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The Charlotte News

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Green Up Day Charlotte

Left to right: Eloise Glassco, Ava Bergquist, Amelie Fairweather and Lily Siedlecki, along Guinea Road. *Photo by Rowan Hawthorne*

See the full story and more photos on page 10

Charlotte residents weigh in on COVID relief aid

Kellyn Doerr
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

Charlotte residents are weighing in on what the town should do with about \$370,000 (visit nrc.org/resource/estimated-local-allocations-in-the-american-rescue-plan) of COVID-19 relief money, which was allocated to the town by the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan.

“The most important thing a town can do right now is be patient,” said Ted Brady, the Executive Director of The Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT).

There is little guidance on how this funding can be used, Brady said. The Vermont Legislature is still debating exactly how to allocate the more than \$1 billion the state received, and towns are urged to be patient in regard to when guidelines will be released.

VLCT is establishing a program that will help towns that want or need assistance in evaluating how they can legally spend the funding, what will be best for the community, and how to report it to the federal government.

“Municipalities will need to decide how these funds can best foster good governance, leverage other resources and encourage long-term recovery. The beauty of this aid is that it recognizes that local governments might need and want different things depending on their size, their priorities, and their citizen’s interests,” said Brady.

The guidance is set to be issued in mid-May, Brady said.

Deirdre Holmes is another town member, a part of the energy committee and is a new

member of the Charlotte Community Partners group. Holmes is concerned with how much money is being allocated and who will be making this decision for the town.

Holmes says this would be a great time for the community to come together, become stronger and recover from the pandemic, economic crises and address and pay closer attention to the climate and racial crises.

“If we spend the funding wisely, we can build community resilience and become a stronger community all around, in much better shape for both day-to-day and emergency challenges,” said Holmes

Holmes suggests looking into the Town Energy Plan, and with this funding could improve greatly in areas like transportation, solar power for all town-owned buildings, community composting, support for local food producers and more.

Holmes also believes that the community should be part of the discussion for funding.

Another Charlotte member, Tica Netherwood, who teaches at CVU and has lived in Charlotte since the 1980s, believes garbage and recycling pick-up is a crucial service.

“I realize that I can pay a company to come to my place to collect, and that a good number of folks do this. However, when I consider how much I pay in taxes for a single dwelling, it is irksome that our taxes don’t cover it,” said Netherwood.

Community News Service works in a partnership with The Charlotte News and other local media outlets to provide opportunities to University of Vermont students.

Joint ZBA/PC hearing on proposed new health center gets to closure

Robert Bloch
CONTRIBUTOR

I must admit that when I drew the assignment to cover the April 28 joint Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission meeting on the proposed Community Health Center facility in the West Village, I was not excited. With all the rancor and frustration of late about conflicts of interest and resignations, not to mention complaints about the length and confusing nature of the permitting process, I expected the worst.

Much to my surprise, the joint meeting covered a lot of important detail and went smoothly. The result: both the ZBA and PC voted to close the hearing process and move to drafting a decision, which it appears will be a favorable one for the proposed health care facility.

The meeting started with a moment of silence for former Planning Commission member Marty Illick.

The Zoom meeting was well attended and included Selectboard members Frank Tenney,

Louise McCarren and Lewis Mudge, as well as numerous West Charlotte village neighbors. Paul Reiss, M.D., of Emerald Green Properties, of which the Charlotte Family Health Center is a part, spoke about the project as did Emerald Green’s representatives, engineer Jacques Larose and attorney Michael Russell. Newly elected ZBA chairperson Lane Morrison was joined by newly appointed ZBA member Karina Warshaw and alternate Andrew Swayze. Five Planning Commission members participated.

For those unfamiliar with the latest Community Health Care Facility plan (see page 3), it imagines a new, 4,275- square-foot, barn-themed building to be built on Ferry Road west of the Post Office. The facility will replace a currently dilapidated residence on the site. The property is part of the 54.7-acre Shirley Bruce Estate property (formerly the LeBoeuf property). The facility will accommodate four full-time doctors and related staff. The site plan includes 27 parking spaces, and, reflecting learning from dealing

SEE **MEETINGS** PAGE 3

Did a pandemic year mean more or less litter on our roadsides in Charlotte?



Left to right: David McColgin, Sam Darling and Caroline Patten.

Photo by Suzy Hodgson

Suzy Hodgson
CONTRIBUTOR

On the one hand, curbside collection for take-out, extra packing for health and safety, and compulsion to drink away pandemic sorrow could have meant the gullies along Spear Street would have been overflowing with plastic, paper and beer cans. On the other hand, many of us were able to stay at home, barely ventured from our homes, and when we did indulge in lots of takeout, we care about our roadsides so would dispose or recycle containers responsibly.

So the amount of litter seemed to be from out-of-town people driving through Charlotte. The verdict— all in all, we didn’t see much difference along our roadside from last year, judging from the number of bags we filled. In the section of Spear Street from Mount Philo Road to Guinea Road, we collected 12 bags among the four of us—mostly cans and bottles, the drink of choice being Twisted Tea, and then one four-foot length of twisted metal.

Read more about Green Up Day on pages 10 and 11.

Selectboard meets on policy development, implementation and operations

Nancy Richardson
CONTRIBUTOR

The Selectboard meeting of April 26 illustrated the complexities of governance in Vermont. Members considered issues at three levels: policy development, implementation and oversight of current regulations, and town operations.

The board voted to engage attorney John Klesch of Stitzel, Paige, and Fletcher to develop a new or improved personnel policy. The past eight months have seen problems with current personnel rules, and the assignment is to bring them in line with best practices.

The discussion of personnel management veered into the area of having a town administrator versus a town manager. Currently, Charlotte has a town administrator, Dean Bloch. A manager model would shift some of the Selectboard’s current administrative functions and provide relief from overseeing personnel issues. Mr. Klesch stressed that revising personnel policies and regulations is an issue that is separate from the

town management.

In another policy area, conflict of interest for Selectboard members, Lewis Mudge presented language to amend the Rules of Procedure as follows:

Recognizing that serving on two separate boards presents multiple opportunities for the appearance of, as well as actual conflicts of interest, no member of the body will hold membership on another town board, commission, or committee while serving on the body.

Bill Stuono and Mike Russell commented that some Selectboard members are also serving as liaisons or members of other town committees. It was decided to table the proposed language until the matter of Selectboard members serving on other town committees can be clarified.

In discussions of membership on the Zoning Board, the issue of establishing a development review board was raised. Such a board would

SEE **SELECTBOARD** PAGE 2

Town

The Charlotte Planning Commission remembers Marty Illick

Peter Joslin
PLANNING COMMISSION

The Charlotte Planning Commission was fortunate to have Marty Illick as a member for nearly a decade. She was a collaborator and believed strongly in “boots on the ground,” encouraging neighbors near and far to participate in the health and well-being of Charlotte, Vermont, and beyond. As mentioned in numerous tributes, she was a steward of the land in every sense of the word and her commitment was infectious. As a Planning Commissioner she was articulate, insightful

and respectful in a way that one wanted to emulate. She was friend and mentor, forthright and caring.

Marty was capital “C” committed to her town and beyond. Marty was like the “Lorax” of Dr. Seuss fable, who said, “I am the Lorax. I speak for the trees. I speak for the trees for the trees have no tongues.” She spoke not only for the trees, but for the wetlands, rivers and streams she so loved and did so with respect and consideration of landowners.

She believed strongly in outreach and education as a means by which to engage the

public to promote the importance of protecting the natural world. This commitment, coupled with coaxing and cajoling friends and neighbors to actively participate, is a piece of her legacy.

The Planning Commission is forever grateful to have known and worked with Marty. We extend our condolences to Tai Dinnan and her family.

Charlotte Planning Commission members Gerald Bouchard, Kelly Devine, Peter Joslin, Charlie Pugh, Ben Pualwan, Bill Stuono and Charlotte Town Planner Larry Lewack

Lewis Creek Association fund honors Marty Illick and Terry Dinnan

Staff report

Lewis Creek Association has established a fund to honor Marty Illick and Terry Dinnan. Marty was a founding co-creator of Lewis Creek Association who was devoted to sharing her love of the creek, its beauty, the woods, flowers, animals and magic by bringing everyone to the table. Marty was a dear friend and most loving and inspiring leader who died tragically in an accident on Lewis Creek.

The establishment of this fund is just a beginning sentiment to express and share our love and sadness to all who knew Marty and her husband, Terry Dinnan. Cards can be sent to Tai Dinnan, 442 Lewis Creek Road,

Charlotte, VT 05445, or to LCA to share with the family, at P.O. Box 313, Charlotte, VT 05445.

This fund is set up to continue Marty and Terry’s legacy of conservation. Donations can be made on the LCA at lewisecreek.org/donate or illickdinnan.wixsite.com/my-site.

LCA is a non-profit conservation organization that does sustainability and conservation work in towns of the middle Lake Champlain Valley. We work with towns, governments and citizens to conserve Vermont’s important landscapes and natural resources. We rely on active citizens and volunteers to collect data, make informed decisions, and implement positive change.



Photo contributed

Resolution to honor Marty and Terry to be read on House floor

The following will be read on the floor of the House on Friday, May 14, when the session begins at 9:30 a.m.

By Senators Lyons and Ram, Representatives Yantachka of Charlotte, Lippert of Hinesburg and Webb of Shelburne,

Senate concurrent resolution honoring former Vermont Natural Resources Board Vice Chair Martha Illick and her husband, Terrence Dinnan, of Charlotte.

Whereas, Marty Illick’s dedication to defending Vermont’s environment was demonstrated through her service on the Charlotte Planning Commission and as Vice Chair of the Vermont Natural Resources Board, and

Whereas, as Executive Director of the Lewis Creek Association, she passionately advocated for the waterway’s integrity, including collaborating with the Nature Conservancy, the Charlotte Land Trust, and other conservation organizations to preserve 123 acres of forest and farmland along Pease Brook, a tributary of Lewis Creek, and

Whereas, she assisted in the establishment of the Ahead of the Storm system that improves resiliency for handling local stormwater runoff, and

Whereas, Marty Illick’s husband, Terry Dinnan, enthusiastically supported his wife’s environmental efforts, and on his own accord was instrumental in the establishment of the

Essex Quarry Nature Park in New York State, and

Whereas, tragically, Marty Illick and Terry Dinnan died in a boating accident on Marty’s beloved Lewis Creek, and their survivors include a daughter and grandson, *now therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives: That the General Assembly honors former Natural Resources Board Vice Chair Martha Illick of Charlotte and her husband, Terrence Dinnan, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of State be directed to send a copy of this resolution to the family of Marty Illick and Terry Dinnan and to the Lewis Creek Association.

SELECTBOARD CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

centralize some zoning and planning functions to facilitate a more efficient process. Jim Faulkner will lead a small committee of Lane Morrison and Peter Joslin to research the matter and report back to the Selectboard. Jim noted that he is not necessarily a proponent of the DRB system. Matt Krasnow stated that altering the process of planning and zoning would have to go in front of the voters.

In the area of ongoing implementation, the Selectboard heard from Jim Donovan, representative to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. Jim stated that the CCRPC has resources to assist Charlotte in the development of improvements such as parking lots, stop signs and sidewalks. There is also funding available for training emergency management responders. There had been a list of proposed projects developed by

Charlotte 15 years ago, but there have been no requests from the town to the CCRPC recently. Matt asked Dean Bloch to retrieve the list and provide it to the Selectboard for review.

The board then heard from Chris Davis about the Local Emergency Response Plan and the Charlotte Rail and Highway Hazmat Emergency Response Plan. Both were discussed and approved. Chris Davis was appointed to be the Charlotte Emergency Management Director.

Administrative and operational decisions included the interviewing of three proposed appointees to the Zoning Board and six others to town committees. At a follow-up session, Karina Warshaw was appointed to the Zoning Board. The Charlotte Fire and Rescue budget was approved as well as license agreements for the Spear’s Corner Store and Philo Ridge Farm.

At a later Special Meeting of the Select

Board on May 3, the following candidates were selected to be members of the Zoning Board: Ronda Moore, Charles Russell, and J.D. Herlihy. They join new member Karina Warshaw and Lane Morrison as regular members of the five-member board. At the meeting on May 3rd, Lane Morrison, a member of the Zoning Board in attendance, suggested that Andrew Swayze, current alternate, be moved to a regular membership slot, so that he might participate in the approval of a town project in which he had been involved. This discussion diverted the nominating process while the members discussed the various ways an alternate might participate in voting on a specific project. In the meantime it was noted that Swayze had asked to step off of the Zoning Board because he is moving. A decision was made to keep Swayze on as an alternate for now and replace him in late August. William Stuono had entered his name to take Swayze’s place as an alternate.



