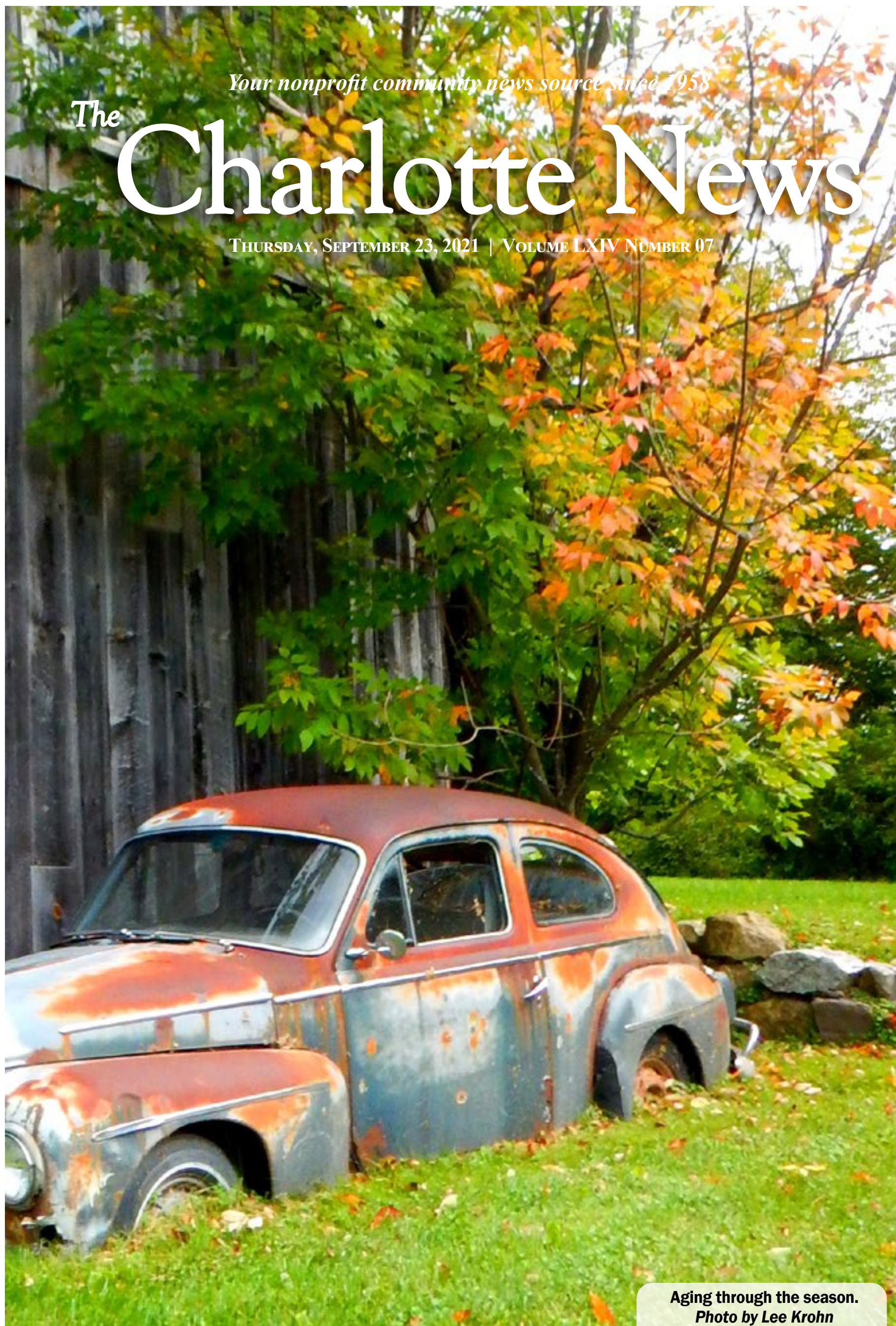


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# *The* Charlotte News

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2021 | VOLUME LXIV NUMBER 07



**Aging through the season.**  
**Photo by Lee Krohn**



## Backyard Bistro cited for land use violations



Mara Brooks  
EDITOR

*Charlotte Crossings owner Mike Dunbar said the restaurant will appeal*

Zoning Administrator Wendy Pelletier has put

Charlotte Crossings' Backyard Bistro on notice.

In a Sept. 14 Notice addressed to Backyard Bistro Gemini Properties, LLC, Pelletier warned building owners Debra Kassabian and Mike Dunbar, and restaurateurs Adam and Jill Spell the restaurant was in violation of the town's Land Use Regulations.

Offenses listed in the Notice included hosting large events on the Route 7 property, unauthorized parking, and adding gravel to an area identified as a Class 2 wetland buffer without proper permits.

"The number of seats inside and outside the Backyard Bistro restaurant exceeds the 26-seat limit established by the Certificate of Occupancy," Pelletier wrote. "Furthermore, for the event held at Backyard Bistro on

Sept. 4 ... there were roughly 80 tickets sold, and it was apparent that there were at least 50 seats set up outside and more than 30 seats set up under the tent."

This is not the first time Charlotte Crossings has locked horns with the town over Land Use Regulations. In August of last year, building owners Debra Kassabian and Mike Dunbar were ordered to stop hosting food trucks at the property because they were in violation of seven different regulations.

In a written statement to *The News*, Dunbar characterized the latest alleged violations as "mainly limitations in the Land Use Regulations and how they can be interpreted and selectively enforced."

The restaurant plans to appeal, Dunbar said.

"From the beginning, our vision at Charlotte Crossings was to build a place where Charlotters could cross paths, gather, and enjoy a nice meal," he said. "A local place to get together and build the community, as stated in our town plan."

Dunbar added that all six businesses located at the Charlotte Crossings building ("i.e., Red Onion, Charlotte WorkClub, Backyard



Backyard Bistro located at The Charlotte Crossing.

Photo by Mara Brooks

Bistro, Robbison Consulting, Junapr, and Guided Elephant) "are owned by Charlotte residents. We worked very hard through a pandemic to recruit a restaurant to move their business to Charlotte."

Former La Villa Bistro owners Jill and Adam Spell "moved from their restaurant location in Shelburne, changed their

SEE **BISTRO** PAGE 7

## Charlotte Health Center's long road to nowhere

Mara Brooks  
EDITOR

*Citing rising costs, Evergreen Family Health gives up on Charlotte—for now*

Evergreen Family Health's announcement last week that it suspended plans for a Charlotte Family Health Center came six days after the decision was made to halt the project, said Evergreen partner physician Paul Reiss.

"The partners made the decision on September 9," Reiss said.

The consensus to put the proposed health center on ice followed an appeal filed in August 27 by neighbors Rene and Jeanne Kaczka-Valliere—the second legal challenge aimed at the town's conditional approval of Evergreen's permit to build at 251 Ferry Road. A group of 16 residents led by Ronda Moore filed the first appeal on August 16 on the grounds that the site is a protected wetlands area.

For now, Evergreen's medical practice will remain in Shelburne, Reiss said.

"We are planning to stay in the Shelburne Green location for the foreseeable future and make that site as accessible and professional as our patients expect from our long history of community personalized care," Reiss said.

While Reiss said the appeals were not the only factor in the group's decision, he admitted the new legal wrinkles signaled a tipping point for the beleaguered project.

"[The appeals] were one of the things that made us take a step back and say, 'Do we really want to push this thing, and should we really push this thing through to the end?'" Reiss said. "It came to a point where we had to sit down with the group and talk about the long-term viability of the project. Is it

**"We don't have other options right now, so we're going to make a go of it in Shelburne and continue to take care of our patients who are very loyal and need our care. We won't be actively looking for another site."**

— Dr. Paul Reiss  
Evergreen partner

something that's going to work out for us financially if we continue to put good money after bad?"

Ultimately, the partners agreed it was time to step back.

"Once you're in it, you're just going through the motions and trying to get it done," Reiss said of the permitting process. "But periodically you have to reevaluate the situation. And we reevaluated it at that time."

Evergreen's efforts to bring a health center to Charlotte began nearly two years ago, Reiss said. But news of the plan only reached the public last fall when the permitting process got underway.

"The purchase and sales agreement [for 251 Ferry Road] was reached [in] January 2020, but the negotiations with the sellers started many months before that as we looked into the many issues with that property," Reiss

explained.

The sale of the property was contingent on all permits being approved and the project working out financially for the partners, Reiss said. The closing date was extended multiple times throughout the process, with the next date scheduled for November 1.

The sellers were notified that "the project is not going forward," Reiss said.

Pushback from neighbors of the proposed site on Ferry Road was "not unexpected," considering the power afforded them by state laws, Reiss said.

"It was a very small amount of opposition," Reiss said. "But Vermont laws are set up to allow any small group of community members to put the brakes on any project, no matter how noble or important it is for the community. Whether it's Act 250, or the ability to appeal in environmental court, it allows a very small group of people to really stop a project in its tracks."

But while Vermont developments, in general, may be vulnerable to appeals, Reiss said Charlotte is unique in its complete absence of a downtown area.

"Charlotte has no businesses, really, very few," Reiss said. "You don't want sprawl, but they don't even have any significant downtown such as Shelburne does or even other small towns that are more far flung in the state. Very rural towns have much more of a town center with shops and services and offices."

Not only does Charlotte lack businesses, Reiss said, but "there's nowhere to put any."

Despite his assertion that Evergreen has no plans to go forward with the health center, Reiss said the group will continue to defend their permits in environmental court.

SEE **HEALTH CENTER** PAGE 2

## Town looking to crowdsource ideas for ARPA projects

Shaw Israel Izkson  
CONTRIBUTOR

The Selectboard is looking for the public's input on how it should spend its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

The board discussed how to obtain public input and potential use of the funds during its regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 13.

Back in March, President Joseph Biden signed the ARPA into law, which directs \$65.1 billion in aid to cities and towns across America.

Charlotte has received \$370,000 in aid, but more than five months after the town received the aid, town officials are still trying to determine what to do with it.

Selectboard members Lewis Mudge and Louise McCarren have been leading research for the town on potential uses for the funds.

"We should dedicate at least two meetings this fall specifically to this," Mudge told the board. "We need to explain to the public what the funds can and cannot be used for."

McCarren suggested that the town put links on its website to find more information concerning the funds, including a form on the website asking residents for suggestions.

"We should have a public space, along with meetings for input," McCarren said.

Chairman Matt Krasnow said that funds from

SEE **ARPA** PAGE 4



## Town

## State Police identify body found in Lake Champlain

Mara Brooks  
EDITOR

The Vermont State Police have identified the victim found dead in the waters of Lake Champlain last Friday as Katherine Curley, 74, of Evergreen, Colorado.

An autopsy was performed at the Chief Medical Examiner's Office in Burlington. The cause of Ms. Curley's death was found to be drowning, and the manner of death was ruled an accident.

The other person aboard the boat at the time of the incident was William F. Snow, 76, also of Evergreen, Colorado.

At about 10 a.m. on Friday, troopers from the Williston Barracks responded to the area of Point Bay Marina in Charlotte for a report of a missing person. Troopers learned that an off-duty firefighter who was fishing on the lake at about 9:30 a.m. had located an elderly man who appeared to be experiencing mental distress alone on a sailboat off the shore of Cedar Island.

The U.S. Coast Guard responded from the Burlington station and towed the 29-foot sailboat and its occupant back to shore. At that time, first responders learned that a second occupant might have been on board. Subsequently, dispatch received a 911 from another boater who reported finding a body at about 10 a.m. located off the shores of Cedar Island. The Coast Guard and Charlotte



Boat launch looking at Lake Champlain in Charlotte.

Photo by Mara Brooks

Volunteer Fire Department responded and located the body of a woman.

Through investigation, troopers with the Vermont State Police were able to determine that Ms. Curley and Mr. Snow had left Charlotte together on Thursday night for an evening outing on the sailboat but never returned to the marina.

Members of the Vermont State Police, including detectives with the Criminal Division and troopers with the Field Force Division, investigated. Preliminary indications were that

Ms. Curley fell overboard and drowned. There was no evidence suggesting the incident was suspicious, police said.

Ms. Curley's remains were transported to the Chief Medical Examiner's Office in Burlington for an autopsy. Mr. Snow was taken to the University of Vermont Medical Center for evaluation. Their identities were initially withheld pending notification of relatives.

State police will provide updates as the investigation continues.

## HEALTH CENTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The work we did on [the health center] resulted in a number of permits that we obtained, and those permits are worth something if somebody else wants to purchase them from us," Reiss said. "It's in the best interests of the town and the current owners to defend that it's buildable under the conditions that the town approved."

Reiss said if the permits are upheld that "they'll last for a couple of years, where somebody else could potentially do the project for us or for someone else."

The Kaczka-Vallieres expressed distrust of Evergreen's motives for defending the permits.

