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The Charlotte News

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**Mount Philo after the first snow.
Photo by Lee Krohn**



The Selectboard interviews DRB applicants

Mara Brooks
EDITOR

The Selectboard began the process of interviewing applicants for the town's new Development Review Board during its regular meeting on November 22. Prospective appointees included past and present members of

both the Zoning Board of Adjustment and the Planning Commission as well as those who had previously opposed forming a DRB.

The Selectboard said the DRB will have five members and two alternates with terms ranging from two and three years. Unlike the ZBA it replaces, the DRB will conduct both conditional use review and site plan analysis.

"We've been really lucky on this DRB, to date we have a lot of applications," Selectboard Chair Jim Faulkner said.

All the DRB applicants were male; something noted as "problematic" by PC member Bill Stuono during the public comments portion of the meeting.

"We have many qualified professional women in town, I think we really need to try and reach them," Stuono said.

Stuono was the first DRB applicant to be interviewed by the board.

"I have a degree in planning and policy. I think of myself as a problem solver and consensus builder and a roll up my sleeves type," Stuono said. "I'm here to put my hat in the ring to try to help this town along and move forward."

Faulkner asked if Stuono planned to stay on the planning board if he were to be appointed to the DRB. Stuono replied he would serve on both boards "in the short term, to try and get us forward during this time of transition."

Stuono said he previously served on DRBs in South Burlington and Shelburne.

Selectboard Vice-Chair Frank Tenney pointed out that serving on the DRB entailed following the bylaws rather than seeking to amend them.

"A lot of people get confused when they want to get on the DRB, they think they're going to change the whole town," Tenney said. "But the DRB is basically supposed to look at an application and follow the [land use regulations] and do what's right according to the rules."

Planning Commission Member Gerald Bouchard also applied for a DRB seat.

"Somebody from the Planning Commission should be on the DRB for continuity purposes," Bouchard said. "This is my 12th year on the Planning Commission. My knowledge of the DRB? Zero. So, it's going to be a learning experience if I'm appointed."

Charles Russell, who served on the current ZBA for six months, said if appointed to the DRB he would not concern himself with whether the town should be more or less "restrictive" toward development.

"The [land use] rules are the rules," Russell

said. "It's important to me that we have a clear due process, fair to everybody."

Russell said he hoped the DRB would adopt the ZBA's new procedures and ethics rules, particularly about open meetings.

"We have open deliberations unless we decide to close them and from a transparency standpoint, the open deliberations have worked well," Russell said. "So, I would encourage our [DRB] rules to be open deliberation."

ZBA member and DRB hopeful Eli Lesser-Goldsmith read a statement outlining his vision for the town.

"The question remains what kind of town and community do we want to be?" Lesser-Goldsmith asked. "Do we want to be a place where we do things the way we've always done them? Or do we want to change and progress? Do we want to be stuck in the past, or do we want to embrace the future?"

Selectboard member Lewis Mudge said it sounded like Lesser-Goldsmith was "more interested in the planning aspect" of reviewing applications than in serving on the DRB.

"The DRB is really going to be this body that interprets what's already been established," Mudge said. "Will you be able to balance your broad vision about change but also recognize this is a technical position whereby you're just helping to ascertain whether rules are being followed?"

Faulkner agreed with Mudge.

"I think what you're talking about, trying to be progressive and innovative -- that's probably something the Planning Commission would do," Faulkner told Lesser-Goldsmith.

Lesser-Goldsmith said he would be happy to serve on either board.

"I'll leave that up to you. I'm here to serve. Put me in wherever you'd like," he said.

Former ZBA member Stuart Bennett, who previously opposed the town's move to a DRB, said he was now interested in serving on the board.

"I was critical of the concept of a DRB, there's no secret about that," Bennett said.

He explained that upon further reflection he decided a DRB structure would be "certainly workable", and indicated he wanted the board to succeed.

"You don't want to see it stumble," he said. "The town is entitled to something that works right out of the gate."

Current ZBA member and DRB applicant JD Herlihy described himself as a "a bit of a geek for the Land Use Regulations" and said he did not believe the DRB should "interpret" the regulations but rather should apply them "as they are."

Faulkner said he agreed with Herlihy characterization of the DRB's role.

"I like that," Tenney said.

Acorn Painting contributes to the town



Photo by Lane Morrison

Mike Dever, president of Acorn Painting, has volunteered his time and crew to give back for the business that the Charlotte community has given him over the last several years. The Charlotte Senior Center was selected as the site to receive these services. Today it was inside touch-up, and in the spring there will be more extensive exterior work to be done. Mike's dedication to his work and our community is greatly appreciated.

Thanks,
Lane Morrison for the Senior Center

More local news. More community stories. Let's Do It!

Dear Reader:

I am thrilled to announce that, thanks to your recent gifts, we're moving on to the next phase of our fund drive.

For the last month of our year-end campaign, we're focused on a new matching gift opportunity. Early in 2022, we hope to hire several local reporters and writers to boost our coverage of town affairs and the people who live here.

The next \$10,000 that we receive in donations will unlock another \$10,000 in matching gifts from eight friends of *The News* to power this urgent work.

In the last six weeks, we've heard from dozens of Charlotte residents in conversations, emails and Front Porch Forum posts. The message is clear:

Charlotters want *The News* to produce journalism that informs and strengthens our community, that reflects the diverse interests

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With gratitude,

John Quinney
Publisher and President
The Charlotte News

Letters from the Editor & Publisher

Stepping down



Mara Brooks
EDITOR

I first became aware of *The Charlotte News* last spring, during an especially difficult time for the paper. My predecessor had resigned to start a competing news site and *The News's* future looked uncertain. I

had only intended to help for the short term, until a new editor could be found, but the board asked me if I would stay on permanently.

When I accepted the job, I was recovering from a broken leg and had temporarily suspended my law school studies. *The News* was a part-time gig, so I thought it would work well with my existing career as a communications specialist for two other Vermont nonprofits.

But over time, I've come to see that the paper requires a full-time editor—and then some. This is a very dynamic town, with an almost 24-hour news cycle. *The News* needs an editor/reporter who eats, sleeps and breathes Charlotte news, and who can be in town to meet with the players who make up the town's many boards and businesses. As much as it pains me to admit, I cannot be that person.

In the past months, I have found ever more of my time and energy has been

required to do my job at *The News* well—more time than I have to give. I have goals and obligations that predated my association with *The News*, and I need to get back to them—including a return to law school in the spring.

As such, I have made the decision to step down as editor of *The Charlotte News*. My last official day will be Dec. 16.

I've enjoyed the experience of reporting the news in Charlotte and meeting so many wonderful people. Residents here love their town intensely and have very strong feelings about its future. I hope that some of the issues currently causing turmoil among neighbors will find their way to resolution. I also hope the readers will continue to support the paper and recognize the importance of having a news source that brings you the facts, both pleasant and unpleasant.

Going forward, you may see my byline appear on the occasional story, as my schedule permits—maybe even an investigative report, should one be commissioned (I find those hard to resist). To all the friends I've made here, please stay in touch. You can reach me at marambrooks@gmail.com.

Until next time,
Mara

Thanks, Mara



John Quinney
PUBLISHER &
PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'm writing to thank Mara Brooks for her many contributions to *The Charlotte News* over the past eight months.

Our readers first got a taste for Mara's reporting chops on

May 20 when we published her story, "Why they left: Former ZBA members open up." It was a story that had to be told, and Mara impressed many of us with her writing skills, her sharp questions and her ability to get up to speed quickly on a complex story.

Also on May 20, Mara wrote her first editorial, "Can you trust us?" in which she set out the responsibilities faced by community journalists and the high standards she set for her own reporting.

Over the next few months, Mara followed with stories on the health center, the Development Review Board, Vermont Commons School, Charlotte Community Partners, and a host of others. Mara also expanded the paper's coverage of town affairs, boosted the newsletter publication schedule, recruited an experienced community journalist to cover town meetings, and produced in-depth reporting on several problems in town government.

We were surprised by Mara's resignation but appreciate the thoughtful way she has focused her work and set priorities for this edition of *The News* and the next. We also look forward to seeing more of Mara's reporting in *The News* in the new year, as her schedule and other responsibilities allow.

Everyone here joins me in wishing you all the best for future success, Mara. Thanks again for the hard work and long hours you put in as editor of *The Charlotte News*.



Mission Statement

The mission of *The Charlotte News* is:

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

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

Editorial independence

The editor makes final decisions on stories that are published in *The Charlotte News*. While we are funded by advertising revenue and donor contributions, our news judgments are made in accordance with our mission and are independent of all sources of financial support.