The Charlotte News

Mission Statement

The mission of *The Charlotte News* is:

- to publish rigorous, in-depth, fair reporting on town affairs, and,
- to source stories of interest from our neighbors and friends.

The News is a forum for the free exchange of the views of Charlotte residents and community volunteers on matters related to the town and the people who live here.

Editorial independence

The editor makes final decisions on stories that are published 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 are independent of all sources of financial support, including support given through our affiliated 501(c)3 organization, The Friends of *The Charlotte News*.

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

Consistent with our mission *The Charlotte News* publishes letters to the editor, opinion pieces and obituaries submitted by our readers. All such materials are subject to review and approval by the editor in accordance with the following standards and requirements:

- The views expressed in letters or opinion pieces are those of the author, and are not endorsed by either the board or the editorial staff of the paper. Opinion pieces and letters to the editor will be clearly labelled as such.
- The News strives to stay clear of conflicts of interest. If an actual or perceived conflict arises or becomes known at a later date, it will be fully disclosed.
- While letters or opinion pieces may endorse political positions or candidates for public office, the paper always remains objective and impartial in such matters.
- All submissions are strictly monitored for personal attacks, score settling, blatantly false information and inflammatory language. The editor reserves the right to reject any submission that is deemed contrary to the paper’s standards.
- All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, factual accuracy, tone, length and consistency with our publishing style.
- Efforts will be made to publish submissions in their entirety and to preserve the original intent and wording, but minor editing may nonetheless be necessary. Contributors will be notified before publishing, if in the editor’s judgment, significant changes are required, or the submission is rejected.
- Submission requirements:
- Letters to the editor, opinion pieces and obituaries should be emailed to news@thecharlottenews.org as attachments in .doc format and must contain the writer’s full name, town of residence and, for editing purposes only, contact phone number.
- Letters may not exceed 300 words, obituaries 500 words and opinion pieces 750 words.
- All published letters and opinion pieces will include the writer’s name and town of residence.
- Before publishing any obituary, we will need proper verification of death.

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Report from the Legislature

Thinking about buying a car?



Rep. Mike Yantachka

Are you in the market for a new or used automobile? Are you concerned about climate change and want to reduce your fossil fuel consumption? Have you been thinking about buying an electric vehicle (EV) but are anxious about the cost or about

how far it can go on a charge? Having good information about the EV market can help you decide if an EV is right for you.

Transitioning from internal combustion engine vehicles to electric vehicles to help Vermont become less dependent on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to transportation is key to our efforts to fight climate change. With the help of federal recovery assistance, this year’s state budget increases the money available for EV incentive and emission repair programs. Here are some facts about the pros and cons of buying and owning an EV.

What is an EV? An EV is a car that uses a battery either wholly or partially to power the vehicle. It can be a plug-in hybrid EV (PHEV) that supplements the battery with a conventional gasoline engine, or it can be a



Courtesy Agency of Natural Resources website

purely battery powered vehicle called an All-Electric Vehicle (AEV). PHEVs have a more limited electric range, typically around 30 to 50 miles, before switching over to gasoline. AEVs can go much further on a charge, the distance depending on the year, make and model. Older AEVs may reach 100 miles, but new models have ranges exceeding 200 miles. Tesla AEVs can now travel up to 350 miles on a full charge. Drive Electric Vermont (DriveElectricVT.com) has all the information you need on EVs available in Vermont as well as fact sheets which list EV models and their ranges.

Why drive an EV? Vermont has a goal of transitioning from fossil fuel energy to 90% electric energy by 2050. Vermont’s electricity is about 65% carbon-free today and is getting cleaner every year. Aside from the benefit of not burning fossil fuels that contribute to the greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change, there are financial benefits as well. Not only is the cost of electricity per mile driven less than the cost of gasoline per mile, but the maintenance costs of an EV are lower. There are no oil changes, spark plugs, catalytic converters, or emissions equipment unless it’s a PHEV, and those costs are lower for PHEVs compared to gasoline-driven vehicles. Go to DriveelectricVT.com for a detailed cost of ownership analysis.

What incentives are available? Available incentives depend on the year and model of the EV, whether it is new or used, and who the seller is. There are federal, state and utility incentives available in Vermont. Federal tax credits ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500 are available to buyers of qualified plug-in electric vehicles. The size of the credit is based on the battery size. Once an individual manufacturer sells 200,000 qualifying vehicles the credit is phased out for that automaker over the course of a year. The State of Vermont provides incentives for plug-in electric vehicles sold

or leased as new with a base manufacturer’s suggested retail price (MSRP) of \$40,000 or less. Depending on a family’s adjusted gross income (AGI), rebates from \$1500 to \$4000 are offered for new EVs and PHEVs. Used EVs are also eligible for a rebate of 25% of the initial price of the vehicle, up to \$5,000, through the Vermont Mileage Smart (MileageSmartVT.org) program administered by Capstone Community Action. Green Mountain Power, Burlington Electric Department, and other utilities also offer incentives for new EVs ranging from \$1000 to \$2500.

Electric vehicles are going to play a major role in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Their popularity is increasing at the same time range anxiety is decreasing because of the longer ranges being built into the vehicles as well as the growth of the public charging infrastructure. And they’re fun to drive. So, next time you decide you need a new or used set of wheels, take the time to visit DriveElectricVT.com and see if an EV makes sense for you.

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).

MEETINGS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with COVID 19, an examination room that can be accessed directly from outside the building, enabling a potentially contagious person to meet with the medical staff without traversing the lobby.

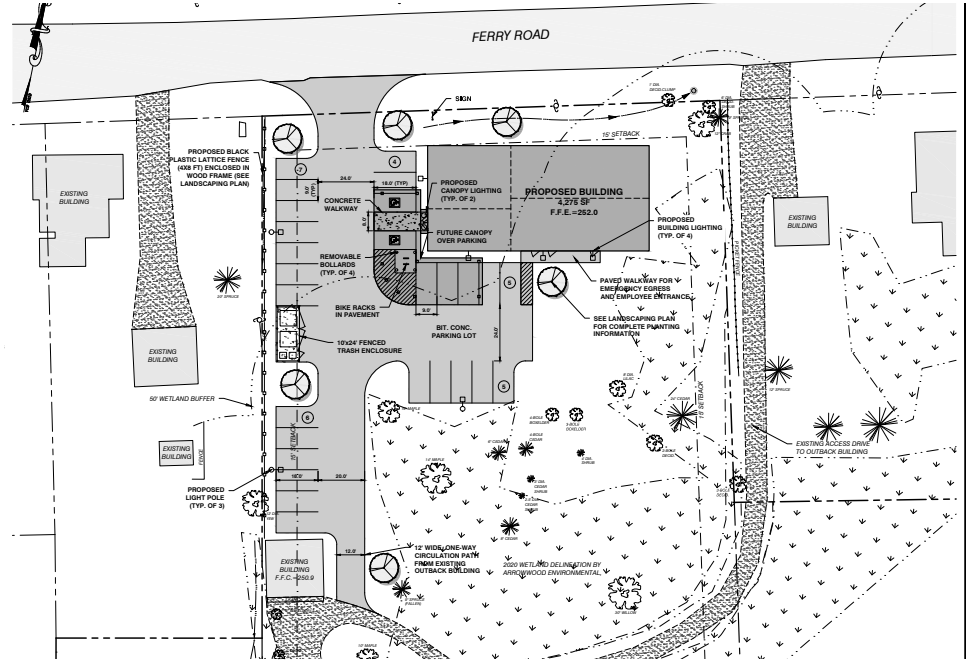
As the discussion unfolded, attorney Michael Russell reviewed some of the history of the project and each of the remaining issues. Then both the ZBA and PC members asked questions dealing with a wide range of details. These included questions about the number and the location of some parking spaces within the property’s 15-foot setback from its neighbor, proximity and impact to actual wetlands, building height, a potential easement and routing of the Town Trail through the site, provision for a future sidewalk along Ferry Road, impact of on-site lighting, and vehicular traffic implications. Traffic implications were judged to be negligible given the estimated new traffic relative to current Ferry Road traffic, and the experience at the old Community Health

Center farther down Ferry Road. Discussions also covered the appropriateness of designating the new facility as a “public facility” under the land use regulations. This status would limit the scope of conditional use review. Russell argued that the intended use of this facility makes “public facility” status a reasonable designation for the project. He added that, as he understood matters, should the facility be converted to some “non-public” use in the future, that it would then be subject to all typical conditional use review criteria in a new application. PC and ZBA members generally agreed with this view, subject to further discussion and their written decision. Russell reminded everyone that the project still faces an Act 250 review, stemming from the original subdivision of the LeBoeuf property for the development of the post office.

The other ZBA agenda item concerned an application by Ed and Michele Chiappini to remove an existing Thompson’s Point camp on Lane’s Lane and replace it with a new

structure. To summarize, the ZBA looked favorably on the plans for the new camp, inasmuch as the new facility was within

regulation for footprint and other factors, and because the site plan included some obvious improvements to the property and shoreline.



Plan courtesy Civil Engineering Associates

Around Town

What's next just a Stone's Throw away?

The building on Ferry Road, across the street from the library, has been many things in its long history. Most recently it carried the Little Garden Market and, prior to that, it was The Flying Pig bookstore and the Charlotte Post Office. It is a still-standing piece of our town that goes back many years. Allison Stratton and Silas Pollitt have made it the third location for Stone's Throw Pizza. In addition to a variety of pies, the restaurant offers a variety of wines. In order to deal with cook and customer interaction and yet comply with COVID-19 precautions, the owners installed windows between the pizza preparation area and the customer pick up area.

Congratulations:

to **Annika Gruber** of Charlotte who once again has had a poem selected to be published in the "Young Writers Project" of the *Burlington Free Press*. Her piece appeared at the end of April and was titled "Music on the ceiling." She begins by describing her inability to fall asleep due to the noise from a party going on downstairs. The music from it seems to sit at the foot of her bed, and shadows on the ceiling above her bed seem to be dancing to that music. She can't fall asleep as a result—"not when there was a party on her ceiling."

to **Dave Berg** of Horsford Gardens and Nursery in Charlotte who was named Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association (VNLA) "Young Nursery Professional of the Year." Dave graduated from UVM with a degree in environmental studies. Going to work for Horsford he worked his way through the

ranks to wholesale manager and recently has expanded his scope to assisting the retail division where he often helps with customer service. Most recently, he has worked through VNLA with Habitat for Humanity projects. He has a good number of accomplishments for someone who has yet to reach the age of 40.

Sympathy:

is extended to family and friends of **Marion Paris** who died at the UVM Medical Center in April at the age of 76. Marion lived in Charlotte and served as a social worker for various agencies throughout the state, focusing primarily on children. A daughter Maria survives her. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, donations in her memory be made to Homeward Bound, Middlebury.

is extended to family and friends of **Daniel Horsford** who died at McClure-Miller Respite House at the age of 56. Dan graduated from CVU High School in 1982 and worked in the area in the food business—at Martone's Market, the Sirloin Saloon and most recently as a baker for the Red Hen Bakery in Middlesex. His mother, Susan Horsford, of Charlotte, survives him. The family asks that, in lieu of flowers, those wishing to make donations in his memory do so to the McClure-Miller Respite House, 3113 Roosevelt Highway, Colchester, VT 05446.

is extended to family and friends of **Larned Ketcham** of Hinesburg who passed away April 26 at the age of 88. A teacher of science and mathematics, he served at CVU and Williston Central School before transferring to Charlotte Central School where he taught and was principal for 14 years before retiring.

Which season is it?



Mt Philo on April 21.

Photo by Julian Kulski

Milk Money Vermont announces local crowdfunding campaign

Staff report

Milk Money Vermont offers a unique opportunity for "impact investing" since a dollar invested in a local business generates potential financial return as well as tangible social return on investment. By investing in a local business such as Local Maverick, wealth will be circulated and help build a stronger community that will foster new relationships between businesses and community members. The Milk Money platform serves as a meeting place for Vermonters to discover local investment opportunities such as Local Maverick.

Local Maverick is an e-commerce platform that makes it easier for people to discover, shop and support local businesses. Their mission is to build stronger local economies by empowering local businesses to thrive in the modern market. They currently offer a digital market, "Maverick Market," where you can seamlessly access high-quality local farms and food producers online. They

recently launched their marketing services, "Maverick Marketing," which focuses on working with local businesses to elevate their brand story and grow. They plan on continuing to grow the platform to create an ecosystem that provides local businesses the tools they need to create a strong digital presence. They believe by growing their platform it will dramatically enhance local businesses' ability to reach and understand their customers. This will allow dollars to stay local, create more job opportunities for our community, and build a stronger Vermont economy.

Vermonters who want to learn more about the Local Maverick's opportunity can find investment details on the Milk Money website (MilkMoneyVT.com).