"Evergreen's statement elicits confusion,"

said the couple in a written statement. "During the past year, this has been our continued experience with the developers and the process. The fact that they have 'suspended' the development and intend to protect their investment in environmental court, leads us to believe that they intend to pursue the health center in this location. We support the health center in Charlotte. It's unfortunate that Evergreen would not work closer with us to mitigate legitimate concerns."

But Reiss insisted that even if Evergreen's permits are found to be valid, he does not see a path forward for a Charlotte Health Center anytime soon. He explained that the landscape of primary health care has changed in ways Evergreen did not anticipate when the project began.

"[Two years ago] there was a promise of healthcare reform and OneCare and the state all-payer model," Reiss said. "There was a promise that primary care would be supported and elevated to the point where more people would want to go into it, and it wouldn't be so grinding, it wouldn't be

so hard to make ends meet. But that hasn't happened."

Instead, healthcare reform has "really moved towards supporting institutional care through federally qualified health centers who get significant subsidies, and through our major hospital organizations who also have subsidies in the sense that they're tax free and can raise rates," Reiss said.

Reiss insisted Evergreen's primary reason for aborting the project was the "lack of appropriate payment" for primary care services by both government payers and commercial insurers, and "the flagrant failure of healthcare reform efforts to stabilize and solidify community primary care services."

To date, the proposed health center has cost Evergreen partners close to \$200,000, or "tens of thousands of dollars" in individual losses, Reiss said.

"[Project costs] basically comes out of the pockets of the individual partners of our group," Reiss explained. "The hours and the money that we put into it becomes a direct loss."

Reiss said Evergreen has no plans to look for another site.

"We don't have other options right now, so we're going to make a go of it in Shelburne and continue to take care of our patients who are very loyal and need our care," he said. "We won't be actively looking for another site."

Town Planner Larry Lewack told *The News* he stands by the town's July 29 approval of the health center's permit application.

"I believe the decision effectively balanced the Health Center's interests and goals with affected neighbors' concerns, and correctly applied flexibility in local and state wetland protection rules while limiting this project's wetland impacts," Lewack said. "It was a good decision, despite this outcome."

## Can you spare two hours a month?

*The Charlotte News* is looking for a volunteer to deliver the paper to 10 locations in and around Charlotte. The route takes about an hour and your time is only needed twice a month on a Thursday. Help us spread the news! If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Anna at [anna@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:anna@thecharlottenews.org).



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## 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.

## 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.
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Town .....

Senior Center repairs take shape

Lane Morrison  
CONTRIBUTOR

The Charlotte Senior Center was built in 2002 and has since experienced various upgrades and modifications. The exterior, however, has started to look a little shabby over recent years. Town budget money was set aside after various walk-arounds of the building by town officials to get an appreciation of the deterioration and possible water damage to the structure.

Denton Construction was awarded a contract by the town to repair and replace siding, trim and paint as necessary. Work started this past week with the discovery of major deterioration at the base of the cupola. Thanks to the work of Peter Denton and his crew, the work was completed, and the Senior Center appearance continues to be a welcoming

community asset for seniors.

The Senior Center is open and offering various classes, exercises, meals and weekly Wednesday presentations. The Senior Center Board is in constant contact with state officials and comparing local practices to be sure their activities

are safe. Recently a hybrid model of an exercise class was offered; participants could join by Zoom from home or attend in person.



Photos by John Quinney and Lane Morrison

Letters to the Editor .....

Vermont Commons neighbor warns town that education center could harm wildlife, property values

Prep school is misleading town, long-time resident claims

My name is Sara Shays and I am writing to you in regard to the Vermont Commons School article. I live one lot from the proposed site, and I am very concerned about what this will do to my East Charlotte neighborhood. This is a quiet, peaceful area with farm animals, wildlife and natural wetlands, and families with children (and grandchildren). We all live here for these things.

At first the idea of school-age children coming and learning about the wildlife was great. But the plans are so far from that!

VCS wants nothing more than a sports and events center with no proper bathroom or running water. They want to disrupt one of largest wildlife corridors in East Charlotte by putting yurts for camping there. This will also involve fires in the forest. What is this teaching students about safety and protection of our wildlife?

All residents in this area who have recently subdivided have had to comply with having open space to protect the valley, wildlife and wetlands. At the very least, VCS should not be permitted to have any camping on the property. The State of Vermont has 55 beautiful state parks for camping with proper facilities.

As far as the sport and event center, I want the community to understand that this would not be like an occasional wedding. If the math is done correctly, the school has approximately 116 students, plus staff. Add parents, siblings and extended family members. These large numbers would be at events. For sports games, you have the teams and coaches, friends and families for each team. This could be hundreds of people. The current plan has 25 parking spots and overflow parking in a wet area directly behind another neighbor's home! There have already been issues with parents dropping off and picking up students on Spear Street. It was very dangerous. This event center will disrupt neighbors on a regular basis. There would be many times a week that traffic would increase on Spear Street, which is already too narrow for the traffic it has now.

Who will pay for road infrastructure? Not VCS, they are a non-taxable entity. So, we as residents who pay high taxes to live in this beautiful area would be responsible for that cost.

I urge the community and elected officials to take a good hard look at this before just signing on the line.

I would like to see no camping or fires in the wildlife corridor, proper water and facilities, their own entrance to the site, all buildings in keeping with the location of other buildings on this section of the road, managed times of use with a cap on the number of people at one time, and protection for neighbors so that people visiting the VCS site do not wander onto others' property.

If the use of this site is not carefully outlined, it could open up a huge disturbance to this peaceful neighborhood. Will our property values go down? Will our taxes go up? I think they will.

I truly hope my letter will give the community a better picture of this situation because it is a much more intrusive use of this land in a residential area than Mr. Mahaffey is making it seem.

Sincerely,  
Sara Shays  
Charlotte

Selectboard refuses to address Moore resignation

Some things sit with you. You cannot shake them because they are just not right. Well, this is one of them for me.

The Selectboard, despite statements committing to increased transparency, has been deliberately opaque in deflecting public scrutiny from the recent behavior of two Selectboard chairmen.

Earlier this summer, citizen and volunteer ZBA member Ronda Moore was the victim of a calculated political hit after she publicized her misgivings about the proposed Charlotte Health Center permit application.

Lane Morrison, a former Selectboard chair and the current ZBA chair, publicly accused Ms. Moore of violating the Selectboard's trust and not being fair and open. He said Ms. Moore had an undisclosed conflict of interest with the

Charlotte Health Center and that he wanted her removed from the ZBA.

Matt Krasnow, the current Selectboard chair, piled on in a *Charlotte News* article saying that it was irrefutable that Ms. Moore had a conflict of interest.

Things heated up and the Town attorney got involved. Suddenly, Matt and Lane got religion and stopped talking about this. Efforts to remove Ms. Moore from the ZBA also stopped. But she eventually resigned her seat in protest over how she was treated and the destruction of her effectiveness on the board.

The Selectboard was asked to be transparent and put a discussion of the episode on their agenda. The Selectboard agreed that the town attorney would be contacted to see what details could be disclosed.

Months have passed but nothing has happened. Matt and Lane have never been held to account by the Selectboard for their demeaning, and apparently false, allegations which forced a volunteer off the ZBA. Not a peep.

Matt would not put a discussion of this episode on the Selectboard agenda. No objection from other Selectboard members.

And the Selectboard is slow-walking an open discussion of the town attorney's advice.

A citizen got railroaded off the ZBA, and there is dead silence from the Selectboard.

Is it any wonder that no one has applied to fill this vacant ZBA seat?

Stuart Bennett  
Charlotte



# Town

## ARPA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ARPA need to be committed by 2024.

“We do have a significant amount of time to commit the money,” he said. “For large potential expenditures of \$50,000 or more, including fire and rescue equipment, it has to go to a town vote. We have two years to consider larger infrastructure and community investments for the whole town to weigh in on. We will also have two and a half years to consider the smaller ones.”

Krasnow suggested that the town bring potential spending packages forward to town meetings during the next two years to get community input.

“There’s no one way to do this,” McCarren said. “I am thinking about ways for other townspeople to hop on and see what they are all thinking.”

“With the affordable housing fund, there is an application process and there are criteria laid out for awarding those applications,” Krasnow said. “As a board, we could look into a similar process for the funds, so it is very transparent what the decision points are for greenlighting some funding requests over others.”

Krasnow said one idea he received involved setting “a minimum guaranteed funding request,” providing that a certain criterion was met. “Any community request for \$500 is guaranteed to be committed as long as it meets ARPA funding standards.”

Krasnow added, “This will be a thorough and thoughtful process because a lot of funds

have been given to the community.”

Resident Robert Bloch asked a question about the philosophy of the Selectboard in addressing ARPA spending.

“Do we view this as this magical windfall that’s come to us and we will do everything we can to spend it within the rules?” Bloch asked. “Or is there any room in there for us to say, ‘Hey, we’re statistically the most prosperous community or one of the top three in the state. We have a federal government that has significant debt, and even though this money is available to us, there is an idea that we might return some or not spend some.’ Does that enter the equation at all, or is it ‘Hey, this is a windfall, baby! Let’s see if we can spend it all!’”

“If we do send some of it back, will it be reallocated to other [towns]?” McCarren asked.

No one on the board had the answers to Bloch or McCarren’s questions.

“This is not just magic money, and we have a responsibility to use it properly,” Bloch added. “There are plenty of useful things we can do with this money, and I hope we can use it properly.”

*Shaw Israel Izikson has been a journalist for 20 years. He is the founder and editor of The Winsted Phoenix and the former editor of The Winsted Journal. He won first place for editorial writing from the New England Press Association’s Better Newspaper Competition in 2015. He has worked at newspapers all over New England including in Connecticut, New York, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.*

## Selectboard approves funding

Shaw Israel Izikson  
CONTRIBUTOR

At their regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 13, the town’s Selectboard approved the expenditure of \$50,000 from the Charlotte Conservation Fund for a conservation project.

The applicants for the funds are the Charlotte Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust.

The two organizations applied for the funding for the easement acquisition price of a 59-acre parcel owned by Clark Hinsdale.

Hinsdale’s property is located between Spear Street and Bingham Brook Road.

According to the application submitted to the town by both organizations, the property is accessed through farm roads on an adjacent property owned by David Nichols.

The property is suited for agriculture use, with 83 percent of the soils on the land ranked as statewide, one acre designated as wetlands, two acres designated as woodland, and no waterways on the property.

With the conservation project, the organizations intend to protect the farmland and to add the land that has been protected through earlier conservation projects, including the adjacent Nichols farm, the nearby Fat Cow Farm, Adam’s Berry Farm, and Dylan Preston’s farm.

The application notes that the project will help to possibly transfer farmland to the next generation of farmers “...and to further the success of an established farm business, the Nichols Fodder Farm.”

The organizations note that there will be no public access to the land.

The total amount for the conservation project is \$468,000, with \$288,000 in funding from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, \$30,000 from the Charlotte



The Charlotte News file photo.

Land Trust, \$50,000 from the Charlotte Conservation Fund, and \$100,000 in bargain sale funds.

“This is one of the most straightforward applications we have ever brought forth to the town,” Charlotte Land Trust representative Kate Lampton said. “The land is entirely open, and, except for a couple of acres, it’s entirely farmable.”

“Clark has had conservation of this property for several years. The idea is for the property to be acquired by Nick Powden.”

Lampton said that Powden is in the process of taking over Nichols’ business and property and will eventually acquire Hinsdale’s property as well.

“One of the things that I learned from my mother, who is 90, is to embrace each stage of life,” Hinsdale told the board. “What I have been doing for the last several years is conserving land and also selling to conserve land for the next generation of farmers. I couldn’t be more proud of the job everyone is doing getting a great crop of young farmers on our land. We’re going to have a critical mass of skilled young people to take over the next generation of farming. It’s going to be very different from what some of us old-timers did.”



## September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month


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## PROPERTY TRANSFERS AUGUST 2021

**Aug. 2** Patrick Korkames & Kristen Daniels to Zachary Pollakoff & Nancy Rosenbloom, 9.0 acres with dwelling, 3494 Mt. Philo Rd., \$540,000.

**Aug. 11** Jed & Kelly Dousevicz to Brett Mayer & Ekaterina Luchanskay, 2.61 acres with dwelling, 2663 Greenbush Rd., \$895,000.

**Aug. 13** Richard S. Brokaw Jr. Trustee to Matthew & Margaret Citarella, .61 acres with dwelling, 1042 Church Hill Rd., \$549,000.

