Wildlife technician Cody Sears, Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation director of philanthropy Susan Harry and volunteer Kevin Boyle pull and push a canoe with five rescued loons in bins off the ice near Diamond Island. See the full story on page 7.
A lot of bull migrating to town hall vicinity

Scooter MacMillan
EDITOR

Town planner Larry Lewack got a bit of a surprise when he got to work and was greeted by the sight of a pile of manure outside his office window in the field behind the Charlotte Town Hall parking lot.

“Happy Monday! Don’t open your window,” he said was how his week started on March 7.

Although the selectboard has extended the mask mandate through March in the town hall, the library and the senior center, Lewack said he still thinks one would help with the olfactory bouquet of bovine waste.

The manure was the result of that property, often referred to as the LeBoeuf estate, being purchased by Mike Dunbar from the Shirley Bruce Estate on Friday for $500,000.

Robert Mack said he delivered the manure to the property over the weekend, preparing to farm there for Dunbar.

He expects the first crop he’ll plant is soybeans, not hemp, a crop that didn’t do as well as he had expected when he planted a number of acres in 2019, hoping to take advantage of the predicted CBD craze. He attributed part of the problem

A deliberation is not a meeting.

And because a deliberation is not a meeting, open meeting restrictions do not apply. This was the legal opinion David Rugh, one of the town’s attorneys, delivered again and again at a special meeting of the Charlotte Development Review Board on Wednesday, March 2.

This meeting was one of several held in recent weeks to address whether the board violated open meetings laws when it discussed whether to reopen reconsideration preliminary approvals of applications for a couple of proposed projects, but particularly an application by Patricia O’Donnell and Jim Donovan for a nine-lot subdivision on 124 acres at 125 Lake Road.

Ultimately, these discussions have turned out to be moot except as examinations of how the new board’s process should work because O’Donnell and Donovan withdrew their reconsideration request.

The issue may have become even more academic when an online real-estate company listed the Lake Road property for sale at $1.17 million. However, this ad appeared to have been taken down a day or so later.

Town planner Larry Lewack said he didn’t know whether or not O’Donnell and Donovan withdrew their reconsideration request.

Chair Charlie Russell said the board felt it had enough evidence to decide whether to open the application for reconsideration. “We believe we didn’t need to take new testimony. We had a decision in front of us with findings and conclusions that we evaluated.”

Even if the board was not required to let people speak, board member Christina Asquith questioned why they weren’t allowed to speak. At subsequent meetings the development review board has spent a lot of time listening to people sharing their frustrations about not being given a chance to speak.

“It’s taken us so much more time and everybody’s feeling badly about it. And I also feel like we weren’t able to hear full information,” Asquith said.

Chair Charlie Russell said, “I don’t think we’re wasting a lot of time. I think we’re all learning a lot about a very confusing issue. I think when the next time this comes up, if it’s ever like this, we’re going to be better prepared.”

Development review board hopes reconsideration ruckus proves instructive if similar situations arise

Scooter MacMillan
EDITOR

The Charlotte News
Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

Champlain Valley Union High dominates on the slopes at state championship

George Francisco took fifth in the slalom and ninth in giant slalom to contribute in a big way to Champlain Valley Union High School nabbing its second state skiing championship in a row. See the full story on page 7.

The sketch plan stage is followed by a preliminary review. The preliminary plan review stage is a formal hearing where the board sits in “a quasi-judicial capacity,” Rugh said. Applicants and neighbors are supposed to be notified of such a hearing and have an opportunity to attend to present evidence or give testimony.

“Charlotte’s development review board has established a practice of deliberating in public,” he said. “Many of the recent issues that have been raised result from the board deliberating in public. That is a good thing from a transparency perspective, but it doesn’t have to happen.”

The development review board is one of the town boards with the authority and necessity upon occasion to meet as a quasi-judicial body, and when it does, it is operating similarly to a judge in a trial. Like a judge’s right to retire away from public view to consider a case, the development review board can meet in closed session to deliberate.

Finette objected to the way the board handled the reconsideration process because he had made “a formal request” to speak during the board discussion and wasn’t allowed to speak.

“Your opportunity comes if the development review board decides to reopen the hearing,” Rugh said.

“It’s not an open meeting law violation because it’s not a meeting,” he repeated.

See PROPERTY PAGE 4
I’ve always assumed that everyone’s dream job was to be a coach or an editor at a community newspaper. What a big surprise it was to find that neither of these was everyone’s dream job. And an even bigger surprise to realize that neither of these jobs is probably even most people’s dream job.

For me, being editor of The Charlotte News is a big deal. A dream job come true. Although a good many years ago I made the jump from small community newspapers to a relatively big daily newspaper, I don’t regret the jump, but I always thought the things I was learning helped put out a newspaper every day for more than 60,000 readers would make me better at putting out this community newspaper.

So, here I am. And I hope you’re with me in being committed to keeping this community newspaper at the risk of a beating a dead clitch. It takes a community to put out a community newspaper.

Which means we depend on you donating to this community newspaper. Sometimes it’s a one-shot deal, but many times it is dedicated people who send in things all the time. You’re wrestling with how to get your thoughts into words, may I suggest returning to the basics but with a twist. Whenever we write all of us should stop to reread our minutes and make sure we contain the five Ws. Most of us have learned the four Ws and the H—what? who? where? when? and how? — but remember that there’s a fifth W which stands for “weird” or “wacky.”

Before you hit send, stop, reread your article, letter to the editor, event write-up, whatever and ask yourself was there something weird. Often the weird detail that at first glance seems to have nothing to do with the writing. The weird detail that will put a story in focus or make it more compelling.

I hope you’re with me in being dedicated to find that neither is significant to a few or more people in town has already happened to tell us. Or, if you forget to tell us beforehand, and you suddenly realize in the middle of something happening that other people in Charlotte might like to know about it, please take out your cell phone or camera, get a couple of pictures and take a few notes.

My email address is scooter@thecharlottenews.org. I’m not just looking forward to hearing from you — I’m counting on it.

So much of what appears in The Charlotte News is written by volunteers. Sometimes it’s a one-shot deal, but many times it is dedicated people who send in things all the time.

The Charlotte Selectboard re-elected Faulkner and Tenney as the board’s chair and vice chair, respectively — and they both agreed to once again step into the metaphorical crucible of fire as leaders of Charlotte’s smallest municipal body.

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Charlotte residents approve town, fire, library budgets handily, defeat community center study soundly

Scooter MacMillan, Editor

In the late afternoon of Tuesday’s Town Meeting Day voting, outside the Charlotte Town Hall was seeing a good bit of action with leaving and arriving cars having to dosey due to getting in or out of parking spaces. With the sky starting to dim and less than three hours left before polls would close, assistant town clerk Sy Koorser said the turnout had been steady. At 12:23 p.m., Charlotte had just over 3,300 voters. Of these, 969 or 29 percent exercised their right to have a say-in town decisions.

More than half of those voting, or 527, did so by absentee ballot. The most controversial item on the ballot proved to be an article asking voters to approve $50,000 for a feasibility study to determine the viability of building a Charlotte community center. This proposal was soundly defeated 735–225 with more than 76 percent of votes cast against it.

As of Tuesday, Charlotte had just over 3,300 voters. Of these, 969 or 29 percent had voted for the town’s general budget of more than $2.6 million in fiscal year 2022–23.

The Champlain Valley School District budget was “not entirely clear.”

The next most popular candidates were apparently Mary Mead and Janice Heilman, who were approved, respectively, as delinquent tax collector and Charlotte Library trustee, with each garnering 812 votes.

Also approved were James Faulkner—one-year term to the selectboard, Louise McCarron—two-year term to the selectboard, Charlie Russell—one-year term as moderator, Richard Mintzer—three-year term as auditor and Matt Kranow— one-year remaining of a three-year term as a trustee of public funds.

School district voting

In Champlain Valley School District voting, voters across the district approved the school system’s total budget for fiscal year 2022–23 of almost $89.4 million with 3,395, or 60 percent, voting yea to 2,204 nay votes.

There’s almost $4.8 million in work proposed for Charlotte Central School, including electrical and fire renovation and parking lot paving and work.

Almost 73 percent winning margin, for the school system to secure a $7.5 million bond to fund upgrades, remediation, improvements and maintenance in hopes of avoiding “the need for large construction projects we have seen in the past,” according to district documents.

