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The Charlotte News

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Charlotte Park and Refuge skier.
Photo by Frances Foster

Stolen signs divert LUR amendment debate

Chea Waters Evans
EDITOR

“If you don’t know what the impact is... vote no.” A group of Charlotters printed these lawn signs and distributed them around town over the past weeks in an effort to convince other voters to vote with them on Articles 6 and 7, which are appearing on next week’s ballot on Town Meeting Day. These articles are focused on an issue that began, like many do, as a disagreement about when, how, and why Charlotte should plan for the future; now a series of sign thefts by an unknown perpetrator or perpetrators has added fuel to the fire of the Land Use Regulation amendment debate. Some of the signs are removed completely, and in other circumstances, the paper section is gone but the empty wire frames remain.

Joel Cook of Charlotte, who does not support passing the LUR articles, said that individuals stealing signs troubles him because “doing so is neither neighborly nor lawful,” and that he is “dismayed that anyone engaging in this sort of behavior thinks silencing others in this adolescent manner will help these

inadequately considered articles get adopted by townspeople.”

In a series of Front Porch Forum posts and emails to *The Charlotte News*, over a dozen Charlotters expressed their anger that the signs had been taken from their property and noted that removing them could be counterproductive. In one post, Ebeth Scatchard wrote, addressing the thief, “Your actions have had the opposite effect on me. It wasn’t until earlier today that I knew how I’d vote on Articles 6&7...I am going to vote NO against Articles 6&7 for multiple reasons including the undemocratic action of multiple signs being stolen. East Charlotte is not Russia...we must not be silenced!”

Carrie Spear owns Spear’s Store in the East Village and is on the Selectboard; her store is within the commercial district that would be affected by the LUR changes. She said she doesn’t know who has been stealing the signs or why they did it, but also that she didn’t appreciate their presence in town. She said they bring a “sad vibe that I’ve never seen in my twenty years there.”

Clark Hinsdale, a former Charlotte resident who owns property in the East Village that will be significantly affected by passage of the articles, has been vocal about his support for the LUR amendments. He frequently responds privately to posters on Front Porch Forum when they complain about their signs being taken, and said he always tells them first, “I am sorry that your signs were stolen.” He also noted that he has “the opposite problem. I’ve had people put Article 6 and 7 signs on my property,” he said. He also said he doesn’t know who has been removing them from people’s property.

Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow, who has not publicly stated whether he will vote yes or no on the issue, is firm that removing signs from people’s property should stop. “Stealing political signs off private property amounts to theft, vandalism and an attempt to mute people’s right to free speech and is completely unacceptable,” he said. He urges people who disagree to find other ways to communicate. “My hope is for the town to discuss, debate and vote on town-wide issues being well



Signs urging voters to vote no on next week’s ballot items have gone missing from people’s lawns.
Photo by Alex Bunten

informed, with honesty and while upholding our shared values of mutual respect for each other even with irreconcilable differences of opinion.”

Meet the Candidates Night in review: conflicts of interest, East Charlotte, Black Lives Matter

Ethan Putnam
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

Last Tuesday, *The Charlotte News*, along with the Grange and the Charlotte Public Library, hosted its annual Meet the Candidates night, where four Selectboard candidates answered questions posed by the community. This year was different than most, with everyone gathering virtually due to Covid, but the event went on without a hitch. Over one hundred people turned up on Zoom—a record turnout.

The candidates were given two minutes each to explain who they were and why they were

running. Meghan Metzler, who is running unopposed for the CSVD school board, was also present and spoke early in the meeting, but had to leave before questions to sit in on a school board meeting.

The first question of the night was about the Selectboard candidate’s opinions on the proposed changes in the East Charlotte Village.

Mike Dunbar, who is running for the two-year Selectboard seat, reiterated his position that while he agreed with the move toward concentrating growth, he did not want the changes applied selectively. “I really do think it’s important to come up with a plan

to designate a town center since the lack of a town center hurts the ability for the town to get grants,” Dunbar said.

Lewis Mudge, running for the two-year seat against Dunbar, said that he wanted to avoid the “sprawl” of other towns, and that he agrees with the town plan “in principle.” Mudge also said, “I think this is a fantastic occasion for someone like myself who has absolutely no vested interest in East Village, West Village. I have a house on Greenbush Road and that is it. That’s all I’m invested in. What I will offer on the Selectboard is a sound, reasonable assessment of what the Planning Commission, with the Zoning Board, have come up with.”

Frank Tenney, the incumbent running for a three-year term, addressed the criticism that there was a conflict of interest with him being involved in the proposed changes to the town plan since he owns property in the commercial district and is on the Zoning Board and Selectboard.

“I voted to put it onto the ballot because I felt in my mind that it was best for the voters to make their own decision on whether this should or should not be done,” Tenney said.

Talking about his own views on the matter, Tenney said, “I think going from five acres to one acre to me is a little quick,” and he agreed with the other two candidates about the need for responsible growth.

Justin Bora, who is running for the three-year term against Tenny, didn’t have much to say about the issue, other than to mention that voters should be informed before they make any decision.

Candidates were asked what their level of support for the town trail was, and whether they would expand it.

All four said that they fully supported the town trail. Mudge and Bora also mentioned that they felt Charlotte’s green spaces should be preserved for other uses such as hunting,

“I believe that we should do everything that we can to encourage all walks of life to live and enjoy life here.”

— Mike Dunbar

and such uses would need to be taken into consideration when expanding the trails.

Throughout the night, a common theme among many of the questions was how they thought Charlotte should grow and what they would do to make that happen. Dunbar said that he thought Charlotte has an image issue with businesses and that he wants to change people’s attitude from, “We don’t want anything” to more along the lines of, “This is what we want and this is how we can get there.” Mudge disagreed, saying that he didn’t think Charlotte has an issue with its image, and that, “this is a town that people want to move to, want to bring their families to.”

The four candidates all voiced their support for increasing the number of solar panels in the town with Dunbar, Tenney, and Bora saying they wanted more rooftop panels. Mudge stated that he felt the state should help Charlotte in combating climate change.

Touching on an issue that has been in the news a lot lately was a question about what the candidates would do to fight racism and to ensure that Black, indigenous, and people of color feel a sense of belonging here, and that Black lives matter here in Charlotte, and

A brief moment of flight



Francis May caught air last week in Charlotte when he was out with his father enjoying the windfall of two snow days in two weeks.
Photo by Josh May

Opinion

Q&A regarding LURs, part two

Peter Joslin, Planning Commission chair
LARRY LEWACK, TOWN PLANNER

Some people allege there are a lot of unanswered questions about the impacts of adopting Articles 6 & 7. How can voters make sense of these issues?

There is quite a lot of detailed information posted in public sources and shared in the community, including at hearings by Planning Commission and the Selectboard, postings on Front Porch Forum, articles in *The Charlotte News*, and material on the town website. Outlined below are responses to many of the issues that have come up during this debate.

Article 6 would add ~24 acres to the East Charlotte Village Commercial District. The ECVCDD is currently 20 acres in the immediate vicinity at the crossroads of Spear St. and Hinesburg Road. No changes to the larger East Charlotte Village District, which surrounds this small commercial district, are proposed, and none of these changes would affect the rules governing

development in the ECVCDD.

If there were no constraints (such as septic and water capacity, setbacks, existing homes), the proposed added acreage in the village Commercial District would permit up to 20 additional houses or mixed-use units to be built there. The town does not plan to add any municipal water or wastewater systems in that area.

Density bonuses for adding more units of either affordable housing or elder housing in the context of a clustered, multi-unit project are already part of the current Charlotte Land Use regulations & apply to the entire town. They are not proposed to change now.

Some people claim that this will benefit just one or two landowners. This is untrue. In the planning field, spot zoning is defined as “singling out a small parcel of land for a use totally different from that of the surrounding area, for the benefit of the owner of such property, and to the detriment of other owners.” In fact, there are currently 10 properties within the

boundaries of the existing commercial district; Article 6 would add 6 more parcels, for a total of 16 parcels.

It is not feasible to supply precise buildout numbers if Articles 6 and 7 were adopted. There are too many variables and constraints that determine what actually can get built there.

What’s the rationale in favor of the proposed changes?

Long-established Vermont law and town of Charlotte policy (in our Town Plan) is to encourage development in established town and village centers, while discouraging sprawl development across our open landscapes. But the current minimum of five acres per housing unit that’s now the rule in this district directly contradicts these goals. This makes it very difficult for even modest development to proceed. Hence, the Article 6 and 7 proposals.

These changes are primarily about fine-tuning the rulebook to allow limited, very

SEE **LURs** PAGE 12

Letters to the Editor

Dunbar requests write-in against Bora and Tenney

Hi neighbors:
For those who don’t know me, I’m Mike Dunbar. I am currently serving Charlotte as auditor, and you’ll see my name on the ballot for the two-year Selectboard seat.

Things you should know about me:

1. I LOVE Charlotte—living here, building my business here, and raising my children here. My wife and I don’t plan ever to leave.
2. I’m an engineer and love things to work well and efficiently. This is what I want to bring to our town.
3. I respect Charlotte’s vision for the future of the town and want to work to help this continue to be a great town to live in for decades to come.

Through this process, I have gotten to know Lewis Mudge. He’s great, and he has excellent ideas for our town as well. Rather than run against him, I would like to run with him. I have received numerous calls and e-mails from Charlotters suggesting that I mount a campaign to get written in for the three-year seat.