**Aug. 16** KR Properties LLC to Mary Theodore & Guy Johnson, 4.0 acres, 352 Half Mile Rd., land only, \$225,000.

**Aug. 18** Russell Blodgett to Shayne & Michelle Fenton, 31.43 acres with dwelling, 544 Ethan Allen, \$655,000.

**Aug. 19** Per & Jenny Eisenman to Aaron Darland & Cherry Woodburn, .04 acres, 12 Common Way, \$370,000.

**Aug. 20** David & Jane Garbose to Elizabeth Archangeli Trustee, 27 Inn Rd. condominium, \$529,000.

**Aug. 23** Donna & Gregory Liebert Trustees to Michael Swain & Meghan Winters, 11.41 acres with dwelling, 366 Bown Lane, \$575,000.

**Aug. 24** Estate of Leo Laberge to Cornelia Pillard & David Cole, 2.0 acres with dwelling, 4532 Greenbush Rd., \$258,500.

**Aug. 26** Sheila Kerr to Champlain Housing Trust Inc., 7 Common Way with quadplex, \$164,000.

**Aug. 26** Champlain Housing Trust to Jeanne K. Bateman, 7 Common Way with quadplex, \$303,000.

**Aug. 27** Cynthia Curtis Trust to Tracy L. Rubman Trust, 690 North Shore Rd., seasonal camp, \$479,000.

This information was supplied by Jay Strausser and Nancy Warren, Four Seasons Sothebys International Real Estate.





## Town

## Discussion on improved high speed internet access for residents scheduled for Sept. 27 meeting

Shaw Israel Izikson  
CONTRIBUTOR

The town's Selectboard has scheduled a discussion on fiber optic internet broadband access for their next meeting on Monday, Sept. 27, at 6 p.m. at Town Hall.

According to Selectboard member Louise McCarren, at the Sept. 27 meeting, a representative from Waitsfield and Champlain Valley Telecom (WCVT) will give a presentation on the town's broadband coverage and how to potentially provide better coverage for residents.

State Rep. Michael Yantachka (D) told the board that, according to WCVT, at least 25 percent of Charlotte residents do not have fiber optic broadband internet access.

Yantachka, who serves on the House Energy and Technology Committee, said, "I've heard from a lot of people from Charlotte who are having trouble with slow broadband access."

"It is my intention, and the intention of the committee, to get high-speed broadband out to everyone in Vermont," he said. "WCVT has been building up fiber optic cable throughout Charlotte over the years. Now that there is money available from the federal government through the American Rescue Plan, we can allocate money to this. The sooner we can get on board with this, the better. What is going to happen is that there will be a huge demand for trained workers to install broadband."

He said that any upgrades to the town's internet system would allow for internet upload and download speeds up to 100 Megabits per second (Mbps).

"If you are a customer and you connect, you will have the option of getting those speeds, or if you don't want to pay as much money, you can get a slower speed," he said. "I am working with a 50 Mbps system and it seems to be working very well for me. My kids use it."

Board member McCarren said that she has conducted research on possible plans on upgrading broadband access for residents.

"I think the most important thing from the presentation by WCVT is to find out where there are holes in broadband coverage in town and what it will take to fix those holes," McCarren said. "There may be some really oddball places in Charlotte, and some residents may be served by a different company than WCVT. We can work that out."

She said that after investigating several plans the town should go for a public and private partnership with WCVT for internet upgrades.

"That's because our telephone company WCVT is a good provider," she said. "They know how to do this stuff."

"The sooner we get on board with this, the better," Rep. Yantachka said. "Let's get everybody connected as quickly as possible."

## Selectboard discusses but takes no action on groundwater source protection in West Village

Shaw Israel Izikson  
CONTRIBUTOR

The Selectboard thoroughly discussed but took no action on an agenda item concerning water quality in West Charlotte Village during their regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 13.

Chair Matt Krasnow said that he wants to keep the agenda item for future Selectboard meetings to keep an open dialogue for the public to provide input.

"A few months ago, it came to our attention that there was stormwater from Ferry Road running onto private property and not doing what it was intended to do from an engineering perspective," Krasnow said. "The last couple of months, the Selectboard has been looking at that with the previous stormwater scoping study that was conducted in 2015. We reviewed that and saw there is an infrastructure that is not working properly."

Krasnow said the board intends to "dust off that study and look at it with fresh eyes."

Resident Ronda Moore told Krasnow that there are various issues concerning water quality that have been going on for years.

"It's very well known that the groundwater recharge potential in the entire West Village, from Route 7 to the lake, is poor," Moore said. "Somewhere in this area, particularly along Greenbush Road, we're obtaining groundwater. We don't know where it's coming from."

Moore suggested that the town hire a hydrologist for a new study of the problem. "The West Village has also been challenged not just for water quality, but also water quantity," Moore said. "One well was drilled in 1972 and previously yielded 100 gallons per minute. In 2018 the well failed and it was corrected, but it failed again a year later. It got corrected again after it was drilled deeper. But the yield has gone from 100 gallons per minute to 20 gallons." Moore said that she suspects the decline in water quantity is typical of old water wells in the area.

"Over the years, they begin to decline," she

said. "There's some real concern about that because we don't have another source of water."

Krasnow said it is possible to use American Rescue Plan funds given to the town by the federal government to conduct studies on the problem.

"We are going to keep this on our radar," Krasnow said. "As potential funding ideas become clearer, and priorities crystalize, we're going to keep this discussion going and move forward."

Moore is a former member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and led a group of 16 residents who appealed the Planning Commission's July approval of the Charlotte Health Care Center. The petitioners argued that the proposed site of the center, at 251 Ferry Road, is a protected wetlands area and would violate the town's land use regulations if built at the location. On Wednesday, Sept. 15, *The Charlotte News* broke the story that Evergreen Family Health Group has suspended its plans to build the center.

## News from The News

### What is "Dissolution" all about?

John Quinney  
PUBLISHER AND PRESIDENT

In the June 3 issue of *The Charlotte News*, we reported that our application to the IRS for nonprofit, 501(c)3 status had been successful. This was a key step in efforts to simplify and improve our fundraising and financial management practices.

Earlier this year, as part of this process, the board of directors created a new organization, TCN, Inc. which is doing business as *The Charlotte News*. Now we're embarking on the next steps that are required to wind down the two organizations that served us so well for many years.

Elsewhere on page 19 of this paper, you'll see two "Notice to Creditors" advertisements. One is for "*The Charlotte News*" and the other for "Friends of *The Charlotte News*." We are required to post these notices and then to honor any subsequent and valid claims from creditors. As far as we are aware, there are no outstanding claims; all of the two organizations' bills have been paid in full.

It takes time and commitment to start a new organization and to wind down two others. Board member Vince Crockenberg, our lawyer Michael Russell, and our former treasurer Ted LeBlanc, have led this work. We are most grateful to them. Going forward, our new treasurer Margery McCracken will work with Mike to take this project to completion.

Rest assured, you'll see no changes in our publication schedule. Aside from a two-week break during the holiday season, *The Charlotte News* will continue to arrive in your mail box every two weeks. Look for more coverage of town meetings as well as stories from some new community writers.

As always, everyone here at *The News*, appreciates your support. We couldn't keep the presses running without our advertisers, volunteers, donors, staff and writers. Thank you all.

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## Around Town

### Congratulations:

to **Kate von Trapp** on her marriage to Chris Renner on Aug. 7, 2021. The ceremony took place at her mother's home (Jane von Trapp) on Lake Dunmore. Kate is a graduate of Charlotte Central School, St. George's School, and the University of Miami. Kate and Chris live in Burlington.

to **Ace McArleton** and his company, New Frameworks, whose retrofit of a house on Greenbush Road in Charlotte is featured in an article in the Sept. 15 *Seven Days*. The retrofit was designed to give the house "deep energy efficiency" while maintaining the basic design.

to **Lydia Clemmons** of Charlotte who received the Arthur Williams Award for Service to the Arts. Lydia is the steward of the Clemmons family farm off Greenbush Road where she teaches African culture through the farm site. Lydia has 35 years of community development experience, both here and in Africa. The Clemmons farm is one of the 0.4 percent of farms in the U.S. that remain Black-owned, and its history remains an important teaching tool. Lydia's father, Jackson Clemmons, grew up in southern Wisconsin before attending medical school. Lydia's grandfather had been moved to Wisconsin from the deep south to integrate an otherwise all-white staffed headquarters of the Fairbanks-Morse Power Corporation in Beloit, Wisconsin.

to **Alex Buntin** of Charlotte for his recent appointment as Leadership and Talent Manager for the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce. A former editor

of *The Charlotte News*, Alex more recently served as Project Manager for the Burlington Business Association. Alex earned a baccalaureate degree from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and masters from the universities of Uppsala, Sweden and the University of Deusto, Spain.

### Sympathy:

is expressed to family and friends of **Harold (Chubby) Moran** of Shelburne who died Sept. 1 at the age of 93. He was the first baby to be born in the new DeGoesbriand Hospital in Burlington. Among other work positions in the area, he was a financial administrator with Burlington hospitals. His surviving family includes children Sean, Karen Lafayette, and Tim, as well as daughter-in-law Ceal Moran—all with ties to Charlotte. Those wishing to make financial contributions in Harold's name are urged to consider Ronald McDonald House Charities, 16 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington, VT 05401.

### David Garrett

David Walter Garrett, 78, of Charlotte, died on Aug. 17 from heart failure brought on by a breakthrough COVID infection. Though tragic, it was as he would have wanted it: over in an instant at his home, the



David Garrett

historic Cedar Farm on Thompson's Point in Charlotte.

A woodsman, artist, investment manager, entrepreneur and hotelier, things that seemed impossible regularly came to be real—from a cabin in the Adirondacks he built by hand, to a boutique hotel company that set new standards for ultra-luxury accommodation and historic preservation.

David was one of the most experienced developers in the world of small, high-end hotels, beginning with the purchase in the 1980s of a Rockefeller Great Camp on Upper Saranac Lake, New York, known as The Point. The hotel became one of the most lauded luxury properties in the country and led to other hotels, including The Lake Placid Lodge, The Wilcox in Aiken, South Carolina, and The Inn of the Five Graces in Santa Fe, New Mexico. David was also instrumental in Twin Farms in Barnard, Vermont. He had served as North American president of the prestigious Relais & Chateaux hotel association.

He helped inspire a renaissance of all things Adirondack. He enlisted local craftspeople to build pieces for the hotels and he also made pieces himself—many are on display in his most recent hotel project, The Ivy, in Baltimore, Maryland; in his barn/office in Charlotte; and on his website, Corkiture.com, named for his fascination with using corks in his furniture making.

David was born in New York City on Dec. 12, 1942, and grew up in Scarborough, New York with his brother, Daniel. His parents, Daniel N. Garrett and Louise Benson

Garrett, were transplanted Southerners, and David nurtured a lifelong fascination with his family genealogy.

As a boy, he was drawn to the woods and fascinated by the television show, "Daniel Boone," impressed by the warm family life in a log cabin. He attended The Williston Northampton School and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he even lived in a log cabin.

After college, he met his wife, Christie Coursen, then a flight attendant for TWA. In 1967, he purchased 165 acres in the Adirondacks and began building his own cabin that became a family retreat. All important life decisions, he'd say, were made at the cabin.

David was a broker at Moseley, Hallgarten, Estabrook & Weeden and later at First Albany, managing offices in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in Burlington. He also helped the Vermont Teddy Bear Company go from a pushcart to a booming bear-gram business. In 2008, David and Christie started Garrett Hotel Consulting, where they advised on properties around the country.

David is survived by his wife of 53 years, Christie, of Charlotte; daughter Erin Garrett-Metz, her husband, Andrew Metz, and their children, Lydia, Daniel and Miriam of Manchester by the Sea, Massachusetts; daughter, Moriah Garrett, her husband, Rob Arthur, and their children, Samuel, Elouise and Olive of Baltimore, Maryland; and daughter, Caitrin Garrett of Burlington.



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Town

Is it raining golf balls?

John Hammer  
CHARLOTTE-SHELBURNE-HINESBURG  
ROTARY CLUB

What do you get when you mix a beautiful Vermont summer morning with 1,100 golf balls, a helicopter and the Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary Club? You get a big win for Shelburne resident Caleigh Thompson. She won first prize at the club’s first-ever airborne drop at The Kwini Club/ Gonzo’s on Spear Street in Shelburne. The excitement was palpable as the copter made its low introductory pass over the big red “pin” 60 yards away. The rain of balls from the subsequent hovering helo drew a collective gasp as the balls hit the ground. And the winning ball came to rest six inches from the “pin,” beating out the runner up by two inches. The farthest ball at 15 yards won its owner a substantial gift basket.

