Celebrating Charlotte Saturday, April 2 - Saturday, April 9

The Charlotte Grange will hold its online auction, featuring products, services and other valuable items donated by local individuals. This is the primary fundraiser for this revered local organization that has helped bring the community together for over 300 years. See ad in this issue for information on how to bid on the varied offerings.

Pride hike Sunday, April 3, 1-3 p.m.
Wander the trails at Shelburne Farms at an easy pace, visit the lambs, enjoy the scenery. All ages and families welcome. Meet at the Farm Barn parking lot; bring snacks and water. Dress for ice and mud. For more info or to register, see shelburnefarms.org.

No Strings Marionette Company Sunday, April 3, 2 p.m.
The Barre Opera House hosts a production of the classic Russian folk tale “The Snow Maiden.” Mythical figures, animals and humans weave a magical story about the changing seasons. For tickets or more info see barreoperahouse.org or call 802-476-8188.

Middlebury Bach Festival Sunday, April 3, 3-5 p.m.
The Mahaney Arts Center at Middlebury College hosts this concert, featuring students, faculty and guest artists. The free, live performance welcomes guests who are vaccinated, boosted and masked.

The Bombadils Sunday, April 3, 4-6 p.m.
These Canadian Folk Music Award nominees bring together bluegrass, Celtic and singer-songwriter traditions with front-porch style and classical grace. Hailing from Halifax, Nova Scotia, they perform at the Richmond Congregational Church for a live or streaming performance. For tickets or more info see valleystage.net or call 802-434-4563.

1800 and Froze to Death Wednesday, April 6, 6 p.m.
Vermont author and historian Howard Coffin speaks in person at the Worthen Library in South Hero. His free presentation focuses on the dark and cold year of 1816, which Vermonters called “the year of monthly frosts.” For more info see shlt.org or call 802-372-6209.

Artist talk Wednesday, April 6, 6-7 p.m.
Vermont-based and internationally acclaimed artist Eric Aho is a current exhibitor at Burlington City Arts on Church Street. In this free virtual program, Aho discusses his approach to painting, his influences and the landscape that inspires his work. Aho’s exhibit is called Headwater. To register or for more info see burlingtoncityarts.org.

Climate change gardening Wednesday, April 6, 6:30 p.m.
This series of three Wednesday panel discussions highlights our local food systems and long-term strategies for creating solutions to growing challenges. Virtual meetings also on April 13 and April 20. Each evening features a diverse group of knowledgeable panelists. For more info or to register see vtgardens.org.

Improving habitat for Vermont’s black bears Thursday, April 7, noon-1 p.m.
Jackie Comeau, a biologist at the Vermont Fish & Wildlife department, discusses ways to discourage bears from backyards, and the habitat needs for bears in Vermont. Loss of habitat is of great concern to future bear populations. Registration required at vtfishandwildlife.com.

The Pringle Herbarium Cyrus Pringle, self-taught plant breeder and botanist born in East Charlotte in 1838, is the namesake of the Pringle Herbarium at the University of Vermont. Vermont’s principal botanical collection includes over 350,000 sheets of mounted plants and fungi (now all digital) from Vermont and most other continents. Pringle himself is known for the discovery of at least 1200 species new to science. Established in 1902, the Herbarium is open to visitors by appointment. Call 802-656-3221 or email pringle@uvm.edu.

You can find this calendar of events online at: charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events/
Thompson’s Point hasn’t always been so valuable

Scooter MacMillan
EDITOR

The 1.5-mile-long peninsula now known as Thompson’s Point is a valuable town-owned asset, but it has not always been so. Over the years some have proposed selling the property to lower taxes or pay off Charlotte’s debts. This is a proposal that Charlotte Historical Society Dan Cole scoffs at. “Thompson’s Point is the goose that lays the golden egg each year,” Cole said. “Selling it off would be like killing the goose.” Today, a third of the town’s revenue comes from leases for the parcels on Thompson’s Point ($855,000 of the more than $2.6 million in revenue budgeted for 2022-23). The high value placed upon Thompson’s Point and other lake property was not always the case. In fact, in historical time, today’s value is a relatively recent phenomenon. “It was the case all up and down the Lake Champlain shore,” said Steve Perkins, executive director of the Vermont Historical Society. “Land near the lake was not seen as desirable by the early European settlers. It was a working waterfront. Often the lake was dirty and polluted. It’s where your job was; it was where commerce took place. They didn’t have a good idea about sanitation, so all the sewage was washed into these large bodies of water,” Perkins said. “It wasn’t a desirable place to go recreate.” Building your home next to the lake was like deciding today to live next to a railroad depot or a truck stop on the highway. And the earliest European settlers didn’t value the property on the lake as farmland because it was too rocky, Perkins said. In fact, Thompson’s Point was so undesirable that it was the location Charlotte chose in 1846 for the town’s poor farm. Instead of impressing people who were in debt and homeless, as was common in Britain and western Europe, people could live on the poor farm and help with the farming in return for room and board. The Charlotte Poor Farm operated as a town-owned home for the indigent for about 100 years, until it was discontinued in the 1940s. Although after the end of the Civil War people had begun to appreciate leisure time and some were gradually beginning to find camping on the water a great way to spend time outside of work, Thompson’s Point didn’t become high-dollar property for quite a while. According to a Burlington Daily News story in March 1859, the going rate for camps on Thompson’s Point was $20 a year for a 15-year lease. And if current allegations of conflict of interest in town make your hair curl, the newspaper told of townshenagings that would set your hair on fire. Two years before, the selectmen (which is what the selectboard was called back then), the road commissioner and the superintendent of Thompson’s Point decided to lease the last part of the town-owned property to the public. Except the leases weren’t actually offered to the public. Two of Charlotte’s three selectmen got leases for camps on

Amtrak warns schools about track dangers with passenger train returning

Scooter MacMillan
EDITOR

In 2015, a 25-year-old man was walking to work at a Randolph pizza place, taking a shortcut down the railroad tracks. Keven Kenyon was listening to music on his headphones and didn’t hear the train that was running late. He was killed. Officials, tasked by Amtrak with spreading information about how train tracks in Charlotte and Shelburne are even more dangerous now as regular passenger service is returning for the first time since the 1970s, spoke to the Champlain Valley School District board meeting on Tuesday, March 15. The officials had chilling evidence of the immediacy of the danger. On the Friday before train employees had taken a photo of six children “leaking dangerously” on the tracks near Shelburne Community School. Amtrak is conducting required test runs now, preparing for the extension of Ethan Allen Express passenger service from Rutland to Burlington. Its passenger service currently runs from Plainfield to New Haven, New York City. Service to Burlington is expected to begin around July. The test runs present an unpredictable and dangerous situation because the test runs could come at any time. Too many people in the area appear to have a “casual outlook toward train safety,” said Tom Clithero, who works with Amtrak for the Vermont Agency of Transportation. In a phone conversation, Clithero mentioned a social media post the agency made trying to heighten public awareness about the danger of walking on the tracks. A disturbingly large number of online commenters ridiculed the warnings, sharing memories of playing on the tracks, walking out to school, riding bikes, ATVs, snowmobiles and getting off the tracks if they heard a train. “About every three hours in this country a person or vehicle is struck by a train,” Amtrak detective Rob Hanson said. “There are three to five incidents a day in the U.S.” In spite of people’s naively heartwarming memories of hanging out on the railroad tracks, it’s more dangerous now because trains are faster and quieter. “People may be remembering a time when trains stopped at many road crossings and may have just been traveling at 10 mph,” Hanson said. Trains will be regularly coming through Charlotte and Shelburne at 59 mph around 9:30-10 morning and night. If an engineer realizes there is something on the tracks, they only have one strategy — trying to stop. “Trains can’t swerve; the best thing the engineer can do is put a train into an emergency stop,” Hanson said. “A train going 59 miles an hour is going to take about a mile to stop.”