Projects totaling $865,000 proposed at Champlain Valley Union High School include heating and air conditioning upgrades, a section of roof and drainage work on some athletic fields.

Charlotte residents vote nay to community center study

11:55 a.m.

Charlotte Town Hall was busy and moving on Town Meeting Day, as this cold and cloudy Tuesday didn’t keep voters away from coming to speak their truth about town issues.

One of these voters was Kristen L’Esperance, 42, who works as a designer. “There was an exploratory budget for a potential community center that I don’t feel like we need,” L’Esperance said.

“I don’t have children in school, so the Champlain Valley School District stuff doesn’t really make sense to me. Everything else seemed reasonable,” said L’Esperance.

“I just felt it was my obligation,” said L’Esperance of her reasoning for turning out to vote on issues that were pertinent to her and leaving the others blank.

As she left town hall, Weed said, “I’ve been reading about the fire department budget and the potential for the new community center issue and also the library, which was pulled out of the budget and put in a different category.”

“We voted yes for was John Kennedy. It was a wonderful thing, and you wouldn’t believe how interested we were to vote,” said Weed. “I’ve been voting my whole life and I believe we should, and that we should read up before we vote, and be responsible for what we say.”

Halle Segal, Community News Service

Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Photo by Halle Segal

Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Resident votes in her second Town Meeting Day

12:04 p.m.

Local Charlotte resident Madison Denton, aged 22, worked as a bookkeeper in Charlotte and braved the cold on Tuesday morning to vote.

Denton came to vote against the idea of the community center building, saying she thinks it will negatively affect Charlotte residents with higher taxes.

“They’re trying to put in the building for the swimming pool and basketball courts, and I voted against it for property tax reasons,” Denton said.

Denton said it’s an unnecessary use of time, money and space.

“Just the way the financial issues are going right now, if they’re ever going to happen,” she said. “Up here, at least locally, it doesn’t matter, as far as me, what party you’re in. We don’t think about what ticket you write, the party of who’s running and if they’re worthy of the office.”

Another couple opposed to community center study

4:04 a.m.

Jonathan Freese, who has a very appropriate last name for the Town Meeting Day weather, came with Chickadee, a small black and white papillon who rode in a pooch pouch on Freese’s chest.

Freese said he always votes. Chickadee could have cared less about the proceedings and never voted.

The biggest issue in Tuesday’s town ballot for Freese was the community center.

“I wasn’t thrilled about that,” Freese said, “the Charlotte Fire and Rescue Departments budget was "not entirely clear."”

From left, Louise McCarron, Robin Reid and Kate Mesarus were kept relatively busy, signing up a steady stream of voters on Town Meeting Day Tuesday, March 1.

Enthusiastic Charlotte voters share their voting opinions

Local Charlotte resident Joan Weed, 83, was concerned about the fire department’s budget but voted for it anyway because of “what they do for us.”

As Charlotte resident, age 83, has never missed a chance to vote

12:23 p.m.

Joan Weed, 83, has been coming out to vote her entire life, and this year’s Town Meeting Day was no different.

Weed even put on an old pair of dazzling blue-stoned earrings for the event, in honor of the importance of the occasion, coming out to vote, even during the COVID pandemic.

Weed grew up in Connecticut, doing most of her voting down there where the voting is “far more political, believe it or not,” she said. “Up here, at least locally, it doesn’t matter, at least to me, what party you’re in. We don’t think about what ticket you write, the party of who’s running and if they’re worthy of the office.”

Halle Segal, Community News Service

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“I wasn’t thrilled about that,” Freese said, “the Charlotte Fire and Rescue Departments budget was "not entirely clear."”

From left, Sallie Mack, Chickadee and Jonathan Freese braced the cold — Mack and Freese to vote and Chickadee to just hang out, literally.

His wife Sallie Mack came out of the Charlotte Town Hall in the middle of the conversation, but her immediate response to the question of what her biggest concern on the ballot was the same as his— the proposed community center.

Mack said she thought a community center would be great except “there’s so many other more needs in the community.”

She is also concerned about the size of the Charlotte Fire and Rescue Department’s budget.

“The fire department’s budget is twice as expensive as Hinesburg’s,” Mack said. “I don’t understand why, and they don’t really tell us why. There’s no transparency.”

Mack would like to see if Charlotte and other nearby towns could combine rescue departments and save money, but she admitted she wasn’t an expert on the subject and the issue is not really in her “wheelhouse.”

Scooter MacMillan, Editor
The war in Ukraine and our heating costs

Surely, we are all horrified by the devastation that is happening in Ukraine. The uncalled-for war initiated by Vladimir Putin has outraged the world and resulted in a unified front against Russia in support of the Ukrainian people.

The strong economic sanctions are totally justified and must remain as long as Russian forces continue their assault and occupation. We will have to stand firm regardless of the economic pain that the sanctions cause in the U.S. and among our allies in Europe and around the world, because that pain is nothing compared to the pain being visited on the people of Ukraine.

One of the biggest effects in the U.S. is soaring oil prices which are driving already high inflation even higher. With gasoline topping $4 per gallon and heating oil not far behind, the remainder of the heating season as well as our daily commutes will be more costly than previously expected.

The question many are asking are: “What can we do about it?”, and “How can I handle the added expense?”

Help Vermonters reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

The governor has proposed, and the House Committee on Energy and Technology has recommended, that $80 million be allocated for weatherizing 8,000 low-income and moderate-income residences between 2022 and 2026. Vermont homeowners and tenants with low incomes will be eligible for no-cost, comprehensive home weatherization services through Vermont’s Home Weatherization Assistance Program administered by the Office of Economic Opportunity and delivered through six weatherization assistance providers.

Weatherization of buildings with five or more units will be delivered through 3E Thermal, a team of consultants who help apartment building owners increase energy efficiency and improve building performance. Vermonters with a moderate income will be eligible to receive incentives through Efficiency Vermont and its network of contractors to support the cost of home weatherization. Weatherization will reduce the amount of fossil fuels needed for heating and thereby reduce the cost of heating.

In addition, $20 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds is recommended for low- and moderate-income Vermonters to upgrade home electrical systems and install energy-saving technologies such as cold-climate heat pumps in conjunction with weatherization. Another $5 million is recommended to help approximately 3,000 low-income Vermonters who have a fossil fuel water heater at least 10 years old to replace it at no cost or with a heat pump water heater to reduce their energy costs and emissions. These alternative heating appliances will further reduce dependence on fossil fuels and their associated cost.

While the situation in Ukraine was not a consideration when the Vermont Climate Council proposed a clean heat standard, it may turn out to be an effective tool when combined with the state’s share of American Rescue Plan Act funds in countering the heating costs of Vermonters. By allowing clean heat measures like weatherization, heat pumps, and heat pump hot water heaters installed starting January 1, 2022, to create clean heat credits, we can get a jump start on reducing emissions as well as costs of residential heating. These credits will be readily available for purchase by fossil fuel dealers to meet their clean heat credit obligations that are expected to start in 2024.

Or they can generate credits themselves by helping their customers transition to these clean heat measures.

We don’t know how long the war in Ukraine will continue, how the sanctions will affect Putin’s conduct, and what the outcome will be. But fuel prices that were already high before the war will probably continue to be so. For every gallon of heating oil or gasoline we can avoid using, we will further insulate ourselves from the volatility of fossil fuel prices as well as reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

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 (MikeYantachka.com).

Deadline approaches for SCHIP grants

The spring deadline for SCHIP (Shelburne Charlotte Hinesburg Interfaith Projects) grant applications is Friday, April 15. Since SCHIP began making grants, many nonprofits have used their awarded funds to continue their mission to improve the lives of neighbors and strengthen their communities.

Grants range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. Grants may not exceed $3,000 per request, and only one grant can be received within a one-year period by any one entity.

Applicant requirements:

- Be a 501(c)(3) or submit the application through such an organization.
- Projects must serve residents of Shelburne, Charlotte or Hinesburg.
- Funds may not be applied to annual operating budgets or personnel staffing.
- One application per organization per calendar year.

Grants deadlines are April 15 and Oct. 15. To obtain an application, go to the contacts through such an organization.