The Golf Ball Drop is an ongoing project and will net the Rotary Club more than \$11,000 that will be divided equally among the fire and rescue departments of the club’s three towns. The total of number of calls to which they responded last year was 2,100. The club would like to particularly thank Beta Technologies for providing the pilot and aircraft and The Kwini Club for their generous support, as well as all those who contributed to the program by buying balls. A special thanks goes to Steve Gonsalves who arranged for the wonderful machine that swept up all the balls, saving the Rotarians the backbreaking task of picking up and washing all those balls. We look forward to the next big drop, which is hopefully set for Sept. 24 next year.



Above: Beta Technologies helo at the Drop.  
Right: Pictured left to right: Chris Davis (CH Battalion Chief), Dave McLellan (SH), Jon Davis (CH Fire Captain), Jacob Leopold (SH Rescue Chief), Evan Knoth (CH).

Photos contributed



Some of the Charlotters present at the Golf Ball Drop. Left to right: Teena Flood, John Hammer, Ric Flood, Linda Gilbert.



BISTRO

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

[business] name and completely revamped their menu overnight,” Dunbar wrote. “This is a very difficult thing to do especially in these times, and boy, they nailed it.”

In a combined written statement, Jill and Adam Spell said, “We are here to provide a service and benefit to our community, which has so far been well received. The town of Charlotte citizens have been asking for this for years.”

Dunbar lamented that at a time when the

group “should be celebrating” the success of their restaurant, they are instead “dealing with violations and how to operate in a town not supportive of our vision and hard work.”

Backyard Bistro has seven days from the date of the notice to comply with the town’s demands or risk fines of up to \$200 per day.

The restaurant was given until Sept. 30



to remove the unauthorized gravel from the property.

Dunbar encouraged residents of Charlotte who would like to offer “feedback” to the zoning office to email or call the town office and ask for Town Administrator Dean Bloch, Town Planner Larry Lewack, or Zoning Administrator Wendy Pelletier.

He added that Backyard Bistro is

“always willing to sit down at the table and figure out how we can successfully run our business in Charlotte within the regulations and find a way where it works for everyone.”

The Spells echoed Dunbar’s sentiment.

“We look forward to working with the Town to navigate a successful solution to continue to give the residents of Charlotte a product they really enjoy,” they said.

Backyard Bistro has 15 days to appeal the notice with the Zoning Board of Adjustment.



Town

Annual Kelly Brush Ride rolls through Charlotte

Gail Callahan  
CONTRIBUTOR

When local physical therapist Kristi Johnson realized that a cyclist participating in the 16th Annual Kelly Brush Ride needed help, she didn't hesitate to assist.

Johnson, who practices at PT 360 in Shelburne, got athletic tape so the cyclist on the course could get on the road again. "I wanted to help out so she could complete her journey," said Johnson, who is also a cyclist.

Johnson of Hinesburg decided to volunteer her time Saturday at the fuel station table near

Spear's Corner Store during the Annual Kelly Brush Ride because she is a proponent of community building, she said. "As a physical therapist, I like to be here and help."

Underneath a brilliantly blue and sunny sky, the table served as the rest site for 100-mile cyclists. An array of sandwiches, muffins and drinks adorned the counter. Cyclists had two options for the event: either participate in person or join virtually.

The event netted over \$810,000 and saw 902 individuals and 84 teams participate. Kicking off at Middlebury College, cyclists could choose from 10-, 20-, 50- and 100-mile rides. Team Midd 80s took first place in the team division, raising over \$89,000, while cyclist Edie Perkins took in more than \$20,000 in contributions, according to the foundation's website.

Cyclists enjoyed views of the Green and Adirondack mountains and Lake Champlain as they made their way along the course. Karen Kosi-Koskowski, a Saratoga, New York, resident, was drawn to the event because of the athletic component of the ride. "We were blessed with beautiful weather," she said. "I'm an athlete and I bike."

Billed as an "iconic Northern New England charity event," according to the group's website, its mission centers on bringing people together, supporting the foundation to "inspire and empower those with spinal cord injuries, so they can live active and involved lives."

Shelburne resident Dale Loeffler cited her relationship with the Brush family for her devotion to the event. She was on hand to lend a smile and encouraging words to cyclists who stopped for a break at the fuel station.

The organization's website also noted "proceeds from the Kelly Brush Ride help people with paralysis buy the extremely costly adaptive sports equipment they need for athletic trails, roads, the court, or any other site to get active. The Kelly Brush Ride has empowered the agency to purchase equipment for over 1,000 people in 48 states nationwide."

The woman at the center of the race grew up in Charlotte. Kelly's family—her parents and an older sister—also made their marks in the skiing world. Her mom competed in the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Games, her dad skied for and coached at Middlebury College, and her sister already was a presence on the ski team. Kelly kicked off her sport endeavors with alpine ski racing, gymnastics, soccer, basketball, softball



L to R: Jim Gallagher of Garden City, NY and Edgar Rico of Long Island, NY at a Kelly Brush Foundation fuel station in Charlotte.  
Photo by Gail Callahan

and swimming. As a high school student at the Green Mountain Valley School, Kelly focused on alpine ski racing. Kelly's time at the school also saw her head the soccer and lacrosse teams. Golf, ice skating on a pond behind her home, water skiing on Lake Champlain and surfing also ignited her passion for sport. With a growing reputation as an elite athlete, her world centered on alpine ski racing, according to the foundation's website.

By the age of seven, Kelly's moniker was "Tiger" for her "hard- charging, confident ski racing style," according to the agency's website. As she matured, Kelly climbed the national rankings ladder. She shone in events such as downhill and Super G, considered speed events, qualifying to race in the U.S. National Championships during her junior and senior high school years. Her prowess on the course led to a lion's share of attention from college ski programs.

Selecting Middlebury College, Kelly achieved success on the ski slopes, but an accident during the February 2006 Williams College Carnival ended her dreams. Kelly's accident occurred after she came over a knoll and caught an edge on an icy patch. She battled to remain on the course, but her ski edge caught, going off the trail. She struck a lift tower and suffered severe injuries, including a spinal cord injury at the T 7-8 level. She also fractured

four ribs, broke a vertebra in her neck and collapsed a lung. Kelly underwent 10 hours of immediate surgery to re-align and stabilize her spine at the Berkshire Medical Center.

Kelly returned to Middlebury College in fall 2006 after more than three months in hospitals. She also spent time getting used to a wheelchair. Despite her injury, she retained her active role on the college ski team. She mastered skiing on a monoski, or a single, wide ski.

The foundation website notes that Kelly graduated on time from Middlebury College in spring 2008—despite missing a semester due to her injury—to a standing ovation, bringing the graduation ceremony to a halt. Since that time Kelly has been honored with a bevy of awards, including the NCAA Inspiration Award. She also worked for ESPN for a year after graduation before moving to Boston to attend nursing school.

She now works as a pediatric nurse practitioner and is intimately involved with the Kelly Brush Foundation. She is committed to an array of sports, including skiing, biking, golf, tennis and, when able, surfing. In April 2016 Kelly and her husband, Zeke, welcomed their daughter Dylan; nearly three years later, the couple had their second daughter, Nell. The website includes a photo of Kelly and the two girls.

Calendar  
Events

We welcome appropriate community event listings with a maximum of 100 words. Print fees may apply to community events outside of Charlotte.

Email your events to  
ads@thecharlottenews.org.

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**Saturday, October 2 from 10 a.m. - 12 p.m.**  
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## Nicole Junas Ravlin: Getting accolades from near and far



Phyl Newbeck  
CONTRIBUTOR

Nicole Junas Ravlin has always had an interest in news and used to wonder why certain topics were covered and others were not. “I wanted to find a way to be involved in the news industry without being a journalist,”

she said. Ravlin studied public relations in college and has worked in the field for over 25 years. This year was a watershed one as she received both local and national recognition. Locally, Vermont Business Magazine named her firm Junapr the best PR firm in Vermont. Nationally, PR News placed Junapr in the “Elite Top 100” and Ravlin, herself, was honored by that organization as one of the top women in PR for the year.

Ravlin’s first job in her chosen field was at Cone Communications in Boston. “Carole Cone is arguably the founder of cause communication,” Ravlin said. “That’s a way for businesses to leverage themselves to support a non-profit or cause and do some good in the world.” Ravlin learned how to partner with news outlets to disseminate that information. “We served as a broker for stories,” she said. When Ravlin moved to Vermont 15 years ago, she and a partner co-founded People Making Good in Burlington. Two years ago, she left that firm to start Junapr.

For six years, Ravlin helped others learn about public relations as an adjunct professor at Champlain College. Although she is not currently teaching, she enjoyed the opportunity to work with those who wanted to get started in the field. “I’ve had some great mentors,” she said. “So, when I was asked to teach, I jumped at the chance.” Junapr also has an internship program with two interns from area colleges joining the company each semester.

Ravlin’s love of media has not abated. She spends an hour and a half every morning reading eight newspapers. “Journalism is important for a free society,” she said. “I’m passionate about our First Amendment rights.” To help promote independent journalism, Ravlin joined the board of Vermont Public Radio, eventually serving as chair. With the merger of VPR and Vermont PBS, Ravlin now serves as chair of the united board and is excited to be part of the new collaboration. “Every board member wants to make sure all Vermonters have access to education, entertainment and news,” she said. “I believe free public media is essential.”

In addition to her other awards, Ravlin was named a Woman of Influence in the Food Industry in 2015. “When you own an agency you get to decide what kinds of clients you want,” Ravlin said. “I’m an avid home cook and think a lot about agriculture and where food comes from, so food, chefs and restaurants were at the top of my list for potential clients.”

Junapr is headquartered in the new Charlotte Crossing building, “just around the corner” from Ravlin’s home. “My team loves coming here every day,” she said. “There’s a nice trail behind the office that goes into the woods and it’s close to Point Bay Marina where I keep my sailboat.”



Nicole Junas Ravlin.

Below: David “Big Papi” Ortiz and Nicole  
*Photo contributed*



In addition to sailing and cooking, Ravlin enjoys skiing, but she is currently trying to spend as much time as possible with her two teenage boys—a sophomore and a senior at CVU—while she still has them at home.

In addition to her sons, Ravlin shares her home with Boggs, a dog named after the former Red Sox third baseman. An avid fan of Boston sports teams, Ravlin had the opportunity to meet former Sox star David Ortiz on the field at Fenway Park. “PR is an interesting job,” she said. “It can take you places you never thought of going.” The meeting with Ortiz was due to Ravlin’s work with Boloco, a Boston-based burrito chain. “Ortiz ate their burritos,” she said, “so we negotiated a deal where he designed a Big Papi burrito which was sold during his retirement season. A portion of the sales went to his foundation which helps pay for medical procedures for poor children in New England and the Dominican Republic.”

Ravlin is pleased with the awards she and her firm have garnered, including three gold Stevies from the American Business Association for their PR work on last year’s Masks4Missions and Vermont Mask Day campaign. She is also thrilled that her firm can do business from their location in Charlotte. “When we talk to clients across the country, they’re amazed that we can do our work from here,” she said. “We’re just happy to be part of the Charlotte community.”



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## Farm Series

# High Hedge Farms sets a high bar for humane, sustainably raised beef and pork

Lucie Lehmann  
CONTRIBUTOR

In the changing world of agriculture, new farmers are bringing exceptional creativity to one of the world's oldest endeavors. Bruno and Tara Murphy, owners since 2016 of the 165-acre High Hedge Farm in East Charlotte, embody that new trend perfectly: people with earlier careers for whom a commitment to ethical and sustainable practices is a driving force behind their choice to take up farming.

The couple met in the 1990s when they both worked at Proctor and Gamble in Pennsylvania. They married and started their family there, but in subsequent years moved 13 times to support Tara's career. A mechanical engineer by training, her trajectory took her to Green Mountain Coffee Roasters, then to Vermont Smoke & Cure, and now, at the age of 48, to the helm of Bee's Wrap, a Middlebury company that makes reusable food wraps as an alternative to plastic.

It was Bruno, 49, whose mother once raised goats, who always wanted to farm. Inspired, among other things, by Forrest Pritchard's book, *Gaining Ground: A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm*, the couple eventually returned to Charlotte, where they had lived earlier, bought the farm, and then acquired a herd of Rotokawa Devon cattle. The New Zealand breed, prized for its tender meat, is uncommon in the United States, in part because it doesn't do well on feed lots. But it's a distinguishing feature of High Hedge Farm, along with pasture-raised hogs and honey from their own bees. Bruno, largely self-taught through books and trial and error, runs the farm day to day and ensures that



Left to right: Tom, Tara and Bruno Murphy of High Hedge Farm. Photos by Lucie Lehmann

everything is raised, as he puts it, "in a way that benefits not only the land but the animals as well."

Their seven Duroc/Hampshire cross hogs, down from 20 last year, along with 35 head of cattle, are the lifeblood of High Hedge Farm. The animals are humanely raised, the cattle are 100 percent grass-fed and finished, and the yield from both breeds is marbled, tender and flavorful beef and pork. "It's quality over quantity with us," Bruno says. "It's respect for the life of the animals. You can raise them on feedlots or you can give them good lives like this. When you give them a good life, I feel good about keeping the animals and also the results."