Six children walk the train tracks near the Shelburne Community School — a sight that concerns school and Amtrak officials.

The danger is already here and unpredictable with Amtrak running as many as five test runs a day at a variety of times. “The time to get safer around the tracks is now; it’s here; the train is there,” Clithero said. The danger is also increased because today’s trains are so much quieter. People with nostalgic memories of jumping off the tracks when they heard a train approaching are remembering the segmented rails of the past. Now, rails are welded in stretches that can be attached for more than a quarter of a mile. The old rails made a clackety-clack sound as wheels hit the different rail segments, Clithero said. Railroads in Vermont can be dangerously seductive because they are very rural and inviting. “We have some tragic cases across Vermont where decisions that are made in a split second have shattered communities. And shattered families,” Hanson said. And shattered railroad employees. The “Claims Journal” has an article about

Signs, signs — Charlotte contemplates a veritable cornucopia of different signs

Scooter MacMillan
EDITOR

Signs, signs, so much talk about signs. But unlike the ubiquitous signs described in the Five Man Electrical Band’s 1970 international hit “Signs,” the Charlotte Selectboard’s sign discussions on Monday, March 14 were about signs that will not be “blockin’ out the scenery” or “breakin’ anyone’s mind.”

In fact, the board discussed trail signs that would help open the scenery to people enjoying the town’s trails, signs intended to make traffic in front of Charlotte Central School safer and signs that might open more minds by helping them find the library.

But before the selectboard got to sign discussions, the board, which was expanded to three members for most of this meeting, with Louise McCaren absent and chair Jim Faulkner unavailable for a while, spent a good bit of time discussing trails — where they will go and how much to spend on them.

Ultimately, board members Frank Tenney, Matt Krausnow and Lewis Mudge voted to approve spending on design work for the last about 800 feet of construction of the current plan for the Village Loop Trail. When this work is finished, the trail will run from Route 7 to Ferry Road, although hopes are for it to be extended later.

Spending on the trail design the board approved is limited to $3,200 if it turns out an area near Ferry Road is just damp and $7,600 if it turns out that area is actual wetland.

Determining whether the trail construction will require a more expensive wetlands boardwalk or if it can be built up with such things as gravel will have to wait until May after the area has dried out and plants have started to grow before experts can make a wetlands delineation, trail committee chair Bill Regan said.

After the section has been designed, it will take a few weeks to seek bids on the construction. If it sails through the selectboard approval process with a minimum of stormy seas, the trail committee’s hope is for the 1.8-mile Village Loop Trail to be completed by late summer so bike riders and walkers could enjoy its full length before winter.

The Village Loop Trail runs from Route 7, from a parking area just south of Charlotte Crossing in the field where the old ferry market was. The trail runs west and crosses Greenbush Road just south of the Old Lantern Inn, and in a short distance heads north. When the last section is completed, the trail will connect to Ferry Road near the

SEE SIGNS PAGE 3
“About every three hours in this country a person or vehicle is struck by a train. There are three to five incidents a day in the U.S.”

— Rob Hanson, Amtrak detective

One of the things Hanson said he works to teach older kids of driving age and adults is that, if their vehicle gets stuck on railroad tracks, the first thing to do is get out of the automobile and get away from the tracks.

Amtrak encourages people to stay at least 15 feet from the tracks.

If you see something suspicious or you see a vehicle stuck on the tracks, that should be your first call,” Hanson said, imploring for people to call that number before 911 because that call goes directly to the train dispatcher controlling the line who can stop a train within 20-30 seconds.

“Trains are only going to get faster; they’re only going to get more popular; and they’re only going to impact more communities,” Hanson said. “That’s what we want. We want to expand train service.”

But with more new service to more communities, the issue of safety becomes more important.

In his 13 years with Amtrak, Hanson said there have been over 165 fatalities.

And on Thursday, two days after the school board meeting, there was another one — a person was struck and killed on the Ethan Allen Express tracks north of New York City.

RAILROAD

continued from page 1

The trauma these employees suffer as the result of fatal accidents. It tells the story of William Smith, who was a conductor when he saw and heard his train hit a young woman.

Smith said he imagined somehow being able to save a woman in the seconds before the train impact. Then he saw and heard the woman hit with a sound he described as “a clong.”

Years later, every time he hears a similar sound, he is mentally switched back to re-experience the hopeless helplessness of that tragic day. He told the publication, “She probably has friends and family who don’t think about her as much as I do.”

School board member Brendan McMahon raised concerns that, with the tracks about 200 yards from Shelburne Community School, the noise of the trains might disrupt classes there.

Hanson said the trains are not like the F-35s in Williston — the danger is that passenger trains are so quiet now.

“While having new trains running through a community is wonderful for everyone, there are inherent dangers around the railroad tracks when they’re newly placed back into service,” Hanson said.

At every railroad crossing there is a blue sign with white lettering with information about how to get in touch with Amtrak and the number of the crossing. That’s how a train can be stopped right away.

Dan Cole points to a field that once was part of the Charlotte Poor Farm but is now the site of the mound septic system serving camps on Thompson’s Point.

The Burlington Daily News reported some town residents showed up to the Charlotte Town Meeting Day in 1959 with some questions. For one thing, they wanted to know why the lots had been leased for so little. Many camps on Thompson’s Point were being leased for the exorbitant sum of $75 a year, which would have been a big help with the town’s budget deficit.

Some people even claimed the town could have gotten as much as $100 a year.

At least one person at the 1959 Town Meeting wanted to know why the camp leases hadn’t been put out to bid so Charlotte could have gotten as much as possible to help with town debt.

Bushey said she didn’t put out the leases for that reason. “If they’d been put out for bid before I’ve been here for 33 years and my husband and I have leased some of these sites any different from the way they’ve always been leased,” Bushey said.

Although there were about 25 people on the waiting list for Thompson’s Point camps, she said, “We want to rent to the right kind of people. We can’t take just anybody. And that’s what would happen if you put it out to the highest bidder.”

So what if the sites were “all in the family,” Bushey said. “You’re going to get complaints from people who didn’t get a lot no matter who you lease to.”

She asked, “Why should the town give first call to outsiders?”

The road put in at taxpayer expenses to serve camps that were leased to town officials was needed. Bushey and at least one town selectman said they didn’t see any problem with it.

She was incensed that an auditor inserted a line in the expenses in the town report before it went to the printers.

The Charlotte Poor Farm on Thompson’s Point in 1935.

“It was the most childish, sarcastic, deceitful thing I’ve ever seen,” Bushey said. The auditor had added a parenthetical phrase after the listing for the cost for the road they had intended to name Camp Road (Lane’s Lane).

Surer than driving on a dirt road rud all season, the towns publicly funded personal road was stuck with the name Lane’s Lane. — Rob Hanson, Amtrak detective

The Charlotte News • March 24, 2022 • 3

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

Letters may not exceed 300 words, obituaries 500 words. Initially, letters and obituaries submitted by our readers. All materials are subject to review and approval by the editor in accordance with the following validation and requirements:

• The views expressed in letters or opinion pieces are those of the author, and are not endorsed by either the editor or the editorial staff of the paper. Opinion pieces or letters to the editor will be clearly labeled as such.