I am asking for your vote as a write-in for the Selectboard three-year term. Please vote for Lewis Mudge for the Selectboard two-year term. Again, please write in Mike Dunbar for Selectboard three-year term on the blue ballot (back page). Thanks for your consideration. I hope to be able to serve you in this position.

Mike Dunbar

Vote Yes!

To the editor:

By the time you read this, Town Meeting Day is days away and due to the pandemic there is no actual meeting, only our responsibility to be informed and cast a vote. Proposed amendments 6,7,8 and 9 will strengthen our ability to preserve cherished farmland, open space, maintain areas of high public value as outlined in the Town Plan, and provide enhancements to encourage modest development in the East Charlotte Commercial District and provide farmers flexibility developing accessory farm business.

These are perhaps the most important attributes to Charlotters which have been continually enhanced and approved in the Town Plan and the Land Use Regulations.

The results of which are all around us, vast expanses of open space, beautiful vistas, farms, parks and trails. To reiterate, nothing in these proposed amendments compromises our ability to continue to maintain these cherished attributes.

The cost of a home in Charlotte has escalated drastically over the last 20 years making home ownership virtually impossible for people of modest income, my family included. Additionally, our town, like the state, is aging. For Charlotte to remain healthy and vibrant we need to take steps to enable modest growth so folks of various income levels can become part of the town fabric. Amendments 6 and 7 are such steps. Please VOTE YES for articles 6,7,8 and 9.

Peter Joslin

Selectboard actions do not align with community interests

To the editor:

During this voting period when the composition of the Selectboard is on people’s minds we’d like to share some of our experiences with energy planning. We believe the actions of the Selectboard do not always align with the interests of our community. With an overwhelming majority of 82% of the vote, Charlotters passed the energy plan amendments to the Town Plan in November 2019. We’re eager to put in the volunteer hours to do the work, but we need the whole town to pull in the same direction if we are going to make any progress.

Last year we presented the Selectboard with two different solar proposals for the town. One was a net metering opportunity which would have cost us nothing and saved the town 12% on its electric bill. Another was for solar panels on the roof of the library addition—a construction project that was specifically designed to be net-zero with solar-power. Again, that would have cost nothing upfront and saved around 5%. The Selectboard rejected both proposals, depriving taxpayers of clear cost savings.

This winter, our program focus has been on



The Charlotte News

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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.

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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*.

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Report from the Legislature

Promoting agritourism helps family farms



Rep. Mike Yantachka

Every two years in January a new legislature is sworn in and serves until a new legislature is sworn in two years later. During this time almost a thousand bills are introduced in the House and several hundred in the Senate. Only a hundred or so actually pass in both the House and Senate and get signed into law. Many, however, get incorporated into other bills dealing with similar topics and become part of Vermont’s statutes. Only members of the legislature can introduce bills. However, if the administration proposes legislation, it will go to the committee of jurisdiction and ask the committee to sponsor the bill. Committees also may initiate a bill to set policy, such as the Broadband Bill being developed in my committee, Energy & Technology.

During my 10-year tenure in the Vermont House I have introduced many bills. The language of some made it into other bills, such as the requirement that the money

received from the Volkswagen emissions fraud settlement be used to promote electric vehicles. A handful of bills I’ve introduced have gotten passed on their own. Last year I introduced a bill to promote agritourism. It limits the liability of farms engaging in agritourism for mishaps that might occur to visitors. The bill passed in the House but was derailed in the Senate because of the pandemic. I reintroduced the bill again this year hoping for a better outcome.

With less than two percent of Americans living on a farm, the public is becoming more and more removed from farming practices and agricultural production. Consumers are very interested in learning where their food comes from and about the technological advancements behind producing that food. Agritourism provides an excellent opportunity to open meaningful connections between agriculture and the public. The vast majority of farms depend on outside income to stay in business, and any additional revenue from agritourism could significantly increase their economic viability.

Agritourism is a growing business opportunity in Vermont. Some local examples include Shelburne Farms, Philo Ridge Farm and Adam’s Berry Farm in Charlotte, Isham Family Farm in Williston, and Bread & Butter Farm in Shelburne. Tourism is dormant at the moment due to the pandemic, but once we are back to normal operation, Vermont will benefit from its resurgence. Agritourism epitomizes the Vermont brand. It takes advantage of what VT is known for: agriculture, recreation, a pastoral vibe. And it provides another source of income for family farms by showcasing what they do best. However, the risk of a lawsuit keeps many family farms from engaging in agritourism. Visiting a farm exposes the visitor to certain inherent risks of injury such as bee stings, uneven terrain, contamination from touching farm animals, or falling off a hayride. A single incident can result in bankruptcy.

My bill (H.89) provides a reasonable expectation of liability for the farmer. It provides a clear definition of what constitutes agritourism: an interactive or passive activity for recreation, entertainment, or educational

purposes, including farming, food production, historical, cultural, pick-your-own, and nature-based activities. It does not include lodging at a farm or shopping at a roadside farm stand. The bill requires the farm to post signs in clearly visible locations warning of the inherent risks of participating in farm activities and to include the warning in any written contracts entered into with the participant. While protecting the farm from liability for inherent risks, it does not absolve the business from injuries resulting from gross negligence.

41 members of the House—Democrats, Republicans Progressives and Independents—co-sponsored the bill and it passed on a unanimous vote before heading to the Senate. If the Senate agrees with the House, Vermont will join 33 other states with similar agritourism laws.

I welcome your emails (myantachka.dfa@gmail.com) or phone calls (802-233-5238). This article and others can be found at my website (www.MikeYantachka.com).

LETTERS

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weatherization. We partnered with the library, the food shelf, and the Button Up campaign to create a program helping households use cost-free options to identify sources of wasted energy. We created an “energy shelf” to support lower-income Charlotters with customized kits of DIY materials to weatherize their homes.

The food shelf was almost overwhelmed because of the pandemic and didn’t have space to store the energy shelf materials. No matter! We found volunteers willing to crowd their personal space so that we could still run the project. Supporting Charlotters to weatherize their homes is not a one-year task; it should continue until we’ve assisted all of our neighbors who can’t afford improvements. The program costs just \$1,000.

We discussed the energy committee budget at three Selectboard meetings, each time explaining the program in detail. We were told there would be no more changes to our budget. Then, at the Selectboard’s final budget meeting (Jan. 25), without notifying us, the Selectboard cut the energy shelf from the budget. Not one board member defended the program. The Charlotte Selectboard ended the program to weatherize low-income housing.

As is often said: Watch what they do, not what they say. Words supporting the town’s energy goals are meaningless on their own. Please bear this in mind when voting for Selectboard candidates this year.

Charlotte Energy Committee
Matt Burke
Jacqui DeMent
Rebecca Foster
Suzy Hodgson
Deirdre Holmes
Doug Paton
Carolina Sicotte
Chloe Silverman

Vote for new energy and change

To the editor:

Instead of an endorsement for a particular candidate, today I write to urge all Charlotte residents to get out and vote this town meeting day. We live in an amazing town. A town that

frankly has it all. Close to Burlington, lake access, beautiful open spaces, a beautiful village, kind residents, great schools, and more. Our town has what most towns in the country aspire to be: a great place to live.

And right now, people want to move to Vermont, specifically towns like Charlotte, and Vermont desperately needs new residents and new taxpayers. The problem is that our town doesn’t tend to welcome new residents with open arms. A big reason is town zoning and our overall approach to zoning, development, and economic progress.

Town zoning is divisive, dysfunctional, and rooted in a classic NIMBY attitude that discourages development, renovations, or frankly anything that is based in common sense. Five zoning administrators in 7 years tells one part of the story. A member of the zoning board that also sits on the Selectboard, with the Selectboard having direct oversight over the ZBA? This is a glaring conflict of interest.

Just look at the number of building permits issued in Charlotte every year (most years less than 10) to tell the story of how difficult it is to build a house or renovate a house in this town. But I digress, this piece about the upcoming election. My suggestion is only this: vote for progression and change. Vote for new energy and new ideas. Unless you want the same Vermont and the same Charlotte we’ve had for 25+ years, which is a state that is almost the oldest in the country and has almost zero population growth.

I’m a lifelong Vermonter and proud Charlotte resident. Right now is Vermont’s moment to shine. People want to move to Vermont and Chittenden County specifically because of the jobs, schools, proximity to BTV and UVM Med, the lake, the mountains, and more. Will we be the state and the town that welcomes new residents with open arms, or will be the state and the town that continues to say, “No thanks, move along, find another town to buy or build a house in”?

It’s your decision this town meeting day. Voters have the power. We are the ultimate decision makers. It’s up to us all to use it. Get out and vote.

Eli Lesser-Goldsmith

Mudge for Selectboard

To the editor:

I’m writing to support the candidacy of Lewis Mudge for Selectboard. In speaking with and learning about Lewis, I have been impressed with his background and experience and his

commitment to Charlotte. With his work in the Peace Corps and as the Central Africa Director of Human Rights Watch, he has demonstrated his altruism and concern for others.

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Town

LETTERS

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His roots growing up in Orange County, Vermont, give him a connection to the values and character of Vermont. Since moving to Charlotte three years ago, Lewis has attended Selectboard meetings to learn what matters to Charlotters and how our town is managed. He appreciates the beauty of Charlotte and will work to preserve it. He is willing to listen and make himself available. And he is willing to dig into the details of an issue before making a decision.