As if to illustrate that point, this afternoon, while the cattle are currently grazing on lush pastures throughout Charlotte, the hogs are squealing happily on the farm in the open air. Bruno and Tom, the Murphys' 15-year-old son, create a new paddock by moving temporary fencing and then direct the pigs into a new section of densely overgrown hedgerow filled with invasive species like buckthorn, Asian honeysuckle and wild grapes. It's part of Bruno's plan to regenerate and reclaim overgrown parts of the farm. Over the course of several years, he and the animals have transformed the land, which hadn't been farmed for over 40 years. The hogs move in eagerly and, like heavy machinery, begin pulling down vines



and breaking up the soil with their constant rooting. In this symbiotic process, the Murphys gain more pasture for winter hay for their animals and the hogs enjoy a degree of freedom and togetherness that feedlots don't offer, as well as a richly varied diet that includes nuts, apples and berries, all of which lend a superior taste to their meat.

As you would expect, the couple are enthusiastic meat eaters, and it is their insistence on a gourmet eating experience, coupled with their commitments to humane treatment and the environment, that inform how the animals are bred and raised. "Meat raised without the use of antibiotics or hormones, that's so important," Tara points out. "If everybody could just do a little more...we could alleviate some of the whole [environmental] problem."

Demand for their beef and pork—sold primarily at the Shelburne farmers market and direct to customers who contact them—is high. It draws repeat customers like Lisa and Bob Downing, who praise not only the superior taste of the Murphys' meat, but the couple's philosophy of raising their animals. "To be honest, we would not buy meat that was not sustainably and humanely raised," Lisa Downing says. "We wouldn't go to the supermarket."

The Murphys recently bought half a pig and half a steer, which holds the cost of the meat down and eliminates waste, but also keeps the supply tight. "We could have sold three times as many pigs this year," Bruno acknowledges, but he won't do that because

it would impact the quality of the hogs' life.

The cattle enjoy a similarly free-range lifestyle before all the animals are eventually sent to a slaughterhouse in the Northeast Kingdom. Bruno rotates the herd among a number of pastures, including leased ground on nearby farms, a practice that he says is good for everyone. "It is nice to help the other landowners take care of their properties. They don't have animals so it's really beneficial for both parties." In the cold months, the livestock is fed on the high-quality hay that Bruno grows on their own and leased fields.

Continuing to return their farm to productivity is part of the couple's shared vision. They derive great satisfaction from improving their pastureland, planting wildflower meadows for the bees, rebuilding derelict barns, and reconstituting old stone walls that crisscross the farm. Whenever possible, they work as a team and as a family and relish that. "Other women on Saturday afternoon are shopping on Church Street, they're not moving pigs with you," Tara says playfully.

"There's always a protest about getting chippers on Saturdays," Bruno parries with a smile, referring to the work still to be done once the pigs move on to new sections of hedgerow. But obviously, there's nothing else they'd rather be doing.

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## From the Bench

# What's happening in the Vermont courts?



Helen Toor  
VERMONT  
SUPERIOR COURT  
JUDGE

### Q: Are the Vermont state courts open?

**A: Yes.** The business of the courts has continued throughout the pandemic. However, with some exceptions for emergency hearings, state courthouses were closed to the public for some time. When COVID-19 hit, we started testing

out video ("remote") hearings. Our IT folks quickly managed to get us set up with the necessary software—something similar to Zoom, called WebEx—so that hearings could continue. When someone needed to pick up a form or drop one off, there was limited access to the building for those purposes. When there was an in-person hearing, the parties, lawyers, witnesses and the media were allowed in. When the hearings were by video, the media or members of the public could request the link if they wished to observe.

Jury trials stopped until recently because we could not have so many people together in one room, and evictions and foreclosures stopped because of state and federal legislation that put such cases on hold. Recently, we have started scheduling such cases again and opening up courthouses for more in-person hearings.

### Q: Will remote hearings continue?

**A: Yes, to some extent.** One of the things we have learned from this experience is that remote hearings work very well for some kinds of hearings. Although many people think of jury trials when they think of courts, jury trials are actually only one aspect of our work. Many cases get decided by judges in "court trials," also called "bench trials," where there is no jury. Those can be days or weeks long, but many of them last only an hour or two. In addition, there are many briefer hearings, such as "status conferences," which are check-ins with the parties and their lawyers to discuss scheduling and other minor issues as the case is proceeding. These can be as short as 10 minutes. In the past, we often allowed participation in such brief hearings by phone, so video is actually an improvement. Since litigants and lawyers often do not live in the same town as the courthouse, we can save everyone the driving time that could easily exceed the time spent in the hearing. Lawyers who have cases in many different courthouses can now attend multiple hearings in a day without driving many miles to get from one court to another.

In addition, remote hearings can make the courts more accessible for many people. For example, anyone who lacks transportation, needs to be home with young children, or cannot afford to take a whole day off from work can benefit by being able to



Stock image

participate remotely rather than coming to the courthouse. Parties with physical or emotional disabilities can often participate more easily by logging in from home or work rather than having to drive or get a ride to the courthouse.

Even trials can be done remotely, as documents can be shared on the screen and even marked up remotely with arrows, notations and underlining. Some states have been doing remote jury trials for months now, and the Vermont Supreme Court recently approved such a procedure for our courts if the parties agree to it. See [vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/remote-jury-trials](http://vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/remote-jury-trials) for more information on that process.

### Q: So, will my hearing now be in person or remote?

**A: That depends.** The evidence is clear that COVID is spread through aerosols in the air; thus the air handling system in each courthouse needed to be evaluated. There are courthouses in each of the 14 counties in Vermont, and in some counties there are two courthouses (one for civil court, one for criminal and family court). While some of the buildings are relatively new, some are very old. The old buildings may have lovely architectural details, such as clock towers and carved wooden benches, but they were built at a time when things like air conditioning were not on the menu. Thus, some buildings needed upgrades to create adequate air flow, and some have still not been upgraded. As a result, a case that might be heard in person in one county may still be done remotely in another county that is not yet deemed safe for in-person hearings.

For a list of courthouses that are still closed to the public except for emergency hearings, see [vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/covid-19-and-court-operations](http://vermontjudiciary.org/about-vermont-judiciary/covid-19-and-court-operations).

### Q: What else is being done to assure the safety of those entering

discretion to allow someone who documents their vaccination to remove their mask in the courtroom, such as a witness while she testifies.

One of the reasons we are being so careful is that coming to court is not like going shopping, or to a restaurant. Most people are not in court by choice. Many are there because they were sued by someone else, or had to file a lawsuit, or are getting divorced or fighting over custody, or were charged with a crime. Others are there because they are witnesses called to testify, or victims of a crime. Some are lawyers, police officers or child protection workers, whose jobs require them to be in court. Some are there because they were called for jury duty. Any of these people may be highly vulnerable to COVID-19 for reasons such as medical conditions, or they may have children at home who cannot yet be vaccinated. As a result, the Vermont Supreme Court has determined that we should do all we can to protect the health of those who enter our buildings.

*Helen has been a Vermont Superior Court Judge for almost 20 years. Prior to that she was Chief of the Civil Division in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Burlington. She started her legal career at a large New York City law firm and then worked for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan. She has a degree in Environmental Studies from UVM and a law degree from the University of Chicago.*

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# Town

## Reducing energy use at the Charlotte Library

John Quinney and Bill Kallock  
CONTRIBUTORS

The Charlotte Library was built in 1997 with a least first cost approach. The 2,650 square foot building was air conditioned in summer, and in winter, heated with oil that was stored in an underground tank. While relatively inexpensive to construct, such buildings often have higher operating costs than energy efficient alternatives.

In 2014, the Charlotte Energy Committee worked with GWR Engineering on a Library Modeling and Net Zero Roadmap project. GWR determined that the main opportunities for reducing energy use were to replace the heating system, eliminate drafts and air leaks, improve ventilation and upgrade lighting. In addition to a roof upgrade (described below), GWR recommended: replacing the oil-fired heating system with heat pumps, reducing air infiltration by sealing gaps around windows, doors and specific locations identified in blower door testing, improved lighting controls and additional LEDs, and installing an energy recovery ventilation unit. If implemented, GWR's proposals were expected to cut the library's energy use by 65 percent.

In 2015, the town hired Ellis Construction to replace the asphalt shingled roof with a standing seam metal roof and to replace fiberglass batt insulation with spray foam. The results were quite impressive.

For the four-year period ending in June 2015, the library used an average of 1,300 gallons



Left: Heat pump in the children's room.  
Right: Entrance to the library.

*Photos by John Quinney*

of heating oil a year, adjusted for average winter weather. Electricity use was 20,000 kWh a year. At today's prices for heating oil and electricity, the library's total energy bill averaged \$7,400 a year, or \$3.51 per square foot.

For the four years after the roof improvements, the library used an average of 870 gallons of heating oil a year, adjusted for average winter weather. The library's total energy bill was reduced to \$6,150 a year, or \$2.92 per square foot, which amounts to a 17 percent



improvement.

In 2018, the library's staff and board began planning a 2,200 square foot addition to the library, a project that also included renovations and upgrades to the existing structure. According to library director Margaret Woodruff, the northern section of the library and the children's area were sometimes a bit chilly during the winter. In summer, the mezzanine was often hot and stuffy.

In April 2019, the town issued a Request for Bids for the library addition. The energy committee worked with the Library's Building Committee to require that the finished structure would minimize energy costs and attain Efficiency Vermont's "High Performance" designation for commercial buildings. This would require heat pumps to meet total heating and cooling needs, air-sealing and insulation in all building walls, high performance windows (with a U 0.25 rating), and a roof-mounted solar system sized to meet the building's total energy needs.

The energy committee focused on the solar system for the library roof working with the library board, the Selectboard and Leigh Seddon, an experienced solar designer, to develop a Request for Proposals. Green Lantern Solar was selected to finance and install the system. The economics were attractive with a six percent return on investment if the town exercised its option to purchase the solar system for a discounted price after five years. Unfortunately, the State of Vermont's fire marshal rejected the array design. In his judgment, covering the entire upper west-facing library roof with solar panels would not allow firefighters access in the event of a fire (there were no solar panels proposed on the entire east-facing roof). Removing panels to meet the fire marshal's requirements made the project uneconomic, and so, reluctantly, the energy committee and library board abandoned the library solar project and the goal of a net zero building.

In spring 2019, the Selectboard chose the ReArch/Bellweather Architects team to complete the expansion project using a design-build model promoted by then-board member Fritz Tegatz. The library and town were extremely fortunate that Fritz served as the project's construction manager, donating countless hours to help ensure that construction and commissioning was completed on schedule and within budget in March 2020.

As part of the design build process, ReArch modeled the building's energy use. They calculated that the new 4,800 square foot library would use 34,000 kWh of electricity and cost \$6,200 a year for heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation. This corresponds to \$1.30 per square foot.

We've looked at the library's electricity bills for the past year. Actual electricity use was 33,000 kWh, within three percent of projected consumption. Recall that before the 2015 roof upgrade, the library's energy costs were \$3.51 per square foot. Thanks to the energy saving design measures used in the new, expanded library, energy costs per square foot have been reduced by 66 percent to \$1.19 per square foot.

Margaret Woodruff reports that the new building feels tighter and less drafty than the old structure. The heat pumps performed flawlessly last winter, keeping the entire library warm and comfortable. During this summer's hottest days, the heat pumps were used as air conditioners, keeping room temperatures cool and comfortable. Plans are in the works for informational signs to describe the workings of the library's energy saving features.

Thanks to donors to Friends of the Library and the town's taxpayers for providing the funds that made this project possible.

*John Quinney is Publisher of The Charlotte News and President of the Board of Directors. He and Bill Kallock are former members of the Charlotte Energy Committee.*

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## Outdoors

# Scouting more area trails



Elizabeth Bassett  
CONTRIBUTOR

*Widening the focus beyond Charlotte's immediate neighbors, here's a sampling of walks within about a half hour of Charlotte.*

### Middlebury

Middlebury offers two unusual walking venues: TAM, the Trail Around Middlebury, and the Robert Frost Interpretive Trail.

TAM is a 16-mile footpath that encircles the town of Middlebury. It links town forest, conserved properties, schools and farms, and crosses Otter Creek on two bridges. Maps and information: Middlebury Area Land Trust, maltvt.org.

The Robert Frost Interpretive Trail, on Route 125 in Ripton, is a one-mile walk through the landscape that inspired poet Frost during his 23 summers in Ripton. Frost's poems are posted along the trails. The first 0.3-mile is accessible and suitable for wheelchairs.