To learn more about Sugarbush, visit Sugarbush.com. Sugarbush is better than ever with even more pass options available for next winter. Stay local and explore Sugarbush or unlock Ikon’s 49 global destinations. Next season, get more ski time with less wait time and with Adventure Assurance and a convenient payment plan, now is the time to commit to a winter full of even more adventure. Season passes are on sale now at the best value of the year. Visit Sugarbush.com to learn more.
Association of Southwest Florida, 2575 Morse of Burlington and moving to Champlain College after marrying Robert Florida, who passed away Feb. 20 at the age of 88. Andy was born in Hartford, Connecticut, on Aug. 19, 1933. He graduated from Westminster School and Denison University, where he was captain of the tennis and football teams. Upon graduation, Andy was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Air Force and spent two years on active duty at Craig Air Force Base in Selma, Alabama, as a squadron adjutant.

As a young man, he developed what would become a lifelong love of flying and flight. In 1961, he combined that passion with his business acumen when he founded Northern Airways, a fixed-base operator at Burlington International Airport. Ten years later, he founded Air North, a regional air carrier that provided commuter service through Washington, D.C., Boston, New York City and upper New York state.

Andy was also an avid polo player, sailor, skier and tennis player. In 1964, having nowhere to play tennis in the winter, he and three friends founded Burlington Indoor Tennis, Inc., or Twin Oaks, which was renamed The Edge and currently has four indoor tennis and sports facilities in the Burlington area.

He was known throughout his community as generous, kind and adventurous, often flying off in his seaplane, a Grumman Widgeon, with his trusty co-pilot and wife, Birgit, to remote destinations such as the northern Ontario lakes and rivers, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Alaska or wherever children or friends needed them. Andy was most comfortable in the air, whether at the stick of his Piper Cub, behind the yoke of his Widgeon or DC-3 (a World War II era cargo plane) or at the controls of a Cessna Citation.

Andy is survived by his loving wife of 50 years, Birgit Nielsen Deeds; his six children: Diane Stebbins, Lisa Mackenzie, Andy Deeds III, Susan Griffis, Martha Deeds, Jennifer Huff; four stepchildren: Harald Findlay, Kim Findlay, Lee Potter, and Michael Findlay; 23 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Andy’s independent spirit will be missed by all who knew him, loved him and were inspired by him.

In lieu of flowers, please send contributions to the Andy Deeds Junior Sports Scholarship, c/o Mike Feitelberg, The Edge, 75 Eastwood Dr., South Burlington, VT 05403.

Arrangements are in care of Corbin and Palmer Funeral Home, 9 Pleasant Street, Essex Junction, VT.
Long skate on Lake Champlain turns into loon rescue

Eric Teed
CONTRIBUTOR

Our crew has a lunch policy. “Not a rule mind you, just a policy” put forward years ago by Charlotte resident John Rosenthal.

Lunch may not be taken before noon, seating should be comfortable, in the sun and out of the wind.

Given we had been skating for hours on incredible black ice, we were euphoric and famished. The speck of dirt called Diamond Island in Lake Champlain’s Narrows would have to do. Then, I saw the loons.

I almost missed lunch, and the next day would be one I will always remember.

Noridc ice skating at its extreme takes well-equipped skaters on tours for many miles on variable and dangerous ice. Devotees of this sport learn to read and test ice; they wear dry suits and life jackets and carry safety equipment.

On Saturday, Kevin Boyle, Dan Spada, John Rosenthal and myself were on a more than 20-mile skate on Lake Champlain and came upon a small hole in the ice with five loons in it. Common loons migrate from their breeding grounds to open water for the winter. Ideally these birds go to the ocean, but sometimes they stop at Lake Champlain. In a mild winter the lake can be a good place for them. But in a year like this when most of the water freezes, it can be a loon’s demise.

In winter, loons molt their flight feathers and cannot fly for more than a month. If the ice freezes suddenly, they can be trapped.

They will swim in circles to keep an area open, but if it is really cold the ice slowly closes in on them. Once trapped, they become easy prey for bald eagles and peregrine falcons.

The increase in loons being trapped in the ice is related to climate change. They should be triggered to migrate by encroaching ice on their breeding lakes in December, but now might wait until January or February. Instead of migrating to the ocean they can end up only getting to lakes like Champlain.

Knowing this, I called Nina Schoch of the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation from the ice. She answered on the second ring.

Conservationist Sue George handled checking the birds’ health once they were captured and all five loons were still there. Three had been diving to avoid being eaten by eagles.

We dragged a canoe across the ice, filled with nets and containers for the birds. When a three-approaches loons will dive and resurface only for an instant to take a breath, but we dragged a gill net over part of the hole. One by one, each bird in turn surfaced to become entangled. We quickly brought them out onto the ice, untangled and placed the loons in plastic bins.

We got all five in short order. Back on shore the loons were carefully inspected for any wounds or other injuries. All the birds were OK.

One of the birds had been banded. It turns out that bird was twice lucky. It was rescued and banded by the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation on Lake George last winter.

Thanks to Rosenthal of Charlotte, we knew that open water and safety for the loons was just 12 miles north of the rescue site at the Charlotte Town Beach.

Shortly, we were back on the ice in Charlotte, sliding the canoe with the boxes and their cargo of five loons across old ice on the inner bay to the edge and open water.

There the loons were released one at a time. Within moments, the loons found each other again. We could see them swimming together in the distance with another chance to make it through the winter.

“This winter alone in the Adirondacks, we have saved nine common loons from almost certain death, and more than a dozen have been saved in Maine and New Hampshire.”

These beautiful birds, with their wailing call that is the sound of wilderness and suspense, are not on the federal endangered species list but are protected by the Migratory Bird Act.

Loons face many threats, including climate change, fishing line entanglement, lead shot poisoning and human disturbance.

Cody Sears, the center’s wildlife technician, led the rescue. Boyle and I were assigned to ice safety. Loon naturalist Ellie George handled checking the birds’ health once they were captured for transport to safer waters.

Susan Harry and Jackie Miller, also with the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation, rounded out our skeleton crew.

First thing Sunday morning we were at the mouth of Otter Creek on Fort Cassin Point. In the distance through a spotting scope, I was able to see 12 bald eagles circling the hole and was disappointed to see only two loons.

Maybe three were already gone.

Boyle and I skated out the mile and a half for a closer look. The eagles dispersed and all five loons were still there. Three had been diving to avoid being eaten by eagles.

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A barrage of emails and phone calls followed, and a rescue plan was launched.

Volunteer Kevin Boyle and Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation wildlife technician Cody Sears and staff member Jackie Miller release one of five rescued loons to open water at the edge of the ice at Charlotte Town Beach.

After our feverish work to get the loons released quickly and safely, perhaps it was Boyle who summed up our feeling best: “I don’t often get a chance to change the world.”

“These birds are some of the manyiced-in loons that we have rescued over the last few years,” said Schoch.

“Loon organizations throughout the Northeast have seen an increasing trend in iced-in loons in recent years, and we are now establishing trained rescue teams to respond. This winter alone in the Adirondacks, we have saved nine common loons from almost certain death, and more than a dozen have been saved in Maine and New Hampshire.”

To learn more about loon research and conservation efforts in the Northeast, visit the Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation at adkloon.org, the Biodiversity Research Institute at briwildlife.org, the Loon Preservation Committee at loon.org, and the Vermont Center for Ecostudies at vtecostudies.org.

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Diamond Island in Lake Champlain’s

CONTRIBUTOR

Eric Teed

Volunteer Kevin Boyle and Adirondack Center for Loon Conservation wildlife technician Cody Sears and staff member Jackie Miller release one of five rescued loons to open water at the edge of the ice at Charlotte Town Beach.
Champlain Valley Union High dominates on the slopes at state championship

Scooter MacMillian STAFF WRITER

The Champlain Valley Union High School boys and girls dominated the Vermont state alpine skiing championships at Burke Mountain a week ago.

On Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 28 and March 1, the boys won all the team competitions and the girls won all but one, coach Mike Minnerly said.

The CVU boys, a year after winning their first state championship in program history, took the slalom with 55 points to second-place Woodstock’s 115 points.

The Redhawks were led by George Francisco who came in fifth, Ray Hagios at sixth, Peter Gilliam seventh and Kyle Martin ninth in the top 10 finishers in Tuesday’s slalom.

The Redhawk girls nabbed 119 points on Tuesday for a narrow 1-point victory over Rice (120) and Stowe was third with 129 on Tuesday.

Scoring in the top 10 for the CVU girls in the slalom was Dicey Manning at 10th.

In the giant slalom Monday, Carlynn Strobeck took seventh and Dicey Manning 10th for the Redhawks girls.