We need Lewis on the Selectboard. Please join me in voting for him.

Mike Yantachka

School district’s proposed budget

To the editor:

FY22 budget season is upon us. As Finance Committee chair, I am pleased to offer you the following summary to prepare you to vote early or on March 2. Our priority is the safe return to full-time in-person learning. The Champlain Valley School District’s FY22 budget was developed with a goal to return to the familiar 5-day-per-week instruction this August.

This year, there are nine articles (ballot questions) for voter approval.

Articles I-VI may look a little strange to you. Typically, these articles are voted upon in person at the CVSD Annual Meeting, but they appear on the ballot due to COVID-19 meeting restrictions.

Articles I-VI pertain to specific district business: the election of three non-voting board positions, short-term borrowing for cash

flow purposes, annual report distribution, and setting the annual meeting date.

Articles VII-IX focus on the proposed budget, including fund balance and bus purchases. Each year, the CVSD Board works to develop a fiscally sound and community-minded budget. Many of you respond to our yearly budget surveys. You remind us that the community values experienced educators, small class-size, and a commitment to the arts and languages. This information plays an essential role as we formulate our budget and district goals.

Article VII, the proposed budget, represents a 3.5% increase from last year. Article VIII requests voter approval to apply a portion of the district’s fund balance to ease the voter’s tax burden. Understandably, for many of us, this has been a challenging year. If approved, these funds help lower the percentage increase to 1%. Given this year’s spending forecasts, we anticipate all FY22 excess funds will return to the fund balance. Additionally, the district will again receive federal and state COVID relief funds to help cover any unforeseen COVID-related expenses.

For current information, visit www.cvsdvt.org/budget, or please reach out to me if I can help answer your budget questions: Kbowen@cvsdvt.org. I look forward to the continued educational and fiscal success of the Champlain Valley School District. On behalf of the CVSD School Board, we appreciate your generous support through this unprecedented year.

Kind regards,
Kelly A. Bowen,
Chair, Finance Committee
CVSD School Board

Health Center plans move forward

Kellyn Doerr
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

The Charlotte Selectboard voted to approve a Wastewater Allocation application by the Charlotte Family Health Center — a step toward allowing the center to tap into the town’s wastewater management system.

This application is the first that the Selectboard is looking at for the health center to move property into the center of town. This is also the first application after a decision to allow private organizations to use town wastewater capacities.

Paul Reiss, the senior partner with Evergreen Family Health and the health center’s attorney, Michael Russell, joined the Feb. 8 meeting to help explain the application.

The board approved the ordinance to allocate a portion of capacity in the town system to private property owners and created an application process for the approval process. This is the first step in the process, evaluating property to see if there is capacity, and if there isn’t then the Selectboard can allow an applicant to connect with the town system.

The health center signed a purchase and sales agreement on March 7, 2020 and has been attempting to work on permits to go through with this construction ever since. Conceptual designs have been finished with private architects, said Reiss. There have been multiple extensions and the completion date has been pushed back to April of 2021.

The total allocation being requested is 556 gallons a day; they are currently served by a system that needs 490 gallons.

“The ordinance is quite clear and the science is also quite clear that a two-acre parcel contains insufficient capacity for us to dispose of the 556 gallons a day we propose to use,” said Russell. “We’re not creating any new parcels here, we’re just moving a property line.”

After this approval, attorneys will conduct a legal review of this process.

The board also discussed town policy for interaction with private landowners.

They came to agreement that they do not have any policy in place for this type of interaction. Selectboard member Louise McCarren mentioned that they could try to draw inspiration from other towns that already have these policies written up.

Audience member Robin Reid then made a suggestion to make these policies on a per-case basis. Selectperson James Faulkner commented that he had communicated with private landowners and wanted more guidelines for these interactions.

“It would be nice to have some kind of parameters that I should stay within,” Faulkner said.

Chair Matt Krasnow had concerns that there would be lack of communication between representatives without such a policy, as they don’t know when other representatives of the town are meeting with private landowners.

After five minutes of deliberation, it was decided that creating this type of policy is necessary and the board will pick up this subject again in March and attempt to develop policies in 2021.

Town

Armed robbery at Spear’s Store, suspect still not apprehended

Chea Waters Evans

A February 13 armed robbery at Spear’s Store in Charlotte ended without injury, but the perpetrator is still at large. Vermont State Police are currently investigating the incident.

At approximately 6:30 p.m. on February 13, as a teenage salesclerk was working alone at the store, which is located at the corner of Spear Street and Charlotte Hinesburg Road, a man entered the store, showed the employee his weapon, and demanded money. The clerk handed him cash and the suspect fled on foot; the clerk did not see him depart in a vehicle.

Detective Sergeant Michael Filipek with the Vermont State Police said that according to the store clerk, the suspect was “totally covered up,” wearing a tan-colored hooded sweatshirt, black or dark-colored sweatpants, and a dark-colored gaiter-style mask over his face. He is believed to be Caucasian and



Spear’s Corner Store. *File photo*

is most likely in his 20s; he has a “slender build” and is approximately 5’9” to 5’10” tall. Filipek said he didn’t know how much money was taken from the store and said he preferred not to disclose whether or not there were

security cameras at the store that recorded the robbery.

After the incident, VSP officers used K-9 units in the area to try and track where the suspect fled after he left the store. Because the suspect’s vehicle wasn’t seen, Filipek said it was possible that it was left nearby; he said that officers were using the dogs to investigate where the perpetrator’s car had been parked.

State police are hoping for community input regarding the robbery, Filipek said, noting that they are looking for “any type of observations or tips that come in, [or] if people hear anything...they thought was insignificant several days ago.” He encourages anyone with any information to reach out to the Vermont State Police Williston Barracks at 802-878-7111.

For now, he said, VSP will “continue our investigation, which involves forensic analysis of the crime scene.”

Around Town

Congratulations:

to the following Charlotters whose poetry appeared in recent “Young Writers Projects” printed in the Burlington Free Press: **Annika Gruber, Ava Rohrbaugh** and **Margaret Eagan**.

Annika and Ava earned placement in the February 12 issue.

Annika’s poem was titled “A palace of words.” She says, “Scissors of light cut through the . . . walls of our house,” emerging in “puddles of words at our feet.” Words have created her home, and she wonders at the printed lines that have made the building.

Ava titled her poem simply “Boat.” She describes how her boat-builder, Tilda, folded newspaper to make the boat before taking it out to test its floating. She sailed it with her final question being, “How longe will Tilda’s voyage be in her folded newspaper boat?”

Margaret’s appeared in the February 19 Free Press. In it she is looking for the “Recipe of life.” What does life’s cookbook carry for a recipe? Is this recipe your truth or another’s ? Isn’t it just a story? It may be, but one should not forget oneself. Don’t leave life all up to dragons. Come midnight, it is time to face yourself. What was truth and what was story is all now you, a digestible recipe.

CANDIDATES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

what the candidates’ views were on promoting diversity in this community of primarily white, wealthy people.

Dunbar said, “I believe that we should do everything that we can to encourage all walks of life to live and enjoy life here.” He added that when the community center is built it should be “all inclusive, with all colors and and sexes and and sexual preferences and everything.”

Tenney said he didn’t know what the Selectboard could specifically do about that, but that he “doesn’t judge people”.

Mudge pushed back on Tenney’s comment about the Selectboard not being able to do anything about this issue, saying, “I think we need to have the Selectboard members trained on this. I think they should be leaning forward on these types of conversations. I don’t

think it’s acceptable for them to shrug their shoulders and say, well, look, I’m not racist.” As for what he would do to address it, he said there was a need to make the town more affordable to live in.

While the question was being read, Bora visibly rolled his eyes, left the meeting, and did not return.

The night ended with a question about how the candidates would handle perceived or real conflicts of interest as a Selectboard member. Dunbar went first, saying that there needs to be a discussion on “the definition of what a conflict of interest is,” and that he felt there was a conflict of interest with two members on the Selectboard regarding the recent discussions about East Charlotte.

Tenney responded to Dunbar’s comment by pointing out that he had “held off until pretty much tonight on my opinion on the zoning bylaws.” He also said that “there have been situations on the board that I have recused

myself” and that he “knows what the rules for conflict of interest are.”

Mudge answered by saying he would recuse himself if there ever was a possible conflict of interest. He also said that the term had become “a loaded expression” and that to avoid this the town should “put forward a panel to put forward procedures that address conflicts of interest so we can actually get it out of the way and focus on the real plan.”

The full discussion can be viewed on the library’s YouTube page at <https://youtu.be/sVHRNnrYl6A> or at mediafactory.org/ Charlotte.

Corrections

In the February 11 issue, the op-ed “Taking issue with \$110 per life” was incorrectly attributed. It was originally published by Rutland Herald/Times Argus Publisher Steve Pappas.

In the Feb. 11 Letters to the Editor section, a typographical error was made in Selectboard candidate Frank Tenney’s name. We regret the error.

Just when you thought you'd seen everything



Photographer Jim Hyde was cross-country skiing last week on the Plouffe trails off Carpenter Road and came upon this phenomenon: a snow-nado. The sunny, windy, 14-degree day offered prime circumstances for this rare winter weather wonder. Hyde said he sent it to Meteorologist Matt Noyes at NBC News 10 in Boston. "He said it was among the coolest winter photos he's ever seen," Hyde said, so unusual that Noyes planned to show it on the air.