Milk Money is powered by VSECU through its wholly owned, independently operated subsidiary, Vermont Heritage Financial Group, Inc. Investments made through Milk Money are not federally insured by NCUA, involve investment risk, may lose value and are not obligations of or guaranteed by the credit union.

Town

Local Rotary Club offers festive spring fun event for all

Come spin with us on May 22

Laurie Caswell Burke
CONTRIBUTOR

Antique clocks...Drones...Native Americans...Poems from the Wilderness... Shelburne Country Store's history ...and a SPIN-A THON? What on earth is the common link? If you are a member of the Charlotte Shelburne Hinesburg Rotary Club you would know the answer. I am honored to be part of the group.

When I joined the club six months ago, I did it with some trepidation. I was eager to get more connected to my community and ready to participate more actively in hands-on service projects. However, I wondered if our local Rotary Club would be a good fit.

Growing up, I have vivid memories of my dad, Hank Caswell, who, among many community engagements, was an active member of the South Burlington Kiwanis Club. From what I could tell they did many good things for the community, but I honestly thought it was just a bunch of old men who gathered every week for jokes, camaraderie, food, and very long meetings. Within a few weeks of attending ZOOM meetings for the Rotary club in our community, I have realized that my perception of Rotary was completely wrong. Clearly there is fun to be had, but there is so much more.

During the past six months, I have found myself part of a group of interesting, caring, service-minded women and men who sincerely want to give their time and energy to help our communities. In my short time

as a member, I have joined them to park cars for RACE VERMONT running events, gathered and washed winter coats to donate to community schools. Fellow Rotarians have shared their stories of preparing food at our local schools and then delivering the food on school buses for families in need. More recently, I have helped with mucking out the pond at the town offices. And, meetings are short and start our Wednesdays at 7:30 sharp!

Our weekly speakers during the past six months hail from local Vermont communities. An old-time clock fixer from Vergennes shared his story of repairing Shelburne Town Hall's historic clock. An author/pediatrician from Middlebury shared poems from his latest book. Small business owners from Charlotte and Shelburne told their stories, including what it is like to run a business in a pandemic as well as the draw of "maple cremees." Also, a Sail Beyond Cancer non-profit, a fascinating drone technology speaker, and a farmer who raises shrimp in Vermont inspired us all with thoughtful presentations. Every week I learn something new. As a gesture of appreciation, the club donates a book in the guest speaker's name to one of the three local libraries.

President Chris Davis keeps our meetings lively and fun, engaging members fully. Club member Denis Barton offers clever questions to members, providing an opportunity to get to know each other. Through this group sharing, I have discovered how many Rotarians did not grow up in the Green Mountain State and that most have traveled far and wide in pre-Covid times. Many local organizations benefit from receiving needed funds from our Rotary club.



Left to right: Bob Sanders, Roz Graham, John Hammer, Ric Flood, Linda Gilbert, Keith Walsh, Jon Lowell, Laurie Burke, Susan Grimes, Diana Vachon.
Photo contributed

On May 22, Rotary will host a fundraising SPIN-A-THON at Shelburne Athletic Club with a dedication to follow outside the Shelburne Town Hall where former Governor James Douglas will speak at a ceremony to commemorate the dedication of our first DERO bike Fix it Station in memory of beloved former Rotarian and Legislator George Schiavone. Our goal is to raise enough funds to have additional Fix It Stations in Charlotte and Hinesburg as well. Ski Rack, Local Motion and Race Vermont will be joining us.

With spring in the air, outdoor fun is beckoning, and what better way to support your community than by spinning on May 22 at Shelburne Athletic Club, followed by the dedication ceremony. Even If you don't spin, we encourage donations to this worthwhile project. Donate online or you can send your check to P.O. Box 156, Shelburne, Vermont, 05482. And please join us for the dedication at 11a.m.! More information can be found on the Club website at rotaryclubofcsh.org.

Summer music events on the Green

Mike Walker
CONTRIBUTOR

The Library and the Grange are excited to announce a series of free outdoor music and farm events this summer.

"Grange on the Greens" will take place on four Thursdays—June 10, July 8, Aug. 12 and Sept. 9—providing an opportunity to gather safely, enjoy music and food and learn about our local farms and food producers.

Library Director Margaret Woodruff explains, "We're looking forward to seeing people get together safely this summer. There'll be displays from local farms, music, and food options, too. We have been following closely

the guidance from the State of Vermont on outdoor events and will provide a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone"

The series will open on June 10 with Pete Sutherland and Oliver Scanlon. Pete is a warm-voiced singer, songsmith and accomplished multi-instrumentalist with potent originals, age-old ballads and fiery fiddle tunes. Pete Sutherland "covers the map" and shines with a "...pure spirit which infuses every bit of his music, and cannot fail to move all who hear him." —American Festival of Fiddle Tunes. Joining Pete is his talented protégé Oliver Scanlon playing fiddle, viola, mandolin, foot percussion and vocals.

On July 8 the Burlington-based Shades of Blue VT will be playing R&B, blues and classics—bring your dancing shoes!

August features Addison County group *Va-et-vient* (Come & Go). With backgrounds rich in Francophone cultures and language through lifelong experiences living and traveling in French-speaking lands, they create beautiful harmonies, teaching and engaging audiences. Since 2001, this band has carved out its place in New England and particularly in Quebec, where its ties to traditional musicians provide a fountain of resources in collections of songs, tunes and dances. Wherever they travel, they add to their repertoire of French, Quebecois, Cajun and Creole music.

And the season will end in September with Vermont mandolin virtuoso Will Patton playing jazz and Brazilian choro with his trio.

This great line up of top local performers has plenty of variety to appeal to all musical tastes. As well as being a fun way to spend an evening in town, you can donate to the fund to

restore of the Lyceum Schoolhouse at Baptist Corners on Spear Street and help make it a resource for the whole community.

We're grateful for the support of local companies and organizations. Pease Mountain Law, Cumbancha and Charlotte Community Music are supporting individual concerts, and Mow Electric! and College Essay Coach are season sponsors.

If you or your organization or company would like to get involved and support these events, please contact Mike Walker at charlottegrangevt@gmail.com.

Look out for more information in the coming weeks.



Will Patton Trio.

Photo contributed

Know someone interesting in Charlotte?
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The Charlotte News

Town

And the survey says...



Trina Bianchi
CONTRIBUTOR

As we journey through the COVID vaccination process toward the goal of herd immunity, we know that goal and the percentage of individuals vaccinated are inextricably linked. And we also are aware

that there are those who have not been vaccinated, either because of obstacles they are finding difficult to overcome or because of a true hesitancy or possibly distrust of the vaccine itself.

So, let's talk about resiliency. If we, as a town, would like to achieve herd immunity, each of us needs to do our part. If we know folks who would like to get vaccinated, but for whatever reason have been unable to schedule or get to an appointment, VaxHelp05445 has been established to aid and support those folks. Contact them via VaxHelp05445@gmail.com or by phone at 425- 3864 (the Charlotte Library).

But that's not everyone. There are those folks who, for various reasons, are hesitant or perhaps do not want to get the vaccine. It's easy for us of a certain age to say that we have lived through numerous vaccine protocols—from smallpox, to polio, measles, German measles and various flu vaccines—to say that COVID is just another vaccine, effective and safe. Go and get it. But we have to remember that in yesterday's world we trusted what was printed in the papers, we trusted the doctors, and we didn't have the bombardment of social media and various news stations airing sometimes widely different versions of the news. Who or what do we trust in today's world?

Each of us has to decide on our own how we best protect ourselves, our families and our friends from this virus. The

The section below is from the actual survey with the results for the basic needs and services section.

BASIC NEEDS & SERVICES - Meeting baseline physical needs for surviving and thriving communities						
Category & factors of very resilient systems		Score				
SCORE: How do you think your community resilience rates in each of the following categories?		1	2	3	4	5
1 = not very resilient 5 = very resilient						Not sure
Food supply						
Food is primarily sourced locally; many residents grow and store food; thriving community gardens and farms; region grows enough food to sustain all residents; produced with methods that cultivate healthy soils; food systems actively adapting to climate change		6 3%	30 17%	76 42%	48 27%	12 7%
Food equity						
High level of food security at neighborhood level, in wider community, and in region; robust dietary and culturally appropriate food options; local, healthy food is accessible and affordable for all		13 7%	47 26%	64 35%	40 22%	9 5%
Clean water sources						
Residents get water in many ways (wells, rain collection, springs); residents, businesses and town are working on improving water quality and preparing for droughts and floods; ground water inventory is updated annually and there are conservation measures to protect groundwater		13 7%	35 19%	53 29%	44 24%	16 9%
						20 11%

virus is real—and can be a real threat to individuals. Granted, some people have gotten it, it hasn't been bad and they are now fine. Others haven't been so fortunate and have either succumbed to the virus or are dealing with lingering symptoms that are now affecting their daily lives.

It therefore behooves all of us to recognize that and do what we can to help our community become more resilient against COVID, because COVID isn't going away, at least not anytime soon!

It's here and we need to accept that. We can encourage folks to get the vaccine and talk about why we are comfortable with the vaccine, but at the same time know and respect the fact that some folks are simply not going to get it—at least not now. We can suggest they continue to wear a mask when they are with other people, especially inside, to protect themselves as well as others, especially

after the mask mandate opens up as of May 1, outside. I know I'm not tossing my masks away any time soon as even though I'm vaccinated and legal to travel. I will continue to wear a mask inside in public even if the mask mandate is eased or lifted. If not to protect myself, I

will wear it to protect someone else who may not have been vaccinated. We can also maintain the social distancing protocol. I liken it to stopping at a four-way stop sign even though there are no other vehicles approaching the intersection.

Resiliency happens when people work as a community—talking, listening, encouraging, supporting and respecting one another and doing whatever each can to make our community safer.

The results of the COVID section of the Resiliency Survey might indicate that the communication in our town around what is available for support could be better—24% of the respondents were not sure about the level of mutual aid and community support that was available during this past year, and 30% were not sure around the question concerning the schools. Understanding that the results are strictly based on the perception of the respondents as opposed to “actual fact of

what is available,” to note that 24% and 30% of the people were unaware doesn't mean that the support was not there. It simply means people didn't know about it. And that speaks to communication. If better communication means more people are comfortable and feeling that our town has the support they need, that's a pretty easy fix.

Discussion on the next part of the survey, Basic Needs and Services, will be held via zoom on Tuesday, May 18, from 7–8 p.m. The clickable link can be found on the Charlotte Library website, in the electronic version of *The Charlotte News* and at <https://bit.ly/convo05445>.

This is a great opportunity for everyone in Charlotte to be heard—around food supply, food equity, clean water, energy independence, health service, inclusivity in our town, and housing. The actual survey questions and results can be seen in their entirety above. Members of the CCP team hope you will mark this down on your calendar and join the discussion!

Dates for future discussions on the survey are: June 1 for the section on the Environment; June 15 to discuss Physical Infrastructure, and June 22 on Community Connections.

It is the hope of the Charlotte Community Partners that our neighbors and friends will join into these discussions to listen and present ideas on how we can make our town even more resilient, more welcoming, and more supportive to all.



Town

Fire safety: Rules and tips for summer and beyond

Rob Mullin
DEPUTY CHIEF
CHARLOTTE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

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

A reminder about the state rules regarding burn permits:

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

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

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

Outdoor grilling safety tips
Gas grills: Please follow a few simple precautions before lighting your grill. First,

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

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

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

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

Charlotte Fire and Rescue highly recommends using the preceding tips in order to keep yourself, your family, your friends and your home safe during the summer season. There have been quite a few preventable fires in Charlotte in the past years resulting from improper grill use, some of which have resulted in severe damage to property.

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



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Hi, Neighbor!

Jen Novak: Bringing home décor to Charlotte Crossing



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Jen Novak first started thinking about opening a home design and décor store last February, but when the pandemic hit, she put her plans on hold. With things looking up, Novak decided now was the time and opened the Gilded Elephant at

Charlotte Crossing in mid-April. “When this space opened up and with people getting vaccinated, it seemed like a good time to go for it,” she said.

Novak has a master’s degree in marriage and family therapy, and she practiced in that field after graduate school. She later worked as an early childhood mental health consultant and then taught yoga for kids with special needs. As she and her husband were getting ready to move from Massachusetts to Vermont four years ago, she decided to take her passion for interior design and turn it into a new career.

The Gilded Elephant is a small space—just 250 square feet—but people have already been coming in. “I’ve had supportive friends who came in and bought things,” Novak said “but people have also been trickling in from the Red Onion.” Others have come to the store looking for her interior design services.

Because Novak is a one-woman show and has two sons, aged 10 and 12, her hours are currently limited to Tuesday, Thursday



Left: Jen Novak *Photo contributed*

and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., some Saturdays, and by appointment. “I’d love to expand and continue to grow my client base and need a bigger space,” Novak said, “but for now I’m content to do it on my own and see where it takes me.”

