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The Charlotte News

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022 | VOLUME LXIV NUMBER 19



Photo by Lee Krohn
Tufted titmouse perching.

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 about.

"Thompson's Point is the goose that lays the golden egg each year," Cole said. "Selling it off would basically kill off the goose."

Today, a third of the town's revenue comes from leases for the camps 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.

"This was the case all up and down the Lake Champlain shore," said Steve Perkins, executive director of the Vermont Historical Society. Land next to 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 to 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 so 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 imprisoning 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 1959, 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 town shenanigans that would set your head 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.

Kevon 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 "lackadaisically strolling" 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 Rutland to 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 Toni 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



Photo courtesy of Vermont Rail Systems
Six children walk the train tracks near the Shelburne Community School — a sight that concerns school and Amtrak officials.

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 been just 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."

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; the train is here," 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 solid for more than a quarter of a mile. The old rails made a clickety-clack sound as wheels hit the different rail segments, Clithero said.

Railroads in Vermont can be dangerously seductive because they often 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

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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 people's minds by helping them find the library.

But before the selectboard got to sign discussions, the board, which was limited to three members for most of this meeting, with Louise McCarren 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 Krasnow and Lewis Mudge voted to approve spending on design work for the last about 800 feet of construction of the current

"It is 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."

— Maura Wygmans

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 Crossings in the field where the old flea 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

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THOMPSON’S POINT

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Thompson’s Point, the road commissioner got three camp leases—for himself and his two sons, the Thompson’s Point supervisor got two camps for his sons, a man who lived in Essex and did road work for the town got a lease, and a man who lived in Florida got another.

Not only did the road commissioner Henry Lane get three camps, he got a contract to construct a road to these camps and a fee for supervising that construction. Total cost of the road from the camps to the highway was \$1,744.25.

That may seem cheap for building a road considering today’s costs, but times were tight and Lane agreed to take the \$1,000 contractor’s fee the town owed him for building a road to his camps in two yearly \$500 payments.

The Thompson’s Point supervisor Henry Bushey died and his widow, Jessie Bushey, was elected to succeed him during the two years before Charlotte residents found out who had gotten the new camp leases 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 bid because they’d never been put out for bid before.

“I’ve been here for 33 years and my husband and I never leased any of those 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



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

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.



Photo courtesy of Charlotte Historical Society

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

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 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.

“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 in mud season, the town officials’ publicly funded personal road was stuck with the name Lane’s Lane.

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 snatched 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 a wonderful thing 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 Amtrack and the number of the crossing. That’s how a train can be stopped right away.

“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 stopped 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



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

The rail crossing on Ferry Road west of Charlotte West Village.

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.



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The mission of *The Charlotte News* is:

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- to source stories of interest from our neighbors and friends.

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The Charlotte News, P.O. Box 251,
Charlotte, VT 05445 Telephone: 802-425-4949
Circulation: 2,100
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Member of the New England Newspaper
and Press Association, LION Publishers
and the Vermont Press Association.

NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

April 7, 2022

Copy Deadline: Friday, April 1

Ads Deadline: Friday, April 1

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SIGNS

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

For example, Sommers said, hiking 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 three 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 is 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 blinking sign that displays the speed cars are traveling — like the sign at Shelburne’s school.



Photo by Scooter MacMillan
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 blinking 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 turn lane, so that we can have a pull-off lane.”

The board decided to investigate the issue.

Library signs

The selectboard’s sign considerations were not at an end.

The Charlotte Library presented a request for signs on both sides of the library on Ferry Road directing drivers to the bibliophiles’ nirvana.

Members of the selectboard said new signs have been ordered for the Town Hall and they would like for the library signs to match that design, so the decision was put on hold in order to look into that.

Faulkner, who had joined the meeting, said the town has ordered attractive, 3D signs for the Town Hall that are not “run of the mill.”

Letters to the Editor

Sanders: 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 straits 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 Committee for 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 none should be made worse by U.S. complicity.

MaryDiane Baker
Brattleboro

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Report from the Legislature

As deadline approached, environmental bills scored big



Rep. Mike Yantachka

As the Legislature hit the crossover date last week, House committees were busy finalizing work on the dozens of bills they had been working on since January.

The once-a-decade legislative reapportionment bill was finalized and passed, and the Charlotte-Hinesburg district, Chittenden 5, again contains all of Charlotte and a slightly larger portion of Hinesburg, running along the west side of Baldwin Road from the Monkton line to Burritt Road.