• The news refers to any clear facts of interest. If an actual or perceived conflict arises to become known at a later date, it will be fully disclosed.

• While letters or opinion pieces may endorse political positions or candidates for public office, they are not to advocate for changes in election rules or the way a political party nominates candidates.

• Submission requirements:

Letters to the editor must be submitted as an email to news@thecharlottenews.org or as a standard letter mailed to the publisher. The writer’s full name, town of residence and, for the writer, the writer’s full name, town of residence and, for the writer, must be acknowledged on the front page even if the letter is rejected.

Letters may not exceed 300 words, obituaries 500 words. Initials, if necessary, must accompany each submission. All materials must be double-spaced, be original work, be typed in 12-point type, and not exceed 500 words.

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Letters to the Editor

Sands: Join Welch with Yemen War Powers Resolution in Senate

To the Editor:

On the day that the invasion of Ukraine began, there were 37 separate airstrikes on Yemen. Airstrikes are frequent there, day and night. The United States has backed the Saudi-led destruction for seven years. Our country supplies and supports the weapons, ammunition and military intelligence that batters people on the other side of the world, out of our sight. We fund and facilitate those airstrikes.

The United Nations currently lists 17 countries in crisis, millions of fellow humans around the world in need of humanitarian aid. Yes, Ukraine is one of these, its tragedy garnering much news coverage. The other 16 countries get little notice, maybe because they’re far away, have different cultures from ours, or we feel helpless to change their situations. One of those 16 is Yemen.

Yemen has roughly 10 percent of our population. To compare our circumstances to theirs, take the statistics on violence and death in Yemen and multiply by 10. If the United States was in the same strait as Yemen, under siege and blockade of basic necessities, 160 million Americans would be on the brink of starvation with 23 million children under the age of five suffering acute malnutrition. No less than 2.3 million Americans would have died. Our residents, our children. Adapt the UN’s numbers and you’ll see that 240 million people in the United States would need humanitarian assistance. Right now.

It’s fair to say that 37 airstrikes on this country would move citizens and the government to action. We have the power and the ability to stop our collusion and participation in the catastrophe in Yemen.

During a national day of action for Yemen on March 1, with Catherine Bock of Charlotte and other members of the Friends of National Legislation in attendance, Rep. Welch (D-Vt.) declared that he will be an original co-sponsor of the House’s upcoming Yemen War Powers Resolution, soon to be introduced by Rep. Jayapal (D-WA) and Rep. DeFazio (D-Ore.). This is an important step. Many thanks to Rep. Welch. But the job is not complete. We need a companion resolution in the Senate.

We need Senator Sanders (I-Vt.) to collaborate with Welch. Bernie: side-by-side with your Vermont colleague, introduce another War Powers Resolution for Yemen. You did it beautifully in 2018 and 2019; it passed in both houses, on both sides of the aisle.

Of all of the human-made horrors on the planet, none should be forgotten. And should be made worse by U.S. complicity.

MaryDiane Baker
Brattleboro

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old Charlotte Family Health Center, about a quarter of a mile west of West Charlotte Village.

In a discussion after the meeting, Regan said the trail committee’s goal is to eventually have the Village Loop and the Town Link trails actually run into the village.

Trail signs

Larry Sommers of the trail committee presented a plan for a system of signs for Charlotte color-coded to indicate primary versus secondary trails.

For example, Sommers said, biking to the top of Pease Mountain can be confusing with alternative trails splitting off the main trail. So, the trail committee proposed that primary trail signs across the town be a specific common color — gold-yellow backgrounds.

“If you’re a first-time user and you want to know the best way to get to the top of Pease Mountain, use these paths,” Sommers said.

Besides the Pease Mountain Trail, other primary town trails that will be indicated by gold-yellow backgrounds include the Village Loop and Plouffe Lane trails. An exception is the Town Link Trail whose sign backgrounds will be blue.

Secondary or alternate trails that intersect primary trails will have a white background.

The trails committee also proposed common designs for signs to indicate such things as parking instructions, trailhead locations and points of interest.

The trail committee’s goal is to get bids for constructing an inventory of signs that will designate all the things that need to be indicated about town trails consistently.

Trailhead signs will be brown wooden signs with white letters routed into the wood.

The trails committee also proposed a plan for a system of signs for trailhead signs with white letters routed into the wood. The Town Link Trail already has some signs with its distinguishing blue background.

“I completely agree,” Mudge said. “I pick up my kids a lot, too. I’ve actually said it here before: I’m surprised there hasn’t been an accident yet since COVID, with the amount of traffic we get out there.”

Mudge said it doesn’t make any sense that the speed limit in the village is 25 mph and 30 mph by the school.

Krasnow said the road is a thoroughfare for east-west travel from Hinesburg to New York state. He argued for blink signs that would lower the speed limit during morning school drop-off and afternoon pickup times rather than reducing the speed limit all the time.

There are significant infrastructure issues, Krasnow said. “Well before COVID, it was almost impossible to get an ambulance through there at pickup or drop-off time.”

At those times the road is down to a single lane and it’s a very hazardous situation that just signs won’t fix, he said. “I think widening the road there is going to be a necessary long-term plan that the town has got to think about investing in so that we can have a pull-off lane.”

The board decided to investigate the issue.

Library signs

The selectboard members in attendance all voted to approve the town trail design proposal.

School speed limit signs

Maura Wygmans said Hinesburg Road in front of Charlotte Central School is a major route for people commuting to work and the high school. She feels the combination of the 30 mph speed limit there with more parents taking their students to school because of COVID concerns and changes to bus routes is a dangerous situation.

“It’s a bit of a blind driveway, pulling out of the main entrance at Charlotte Central School. When cars are approaching from the west, it’s quite difficult to see the cars coming,” Wygmans said.

She noted that the roads at Hinesburg Community School and Shelburne Community School both have a 25 mph speed limit.

Besides reducing the speed limit, Wygmans would like to see more speed limit signs at Charlotte’s school, particularly a blink sign that displays the speed cars are traveling — like the sign at Shelburne’s school.

SANDERS: JOIN WELCH WITH YEMEN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION IN SENATE

To the Editor:

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Brattleboro

STONE’S THROW

Wine Club Alert!

Stone’s Throw Wine Club launches April 1

Sign-up on our website, stonesthrowwine.com

86 Ferry Rd Charlotte
802-859-2084
OPEN 4-9 Tue-Sun

“Celebrating Charlotte” Auction

Don’t miss this seven day, online auction happening April 2 - 10

Start your bidding at: charlottegrangevt.wixsite.com/website

Featuring a wealth of items donated by generous Charlotte residents and businesses. For example:

- Gift certificates for local landscapers and craftsmen
- Legal work
- Tool sharpening
- Private music concerts
- Massage
- Accommodations
- CSA shares
- Rides to the airport and more!

Funds raised will help support the Charlotte Grange and our work in the community.
Vermont and the environment

Vermont's Working Landscape Initiative (H.518) passed unanimously in the House. It mandates that the Department of Environmental Conservation, in coordination with the Vermont Land Trust, prepare a working landscape strategy to achieve the following goals:

1. Meeting the goals of the Climate Leadership Act.
3. Treating our forests as important carbon sinks.
4. Promoting the use of agricultural residuals for bioenergy.

In 1991, this changed. The legislature turned school budgets into a “public purpose” by allowing public schools to use tax dollars to pay private schools. This opened the door for voucher programs and other forms of school choice.