Since the store is small, Novak has spent a lot of time thinking about her inventory. “It’s important that someone can come in and appreciate the look and feel of the store,”

she said. “They can purchase anything from a ten-dollar candle to a side table worth a few hundred dollars. I worked hard to have a range of items so everyone will think there is something for them.” Novak carries small pieces like candles, vases, picture frames, pillows, blankets, and bar and cocktail items, but she also features larger pieces that are either custom or customizable. “I have some nice trays from companies that can make them in different color finishes, patterns and textures,” she said. “Clients can buy what’s on the shelf or I can work with them to tailor an item to their needs.”

One of Novak’s specialties is revitalizing vintage furniture. “I’ve done it for myself,” she said, “as well as for friends and clients. If someone has a beloved piece that’s in good shape, I can breathe new life into it.” Novak noted that this can include new paint, upholstery or hardware. “It’s a really fun way to add something unique to your house,” she said. “Sometimes it’s a piece with sentimental value that you’re able to save. It’s something nobody else will have.”

So far, Novak has only done residential design work, but she is not opposed to having commercial clients. In a non-pandemic world, she visits with people in their homes, but Covid placed some restrictions on her



Right: Jen welcomes Kristen O’Connell’s daughter, Neely on opening day of The Gilded Elephant. *Photo by Kristen O’Connell*

work. “Typically I go to a client’s house, take measurements and see their style,” she said. “They can also come into my studio when it’s time to look at things like wallpaper and fabric.”

“One of the reasons I wanted to open the shop,” Novak said, “is I wanted to give my design clients the full picture. I’ve found that the finishing touches, accents and details are just as important in making a home feel warm and welcoming, so I wanted to be able to provide a place where people can find unique, curated pieces to add to their homes.” Novak wants to give people access to a full range of services. “I want people to feel welcome,” she said. “People can feel intimidated by interior design and I want to break down that barrier.”

Novak has always felt that it’s important to be invested in her community. “I’ve been volunteering with Meals on Wheels,” she said, “and I’m currently the president of my PTO board. It’s really important for me to connect with community members and feel that I’m contributing in a positive way.” Novak loves the work she does, but she also believes it is another way to help her community. “I want people to have a place to go for décor,” she said. “I felt that this was another way I could contribute to my community.”

People

Gifts while staying home

Molly McClaskey
CONTRIBUTOR

This morning my husband and I were remembering winter, how we waited and worried for something to change, to improve during the long months of COVID isolation. Winter also brought fresh, frequent snowfalls that lured us outside and onto our skis, even at -11 degrees. The out of doors, we concluded, had lifted our spirits, what a gift! And now the grass is green; daffodils and grape hyacinths have pushed through cold soil bringing color to the landscape. It feels like we’ve come a long way.

We talked, too, about the projects we tackled that might otherwise have remained untouched were it not for the strange circumstances of staying home. I baked bread and cooked, a lot, and shared sour dough starter and recipes with a friend. Like many others, we lit our wood stove every day, stacked wood, read books and articles (too many about politics), watched movies, and zoomed. And we were in better touch than usual with friends and family living in other places. We got busy hoeing out the mess in the basement, provided read alouds, puppet shows and sing-alongs for our grandchildren, and Gill’s shop roared into action, saws buzzing and drills whining. First, log pieces once stacked out back became five wooden reindeer with tree branches for antlers and red painted noses. These went to friends and family to cheer their moods and porches. A week later Gill came up from the cellar holding Frank Lloyd Wright-style bluebird nesting boxes. These also became gifts, in more ways than one. We hadn’t anticipated the simple joy this giving would bring us as well as those who received them.

Nor had we predicted the sense of community and sheer delight the bird boxes engendered. With each nesting box we attached a few pages of information that summarized the research we gathered about locating, observing, and cleaning them. As spring approached, friends sent texts and called. “We set ours up,” one reported. “Will you help me locate my bird box?” another inquired. Some friends sent photos of their newly installed boxes. One by one from Waltham and Charlotte, to Shelburne, South Starksboro and Tunbridge, friends reported that their boxes were installed at the proper height, on the edge of a field, and facing northeast just as the directions suggested. Then, as if bluebirds had watched the installations, they came. “There’s a bluebird in our truck! I think we left a window open. I hope it won’t hurt a wing,” one couple wrote. A steady stream of communication about bluebird sightings has continued ever since. “Molly,” Gill declared from the office, “everyone is texting about their bluebirds!” He was ecstatic.

An unexpected clan of bluebird enthusiasts evolved, sending one another anecdotal notes of excitement, humor and awe as they watched bluebirds in their yards. Observations arrive every few days. Yesterday one read, “Saw a male standing on the roof of the box

this morning, 7:45 a.m.” Another friend shared, “Female warily watching male from a nearby tree while male perches on top of box. Female doesn’t seem impressed, 8:15 a.m.” One friend’s message said, “ 9:00 a.m., female flew inside the box while male proudly posted himself on the roof like a soldier guarding.” On some mornings, texts flit back and forth among us like birds at a feeder. Another day a friend pondered, “Can you believe all of us have bluebirds in our fields? A year ago I had never seen one? Have they been here all along?” It made me wonder, would this group of friends have had the time and interest to watch and communicate about the life cycle of bluebirds if not for this unhurried space in our lives, if not for being at home in the daylight hours? This morning, while Gill drank his coffee and I my tea, we passed the binoculars back and forth watching a male bluebird stake a claim on our nesting box. Watching bluebirds with friends is an unexpected gift born of this extraordinary year in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Just days ago it seemed like a page turned. I found more green shoots poking through the leaf litter where I planted bulbs last fall, and the same pair of bluebirds keeps checking the box. I think they’re moving in. From winter’s frigid hold came spring and the smell of mud, wet fur and dirty paws. Barely noticeable delicate gray-green buds have emerged, softening stark, dark branches. There are chartreuse patches of new growth in the gardens and pale pink, feathery buds on maple tree crowns. Soon they will burst forth, becoming lush leaves in deep showy shades of green and burgundy. I am reveling in the arrival of this new palette. Would we notice this subtle unfurling if not for the quiet cold that came before it, if not for this morning ritual, sitting in our chairs where we are still and watching? This too, this time to notice the unwrapping of a season, is a gift.

Spring’s approach is subtle, but this year it also brings boldness, the certainty of enough vaccine for everyone older than 16 in our state to get immunized. Bolder still is the hope and real possibility of broad protection from the spread of COVID-19 in Vermont and across the country. As the land awakens so too are we; bravely reaching out, dipping our toes in the wet grass and welcome, warm air. Ahead of us is the promise of being with our family and friends, of hugging and being close together. I will wrap my arms around our children and grandchildren and probably cry for the happiness and relief of it, the recognition of how much I have missed this tender touch and togetherness. We will cook and eat side by side, and the grandkids will hunt for eggs, play in their fort, and soon spend nights here the way they used to. I am humming with anticipation, appreciative of the resilience that seemed to take our hands and pull us forward, that brought this fresh season and made us grateful for the gifts we discovered this year, of all years, right here in our midst, in unusual places, like colored eggs in a stonewall.



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Rowan Hawthorne
COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

Green Up Day in Charlotte

to utilize the school dumpsters, where they place the washed recyclables. Foulk sets up three barrels of water to use for washing the recyclables that need it. "Some stuff I do have to rinse, but a lot of the time the material isn't even dirty."

Ken Spencer, 60, is a co-coordinator of Green Up Day for Charlotte and works with Foulk to ensure the recyclables are washed and delivered to Tenney's Snack Bar & Bottle Redemption.

There are several stations at the Charlotte Central School, which is the drop-off spot for the trash and recycling for volunteers during Green Up Day. Most volunteers signed up online beforehand, deciding what sections of the road to clean up. If someone didn't sign up earlier, they check in at the tent where Kim Findlay, the other co-coordinator, was handing out green bags for trash and clear plastic bags for recycling.

"We're hoping to divert as much recycling and redeemables from the landfill as possible. The way we do that is by cleaning everything, so it's in as good condition as it can be, and then taking it to Tenney's Redemption and Recycle, if it's a material that can generate some money," said Spencer.

"They are willing to take all these materials we bring, cans and bottles, and separate the redeemables," said Spencer. "It's complicated because there are different waste streams. At the very least, we're diverting it from landfill and hopefully providing some afterlife for it."

"We have our three trucks here, which is all material we can take to the Solid Waste District," said Spencer. That includes scrap metal, tires and electronic waste.

"I'm very committed to litter pickup—this is what I do every day," said Spencer. "In my retirement, Green Up Day is fun for me because it's when everybody joins in that fun. So, I just feel like I'm a part of a big community effort that is doing something that is really easy to do."

"My hope is that it spreads a little bit to other days, you know, like every day to be cleanup day."

Spencer is the founder of Planet People, a non-profit organization based in Charlotte that sells "Planet Packs"—backpacks filled with everything someone needs to do roadside litter cleanup.

"The organization really just exists to support the direct activism and support people who pick up litter," said Spencer. "I really got the sense that people were just jonesin' to get out and do something helpful with other people."

Last year, Charlotte organized Green Up Day on May 30 instead of May 1—later than usual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest difference Spencer noticed was simply that people had to social distance,

wear masks, and that "the grass was so much taller off the roadsides. A lot of people had trouble finding stuff and seeing it."

Spencer has been organizing Charlotte's Green Up Day with Kim Findlay for four years.

Ken Spencer stands with bags of trash collected from volunteers.



Abby Foulk washes recyclables in front of CCS.



Abby Foulk, 66, is retired and has lived in Charlotte for 29 years; she serves as an alternate board member of the Chittenden Solid Waste District.

Foulk, along with Spencer, washes the recycling they receive to ensure it can be redeemed. This practice is unique to Charlotte. Foulk suggested doing this "several years ago." "Normally we have about 10 50-gallon bags," she said.

Foulk was the first to suggest washing the recycling for Green Up Day. "I just noticed on my road when I was a volunteer and picked up litter that was recyclable, it was pretty clean," she said.

"A lot of beer cans, sometimes clean glass like liquor bottles, and mostly just lots and lots of aluminum cans are in pretty decent shape," Foulk said, describing the majority of what she picks up along Charlotte's roads.

She wanted to get people to start recycling the materials that could be recycled, and washing these made them more valuable and allowed more to be redeemable and recyclable.

The proposal to Charlotte's Green Up Day coordinators was that "we would be willing to provide clear plastic bags and a rinsing station and have it be totally on a voluntary basis."

When people pick up the bags at the beginning of their shift, they are asked if they want separate bags so they can isolate the recyclables in bags to be washed. Most people are asked, and those that are asked all take it.

The washing station is behind the Charlotte Central School, allowing Foulk and Spencer

Karen Tuininga and Wolfer Schneider sort E-waste.



For a final tally, "15 bags of redeemable bottles and around half again as much recyclable containers" were collected. "We filled Ken Spencer's 4x8 trailer!" wrote Abby Foulk in an email.

Karen Tuininga, 57, and Wolfer Schneider, 80, are annual volunteers for Green Up Day. This year, they were taking the 10 a.m. to noon shift at the e-waste drop-off location at Charlotte Middle School.

The most common items that Tuininga and Schneider receive are modems, keyboards, flat panel TVs, tube TVs, mice, keyboards and printers. The strangest items they've seen while volunteering at the e-waste drop-off are "old tube radios from the 50s and an exercise machine," said Schneider. Most of the items they receive for e-waste are from people's homes and not from the roadside. "I feel like there was a lot extra last year, but this is probably similar to a normal year," said Tuininga.

"I feel like there was a lot extra last year, but this is probably similar to a normal year," said Tuininga.

The e-waste is picked up by a company that refurbishes what they can, "so it keeps it out of the landfill," said Tuininga.

"We're disgusted at the amount we collect," said Schneider.

"It's alarming what the turnover in people's lives this must represent," said Tuininga. "But we're delighted to keep it out of the landfill."

"I love Vermont for so many reasons, but this is one of them—that all the communities are doing it, that it's statewide, that, you know, so many people are involved. I just love it," she added.

Ruah Swennerfelt, 73, has been in charge of organizing the e-waste pick-up and disposal for eight years. She is part of the Charlotte Sustainable Living Network, which focuses on "transitioning from fossil fuel-based economy consumer society to a regenerative future."

As a way to encourage recycling e-waste, the Charlotte Sustainable Living Network partnered with Charlotte's Green Up Day organizers to set up a place where residents can drop off their e-waste on Green Up Day at the Charlotte Central School. The e-waste collected is then given to Good Point Recycling in Middlebury. Good Point Recycling picks up the waste and recycles it. The goal is to "keep electronic waste out of the landfill, both in its bulk but also its dangerous metals and stuff like that," said Swennerfelt.