The CVU boys took three places in the top 10 in the giant slalom—Jake Strobeck second, Ray Hagios fourth and George Francisco ninth.

The team’s success was not a complete surprise to their coach.

“We had won district and had a pretty good understanding of who we were and what we’re capable of,” Minnerly said.

“We’re fully aware that anything can happen, but we also felt that, if we stood up and we skied well, we would be in good shape.”

One of the most dramatic moments at the state championships came on the girls side in the slalom when the Redhawks’ No. 1 Ella Lisle fell on her first run. But she got up, hiked back to the gate and completed the run.

In spite of her fall, Lisle still managed to place 39th out of 73 skiers on that initial run, but nonetheless a big gap to close for CVU to have a chance in the slalom’s combined scores.

“We were going to have to leapfrog over teams if we wanted to win,” Minnerly said. “So, we needed her to ski her very best at the very biggest moment for us to have a chance.”

He said that, on her second run Lisle came in first by nearly five seconds, “which is an absolute eternity in ski racing. And the girls won the state championship by one point. She jumped from 39th place to 20th place on her second run.”

The future looks bright for the Redhawks with only one senior and three juniors among the teams’ 14 skiers.

CVU girls ski team at the state championships are, from left, Carly Strobeck, Elizabeth Norstrand, Dicey Manning, Merrie Cartwright, Kate Kogut, Zszie Scapof and Ella Lisle.

CVU boys skiers at the state championships are, from left, Alex Provost, Jake Strobeck, John Ackerson, Alex Sweitzer, Roy Wrisley, Sam Sweeney, Max Peters, Tucker Tharpe, Ben McGovern, Jake Komor, Kyle Marvin, Alex Provost and George Francisco.

Nordic skiers hit the trails

Edd Merritt CONTRIBUTOR

Redhawk Nordic skiers participated in the state championships, as did the downhillers. After the first day, the classic women were in third place behind Burlington and Mount Mansfield. The men’s team trailed Mount Anthony for second place.

Women individuals saw Emma Crum come in third, while the CVU men were led by Geo DeBrosse in sixth.

Among relay teams the Redhawk men placed second; the women third.

Nordic skiers will continue to hit the Craftsbury trails.

Redhawks defeat South Burlington

CVU men’s basketball team topped South Burlington 48-41 in the Division I state quarterfinals. Alex Provost led Hawk scorers with 13 points, followed by Tucker Tharpe with 12, and Sam Sweaney with 10. It took CVU a third-quarter scoring run to gain a lead they did not give up.

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It took seven years but Brian Just is happy to say that his house at Ten Stones doesn’t need a CO2 detector. That’s because he and his wife, Erin, have gone completely fossil fuel free.

“We just started chipping away,” Just said. “We replaced the boiler with an air-to-water heat pump three years ago and took the propane tank out of the ground. Seeing it being excavated from the front yard is one of my favorite moments.”

Saving energy is part of Just’s professional life as well as his personal one. He is the director of energy services engineering at Vermont Energy Investment Corporation.

“I work with really smart engineers,” Just said. “They are figuring out creative ways to solve energy problems and helping to line up great ideas with opportunities inside and outside the state.”

After replacing the boiler, Just set his sights on transportation and purchased a used electric vehicle. The couple kept their Subaru until it gave out and then replaced it with an electric SUV.

Then, Just turned his attention to the kitchen where he installed an induction stove.

“We got rid of our propane grill,” he said, “and I sold my gas-powered chainsaw.”

The couple’s home isn’t ideal for solar panels so they bought into an array on the Bristol landfill.

“It makes up for the electricity our home and vehicles use,” Just said. In addition, he pulled most of his retirement money out of mutual funds which invest in fossil fuels, a process he admits isn’t that easy. “If you’re willing to do the work, you can do it,” he said. “It just takes a little commitment.”

Just grew up in the prairies of western Minnesota and started his career as a mechanical engineer designing big equipment. After working enough to pay off his student loans, he decided to take a non-traditional route.

“I bought a one-way ticket to Bangkok,” he said, “because it was the cheapest fare to a distant place.”

Although his initial plan had been to travel for a year, Just didn’t return for four years when he turned 30. “I spent a couple of years meandering,” he said. “I was in Australia and New Zealand for a brief period, hopped through Asia and crossed Russia and Eastern Europe.”

He traveled to Africa, the Middle East, South America and Central America. He finished the jaunt on a Greyhound bus, walking the last 13 miles from the bus stop to his parents’ home.

Traveling opened Just’s eyes to problems that exist in developing nations and he began to think about ways he might be able to provide solutions.

“I’d been traveling around Borneo, an island whose name sings ‘rainforest’ to me,” he said, “but even venturing inland I saw firsthand how much deforestation there is.”

After travelling for weeks far off the beaten path, Just never found true jungle. When Just was 20, he visited Vermont for a fall foliage weekend and fell in love with the state. Just was thrilled at the opportunity to move to Vermont when the Vermont Energy Investment Corporation job opened.

“There was a lot of intention,” he said. “I have a 200-year view of things. It’s hard for me to imagine the place where I grew up not turning into a desert, and I wanted to be somewhere near a coast where a water shortage wouldn’t be an issue.”

The locavore movement was also a draw.

“There is so much pride here in the agriculture, and land and food and that really fits us,” he said.

Just is also happy to have found a community in Ten Stones. “I wanted the opportunity to have closer relationships and to know our neighbors,” he said.

For those interested in following in his fossil-free footsteps, Just has some simple advice: “Start with what you can do. When we bought the house, the first thing we did was replace the light bulbs with LEDs, and then we started to chip away more as opportunities arose.”

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

Hi Neighbor!

Brian Just: Happy at chipping away at the fossil-fuel addiction

Phil Newbeck CONTRIBUTOR

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Community supported agriculture versus large agribusiness

Stronger Together

This industrial approach to agriculture has significantly impacted family farms and the rise of large farms, leading to a steady loss of small- and medium-sized farms. This has left many farmers struggling to keep up with the demands of large-scale production and market expectations.

To offset some of the cost, farmers have转向了“commodities.” This has led to a loss of diversity in the types of crops grown and a decrease in the nutritional value of the food produced.

Why would they do that? Incentives. Farmers are being under contract with corporations for a regional and national market to ensure their success because they contribute to the increasingly important supply of fresh and storable processed food from elsewhere. The best of both worlds, right?

In the 1990s Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) became more mainstream. This innovation in agriculture value. Between Vermont Land Trust’s contribution and Charlotte Land Trust’s ability to tap into Charlotte Conservation Fund plus successfully raise additional private donations in town, the land’s development rights could be taken out of the equation. I struggled to come up with the money to close the deal, but eventually I found a bank that liked my business plan and experience for running a CSA.

Twenty years ago, my goal was a 250-member CSA. But today, with many farms offering CSAs, the blossoming of farmers’ markets, the willingness of local grocery stores to stock local produce and local restaurants to feature them, I’ve learned to use a variety of markets.

Still, the CSA remains the heart of the farm. Even though it is not our sole retail value and that’s not including the value and popularity of u-picks. Being a member of Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont’s Farm Share program helps me offer reduced-price CSA shares to folks who need that help. Another win-win.

So now, Virginia, you see the value of local farms and how we all benefit from their success. Donations to Charlotte Conservation Fund and Charlotte Land Trust, membership in a CSA, choosing to buy local at farm stands or grocery stores, and thanking restaurants for featuring local products all play a role. Thank you for doing your part to keep local farms alive!

Linda Hamilton is a long-time Charlotte resident and a Grange member (charlotteranigrantwxcite.com/website or charlotteranigrant@gmail.com). Dave Quickel produces organic vegetables, herbs and flowers on 10 acres and hoopouses of his Story Loam Farm in East Charlotte (storyloamfarm.com).

Photos contributed

Above: Dave is waist-deep in tomatoes. Right: no farm is complete without a dog.

CONTRIBUTORS
Linda Hamilton
and Dave Quickel
Most Charlotte farmers have to supplement their income

The Charlotte Land Trust this week released a study it commissioned to better understand the agricultural landscape in town and identify the roles conservation can play in the future of farming here.

Authoring the study for the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont, the Charlotte Agricultural Landscape Study shows that Charlotte is home to a robust and diversified farm community of at least 77 agricultural operations, almost all of which have shifted from dairying farming and moved toward raising meat animals and fodder, as well as specialized operations like berry and flower farms and CSAs that depend increasingly on direct-to-consumer sales.