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

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HAPPY NEW YEAR
January 13, 2022

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Report from the Legislature

Rising COVID cases prompt special legislative session



Rep. Mike Yantachka

Although it's been only two years, it seems a lifetime ago that we first heard of the SARS-CO-V2 coronavirus, a.k.a. COVID-19. From March 16, 2020, until July 1, 2021, Vermont, along with most of the country and the world, was in a state of emergency caused by the pandemic. Under Governor Scott's leadership Vermont fared very well in terms of infections and fatalities. When the vaccines became available a year ago, Vermont was the first state to hit the 80% mark, and we saw positive case rates plummet to near zero leading the governor to lift the state of emergency and allow our lives to return to near normal.

Then, during the summer, the significantly more transmissible Delta variant started to spread throughout the U.S. Despite Vermont's high vaccination rate, the number of positive COVID cases began rising once again in August and reached

a record number of nearly 600 in one day recently. Vermonters are again being impacted in their everyday lives as a result. Parents of children who are exposed are unable to go to work because of having to stay home with their children during the quarantine period. Business owners are impacted by being short staffed. COVID hospitalizations have again risen at the same time hospitals are facing nursing shortages.

As a result, legislators called on Governor Scott to issue an indoor mask mandate to help mitigate the spread. The governor, however, has resisted such a mandate and instead has continued to emphasize vaccination for eligible persons including children 5 years or older. As positive cases grew, he stated that he would be willing to call the legislature back into a special session to pass a limited mask mandate. Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski and President Pro Tem of the Senate Becca Balint met with Governor Scott and agreed to his terms, whereupon he called the legislature back into session.

During this one-day special session, the Senate introduced a bill giving cities, towns and incorporated villages the authority to mandate mask-wearing indoors in public facilities. The House received the bill, debated it on the floor for over two hours, passed it without changes, and sent it to the Governor who signed it the following day. While a statewide mandate to wear masks indoors would have been more uniform, the only option immediately available to the legislature was the governor's proposal. It is notable that the authorization does not apply to school boards, because they already have the authority to implement health measures such as an in-school mask mandate.

If a municipality chooses to implement a mandate, it must be reviewed every 30 days to remain in effect. Furthermore, this authority ends on April 30, 2022. The most effective way of preventing infection or serious illness resulting from an infection is to get vaccinated. For those who refuse or cannot get vaccinated,

wearing a mask is a less invasive way of protecting both the wearer and those who encounter the wearer. It is a limited public health measure that we should all be willing to adhere to for the good of our neighbors. Whether or not Charlotte decides to issue a mandate, we all need to pull together and look out for each other to defeat this virus.

In January the legislature will be returning to Montpelier for the second half of the biennium. A primary focus will be on another existential crisis: climate change. The Vermont Climate Council will report its recommendations to take Vermont on a path to substantially reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and the legislature will consider measures to implement those recommendations. I will continue to keep you informed as to what is happening in Montpelier throughout the session. As always, I welcome your emails (myantachka.dfa@gmail.com) or phone calls (802-233-5238). This article and others can be found at my website (www. MikeYantachka.com).

Letter to the Editor

Perspectives on humble pie

Kendra Bowen presents recent COVID-19 case rates to argue we are no better off in Vermont compared to Texas or Florida (Charlotte News November 18, 2021). She suggests our sacrifices and inconveniences were excessive, and implies Vermont might have accepted more COVID-19 exposure driving higher rates of natural immunity; that if we had listened to others, Vermont would be in the same place we are today, with fewer negative impacts. I consider the long view and disagree. Data on cumulative cases and deaths by state are available (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/state-timeline).

Here are COVID-19 cases and deaths from March 2020 to November 20, 2021 for the three states she compares:

Texas: population 29,730,311; 4,296,397 cases; 73,276 deaths; 145 cases and 2.46 deaths per 1,000 people.

Florida: population 21,944,577; 3,721,503 cases; 61,081 deaths; 170 cases and 2.78 deaths per 1,000 people.

Vermont: population 623,251; 46,449 cases; 404 deaths; 74 cases and 0.64 deaths per

1,000 people. Vermont has experienced half or less of the total cumulative cases per capita compared to Texas or Florida and approximately 25% of the deaths. Vermont is also better off than Texas or Florida for total COVID-19 hospitalizations per capita (https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/data/hospitalization-7-day-trend/vermont). This means our hospitals were better able to address non-COVID related issues compared to other states. These numbers came with costs that are difficult to quantify: reduced human contact, mental health impacts, economic losses, etc. The cumulative benefits of our collective actions are that a lower proportion of Vermonters died or were hospitalized during the past 21 months. These benefits should motivate our continued individual contributions to reduce viral transmission in our communities. Kendra Bowen and I agree on important points—continue to encourage vaccines and masking, stay home if you feel sick; I add, continue to practice social distancing and utilize testing when appropriate.

John Barlow
Charlotte

Last paper for 2021 is Dec 16! See you in 2022.

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First deer



Ten-year-old Franklin Donegan got his first deer this season. The deer weighed 144 pounds and was harvested from his family's farm in Hinesburg. Franklin lives in Charlotte and attends Charlotte Central School. *Photo contributed*

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Library gardens update



(L to R) Toni Sunderland, Linda Hamilton, Rick Junge, Alison Williams, Deirdre Holmes, Elizabeth Harding, Leslie Carew, Karen Tuininga and Carol Geske add four American hazelnut trees to the north end of the Library garden Nov. 3. Thank you to *The Charlotte News* for generously donating these trees! *Photo contributed*

Linda Hamilton and Karen Tuininga
LIBRARY GARDEN STEWARDS

We hope you have enjoyed watching the library's new gardens come to life this spring and summer and stay interesting even as they begin to shut down for the winter.

The large rain garden, along the east side of the building where the entrance driveway used to be, is well on its way to qualifying as a Lewis Creek Association Ahead of the Storm demonstration site. After the driveway paving was removed last year, most of the area was sculpted into a wide shallow basin and painstakingly planted with almost 1,500 young, water-loving perennials and shrubs. Thanks again to the several hardy volunteers who did all that planting! It was a satisfaction and delight to see those plants begin to settle in this year. Next year we should see them really take hold and spread out.

The purpose of the rain garden is to manage the significant amount of water running off the library roof, especially in storm events, and prevent it from causing erosion and sediment load in nearby streams, which empty into Lake Champlain. It uses the permaculture approach to water management: slow it, spread it and sink it. Because this is an effective way to improve water quality in Lake Champlain, the garden also qualifies as a University of Vermont Sea Grant water management site in their Blue program.

What about those big rain barrels? Yes, they are big! But so much water comes off the roof that they need to be correspondingly large. When full, the barrels release water slowly into the rain garden through buried perforated pipes. We can also attach hoses to the barrels to hand water when needed.

This November we turned our attention to the area north of the rain garden and closest to Ferry Road, which last year was put on hold under a thick blanket of wood chips while we were concentrating elsewhere. (Thank you to Road Commissioner Jr Lewis for cheerfully bringing those truckloads of wood chips to the gardens whenever we asked.) This fall we were ready to move forward, starting with the planting of four American hazelnut trees, generously donated by our friends at *The Charlotte News*! These attractive, multi-

stem trees will provide structure in that part of the garden and very tasty nuts (if we beat the squirrels to them!).

The brightest garden spot has been what we think of as the Welcome Garden, wrapping around the south end of the building and following the sidewalk west to the main entrance on the porch and east to the program room entrance. The focus of this garden is to be pollinator friendly, combined with culinary and medicinal herbs, a few vegetables and berries, and creating a beautifully exuberant array of color to welcome library patrons. This year the zinnias were perhaps over-exuberant in height and branches heavy with flowers! But really, can one ever get too much of that zinnia eye candy? No.... We say bring it on!

The library's other significant garden area is the Food Garden behind Quinlan School. Using raised beds enriched with compost, we have been growing both heritage vegetables as a source of seeds to distribute through the Seed Library and a few sturdy (heritage) vegetables for the Charlotte Food Shelf. This year we harvested garlic, potatoes and winter squash (and one *giant* volunteer sunflower!).

Gardens at the library are not possible without community support. To learn more about the growing team of Garden Stewards and how you might help, please contact us at Seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org. It's not all about weeding and watering (although there is that to attend to, for sure). For example, over the winter we'll be working on educational signage and developing ideas for programs making use of the gardens. Join the team and become the part of the library family of volunteers that likes getting down and dirty!