"Good Point Recycling consider[s] themselves a very environmentally important company, that kind of breaks down all this stuff for all its usable parts and recycles whatever can go just into recycling and then whatever can be used for the electronic components," said Swennerfelt.

Quoting what Swennerfelt referred to as the "cheerful disclaimer" of Good Point Recycling, she said, "If we wait for governments, it's going to be too little too late. If we act on our own, it's definitely going to be too little, but if we act locally with each other, it might be just enough just in time. And so we know that local efforts can grow with each other to become much bigger."

Green Up Day represents a "wonderful thing" to Swennerfelt. "Once a year, people of all stripes get out, walk the roads, clean up after the winter and find all the things that were left behind, you know, and were hidden by the snow, and, and it's not partisan. You're gonna be meeting up with and joining together with people who voted for somebody different from you," she said.

While organizing the e-waste drop off and pick up on Green Up Day is hard work, Swennerfelt feels that it is important. "It's just an incredible community spirit, the smiles and the laughter. Some of the laughter at the most ridiculous things that people find, you know, it's just, it's really beautiful," she said.

Emma and Nathan Cote, 12 and 10, are students at CCS and have participated in Green Up Day for six years. They enjoy helping out on Green Up Day because "it's helping the earth" and "all the trash that we get doesn't go into the land." Growing up in a household where they recycle everything, it was disappointing to see "all the trash that everybody just threw carelessly," said Nathan.



Left, Christopher Vatis and below Emily Vatis clean up along Mt. Philo Road.



Left, Rebecca and Amelia Gerlin, in Charlotte.

Last year, they didn't participate in Green Up Day, and the thing they missed most about it was "picking up the trash" and "doing something nice for the Earth."

They love the tradition of Green Up Day and are environmental advocates already. "If we keep treating the earth badly, it could blow up," Nathan said. Emma and Nathan "definitely" plan to participate next year.

Kim Findlay, 60, is the other co-coordinator for Charlotte's Green Up Day. Organizationally, last year and this year were "pretty much the same." "It's been a good turnout," said Findlay, describing the volunteers signed up for Green Up Day. "It's been very steady and we have nearly all the roads signed up for, which is normal but fantastic."

Her favorite part of coordinating is "talking with people and, you know, just hearing their enthusiasm for cleaning up the roads, being in touch with the spirit of the day."

Findlay's role this year was greeting people and giving them bags, making sure they knew which roads to clean up, and helping people who hadn't signed up already. This is her fourth year co-coordinating with Ken Spencer.

Christopher Vatis, 60, is a retired schoolteacher who participated in Green Up Day alongside his wife, Emily. "We walk a lot and we generally pick up as we go just because neither of us is a native Vermonter and we came here because we love Vermont and what it stands for," said Vatis. "So, when we don't see it clean, it kind of offends us—so we do what we can when we can."

Originally from New York City, Vatis moved to Vermont 27 years ago to be in the outdoors and "wide open spaces, fewer people, less traffic, and, you know, outdoor life."

"Vermont's the place to be for [COVID-19], because you could get out and not always have to be masked," said Vatis. "Every day, we were still walking or hiking or snowshoeing, skiing or something."



The Vatises participate most years "because we sort of do it more actively because we enjoy the outdoors and we get sort of bothered by the casting off of stuff."

Vatis described why he likes to clean up the roadsides, saying "there's always going to be a need to clean up, but, you know, the thing about cleaning up is not discarding stuff in the first place and so I just wish people would be more mindful of it." And he says, "I'm also cheap and love to get the collectibles or the returnables."

"Emily and I just had a very nice experience with an older gentleman pulling up—he just stopped his car and came out and gave us two jars of maple syrup," said Vatis. Green Up Day "brings us together."

Eloise Glassco, Ava Bergquist, Amelie Fairweather and Lily Siedlecki, all part of the 6th grade class at Charlotte Central School, picked up trash along Guinea Road in Charlotte.

"We just really wanted to clean up the roads," said Bergquist. "We want to help the environment."

"I'm just really interested in helping the environment, and Vermont is just so pretty in its natural beauty and we need to make sure it's restored," said Fairweather.

Since the pandemic started, life changed for these four friends. "We're not really allowed to hang out with our friends as much," said Glassco. "It's hard because we're all great friends."

"And the teachers are just a lot stricter," added Bergquist.

The four 6th-graders participate often in Green Up Day. "I always participate, year-round," said Siedlecki. "I just think that people should go out and clean up their neighborhood, like all the small things to help the environment will definitely make an impact on Vermont," she said.

"Thanks to all the people who went out and actually did something today. I mean, it's fine if you don't, but it's better to get out and help



The tent to pick up bags and sign up is set up in front of the school buses at CCS.

rather than just thinking that other people are going to do it for you," said Bergquist.

"Keep Vermont fun, keep Vermont weird, and keep Vermont clean," said Fairweather. "I think Charlotte should make like a green up day every month or so," said Glassco. "Not just once a year."

In the future, these 6th-graders hope to be artists, actors and activists—and maybe a veterinarian, according to Seidlecki.

Amelia Gerlin, 54, is a social worker in Charlotte who was cleaning up trash with her sister Rebecca, a landscape garden business owner from Connecticut. "I dragged my sister along, she's visiting for the weekend," said Amelia. "I've done it every year, and I've lived here for 20 years."

Green Up Day means "taking care of my environment, my community and my walking path, so it's like the big, the medium and the micro," said Amelia.

"My town has a town-wide cleanup day every year on Earth Day, so actually, this is perfect because I didn't participate this year because I was away. So, I'm happy to be doing it here!" said Rebecca.

"It's community spirit," said Amelia.

This year, most of their family is already vaccinated and able to see one another again safely. Last year, they struggled to spend time together, but for Christmas, they did "a quarantine, the test,

and quarantine so we could really guarantee we could see our parents who are in their 80s so they didn't have to have another Christmas alone," said Rebecca.

Now, they're able to be outside without masks, thanks to Governor Phil Scott's recent relaxation of the mask mandate. Green Up Day "is a great tradition," said Amelia.

"Yeah, I think it is a really great tradition and I really do like the community element and I guess I kind of go at it a little bit differently. We know people litter and we know people have alcohol problems, and, you know, we're not plagued by those things. So, let's step up," said Rebecca.

"I see everybody out with their bags, like it just does feel good, like real people are concerned and caring and participating and that's nice," said Amelia.

Emma and Nathan Cote just dropped off trash and recycling at CCS.



E-waste collected at CCS.

Education

Off to college on a green foot



Margo Bartsch
CONTRIBUTOR

Going to college is typically the first time a student lives independently and is in charge of making their own decisions, including the choice to live green. Since 1970, both Earth Day and Vermont Green Up Day have

been celebrated to remind us of the human connection with our environment. If your teen values being green, a college's sustainability efforts can be an essential criterion to include in developing the college list. In planning for the student's college experience, the green lifestyle can be highlighted in dorm life, academic classes and college initiatives.

First, most colleges have specifically marked trash bins for sorting trash, paper, recyclables and even composting. However, some colleges go further by encouraging sustainable actions in dorm life. For example, Princeton University's Office of Sustainability posts a "Green Your Dorm" list of helpful tips for sustainable living. Eco-friendly ideas to consider include doing laundry with only a full load in cold water. Also, to avoid wasting energy, use a power strip for electronics and switch off the power when not using. Remember to shut off the lights in the bathroom or when leaving the room. These ideas are great planning tools whether living in the dorms, at home or off campus. To be respectful of a green mindset, it is helpful to discuss recycling and sustainable behavior with roommates, even if some decide to participate less.

For a daily green lifestyle, students can take little actions that can add up to make a big impact. Consider shopping at thrift stores to be part of the reusable movement for used furniture like book cases and desk chairs. Supporting local businesses is a great idea when buying plants to filter indoor air pollutants and reusable water bottles to fill at water stations or fountains. It is fun to visit farmers markets with friends to buy fruits and veggies for snacks and artisan crafts to update your room and wardrobe.



Photo by Stanley Morales from Pexels

For academic courses, many colleges emphasize hands-on learning experiences as integral to their curriculum. In 2013, Colby College was one of the first colleges in the U.S. to achieve carbon neutrality. This environmental stewardship trickles into its academic programs. For example, Colby has an "Environmental Commitment" with three strategic initiatives: Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences to study climate change and marine science, 7 Lakes Alliance for non-profit research and freshwater ecosystems, and Up East Foundation to support American art and academic opportunities. Colby is a dedicated green campus with its food systems, physical facilities and student clubs.

The Environmental Studies curriculum at Colby includes interdisciplinary courses that combine various academic disciplines. With dedicated faculty in environmental policy, environmental science, and environmental computation, this shows that one size does not fit all. For example, the class Environment and Society (ES-118s) includes literature, lectures, a group project and written assignments. This four-credit class, taught by three professors, explores ecological issues from both scientific and public policy perspectives on the local, national and global stage. Identifying immersive classes is the first step in establishing the student's academic interests and friend groups.

Finally, many colleges have a green mindset permeating throughout campus. For example, UVM's Office of Sustainability prioritizes its commitment to the environment. UVM touts "Green since 1791" with its focus on environmental health and community

engagement. There are seven sustainable initiatives: academics and research, energy and water, responsible investing, transportation, building and grounds, food and dining, and finally, waste. In 2013, UVM banned selling single-use plastic water bottles to reduce waste on campus. UVM tracks its sustainability efforts with STARS (Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System) in analyzing data to influence campus decisions.

UVM students created the Sustainable Campus Fund (SCF) that includes a \$10 per semester student fee to address efficient and renewable energy, along with sustainability projects like social equity and ecological health. By raising \$230,000 annually, the student body emphasizes its commitment to green initiatives. Researching various college websites can highlight the many ways to get involved with green activism, club activities and campus leadership.

Colleges are building communities around sustainable values. Students can participate in a range of green actions from bike-sharing to ecological engagement. In developing a college list, finding the right "sustainable fit" can help a student discover the ideal campus to contribute to positive change. The overall college experience can include fostering the next generation of green leaders.

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.

CVSD School Board reviews the restoration process

Nancy Richardson
CONTRIBUTOR

The April 27 CVSD Board meeting focused on the plan for the "restoration" of the school system after a year of pandemic operations. Jeff Evans, Director of Learning and Innovation, and Meagan Roy, Director of Student Support Services, have developed an extensive plan that conforms to state recovery process requirements. The plan recognizes that, despite heroic efforts by school staff and administrators, there have been negative consequences from pandemic operations for some students. Equity gaps among students that were present prior to the pandemic may have increased.

The process of recovery and restoration is expected to take two to three years and will be funded by state and local education funds, with a big boost from an increase in federal funding. The plan includes the assessment of needs, the creation of an active plan for intervention to begin on June 1, and feedback loops that will refine the plan as it proceeds. To implement the plan as soon as possible, there will be four major teams across schools and levels of administration and staff with a connection to the board. Of particular emphasis will be the identification of learning needs for each child in the system and an emphasis not only on academic progress, but on social emotional well-being and community connections.

The resources needed to implement individual student plans will be extensive. Tutors and interventionists, professional development for teachers, possible new consistent assessments, summer and after-school programs, and support services are examples of resources that must be in place.

Megan Roy stressed that this effort to reduce the effects of the pandemic year that required remote instruction will be layered on top of the ongoing student support system that has been well developed in the district. The notion that CVSD schools focus on meeting the needs of each child is

SEE **CVSD** PAGE 13



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Education

One hundred seventy-nine years of teaching wisdom retiring from Charlotte Central School

Nancy Richardson
CONTRIBUTOR

Five teachers at Charlotte Central School will be retiring next year after an average each of 30 years spent teaching. All but one teacher had taught exclusively at CCS. As a sometime student of public management in various roles, I was intrigued by the idea that committed professionals might spend an entire career in the same institution. So, I pursued with pleasure interviewing Kathy Lara, Penny Stearns, Leslie Thayer, Kris Gerson and Christa Duthie-Fox.

Penny Stearns was a math teacher for 30 years in the Burlington school system. She then spent the past six years as math coordinator at Charlotte Central School. When asked about the major contributors to her success here, she spoke of the welcoming attitude of teachers and staff, and the support they receive from families and students. Penny has been in many different schools, and she considers CCS one of the best. “It really does take a village,” she said, and highlighted the flexibility of the community, especially during this past pandemic year.

Leslie Thayer, a K–4 teacher, has spent 34 years at CCS. She also highlighted the “wonderful community and administrators” as key elements in her successful career here. This sense of cohesive support present in the staff and leadership persisted across years and changes in administration. She described how the teachers had a running start in dealing with pandemic in the area of technology because of prior training. But starting in the spring of 2020, when schools closed suddenly, they “learned on the fly.” White boards and webcams were set up in teachers’ homes, and they had to determine rapidly how and what to teach. The fact that 3rd grade students were able to adapt to wearing masks, washing hands, and keeping their distance was unexpected and gratifying. Flexibility among students, teachers, staff and principals was also a major element.