At least 19 farms sell some of their products directly to the public.

The study also highlights that, while enrolled parcels in the state’s Current Use Program increased between 2015 and 2020, the total number of enrolled agricultural acreage decreased. The average number of acres owned by a farmer in Charlotte was 100, slightly lower than the state or county average, and the majority of farms reported only one employee on a year-round basis.

Charlotte is still a strongly supportive community for farming, including for new, younger farmers. However, key findings also point to significant challenges: the high cost of farmland in an increasingly affluent area where development is occurring; a lack of affordable housing for farm employees; a reliance on off-farm employment and earnings to keep many farms financially viable; confusion over town policies and regulations, especially on farms with conservation easements; and some tensions between farmers and non-farming residents.

Kate Lampton, president of the Charlotte Land Trust, said the study contains no surprises but does provide clearer direction moving forward.

Whereas in the past land trust’s emphasis had been on “conserving the land before the development moves forward,” now it also will be to support the farming economy.

“We have these farmers coming in who are very entrepreneurial, with a lot of interesting focus on techniques and soil and marketing and all that. So, what can we do to not only conserve the land, but what can we do to support the industry on that land? I think that’s going to be our biggest push,” Lampton predicted.

The study employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to gain as full a picture as possible of agriculture and conservation in Charlotte. While it was impossible to pinpoint the exact number of farm operations due to the absence of a comprehensive database of farms, among other factors, the study did identify most of the farm operations in Charlotte.

In total, out of the 77 agricultural operations, 40 farm owners or operators participated in a specially designed survey for the study, capturing 51.9 percent of the known agricultural operators in Charlotte. They answered questions about demographics, land use, conservation practices, products, sales and viability. In addition, seven farmers from diversified operations took part in two different focus groups, while others, including town officials, Charlotte Land Trust board members and other community stakeholders, provided information to the researchers.

A key finding of the study is that two-thirds of the survey respondents identified conservation as helping them to maintain financial stability and viability in their operations, while some farmers, including Adam Hausmann of Adam’s Berry Farm, said that they wouldn’t have been able to purchase their farm in Charlotte without help from land trusts and other sources, including the Charlotte Conservation Fund.

Currently, Charlotte Land Trust holds 15 conservation easements on properties in Charlotte — some, but not all of them, on farms.

“As there is more development in Charlotte, I would like people to recognize the value of conservation and farming in their landscape and what makes it unique, even in the number of small farm stands that exist here,” Hausmann said.

He hopes the study will generate even deeper community support and attract more young farmers who will get help purchasing conservation land.

The study depicts how financially challenging farming can be. About one-third of the surveyed farmers reported income from other revenue streams as their primary source of income, “while the other two-thirds had at least one principal operator with off-farm employment income sources, indicating a need for additional sources of income.”

The surveyed farms generated less than a third of a household’s income in 2019, and 46 percent of the respondent operators said their farms generated less than $50,000 in gross sales, although 21 farms reported sales of more than $50,000 in 2017.

On average, the study reports that “farms in Charlotte earned a net income of less than $10,000 or experienced a net loss in 2019.”

The Center for Rural Studies offered five recommendations for the Charlotte Land Trust.

“Develop community programming in collaboration with farmers and local town leaders to bridge connections and build a greater understanding of agricultural operations within the community.”

“Consider potential avenues for the Charlotte Land Trust to coordinate education about town planning, zoning ordinances, and regulation while also engaging town leadership to identify ways to address farmer concerns about consistency and transparency.”

“Provide direct support to local farmers interested in learning more about land conservation and structuring easements while exploring ways to incentivize farmers to adopt sustainable land management practices and begin transition planning within the context of a changing climate.”

“Explore strategic farm properties for conservation that would promote connectivity between previously conserved properties.”

“Convene networking opportunities to meet the needs of today’s Charlotte farmers by re-imagining the concept of the Grange for farmer-to-farmer support.”

Lampton said that as a wholly volunteer-run organization, land trust will of necessity partner with organizations like the Charlotte Grange and others in the community to address some of the concerns, gaps and opportunities identified in the study.

“There was some discussion in the focus groups about frustration at dealing with planning and zoning,” Lampton said. “We aren’t going to be the ones necessarily saying we want to propose these changes to the regulations.”

Lampton will give a Zoom presentation on the study through the Charlotte Senior Center at 1 p.m. on March 23. The event is free and open to the Charlotte Grange. The study is also available at charlottelandtrust.org.

Grass Cattle Company, Charlotte, VT.

Photo by Steve Schubart
Out Takes

Following tracks in the yard to cosmic thoughts

Animal tracks in the woods.

Photo by Edd Merritt

Ed Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

‘Cause I want to live like animals
Careless and free like animals
I want to live
I want to run through the jungle
The wind in my hair and the sand at my feet
“The Animal Song” — Savage Garden

So, what does this land of snow that I’ve been seeing out my back windows indicate? The white blanket over my backyard shows that a band of living creatures has made my yard their highway to somewhere. Their tracks maneuver through it as though they were heading from point A to point B—and perhaps beyond—with a specific purpose in mind.

Is that purpose to find food? Is it to find kin? Or find a mate? Their tracks enclose the house as though the building might contain the purpose for which they search.

For me that purpose is to better understand other living creatures. Yet, all I can learn about them comes through their tracks through my yard.

Rabbit tracks encircle the house closely. Do these tracks lead to food, a necessity of life, or to mates, another necessity of life? I’m betting food as I see their jaws moving.

Deer seem to be another matter. I see both them and their leftover tracks, using my yard as causeway from my western wood line to the eastern woods. It’s almost as though they smile in my direction as they pass through.

What’s going through a deer’s brain, you wonder? How does it differ from a human brain? Humans take data and cause brain cells to actually change as that data interacts with this system, providing people with what we refer to as “thoughts.”

Often these “thoughts” lead to a purpose, which is unfortunately happening in the former Soviet Union as we speak. Putin and Russia want to reign over the smaller country of the Ukraine.

Interesting or ironic that not too long ago, Charlotte was the home base for secession from the United States. Charlotte Thomas Naylor, an economist by training, felt Vermont should become its own democracy and not a cog in the wheel of the huge U.S. He was added in this effort by a fellow secessionist and yak farmer. Naylor died before it happened.

So, back to my yard: Place and being offer an interesting interchange. We like to choose our place to live. That was one reason we chose Charlotte. I was working in Rutland when we bought our property in East Charlotte. The property size and house design suited us and we could afford it. Education of our sons was an issue, and Charlotte proved to be the right choice as they moved forward in life through Charlotte Central School and Champlain Union Valley High School. Given quite different personal talents, they have found themselves in different places on earth, doing different things, both successfully.

So, the footprints in my yard show that the deer and I tromp the land for different reasons. I’m reminded often of the fact that as I near the end of this thing called life, I have no idea where I’ll step next. I don’t think I’ll feel that step. Maybe into a galaxy similar to ours in the universe with, probably, billions of creatures similar to human beings. To follow a cliché, “Man alive, that gives food for thought.”

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Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

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Vernacular strategies for flushing an ‘outta stater’ on the ice

The Milky surface ice has begun to pull away from the rocky, pebbled shoreline of the bay. Tiny vertical prisms are visible in the heartfoot-like honeycomb of the decaying core.

There is water about 6 inches deep extending out 2 feet from the shore. Some kind fool has placed an 8-foot-long, 2-by-10 board extending from the shoreline out onto the thicker ice. I can see the boot prints of those who have courageously crossed this mini bridge. You may ask yourself, “What kind of person would dare walk out on this ice?” Is this display of judgment indicative of how they would live their entire life?

The answer to this question is buried deep in the soul of the avid outdoorsman. Others may see him or her as someone who may make poor life choices, but to the ice fisherman pursuing the late winter spawn of white perch, it is a calculated risk. I have known eight men who have succumbed to the depths of Lake Champlain.

When I make the decision to walk the plank, it is their memory that causes me to be more cautious than those boot prints before me. In my 30 years of ice fishing, I have learned to read the ice by noticing its shapes, softness, clarity and have considered the effect of sunlight magnifying its strength through the surface. And still, I will always have my flotation suit on, my ice picks ready around my neck, a long rope with a grip loop on one end and a whistle attached to a lanyard.

And I never go alone. I will never be the first guy out on the ice. I may not catch as many as others do, but in my book, even with my love of white perch Thai fish cakes, no fish is worth dying for.