In 2023, Vermont's voucher system—like voucher systems in Florida and Indiana—is under challenge. The House and Senate have already introduced over 20 voucher bills, each attempting to skirt constitutional restrictions on state funding of private schools. These bills are likely to be challenged in court, and the courts will decide whether private schools receive public funds.

Vermont values of neighborly service to others and the common good are under threat.

Vermont's forest is a vital and irreplaceable resource. It provides habitat for wildlife, stores carbon, and is a source of recreation. Vermont Senate Bill 219 would allow public schools to use tax dollars to pay private schools.

Vermont's constitutional requirement to create a common school fund (Article X, Section 1) is at stake. This requirement is an expression of Vermont’s commitment to common benefits, the protection and may make matters worse.

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Search for process to find Charlotte’s past and future continues

Peter Joslin

What’s your perception of development in Charlotte?

Typically, we see it—or the lack of it—driving around town, biking or walking in our neighborhoods. Vast open spaces, farmland, beautiful vistas and woodlands about. All is good.

Or is it? Do you recall or wonder what Charlotte looked like 25 years ago? What will our town look like 15 years hence?

Here’s a thought experiment: Go to your device of choice, navigate to Google maps and use the satellite view to pinpoint your location. For those who have lived here 15-20 years, does it look the same as you remember?

Start to move around town, focusing on patterns of development. What do you see?

In my neighborhood there were 13 homes in 1993. Today there are 21 and an additional 8 lots to be developed. Little has changed in the village districts.

In 2020, the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development partnered with Hinesburg New Urbanism, Vermont’s 11 regional planning commissions the American Association of Retired Persons, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and the Vermont Association of Realtors to address the crisis the town and villages face regarding the lack of affordable housing.


In its introduction it states: “Vermont’s statewide planning goal to maintain the historic settlement pattern of compact village and urban centers separated by rural countryside provides a wonderful context for individual town and village comprehensive growth plans. Yet in many cases, the bylaws in many communities do not reflect either statewide planning goal or the local village or town plan.

“In Vermont and in communities across the country, too many families cannot find homes they can afford. There is simply a dearth of affordable housing at a price-point that working-class residents such as teachers and firefighters, let alone families surviving to own minimum wage, can afford.”

This is certainly true in Charlotte. This report goes on to identify the disconnect between policy and need:

Production of housing units for rental and ownership at prices that match incomes must keep up with demand in order to achieve affordability, and that means lowering the cost of production and increasing the variety of housing types being built. However, the problem is more complicated than simple economic failure of supply not meeting demand. Housing policies at both the state and local levels unjustifiably restrict housing access and unnecessarily limit choice of alternative housing options. In Vermont, the resulting impact to the cost and availability of housing matters, not only for individual families, but for the state economy as well: businesses struggle to hire and retain qualified workers, limiting business development, expansion and retention.”

This mismatch between housing needs and housing stock is exacerbated by bylaws that can inadvertently drive development costs. Zoning and subdivision regulations:

“...modest homes, and critics say they limit to the cost and availability of housing available in large, single-family homes. In many cases, the bylaws force developers to build larger homes and more single-family homes than needed for the growing number of smaller households.

In Vermont, the resulting impact to the cost and availability of housing matters, not only for individual families, but for the state economy as well: businesses struggle to hire and retain qualified workers, limiting business development, expansion and retention.”

The report, which outlines the reduction in family size and the lack of appropriately sized housing to meet this change:

“Vermont towns and villages need a wider range of housing types to meet a changing population. While total population has seen little growth in the past decade, household size is also decreasing. Single-person households now make up a quarter of all Vermont households, but one-bedroom homes are rare in Vermont. While household sizes are shrinking, homes are not.

The state’s housing stock is often larger than needed for the growing number of small households and is old, which means municipalities need to make it easier to 1) modify existing larger homes, and 2) build more smaller and varied homes to meet the growing needs of 21st century families and individuals.

Finally, it draws the correlation between changes in housing needs and how they are impacted by current zoning and subdivision regulations:

“This mismatch between housing needs and housing stock is exacerbated by bylaws that can inadvertently drive development costs. Zoning and subdivision regulations in towns and villages across Vermont often require large setbacks from the road, low densities, separations of use, limited housing options, excessive parking requirements, overly wide streets, and occasionally ill-considered design standards. Such provisions can restrict opportunities for housing, increase costs for individuals and conglomerates, perpetuate sprawl, auto-oriented development, and negatively affect Vermont’s villages, farms, forests and natural resources.”

In the March 5 edition of VT Digger, the Champlain Housing Trust announced its plan to build 100 mixed-income homes in Hinesburg on about 40 acres of donated land. The development will be a mix of permanently affordable and market-value homes. Playgrounds, walking trails and sledding hills are also planned for the site.

Michael Monte of the Champlain Housing Trust said, “This will be a model project that I hope will inspire other communities across our region and state to prioritize affordable housing development when Vermonters’ need is so great.”

This development will be in Hinesburg’s village district. A development of this size would be out of scale in Charlotte. But what about something smaller—20 modest homes, condos or apartments in the east and west villages?

Future development was a topic of discussion at the Charlotte Planning Commission’s March 3 and 17 meetings. Planning commissioners Kyra Miller and Bob Bloch have begun to research Community Heart and Soul, a national nonprofit, that, as stated on its website, “is a resident-driven process that engages the entire population of a town in identifying what they love most about their community, what future they want for it and how to achieve it.”

Over the past several years, many of the proposed development projects large and small have been contentious, resulting in appealed decisions and legal disputes regarding the nuances of procedural issues of governing bodies. We need to build consensus toward our future goals. This is Community Heart and Soul’s wheelhouse—engaging all members of the community toward a collective future.

Circling back to Google’s satellite image of Charlotte I think about where and when the infill in the rural district slows down and gives way to deliberately planned modest growth in the villages.

When and how do we get there? Community Heart and Soul may just be the spark to engage our future.

Peter Joslin is the former chair of the Charlotte Planning Commission.
Omnibus appropriations bill includes $500,000 for Clemmons Family Farm

“The Big Barn is one of Vermont’s cultural treasures, and a touchstone in the complex and troubled history of African American land ownership in our nation.”

— Karen Mittelman, Vermont Arts Council executive director

On Tuesday afternoon, March 15, President Joe Biden signed the $1.5 trillion 2022 Omnibus Appropriations bill, which funds the federal government for the rest of this fiscal year.

In large part due to the efforts of Senator Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Vermont will get more than $167 million in funding for specific Vermont projects across the state.

One of those Vermont projects is the nonprofit Clemmons Family Farm in Charlotte which will get $500,000 in funding.

“I made sure that Vermonters have had a center seat at the table in writing this bill. From providing resources to grow ‘made in Vermont’ crops to providing more direct say in how Congress, and not just unelected federal agency officials, to have a direct say in how taxpayer dollars get distributed to Vermont’s priorities,” Lehay said.

The Clemmons Family Farm, Inc., a leading Black-led nonprofit organization in Vermont, will receive the funding as a historic preservation grant to improve arts and culture facilities on the farm. The farm, owned by 98-year-old Jackson and Lydia Clemmons, is one of the oldest family-owned farms in the state and around the country.

The two historic buildings will be dedicated to artist studios, art galleries and exhibitions, artist residencies, visual and performing arts programming, and educational programs for the public. All of the programs promote learning, dialogue and appreciation around African American history, art and culture, and foster multicultural community-building.