Kathy Lara, also a K–4 teacher, is retiring after 30 years. In discussing pedagogical



Penny Stearns



Leslie Thayer



Kathy Lara



Kris Gerson



Christa Duthie-Fox

changes over the years, she mentioned the importance of a team of teachers and the constant “learning and reflection” that occurs when a group of dedicated individuals work together toward important goals. During her tenure, classrooms went from being self-contained to accommodating multi-aged students. The mathematics curriculum changed, and the use of technology in teaching presented both continuing challenges and learning opportunities. Kathy complimented Bonnie Birdsall and the central administration for supporting technology teaching as a priority. Overall, the ethic of “community support and the sense of belonging” were again cited as the enduring characteristics of Charlotte Central School.

Kris Gerson, a 1st and 2nd grade teacher, retired at the end of the 2020 school year after 20 years of teaching and did not teach during the current year. She describes the transition last spring to remote instruction as extremely challenging. District training programs had given teachers competency in using different platforms and instruments like Google Docs, but suddenly teachers were producing programs from their kitchens. Often, they would have webcams, phones and computers going at the same time. Once, half of her class went remotely to the wrong site when she received a phone call from another teacher stating, “What happened? I have half of your class in my room.” Kris describes her experience at CCS as being in “a very supportive professional environment.” Over the years

there were changes in curriculum that required all teachers to work together, and Kris used “helpful, supportive and amazing” to describe this effort.

Christa Duthie-Fox was a member of the five new teacher class of 1994 and has taught science and mathematics for 27 years. She identified Monica Smith as the perfect leader for the new group of teachers in 1994 and that strong leadership has been present at CCS across time. Christa was awarded the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching in 2008, the highest award by the United States government for teachers of mathematics and science. She accepted the award at the White House, where she met President Obama. She highlighted the

strong teams she has been a part of at CCS, the emphasis on basic science content, and “always the project-based approach” curricula that she helped to develop. She described her work in this way: “I have had the awesome privilege of teaching the next generation.”

Across the five conversations, the most commonly mentioned characteristics that are common in successful schools and present at CCS are: (1) learning and reflection across disciplines; (2) a team-centered approach; (3) community and staff support; (4) flexibility and the ability to adapt in extreme circumstances; and (5) moving toward school goals consistently in day-to-day operations.

CVSD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

an ethic that is well established.

In other business, Students Demand Action, a progressive student organization at CVU, presented a program on gun safety that emphasized proper ownership practices. This presentation did not present an opinion on gun ownership but stressed best practices for storing and handling guns.

There was also discussion of efforts to get high school and middle school students

back to school for five days a week this spring. Some parents remain frustrated that this is not going to be possible. The school system has developed a process and criteria for deciding these matters based on health department guidance, the number of cases in the schools, and staff capacity when quarantining is necessary. In the first two weeks in April, COVID cases increased to six, reflecting a community increase in cases among young people. Over 100 contacts had to go through the quarantining process, straining staff capacity.

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Outdoors

Charlotte memorial and specially dedicated trees planted since 2000

In 2000, Larry Hamilton, Charlotte's tree warden, began the project of planting memorial and specially dedicated trees in Charlotte's parks and rights of way. We are publishing this list so people can be aware of these trees and more easily find and enjoy them. Anyone who might be interested in planting a memorial tree and would like information about how to do so should contact Tree Warden Mark Dillenbeck (mark@ocmq.com) or Deputy Tree Warden Sue Smith (ssmith@gmavt.net).

2000

- Millennium Tree. Swamp white oak planted with ceremony with state grant at SW corner of Town Hall.

2006

- To honor her husband, Paul, a memorial sugar maple from Katherine Teetor, at Barber Cemetery, in center near large stump.

2007

- To honor their sister Kerri Frost, a memorial swamp white oak from Alden and Andy Pellett, at Town Beach ballfield parking island (first of three trees going east on Lake Road).
- To honor their nephew Paul Rogers, a memorial sycamore from Sarah and Ted Montgomery at Town Beach ballfield parking island (first of three trees going west on Lake Road).
- A birthday-honoring Princeton elm, later replaced with a burr oak, for Richard Weed, from his wife, Joan, in front of Old Lantern

(first tree north of the driveway).

2008

- To honor the late Hugh "Cowboy" Lewis, Charlotte's town constable for many years, a memorial sycamore planted at Town Beach beside a bench overlooking Lake Champlain. The tree was formally dedicated in 2010.
- A birthday-honoring sycamore tree for Dana Farley from many friends who donated generously. Planted at the Town Beach ballpark parking island. Dedicated in 2010.
- To commemorate Green Up Day, a sycamore, funded by CCS class bake sale and guided by Susanna Kahn, at Town Beach Park, to provide future shade for the parking lot attendant.

2009

- To honor Marie-Dennet Murphy McBill, a memorial black locust from Christina Ellis, at the Charlotte Museum to replace large locust taken down in 2008.
- To honor John Outwater, memorial sugar maple at Thompson's Point ballfield, to provide shade, courtesy of Katherine Teetor.
- To commemorate Arbor Day, an apple tree obtained by Robin Reid, planted at The Old Lantern, south of the building, followed by a party and tree display.

2010

- To honor Thompson's Point summer resident Robert Tucker on the occasion of his 90th birthday, a Freeman's red maple on the corner of Thompson's Point and Flat Rock roads given by his longtime friend

Katherine Teetor.

- To honor Thompson's Point summer resident Roberta Tucker Clair on the occasion of her 95th birthday, a sugar maple on Thompson's Point Road, second tree west of Flat Rock Road.
- To honor Bodhi Kurindiyara Hill, a memorial red maple on Prindle Road, the farthest south of the planted row of red maples, given by Carol Hanley and Bunky Bernstein.
- In honor of Virginia Rutter, a row of 10 Freeman's red maples planted along Thompson's Point Road west of Flat Rock Road, given by her daughter, Robin Coleburn. Robin is the granddaughter of the original benefactors, Bill and Dorothy Rutter, who provided the initial funding for the Rutter Family Charlotte Beautification Fund, which made most of our roadside restoration tree project possible.
- In memory of John Outwater, two white pines on Thompson's Point Road just east of the caretaker's house, planted and donated by his wife, Alice.

2011

- To honor Frank Thornton for his long service to the Town of Charlotte, a sugar maple near the southeast corner of Barber Hill Cemetery, donated by Carrie Fenn (nee MacKillop) and Peter Demick.
- In memory of Will Foster with funds raised by his wife, Frances, and friends, three swamp white oaks planted at the corner of Lake and Holmes roads.

2012

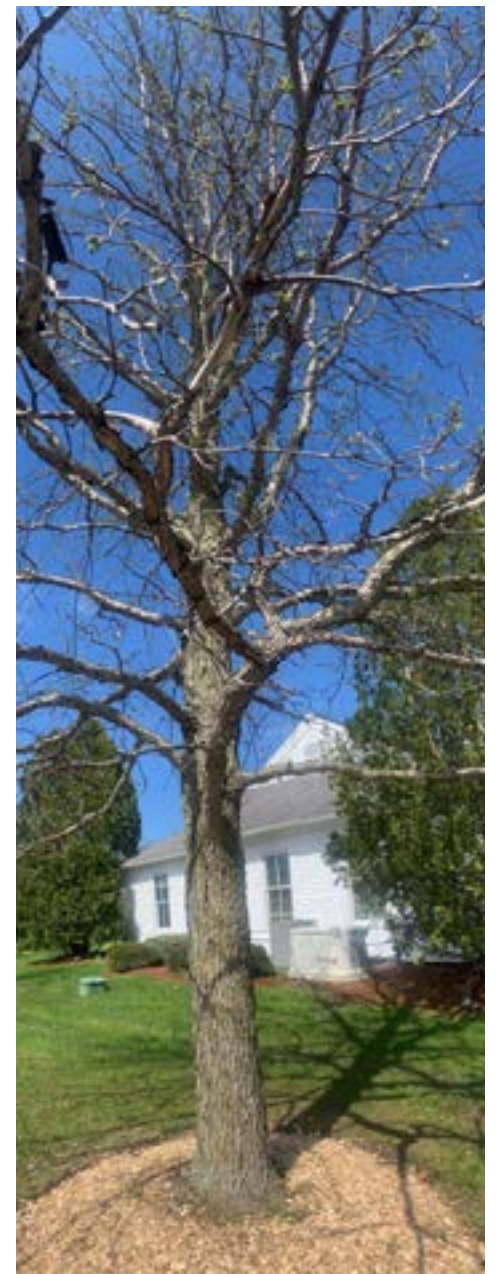
- To honor Sarah Montgomery, a memorial swamp white oak, a species much beloved by her, planted on Greenbush Road opposite Ten Stones, where she lived. Her husband, Ted, and their neighbors contributed to the memorial tree.

2015

- To honor Arline Lewis, who, along with her husband, Cowboy, was often the "gatekeeper" at the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, a memorial swamp white oak, planted by her family on the center island at the entrance to the park.
- To honor Larry Hamilton on the occasion of his 90th birthday and to recognize his 20 years of service as Charlotte's tree warden, a "Tree Warden" swamp white oak planted to provide shade to those sitting on an overview bench in the upper Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge.

2016

- A gift to the town from Alice Outwater of eight red maples and one sycamore planted



The Millennium tree, a swamp white oak at Town Hall, is now 21 years old. It will reach 60 to 80 feet in height and can live up to 300 years.

Photo by Vince Crockenberg

at the Charlotte Beach playground.

2017

- In memory of Larry Hamilton and appreciation for his long community service, a burr oak, donated by Horsford Gardens and Nursery and planted northeast of the World War II Memorial on the Town Green.

See more photos at charlottenewsvt.org

Conservation Currents.....

Springtime ephemerals in our New England forests

Mary Van Vleck

As we continue to practice social distancing to avoid the coronavirus, I think daily how grateful I am to be living in Vermont, and in Charlotte in particular, where most of us can walk out our doors for fresh air and a closer look at the natural world around us. We're not confined as are most city people, and there are blossoming trees, colorful birds and currently daffodils right outside our doors. As the weather warms, we can drive along country roads or amble in the countryside to witness nature awakening and revel in the springtime miracle of returning birds, the greening of lawns, meadows and forest floors.

The trees are just beginning to open their leaves, so on sunny days abundant light reaches and warms the forest floor. The tiny plants under the trees have burst forth to take advantage of this brief period of light and warmth; they unfurl their leaves, and the flowers extend upward in brilliant colors. Great swaths of the forest floor turn green with a yellow or white glow for a while before the flowers wilt and, if fertilized, seeds develop, all before the leafy canopy closes in overhead. These plants that sprout, flower, and fruit so quickly before wilting and disappearing are called ephemerals, for their brief appearances on the forest floor.

We have all seen and admired these little beauties. One of the earliest is the hepatica, only 4–6 inches tall, with a delicate white, pink or periwinkle, daisy-like blossom. Its leaves are rounded with three deep lobes, similar to the shape of a liver, which is how it got its name. While there is a good population of hepaticas on Thompson's Point, most of the time they occur in very small clusters, even as few as just one or two plants.

By contrast, the trout lily (*Erythronium americanum*), which started blooming here in late April, is a much more abundant plant. If you see one plant, you may find a hundred or a thousand of them, and they are blooming now. It has very simple, mottled leaves, 5–8 inches long that you've probably seen along roads or in the forest, even creeping into your yard. It is a lily, so has three petals and three sepals, all yellow in a typical lily-like, bell-like shape that droops slightly. Inside are six stamens surrounding one green pistil, the male and female parts respectively.

Another lovely flower that has just finished blooming is the bloodroot. It has a delicate white flower with a daisy-like radial design, with 8–10 petals surrounding the yellow center. Like the trout lily, it is only about 5–8 inches tall, but after it blossoms and wilts, the leaves get bigger and taller, extending at least twice the height of the original flower. The leaves are very distinct; they are round with indentations and great lobes, making it look very decorative. (See photo.)

Most people are familiar with the white trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) also in the lily family, which is now flourishing in our woods. There are great swaths of trilliums on the forest floor on some areas of Thompson's Point and other areas around town. Look for them on the eastern side of Greenbush Road south of Thompson's Point Road and along the town trail on the Burns property south of the West Charlotte



Hepatica



Bloodroot



Trout lily

Photos contributed

town center. The flowers are 2 to 4 inches in diameter, with three showy white petals above three smooth, pointed leaves, about 10–15 inches tall. They are striking, especially when found in large groups.

There are also two other trilliums found in Vermont—the red trillium, often called a wake robin, and the painted trillium, which is also white with a red streak extending down the middle of each petal. The white is by far the most common and abundant and is the first of the trilliums to appear.