So, tentiously, I walk the plank, after seeing a dozen others before me. I am dragging my old black jet sled with my auger, fish finder, rods and lures that I purchased from a college-educated kid from outta state. My rod is pulsating with strong downward pulls. The line runs from side to side of the five-inch cylinder of ice.

“I hearah,” someone yells.

“They’re here!” someone yells.

Everyone around us is fighting a fish. This is what we have waited for all season.

My rod is pulsating with strong downward pulls. The line runs from side to side of the five-inch cylinder of ice.

Keep the line from rubbing up against the sides of the hole,” I instruct my protégé. “The abrasion will snap the line.”

These fish are pretty big compared to the yellow perch we catch all season. And boy do they love to fight!

As we bring up the first fish, silvery scales shining in the late winter sun, its fans on its dorsal fin display its very sharp spiny protrusions. Be careful how you handle these fish, or they can give you a powerful sting that doesn’t heal easily. But once you’ve mastered the handling, it all fades into the exhilaration of the moment. It is one fish after another. For hours.

After a couple of hours of non-stop battles, we look around us at the piles of whiteys laying on the ice and begin to think about what we are going to do with that many fish. The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has no limits on white perch, because they are an invasive species to Lake Champlain, and they are overfishing the native fish. We look at each other and accept a knowing countenance. This is plenty.

We begin to collect them and toss them into the buckets like so many gold bullions. The sun is high, and this is likely the last day of the season. So, for the next few days we will be making those Thai fish cakes and freezing them for easy meals throughout the year.

There is a note of sadness that the 2022 ice fishing season is over, and we will have to put away all our equipment in the basement. After acknowledging our grief, we look to the future and begin to cheer up when we see the ice melt and the rivers begin flowing their muddy waters out to the lake.

For us, this means it’s “Bullpout Season!” (PS: “bullpout,” “hornpout” and “mud puppy” are just a few more ways of identifying an “outta stater.”)

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

The Charlotte News  •  March 10, 2022 •  13
Into the Woods

Responsible forest management doesn’t mean deforestation

Ethan Tapper
CHITTENDEN COUNTY FORESTER

Over the last few centuries, Vermont’s forests have been on a transformative journey. Prior to European colonization, Vermont was about 90 to 95 percent forested. Following the massive clearing of the early-mid 1800s, Vermont rebounded from a low of about 20 percent forested around 1850 to nearly 13,000 acres per year, depending on how we define the term. Despite uncertainty about the exact amount, it’s clear that we are losing forestland in Vermont.

Deforestation, or forest loss, occurs when forests are converted to non-forest. While both local and global forest loss are driven by a variety of factors, here in Vermont development is one of the leading contributors. The estimates of annual deforestation in Vermont range from 2,000 acres to nearly 13,000 acres per year, depending on how we define the term. Despite uncertainty about the exact amount, it’s clear that we are losing forestland in Vermont.

Forests are foundational to our lives: they make our world work and our lives beautiful. Among the many benefits that forests provide are food and shelter for wildlife; clean water and air; protection of biodiversity; renewable resources (wood); scenic beauty; and outdoor recreation. Rightfully, those who care about forests increasingly recognize the problem of deforestation and are looking for solutions. However, understanding deforestation is more complex than it may seem.

When you see tree stumps in the woods, you might assume that deforestation has occurred—that the forest has in some way been lost. However, while deforestation involves the cutting of trees, tree mortality (whether natural or human-caused) is not the same as deforestation. Within Vermont’s forests, tree mortality is an important part of forest growth and development that the plants, animals, trees, fungi and microorganisms that make up the forest community have adapted to over millennia. Forest development is a cycle, a continuous, dynamic process within which the death of trees is a beginning as much as an ending. Every old forest was once a young forest and will be one again.

Deforestation is the only real endpoint for forests, systems that include, and even thrive on, death and disturbances. While the death of trees in a forest may lead to a rich and robust natural response—including the development of unique habitats and robust regeneration—deforestation undermines the natural cycles that perpetuate forests by denying them the opportunity to regenerate. In short, instead of letting forests be forests, deforestation turns them into something else. When deforestation occurs, we lose forests’ countless benefits for the foreseeable future; a forest converted to non-forest will no longer sequester and store carbon, no longer provide habitat for wildlife, no longer clean our air and our water to the degree that forests do—and may not do so again in our lifetimes.

While the goal of deforestation is to turn a forest into something else (often to meet human needs), the goal of responsible forest management is the perpetuation of healthy, vibrant, intact forests and the many values they provide. Done well, forest management can be regenerative, working with natural processes to help forests become more biologically diverse, complex, resilient to climate change and rich in habitat for an array of plants, animals and other native species. While cutting trees is different in some ways than natural mortality, it can be done in ways that build on forests’ natural resilience and that are ultimately beneficial to the forest community. That said, forest management has tradeoffs: we can recognize that forest management can be very positive while also acknowledging that some critiques of forest management are valid, deserve our close attention and highlight opportunities for improvement.

As we endeavor to understand how best to build a healthy, functional, beautiful world, understanding how deforestation is fundamentally different from forest management is one of the many nuances we must explore. Developing a common definition for what deforestation is and how it differs from responsible forest management allows us to work towards common solutions—strategies that ensure healthy forests and the benefits they provide exist for this and future generations. Having frank conversations about what constitutes responsible forest management is critical, but limiting deforestation—both in Vermont and across the globe—is the single most important thing we can do to protect our forested ecosystems. We must find a way to keep forests as forests.

Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. See what he’s been up to, check out his YouTube channel, sign up for his eNews and read articles he’s written at linktr.ee/chittendencountyforester.
While there are still a few weeks till it’s wise to start seeds inside, this is a good time to use up the root vegetables so prolific in the produce stalls at this time of year. Those of us who enjoy eating locally grown vegetables will find quite an array still available.

I’m thinking of beets, carrots, turnips, parsnips, celeriac, potatoes, onions, sweet potatoes. Each offers great nutrition, as well as opportunities to eat local. It’s also a good time to plan on which you might like to add to your own vegetable rows. These happen to be the very items that can take the cool of spring and be planted earliest. As soon as the snow has gone and the soil can be worked, the above veggies can be planted (excepting potatoes). The soil should not be too wet and have warmed a bit to start. Root vegetables particularly need a loose, friable soil to grow well.

Did you know each beet seed is actually a cluster of seeds?

So, when you plant them, you will have to do some editing, but the tops and baby roots are edible as early spring salad material. A couple of my favorite beet varieties are Detroit dark red, choggia and bull’s blood. These, along with carrots, can withstand cool weather. One help is to plant radishes in the same row, as they emerge in a few days, whereas carrots and beets can take a few weeks to show. The radishes will mark the row and, as you harvest, loosen the soil. White potatoes (and the many other colors) prefer to begin life in a trench, with soil pulled up past the plants as they grow, to keep the tubers well covered. Light must be kept out. Seed potatoes can be bought locally or ordered from certified growers.

If you plan to store some potatoes for next winter’s meals, you should choose good storage potatoes such as russets. Red-skinned and Yukon gold types are better for immediate uses. Fingerlings, which are delicious just steamed or mashed (with skins), should also be used up first. You might want to cook with skins intact, as they are difficult to peel. Celeriac does not win beauty contests but is useful in soups or pureed alone or mixed with mashed potatoes. Julienned celeriac with a creamy mayonnaise dressing makes a refreshing salad. The taste is celery-like. A sharp paring knife is needed to trim the knobs and tougher skin, but worth the effort.

Onions and all alliums can be started inside from seeds. They can also be bought in bundles already started or dried as sets from garden centers or hardware stores. I find the sets require the least attention, but your choices are better with seeds.

One of my favorite varieties is cipolline, a flat but plump variety. Very good roasted or caramelized. Of course, basic yellow or red are pantry necessities. Onions depend on day length to do best. We have long days but for a short time in the north. That is why Vidalias are grown in southern climes. Their growing season is much longer, and they can take advantage of all daylight hours. Plant as soon as soil is workable.

Sweet potatoes are root vegetables but require heat to grow at their best. So, hold off planting until soil is warm to the touch. Here I offer a few recipes with root vegetables that might interest you.

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Creme du Barry Soup

| 1 head cauliflower |
| 1 fennel bulb |
| 2 large garlic cloves, minced |
| 4 tablespoons unsalted butter |
| 4 cups water or chicken broth |

Herbs of choice, if desired—thyme, rosemary, savory possibly.