The grant will also support the return of award-winning architect Zena Howard to the farm. Howard served as senior project manager for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and is a principal and managing director of Perkins + Will architecture firm in North Carolina.

In 2018, Howard led a three-day design workshop at the Clemmons farm to envision the future and interior design of the Big Barn as a visual and performing arts center. She will continue to provide technical assistance to plan the interior design of the Big Barn over a series of site visits and workshops with the farm’s artists, architects and barn preservation experts.

“The Clemmons Family Farm board of directors was over the moon when we received the news of the grant,” said Clemmons Family Farm board member Leslie McCrorey Wells. “In these challenging times, this magnificent, meaningful and uniquely held property has the power to transcend our differences and bring Vermonters together. This grant also supports Clemmons Family Farm’s work to preserve the farm, empower Vermont’s Black artists and contribute creatively to our community as a whole.”

Karen Mittelman, Vermont Arts Council’s executive director, said, “The Big Barn is one of Vermont’s cultural treasures, and a touchstone in the complex and troubled history of African American land ownership in our nation.”

Also included in the funding Leahy secured for Vermont was $5 million for Shelburne Farms to establish a National Farm to School Institute providing technical and practical assistance to farm to school programs in the state and around the country.

The Clemmons Family Farm supports a network of approximately 230 Vermont artists of African descent. The nonprofit’s mission is based on the 60-year-old legacy of Jack and Lydia Clemmons of building community in Vermont around African American and African diaspora arts and culture. The farm is one of the 0.4 percent of farms in the nation that is Black-owned and is a state landmark on the Vermont African American Heritage Trail.

For more information about Clemmons Family Farm, visit clemmonsfamilyfarm.org.
What is food insecurity?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food to maintain an active, healthy life.

During the first seven months of the pandemic, research from the University of Vermont’s Nutrition and Food Sciences Department found that nearly 30 percent of Vermonters experienced food insecurity. Job disruptions within households led to food insecurity in almost 40 percent of those households.

Current critical developments on the world stage have contributed to rising prices of heating oil, propane and gasoline. This has stretched budgets, compounding the risk for food insecurity. The Charlotte community continues to respond to the challenges of these times.

The Food Shelf continues to help with food, fuel and emergency assistance. Thank you to Norman and Dorothy Pellett, Diane Cote, Jeanie MacDonough, Loraine Gardner of the Wonderful Foundation, Virginia Foster, Kathleen Nolan, Horsford Gardens and Nursery, and Waverly Pardum for donations that are helping neighbors stay warm and fed.

The Food Shelf’s ability to purchase beef has been limited by the increase in beef prices. We thank Lisa Crispin and Bob Dowling for their timely gift of a quarter of beef. We appreciate Suzanne Ferland’s help in the delivery of this donation.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel’s monthly food drive has been helping to keep the shelves stocked with items from our wish list. For those who can contribute to our wish list, please note that we are out of toothbrushes and laundry soap. Items that have been hard to keep in stock include canned corn and peas, creamed soup, crackers, spaghetti sauce, dry pasta, egg noodles and instant mashed potatoes. These are always welcome.

High quality N95 masks have been supplied by the Resilience Community Committee for distribution. Given concerns about possible increasing risk from rising levels of the more transmissible Omicron BA.2 variant, we continue to encourage masking and will continue distributing food by curbside pickup to keep families and volunteers safe.

If you cannot come to food shelf distribution due to COVID symptoms, or if you seek further information about the Food Shelf, please call 802-425-3282.

Monetary donations are appreciated and can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc., P.O. Box 83, Charlotte VT 05445. The Food Shelf is a 501(c)3 entity, and contributions remain tax-deductible.

The Food Shelf is open for food distribution from 4-6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. For emergency food, please call John at 802-425-3130.

Foreign strife has raised fuel costs, cutting into food budgets

Town

Maj Eisinger
CHARLOTTE FOOD SHELF

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Nine years ago, Gregory Smith started organizing pickleball games in Charlotte. He had seen the game being played and thought it looked like fun, so he took a class and was hooked. “I got four friends to join me,” he said, “and then the group started growing. I advertised it locally and through word of mouth and more people joined.”

Smith has had as many as 100 people on the email list that he uses to organize pickleball games. “It’s a game for those over 45 for whom mobility on the tennis court is no longer there,” he said. “It’s for those who play badminton or racquetball and want a reprieve from the pressure. It’s a gentle sport but demanding of physical ability and concentration.”

Although Smith described pickleball as ideal for an adult population, he noted that it’s also good for kids because it requires concentration. “It’s also good for kids because it requires them to focus on the ball and the motion it’s also good for kids because it requires concentration.”

Smith said the commission will add boules and bocce courts this year with benches on either side for those interested in watching. In boules players throw the ball to try to get closest to the target ball; in bocce the ball is rolled.

Smith is happy to have settled in Charlotte after a lifetime of travel during which he has visited 143 countries. He spent 30 years working with the federal government in locations as diverse as the Philippines, Mexico and Rome. His last position was associate director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, leading 2,450 federal and contract employees in a variety of programs. When Smith left his assignment in Rome in 2004, he and his wife took about three months exploring for a place to settle down. “We came here in early December, and I walked up the first flight of steps to this house and saw the lake and the Adirondacks and that was it,” he said. “We’ve been infatuated with the place ever since.”

When Smith was named associate director at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, he left from 2007 to 2010, but his wife and mother-in-law stayed. He was thrilled to come back home to Charlotte. Many people fear that pickleball will adversely affect their tennis game, but Smith thinks it has helped him. The two sports may look similar, but they have different scoring systems. A pickleball court is one-third the size of a tennis court and has a seven-foot setback on each side of the net known as the no-volley zone, or kitchen. “You can’t take a ball in the air in that section,” said Smith, “but outside of that you can whack as hard as you possibly can. There is a delightful combination of volleying, the occasional lob and the occasional rock shot.”

He is one of the better players who are able to add spin to the ball. “The game has grown in such a dramatic fashion that we have people who play outdoors year-round,” Smith said, giving the nod to a new group called the Polar Pickleballers who have been playing outdoors all winter after shoveling and de-icing the court. “This is the first year of it,” he said with a smile. “Those who haven’t frozen to death are still at it.”

Besides exercise, Smith said during COVID pickleball provided relief and community for those who might otherwise have been isolated. It has also brought together an array of people who might not have gotten to know each other. “It’s a full-spectrum sport,” he said.
Charlotte Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary is once again sponsoring five students to attend a youth leadership academy at Northern Vermont University-Lyndon. The Rotary Youth Leadership Academy is for high school sophomores. The students learn by experience and actions about personality traits, how to bring out everyone’s talents and their own traits and talents, which many are surprised they have. It’s fun. And it’s free.

There is a service project during the weekend where they can make a difference for someone they do not know. Participants must agree to attend the entire event, which begins at 8 a.m. on Friday and closes at noon on Sunday, June 24-26.

For an application or more information, please contact Carrie Fenn at carriebfenn@gmail.com.

Rotary sponsoring leadership academy for sophomores

Rotary spinning for defibrillators

The Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary is sponsoring a fundraising spin-a-thon to purchase automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for the three towns served by the club, 7-10 a.m. April 9 at the Shelburne Athletic Club. Spinners can choose to ride a stationary bike for one, two or three 45-minute sessions. Each session is $20, and all dollars raised will go toward the purchase of AEDs.

“We’re excited to provide this life-saving technology to our three towns,” says president-elect of Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary Carrie Fenn. “We’ll provide the training to town employees and any other citizens that would like to be certified in the use of AEDs.”