Charlotte Food Shelf news

For it is in giving that we receive.
— St. Francis of Assisi

The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members. — Coretta Scott King

We are grateful to live in a community committed to reaching out a helping hand to our neighbors. Ours is a community that steps up with basic monetary support and, from ears of corn to ceramic bowls to winter coats, finds constructive and creative ways to offer help.

As we begin a new year, we want to emphasize that for the giver, the gift is in the deed, not in any public notice of that deed.

The Charlotte Food Shelf is open every Wednesday evening from 4 to 6 p.m. with food distribution. This is curbside service only, at the Congregational Church, 403 Church Hill Road.

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.

If the weather is bad on Wednesday, the distribution will be moved to the next day, Thursday, 4–6 p.m.

For Emergency Food, call John: 802-425-3130

Check the Food Shelf website for more information about eligibility and different types of financial assistance. Applications are available at the Food Shelf and online:

<https://www.charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf>

The website also contains information about other Vermont resources offering further assistance.

The Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc. is a nonprofit organization supported by the Charlotte Congregational Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church, and the Charlotte community. Our organization is run by volunteers, and so

all donations made to the Food Shelf go directly for nutritious food and assistance to our neighbors in Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh.

Checks may be mailed to Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance, PO Box 83, Charlotte, Vermont 05445.

We offer thanks to all who find a way to offer assistance.

Food distribution event

Saturday, February 27 at 12 noon in the Champlain Elementary parking lot (800 Pine Street, Burlington). Anyone in need is welcome and encouraged to come. Reusable bags will be filled with a gallon of cool milk, eggs, staples including beans, tuna, pasta, local Vermont bread, tasty treats, fresh produce, and other items. Additionally, each food package includes a gift card to a local supermarket provided by local sponsors.



These tray seed starts remind us to grow a little extra for Food Shelf families. Fresh vegetables were greatly appreciated this past summer.
Photo by Karen Doris

Town

Neighbor’s well could derail Spear’s Store plans

Ethan Putnam
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

In East Charlotte, two permits stand at an impasse. Richard Tenney got one to build a new well. Carrie Spear needs one to add septic to her store. There is only room for one of them, and it’s not clear who will get what they want.

For twenty years, Spear’s Corner store has been a fixture of East Charlotte, but Spear and her husband have decided it’s time to move on. All that the store was missing was a deli and an apartment. In October of last year, Spear applied for a conditional use permit for the improvements.

The planned improvements increase the water and septic supply capacity, and require a new wastewater permit. According to the Vermont Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules, the minimum distance between a septic system and a drilled well is at least 50-100 feet. Tenney’s and Spear’s properties are too close to each other for both.

Spear’s application for the deli got conditional approval on Tuesday after months of deliberation. In the initial Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting to discuss the application, Frank Tenney, Richard’s brother, recused himself. Frank is the chair of the Zoning Board. However, Frank participated in a half-dozen emails about the application with the ZBA prior to his recusal.

This Wednesday’s ZBA meeting where the application was to be discussed was cancelled without Spear’s knowledge. According to Town Planner Larry Lewack, the meeting was cancelled because a decision to approve the changes had already been made.

Richard Tenney owns Tenney’s Snack Bar and bottle redemption center next door, and his daughter operates Brit-Sue’s Greenhouse from the same property. He submitted a draft permit

for a well on February 12, and received approval that day.

With both projects approved, a new problem arose. Which takes precedence? The conditional approval for the deli necessitates a septic system, but according to Lewack, if the well gets put in first, the septic permit wouldn’t be granted “because the two properties are next door to each other. It would be a problem to have permits issued either before or at the same time.”

Vermont’s Wastewater Systems and Potable Water Supplies Rules require an isolation zone around both potable water supplies and wastewater systems where no contaminants or potable water supplies can be built, respectively. These zones are colloquially known as “well shields” and “septic shields”. When a well or septic shield extends from one property to another, this is termed “overshadowing,” an issue about which the Technical Advisory Committee wrote a report on in 2010. The problem Lewack referenced is the “first-in-time” rule, which grants the permit to whoever applied for it first, even if it affects an adjacent property.

When Lewack was asked if Spear’s application would preclude the well permit since it was in the works since October, but hadn’t been approved yet, he said, “I don’t know the answer to that. It’s a fair question. As soon as I found out about the issue I did bring it to the attention of our interim zoning administrator.”

Interim Zoning Administrator Jeannine McCrumb did not respond to a request for comment at press time.

Richard Tenney told *The Charlotte News* he did not want to talk about the well. Frank Tenney did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Carrie Spear declined to comment for this article.

Pre-vote informational meeting on Monday

Staff report

The Selectboard is holding a Zoom informational meeting on Monday, March 1 to discuss the items on this year’s ballot ahead of Tuesday’s Town Meeting Day vote. There will not be a town meeting this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, so Monday’s meeting is the last chance before voting day to ask questions of Selectboard members and members of boards and committees who will be presenting that evening.

Some committees have already made presentations to the Selectboard regarding

their items on the ballot; these can be watched at mediafactory.org/charlotte.

The meeting starts at 6 p.m. and can be accessed here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85822505456?pwd=YVhLQjZaTWtQTU5CL1hlVk9ZS0hUUT09>.

Though it is not a forum for debate or advocating for a particular political candidate or voting position, there will be time for audience questions and discussion regarding the 12 articles on this year’s ballot, including the LUR amendments, the Town Plan amendment, and the town budget.

Hi, Neighbor!

Christine Cowart: Sharing her love of skiing with others



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Christine Cowart was living in New Jersey and skiing at Pico almost every weekend when she started seeing skiers with orange bibs. The bibs were worn by blind skiers and their guides from Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports. “It dawned on me how amazing that was,” she said “and I thought it would be incredible to be part of something like that. Vermont Adaptive Sports had a ‘come-one, come-all’ perspective and they were willing to take anyone, train them, build up their skills, and use them in any capacity where they could help.”

Cowart started volunteering with Vermont Adaptive Sports in 2002 and since moving to Charlotte in 2015 has concentrated her efforts at Bolton Valley resort. In January, she was honored as one of the nonprofit’s volunteers of the year. Sadly, she is sitting out this season because she has two sons who are high-risk should they be exposed to COVID-19. Although Cowart initially worked only with blind skiers, she expanded her volunteerism to include physically disabled athletes who use sit-skis, as well as those with emotional and developmental disabilities. She also works with a program called Pushback for Parkinson’s which is affiliated with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports.

Cowart has come a long way since her initial volunteer efforts. Vermont Adaptive supported her when she went through the process

of getting certified by the Professional Ski Instructors Association to teach blind and developmentally disabled skiers. She is also a certified child specialist with PSIA and a certified adaptive recreation and sports specialist through an organization called Blaze Sports America.

After working for several years with Vermont Adaptive, Cowart and her husband adopted two boys who had trauma in their background. That helped spur Cowart to become a certified trauma professional as well as a member of the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) Speakers and Trainers Bureau. “Sometimes techniques you would use for a typical child are not the ones to use for those who have been exposed to trauma,” she explained.

Cowart has worked for the State of Vermont as a policy analyst, first for the Department of Corrections and now with the Department for Children and Families. In addition, she recently started her own business providing training on the impact of trauma on people of all ages. She launched that venture with a presentation for Vermont Adaptive volunteers. “We rolled that out in the fall of 2019,” she said. “I thought it would end there but the response was overwhelming and people said I should present it to a wider audience. Some people said it helped them understand both others and themselves better and it just snowballed from there.”

Since then, Cowart has created trainings through PSIA and an organization called

Move United, but she has also gone beyond the athletic world to provide training on trauma-informed policing for an organization in New Jersey, another for teachers in New York City, and yet another on transforming correctional facilities, which she described as trauma-inducing environments. Cowart noted that due to the pandemic, she is able to reach a wider audience through virtual seminars.

Vermont Adaptive Sports is not Cowart’s only volunteer activity. She served one term on the Charlotte Trails Committee and since 2018, she has been involved with the Charlotte Central School diversity committee. “We came to Vermont to find a better quality of life and we’re really happy to be here,” she said. “Not a single member of our family would say we didn’t find that, but there are things that can be improved and I try to dig in and bring that around.” Cowart’s sons come from South America and watching people react to them has led her to spend more time on equity issues including co-chairing the Racial Equity Committee for the Department for Children and Families. “We noticed that there is some work that needs to be done,” she said “and I wanted to advocate for them.”

Among Cowart’s favorite activities are hiking and skiing, which is one of the reasons



Volunteer and advocate Christine Cowart combines her love of skiing with her desire to help others.
Courtesy photo

the family moved to Vermont. She is happy to be able to spend winters with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports to pass her love of that sport on to others. “As much as I feel like I’m doing something that can hopefully help someone else, it’s sort of selfish,” she said. “I like to be out there on the mountain and I’ve made some of my best friendships through that program. Vermont Adaptive is such an amazing organization. I’ve loved every minute of my involvement.”

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Town

The Grange remains much the same; request for a yes vote on tax exemption

Mike Walker

Towards the end of last year, I spent a couple of evenings sifting through records of the Charlotte Grange, pulling together photographs to map out how the Grange Hall has changed over the years and adapted to new uses. My reason was to inform an application for a grant for restoration work, but it soon became clear that this was an interesting and worthy exercise on its own.