2021 library garden helpers

Sincere thanks to the volunteers who got down and dirty in the Library Garden with Linda Hamilton and Karen Tuininga this year: Leslie Carew, Jim Donovan, Abel Fillion, Carol Geske, Janice Heilmann, Cathy Hunter, Elizabeth Harding, Deirdre Holmes, Rick Junge, Wolfger Schneider, Toni Sunderland and Alison Williams.

Town

Survey shows strong support for more walking, biking and public transport

The Charlotte Energy and Trails Committees

An online survey conducted this summer revealed that Charlotters want more access to public transportation and more opportunities to walk and bike to destinations in their communities. The survey was conducted by Local Motion, Vermont’s leading advocate for walking and biking, in partnership with the Town’s Energy and Trails Committees. The survey received responses from nearly 10 percent of the Town’s population—a strong rate for online community surveys—and Local Motion’s expert on policies and infrastructure analyzed the results this fall. The survey asked about what kinds of transportation people use, what they would like to see more of, what barriers exist to additional use, and what policy solutions they would support.

Respondents, who overwhelmingly (97 percent) rely on motor vehicles for transportation, said they would like greater access to public transit. When asked why they do not walk more, Charlotters cited long distances, concern about dangerous drivers, and the lack of sidewalks. With regards to bicycling, the top issues cited were dangerous drivers, not enough bike lanes or paths, and traffic volume. Charlotters said they would engage in these activities more to shop or eat out, run errands, or connect to public transportation if these concerns were addressed.

Some of the most interesting insights from the survey came when respondents noted what policies they support. The walking-related improvements most supported by respondents were more off-road paths (83 percent), more separation on roads from vehicles (79 percent), better education and enforcement for drivers (73 percent), safer intersections (62 percent), and sidewalks (57 percent).

Regarding bicycling improvements, respondents’ top picks were wider shoulders (85 percent), more off-road paths (82 percent), better education and enforcement for drivers (80 percent), bike lanes (79 percent), and better education and enforcement for bikers (72 percent) as their favored initiatives.

Katie Franko told us that she answered the survey “because it was a way to help my

town with something I enjoy doing, plus there was a chance of winning a prize!”—a gift certificate to a local business. Rich Ahrens also completed the survey out of a sense of civic duty, and said Charlotte needs to “encourage quaint growth of the west village area to provide a reason for citizens to go there, walk from place to place, and spend their money in our own town.” Another gift certificate winner, Julie Parker-Dickerson, said she is “highly concerned for my safety (and that of others) on our roads” when she walks and bikes. She added that she would “love to see more people out and about in all seasons” if roads were safer.

The Charlotte survey results come at a time of increased national attention to walking and biking. Communities around the United States have reported much greater usage of their parks and trails since the start of the COVID pandemic, and the electric bike revolution has opened up cycling to many who would not have used a bike because of health constraints or long travel distances. This point is particularly relevant to Charlotte, where five percent of survey respondents said they, or a member of their household, have a disability that inhibits their ability to walk and bike.

A White House statement on the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act says that Vermont will be eligible for over \$1 billion in funding to “repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians,” and an additional \$77 million for public transportation. Taken together, the survey results and the infrastructure act suggest Charlotte has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to improve its off-road paths, on-road facilities for walkers and bikers, and connections to public transit, as well as the experience of drivers. Perhaps gift certificate winners Bill Stuono and Leslie Carew will get their wish: “We would really like to see the town and state promote a safe commuting/recreation path from here to Burlington, resurrect the Champlain Path Feasibility Study, and, of course, allow for more walking trails throughout.”

The Charlotte Energy and Trails Committees, with the vital support of Local Motion



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DRB
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Current ZBA Chair Lane Morrison said he hoped to be appointed to the DRB “to continue the work” of the ZBA.

“Our (ZBA’s) procedures and our process have been improved, so I think we’re in the right course,” Morrison said. “I do want to be clear that our job is to adjudicate land use regulations, that’s our job, and we understand that.”

Resident Peter Richardson, who has not served on the ZBA or the PC, joked that “There are few opportunities, after a certain state of life, where you get to say, ‘my offering here is to provide new blood.’”

Richardson said he has experience both in public and private program development and has “been on the other side of the table” with regard to development review and “dealing with development projects in various communities.”

Several Selectboard members said they were impressed with Richardson’s background and resume. Richardson said he would also accept an alternate seat.

Rick Pete, who applied for an alternate seat, did not attend the meeting.

Faulkner said the Selectboard will “probably” hold a special meeting on Dec. 6 or 13 to announce which applicants were chosen to serve on the DRB.

“There will be no decisions made tonight,” Faulkner said.

Opinion
Wildlife habitat

Claudia Mucklow
CHARLOTTE, VT

Driving through our town, Charlotte still has some of that bucolic small town feel that attracted me to live here half a lifetime ago. But with increasing development pressure, that may very well change in the years to come. I shudder to think that before long we’ll look like our neighbor to the north.

Some contend that development can be done to suit our natural aesthetics by tucking new homes out of sight into the woods and away from main roads. Unfortunately, this comes at the expense of our wild neighbors, the current residents of those very woods. Are we only concerned with preserving the look of the town, or do we actually care that some of it remain truly wild?

I for one do. As an active board member of the Vermont Wildlife Coalition, a statewide wildlife advocacy organization, as well as a member of our Park and Wildlife Refuge committee, I have made protecting wildlife an integral part of my life.

Vermont loses thousands of acres of wildlife habitat every year to development and, according to the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department, habitat loss and fragmentation are some of the biggest threats to wildlife and ecosystems. Some species require large tracts of forested land, something we have little of in Charlotte.

Placing housing developments next to forested habitat, even if it doesn’t result in the outright destruction of the forest, creates undesirable edge effects that result in animal behavior modification across a wide range of species. The disruption to nesting and foraging grounds, which inevitably occurs when you put a road right through the middle of them, has an outsized negative impact on wildlife. And the domestic animals that accompany these developments add a predatory factor into the equation, as studies have shown that free-roaming cats are detrimental to birds, while dogs will chase and sometimes kill wild animals as large as deer.

For your consideration, is the new development on 125 Lake Road currently under review by the Planning Commission? While I give the developers, Patricia O’Donnell and Jim Donovan, a lot of credit for keeping the majority of the 124-acre parcel undeveloped, the placement of the nine-unit PRD right next to the forested habitat is problematic. At a minimum, there will be 18 and potentially as many as 60-plus people living there, as well as a number of domestic cats and dogs.

Furthermore, the new residents will be able to use the forested habitat for recreation, putting even more pressure on the resident wild animals, which will have no choice but to retreat. Some species will, of course, adapt, and this might cause conflicts with their new human neighbors. Conflicts that the animals will inevitably lose.

When questioned about the PRD’s placement, the developers of 125 Lake

Road cited two existing developments as precedent—Ten Stones Circle and Champlain Valley Cohousing. Indeed, these types of cohousing can create wonderful neighborhoods and safe environments for children to grow up in. Both are well hidden from view, tucked in behind tree lines, but while Ten Stones Circles tried to stay close to Greenbush Road, Champlain Valley Cohousing’s access road is almost half a mile long and runs right through the center to the far reaches of the 125-acre property where the housing was constructed. Even though 115 acres remain conserved for wildlife corridor and farming, the wildlife habitat was severely compromised and then dealt another blow when the Charlotte Town Link Trail was added into the mix. This surely could have been circumvented by locating the development closer to Greenbush Road, where it would have avoided ripping up the landscape and saved tons of money in road construction and utility placement, plus savings on gas for driving and snow plowing, among other things.

Once approved, something similar will happen on 125 Lake Road and another precedent for out-of-sight PRDs will be created, inviting other developers to do the same.

Our town has done a great job with land use regulations, but they need to be continuously revisited and improved. I call upon the Planning Commission to clearly define where PRDs ought to be located in order to minimize their negative impact on wildlife habitat.



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Hi, Neighbor!

Nancy Winship Milliken: Bringing her love of the environment to her art



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Nancy Winship Milliken is making up for lost time. After graduating from UVM in the 1980s, she worked in the health care field. But at the age of 46 she returned to school and got her MFA at the Massachusetts College of Art and

Design. “I went in as a painter and came out a sculptor,” she said. “I was more interested in still lifes and using netting and wool, so tactile material started to have its own meaning. I felt that my voice was more authentic with sculpture.” While in school Milliken began creating outdoor installations using natural material.