Trim cauliflower and break into florets. Peel and cube celeriac. Trim top off fennel and slice bulb into chunks. Save fronds for garnish.

Melt butter in saucepan and add vegetables to soften. When translucent, add broth or water, if vegetarian. Simmer till all is softened. With immersible blender or processor, puree soup adding any fresh herbs you might like. Season with salt and white pepper. Dried herbs should be added earlier in the process. No thickener is needed. Snip fennel fronds for garnish when serving.

Sweet Potato Bisque

2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
2 tablespoons chopped shallots
1/2 cup white wine
1/2 cup butter
1 tablespoon sugar
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
Melt butter in skillet, add whole onions. Sauté 5 minutes. Add garlic and sugar, continue cooking. After trimming root end, slip off skins. Water or chicken stock to cover.

Melt butter in saucepan and sauté shallot till translucent. Add sweet potatoes and cover with liquid. Cook till soft, and at end of cooking add sage and orange zest. Season with salt to your liking. Puree with immersible or processor. Serve hot with a dollop of creme fraiche or sour cream.

Beet Salad

1 bunch fresh beets, about 6 small
1/4 cup Vermont maple syrup
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/4 cup walnuts, loosely chopped
Water or chicken stock to cover.

Trim beets, removing stems and tails. Wrap each in foil adding a pinch of the garlic, a tiny bit of salt and a few drops of olive oil. Wrap tightly and roast for 45 mins. at 375°. Check for doneness with knife point.

When tender, remove from packets, after cooling. Rub beets to remove skins and cut into chunks or slices. Add maple syrup while beets are warm, along with any liquid in roasting pan/foil. Toasted walnuts are added next. Cool to room temperature. Lastly, add cheese in pieces for serving. A delicious combination.

Cipolline Glazed Onions

16 oz. whole Cipolline onions, peeled
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup white wine
2 cloves garlic
1 tablespoon sugar
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1 fennel bulb
4 tablespoons orange zest
1 teaspoon dried sage or 1 tablespoon chopped shallots
2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
Water or chicken stock to cover.

Peel and cube celeriac. Trim top off fennel and dice. Add maple syrup or plain maple syrup while beets are warm, along with any liquid in roasting pan/foil. Toasted walnuts are added next. Cool to room temperature. Lastly, add cheese in pieces for serving. A delicious combination.

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As winter winds down — root vegetables on our minds

Ioan Weed
CONTRIBUTOR

PHILO RIDGE FARM

Using innovative, ecologically sustainable practices, we manage four hundred acres of healthy pasture land, forests and diversified produce gardens.

Visit our Market and restaurant to shop, eat and learn more.

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**Gardening**

While garden’s on hiatus try growing greens indoors

Deborah J. Benot

**On Books**

Books that can bring a welcome change of mental venue

Katherine Arthaud
As of Monday, March 7, masks became required according to District mitigation guidelines. Register at gotrvt.org/register-now. Girls on the Run is now open for students in grades 3-5. Girls on the Run at Charlotte Central School is a newly created position intended to provide a variety of support to families experiencing instability or homelessness. The coordinator works alongside the school support teams to facilitate access to housing resources and make sure all members of the community have the information they need to ensure they are in permanent, safe, stable housing. There are no requirements to access housing support services in the school district. Children ages three to six years, when you have concerns about development. If you or your child’s early childhood teacher have any concerns about your child’s development, please contact Kristin Eisensmith at keisensmith@cvsdvt.org.

The Charlotte News file photo.

Charlotte Real Estate Update

COURTESY OF THE NORTHERN VT BOARD OF REALTORS

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Each Office is Independently Owned and Operated.
Area Calendar Events

March 12, 7 p.m.
Kerubo Opens Facing the Sunrise Black Performing Arts Series in NEK

Clemonns Family Farm, in collaboration with Catamount Arts, is pleased to announce an evening with Afro-jazz singer/guitarist Kerubo, as part of the Facing the Sunrise Black Performing Arts Series. The series aims to engage audiences with performances that celebrate and teach the Black Experience with positive and uplifting messages. Kerubo’s Black artist community, KeruBo, the first artist in the series, will appear at Catamount ArtPost in St. Johnsbury.

Saturday, March 12, 10-11:30 a.m.
Area Land Trust invite community members to share stories in fond remembrance of loved ones who have passed. Stories will be shared to help us connect with the memories and abilities welcome. For more information, see catamountarts.org.

Monday, March 14, 7:30-9 p.m.
SharedStoriesMarch14.

Monday-March 16-18

Wednesday-Friday, March 16-18

World Cinema Festival

The festival will offer a variety of films from around the world, including Q&A panels with filmmakers and a screening of the documentary, “The Isolation Artist: Scandal, Deception, and Taste Some Delicious Maple Syrup.” For more information, see vpr.org.

Thursday, March 17, 7 p.m.
The Air National Guard Band, Flightline Brass, presents a free concert at the Vergennes Opera House. The group performs Dixieland, jazz, popular music and other works for military and civilian functions. For all ages.

February 24, 7:30 p.m.
In celebration of the 40th anniversary of “The Isolation Artist,” Whitney Wolfe Herd and the Abenaki are invited to meet the cast and chat about their experiences. For more information, see pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/ontour.

Thursday, March 17, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Rope-a-Thon fundraising event over the weekend. Weather permitting, on Saturday, March 19, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., required. For info, see vlt.org.

March 19, 10 a.m.-noon
Vermont Land Trust and Women Owning Woodland present a FREE self-guided outdoor workshop called The Nuts and Bolts of Forest Management. When done correctly, forest management can produce a resilient forest and forest ecology in multiple ways, including increasing habitat for songbirds and songbirds, protecting soil and water quality, and improving forest health. Free booking required. For info, see vlt.org.

Saturday, March 19, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., two hours long.
Discover maple sugaring at this Family event at Shelburne Farms. Head into the woods to see a sugarhouse in action, tap a sugar maple and learn about Vermont’s maple syrup tradition. Roland Bluto of the Nulhegan Band of the Coosuk-Abenaki Nation will share a story of how the Abenaki came to create maple syrup. Program repeats on March 26. Dress for being outside; pre-registration at shelburnefarms.org.

Wednesday, March 23, noon
The Vermont Historical Society hosts a free Zoom talk by historian and author Rachel Hope Cleve as part of her Winter Speaker series. Her subject is the relationship between Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake, who were recognized as a married couple by their kin and community in Weybridge where they lived together from 1807 to 1853. Drees explores the roles that family, work, religion, love and sexuality played in the women’s lives. In 2014, Cleve was named a National Humanities Fellow and is pleased to offer for info, see vhm.org.

Wednesday, March 23, 6-7 p.m.
Join author and nationally recognized artist, John Eppright, along with Tom Dentenberg, director of Shelburne Museum, in a conversation about Noyes’s recent book, “The Isolation Artist: Scandal, Deception, and Taste Some Delicious Maple Syrup.” For more information, see vhm.org.

Thursday, March 24, 7 p.m.
Attend an in-person movie screening at the Mountain Top Inn’s Newfane Town Hall. Seated in the Nulhegan Band’s Town Hall Theater, you will enjoy the world premiere of “The Isolation Artist: Scandal, Deception, and Taste Some Delicious Maple Syrup.” For more information, see mountainstopinn.com.


Calendar compiled by Mary Landon.
Welcome to the library. We look forward to seeing you as you browse our collections, enjoy our new (and familiar) spaces and perhaps attend a program. Please take note of the registration instructions for each program when you sign up.

As we start to reopen our doors and restart our program schedule, the staff and board of the Charlotte Library would like to remind the community of the circulation rules here. These rules ensure that all in our community have equal access to books and other materials in a timely and fair manner:

1. All materials except for a few special items circulate for two weeks.
2. Patrons are requested to return or renew materials by the due date.
3. Patron accounts are restricted when materials are overdue by eight weeks. This restriction applies to circulation here and at all Homecard libraries.
4. Restricted patrons may not check out any materials until the account is cleared. However, we are happy to keep books on two-day “layaway” until overdue items are returned or paid for.
5. If you need help identifying overdue materials, we provide a receipt listing all items checked on your account.

We appreciate your support and assistance as we strive to provide the best service at the library and best stewardship of this community resource. Please call or email us with any questions.