### Ferrisburgh and Vergennes

Rokeby Museum, Ferrisburgh: A stop on the Underground Railroad and home to a Quaker family of abolitionists, Rokeby is more than a museum. It's a window into the life of a prosperous 19th century sheep farming family. These 90 acres tell the story of man's interactions with nature. Only a few miles south of Charlotte on Route 7, Rokeby offers

guided tours of the house and farm in season. An interpreted walk threads through forest, field, garden and orchard. rokeby.org.

Kingsland Bay State Park, Ferrisburgh: Although short, the 0.6-mile walking trail offers a restful stroll away from the lakeside busyness of the park. Beneath towering hemlocks and cedars, the trail stays close to the water as it follows the shoreline around MacDonough Point.

Button Bay State Park, Ferrisburgh: A nature trail, 1.6 miles, on the peninsula loops beneath very old oaks over limestone cliffs. The route is punctuated with listing northern white cedars and passes a giant fossilized maclurites magnus in the ancient bedrock. These snails lived in tropical waters about 500 million years ago.

Vergennes Falls Park: Not a very long walk but what a setting! Below the crashing falls on Otter Creek, six and a half acres of waterside park offer walking paths, picnic areas, fishing and a boat launch. Mechanic Street. vergennes.org/departments/city\_trails.

Buck Mountain: Located just south of Vergennes, this 900-foot sheepback mountain has unmarked trails that lead to its summit. This writer has only reached the summit by trial and error (lots of it). Make your first trip with someone who knows the way! Great views of Addison County farm fields.

### Burlington and nearby towns

Properties managed by the Winooski Valley

Park District are varied, from the scenic Essex Overlook to a hilly 3.5-mile walk around Colchester Pond. The WVPD, a cooperative of seven communities protecting natural resources in the Winooski River Valley, includes Burlington, Colchester, Essex, Jericho, South Burlington, Williston and Winooski. It manages and protects 18 parks and natural area on 1,750 acres of conserved land, with over 22 miles of trails and more than 13 miles of shoreline on lakes, ponds and rivers. For a listing, descriptions, and maps: wvpd.org.

Rock Point is a new preserve in Burlington. A coalition of municipal, state and non-profit partners collaborated with the Episcopal Church in Vermont to protect the spectacular lakeside peninsula not far north of downtown Burlington.

Among its many natural features is the world-renowned Champlain Thrust Fault. A similar phenomenon created Mt. Philo—an inversion in which older rock layers were thrust over younger rocks—an ancient mountain-building event known as the Taconic Orogeny. At Rock Point this fault is exposed at eye level.

The Episcopal Church in Vermont owns the land at Rock Point. Lake Champlain Land Trust holds a conservation easement and maintains the land and the trails. Visitors must adhere to certain rules and obtain a free trail pass via a quick, one-minute online form. Visit the Land Trust's website for directions, visitor guidelines, trail map, and trail pass: lclt.org.

### Charlotte Library day passes

If you've not noticed that the Charlotte Library is an amazing resource, you've not been paying attention. Our library has day passes for a 24-hour loan to some amazing places! Vermont state parks, Vermont state historic sites, and the Vermont History Museum in Montpelier, for starters. Always wanted to visit the Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington? Borrow the pass for a day. Vermont's 53 state parks range from a beach with sand dunes at Alburgh Bay to Smugglers' Notch, nestled between 1,000-foot cliffs in the Green Mountains, to 653-acre Green River Reservoir. Vermont state historic sites include Chimney Point, Bennington Monument, Mount Independence, and the home of President Calvin Coolidge. The library also has passes for Shelburne Museum, Shelburne Farms, ECHO in Burlington, Vermont Granite Museum in Barre, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, and the American Precision Museum in Windsor.

A final thought: the recently completed trail to the summit of Mt. Philo is a wonder of thoughtful construction by Timber and Stone, the gravel footpath and stone steps respecting the contours of the terrain. Bring your best lungs—it's quite a climb!

## Sports

# Fall sports season is off to a full start

The Redhawk fall sports season is off to a full start. Football, volleyball, soccer, field hockey, golf, cross-country running—with exception of football and field hockey, all others carry both men's and women's teams.

At one time not too long ago, CVU called itself "Soccer Central." That, however has changed, particularly with the loss of soccer coach Peter Coffey and the introduction of football. This fall the Redhawk football team, under the direction of head coach Rahn Fleming, has played three games, winning its opener against Burlington/South Burlington, then losing a tight contest to St. Johnsbury, 35-

23. Redhawk quarterback Max Desito threw for 273 passing yards and ran for an additional 57 yards. Alex Provost was his primary receiver with 8 catches for 148 yards.

This year, soccer saw tight contests between men and women from CVU and Hanover, New Hampshire, in the Jay Brady Tournament, the women 1-1, the men 3-3. The women came back to shut out Burr & Burton 4-0 on the back of Emma Crum's 3-goal hat trick.

Redhawk volleyball teams, its field hockey contingent, its golf and cross-country running crews have all begun their seasons with

strong showings. Saturday saw field hockey defeating Rice 4-0, and the men's volleyball team knocking off its archrival Essex 3-2 on Saturday.

In another age setting, Little League softball, the Champlain All Star Team was runner up to Connecticut Valley, 14-7, in the 10- to 12-year-old state championship game.

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*Health Matters* .....**Low back pain: an evidence-based approach**Alex Linde  
CONTRIBUTOR

Low back pain is an exceedingly common ailment that has been a cash cow for the medical device industry, the pharmacological industry, and individuals who tout scientifically unsubstantiated claims as facts. While we have become much more effective at treating, diagnosing, classifying and preventing causes of low back pain, there is a lack of research-based evidence regarding conservative therapies. My goals in writing this piece are to highlight the current best practice for physical therapists and bring to light a number of therapies that are commonly used but not supported. Please note, I am not a physician and I do not make any recommendations outside my scope of practice as a physical therapist. This article is also applicable only to simple cases of low back pain; there are many serious issues that can present as lower back pain, and they must be ruled out by a licensed professional before you start a therapy program. Any medical or surgical interventions should be recommended by a qualified healthcare provider. Always talk with your primary care provider before starting any medication and/or pursuing a novel treatment.

Low back pain is one of the most common musculoskeletal disorders for which people seek medical intervention. Some studies estimate nearly 36 percent of Americans will seek treatment each year. It is also one of the most common reasons individuals are referred to physical therapy. We have an understanding of the pathophysiology behind most episodic low back pain, as well as evidenced-based medical/surgical interventions for individuals with severe and emergent conditions. Unfortunately, consistently effective conservative management remains only moderately backed by hard science. In this article we will discuss the current clinical practice guidelines (a document that provides the most up-to-date and evidence-based treatment models) and what interventions are supported by scientific literature.

Let's get things started by discussing the risk factors for low back pain and their potential implications for diagnosis and treatment. There is moderate evidence to support occupational stressors are correlated with development of low back pain. Additionally, comorbidities such as cardiovascular disease and lifestyle factors (such as smoking, being overweight or being obese) are all correlated with sciatica. That being said, when we look to see if these factors impact the duration of symptoms or return to baseline, there is little support from the current literature. Across the board, expectation of a full recovery and lack of fear avoidance behavior are correlated with return to work and return to prior level of function following an episode of low back pain. Overall, the position of the guidelines is as follows: "Current literature does not support a definitive cause for initial episodes of low back pain. Risk factors are multifactorial, population specific, and only weakly associated with the development of low back pain." As a takeaway, skepticism of claims that your low back pain is due to a specific behavior or trait is warranted.

Once a patient has undergone a full physical evaluation, the next step is to start treating. The first section of the clinical practice

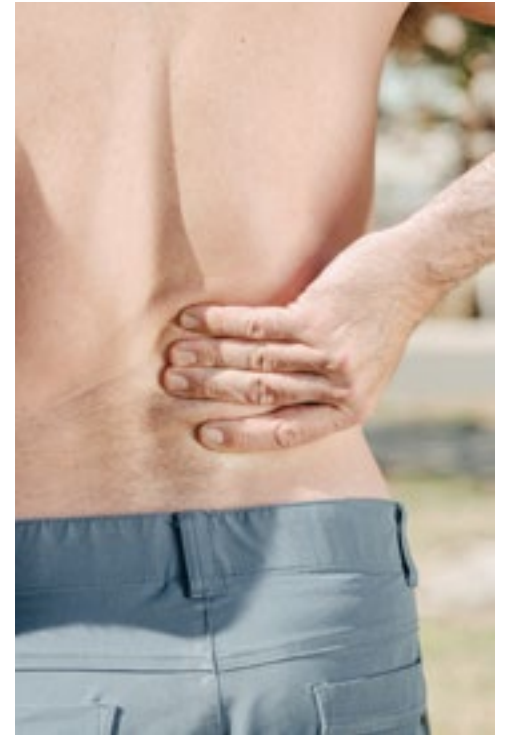


Photo by Kindel Media from Pexels

guideline addresses the use of manual (hands on) therapy for the treatment of low back pain. There is strong evidence in support of a thrust technique—think of having someone crack your back—to decrease both acute back pain and associated lower extremity pain. It should be noted this only applies to certain subsets of patients as there are many patients who do not feel improvement from a thrust technique. Also recommended, based on strong evidence, is trunk coordination, strengthening and endurance training (a well-designed core workout). In the case of low back pain with radiating pain into the lower extremities, there is strong evidence to support repeated movements that cause the symptoms in the affected lower extremity to lessen (known as centralization of symptoms). The last recommendation supported by strong evidence is progressive endurance exercises and fitness activities. The key takeaway is this: a program based on strong scientific evidence should include core strengthening, repetitive movements that cause pain in your legs to decrease, and as much physical activity as you can tolerate without exacerbating the symptoms.

There are a few additional techniques in this clinical practice guideline that are supported by weak, moderate or conflicting evidence. The first is flexion-based exercises. According to weak evidence, flexion-based exercises can be used in conjunction with manual therapy, progressive walking programs and strengthening activities in older patients with radiating pain into one limb. Additionally, nerve mobilization techniques may be beneficial for patients with chronic low back pain with radiating pain, provided they are used in conjunction with other supported interventions. The technique supported by conflicting evidence is lumbar traction. According to the most up-to-date research, patients with symptoms that correspond to nerve root compression will benefit from intermittent lumbar traction. On the flip side (and the reason there is conflicting evidence on the subject), patients with chronic low back pain and/or non-radicular symptoms should not be treated with static or intermittent traction. The only intervention included in the



## HEALTH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

guideline supported by moderate evidence is patient education. There is evidence to support patient education that promotes understanding of the underlying pathophysiology, the science behind pain, the favorable outcome of most low back pain cases, and the importance of returning to everyday functional activities in a timely manner.

There you have it, a broken-down and somewhat easier to understand version of the physical therapist clinical practice guideline for low back pain. The biggest goal of this post is that PT rehab protocols for low back pain should focus on function, proper classification, and should utilize the interventions that are supported by high-quality literature. You may notice this guideline did not mention TENS, ultrasound, craniosacral therapy, any “brand name” therapy, topical agents, braces or

specific exercise equipment. There are many different approaches to treat low back pain on the market and many professionals who will tell you they have the secret to curing your pain. While there is emerging evidence for some of the more unique treatments out there (see my post on trigger point dry needling), it is not yet substantial enough to make it into the clinical practice guideline. So, if you have low back pain without a formal diagnosis, please talk to your doctor about the next steps to take. If you have any questions about the information in this article, please reach out to me and I would be happy to give what answers I can.

*Alex Linde is a physical therapist at Dee PT in Hinesburg and treats patients with a range of injuries and fitness levels. Alex can be reached at ALinde@deept.com.*

## Out Takes .....

### Is it better to keep a gun on a leash?



Edd Merritt  
CONTRIBUTOR

*When I hold you in my arms -- oh yeah  
And I feel my finger on your trigger -- oh yeah  
I know nobody can do me no harm -- oh yeah  
Because, happiness is a warm gun*

Happiness is a Warm Gun  
-- The Beatles

Well, I’m on my gun pitch again; this time after reading an article in the October 2021 *Atlantic* magazine. Titled “Dispatches,” author David Frum argues that, “Responsible gun ownership is a lie.” While Americans covered pandemic needs with purchases that allowed them to live crowd free—things such as toilet paper, food, clean water, etc.—they also increased their purchase of guns dramatically. More than 23 million firearms were purchased—a gain of 65 % over the previous year. And things have not slowed down. In January, Americans bought another 4.3 million guns, setting a monthly record.

As I said in a previous *Out Takes*, I grew up in a gun-bearing family. My father hunted ducks and geese on a lake in southern Minnesota. On weekend mornings we would hunker in a duck blind, shivering in usually cold middle-to-late October. Most of the day we would hope the batteries would not give out on our portable radio so we could hear what the Golden Gophers were doing on the football gridiron.