My first surprise was how little the building has changed in its external appearance over the years. What we see now is remarkably similar to how the hall looked when it was built in 1870. There have been a couple of changes to the original entrance—it had a platform in front, presumably to accommodate horse riders, which was removed in the 1920s. One hundred and twenty years later a new platform and ramp was built for wheelchair users. The only other major external change was the addition of a fire escape. Minimal change, given its 150-year history.

The Grange as an organization has seen a greater ebb and flow. From 1908 to 1958 it had no permanent home, using four different locations in town for meetings. However this didn't impact on its popularity and in the 1930s and 40s it boasted almost 200 members—one in five of the town's residents! Since then, there has been a steady decline in membership, but we're now experiencing a quiet resurgence as interested townsfolk come together to foster a spirit of cooperation and maintain a hub of community activity.

I was also struck by the role the organization played in community service. Whilst traditional social events such as card parties and bingo nights peppered the Grange's calendar, annual "community service" reports record a wide array of activities including donating to organizations across the whole of Chittenden county. Pride in our little town was also a driving factor, and between 1989 and 1992 Grange Members made and installed the blue "Welcome to Charlotte" signs on all the roads entering the Town. Tree planting was also carried out, on the Grange's own property and in locations across town. And in 1987 members bought and installed a picnic table at the rest area on Route 7 in hope that "our local residents and many travelers will stop to enjoy the beautiful view of the mountains." It was further noted in a later report that in 1992 mowing and maintenance of this rest area "was taken over by Grange members due to a cut in funding by the State."

The Grange is funded by donations from its members and interested townsfolk, and our work to preserve the Grange Hall has been supported by Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Department of Historic Preservation. Vermont is the only New England State that does not automatically exempt Granges from paying property taxes, and so every few years the Town asks voters whether they wish to exempt the Grange. This time has come again, and we respectfully request that voters support the preservation of this historic Hall by voting to exempt the Grange from property taxes for another five years.

Floral Heart Project honors COVID-19 losses

Staff report

The Floral Heart Project, a COVID-19 Memorial effort, will lay floral hearts in cities and towns across the US in conjunction with a National Day of Mourning effort. The project partnered local florists, COVID-19 loss families and volunteers to lay hearts in cities and towns throughout the United States. Charlotte writer for The Charlotte News Katherine Arthaud is volunteering for the Vermont event on March 1.

The non-partisan effort on March 1st is aligned with Marked by COVID's work to create a National Day of Mourning. To date, over 50 mayors from around the United States have supported their resolution. The Floral Heart Project supports efforts that are actively focused on creating memorials now and permanent memorials in the future.



Across the country, volunteers are laying wreaths to remember those lost to COVID-19.

Courtesy photo

On Monday, March 1 at 1 p.m. there will be a wreath laying on the Church Street Marketplace.

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Sports

From rinks to slopes to trails to courts

Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

For a pandemic-driven school year, sports crop up at odd times and in limited spaces – limited in terms of fans-in-the-stands and in terms of where competition occurs so as not to endanger fellow competitors. Nordic skiers, for example hit the trails in small batches from single schools, unlike previous years where they began in large batches from many schools. Alpiners, of course make the trails their own, bending slalom courses as the flags direct them. And hockey rinks and basketball courts limit spectator capacity.

With that said, let's look at how some sports did midway through the season.

Zubarik and Lisle lead CVU Alpiners

Olivia Zubarik has been the Redhawk women's top Alpine Slalom racer so far this year as has Ethan Lisle on the men's side.

Womens basketball keeps its streak alive

It was 340 days since their last official game. Anxious to get back on the court, they opened their season February 12 with a convincing 54-19 win over South Burlington. Although the Redhawks jumped out to an 8-2 lead, they relied on defense when the ball would not find the net. That net seemed larger in the second quarter as CVU's offense came alive for a 22-4 halftime lead and 42-11 after three quarters.

The Hawks were led by Catherine Gilwee's 12 points and seven assists. Maddie Reagan

was all over the court adding seven points, six rebounds and five steals.

The second game of the season meant traveling to St. Johnsbury Academy. It was an important contest insofar as St. Jay claimed the last victory over CVU two seasons ago. Their efforts led to a lopsided 47-19 win with with scoring spread throughout the team. Maddie Reagan led with eleven points and seven rebounds. Sophomore Shelby Companion tallied eight more points and six steals, while Catherine Gilwee collected seven points, seven assists, five rebounds and four steals. Catherine, by the way, is off to UVM next year where, perhaps, coronavirus will have lost a part of its grip on winter sports.

Monday night the Hawks went to Burlington's Buck Hard Gym where Catherine Gilwee was again a key element in CVU's 61-49 victory over BHS. Down by one point after one period, BHS scored the first four points of the second to lead CVU by three before Coach Otley sent her squad into a full-court press. CVU lead 37-24 at intermission and 47-37 going into the final period. Catherine Gilwee's game-high 20 points were followed by Maddie Reagan and Shelby Companion with ten apiece.

Coach Ute Otley (a Charlotter) said she thinks "it will take us some time to get our timing right on our offensive sets since we have so many new players on varsity this year." She says BFA, Essex and Rice could be strong opponents. However, the Redhawks have hit the mid-mark of this abbreviated season with a 4-0 record.



Women's hockey Redhawk goalie Grace Ferguson makes the save.

Photo by Al Frey

Mens basketball begins the season with a win

Given a taste of what lies ahead, the Redhawk men squeaked out a 37-34 win over Mount Mansfield. Behind MMU 22-20 at halftime, CVU came back and regained the lead with just over a minute to play. This was due in large part to Devin Rogers' team high of twelve points, as well as seven from Alex Provost and six from Oliver Pudvar.

Input for CVU basketball came from Tom Giroux and Edd Merritt.

Hockey victories for both men and women

Both men and women's hockey teams came away with wins this past Saturday. The men topped Stowe 4-2 on goals by Angelos Carroll, Devan Fay, Ryan Carty and Alex Zuchowski.

It took the women three periods to upend Middlebury by one goal, 2-1. Hannah Schmid and Georgia Bruneau were scorers. Georgia provided an assist to Hannah, and Riley Erdman did the same for Georgia. Grace Ferguson made 18 saves in goal.

Education

College course roadmap: Evolving academic interests



Margo Bartsch
CONTRIBUTOR

By the end of March, colleges will be notifying high school seniors of their acceptances, while college students will be registering for their fall 2021 classes. Having an academic road map can help the student develop a plan to take a range of

courses that can influence their future success. A recent Wall Street Journal article reports that during this pandemic, entry-level hiring for recent graduates has fallen to 45%. Upcoming college graduates will face the worst job market in decades.

In addition, the speed of technology and globalization has redefined how we work with remote teams, sometimes underlining the need for cultural awareness training and time management with different time zones. Don't wait to choose college courses until the last minute. Now is the time to discuss a range of academic interests and make a plan now so that your student will be prepared for the job markets ahead.

Once a student is admitted to college, the planning and work does not stop. Most colleges have distribution requirements, which are specific classes within various academic categories that must be completed

for graduation. For example, Middlebury College has eight categories, where a student must complete at least one course within seven of the sections: Literature, Arts, Philosophical and Religious Studies, History, Physical and Life Sciences, Deductive Reasoning and Analytical Processes, Social Analysis, and Foreign Language. Some courses within the distribution requirements could also be used towards a student's major. In addition, specific writing courses may be needed to satisfy requirements. By being exposed to a range of classes, this can allow a student to create a unique academic pathway that satisfies their personal and career interests.

Colleges have developed a new buzz phrase called Interdisciplinary Studies. For example, The University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services encourages students to take an Individually Designed Major by taking classes across UVM to create a unique major designed to a student's goals. For example, students interested in Psychology can consider taking courses in consumer behavior (business) and social statistics (math) as pathways to explore different team dynamics, how people make decisions, and ways to share data and information. In considering a student's professional goals, taking a range of interconnected courses can prepare them for potential jobs in teaching, guidance counseling, advertising, human resources, and nonprofits.

Most colleges encourage students to take a major within their field of study and a minor within a different field to expose them to new ways of thinking and different team processes. In the 1980s when I attended Northwestern



University, it was not encouraged to take courses across different departments. It was nearly impossible to get off a wait list for Arts and Science majors to take a course in the music school. However, currently Northwestern reports that 60 percent of students double-major across schools within the college. For example, students majoring in engineering can take a journalism class in investigative reporting to research all sides of an issue, and international relations to track the global landscape of market opportunities and legal regulations. Having a broad range of interconnected coursework that differentiate a student can make them prepared for specific internships and career goals.

In reviewing the college's course catalogue, the syllabus is usually posted that lists the types of homework assignments, team projects, and test measurements that are added together to determine a student's grade in the class. In taking courses with

Sacred Hunter

Hold your nose right to catch a big one



Bradley Carleton

To a fisherman, the mysteries of what lies beneath the surface, living in a world where we can survive only for a limited duration, speaks of a world vastly different from our own reliance on terra-firma.

Although the underwater world has been here millions of years, and even with sages like Jacques Cousteau, we have but an inkling of understanding of the realm of the deep. If you seek wisdom about our connection to the life of marine beings, listen to a fisherman as he speaks of his wonderment and awe of fish, and what attracts him to seek connection to these beings. After getting past the story of “the one that got away” you will begin to see the intensity of their devotion for these creatures.