In late May and early June, another lily will appear: the blue bead lily (*Clintonia borealis*). This plant has two larger, fleshy leaves, 8–10 inches long, with a single stem, coming up between the two leaves with 3–6 yellow-green flowers, about an inch long. These flowers also show the typical lily structure with three petals and three sepals, all the same color.

As the spring progresses, other flowers will emerge: many species of violets and clovers, Jack-in-the Pulpits, and columbine, to name a few.

For more information, google “spring ephemerals” or “native spring wildflowers. Most importantly, get outside and enjoy this wonderful time of year before the tree leaves develop and shade the ground underneath them.

Mary Van Vleck is a member of the Charlotte Conservation Commission. The commission currently meets by Zoom the fourth Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. All are welcome.

Into the Garden

It's time to get out in the garden



Joan Weed
CONTRIBUTOR

May! It's here with its wonder and beauty of colors and fresh aromas, bird song and hope. It also brings chores as one of the busiest months in a gardener's life. The much appreciated rain we've had made everything jump with growth and reminded us we need to get busy.

We've been warned not to start clean up too early so pollinators and other insects can emerge as they will on their schedule. But now we can start before true growth begins. Adding compost or mulch of choice is a perfect early season chore. It's so much easier before the stems and new leaves get in our way. Now is also the time to pull those small beginnings of garlic mustard, burdock and dandelions that have invaded our garden beds.

Deadheading the spring bulbs as they finish blooming is useful to direct energy to bulb health rather than seed production. When I walk to enjoy the garden, I try to remember to bring a pair of snips along for this. Doing small bits every day makes the chores less onerous.

I hope you used your "armchair garden time" to plan, order and assess. Good idea to make notes as things occur to you. I have ordered some plants from a few favorite nurseries and scheduled arrival around end of April. Usually this works, but if chilly



Early azaleas, daffodils and dicentra.

Photo by Joan Weed

like this year, keep these in a covered garage or shed till the air and soil warm up. These days my orders are usually replacements for favorites that have died or other choice plants to fill in holes in the planting beds. I rely mostly on perennials except for the containers I keep here and there for color in between mini-seasons of interest. It's still early for most annuals, but pansies can take the cool air and are good to tide us over till it warms up. Dahlia tubers are potted up to get a head start and I think will be okay. I sometimes buy my local annuals as early as they are available and keep them

under wraps to ensure that my choices are available. Horsford's has greenhouses full.

For the vegetable garden, the garlic has come through nicely after last October's planting. Seed potatoes have been secured and can go in the ground now if your soil isn't soggy. I only plant a couple kinds these days, a fingerling and an all-purpose type. You can buy these locally at Red Wagon Plants or Gardener's Supply. There might be other providers—check the internet.

Since I did not start any tomatoes, peppers or cucumbers inside this year, I will

purchase starts from local places. Brit-Sue's has a nice selection of veggie starts every year, well grown. I bought Marketmore cukes last year and had the best crop in ages. They need a trellis or climbing pole. They have heritage tomatoes as well as hybrids. Wait to plant these tender vegetables till near the end of May. Feel the soil and reach in to see if it feels warm.

Seeds that can be direct-sown this early are radishes, peas of all kinds, lettuce, spinach, onions, Swiss chard, beets and carrots. Parsley plants can take cool air and should be started indoors earlier or buy plants.

Save beans, basil, dill, squash and melon to sow in early June. Corn needs real warmth and is a heavy feeder.

If we should experience another dry spell, be sure to keep the starts or seed beds hydrated. I don't use much fertilizer for my gardens but rely on compost. If you choose to, I hope you'll pick an organic label. Our nearby lake will thank you. Some of my herbs are perennials, so I check them out and replace if needed. A few I grow are thyme, sage, savory, tarragon, garlic chives and chives.

Annual herbs that need planting each season are dill, basil, cilantro, chervil and parsley. Some will self-sow so learn to look for tiny starts.

I guess we should raise ourselves and get out in the garden. Wishing you a fruitful year in your plot.

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Sports

Spring sports start, but first the coaches' all-league winter teams

Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

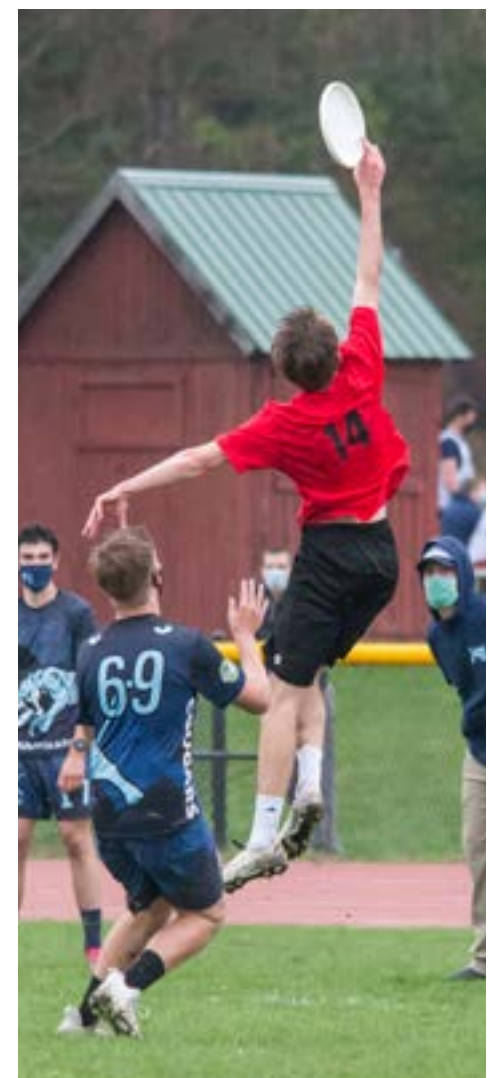
The Vermont high school coaches of hockey and basketball for the 2021 season named a number of Redhawks to both men's and women's teams.

Beginning with women basketball stars, CVU's Catherine Gilwee was named Player of the Year for the Metro Division. Shelby Companion earned second team honors, and Josie Pecor and Madison Reagan were awarded honorable mention. Unfortunately, the season was curtailed by the coronavirus pandemic before the state tournament could

be carried out. CVU has a history of state championships under coach Ute Otley.

Battle for the Bucket goes to CVU

The annual "Battle for the Bucket" men's lacrosse game between CVU and Essex went the Redhawks way on Monday. But, it took two minutes into a second overtime before it was decided, 13-12, on a goal by Colin Zouck. Colin and Shane Gorman led the CVU scoring with five goals apiece, and Nolan Shea added two. Jake Bowen was called upon for seven saves.



The ultimate spring sport.

Photo by Al Frey

Books

The Overstory of the Charlotte Men’s Reading group

Jonathan Silverman
CONTRIBUTOR

Can you imagine... *Being Mortal*, *Lost in Shangri La*, hearing the *News of the World* about the *Destiny of the Republic* that includes *The Underground Railroad*, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, and *The Wright Brothers*; that the *Soul of the Octopus*, *Elephant Company*, and *Cod* are the *Gift of the Rain*; that the *Killers of the Flower Moon*, a *Station 11* pandemic will not *Collapse* because of the heroic efforts of *The Contract Surgeon* and *A Gentleman in Moscow*, and that it is possible for gentlemen to have *Oil and Marble* to attend to *The Overstory of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*?

If so, then maybe you can imagine a men’s reading group being swept away by politics, art, inventions, medicine, environmental and social justice, adventures, biodiversity, and mortality. Let me share a bit of how we came about and what feeds our mortal souls to read and spend an hour and half together each month.

For many of us who are fully immersed in family life, work and odds and ends of household and financial maintenance the joy of reading often takes a back seat. I confess this was true for me. For many years as a professor at Saint Michael’s College my reading time was focused on academic articles, books and essays on art education and pedagogy. Of course, there were the student papers as well.

After retiring, I had no more excuses. My wife is a member of a book group, and I witness how this experience both enriches her curiosity and offers pleasure in connecting with others. Her book group is 25 years young. As a Charlotte Library trustee, I was aware of the vibrant Friends Book Group and Mystery Book Group organized by the library. Yet, these book groups are comprised of all women. One might ask: is that a problem? No, not really, yet I couldn’t help wonder, where are the men? Men do like to read and occasionally like to talk.

I shared my wonder with Margaret Woodruff, our Library Director, whether she thought offering a men’s reading group would be appealing and would actually fly. She and the library staff were more than encouraging. Within a week I chose *The Contract Surgeon* by Dan O’Brien, about an army surgeon who treats Crazy Horse and life in the late 1800s. The library posted a meeting date on the website and FPF to see whether

we had any takers. We struck a chord as 10 brave and eager souls came forth. This was three years ago and we have been meeting monthly since. A few have stepped aside and a few have stepped forward.

What was the appeal of a book group designed for gents? There must be more than just hanging out with guys. There was also a common commitment to keep our minds actively engaged and open to other perspectives with other thoughtful gents. We came with a common curiosity to expand our horizons and a willingness to be challenged by a good book to read every month, often ones that we would not necessarily choose ourselves to read. One of my goals for our group was to be sure that everyone would have a chance to reflect on the book... and we all do. Our conversations on each book are enriched by our varied life and professional experiences. A room or zoom room full of engineers, health care providers, educators, public health personnel, environmentalists, ophthalmologists, etc. offer a vibrant array of perspectives. The openness to challenge “old” ideas, stretch our imaginations, and encounter perpetual political, social and environmental issues has been refreshing for each of us, particularly during a time of social isolation. For some of us the recent book we read is our new favorite book; not a dud in the lot, as one of the readers shared with me. We feel a healthy sense of responsibility with our choice of book, yet, this comes easier knowing that we have developed our trust in the choices of others. The responses to my query about the most memorable book we’ve read suggested that each of us connected with different books. I take that to be a good sign.

Perhaps most valuable to our gathering is that we have learned about each other’s stories, interests and experiences. Some of us knew each other from before and some not. We check in with each other, we listen to each other, we kid each other, and we laugh together. This group has been a lovely addition to my life. I appreciate the commitment we have made to each other and to good literature. And, yes, my opening includes most of the books we have read and enjoyed. Many thanks to my fellow readers in making this happen: Paul Wagenhofer, Richard Hendrickson, Mike Lynch, John Quinney, Vince Crockenberg, Jim Hyde, Robert Smith, Tom Cavin, Tim McCullough, John Carrigan, Geoff Greenhalgh, Greg LeRoy as well as to Charlotte Library staff.

The raid of the grackles



Photo by Lee Krohn

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Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER
DIRECTOR

“Each year, you rediscover in a garden the magic of life. A flower arrives, and it is a miracle. . . There is a tenderness about a garden . . .”
~ *Hubert de Givenchy*

“I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked a thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow.”
~ *Abraham Lincoln*

Another season is almost upon us: CSC’s **Summer Schedule** will be inserted in the next issue of *The Charlotte News*. Have you noticed that one season keeps following another? That said, lately, it is hard to keep them separate - even though the weather keeps changing. It’s hard to distinguish if something happened in June 2020 or in June 2019.

We are still in a holding pattern when it comes to re-opening the Senior Center. Around the state, other centers are grappling with the state guidance about the need to wear masks and to continue social distancing. This Vermont Department of Health guidance applies to both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. In the meanwhile, outdoor activities like Spring Walks and Birding Expeditions have continued, and Kayaking for Women will be starting in June.

When the Senior Center does re-open, one challenge will be to establish new cooking teams for Mondays and Weenesdays, since some key volunteer cooks have retired. Want

to get involved? If you’d like to find out more, please leave a message anytime at 425-6345, and someone will get back to you.

Courses Starting Soon

Since we are at the end of this season, there are no new courses starting now. New ones will begin in June. For details, please see the Summer Schedule insert in the next issue here.

Ongoing classes continue year-round. Check out the website and consider signing up for an exercise or health course – which can be joined at any time during the season: **Chair Yoga (M, W); Essentrics™ (W, F); Gentle Yoga (M); Pilates (Th); Pilates PLUS (Tu); Tai Chi for Beginners (Tu, Th); and Mindfulness Meditation Practice (W)**. And, if a course is offered twice a week, you can opt for participating on just one of those days – if you wish.

Talks on Wednesdays at 1pm

These talks do *not* require advance registration, are always free – plus, they now include a closed captioning option for those who are hearing impaired. The Zoom invitation/link to each talk is posted on the website the day before at: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The link also appears in Front Porch Forum for that week. Can’t make it on Wed.? Talks are recorded and posted for 2 weeks afterwards on the website.