In 2006, Milliken founded Nancy Winship Milliken Studio, which she describes as a “place-based environmental art studio committed to building community through collaborative expressions of reverence for the land, humans, and animals.” She sees a connection between her previous artwork and her current media. “When I put work in the field, I’m considering light, scale, and where the viewer should be,” she said. “It’s almost like a landscape painting.”

People often approach Milliken to offer their property for her work. She has what she describes as residencies in which she visits a farm and learns about their work and their animals. “I feel that farms are neighborhood centers that nurture our communities,” she said “so I want to shine a light on them.” In New Zealand she created her own residency after calling people to get introduced to farmers. “I did an installation where I worked with the sheep in the field using their wool,” she said.

Milliken’s artwork is made with reclaimed materials like cello bow hair, wool that wouldn’t go to the spinnery because it has too much burdock, and old barn beams. “Since we have to deal with gravity, steel is my infrastructure,” she added, noting that she tries to avoid plastics. She sometimes reuses material from artwork that has been taken down. Some installations are permanent, but many are ephemeral because the environment—in the form of the sun, wind or rain—will alter her creations. “You can almost think of the work as transitional,” she said. “The pieces allow the environment to transition them.”

Despite the fact that her work is based outdoors, Milliken often moves pieces from their initial site to a gallery or museum. “It’s taking the work and the materials out of context and placing them in a white cube,” she said. “That’s really fun and it’s a different way of looking at the work—almost highlighting it.” Often, the art only comes indoors after the environment has impacted it. “If I have things in a state of first finish,” she said “it still feels like some work needs to be done on it.”

Milliken recently received a \$4,000 Creation Grant from the Vermont Arts Council to support the construction of a limestone monument of natural field elements. She has collected materials for the piece, and after they dry, she will sand them and dip them in limestone that is part of the geology around her property. Another upcoming project, slated for next summer, is a Shelburne



Nancy Winship Milliken

Museum exhibition on sustainability. “My work is generated by my love of the environment and love of place,” she said.

Milliken is pleased to be able to offer a mentorship program to local students who have helped her with her projects. She noted that when she creates artwork in public, she often takes input from those watching her creative process. She has enjoyed working with a number of collaborators, including barn restorer Eliot Lothrop of Building Heritage, the farmers and animals of Bread and Butter Farm, former Vermont Poet Laureate Chard deNiord, and several architects. Although she has been involved in climate justice work, Milliken recognizes that not everyone will see those themes in her projects. She is currently working on a piece about storm water mitigation using materials from the lake, but she realizes that not everyone who sees it will understand the basis of it. “It’s more about a feeling for the land,” she said. “It’s climate awareness.”

Milliken is doing her best to make up for her late start in art. “I feel like I can’t get enough done,” she said. “It’s as if I waited all this time and now I’m just brimming.” Although her work is site-specific, Milliken believes it relates to what is happening to the environment beyond the site. “I’m so grateful to be able to do this work,” she said. “I would still be doing this even if I didn’t have exhibitions.”



Photo taken in Turangi, New Zealand. The title is Tika Whare, which means True Home in Maori.
Photo by Nancy Winship Milliken



Title: Windscape (taken at Shelburne Farms). Aerial photo by Ian Ray of Airshark

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Around Town

Congratulations:

to the owners and tenants of Charlotte’s **Nordic Farm**, located off Route 7 and featured in an article in the Nov. 17 Seven Days. The farm has long been an operational and visual fixture of Charlotte’s agricultural heritage. Owned for a number of years by Clark Hinsdale, the fields, herds and structures eventually became part of the region’s conserved agricultural property. The article says that, that “epitomizes the challenge that many farms in Vermont have,” in fact, exaggerates it.

for the efforts being extended to maintain Nordic Farms as part of Charlotte’s agricultural heritage. **Will Raap**, founder of Gardener’s Supply and the Intervale Center, hopes to purchase the property and turn the 40,000-square-foot malthouse and neighboring land into a “multiplex” of agricultural businesses—”including a WhistlePig tasting room.” Will wants to see many of the cars driving down Route 7 stop in and “learn about the process from seed to sip.” Nordic Farm has a history of combining agriculture and modern technology. It contained the earliest computerized milking system in this area, timing cows’ milking needs through computerized chips worn by the animals themselves. Labor costs were limited to a smaller number of computer technicians than the usual number of farm hands for a herd of Nordic’s size.

to young Charlotters **Rose Lord** and **Ava Rohrbaugh** whose poems were selected for publication in the *Burlington Free*

Press “Young Writers Project” of November 19. In her poem titled “To swing and to shine,” Ava looks back on her younger years and describes them as symbols of her life and mind at the time. She continues to grow and to conduct her life. “And the show has only just begun.”

Ava’s poem is entitled “November floating.” She says in November one looks back over the year, noticing what has been missed, the “dust growing like gray shadows on the piano keys.” August and October play their parts in the years cycle. November, then “leaves us floating, looking for the snowflakes.”

Sympathy:

is extended to family and friends of **Margaret Allgaier (Mickey)** who passed away in Vermont at the age of 77. A member of the Army Nursing Corps, she was stationed in Japan during the Vietnam War, serving as a critical care nurse. She later moved to Charlotte to be near her granddaughter Ruby. She has been active in the Charlotte Congregational Church. The family asks that donations in her honor be made to Habitat for Humanity.

is extended to family and friends of **Katherine (Kitty) Frink** of Charlotte, who passed away on November 12 at the age of 68. With hobbies as a writer, artist and cook, she enrolled in Champlain College to earn a degree and become a paralegal. She is survived by her husband Brian Frink. The family asks that donations in her memory be made to a charity of one’s choice.

Sports

Coaches’ football all-stars include many Redhawks

Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

Vermont’s high school football coaches selected all-star teams recently. Led by the “Coach of the Year,” Marty Richards of Essex, offensive and defensive teams contained many CVU players from the team that finished second in the top division. On offense, the first-team backfield was led by quarterback, Max Destito, with Angelos Carroll one of the running backs. Jack Sumner was noted as a wide receiver, while up rot, Hayden Hilgerdt held line recognition.

First - team defense had among its linemen, Redhawk Charlie Taylor, with Ryan Canty as a linebacker, Jared Anderson in the backfield,

Angelos Carroll as a kick returner and Oliver Pudvar as the punter.

The Redhawk selections did not stop with first team stars. Second team all-state listed Ryan Canty as a running back and Jared Anderson as a wide receiver. Lineman Eli Jones and running back Aidan Miller receiving honorable mention.

Meanwhile the Vermont Southern All-Stars squeaked out a North/South football victory on a seven-yard touchdown with two and one-half minutes left in the game -- 39-35.

The North roster contained Redhawks Jared Anderson, Ryan Canty, Angelos Carroll, Haden Hilgerdt, Henry Kramer and Ryan Walker.

Town

Food shelf seeks new home



Mara Brooks
EDITOR

The Food Shelf is searching for a new location.

At the Nov. 22 regular Selectboard meeting, Charlotte Food Shelf Secretary Peggy Sharpe informed the town that the food shelf will be moving from its current spot at the Charlotte Congregational Church sometime next year. Sharpe asked the Selectboard members to “keep your ears to the ground” for any locations that might be a good fit for nonprofit.

“We need about a thousand square feet, and it needs to be handicap accessible, and we need to have better delivery ability than what we have now,” Sharpe said.

Sharpe explained that although the Congregational Church has been “incredibly

generous” in sharing its space with the charity, the arrangement has become less than ideal for both parties.

“Frankly, we really need to find something that works better for volunteers and for the people that we’re serving,” she said.

Sharpe said she did not know whether the food shelf’s next location would be temporary or permanent.

“It depends on what we find, it depends on what people might be willing to donate, it depends on a lot of things,” she said.

Sharpe also asked the Selectboard to consider making a “shift” in its own relationship to the food shelf.

“It’s not like we’ve ever felt like we weren’t supported by the town, it’s just that we’ve never reached out to try to do anything a little more formal in terms of a relationship,” she said.

She asked the board to consider including the food shelf on the town’s website and allowing it hold meetings in Town Hall.

“We would like to be able to have meetings in Town Hall. We have done it before, it’s just that we’ve never asked regularly,” Sharpe said. “So, it’s just a little shift in our relationship that we’re looking for.”

Sharpe added that the food shelf is currently in need of a new stainless-steel refrigerator but assured the board that she was “not here to ask for money.”

“I think we all feel that if we did some fundraising in town, we would probably be able to raise the money for [the refrigerator], it’s probably going to be around eight thousand dollars,” Sharpe said.

What she really wanted from the Selectboard, Sharpe said, was to get the food shelf on the town’s “radar”. She said she hoped the food

shelf and the Selectboard could “collaborate” to increase outreach to those in need and to find the charity a suitable new location.