Join the fun or donate to the cause by going to facebook.com/events/681059550006382.

For more information, contact Susan Grimes at susan821@gmail.com.

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SNEAK PEAK OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

Property Transfers
February 28
Kathryn Silver, 3220 Mt. Philo Rd. 12.00 +/- acres $535,000 w/dwl
March 2
XL Building & Design to Jun & Joyce Chun, 462 Higbee Rd. 5.81 +/- acres $110,000 land only
March 2
Russell Womer & Genna Durante, 125 Elfin Lane 1.26 +/- acres $996,500 w/dwl

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

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The college essay can tip the balance in admissions process

“College admissions is not about you, the prospective student or parent of a student, it’s about the college,” Jeffrey Selingo said in his book “Who Gets In and Why: A Year Inside College Admissions.”

Selingo embedded himself within the admissions committees of three highly selective schools: Davidson College in North Carolina, Emory University in Georgia and the University of Washington in Washington state.

Each college has a distinct admissions review process that usually has teams of readers, independent evaluators and committee reviewers. Each student’s application typically includes two elements: the common application required by most colleges that lists the student’s demographics, academics, activities, recommendations and essays, along with a supplemental application specific for each college that usually asks for additional academic information and essays.

Colleges evaluate the applications to assess “fit,” where the institution’s goals to involve leadership. Selingo discusses an example where a stellar STEM student also took rigorous English and history classes, including their English teacher’s recommendation. This balanced profile set the student apart from other STEM-focused applicants.

Third, the essays can bring to life a student’s unique attributes and what they think and feel. Selingo describes a Davidson review session: “In a sea of sameness that becomes the committee’s deliberations after several hours, it’s once again a small element in a file that turns the group’s opinion.” The small element in one situation was the applicant’s essay that got the committee interested.

The college essays are the only opportunity for the student to share their personal voice, passionate ideas and future goals directly to the committee. The best essays will highlight the other application elements. The student’s essays are like having a conversation with the committee to illustrate their stories within tight word counts and character limitations. Colleges look for a range of backgrounds, talents and perspectives to interact within the campus community. If a student starts sounding the same as others, then why would a college admit another cog in the wheel?

Evaluating college applications is like dancing with two partners: the student and the admissions committee. However, the college takes the lead in setting their specific priorities and rating the student within their set of rules. With increasing applicants for limited spots, many qualified students get passed over each year. Nonetheless, be confident in putting your best foot forward, regardless of the outcome.

Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.
Early in the history of Vermont, people placed a high value on education and developed an organization around one of the basic tenets of Vermont independence: local control. This is a legacy being systematically dismantled by our legislature over several decades. Today’s education leaders undervalue the quality of the education provided by schools of the past, as they undervalue the role of students’ parents. In each of Charlotte’s Districts, the parents designed, paid for and built the structure, maintained it, supervised the curriculum and hired the instructor. Naturally, the person employed was critical to the success of the program, and sometimes was a recent graduate of the school.

In his 1897 essay, “The Population of Towns and in Praise of Common Schools,” W.W. Higbee writes, “Stop a minute, some of you men and women from 50 to 65 years old, as good business men and women as can be found every day, and tell me how much schooling did you ever get outside of the old district schoolhouses? Perhaps two or three at some academy. … The bulk of it you dug out in the district school. The tendency was toward them then, not away from them. … The question remains whether the parents of the children in the old district form are not just as competent to provide for them as … a ‘board of directors,’ and perhaps not one of them with a child to educate. Do some of the ‘new methods’ increase or lessen our personal interest in schools?”

A basic education of the time prepared students either to take their places in society, or to move on to more advanced education at an academy. Many attended an academy in Hinesburg, Vergennes or Williston. In 1860, Charlotte teens Martin Eno, Esther Burnham and her younger brother Alfred, attended the co-ed Barre Academy, under principal J.S. Spaulding. The English department taught “the ordinary branches, together with the higher mathematics, moral and intellectual philosophy,” while the classical department taught Greek and Latin, ancient geography, history, algebra, and geometry. Both departments emphasized composition and declamation. Tuition was $3 for each three-month term, with room and board provided for an additional $1.75 to $2 per week.

In this issue, we skip School #3 to allow for more investigation and visit School #4, which was on the west side of Mt. Philo Road, just south of the intersection with Hinesburg Road. The school has been incorporated into a family residence but is still recognizable. For more about the history of Charlotte’s schoolhouses, you can check out the library’s website (charlottepubliclibrary.org). In the middle of the bar at the top of the homepage, hover over “at the library.” On the drop-down menu, hover over “special collections.” On the drop-down menu here, click on “local history & genealogy.” Scroll down to “presentations” and click “read it” next to “Jenny Cole’s Charlotte schoolhouse story walk.”

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Outdoors

Savor the good news of spring in the outdoors

Stop doomscrolling, please, long enough to digest some slivers of good news. Open your eyes. A tsunami of courtship and mating is underway; birds are probing crevices and snowdrops, firebirds perching the early hours, honking goose rattle overhead, red-winged blackbirds squawk as they establish territory. Bobcats, porcupines, skunks, squirrels, foxes, woodchucks and more are on the prowl for mates.

Spring love songs

One of the earliest indicators of spring is the duck-like song of wood frogs. In winter, wood frogs freeze solid beneath soil and leaf litter. As spring rains seep through the snowpack, the frogs thaw and then hop to a nearby vernal pool in search of a mate. Courtship is in order for the females by as much as six to one. Successful males clasp a female around the abdomen as she lays up to 2,000 eggs in the water. The male immediately fertilizes them. Sometimes a frog ball results when many suitors grasp a female simultaneously.

Vernal pool monitors across the state, including this reporter, have installed audio recorders that will document the singing of wood frogs. A project of the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, these long-term monitoring projects collect data that reveal biodiversity trends. These data are vital for science-based conservation, supporting the development of management strategies for those species and the habitat that support them.

Beavers are back

If you have visited Charlotte’s Park and Wildlife Refuge or Raven Ridge recently, you know that beavers are back. They have settled into both preserves, building dams and lodges that they call home. Nature’s engineers, beavers are industrious resources but they can also be troublesome to railroads, culverts and neighbors’ basements. Achieving balance is an ongoing dance that has played out across this country for centuries.

Nearly eliminated by hunters and trappers by the end of the 19th century, beavers have slowly re-colonized various regions of the country, sometimes with elaborate support of local agencies.

Why would that be? When they build dams, beavers slow the flow of water across the landscape. Instead of eroding deeper and narrower river beds, water slows behind dams. Resulting ponds and wetlands attract diverse wildlife and support interlinked ecosystems develop. Water seeps into the ground, recharging aquifers, which in the Charlotte means water for our wells. Silt and pollutants settle instead of rushing into the lake. Win, win, win!

Not when clogged with sticks and mud and the buildup of water threatens roads, and near Greenbush Road, the road.

“We are fortunate that Junior Lewis, our road commissioner, is open to working with us,” said Julian Kuklis, a volunteer at Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge. “We have installed beaver debris that prevent those high-energy rodents from clogging the culverts, allowing water to flow beneath and not undermine the roads.”

For the curious I recommend “Eager, the Surprise, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter” by Ben Goldfarb, available at the Charlotte Library. You will read about successful, and not-so-successful, reintroduction schemes, beaver love hotels and how to tell the sexes apart with your nose. Also, that a pioneering in the world of beaver deceivers is a Vermonter.