As I sit on my pickle bucket on a stunningly sunny Sunday, in the middle of St. Albans Bay, I am staring down through the 6” icy cylinder into the dark green water. I am lost in a moment of meditation. Thoughts of work, bills, money, and society’s plight are draining down into the melting hole. I hold my ice rod by the end of the handle with a carbon blank running through the center, sensing the delicate vibrations of the fish below the surface. I gently jig my rod up and down in miniscule increments to give action to the lure, baited with a chunk of nightcrawler. My eyes are fixated on the tip of the rod, waiting for the slightest motion, up or downward. There are about 60 others around me doing the same thing, but they are laughing and joking and generally carrying on about the last big white perch that they pulled through the hole.

I have a superstition that if I hold my nose right, that is, if I am looking down the left side of my nose with my left eye, I tend to get more bites than if I look down the right side of my nose with my dominant eye. My grandfather taught me how to fish in a small pond outside Akron, Ohio. We would fish for bluegills and he once told me, when I asked, “How come I’m standing just four feet away from you and you are catching all the fish and I am not?” His answer to me was, “You’re not holding your nose right.”

As a ten-year-old who took things quite literally, I shut my dominant eye and started looking down at the fishing pole. As I was reminiscing about fishing with my

grandfather and the lesson I had learned, something magical happened. Immediately, the tip of my ice rod began to twitch. At first it was just a simple upward motion. A release of tension from the 3/16-ounce lure dangling in the dark world beneath the surface. Then, a quick downward tug.

Still not enough to set a hook. The fish was testing my patience to see if I would react to his mouthing the bait. Not really swallowing it. Just holding it in his mouth like a pacifier that could be quickly spit out. Knowing the game, I waited. The line hanging down from the tip of the rod began to sway back and forth. He was swimming with it, holding it gingerly in his lips, prepared to expel it at the slightest sense of tension from above. I waited. The line continued to move from side to side in the ice hole. Then suddenly, out of the blue, a violent tug and the rod bowed down to the surface of the ice, throbbing with powerful vibrations echoing down the carbon shaft, I lifted the rod tip quickly, setting the hook in his jaw. The reel began to sing its zippy song, as the line peeled off the spool. I would reel him in, almost to the hole, and he would take off on a dead run under the ice. The third time he did this, I tightened the drag to create more resistance against his tyrannical battle.

After five minutes, I played the fish until I had his nose and eyes in the hole. He was a big white perch, sides glistening with silver and a wild look in his eyes. I bent forward to pick him up with my hands. Usually, I grab them by the bottom lip, but this fish had no intention of being handled like the others. He was a pack leader and looked to weigh about two pounds with a girth of six inches around his belly. As I reached for him, he contorted himself into a barrel roll, flashing his sharp dorsal spines into the palm of my hand. As the sharp spine impaled the pulpy flesh of my palm, I raised my hand into the air, recoiling from the pain. The fish slipped out of my hand, back on the surface of the ice and in one swift flip of his tail catapulted himself back into the hole.

After releasing the string of expletives accompanying my now bleeding hand, I began to laugh. Whoever thought that fishing was something that old men do to pass the time and resist boredom has never struggled with a white perch. After 52 years of fishing, I still learn valuable lessons. When I look back on my errors that day, I



Bradley Carleton and his fishing partner, Steve Osborne of Williston, at St. Albans Bay with buckets of white perch. *Courtesy photo*

realize that when I stooped down to pick him up, I was looking down at him with my dominant right eye.

Bradley Carleton is executive director of Sacred Hunter.org, a nonprofit that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature.



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On Books

“White Fragility” moves the glacier



Katherine Arthaud
CONTRIBUTOR

Hello, reading friends. I hope this finds you healthy, happy, and staying more or less sane in what I hope are the days of a waning pandemic. I hope you have been able to enjoy some outdoor time in the recent

beautiful weather we have been having. Yesterday was extraordinary, with white snow, sparkling sunlight, glittering ice floes breaking and clattering in the bay, a brilliant sky. My friend and I spotted two Canadian geese and what we thought was a little flock of fuzzy-looking goslings exploring the perimeter of the lake—is that possible? It felt almost...dare I say...springlike.

I have to say before I go any further that if you have read “*White Fragility*” by Robin Diangelo, and I know many of you have, I would highly recommend reading it again and meeting with others to discuss. You may have already done all this, but Sunday afternoon, hours after a Zoom group discussion of this book, I found myself feeling an almost physical, mental/visual shift of consciousness. It is hard to describe; it was kind of like my mind was a glacier and it moved. It didn’t move a lot, maybe it moved just a little, but a glacier is huge and so any small movement is kind of seismic, right?

The chapters describing some of the responses of white people in workshops led or co-led by the author were especially illuminating about how white fragility has a way of holding back the process of understanding racism by diverting the focus back to white people’s discomfort

and pain. The chapter on white women’s tears also really got me thinking, pondering, and reflecting.

“White tears,” Diangelo writes, “refer to all the ways, both literally and metaphorically, that white fragility manifests itself through white people’s laments about how hard racism is on us.” “White women’s tears in cross-racial interactions are problematic for several reasons,” she goes on. One is that our tears trigger the terrorism embedded in the history of black men being tortured and murdered because of a white woman’s distress. “When a white woman cries, a black man gets hurt,” Diangelo’s African American colleagues often say—a warning based on devastating examples such as that of Emmet Till. He was a 14-year-old boy who, in 1955, was accused of flirting with a white woman in a Mississippi grocery store. The woman, Carolyn Bryant, reported the flirtation to her husband, Roy, and a few days later, Roy and his half-brother abducted Till from his great-uncle’s home, beat him to death, mutilated his body, and sank him in the Tallahatchie River. The perpetrators (who later admitted to the murder) were acquitted in an all-white jury. In 2007 Carolyn Bryant admitted that she had lied and recanted her story about Emmet Till and the grocery store.

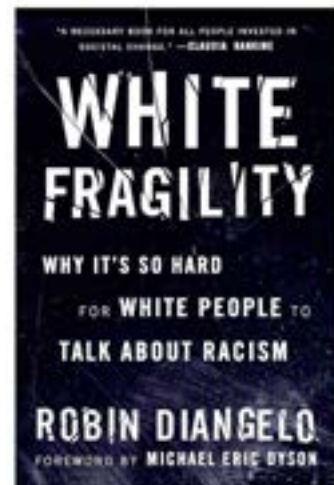
There is a history to white women’s tears, a history that is devastating to the black community. “Not knowing or being sensitive to this history is another example of white centrality, individualism, and lack of humility,” says Diangelo, who goes on to explain that there are various reasons white women cry in cross-racial interactions. One is that sometimes we are given feedback on our reactions and

the feedback hurts our feelings. Diangelo gives a good example of how a white woman’s tears can totally detract and deflect from the issue at hand. In a workshop Diangelo co-led, a white woman attendee attempted to rephrase what a black man had just said.

When the black co-facilitator pointed out to the white woman that she had just reinforced the racist idea that she could speak for a black man, the woman burst into tears.

“The training came to a complete halt as most of the room rushed to comfort her and angrily accuse the black facilitator of unfairness. (Even though the participants were there to learn how racism works, how dare the facilitator point out an example of how racism works!) Meanwhile, the black man she had spoken for was left alone to watch her receive comfort,” writes Diangelo, “Whether intended or not, when a white woman cries over some aspect of racism, all the attention immediately goes to her, demanding time, energy, and attention from everyone in the room when they should be focused on ameliorating racism. While she is given attention, the people of color are yet again abandoned and/or blamed.”

You may have noticed how the question almost always inevitably arises from discussions on racism, What can we do as white people to make things better? It’s a good question, a practical question. Diangelo says that she herself strives to be



“less white.” “To be less white is to be less racially oppressive. This requires me to be more racially aware, to be better educated about racism, and to continually challenge racial certitude and arrogance. To be less white is to be open to, interested in, and compassionate toward the racial realities of people of color. ... To be less white is to break with white silence and white solidarity, to stop privileging the comfort to white people over the pain of racism for people of color, to move past guilt and into action.”

This book is mind-opening, spirit-opening, history-opening, and assumption-opening. I will not be the same as I was before reading it, nor will I see the world and society in the same way I did before. So thank you, Robin Diangelo. I think it is a good thing for a white person to learn what white fragility is, how it develops, how it protects racial inequality and systemic racism, and what white people might do to make things better now.

LURs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

targeted growth in an existing village center. If adopted, they would allow mixed use and planned residential projects in the EVCD, with more diverse housing options for people to live, work and access services in a walkable village center.

How can residents be assured that future development will be controlled to respect and protect Charlotte’s rural character? Will residents have the opportunity to weigh in?

Any future projects in the East Village are subject to a robust and comprehensive

review by the Planning Commission and Zoning Board, who are bound by the very specific rules in the LURs. If anyone has any doubt about how these rules are applied by our citizen boards, just look around you: Charlotte remains a beautiful community that has retained its rural character, with a combination of working farms, forests, individual houses on large lots, and open landscapes, with stringent protection of our natural resources.

Whatever projects are proposed will be held to the same standards applied elsewhere in town and would likely be scaled back or rejected if they don’t fit the rules. Residents

have numerous chances to speak on any development, with multiple hearings on every project that’s proposed.

Why didn’t the Planning Commission propose similar zoning density changes for the West Village?