Selectboard Chair Jim Faulkner told Sharpe her requests would require a bigger discussion.

“I think what we need to do is have another conversation that’s a little bit more in depth on your goals and necessary housing and so forth,” Faulkner said. “Tonight, I think all we really wanted to do is get you on the radar, which we have now.”

Faulkner told Sharpe that after the town “gets through this budget season” the Selectboard could meet with her again “to discuss how else we can help you.”

There was no further discussion on the topic and no date was set for the follow up meeting with Sharpe.

Happy Holidays

Holiday plants: Care and safety

Deborah J. Benoit
EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

It’s that time of year again when amaryllis, Christmas cactus and poinsettias appear in stores and find their way into our homes. Whether you receive a new plant as a gift or purchase it, it’s always a good idea to familiarize yourself with the plant’s needs and any safety concerns it might present.

Amaryllis (*Hippeastrum*) is easily recognized by its tall flower stalk topped with multiple large, trumpet-shaped flowers. It’s available as a bulb ready to plant or already flowering.

This popular holiday plant is easy to care for. Just provide some light, and keep the soil moist, but not wet. Turning the plant regularly will help the stalk grow straight rather than lean into the light.

Keep amaryllis out of reach of pets and children. The bulb, leaves and flowers contain toxins that can cause abdominal pain, vomiting and other physical distress.

After the flowers have faded, remove them. Continue to water and enjoy the foliage until the leaves begin to die, and then cut them back.

Store the bulb in a cool, dry place until you’re ready to plant it again in the fall. For more information on growing amaryllis, go to <https://go.uvm.edu/amaryllis>.

Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) generally is available to purchase during November and December. It’s an attractive plant with arching branches and colorful flowers.

If you receive or bring home a Christmas cactus, place it in a bright window for the winter season. Water when the soil begins to dry out, but don’t let the soil dry completely or buds may drop.

Likewise, don’t over water. Soggy soil can lead to root rot. With minimal care, those bright blooms should last 4-6 weeks, plenty of time to enjoy through the holidays and into the new year.

Christmas cactus is an easy-care houseplant that can last for many years. Once the flowers have faded, continue to water as needed. Place in bright, but indirect light



Amaryllis. Photo by W. Franz/Pixabay



Christmas cactus. Photo by Deborah J. Benoit



Poinsettias Photo by Scott Bauer/USDA-ARS

during the summer when sunlight will be more intense and could burn the leaves.

You also can move it outdoors while temperatures remain above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Gradually acclimate it to the stronger sunlight as you would seedlings in the spring. Be sure to bring it back indoors before the danger of frost returns.

And if you decide you want more?

Christmas cactus roots easily in water. Just remove a section with several segments and place in water. Once roots have grown to at least an inch, the new plant can be potted up using a potting soil or cactus mix.

Christmas cactus is not poisonous to humans or pets, but ingesting the fibrous leaf segments may cause digestive issues.

Poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) seem to be everywhere during the holiday season. The plant’s showy “flowers” are not really flowers at all but leaves called bracts that have changed color. The real flower is hidden at the center of the bracts.

Perhaps the best thing you can do to keep your poinsettia happy is to remove that pretty foil covering its pot. The foil will capture water and keep the soil too wet. And be sure to provide lots of light.

The poinsettia is not considered poisonous. Its milky white sap may cause skin irritation, and if eaten, result in a mild stomachache, vomiting or diarrhea.

If you’re interested in keeping your poinsettia after the holidays and coaxing it to bloom again, you’ll find more information at <https://go.uvm.edu/poinsettia>.

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Happy Holidays

Glass Ornaments

Molly McClaskey
CONTRIBUTOR

My parents weren't shopping types. Food and necessities was one thing, but walking in and out of stores for fun with no particular goal in mind was not on their list of things to do, except during the month of December when they planned purposeful shopping outings. They walked three blocks to catch the bus to Montclair where they shopped for hours in search of one perfect new glass ornament for our Christmas tree. Some were simple and round; others had a distinct shape or bore an intricate painted pattern. One year there was a sparkly star, and I remember a teardrop painted with white snowflakes, an angel and a white bear. Some were hand made, others were ordinary, but each was made of glass.

Christmas in my family was a time of surprises, secrets, gifts and giving. We followed traditions passed down through Irish and German generations and looked forward to the same rituals year after year: Christmas Carols, Dad reading the Christmas Story, a family feast in candle light, and especially mysterious notes inside glass ornaments. The tall balsam tree in the living room was hung with forty or more familiar and fragile ornaments. Hidden among them was the new ornament my parents shopped for and my three siblings and I eagerly searched for on Christmas morning. Ornaments were passed down from my father's parents and grandparents, some so old the paint was worn thin and we could see into the globe where, more times than not, a tiny rolled note was visible. Sometimes there were two notes inside. We kids would imagine what they said.

Each year my parents wrote a new note to one of us and then dated, rolled, and inserted it through the top of the new ornament. Then it was hung strategically among the other ornaments on the tree where it wasn't immediately obvious. And there the precious note stays until, at some future time, the bulb breaks. At times a glass ornament was dropped

“Christmas in my family was a time of surprises, secrets, gifts and giving. We followed traditions passed down through Irish and German generations and looked forward to the same rituals year after year.”

while decorating the tree or became so old it cracked in someone's hand. More than one was knocked off the tree by our climbing cat or wagging dog, giving us the chance to unroll the mystery message inside. To whom was the note written and when we wondered. Who was the author, and what did it say. The year our tree was pulled down by three mischievous lab puppies glass ornaments shattered on the slate floor, and Will and Emily thought they had hit the jackpot. Among the scattered shards of colorful glass they each found several notes written to them, as well as one for my sister and another for my mother. Will and Em then innovated on this long-held note-writing tradition by cutting small squares of paper the size of the notes they received. They carefully taped the squares, one to the bottom of each of their tiny curled notes. They wrote messages on each, squeezing special words onto the tiny square paper and addressed each to a family member who will one day read, as Em and Will put it, “two notes-in-one!” With help, they rolled the now extended notes with new attached to old, tied them with a thread, and slid them

into delicate glass balls for someone else to discover some other Christmas.

As my parents aged and spent the holidays at our house, I became the keeper of the note-writing tradition, preserving this family practice for generations now and after me. Will and Emily are 34 and 31 and would tell you that stockings are the best part of Christmas in our house. But in 1998 when the tree fell over and they found notes written to them for the first time, I'm certain they would have said notes in ornaments and secretly writing new ones was the best part. That year they experienced the satisfying feeling of creating a surprise for someone else and the magic of carrying a tradition forward.

Christmas customs have knit McClaskey family fabric together for generations and are part of my growing-up story. There were four of us siblings and our household was busy. It seemed like we were always coming and going, spinning in separate directions. As the youngest, I clung to the times our family was together, doing things in solidarity. This was especially true on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day when we all stayed home, life slowed down, and we felt important to one another. I remember wishing that feeling of Christmas would linger, wishing I could carry it with me through the year. Isn't that, after all, what we want for our children and grandchildren, to grow up feeling the very pulse of family in their veins? Keeping ornament-notes and other traditions active for my children and their children originates in the deep feeling of comfort and connectedness holidays brought me and I continue to savor now.

Our rituals will outlast me and thread generations together note by note, ornament by ornament. It turns out that the Christmas spirit I yearned to hold onto as a young child has endured and lives within my children, their children and me—one just needs to pause and notice.

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Fun Facts

The often-murky meaning of idioms

Norman Riggs
CONTRIBUTOR

For those who missed my first column, a quick review: My mother, a hardscrabble Kansas ranch girl with little formal education, spoke largely in idioms, pithy historical sayings, many of which at first blush made no sense. They contained a general truth that wasn't clear from the words. In contrast, I don't remember my father, an astronomer, every speaking in idioms.

As a boy I'd eavesdrop on her family discussions and those with friends and neighbors. Many idioms were understandable on first hearing ("Six of one; half a dozen of another.") But even for those that made no sense, the gist eventually became clear in the context of a larger discussion.

Growing up poor during the Dust Bowl of the Great Depression, Mom's sayings resonated with color, earthy humor and wisdom. I learned the gist of her sayings but didn't know the source. Here are a few more:

- *"Bats in the belfry."* Someone eccentric or insane. It is an American phrase referring to bats frantically darting about and screeching inside a belltower.
- *"Happy as a clam."* The phrase is believed to originally been referred to as a clam at high tide when it was unreachable and safe from human harvest.
- *"Full of beans."* A person full of nonsense. In earlier times horses were thought to run faster if fed beans to make them gassy. The phrase endured even after it was disproved.
- *"Loaded for bear."* Fully prepared for a serious confrontation. The phrase stems from hunters of grizzly bears. The species is extremely dangerous and requires more powerful rifles than other types of hunting.
- *"Have a conniption fit."* Conniption is a version of corruption, as if someone is being corrupted by the devil.