It’s not that bigger is better – really – but it was very impressive to have 65 people in attendance for Craig Henidel’s talk on Vermont in Deep Time, on 4/21. In case you missed it, the recording is posted on the website for a while longer. Craig’s talks are interesting and he is very knowledgeable, but who would think that geology would have such a following? Yet, considering that people in these parts are quite outdoorsy and tuned in to the environment, it makes perfect sense. Please note that two of the remaining talks this month will be on Thursdays instead of the usual Wednesdays. You might want to make a special note on your calendar.

5/13 (Thurs.): “Live Free or Die” in China with Tao Sun

Learn about the tragic story of Prof. Wu, a U.S.-educated English literature scholar, who went back to China just after the Communist Party came to power. In his autobiography, he tells of being imprisoned and publicly shamed after being labeled as an “ultra-rightist.” Targeted because he was outspoken, he liked to repeat the slogan, “Live Free or Die.” Despite its dramatic economic growth, China still pays only lip service to the protection of free speech, as written into its constitution. Heavy-handed political control by the party/state was partially responsible



for the spread of coronavirus in China and beyond. ~ Dr. Sun is associate professor of public communication at UVM and a former news editor in China.

5/19: Amazing Libraries of the World with Margaret Woodruff

From the clay tablets and papyrus of ancient civilizations to the digital downloads of today, the thread of library history is information. The power and prestige of the written word led to the development of majestic spaces to house these collections. Join Margaret Woodruff, Director of the Charlotte Library, for a virtual tour of libraries past and present. We’ll consider what future libraries will offer as places of access and resource. Co-sponsored by The Charlotte Library.

Thursday, 5/27: Inside the Internet: How It Works with Brian Bock

Did you know that the Internet of today evolved out of a military project which was actually designed to survive a nuclear war? What do acronyms like HTTP or DNS mean, and why are they important? Find out how the Internet really works from a technical perspective – but geared toward the non-techie. At the end, you will have a chance to ask your burning questions. ~ Brian Bock has worked online his entire career and in 1996 started his own Internet-based software development firm.

Art Exhibits

The Senior Center’s monthly art exhibits are suspended until further notice. Stay tuned.

Plant Sale

The Senior Center’s Plant Sale is back! Rain or shine on Sat, 5/29 from 9-12. Find what your garden needs at great prices – and maybe say hello to a friend, too.

Job Opening

CSC is looking to fill a new part-time

position: Assistant to the Senior Center Director. It’s an interesting, multi-faceted job, flexible hours, great environment. You can find the full description on the website: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. Application deadline is 5/21.

For expanded course descriptions, 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.

Remember - a cow apart. Don’t stop now. Risk is lower - but not zero.

How to Register for a Course

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

To register, email 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. The invitation/link for the course will be sent to you by the instructor the week that classes start.

How to Pay - 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 full title of the course in the memo line of your check.

- 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.
- For courses with set dates, please pay at the start and note the fee listed in the course description.

If fees present a hardship, please inquire about a scholarship 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.

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(802) 425-6345
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Library news



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

Community Conservations:
We need your voice, opinion and ideas! Please consider joining the Charlotte Community Partnership as we discuss the topics and themes from the community resilience survey. The forums are open for all conversation but each meeting focuses on a different survey section. Help us all work together to keep Charlotte resilient and ready for the future. Sign up for meeting sessions here: bit.ly/convo05445

VaxHelp 05445

Charlotte's VaxHelp volunteers are here to help. Do you have non-medical questions about the vaccine?

Need help signing up for a vaccine?

Need a ride to a vaccine site?

Three ways to contact us:

By phone: 425-3864 (Charlotte Library)

By email: VaxHelp05445@gmail.com

Online: bit.ly/VaxHelp

Please spread the word to friends and neighbors who could use some help.

Take & Make Activities for May

Available in the library entryway
Create a festive piñata for any of your spring celebrations!

Pick up an Arbor Day kit to commemorate our forests and trees all month long

Seed Library News

Our Charlotte Seed Library and co-coordinators, Linda Hamilton and Karen Tuininga, were recently featured in *Seven Days*. Check it out: www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/the-charlotte-library-educates-on-heirloom-plants-and-lends-seeds/Content

There is still time to check out the heirloom vegetable/herb/edible flower seeds available for planting this year (and hopefully saving some seeds from the plants). Find the catalog at charlotteseedlibrary.org and email your

request to seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org. We will label and put your special seeds in the Library foyer for pick up.

Starting a small garden and not sure what to plant? Try one of our free Garden Starter Kits, with packets of a few seeds each of some popular vegetables/herbs/flowers. Available now in the Library foyer. Happy gardening!

Upcoming Programs Online Questions?
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org
Phone: 425-3864

Coding Club for Kids

Wednesdays @ 3 pm through May 28

Scratch enthusiasts are invited to join Susanna to work on a project, connect, and problem solve with other coders. Drop-in for one or more Zoom session. Recommended for 4th graders and up with some Scratch experience. Please register in advance for link.

Book Chat

Fridays @ 10 am

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

Virtual Tour: Museum of Everyday Life
Wednesday, May 12 @ 7 pm

Join curator Clare Dolan for an online tour of this unusual and amazing place, which has as its mission "a heroic, slow-motion cataloguing of the quotidian—a detailed, theatrical expression of gratitude and love for the miniscule and unglamorous experience of daily life in all its forms. We celebrate mundanity, and the mysterious delight embedded in the banal but beloved objects we touch every day." Please register in advance.

"How to Eat" Book Discussion

Thursday, May 13 @ 10 am

Hope Seggelink, Registered Dietician and Member of the Vermont Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics, leads a discussion of this new book from cookbook guru, Mark Bittman. What is the "best" diet? Do calories matter? And when it comes to protein, fat, and carbs, which ones are good and which are bad? Mark Bittman and health expert David Katz answer

all these questions and more in a lively and easy-to-read Q&A format. Inspired by their viral hit article on *Grub Street*—one of *New York* magazine's most popular and most-shared articles—Bittman and Katz share their clear, no-nonsense perspective on food and diet, answering questions covering everything from basic nutrients to superfoods to fad diets. Coordinated with the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. Copies of the book available via porch pickup at the Charlotte Library. Please register in advance for the Zoom link.

Friends Book Discussion: *The Snows of Kilimanjaro & Other Stories*

Thursday, May 13 @ 7:30 pm

The ideal introduction to the genius of Ernest Hemingway, this anthology contains ten of Hemingway's most acclaimed and popular works of short fiction. Beautiful in their simplicity, startling in their originality, and unsurpassed in their craftsmanship, the stories in this volume highlight one of America's master storytellers at the top of his form. Please register in advance.

Mystery Book Group: *Blanche on the Lam*
Monday, May 17 @ 10 am

Barbara Neely's Smart, Sassy and Groundbreaking Crime Novel
Blanche White is a plump, feisty, middle-aged African-American housekeeper working for the genteel rich in North Carolina. But when an employer stiff's her, and her checks bounce, she goes on the lam, hiding out as a maid for a wealthy family at their summer home. That plan goes awry when there's a murder and Blanche becomes the prime suspect. So she's forced to use her savvy, her sharp wit, and her old-girl network of domestic workers to discover the truth and save her own skin. Print copies are for check out via porch pickup. Audiobook version available on Libby for Charlotte patrons. Please register in advance.

Community Conversations Session #2:

Basic Needs & Services

Tuesday, May 18 @ 7 pm

The Charlotte Community Partnership* is taking the next step using the data from the Resilience Survey we conducted in

November and December to foster a series of 5 community discussions. Each discussion will focus on one of the 5 survey categories: 1) COVID-19, 2) Basic Needs and Services, 3) Environment and Natural Systems, 4) Physical Infrastructure, and 5) Community Connections and Capacity. We hope you will add your voice to the discussion!

**This group has met twice a month since last April and includes representatives from CCS, CCS PTO, Senior Center, Transition Town Charlotte, Seed Library, CVFRS, Grange and others. With a mind towards learning if people thought our town was resilient and beginning the discussion of how to become more resilient if necessary, the group partnered with Vermont-based Community Resilience Organizations, which has run these assessments throughout the state.*

Men's Book Group: *The Emerald Mile*
Wednesday, May 19 @ 7:30 pm

In the tradition of *The Perfect Storm* and *Seabiscuit*, the engrossing tale of the fastest boat ride ever down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Please contact the library to sign up. Copies of the book available via porch pickup.

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter: "Charlotte Library Newsletter".

The library building is closed to the public but books and other materials 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: 425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org

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Is our country a river?



Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

*I met her
accidentally in St.
Paul, Minnesota
She tore me up
everything I heard
her drawl, that
southern drawl.
Well I heard my
dream went back
downstream, cavortin' in Davenport
And I follow you big river when you
call.*

“Big River” – Johnny Cash

Do we see our planet as a living being unto itself with its own arteries and veins that, instead of carrying blood, are waterways that feed parts of our earth's system with water?

For example, let's look into this country's water anatomy. It is an anatomy that is divided by a major artery, the Mississippi River. It starts in my home state, in Lake Itasca, then drains south, fed by enough tributaries to eventually build into the major stream it becomes around the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, a distance of just over 200 miles.

Known as the “land of ten thousand lakes,” my home county had none of them. We relied on “The River” for our watershed. We never mentioned “The River's” name specifically. Yet, everyone knew it was the Mississippi.

As this country's artery, it was a water highway for goods and supplies that began its barge traffic in St. Paul

and carried it through locks, staying within shipping channels, through St. Louis and all the way to Louisiana to be loaded on freighters for shipment overseas.

Whereas the inter-state highway system was developed to both carry goods quickly across the country and to provide a defense rail system from coast to coast, “The River” is primarily a means of commercial transportation.

It also happens to be a major vacation artery. For many of my friends and their families, it was where you went weekends, even though it was 35 miles away. (My family's water vacation happened to be well north, the greatest of the “Great Lakes,” Superior. Among other amenities, it provided clear drinking water only a pump away from our camp. Water was definitely not drinkable out of “The River.”)

So while we did not have a vehicle on “The River,” many of my friends did, and I sponged off them regularly. To provide some significance of “The River's” importance, I found it curious that my father's boss, while working in Rochester, lived an hour away in Wabasha and in those days commuted daily. Furthermore, whenever asked where he did live, he seldom said Wabasha. Rather he replied, “Oh, I live on the river,” even though his house was smack dab in the center of town. (The house also became a movie star as the home of Anne Margaret's character in *Grumpy Old Men*. Its decor competed well beyond the ice fishing shacks that

filled much of Wabasha harbor each winter.)

Red Wing was another river town. It was the home of the Red Wing Boot factory, a major designer of outdoor and hiking boots. Once one considered buying a pair, the boots had to be tested by climbing Red Wing Bluff and looking out over “The River.” If they worked well after that exercise, one traipsed a bit north to down a bottle of Bub's Beer, which advertised itself as “Brewed in the shadow of Sugarloaf,” another vantage point above “The River.”

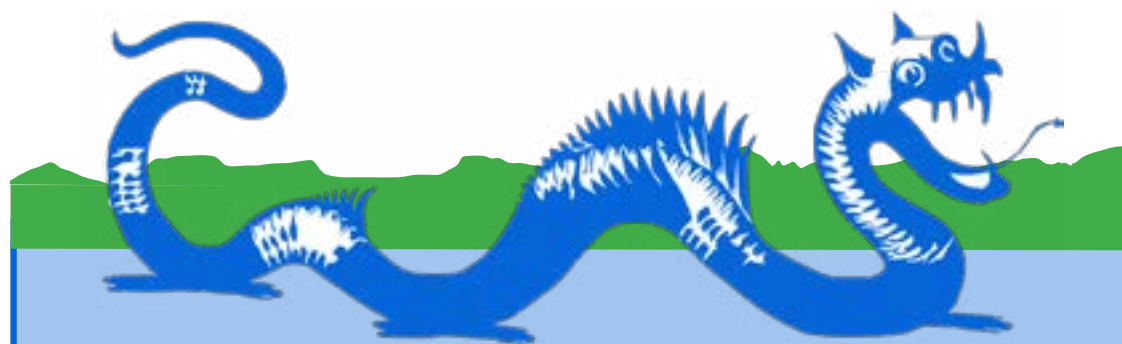
The River was truly a life-giving artery to the upper Midwest. It provided both pleasure and commerce. We even enjoyed powering our outboard into the wake of a tugboat and getting bounced until our stomachs gave in or the wake dumped us. We were clueless as to what drowning meant in human terms.

I see similar water arteries in New England, the Connecticut River being the one that comes immediately to mind. Having spent a year in Hanover, I was made aware of the annual Connecticut River Run, a paddle from Dartmouth College to Long Island Sound, an indication that, in my day, if you completed it you were a true Dartmouth Indian.

Don't say that the Mississippi or the Connecticut calls. Tell me that The River whispers my name. N'Orleans and the Sound beg my presence. They are in my blood, rivers of my dreams.

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. . . . I am haunted by waters.”

(Norman Maclean, *A River Runs Through It*, University of Chicago Press)



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