The West Village has a large stock of existing homes on smaller lots, most of which can’t be substantially modified within current rules. It also has a community wastewater system, with limited capacity, which the Selectboard controls. The PC tackled the East Village first this year because it was identified in the 2019 Town Plan as a priority.

There are already issues in the East Village neighborhood with speeding and no safe bicycle and pedestrian access. Why would we allow more development for this area without fixing these problems first?

The Planning Commission can require developers to install such amenities within their own projects. The Selectboard is responsible for creating reduced speeds, traffic calming measures, and wider shoulders and/or separated sidewalks in the East Village.

Where can I learn more? What are the key documents to review ahead of voting?

The following page on the town website hosts all the key documents about the four proposed articles: <http://bit.do/LURs-amends-docs>. There is also a slide deck titled “Rural Villages that Work” on the project page. A panel discussion laying out the full background to Articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 is posted here: <https://www.mediafactory.org/watch#/episode/55859>.

The Planning Commission hopes that residents will take the time to fully understand these proposed changes before they cast their votes. To obtain hard copy of materials posted to the town website, or if you have other questions not addressed here, contact Larry Lewack, Town Planner at 425-3533 ext. 206, or via email at: townplanner@townofcharlotte.com.

Town

Library news



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

It's hard to believe that a year ago we were just beginning to feel the impact of COVID-19 on our lives. Who knew that Town Meeting would be one of the last public gatherings? As we prepare for Town Meeting 2021,

we wanted to share a few snapshots from our library activities.

- Over 13,000 items circulated through Porch Pickup
- More than 140 online programs offered via Zoom including book groups, coding club and discussion sessions with over 2100 attendees
- Over 30 different "take & make" kits available for kids and adults
- 20+ circulating activity boxes for all ages on everything from origami to astronomy
- Community Art Projects like the Big Green Draw and our heart greetings
- Story Walks at the Park & Wildlife Refuge and Town Green
- Expanded digital collections, including Hoopla, Kanopy and Libby
- Increased WiFi capacity
- Internet hotspot in East Charlotte
- 1-on-1 tech support to assist with new technology demands
- Expanded inter-library loan delivery to accommodate at-home students and others

We hope that you will let us know if there's anything else we can provide or you need help accessing these services.

Looking for a good read? The Library Board offers their following recommendations!

Anne Marie Andriola: *Jerusalem* by Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi
One of my favorite cookbooks! Not only are the dishes delicious, (I highly recommend the beet dip recipe on page 53), but their descriptions and photos make you feel like you're taking a stroll through the streets of Jerusalem. We may not be able to travel there right now but we can eat like we're there!

Katharine Cohen: *The Best American Food Writing 2020*, edited by J. Kenzi Lopez-Alt
This is the third edition of the Best American Food Writing series and it does not disappoint. These fantastic short stories run the full gamut of subjects, and are an especially fun escape from the current pandemic we're in. I love how they touch on many aspects of the food world and offer a nice window into different people's experiences. I can't wait to read more!!

Nan Mason: *West with Giraffes* is a gripping tale based on a true story set in the depression.

Jonathan Silverman: *What possibly could be interesting about a book called Cod?* Imagine though a book that illuminates history, technology, science, geography, culture, and the environment through the lens of this one fish. See for yourself the connection of cod to salt, slavery, ocean rights, and fish sticks. *Cod* by Mark Kurlansky, a fascinating read.

Robert Smith: I started *Native Son* by Richard Wright this month. Sometimes I like to revisit novels and this seemed appropriate this month.



Take & Make for March

Felt Ball Garland: Spruce up for springtime with a mini-garland you can make yourself. Wool roving, twine and needle supplied in this kit for older children and adults.

Stay tuned for details about our kids kit!

Upcoming Programs Online:

Please contact the library to sign up for programs. info@charlottepubliclibrary.org. Phone: 425-3864

Coding Club 2021

Wednesdays @ 3 pm

All levels are welcome! Learn Scratch, a block-based visual programming language, or sharpen your Scratch skills. Ready to take your coding know-how to the next level? We'll have a breakout room with Charlie, our coding mentor, to work on different platforms. 4th grade and up.

Library Book Discussion

Thursday, February 25 @ 7:30 pm

Considered by many to be her masterpiece, Edith Wharton's epic work is a scathing yet personal examination of the exploits and follies of the modern upper class. As she unfolds the story of Undine Spragg, from New York to Europe, Wharton affords us a detailed glimpse of what might be called the interior décor of this America and its nouveau riche fringes.

Book Chat

Fridays @ 10 am

Join Margaret for a virtual stroll through the library collections, highlight a different theme or topic each week.

Guided Autobiography Workshop Tuesdays @ 7 pm, March 10 to May 12

Guided Autobiography offers a facilitated process through which to explore, reflect upon and integrate one's life story. Useful for adults navigating times of transition in life, or simply as a means to embark on a deeper process of self-discovery, this is a personal journey taken up in the company of supportive comrades. Each week, participants will write a two-page story on a particular life theme. Through the process of sharing one's own and responding to others' stories, participants can find new perspective, appreciation for their own strengths, discover creative and previously overlooked opportunities, and experience a sense of connection with others. Although sessions include resources or creative tools to explore one's history, writing skill is not a focus for this group. Limit: 6 participants. Please contact the Library by March 4 to express interest in participation, and for further information on this group.

"Decoding the Weather Machine"

Film Discussion

Wednesday, March 10 @ 7 pm

Join Suzy Hodgson from UVM's Center for Sustainable Agriculture for a discussion of this NOVA film about the scientific basis for climate change and how we can work together for solutions and mitigation. This program is part of our "Resilient Communities" grant funded by the American Library Association. Watch the movie ahead of time here: www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/video/decoding-the-weather-machine/

Mystery Book Group: *A Beautiful Blue Death* by Charles Finch

Monday, March 15 @ 10 am

On any given day in London, all Charles Lenox, Victorian gentleman and armchair explorer, wants to do is relax in his private study with a cup of tea, a roaring fire and a good book. But when his lifelong friend Lady Jane asks for his help, Lenox cannot resist another chance to unravel a mystery, even if it means trudging through the snow to her townhouse next door.

One of Jane's former servants, Prudence Smith, is dead -- an apparent suicide. But Lenox suspects something far more sinister: murder by a rare and deadly poison. The house where the girl worked is full of suspects and, though Prudence dabbled with the hearts of more than a few men, Lenox is baffled by an elusive lack of motive in the girl's death.

Print copies available for porch pick up at the library and ebook available via Libby for Charlotte patrons.

Men's Book Group: *The Overstory* by Richard Powers

The Overstory is a sweeping, impassioned work of activism and resistance that is also a stunning evocation of - and paean to - the natural world. From the roots to the crown and back to the seeds, Richard Powers's twelfth novel unfolds in concentric rings of interlocking fables that range from antebellum New York to the late twentieth-century Timber Wars of the Pacific Northwest and beyond. There is a world alongside ours—vast, slow, interconnected, resourceful, magnificently inventive, and almost invisible to us. This is the story of a handful of people who learn how to see that world and who are drawn up into its unfolding catastrophe. Copies available for porch pickup at the library and ebook via Libby for Charlotte patrons.

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter on our website.

The library building is closed to the public but books and other materials are available for porch pickup.

Porch pickup hours:

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday:

11 am to 6 pm

Tuesday and Thursday: 10 am to 5 pm

Saturday: 10 am to 2 pm

Please call or email to let us know what we can set out for you! Not sure what to read? We're happy to help select books for readers of all ages!

Library Contact Information

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



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Town

Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER
DIRECTOR

“There are three kinds of people in the world:
those who don’t know and don’t know they
don’t know;

those who don’t know and do know they
don’t know;

and those who know and know how much
they still don’t know.”

~ Karen Marie Moning, *Bloodfever*

And which type are you?

The **Spring Schedule 2021** covering March through May is an early insert in this edition. There is a lot to see – and you’ll probably want to have your calendar handy.

General directions for **How to Register** and **Payment** appear at the end of this article and also in the upper right corner of the Spring Schedule.

Courses Starting Soon

3/5 - Better Balance: Comprehensive Exercise

Friday mornings, 11:00–11:45.
Led by doctors of physical therapy from Dee Physical Therapy, this course is designed to improve your balance and reduce fall risk. This program now meets only on Fridays. No fee.

3/5 - Italian For Real Beginners with Nicole Librandi

Fridays, 1:00–2:00. Session A: 3/5–4/9.
Now is the time to begin your study of Italian – and have fun along the way! Please register by 3/1. Fee: \$48.

3/5 - Italian Intro with Nicole Librandi

Fridays, 2:30–3:30. Session A: 3/5–4/9.
If you’ve studied some Italian, but your knowledge of the language is “rusty,” then this is the right place for you. Please register by 3/1. Fee: \$48.

3/5 - Italian Refresher with Nicole Librandi

Fridays, 4:00–5:00. Session A: 3/5–4/9.
Join this class to refresh your knowledge of Italian through conversation and grammar updates. Please register by 3/1. Fee: \$48.

3/8- Mindfulness for Life – Intro with Jill Abilock.

Monday mornings, 10:00–11:00.
Dates: 3/8–4/12.
Enhance your experience of life, one moment at a time! Suggested donation: \$30 for the series.

3/8 - Mindfulness for Life – Intermediate with Jill Abilock

Monday afternoons, 1:00–2:00.
Dates: 3/8–4/12.
Deepen your practice and further enhance your experience of life, one moment at a time! Suggested donation: \$30 for the series.