- *"Fly off the handle"* means seriously losing one's temper. It refers to the head of an axe coming loose from the handle.
- *"Up the river."* Going to prison. It originally referred to prisoners being sent to Sing Sing prison about 30 miles up the river from New York City.
- *"Sell someone down the river"* means to seriously betray someone. Unfortunately, it originally referred to capturing slaves above the Mason-Dixon Line and selling them back South to suffer the atrocities of slavery.
- *"Madder than a wet hen"* is to be extremely angry. It's rooted in the old-time practice of farmers dunking brooding, quarrelsome hens in cold water so they could collect their eggs.
- *"At the drop of a hat"* means to do something rash with little forethought. It can be traced to the American West as the signal to start a duel or fight by dropping one's hat to the ground.
- *"Like putting lipstick on a pig."* Trying to improve someone's looks who is hopelessly ugly.
- *"For the birds"* means something trivial or stupid. Inspired by the fact that birds often try to peck their or other animal's droppings.

Sources: *50 Terms in Rural America. The Idiotic Joys of Idioms. 36 Classic Sayings Every Man Should know. Wikipedia. My own recollections.*



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Health Matters

How much exercise do I need?

Erika Breseman
DOCTOR OF PHYSICAL THERAPY (DPT)

We are often told that “exercise is good for you” and to “make sure you are getting enough exercise.” But what exactly does this mean? What constitutes as “exercise” and how much exercise is “enough?” Before we dive into specific exercise recommendations, it is helpful to first understand the various factors that play a role in determining how much exercise we should be striving for. When it comes to exercise, there are several factors to consider including: type, intensity, time and frequency.

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Type
Type of exercise refers to the kind of exercise you are doing. The two main types of exercise are aerobic and anaerobic. Aerobic exercise is more commonly referred to as cardiovascular exercise, or “cardio,” and includes a variety of activities such as walking, hiking, running, cycling, swimming, rowing, skiing and more. Anaerobic exercise is better known as strength training and includes activities such as weightlifting, body building, Olympic lifting and powerlifting. Aerobic and anaerobic training can also be combined, as commonly seen with CrossFit® and Orange Theory Fitness®. When it comes to choosing a specific type of aerobic, anaerobic or combined exercise program, there is no one superior mode. It all comes down to what is recommended for your age, health status and personal preference. If, for example, you are a healthy individual with no contraindications to running, but find running to be boring, there is no rule stating that you must run just because it will improve your cardiovascular endurance. There are plenty of other activities, as noted above, that will do the same thing and allow you to have fun at the same time.

Intensity
Intensity refers to how difficult the exercise feels and the amount of energy expended while exercising. Intensity of physical activity is further broken down into four different categories: light-intensity, moderate-intensity, moderate-to-vigorous intensity, and vigorous intensity. To determine what level of intensity you are exercising at, a scale known as the “rate of perceived exertion” (also known as RPE) is used. The RPE scale is a scale from zero to 10, where zero is considered “no effort” and 10 is considered “maximal effort.” Using this scale: light-intensity = 2-4, moderate-intensity = 5-6, moderate-to-vigorous intensity = 7-8, and vigorous intensity = 9-10. When you exercise, think about how you feel during the activity and try rating it using the RPE scale. Keep in mind that this scale is completely subjective, meaning that it is based on an individual’s personal capacity, and therefore will vary from person to person. For example, two different people can go for a five-mile bike ride at the same speed, along the same exact route, and for the same exact duration of time, but



Photo by Mikhail Nilov from Pexels

one person may rate it as a “5” and another might rate it at a “2.” This is completely normal and okay, as our individual health and fitness status varies.

Time
Time refers to the amount of time spent exercising during a single session, usually measured in minutes.

Frequency
Frequency refers to how often an individual exercises and is typically measured as the number of days per week.

Now that the variables related to exercise prescription have been broken down, you can use this information to help guide you in understanding the recommended activity guidelines. So, the question remains—how much exercise should you be getting? Per the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the summarized recommendations are as follows:

Children and adolescents (five–17 years old)
At least 60 minutes of physical activity per day throughout the week of moderate-to-vigorous intensity, with at least three days per week of vigorous intensity (i.e., soccer) and moderate-to-vigorous anaerobic exercise (i.e., push-ups).

Adults (18-64 years old, including those with chronic conditions and disability)
150 to 300 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous intensity aerobic exercise (i.e., brisk walking), 75 to 150 minutes per week vigorous intensity aerobic exercise (i.e., running), or a combination of moderate and vigorous intensity. At least two days per week of moderate or higher intensity anaerobic exercise (i.e., weightlifting).

Older adults (65 years and older, including those with chronic conditions

and disability)
At least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise (i.e., brisk walking), at least three days per week of moderate-to-vigorous intensity anaerobic exercise (i.e., weightlifting), and activities to improve balance (i.e., single leg balance).

Pregnant and postpartum women
At least 150 minutes per week moderate-intensity aerobic exercise (i.e., brisk walking).

For healthy individuals, consultation with a health care professional prior to beginning an exercise program is not required. For individuals with chronic health conditions, disability, pregnancy and postpartum, consultation with a health care provider may be required. Examples of health conditions that may require consultation include, but are not limited to, the following: hypertension, cardiovascular disease, type 1 diabetes mellitus, type 2 diabetes mellitus, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and cancer.

For all individuals beginning an exercise program, it is recommended to consult with a health care provider if any new symptoms develop. Such symptoms include, but are not limited to, the following: dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting, nausea, confusion, headache and chest pain.

Not sure if you should check with your doctor first? When in doubt, always check with a health care professional before beginning a new exercise program, to discuss the benefits and risks of exercise, and to determine the appropriate type and level of activity based on your individual abilities and needs.

Erika is a physical therapist with Dee PT, where her area of focus is general orthopedics.

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CVFRS is always looking for new faces. If you ever wondered about or had any interest in giving back to your community, fire fighting or emergency medical services, we encourage you to contact us at:

www.cvfrs.com

Into the Woods

Paper birch: a profile

By Ethan Tapper
CHITTENDEN COUNTY FORESTER

Paper birch, also called white birch (*Betula papyrifera*), stands out: even if you don't know a hemlock from a sugar maple, chances are that you can pick out its iconic white bark shining through the forest. Paper birch captivates people across North America, with an expansive range stretching from northern states into the Arctic, from coast to coast.

The defining characteristic of paper birch is its striking white, peely bark, a feature whose undeniable uniqueness is reflected in its various names. The word "birch" comes from the Old English word *birce* and the proto-Germanic word *bheræg*, meaning to "shine white." The Abnaki call it *maskwamozt*, which refers to how the bark peels—in broad, horizontal sheets (hence the "paper" in its common name).

The woods of Chittenden County also feature several other birches: yellow birch, black ("sweet") birch and grey birch. From yellow birch's golden metallic bark to black birch's grey-black blocky bark, each of these species is distinct but still very "birchy" in appearance. Birches are part of the diverse *Betulaceae* family, which includes other local species, like hop hornbeam ("ironwood"), alder and beaked hazelnut.

Paper birch bark is rich in betulin, a chemical that makes it both flammable and water-resistant. It has massive cultural importance, used by indigenous peoples in northern climes to make canoes, roofs for shelter and a variety of waterproof containers—including the predecessor to the modern-day sap bucket. Recent examination of betulin has revealed an

array of other potential medicinal uses, from treatment of cancers to AIDS, tuberculosis, herpes, type 2 diabetes and more.

The wood of paper birch is beautiful when sawn into boards. It has been used to make plywood veneer and a wide variety of specialty items, from thread spools and tongue depressors to clothespins and toys. Contrary to popular belief, it makes great firewood, with a higher BTU value than black cherry or red maple.

Paper birch is one of our "shade-intolerant" tree species, a group that includes all the poplars, pin cherry and others. Shade-intolerant species need lots of sunlight to thrive, and so usually only establish in openings at least a couple of acres in size. For this reason, a paper birch tree is usually one of many, a whole generation of trees growing in response to a large-scale disturbance. If you can determine the age of the paper birch trees in your woods, you can infer when that disturbance occurred.