Another success story

The bald eagle is back. After an absence of 60 years, the first Vermont nest was spotted in 2002; the first successful fledgling in 2008. In 2020, 64 young fledged from Vermont nests. As a result, the bald eagle has been removed from Vermont’s endangered and threatened species list.

Expect to see bald eagle nests near lakes and rivers, high above the water in sturdy trees. Eagles tend to be faithful to a breeding area and return to the same nest year after year, adding building materials, maintaining the nest. These huge nests are generally 5 to 30 feet below the top of a living tree, helping to shield the young from arboreal predators.

Bald eagles in our region lay eggs, usually one to three, from early March through early May, incubation of about 35 days. Competition for food in the nest can be fierce and the youngest chick often dies. After 11 to 12 weeks, the young fledge, although their parents continue to support and teach them for several more months. Keep an eye out for them.

Into the Woods

Saving the butternut – important part of saving forests

Ethan Tapper

Butternut (Juglans cinerea) is an enigmatic tree. Also called white walnut, butternut is prized for their nuts (rather than their wood), cuisine.

While butternut trees were historically a common or long-lived tree in Vermont’s forests, the species for millennia. After European colonization, butternut trees were widely planted in North America since the 1820s. Interestingly, a certain amount of hybridization between butternut and Japanese walnut (Juglans ailantifolia). Interestingly, a certain amount of hybridization between butternut and Japanese walnut has been occurring for over a century, Japanese walnuts, especially the cultivar known as Japanese butternut, have been planted in North America since the 1800s. This species naturally hybridizes with butternut, creating a tree called “butnut” which was noted in the United States by the early 1900s. While butnuts are more resistant to butternut canker than butternuts, hybridization comes at a risk: potentially eroding some of the unique and adaptive genetic qualities of the butternut species.

Each native tree species has a unique role to play in Vermont forests. Forests are natural communities: complex assemblages of species which are greater than the sum of their parts and enriched by diversity. The loss of a tree species impacts forests in profound ways, and butternut is just one of several important tree species that we have lost, that we are losing or whose role in our forests has been radically changed as a result of a non-native pest or pathogen — others include elm, beech, chestnut and ash.

In a changing world, taking care of forests means supporting their resilience and their ability to adapt. Doing our best to save butternut is just one piece in this puzzle — others include the stopping deforestation and forest fragmentation, controlling non-native invasive plants and addressing the many threats to forest health and biodiversity. It’s up to us to help forests respond to the profound challenges of the modern world as they move into an uncertain future.

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 e-news and read articles he’s written at linktr.ee/chittendencountyforester.

Butternut wood is soft, light and pretty, with narrow, interlacing ridges, similar to that of ash trees but darker in color. When cut, the wormholes prominent in dead trees. Butternut is an awful firewood — as an old-timer once told me: “It burns as well as a newspaper.”

Butternuts’ bark is patterned with yellow “unibrows.” Their bark is cracked into long, interlocking ridges, similar to that of ash trees but darker in color. When cut, the wormholes prominent in dead trees. Butternut is an awful firewood — as an old-timer once told me: “It burns as well as a newspaper.”

Butternut is culturally important to the indigenous peoples may have planted and dispersed butternuts for millennia. After European colonization, butternut trees were widely planted in North America since the 1820s. Interestingly, a certain amount of hybridization between butternut and Japanese walnut has been occurring for over a century, Japanese walnuts, especially the cultivar known as Japanese butternut, have been planted in North America since the 1800s. This species naturally hybridizes with butternut, creating a tree called “butnut” which was noted in the United States by the early 1900s. While butnuts are more resistant to butternut canker than butternuts, hybridization comes at a risk: potentially eroding some of the unique and adaptive genetic qualities of the butternut species.

Each native tree species has a unique role to play in Vermont forests. Forests are natural communities: complex assemblages of species which are greater than the sum of their parts and enriched by diversity. The loss of a tree species impacts forests in profound ways, and butternut is just one of several important tree species that we have lost, that we are losing or whose role in our forests has been radically changed as a result of a non-native pest or pathogen — others include elm, beech, chestnut and ash.

In a changing world, taking care of forests means supporting their resilience and their ability to adapt. Doing our best to save butternut is just one piece in this puzzle — others include the stopping deforestation and forest fragmentation, controlling non-native invasive plants and addressing the many threats to forest health and biodiversity. It’s up to us to help forests respond to the profound challenges of the modern world as they move into an uncertain future.

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**Health Matters**

Laurel Lakely  
DEPT PT

Staying active safely as you grow older

Regular exercise helps maintain bone and muscle mass which are critical in preventing falls and bone fractures, a very real concern among older adults. Research has also demonstrated that exercise can reduce arthritis pain by lubricating joint surfaces and strengthening the muscles that support them. Regular physical activity also benefits our cardiovascular system by lowering blood pressure and preventing the onset of cardiovascular disease.

How does exercise benefit seniors?

Staying active helps maintain muscle mass and bone density which are critical in preventing falls and bone fractures, a very real concern among older adults. Exercise also helps our cardiovascular system by lowering blood pressure and preventing the onset of cardiovascular disease. If downhill skiing is no longer viable for you, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are both wonderful winter sports that are much lower impact. A few other forms of exercise that can still provide you with all the health benefits of physical activity without causing body pain and subsequent frustration. If you are someone who loved hiking tall peaks, an excellent substitute would be hiking on trails with a lower elevation or more gentle rolling terrain. Instead of running, you may consider taking up bicycling, which is less impact on your joints but still gives you an excellent workout and gets you outside.

Hunting: Breaking the stereotype

Today, March 24, noon

Experienced hunters, as well as those wishing to get involved in hunting, will enjoy an online discussion presented by The Nature Conservancy. This free talk will focus on connections to the land through hunting traditions and the future of freshwater.-

Research has also indicated that routine exercise can slow or prevent cognitive decline, lowering the risk of dementia. And onsets of cardiovascular disease. Keeping a regular exercise routine can add years to your life, but with thoughtful selection and a well-balanced exercise diet no matter what your age, physical activity at any intensity, as well as strength and balance training. The Centers for Disease and Prevention recommends a goal of 150 minutes a week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity for adults over age 65, which you could consider breaking down to 30 minutes a day for five days each week. Moderate-intensity exercise means breathing hard enough so that you would be able to talk but not sing. Developing an exercise program that varies is more beneficial than the same activity every day. Consider alternating between different forms of aerobic exercise, as well as incorporating strength and balance exercises over the course of each week.

Living in a climate with long winters can make exercising difficult in the older months, especially challenging for older adults. If you are concerned about falling outdoors, there are a few ways to improve your balance today which can be attached to your boots to help increase your traction on ice-covered surfaces. You also might consider joining a group that goes for regular walks at the mall during the winter. Stationary bikes, treadmills and elliptical exercise machines are also alternatives to outdoor exercise. We are very fortunate in Charlotte to have a wonderful senior center called offering a variety of exercise classes which can provide you a well-balanced exercise diet no matter what weather you are doing outside.

If you have never had a regular exercise routine, it is never too late to start and reap its benefits. If you are unsure about how to begin, talk to your primary care physician and consider asking about working with a physical therapist or personal trainer who can help you safely develop an exercise program unique to you. Although the time and energy required to develop an exercise habit may feel intimidating, it is well worth the effort. Your physical, mental and emotional health will benefit for many years to come.