The lake was shaped like an hourglass, and, periodically, the ducks would migrate from one globe to the other. Our blind was on a point sticking into the middle of the hourglass. Another family owned a similar point across from us, and as the ducks took flight, they or we would shout to the other point dwellers, “North!” or “South!” (It mattered not the least whether the Gophers were about to score that winning touchdown for the “Little Brown Jug.”) Canvas backs and red heads were the important matters of the moment. And they were not dummies themselves. They knew to stay high and above range of our shotguns until they had reached the other end of the lake. Most would make their flight unscathed.

The *Atlantic* article says that weapons are not

being bought largely for hunting, however. Roughly 11 and one half million Americans hunt in a year. Militia members are not the major purchasers either. The most often purchased gun is the modern semi-automatic handgun, and, according to buyers, most are purchased to protect themselves and their families. However, according to the article, in almost every way possible, the purchase makes the family less safe.

Dick’s Sporting Goods has reduced its over-the-counter sales of guns dramatically in the last three years. It began by a 10-store test, which was followed by an additional 125 stores in 2019—2020 saw 440 more of their stores stop selling guns.

Let me take guns a bit closer to home, particularly when I was growing up. My dad was both a duck hunter and a trap shooter, an active member of the local gun club where he could hang out Sunday mornings so he would not have to attend church.

As I said above, we owned a blind on a lake that had belonged to my grandfather. He no longer hunted, but used the cabin to get away from home on weekends. He would build a fire and fix a hot lunch while the ducks flew. Those duties kept him active and aware what was happening on his lake.

Guns also had a gender bias. They were almost strictly men’s tools. Looking at the skeet and trap ranges at the local gun club, it showed a male predominance. This was the 1950s and early 1960s when that predominance revolved around an influential stance over other men. Men fought wars. Women washed dishes.

Guns were symbols until they were put into use against others. That is the point at which, according to Frum, “so many Americans are deceived by so many illusions about what a gun will do for them.” Shooting ducks and geese for food is one thing. Shooting people for many different reasons—many of them insane—is quite another.

The late John Lennon and his cronies probably came as close to the truth, hinting that human nature is indeed theater of the absurd when we claim that happiness is most of all a warm gun.

There you are—“Bang, Bang, Shoot, Shoot.”



# In The Garden

## Preserving your garden harvest



Joan Weed  
CONTRIBUTOR

Talk about a fast-moving train. Does it seem autumn is approaching at speeds not seen before? Well, perhaps it's faulty memory or advanced age, but there is good news too. Visiting the many farm stands we are blessed with gives us appreciation of the plenty that accompanies the advancing season. Tomatoes, shiny purple eggplant, squashes, onions, potatoes, sweet corn, peppers of many hues! And the sweeter fruits of the orchards and berry patches! Time for freshly pressed cider, pumpkins, apples and cider doughnuts. Was ever a community so blessed with abundance?

I have been busy, as I am wont to be at harvest time, preserving as much of the goodness as possible to enjoy all winter. This happens to be less complicated than it was for our forebears. No need to make a root cellar; there's the extra fridge in the garage. What could be easier than freezing the extras?

I am going to share a few preserving ideas.

Horseradish came into my garden as a volunteer in some nursery pot and turns out to be a favorite. The root must be dug, washed and peeled, then ground as finely as possible (outdoors is best) and packed in jars. Fill jars with vinegar of at least five percent acidity and some salt. Refrigerate for months.

It's nearly time to plant garlic bulbs to harvest next July. Mine arrived a few days ago. You can buy new seed garlic or save your best and plant each year from your own stash. Don't try supermarket garlic, as inhibitors are often added to keep them from sprouting.

Alternatively, you can buy bulbs from a local organic farm.

Herbs are a blessing for so many dishes all year long. They may be chopped singly or in combination to add to softened butter and frozen. Another possibility is to chop and add to the salt of your choice. After drying, pack herbs in glass jars. Keep handy for adding as you cook. Pesto can be made with any green(s) but my favorite is basil pesto to add to tomato dishes, such as pasta sauce, or to dress Caprese salad.

Here's how to make it:

### Basil pesto

2 cups fresh basil, packed, stems removed  
1/4 cup pine nuts  
1/4 cup Parmigiano or Pecorino Romano cheese  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 large cloves garlic  
Enough olive oil for the consistency you prefer

In a food processor or blender, puree all ingredients, adding oil as you like. Some cooks prefer to hold back cheese to add later. Freeze the prepared pesto in small containers, chipping away needed amounts as you cook. Another way is to freeze it flat in a ziplock bag and break off needed amounts. Replace in freezer. It will keep for months frozen.

If you find yourself with a plethora of cherry tomatoes, place them on a sheet pan with olive oil, herbs of choice and garlic cloves. Roast at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or so, until softened. Puree with immersible blender or

food processor and freeze for roasted tomato sauce, a whole other taste.

Here is a selection of favorite harvest recipes:



### Old-fashioned chili sauce

24 ripe tomatoes  
6 green peppers, chopped  
6 onions, chopped finely  
1 tablespoon salt  
2 tablespoons cinnamon  
1/2 teaspoon cloves  
1/2 teaspoon allspice  
2 cups brown sugar  
4 cups cider vinegar

Peel and chop the tomatoes. Add to a heavy pan along with peppers, onions, seasonings and vinegar.

Simmer for two to three hours till thick. If sauce fails to thicken, I add either a can of tomato paste or puree about half of the sauce with my immersible blender. If you use a regular blender or food processor, be careful, it's hot!

Pour very hot liquid into hot clean jars, wipe

rims of jars with a damp paper towel. Put lid on and add screw top but don't tighten fully. Place on rack in canning pot and cover with boiling water by one inch. Process for 40 minutes. Remove and cool. Tighten rings.



### Pickled beets

1 bunch of fresh beets  
1 small onion  
1/2 cup cider vinegar  
3 tablespoons sugar  
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Trim one bunch of beets, taking off greens and tails. Place in pot of water and bring to a boil, cooking till tender.

When a fork sticks in easily, drain and cool

SEE **HARVEST** PAGE 17

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# In The Garden

## HARVEST

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

slightly. Slide off skins and tops with your hands.

Slice beets into rounds or wedges. Cut up one small yellow onion into crescents. Place both in a large jar or tall deli container. Pour in ½ cup cider vinegar and fill with water to cover beets. Add 3 tablespoons sugar, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste. Mix well. Taste marinade, adjust seasonings. Refrigerate for several hours. Serve with slotted spoon as a salad.



**Salsa**  
4 cups tomatoes, peeled, cored and chopped  
2 cups sweet green peppers, seeded and chopped  
1 cup hot peppers, seeded, chopped (jalapeños)  
¾ cup onion, chopped  
1½ teaspoon salt  
2 garlic cloves, minced  
1½ cups cider vinegar  
½ cup chopped fresh cilantro

Combine all ingredients in a large pot. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer about 20 minutes. If mixture is too watery, a can of tomato paste can be added to give a thicker consistency.

Pour hot mixture into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headroom. Adjust caps (wipe rims of jars, put on lids and screw tops firmly but not tightened). Process 30 minutes in a boiling water bath with water one inch over jar tops. Yield: about six half pints.

Alternatively, freeze portions in plastic deli containers or freezer bags; thaw well before using.

**Colache** (mixed vegetable medley) from *American Heritage Cookbook*

Serves 4-6  
2 medium summer squash cubed  
6 ears corn, cut from cobs

6-8 tomatoes cubed  
1 yellow onion diced  
1/4 cup butter  
Salt and pepper to taste

In skillet, melt butter, adding onion, and cook till translucent. Add squash (I like zucchini for color). Saute for about 10 minutes and add corn and tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper. The butter flavor is important here, so don't skimp. Herbs may be added but I like to let these fresh flavors shine. Simple but delicious.



**Raw apple cake**  
4 cups (coarsely) chopped apples  
2 eggs  
2 cups sugar  
½ cup vegetable oil  
1 cup chopped nuts  
2 cups flour  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
Optional: 1 teaspoon each of cloves and allspice. (I like this addition.)

In a large bowl, break eggs over apples. Add sugar, spices, oil and nuts. Mix well. Sift flour, salt and soda. Add to wet ingredients. Mix well. Pour into greased 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, or until toothpick comes out clean. Serve warm with ice cream or whipped cream.

I just finished making Marian Burro's plum torte, which was first published in the *New York Times* in 1983. They publish this recipe every year because of its popularity. I can attest to the deliciousness. It's easy to find online. There are way too many options to use the wonderful produce our area produces. I'll try to add more in future columns.

Photos contributed

# Fall rhubarb care

Joyce Amsden  
EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER INTERN  
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

Are you one of those people who loves rhubarb pie, cake, sauce and even preserving rhubarb for off-season use? Although not everyone enjoys eating rhubarb, few dispute its majestic beauty. Whether grown for aesthetics or food, this hardy perennial can be a long-lived addition to the gardening landscape.

Every five to 10 years you need to divide your rhubarb plants to prevent the roots from becoming too dense. Signs of this are smaller, more plentiful stalks and failure to produce stalks at the center of the plant.

While most gardening experts recommend dividing the roots in the spring, it can be done successfully in the fall, if timed carefully.

Dividing and planting needs to be done early enough for the roots to become established but late enough that the newly transplanted root does not push up leaves instead of going dormant. Think mid to late September.

If you decide to wait until spring to plant rhubarb, you can prepare your bed now and be prepared for early spring planting. Rhubarb needs good drainage, plenty of water and fertilizer or compost.

To prepare the bed, you will need to dig out a three- to four-foot-wide by two-foot-deep area for each plant. If your soil has poor drainage, consider creating a raised bed. An undersized bed may discourage optimal root growth and hold water leading to root rot.

Work three to four inches of compost or composted manure into the soil. If not planting until spring, cover the bed with an inch of straw mulch, and add an additional two inches after the ground freezes.

For fall division, dig up your existing plant and divide at the natural weak points between buds with at least one or two buds per division. Plant your division in the new location one to two inches deep with the bud on top.

Cover with soil and press down to eliminate air pockets. Be careful not to damage the buds. Add an inch of straw mulch.

If you are not dividing your rhubarb plants this fall, you can remove the stalks and leaves after the first killing frost. While fine for the compost heap, do not eat the stalks at this

time. The oxalic acid, a powerful toxin in rhubarb leaves, moves into the stalks when the leaves are damaged.

Remove grass and weeds, as they crowd the plants and can harbor insects that damage rhubarb. You can add a little compost or composted manure once the plant is fully dormant. Adding too much in the fall can delay dormancy needed for winter hardiness.

After the ground freezes, add about three inches of mulch to your existing rhubarb plants or new transplants. Waiting for the freeze helps the plant become fully dormant and discourages rodents from establishing routes under the mulch and snacking on your plant's roots over winter.

As winter waxes long, look for new rhubarb recipes to try so you will be ready for spring with a shovel in one hand and a spoon in the other!



A thin layer of mulch or compost can be added once rhubarb goes dormant in the fall.

Photo by Joyce Amsden



Rhubarb can be divided in the fall by digging up the existing plant and dividing at the natural weak points between buds, leaving at least one or two buds per division.

Photo by Di Reynolds/Pixabay



# Town

## Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik  
SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR

*"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existence. One cannot help but be in awe when [one] contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality. It is enough if one tries merely to comprehend a little of this mystery each day."*  
— Albert Einstein

*"I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be curiosity."*  
~ Eleanor Roosevelt.

Are you curious? Try something new. . .

### Courses starting soon

These courses are starting soon, so please make a note of the registration deadlines. Longer course descriptions can be found in the printed Fall Schedule, or on the website: [CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org](http://CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org). Registration and payment is in person, by phone (425-6345) or by mail: CSC, P.O. Box 207, Charlotte, VT 05445.

### Mindfulness for Life with Jill Abilock

Tuesday afternoons, 1–2.  
New dates: 9/28–10/26. (5 weeks) No fee. You can't always change what you experience in life, but you can change how you experience it. Mindfulness Meditation provides tools that help change *how* you experience things, increasing fulfillment and happiness, and reducing stress. Walk-ins are welcome.

### (NEW - not in Fall Schedule)

#### Watercolor – Fall Spectacular II with Lynn Cummings

Please register and pay by 9/30.  
Fee: \$77. 2 Tuesday mornings, 9–noon.  
Dates: 10/5 & 10/12.  
We'll paint fall-themed, local subjects that reflect the colors, shapes and textures of our surroundings this season. Some experience with watercolor is necessary. You will receive the materials list upon registration. Questions? Contact: [lynnccummings@uvm.edu](mailto:lynnccummings@uvm.edu).