Paper birches produce tons of small seeds which can be carried far by the wind. While most of these seeds will not land somewhere suitable—a large, fresh opening in the forest—some of them invariably will. Once established, paper birch's strategy is to live fast and die young; they grow at an incredible rate, often out-competing other tree species for light and space. However, their dominance doesn't last long, as their natural lifespan of 60 to 80 years is short for a tree.

The role that paper birch plays in our forests is somewhat ephemeral but nonetheless critical. They grow in destabilized areas, often in forests reeling from some large natural or human-

caused disturbance. By establishing in these areas, paper birch helps protect soils from erosion and the loss of soil nutrients, safeguarding the fertility of the forest for future generations of trees and plants.

Foresters manage for paper birch as part of "early successional" or "young forest" habitat, a diverse mix of tree, shrub and plant species that grow in the 20 years following a large-scale disturbance. This valuable habitat provides unique opportunities for critters from neotropical songbirds to bears and pollinators like butterflies. Creating early successional habitat may require cutting most or all trees in an area at least two acres in size, something which is not to be taken lightly—a consulting forester can help you consider how early successional habitat can be part of a broader forest management strategy that maximizes its benefits and minimizes its risks.

The next time you see paper birch and think of its beauty, think also of its cultural importance, its utility, its ecological role, what its presence tells us about our past. Then look at the rest of the trees in the woods—each of these species is equally important, equally complex,



Stock image

equally worthy of our appreciation. Growing together, they form the forest: something vital, profoundly important and greater than the sum of its parts.

Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation. To see what he's been up to, check out his YouTube channel, sign up for his eNews and read articles he's written at <https://linktr.ee/ChittendenCountyForester>.

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Town

Charlotte Senior Center news

Check out the Winter Schedule

You will find the Charlotte Senior Center Winter Schedule (for December through February) inserted in this issue of *The Charlotte News*. The Winter Schedule has also been posted on the Center website, CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. Registration is now open—you can register in person at the Center, by mail, or by phone at (802) 425-6345.

Almost all Senior Center courses, events and talks are in person. We will post masking and vaccination requirements at the front door and on our website, CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. If you are in doubt, please call (802) 425-6345 before coming in.

Upcoming December events

Wednesday, 12/8, at 1p.m. Wrap up a Good Read

Join Charlotte Library staff for a book show-and-tell session, just in time for holiday shopping. You'll come away with a helpful list of book gift suggestions for all ages. Books available to purchase at the Flying Pig in Shelburne. This program is co-sponsored by the Charlotte Library.

Thursday, 12/9, 2–7 p.m. Red Cross Blood Drive

The Center continues to host Red Cross blood drives. Please visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS to make your appointment for this drive. COVID health protocols will be followed for the safety of those participating in this event.

Wednesday, 12/15, at 1p.m. A Suburb with a Soul: Life and death in an intentional community, with Ted

Montgomery

Montgomery is an architect, artist and co-founder of Ten Stones on Greenbush Road. He will trace the 50-year history of the creation of this unique neighborhood. Excerpts from his book of the same name will add humorous insights into the trials and tribulations of organizing a new community founded and inspired by dreams of like-minded individuals.

Meals

Monday lunches are served from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The suggested donation is still only \$5. Take-out may be requested.

Monday, Dec. 6

Hearty minestrone

Spinach salad

Carrot cake

Monday, Dec. 13

Moroccan chicken with butternut squash soup and couscous

Green salad

Sticky toffee pudding

Gents Breakfast

Thursday, Dec. 9, 7–9 a.m.

Once a month the men gather for breakfast and conversation. Please register by the Tuesday, Dec. 7. Suggested donation is \$5.

December Art Exhibit

Kim Senior is the featured artist for December and January. An accomplished painter with an extensive and varied body of work, Kim has been focusing on plein air landscapes painted in oils, which she completes on site. She lives and paints in northern Vermont and is a founding artist at



Roadhouse Studios in Shelburne.

The best times to view art are: Tues., Wed. & Thurs. (not 12/9), 2:30–4 p.m. & Fri., 12:30–4 p.m. Call (802) 425-6345 to check for other times.

Ongoing exercise classes

Exercise classes are ongoing throughout the year—you can join at any time. Some courses use chairs, others use mats, some use weights—there is something for everyone. You are welcome to check out a class one time for no charge. And you may check out several different classes. Stop by and fill out an address form. You are always welcome to call with questions or stop in.

You can find the course descriptions on the website: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. Register in person or by phone at (802) 425-6345.

Chair Yoga on Mon., 9:30 a.m.

Gentle Yoga – Mon., 11 a.m.

Pilates Plus – Tues., 8:30 a.m.*

Strength Maintenance – Tues. 11 a.m.

Essentrics – Wed. 8:30 a.m.

Chair Yoga – Wed., 10 a.m. – NEW

Mindfulness Meditation, Wed., 2:30 p.m.,

on Zoom

Pilates – Thurs., 8:30 a.m.*

T'ai Chi for Beginners – Thurs., 10:30 a.m.

(now back on Zoom)

T'ai Chi Advanced – Thurs., 11 a.m.

Meditation—Fri., 7:30 a.m. NEW

Essentrics – Fri. 9:30 a.m.

Strength Maintenance – Fri., 11:30 a.m.

*Note that both Pilates classes are hybrid, in person and on Zoom.

Questions? New to the area? Thinking about volunteering?

Stop in and say hello—we love to show people around. We are located at 212 Ferry Road, Charlotte, just across from the post office. Hours are M–F from 9–4. Or give us a call us at (802) 425-6345. Residents from other communities are always welcome. Our mission is to serve those over 50.

To learn more about the Senior Center, other courses, and upcoming Monday menus, please visit our website: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org.

We look forward to seeing you soon.



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Town

Library news



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

Back by popular demand!

The Friends of the Charlotte Library are holding the second annual GET COZY RAFFLE to provide cheer and goodwill. The centerpiece is a beautiful and comfy quilt made by Amanda Herzberger, and an assortment of great books surrounds it.

Tickets sell for \$5 each, or 5 for \$20.

Raffle dates: 11/3-12/16

The drawing date is 12/16 at 12 p.m. The system will randomly draw the winner. We will notify the winner by email and will also announce the winner on social media.

To enter the raffle, go to this page <http://go.rallyup.com/3a8686>.

All proceeds will benefit the Charlotte Library.

Mitten Tree: Are you a knitter, crocheter or just like to shop? The Mitten Tree is up at the Charlotte Library and waiting to be decorated with handmade/new cold weather gear. We are also a designated food shelf drop-off location. All items collected will be going to a local non-profit organization.

Bird Feeder is Back: Thanks to a community STEM grant, we have a new bird feeder at the library. Take a minute to greet our feathered friends as you walk into the library. Looking for more bird watching opportunities? Consider joining the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count: audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count. Need some tips to get started? Check out our bird-watcher book list here: <https://charlotte.kohavt.org/MyAccount/MyList/1538>.

Happening at the library

Book Chat is Back!

Fridays at 9:30 a.m. via Zoom

Join Margaret on Friday mornings at 9:30 to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, Margaret selects a theme and highlights related titles from the library collection. Register for Book Chat here.

Book Discussion: *We Are What We Eat* by Alice Waters

Fridays, Dec. 3 & 10 at 11:30 a.m.

Alice Waters' latest book, *We Are What We Eat*, is a very readable comparison of the values and assumptions embedded in fast food and slow food. How important is "fast, cheap and easy" and how important is "beauty, biodiversity and seasonality"? Join Seed Library Coordinator Linda Hamilton for a two-part exploration of this timely topic. Co-sponsored by the Charlotte Grange. Register here: <https://bit.ly/3EsZzG9>.

Wrapping Up a Good Read

Wednesday, Dec. 8, at 1 p.m.

Join us for a book show-and-tell session, just in time for the holidays. Staff from the Charlotte Library share their favorite selections for all ages. Co-sponsored with the Charlotte Senior Center. Please sign up through Senior Center at (802) 425-6345. Books available to purchase at the Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne.

Friends Book Discussion: *The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane* by Lisa See

Thursday, Dec. 9, 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Register for the discussion in advance. In their remote mountain village, Li-yan and her family align their lives around the seasons and the farming of tea. For the Akha people, ensconced in ritual and routine, life goes on as it has for generations—until a stranger appears at the village gate in a jeep, the first automobile any of the villagers has ever seen.

Copies of the book available at the library circulation desk.

Mystery Book Group: *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman

Monday, Dec. 20, at 10 a.m. via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84467010512>.