2022 Seed Catalog
Have a look at our new 2022 Seed Catalog, now available at charlotteseedlibrary.org and at the front desk. We’re offering many past favorites, plus some which may be new to you. All are tried and true heritage varieties of vegetables, herbs and edible flowers which are easy to grow and easy to save seeds from. We invite you to add some of these to your garden this year.

You do not need to be an expert gardener to do this. We provide guidelines for eco-friendly gardening and successful seed saving so you can enjoy the fruits of your labors this year and have seeds ready for 2023 for yourself and to share with others. To request small packets of seeds from the 2022 catalog (no charge), email us with your request.

Drop-in craft projects
We will be offering drop-in craft projects that are fun and simple enough for all ages. Families are welcomed and encouraged to bring young artists to work on their creative projects at the library. We will set up a crafting station with all the materials necessary for the project. To start off the program, there will be stations to color sheets — one with a castle theme and one with an African Plains theme.

Book chat
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.

Hack Club
Tuesdays at 3:30 p.m., March 1 - April 5
Join coders to build websites, games and art using many popular coding languages such as HTML, CSS, Javascript, Python and more. Learn your way around the hardware with help from coding pros. Beginners are welcome. Advanced coders should definitely join, as we can work in Ruby, Rails, JavaScript and React, plus Unity and C# (for game dev). For queries and registration, contact Christina Asquith at christinaasquith@yahoo.com.

Knitting drop-in at the Library
Sign up in the children’s room with all the materials necessary for the project. To start the knitting teacher, will be hosting and is excited about growing the in-person community of town knitters. She will be around to get people started, help with existing projects and working on a knitting project.

Garden Chat: Seed Saving
Join seed library coordinators Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton to share questions and tips for successfully saving seeds from your vegetable garden this year. Register here: bit.ly/3AG4JW.

Recycling right … in the blue bin and beyond
Saturday, March 12 at 10:30 a.m.
Register at eventbrite.com/e/cowd-workshop-series-tickets-272737164467. Join Chittenden Solid Waste District staff for a behind-the-scenes look at what happens to your household recycling after it leaves your house and find out why it’s so important to recycle right. Workshop will cover what really in the blue bin and what other items can create big problems for the recycling system. Then it will go beyond the blue bin and explore the “special recycling” options for lots of things that can’t go in there. (Spoiler alert: You can bring some of them to this library.) There will be time to answer questions and settle family arguments (only about recycling), so bring your trickiest items and try to stump the recycling staff.

Short story selections
Thursday, March 17, at 1 p.m.
Join library director Margaret Woodruff to discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will include a variety of authors. One or two stories will be featured each session. Stories will be emailed to participants one week ahead of discussion session. Register at bit.ly/ShortStorySpring2022.

RESCHEDULED:
Media Literacy Take 2
Thursday, March 30, at 7 p.m.
A conversation from last fall will be revived. There continue to be more opportunities for disinformation, declining trust in established news organizations and increasing popularity of conspiracy theorists.

Join us for a conversation on media literacy with Adam Davidson, Chesa Waters-Evans and Jesse Wegman. Davidson co-founded Planet Money and has been a staff reporter for the New York Times and The New Yorker. Waters-Evans has been reporting in and about Charlotte for over a decade with The Citizen, the Shelburne News, The Charlotte News and The Charlotte Bridge. Wegman is an editorial board member of The New York Times. Register in advance at bit.ly/3H0X4w.

For the latest information about programs, events and activity kits, sign up for the monthly newsletter on the library website. (Use link for web post: Charlotte Library Newsletter.)

Library contact information
Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlotteseedlibrary.org
What do Scrabble, backgammon, cribbage and Texas hold ‘em have in common? They are all new groups forming at the senior center. If board and card games are not your cup of tea, then grab a bowl of popcorn from our café and join us for a film screening. The senior center is buzzing with lots of conversation, laughter, many new faces and returning friends. How refreshing it is to be able to start socializing again.

New this month are a coffee and canvas session, a program about navigating Zoom and a workshop on how to record your oral history using your smart phone. Welcome spring with the return of birding expeditions with Hank Kaestner. And don’t forget to join the Zoom presentation about the Charlotte Land Trust’s new farm study and what it reveals about farming, our economy and way of life in Vermont.

The senior center’s March newsletter is now posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org, or follow The Charlotte News on Facebook at facebook.com/charlotteseniorcentervt.org, or call 802-425-6345 or stop by the senior center.

Meals and conversation

Monday lunch: Lunch is served every Monday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Take-out is an option. Suggested lunch donation of $5.

Monday, March 14: Chicken tortilla soup served with salad and a homemade dessert.

Monday, March 21: Homemade macaroni & cheese, salad and frosted German chocolate cupcakes with ice cream.

Men’s breakfast

For breakfast and conversation, join the next men’s breakfast on Thursday, April 14, from 7-9 a.m.

The guest speaker is Andrea Rodgers, founding member and former CEO of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. Rodgers will be speaking about the issues around performing arts in Vermont, especially during COVID. To register, please email Tim McCullough at caburnst@aol.com by Tuesday, April 12.

Suggested breakfast donation: $5.

Grab & Go Meals provided by Age Well.

Pick up on Thursdays 11 a.m. - noon at the Charlotte Senior Center. Pre-register by Monday for the Thursday meal by email at jyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org or call 802-425-6345.

Thursday, March 17: Beef round, boiled potatoes, cabbage and carrots in beef stock and leprechaun cake with frosting.

Thursday, March 24: Roast pork with sauce, mashed potatoes, peas and onions, and oatmeal raisin cookie.

Open café

Friday mornings, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Come join us for some coffee or tea and enjoy a morning chat. This is a great opportunity to join your friends or meet new ones while spending time in our sunny café.

Upcoming program and events

Passing, Thursday, March 31, 1-3 p.m.

Award-winning film screened with Sean Moran of the adaptation of 1929 novel by Nella Larsen. Set in the 1920s New York City, this is the story of a Black woman finding her world upended when her life intersects with a former childhood friend who’s passing as white.

Free, but registration is required as there is limited seating. Call 802-425-6345 or stop by the Senior Center.

Coffee and canvas

Wednesday, March 16, 10-11:30 a.m., 525. Register by Monday, March 14. Limited to 12.

Bringing a friend and enjoy a relaxing morning sipping coffee and Picasso-inspired acrylic painting on canvas with Sherry Senior. Explore and create your own unique painting, but don’t worry, there will be plenty of inspiration and lots of instruction. No prior experience needed. All materials included.

Birding expedition with Hank Kaestner

On Wednesday, March 16, meet at the center 10 minutes prior to a 9 a.m. departure to carpool to spectacular bird-watching location. Free but registration required by email to cbirding@gmavt.net. Include your name and phone number.

Capturing your oral history by audio recording with Dan York

Friday, March 18, 1-2:30 p.m.

You may have heard that story from a relative a hundred times, but is it actually captured anywhere for future generations? In this workshop you’ll learn about—and try out—some of the tools and techniques for recording audio stories, including remote interviews using just a smartphone.

Jonathan Hart teaches beginners the game of duplicate bridge for beginners. There is also interest in a duplicate bridge class for students having some bridge experience. If you are available to instruct a six- to eight-week program on the basics of duplicate bridge, contact Lane Morrison at lmorrison@gmavt.net.

Upcoming presentation

Farms in Charlotte: Who, what, where and how?

Wednesday, March 23, 1 p.m. Zoom only.

Presented on behalf of the Charlotte Land Trust and facilitated by the Charlotte Grange. Learn what a new study by the Charlotte Land Trust reveals about farming as it impacts our economy and way of life.

Ongoing exercise and health classes

The center offers daily exercise programs for a wide range of fitness and activities levels. A complete list of our exercise programs is on our website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Questions? New to the area? Thinking of Volunteering?
The senior center is at 212 Ferry Road in Charlotte. Hours are M-F from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday to Friday, or call 802-425-6345, or email director Lori York at jyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Residents over 50 from other communities are always welcome.

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The senior center is buzzing with lots of conversation, laughter, many new faces and returning friends. How refreshing it is to be able to start socializing again.

A group tried out snowshoes on a hike at the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge on Sunday, Feb. 27. The snowshoers saw bird and beaver activity as well as fresh bobcat tracks in the new snow. Sponsored by the Charlotte Recreation Commission, the Charlotte Library and the Charlotte Park Oversight Committee.