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**Area Calendar Events**

### Vermont Maple Open House

**Saturday, March 26**

This weekend is the second chance to celebrate all things maple. Numerous local producers will be participating, including Pat Perley, Leclaire on Lime Kiln Road in Charlotte. In Huntington, Audubon Vermont hosts sugar-on-snow parties both days from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. For a map of producers or more info see vermontmaple.org.

**Pruning 101**

**Monday, March 28, 6-7:30 p.m.**

Local garden expert Charlie Nardozzi leads a webinar to help homeowners tackle their own pruning jobs. Nardozzi discusses tools, timing, and proper techniques for caring for shrubs and trees, whether young or older. For more info or to register see gardeners.com.

**Vermont Maple Open House**

**Saturday, March 26 and Sunday, March 27**

### Media Literacy Take 2

**Wednesday, March 30, 7-8 p.m.**

Join the conversation with Adam Davidson, Chea Waters-Evans, and Jesse Wegman for a free performance that “showcases the triumphs and failures of today’s medal-winning women Nordic skiers.”

Photo by Anna Shevets from Pexels
Coping Chat
Fridays, 9:30 a.m.
Join Margaret Woodruff via Zoom on Friday mornings at 9:30 to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week she selects a theme and highlights related titles from the library collection. No Book Chat on Friday, April 1.

Hack Club
Tuesdays, Thru April 12, 3:30 p.m.
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, to work in Ruby, Rails, JavaScript and React, plus Unity and C# (for game development). For info contact Christina Asquith: christinaasquith@yahoo.com.

Knitting drop-in
Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m.
Swing by for knitting night at the library. Dust off those old projects you’ve been wanting to finish, start a new project, or even pick up a new skill. Jessica Card, a local knitting teacher at Shelburne Craft School, will be hosting the knitting night. She will be around to get people started, help with existing projects, and will be working on a knitting project as well.

Media Literacy Take 2
Thursday, March 30, 7 p.m.
We’re reviving our conversation from last fall via Zoom. There continue to be more opportunities for disinformation, declining trust in established news organizations, and increasing popularity of conspiracy theorists. Come for a conversation on media literacy with Adam Davidson, Chea Waters-Evans and Jesse Wegman. Register in advance at bit.ly/3HOX4ww.

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

Library contact information
Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org

COVIDhelp 05445
Charlotte Community Partners has been hard at work this winter launching COVIDhelp05445 as a resource for our community.

There’s a lot of information out there about masking, testing and vaccinations and you may have questions, if not confusion. CCP seeks to provide information and resources to assist your research and decision-making:


MASKS: CCP has gathered a supply of KN95 and KF94 masks. If you or your organization needs quality masks, please contact us at: COVIDhelp05445@gmail.com or 802-425-3864.

VAX: You may also contact us if you need assistance making a vaccination appointment or a ride.

TESTS: We do not currently have a supply of rapid antigen tests to distribute, but we can assist you with scheduling a testing appointment.

True crime podcaster
Tuesday, April 12, 7 p.m.
The true crime genre is enjoying a resurgence in popularity. There are entire television channels devoted to true crime. And true crime is one of the dominant genres in podcasting.

Via Zoom, Toby Ball from the podcast “Crime Writers On …,” will talk about the growth in popularity of the true crime genre and how some of the best and most influential true crime shows and podcasts since “Serial” started this new wave.

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

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Senior center buzzing with in-person participation

Susan Ohanian
CONTRIBUTOR

A variety of good eating awaits you at the Charlotte Senior Center over the next two weeks, so come on over.

Thursday meals require registration, so those who have registered can pick up a good Grab-And-Go meal today.

Note that cabbage has been a highly valued food since the time of the ancient Egyptians. It arrived in North America on the return of Wednesday meals? Monday Munch are not available without the volunteer cooks and clean-up crews. From chopping onions to stirring soup to scrubbing pots, talk to anybody who has helped in the kitchen, and you will hear great stories about good times.

The senior center needs your help. The delicious home-cooked meals at Monday Munch are not available without the volunteer cooks and clean-up crews. From chopping onions to stirring soup to scrubbing pots, talk to anybody who has helped in the kitchen, and you will hear great stories about good times. Join us! Send your stories, ideas, commentaries and great photos of Charlotte to news@thecharlottenews.org.
Celebrating Charlotte
Saturday, April 2 - Saturday, April 9
The Charlotte Grange will hold its online auction, featuring products, services and other valuable items donated by local individuals. This is the primary fundraiser for this revered local organization that has helped bring the community together for over 300 years. See ad in this issue for information on how to bid on the varied offerings.

Pride hike
Sunday, April 3, 1-3 p.m.
Wander the trails at Shelburne Farms at an easy pace, visit the lambs, enjoy the scenery. All ages and families welcome. Meet at the Farm Barn parking lot; bring snacks and water. Dress for ice and mud. For more info, or to register, see shelburnefarms.org.

No Strings Marionette Company
Sunday, April 3, 2 p.m.
The Barre Opera House hosts a production of the classic Russian folk tale “The Snow Maiden.” Mythical figures, animals and humans weave a magical story about the changing seasons. For tickets or more info see barreoperahouse.org or call 802-476-8188.

Middlebury Bach Festival
Sunday, April 3, 3-5 p.m.
The Mahaney Arts Center at Middlebury College hosts this concert, featuring students, faculty and guest artists. The free, live performance welcomes guests who are vaccinated, boosted and masked.

The Bombadils
Sunday, April 3, 4-6 p.m.
These Canadian Folk Music Award nominees bring together bluegrass, Celtic and singer-songwriter traditions with front-porch style and classical grace. Hailing from Halifax, Nova Scotia, they perform at the Richmond Congregational Church for a live or streaming performance. For tickets or more info see valleystage.net or call 802-434-4563.

1800 and Froze to Death
Wednesday, April 6, 6-6 p.m.
Vermont author and historian Howard Coffin speaks in person at the Worthen Library in South Hero. His free presentation focuses on the dark and cold year of 1816, which Vermonters called “the year of monthly frosts.” For more info see shlt.org or call 802-372-6209.

Artist talk
Wednesday, April 6, 6-7 p.m.
Vermont-based and internationally acclaimed artist Eric Aho is a current exhibitor at Burlington City Arts on Church Street. In this free virtual program, Aho discusses his approach to painting, his influences and the landscape that inspires his work. Aho’s exhibit is called Headwater. To register or for more info see burlingtoncityarts.org.

Climate change gardening
Wednesday, April 6, 6-7:30 p.m.
This series of three Wednesday panel discussions highlights our local food systems and long-term strategies for creating solutions to growing challenges. Virtual meetings also on April 13 and April 20. Each evening features a diverse group of knowledgeable panelists. For more info or to register see vtgardens.org.

Improving habitat for Vermont’s black bears
Thursday, April 7, noon-1 p.m.
Jackie Comeau, a biologist at the Vermont Fish & Wildlife department, discusses ways to discourage bears from backyards, and the habitat needs for bears in Vermont. Loss of habitat is of great concern to future bear populations. Registration required at vtfishandwildlife.com.

Ongoing
The Pringle Herbarium
Cyrus Pringle, self-taught plant breeder and botanist born in East Charlotte in 1838, is the namesake of the Pringle Herbarium at the University of Vermont. Vermont’s principal botanical collection includes over 350,000 sheets of mounted plants and fungi (now all digital) from Vermont and most other continents. Pringle himself is known for the discovery of at least 1200 species new to science. Established in 1902, the Herbarium is open to visitors by appointment. Call 802-656-3221 or email pringle@uvm.edu.

You can find this calendar of events online at: charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events/