#### How to Read & Sing Shape-Note Music with Kerry Cullinan

Registration required by 10/4. No fee.  
Thursday afternoons, 1–2:30.  
Dates: 10/7, 10/14, (no class 10/21), 10/28 & 11/04.  
This is an opportunity to learn to read and sing traditional music as it has developed in this country since the Pilgrims. Relying on The Sacred Harp tune book, in 4 sessions we will cover a thousand years of history and 400 years of singing.

#### Exploring Line & Color: A Creative Process Workshop with Jonathan Silverman

Register by 10/15. Suggested \$5 donation to

cover materials.

Tuesday morning, 10–11:30. Oct. 19.  
This 1.5-hour visual art workshop will focus on exploration, discovery and *play*. Simple prompts and using pencil, markers, and pastels will replenish the artist within for both those who claim not to have any artistic DNA – and for those with artistic experience. The supportive and joyful environment will emphasize process and surprises. Co-sponsored by the Charlotte Library.

### Exercise - Ongoing

These classes take place in our spacious Great Room. You're invited to come and check out a class one time for no charge. These are ongoing throughout the year, and you can join at any time. Stop by and fill out an address form—walk-ins are welcome.

Be sure to check the course descriptions in the Fall Schedule or see the website for the details.

Chair Yoga – Mon., 9:30 a.m.  
Gentle Yoga – Mon., 11 a.m.  
Pilates Plus – Tue., 8:30 a.m.  
Essentrics – Wed., 8:30 a.m.  
Pilates – Thur., 8:30 a.m.  
T'ai Chi for Beginners – Thurs., 10 a.m.  
T'ai Chi – Advanced – Thurs., 11 a.m.  
Essentrics – Fri., 9:30 a.m.

### Wednesday Talks at 1 p.m.

All Wednesday talks and events will be in person only. Masks are required for everyone who plans to attend. Important: Please note that registration is necessary these days, so that we can manage the audience size. You can call from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. to sign up. (Please do not leave voicemail.)

**9/29: Artists Reception and Gathering**  
Sorry, this event has been cancelled, but **The 14th Annual Senior Center Community Art Show** continues through 9/28. Artists whose work is in the exhibit are asked to pick up their artwork between 10 a.m.–4 p.m. on Wed., 9/29.

#### 10/06: Twisted Tree & Clump of Rocks: From Observation to Abstraction

Jonathan Silverman will share insight about creative process relating to his works which are on exhibit in October and November at the Senior Center. He will address both how he is inspired by observing shapes, colors, line, and texture in nature, as well as how he responds to the emerging abstracted images while he is creating them. He will reflect on the artists who have influenced him and open up the session for questions and connections.  
~ Co-sponsored by the Charlotte Library.

#### 10/13: Bones, Breaks & Balance: Separating Myths from Facts with Tina D'Amato, D.O.

Focusing on prevention strategies and education around bone density and fractures in seniors, we will review the often confusing and conflicting information about calcium supplements, touch on Vitamin D and other supplements, and prescription medications. Resources for self-directed and group exercise as well as physical therapy will be reviewed.  
~ Dr. D'Amato is a family medicine physician working at Charlotte Family Health.



### Lunch Schedule

Our meal schedule is currently in flux. Monday lunches are continuing; Wednesday lunches are suspended at the moment.

Please call in advance to be certain that a Monday lunch will be offered on the day you plan to come. Reservations are not required.

The next Monday lunch is Sept. 27. Suggested donation is still just \$5. Meal time is 11:30–12:30. Take out may be requested.

Menus ~

9/27

Kale and Sausage soup  
Beet and Feta salad  
Bread  
Berry Crisp

10/4

Couscous Meatball Soup  
Caprese Salad  
Brownies with ice cream

Menus are also posted on the CSC website: [CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org](http://CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org). Our café is spacious and airy, and our porch has tables with big sun umbrellas.

### Art News

#### September Art Exhibit

**The 14th Annual Senior Center Community Art Show** is drawing to a close. After some revision, the last day to view the complete show will be Tues., 9/28. There are 66 works by 36 artists in a wide variety of styles. Mediums include watercolor, acrylic, oil, pastel, wood, glass, mixed media and prints. Most pieces are for sale. Because the gallery space in the great room is used for other activities, the best times to view art in Sept. are: Tues. & Wed. after 2:30; Thurs. & Fri. after 12:30.

#### The October & November Art Exhibit

These two months the display will be Jonathan Silverman's **"Visual Dancing: The Interplay between Intent and Spontaneity."** His artwork ranges from landscape and abstract watercolors and pastels, to whimsical driftwood character sculptures, to functional and non-functional pottery inspired by Japanese aesthetics.

### About volunteering

Ever thought about becoming a volunteer?

There's a special spot for you whether you are available once a month for a couple of hours, or on a weekly basis. This is a great opportunity to meet other people, make new friends and to be part of our community. Lori would love to meet you and talk with you about the possibilities of volunteering at the Charlotte Senior Center. She can be reached at email [VOL4csc@gmavt.net](mailto:VOL4csc@gmavt.net) or 425-6345.

### Notes on masks

If you'd like to visit or join an activity, there are some mask requirements to keep in mind. Plus, some activities, like Bridge and Mahjong, are requiring participants to be fully vaccinated because they take place over long periods of time and in close proximity. Please do call to check if you want to join a new activity.

Here is where things are now at the Senior Center.  
If you are . . .

#### Fully Vaccinated:

No mask required—but strongly encouraged. Social distancing advised.

#### Not Vaccinated:

Mask required.  
Social distancing required. (6 feet).

#### Not Vaccinated & Not Wearing A Mask (for any reason):

Kindly do not plan to visit at this time. We ask that you come back after the mask guidance for the Senior Center is updated.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Please visit our website for expanded course descriptions and more information: [CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org](http://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 most welcome to enroll. Questions? Call or stop by between 9 and 4, or leave a message at 425-6345.

Charlotte Senior Center  
425-6345  
[CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org](http://CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org)



# Town

## Library news



Margaret Woodruff  
DIRECTOR

### Happening at the library

Last chance for September Take & Make Kits: Dancing Dragons & Flower Fossil Ornaments

Kids: Make a dragon puppet to dance around

your house in celebration of the Dragon Egg Hunt. (pictured right)

Adults & Teens: In recognition of Vermont Archaeology Week, craft a flower fossil from clay and your own garden. (pictured right)

Pick up kits at the library through Sept. 30!

### Climate Preparedness Week: Sept. 24–30

During September 24–30 each year, we mark Climate Preparedness Week, dedicated to learning, service and actions that better prepare our communities for extreme weather events. By coming together to host events, we provide the resources and space to think about the ways that climate change disadvantages some communities more than others.

### Theme: The Weather is Changing: Are You Prepared?

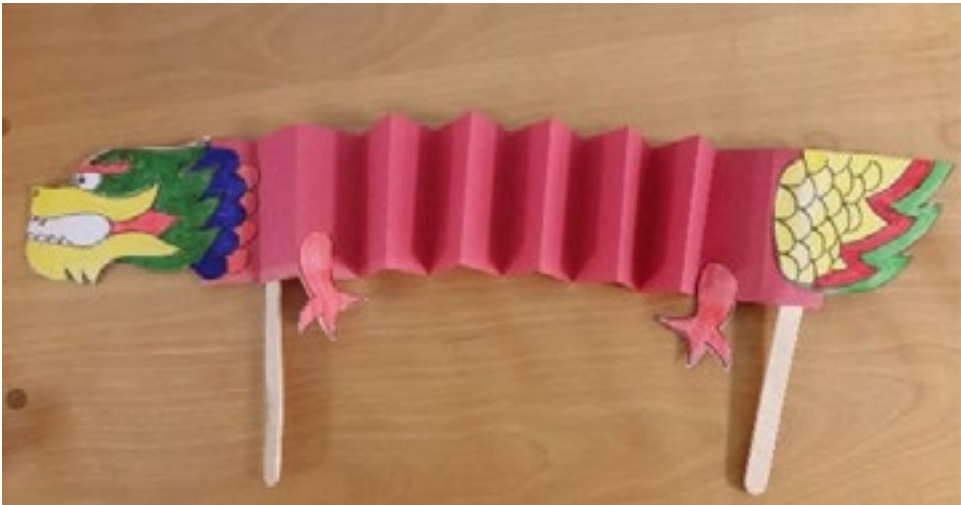
By coming together to host educational and service-oriented events, we can equip ourselves and our communities with the resources, tools and mindsets to build resilience in the face of changing weather and our changing climate. We'll explore how severe weather and climate change affects us all—locally, globally, publicly and personally. We'll also learn about how the impacts of climate change and extreme weather intersect with racial, social, and economic justice and how we can respond to these changes from the ground up and the top down.

Check this link for more information: [climatecrew.org/climate\\_prep\\_week\\_2021](https://climatecrew.org/climate_prep_week_2021). Don't miss our community emergency preparedness program on Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 7 p.m.

### Virtual keynote presented by David Pogue, author of *How to Prepare for*

*Climate Change: A Practical Guide to Surviving the Chaos*

Friday, Sept. 24, at 2 p.m.



Photos contributed



This event is hosted by the Massachusetts Library System in collaboration with Communities Responding to Extreme Weather.

Register for this program here: <https://bit.ly/2Zhm9IN>.

### Practical Earth-Honoring Skills for Everyone

Wednesday, Sept. 29, at 7 p.m. via Zoom

How can we create an ecological civilization without cultivating an ecological psyche first? At its foundation, developing an ecological psyche involves reclaiming and diversifying our sense of relational intimacy. Nutritive and connective, this class is for anyone feeling fatigued or overwhelmed about climate change. Basic earth-honoring skills decentralize humans from the global story and wake us up through joy and relatedness. Kendra Ward, LAc is a local traditional Chinese medicine practitioner who teaches and writes about the cultivation of an earth-honoring worldview as it relates to our health, well-being and sense of deep belonging. You can learn more about her work at [kendraward.com](https://kendraward.com).

Register for this program here: <https://bit.ly/3jgvku9>.

### Emergency Preparedness: Let's Be Ready Together Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 7 p.m.

Extreme weather impacts us all, wherever we live. Learn how to protect yourselves, your family and your neighborhood in the event of a weather emergency. Chris Davis and Karina Warshaw from Charlotte's Emergency Management Team explain how and why it is essential to make preparations, including the essentials for a "Go-Bag" kit. Ruah Swennerfelt from Sustainable Charlotte introduces the "Ready Together" program, a national transition effort to foster neighborhood emergency preparation. Pick up your playbook and copy of "Ready Together" at the library beforehand and enter to win an emergency radio, too. Register to join us: <https://bit.ly/3jDISBx>.

### Save the Lake by Being BLUE Wednesday, Oct. 13, at 7 p.m.

Lake Champlain Sea Grant partners with BLUE, an innovative program that certifies homes, businesses and institutions as watershed friendly. Learn how you can take part as the crew from the Lake Champlain Sea Grant at UVM shares the details of this innovative program that helps us help the lake. Register to join us: <https://bit.ly/3zUpYuu>.

### Library Reminders Time to mask up

Due to the increase in COVID cases, the CDC has issued new masking recommendations. As our policy throughout the pandemic has been to follow their guidance, we are now asking all library patrons, vaccinated and unvaccinated, to wear masks indoors. As always, we appreciate your commitment to keeping our community safe.



### September is Library Card Sign-Up Month

Here's the word from the American Library Association:

Marley Dias, author, executive producer and founder of #1000BlackGirlBooks, is joining the American Library Association and libraries nationwide in promoting the power of a library card this September.

As honorary chair, Dias wants to remind the public that signing up for a library card provides access to technology, multimedia content and educational programming that transforms lives and strengthens communities. "A library card provides an opportunity for discovery and access to a rich and diverse world. It empowers you to make change and experience new stories," said Dias.

Visit your library online or in person to see what's new and take part in the celebration. Libraries across the country are participating.

Do you have friends who don't have library cards? Invite them to sign up during September.

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

### Library Contact Information

Margaret Woodruff, Director  
Cheryl Sloan, Youth Services Librarian  
Susanna Kahn, Tech Librarian  
Phone: 425-3864  
Email: [info@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:info@charlottepubliclibrary.org)

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

This is notice that The Charlotte News, Inc., assigned substantially all of its assets on January 28, 2021 to TCN, Inc., and is currently in the process of winding up its business. If you would like to submit a claim for amounts due to you from The Charlotte News, Inc. you may do so by sending your claim in writing to:

John Quinney, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte, VT 05445.

Your claim must commence within five years after publication of this notice. If your claim is not received within that five-year period it will be barred pursuant to 11B V.S.A. §14.07. Your claim must include copies of all billing documents in support of your claim.

Dated: September 23, 2021  
Name of Publication: The Charlotte News  
Publication Date: September 23, 2021

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