

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Charlotte events, people or places. We want to publish your photos. Email them to: news@TheCharlotteNews.org

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CEMETERY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“The four trees that were removed were on the Town right of way; the complete tree and stumps were removed, so we feel obligated to the town for that. I had an initial phone conversation with the tree warden following our mistake; and on June 22 Megan and I showed the tree warden the trees (which we saved for his viewing and had hauled over to our building lot).” He said he intends to follow any recommendations from the tree warden regarding compensating the town for those trees.

The Selectboard remains firm that the tree removal is not within the board’s purview to settle in any way—Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow has repeatedly said that whether or not the removed trees were on cemetery property, that has no bearing on the HAP and is a “dispute between neighbors” and irrelevant to whether or not Bown and Browning are legally allowed to build a driveway there.

Peter Richardson said in a phone interview that it is still a problem for the cemetery association. “The exquisite part of this cemetery is how it is secluded, this wonderful sylvan setting, and along comes this huge disruption that was exacerbated early on because the applicant got prematurely involved doing demolition.” When asked whether the continued protest of the HAP is because of hard feelings about the trees, Richardson said, “Oh, I don’t know that that kind of speculation is really necessary at this point.”

The problem with disrupting the setting, Peter Richardson said, began long before Bown and Browning got involved; in 2009, the Kaplans, the previous owners of the property, also received permission for a subdivision and a HAP for that location and the MCA was not notified then, either, about the situation. “The notice requirement was not properly followed, the cemetery association didn’t know in 2009, and we didn’t know in 2020,” he said. “There’s been contrition on that...and not questioning the genuineness of that, but that was a big, bad, way to start this conversation.”

At the July 13 Selectboard meeting, once the tree issue had been temporarily put to rest, the MCA was concerned that culvert placement under the new driveway would adversely affect the cemetery land, which, Lewis said at that time, was not only unlikely, but more likely that the new culverts would help the water

drainage situation. It also came out at that meeting that the class 3 road was the town’s responsibility to maintain.

Bown and Browning will pick up the cost for any culverts or land adjustments. “We offered to pay the town for the materials to restore the roughly 70-foot section of Morningside to class 3 road because it was a cost we originally anticipated we’d have to cover as part of our original highway access permit,” Bown said.

To ensure that the job was done properly and the MCA’s concerns were alleviated, the town arranged for Jessica Louisos, an engineer from Milone & MacBroom, to visit the site twice and make stormwater management recommendations, the implementation of which should alleviate stormwater issues.

Then at the Selectboard meeting on Aug. 10, a third issue took the mic. The MCA asserts that Morningside Drive is not, in fact, a town road, and that therefore no further site work should be done, though the HAP was approved, until the town resolves the issue of whether or not that roadway is owned by the town or is private property.

Nancy Richardson, speaking on behalf of the MCA, said at the Aug. 10 meeting that the association is not convinced that the road actually belongs to the town, because the town bases that assumption on a 1991 survey, which relied in part on an 1864 Selectboard conversation on the record regarding roadways. Though she did not note the particular case or law, Nancy said, “The Vermont Supreme Court in 2015 ruled that such an old survey cannot be used for this purpose in absence of other documentation.”

This brings up the question: to whom does this road belong? Is it a town road, as the town has assumed for over a century, or is it private property? Bown maintains that Morningside Drive is the only point of entry to his property; Peter Richardson said he believes there are other, better access points. At the moment, however, Krasnow wrote in an email to the News that to his knowledge, no one has filed an appeal regarding the HAP at this point.

Peter Richardson said that the MCA’s desired outcome is a “successful” agreement with all involved parties, including the Town of Charlotte, and noted that the concern about whether Morningside Drive is in fact a public road is not “in the comfortable affirmative” for him. “This is not based on surveyor versus surveyor,” he said. “It gets very quickly into legal issues; we’re reluctant to pursue that for all the reasons

that people want to avoid lawyering up,” he said, adding, “the people who benefit are the lawyers.”

When asked if the MCA would pursue this legally should the Selectboard stand by the HAP and not hold up the assertion that Morningside is not a town right of way, Richardson said, “I’m not going to offer you a comment about whether we would pursue litigation if this thing should fall apart or start falling in a direction that we think is deleterious to the cemetery.”

Krasnow said in the Aug. 10 meeting that, though the Selectboard is willing to continue to hear all arguments regarding the validity of the road, “the town is not considering restricting any rights regarding landowners,” and that Bown and Browning can continue their plans until told otherwise, and that the town will continue its plan to pay for upgrades to culverts on Morningside Drive, since, Krasnow said, they haven’t spent much “over the past 150 years.”

Selectboard member Louise McCarren summed it up this way in the Aug. 10 meeting: “A very fundamental issue has been raised: that the town doesn’t own the road. And if we don’t, who does, and how does this young couple get access to their property...which is very important to me.”

For now, Bown and Browning are free to move forward with their plans. Krasnow said in the meeting, “The approved subdivision supports that it is a right of way unless proven otherwise...I don’t think it’s reasonable, based on conjecture as the evidence before us, that we should withhold the rights of an applicant for a highway access permit with an approved subdivision.”

The issue will be taken up again at the Aug. 24 Selectboard meeting, and Krasnow said that moving forward, “The Town still needs to upgrade a section of Morningside Drive so that the Will and Megan’s driveway can intersect onto a class 3 road built to the town’s standard. The open question still in front of the Selectboard is how to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution with the Cemetery Association before upgrading the section of morning Morningside Drive that abuts Will and Megan’s Planning Commission-approved driveway location.”

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