Four septuagenarians with a few tricks up their sleeves

A female cop with her first big case

A brutal murder

Welcome to...

The Thursday Murder Club

In a peaceful retirement village, four unlikely friends meet weekly in the Jigsaw Room to

discuss unsolved crimes; together they call themselves The Thursday Murder Club. Elizabeth, Joyce, Ibrahim and Ron might be pushing eighty but they still have a few tricks up their sleeves.

When a local developer is found dead with a mysterious photograph left next to the body, the Thursday Murder Club suddenly find themselves in the middle of their first live case. As the bodies begin to pile up, can our unorthodox but brilliant gang catch the killer before it's too late? Copies of the book available at the library circulation desk.

Coming in January: *Regeneration* Book Discussion

Sustainable Charlotte and the Charlotte Library are jointly hosting a book discussion of Paul Hawken's newest book, *Regeneration: Ending the Climate Crisis in One Generation*. We'll begin, via zoom, on Jan. 11 at 7 p.m. and continue for the following 10 weeks. Each section of the book is filled with amazing information and deserves its own discussion. This is a hopeful book, filled with fascinating and inspiring stories of regenerative activities from around the world, and anyone can find

something that will urge them into some new action.

As Jane Goodall writes in her foreword, '*Regeneration* is a rebuttal to doomsayers who believe it is too late.'

For more information, please contact the library: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org. (802) 425-3864. Please register in advance by December 16: <https://bit.ly/2ZRbbEp>.

For more information about Sustainable Charlotte, either go to the website at sustainablecharlottetv.org or contact Ruah Swennerfelt at ruahswennerfelt@gmail.com.

Copies of the book will be available at the library by Dec. 22.

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

Library Contact Information

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

PUZZLE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 16



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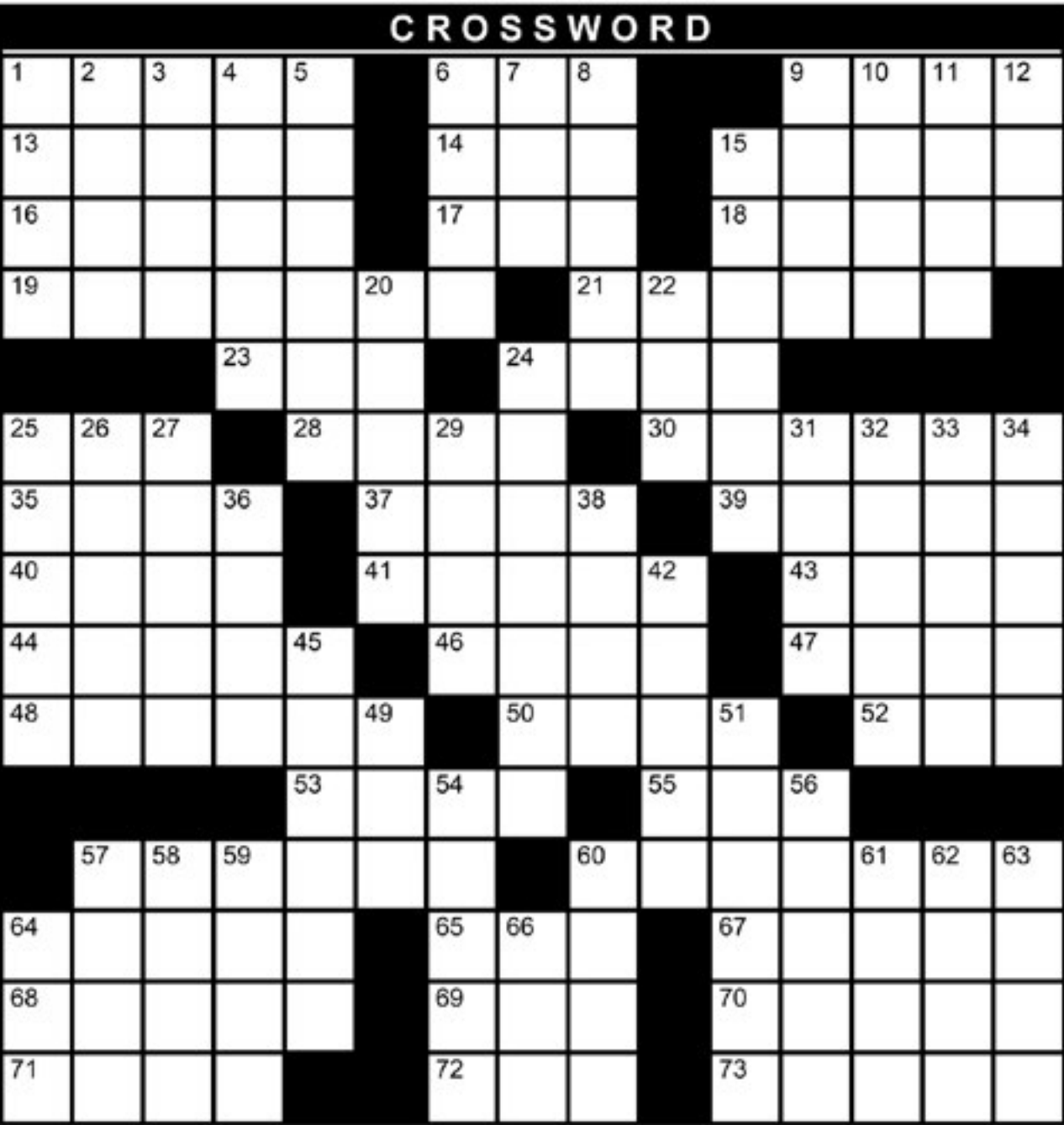
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Make use of the library's new recycle bins. Drop off your old electronics at the Library for recycling and repurposing by Good Point Recycling of Middlebury. Small electronic items including cell phones, tablets, small remote keyboards, tablets and laptops with their cords and chargers. Thank you to Sustainable Charlotte for partnering with us on this project. You can also donate your plastic film to NexTrex®, not only are you helping to keep thousands of pounds of waste out of landfills, you're also helping NexTrex® to continue making eco-friendly outdoor products. Learn what plastic items are approved for this program at: <https://recycle.trex.com/view/educate#materials1>.

Photo contributed.



- DOWN cont.**
10. Second word of many fairytales
11. Cause of Titanic's demise
12. Poetic "even"
15. Burdensome
20. Not this or that
22. Lab eggs
24. Time off
25. *Champagne holder
26. *Wassailing composition
27. Raccoon's South American cousin
29. Feeling of superiority, pl.
31. ____ gum, food additive
32. Furiously angry
33. Exclude or omit
34. *Number of candles in kinara, Kwanzaa
36. *Troika vehicle
38. "Will be," according to Doris
42. Asian goat antelope
45. Potpourri
49. Chevy Suburban, e.g.
51. Builds
54. *Popular holiday wish
56. Munchausen's title
57. *Bedecked arbor
58. Shakespeare, to his friends?
59. And others, for short
60. Minus
61. Tropical edible root
62. Anon's partner
63. Take a load off
64. Like some humor
66. *Traditional main holiday dish



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THEME: HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Answers on page 15

- ACROSS**

1. Pilgrim's destination
6. Make a scene
9. Rubik's puzzle
13. Hawaii environs
14. Toothy fish
15. Cone-shaped dwelling
16. White Swan in "Swan Lake" ballerina
17. ____-Wan Kenobi
18. *Decorate with wreaths and holly, e.g.
19. *Either dessert or source of heat (2 words)
21. * ____ Day, or second day of Christmastide
23. Land parcel
24. Strauss of denim fame
25. Broadband access overseer, acr.
28. Clarified butter
30. Acute one and obtuse one
35. Southeastern Asian country
37. Jousting's breastplate
39. Shrewdness
40. Caspian basin river
41. *Pasadena's Tournament of ____
43. Tel ____, Israel
44. Native American emblem
46. "Why not?"
47. Hitchhiker's quest
48. Omits when speaking
50. Hard to find
52. Bear's winter quarters
53. Hoodwink
55. Scepter's partner
57. *Number of days in Christmastide
60. *"Ugly" holiday party garb?
64. Prepare a letter
65. "Bingo!"
67. Hunger for
68. Pass-the-baton race
69. *Cranberry sauce
- sometimes comes from it
70. Same as tori
71. Raise the roof
72. German river
73. Stall sound

DOWN

1. Whiny and miserable
2. Shade of beige
3. Finish a ceiling, to a plasterer
4. Marlboro alternative
5. Not digital
6. Bug-eyed
7. Not Uber
8. Social group
9. Ghana monetary unit

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