3/9 - French Conversation Circle with Alysse Anton

Tuesdays, 1:30–2:30. Session A: 3/9–4/13.
These relaxed, fun circles are designed for intermediate/advanced speakers who want to improve their skills and confidence. Please register by 3/5. Fee: \$48.

3/10 - Birding Expeditions with Hank Kaestner

Registration begins 3/1. Please email your name, phone number, and the date/s you wish to join to: CSCbirding@gmavt.net. No fee.

3/12 - French Coffee Club with Alysse Anton

Friday mornings, 9:00–10:00.
Session A: 3/12–4/16.
Have engaging French conversation with your morning coffee. This course is designed for high-beginner/low-intermediate French speakers who are able to carry on a basic conversation. (Not intended for beginning French speakers.) Please register by 3/9. Fee: \$48.

3/12 - Writing Your Life Story with Laurie McMillan

Friday mornings, 11:00–12:30.
Session A: 3/12–4/2.
Explore storytelling techniques and utilize in-class exercises to help launch your own meaningful and important stories. Please register by 3/9. Fee: \$48.

3/15 - Book Discussion Group: *Walking Each Other Home*

Mondays, 11:00–12:30. Dates: 3/15, 4/5,



4/26 & 5/17.

This facilitated group began with a discussion of *Walking Each Other Home*. It has just started *Being With Dying: Cultivating Compassion and Fearlessness in the Presence of Death* by Joan Halifax. The group now welcomes newcomers. No fee.

Talks on Wednesdays at 1pm

These talks do *not* require advance registration and are always free. The Zoom invitation/link to the talks are posted on the website the day before at: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The link also appears in Front Porch Forum for that week.

If you attended Sandi’s wonderful talk, **Nepal: Through the Eyes of an American**, and would like to connect with the charitable organization she mentioned – which supports the education of girls – its name is Little Sisters Fund. You might want to visit littlesistersfund.org to find out more, or you can also contact Sandi directly at: sandidetwiler2@gmail.com.

There is no talk scheduled for 3/3, but on the following week, Anne Outwater is back with her talk rescheduled from last season.

3/10: Beekeeping & Peace-Making with Anne Outwater

After being a first responder at the bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Dr. Outwater has been dedicated to the prevention of violence. Her research findings, interventions and next steps include entrepreneurship and beekeeping – drawing on her experiences growing up in Vermont.

~ Anne Outwater, PhD, RN, is a faculty member at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

3/17: Composting For Everyone with Natasha Duarte

How to Register for a Course

All courses are online - and all require registration in order to receive the invitation/link.

To register, send your name, mailing address, and phone number to: CSCZoom@gmavt.net. Be sure to note the title of the course in the subject line of the email. You will receive confirmation that you are registered. Please send a separate email and registration information for each course.

Payment - If there is a fee, kindly pay by check (made out to CSC) and send to: PO Box 207, Charlotte, VT 05445. Be sure to note the title of the course in the memo line.

• For ongoing exercise courses, please pay at the *end* of each month for the classes attended. Unless otherwise stated, tally your attendance and figure \$5/class.

If fees present a hardship, don’t hesitate to request an adjustment by sending an email to CSCZoom@gmavt.net. We want everyone to be able to keep themselves healthy and engaged - especially during this challenging time.

Questions? Need help with Zooming? Please email: CSCZoom@gmavt.net, or leave a message at (802) 425-6345.

Confused about the new “compost law?” Join Natasha, the Director of the Composting Association, to get your questions answered.

3/24: Preparing Your Advanced Directive with Tina D’Amato, DO

3/31: The Power of a Power Of Attorney with Leah Burdick, Esq.

Art Exhibits

The Senior Center’s monthly art exhibits are suspended until further notice. They shall return!

Keep being careful. Are we there yet? No – but the end is in sight.

For more expanded descriptions, as well as additional courses and talks, please visit CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The mission of the Senior Center is to serve those 50 and up; some course enrollments are limited, and if a course is not full, younger participants are welcome to enroll. Feel free to leave a message anytime at 425-6345; voicemail is checked frequently.

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COLLEGE
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

writing requirements, the student will begin developing a writing portfolio. Many job postings require submitting writing samples such as research papers, PowerPoint or Prezi presentations, and lab reports. Potential employers review the applicant’s writing to identify the structure, theme, and tone. This helps in evaluating the range of creative thought and written adaptability. Especially with current remote work and global teams, the importance of solid writing is even more valuable to document ideas, summarize findings, and share recommendations.

College is a journey with lots of twists and turns along the way. Whether a student decides to pursue a professional career, attend graduate school, or travel the world, it is essential for a student to identify an academic major as a core focus, while expanding their overall educational coursework. The job market continues to be competitive and evolve with new trends. Charting an academic road map will prepare a student’s overall experiences to influence their future.

Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.



Au revoir, rabbit

Photographer Robert Caldwell, who came across this scene of the circle of life, wrote, “Charlotte is full of wildlife and during the pandemic it seems like we’ve seen an abundance of activity, including this hawk who landed a rabbit in our field on Dorset Street.”



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Winter Round Up



Elizabeth Bassett
CONTRIBUTOR

Snowshoeing

I hope that in writing about its abundance, I am not putting a curse on our snowpack. Since early January, opportunities for snow sports have

been plentiful. Lake Champlain Land Trust encourages snowshoe outings at a number of its preserves: Eagle Mountain in Milton with gentle trails to a lovely view of the lake; 3,700-acre Split Rock Mountain Wild Forest in Essex and Westport, N.Y., with eleven miles of trails to several vistas, including Ore Bed Overlook, Barn Rock, and Lewis Clearing Bay; Rock Point Natural Area in Burlington with a network of trails improved since it's recent conservation; Upper LaPlatte River Natural Area in Shelburne. Maps for these and other Lake Champlain Land Trust preserves are at lclt.org.

Whooooo Calls in the Night?

Is *Who-cooks-for-you* penetrating your sleep? Barred owls, named for the barred feather pattern on their breasts, are courting in February, their calls echoing in the darkness. Harriet Tubman, a freed slave who helped dozens of others to freedom along the Underground Railroad, imitated the calls of barred owls. Tubman used her knowledge of the natural world to help her: she knew her way through local swamps and woodlands, even in the dark, and she was knowledgeable about medicinal and wild plants. Tubman signaled safety to those waiting to flee, calling, *Who-cooks-for-you*? You never know when an owl call will come in handy!

North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier is offering a one-hour online program Friday evening about Vermont owls. Northbranchnaturecenter.org

Rewilding

Do you find the scale of global climate change overwhelming, yet you'd like to do something meaningful? Perhaps you've not been able to splurge for new insulation or solar panels, a hybrid car or heat pump. Rewilding can be inexpensive and make your yard an attractive haven for the birds and the bees.

Rewilding, using native plants in the landscape, is a simple act that property owners (or renters with a landlord's permission) can do, one step at a time. Native plants are the basis of the food web, providing food and shelter for insects, including butterflies and bees, and birds that pollinate our food.

Start small by sowing native seeds or introducing a handful of native plants to a patch of woodland, meadow, lawn, or garden. Once they are established, natives require no fertilizer, pesticides, or maintenance because they are adapted to our soils and climate. Yard work decreases as bees, birds, butterflies and moths gather. It's not too late to plant seeds plants that require only a short period of winter cold in order to germinate. Some can be sown as late as early April.

Each year the Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District holds a sale of native plants. Over the years we have purchased dozens, and most survive and thrive. This year, in partnership with a local ecological landscape designer, Greenleaf, the WNRCD is featuring three design ideas to fire the imagination and get you started with a list of plants. Ordering is ongoing and the pick-up date in Williston is May 1. Winooskinrcd.org. Plants sell out quickly so hasten to the website to score some natives.

A source of native seeds is Wild Seed in Maine, where plant species are similar to ours. A nonprofit whose mission is to restore natives to the landscape for greater resiliency, Wild Seed volunteers collect, package, and sell native plant seeds. Its website contains all the inspiration and instructions you might need to get started: wildseedproject.net

Fishers

Some of winter's most active mammals are hiding in plain sight. Many are busy after dark and even those that move at twilight are good at staying out of sight. Fishers, cousins of martens and minks, live in our forests where they prey on rodents, including porcupines, birds, and shrews, and eat fruits, nuts, and berries. A special skill enables them to eat porcupines while avoiding their quills. Yet another marvel of nature.

Since fishers are elusive you may fare

better looking for their tracks. They den in logs and tree cavities so keep an eye out if you see prints in the snow leading to a winter home. Look for a tracking chart at local outdoor or bookstores and don't leave home without it while there is snow on the ground.

Insects on the Snow

Have you seen spider-like critters on the snow this winter? It may come as a surprise to learn that several native insects are active above-ground in winter. Snow scorpionflies are wingless insects that crawl across the snow during the coldest months looking for meals of moss and liverworts. If you find a snow scorpion on a mossy outcrop, don't be tempted to pick it up. The warmth of your hand might be enough to kill it!

Birds

The earliest spring migrants will be arriving soon: redwing blackbirds, brown-headed cowbirds, turkey vultures, and American woodcocks. A few outliers have been spotted overwintering locally but larger numbers are poised to begin arriving in the next month. Recently a flock of robins flitted around on Thompson's Point.

Spring can't be too far behind!

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