Among the many bills that passed and were sent on to the Senate, were several that touched on the environment and our efforts to address the climate change crisis. The Municipal Efficiency Resilience Initiative (H.518) passed unanimously to help municipalities assess the energy efficiency of their buildings and apply for grants to weatherize, reduce operation and maintenance costs, enhance comfort and reduce energy use by improving heating, cooling and ventilation systems.

The Clean Heat Standard bill (H.715) also passed with a strong 96 to 44 vote to help homeowners, renters and commercial properties reduce their dependence on fossil fuels for heating.

The Natural Resources, Fish and Wildlife Committee sponsored several important bills, including H.500, which prohibits the sale, starting in 2024, of four-foot linear fluorescent lamps in Vermont for which LEDs are available. All fluorescent lamps contain



A view of Camels Hump from Niquette State Park.

Photo by Mike Yantachka

mercury and can create an immediate public health and environmental hazard when they accidentally break during installation, use, transportation, storage, recycling or disposal. Light-emitting diode (LED) replacements for fluorescent lamps do not contain any mercury.

Another bill, H.523, seeks to reduce hydrofluorocarbon emissions. Hydrofluorocarbons are potent greenhouse gases and enter the atmosphere as leakage from cooling systems. Products that contain hydrofluorocarbons for use in refrigeration systems and auto air conditioners are prohibited starting in 2024. Alternative refrigerant products are available.

Forests play an important role in Vermont’s working landscape and its tourist and recreation economy. Currently only actively managed forests are eligible for enrollment in the Use Value Appraisal (Current Use) program. Forests that exhibit old forest characteristics can provide unique contributions to biodiversity, contribute to the climate resilience and adaptive capacity of Vermont’s working landscape, and serve as ecological benchmarks against which to measure active management of Vermont’s forests. The House passed H.697, which creates a pilot program to extend eligibility for current use for forest parcels that are

left wild and meet certain criteria with the approval of the commissioner of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

This forest program will complement nicely another bill, H.606, the Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Act. Nature is facing a catastrophic loss of biodiversity, both globally and locally. In addition to its intrinsic value, biodiversity is essential to human survival. According to the United Nations, one million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction, and human activity has altered almost 75 percent of the Earth’s surface, squeezing wildlife and nature into ever-smaller natural areas of the planet.

The health of ecosystems on which humans and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever, affecting the very foundations of economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide. The causes of the drivers of changes in nature rank as: (1) changes in land and sea use, (2) direct exploitation of organisms, (3) climate change, (4) pollution, and (5) invasive species.

According to the Nature Conservancy, Vermont plays a key role in the conservation of biodiversity regionally. H.606 sets a goal of conserving 30 percent of Vermont’s total land area by 2030 and 50 percent by 2050, including state, federal, municipal and private land. It requires the Agency of Natural Resources to develop a plan by the end of 2023 with public input from all stakeholders.

These bills and many others now move to the Senate.

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).

Commentary

Vermont Senate Bill 219 on course to hand a weapon to the religious right

Rebecca Holcombe
FORMER VERMONT SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

Vermont has a proud history of providing high-quality, equitable public education for children in our communities. It’s why our equity gaps are narrower than in many states. It’s why many communities fight hard to keep their public schools.

Recently, conservative national litigation groups have targeted Vermont. One of these groups is the Alliance Defending Freedom, which the Southern Poverty Law Center describes as a hate group. The apparent goal is to redefine “religious freedom” as the right to use taxpayer-funded vouchers to promote religion, including in schools that won’t hire or serve LGBTQ individuals or otherwise discriminate.

So far, they’ve succeeded. And, these lawsuits underscore the extent to which Vermont is drifting away from our core values of democratic fairness and fiscal frugality.

Vermont’s constitution requires the state to maintain a “competent number of schools” in each town “unless the general assembly permits other provisions for the convenient instruction of youth.” This governmental obligation is “instituted for the common benefit” of citizens, not the particular advantage of a subset of that community.

For rural communities with populations too small for a robust public school, at least at the high school level, Vermont statute provided for payment of tuition for a public education replacement.

Vermont’s current voucher model was birthed in 1991. Before that, tuition students enrolled in public schools in neighboring districts or in “public schools without school boards,” as Vermont’s academies were described in statute. The state allowed funding of academies through tuitions, to advance the public purpose of education for the common benefit. Academies conformed to most standards and rules for public schools.

In 1991, this changed. The legislature revised statute to remove references to academies as public schools and allowed them to choose to become public schools (as Bellows Free Academy did); public school-approved “independent” schools (as Thetford Academy did); or private “independent” schools (as did the rest). Academies that became “independent” schools, although still dependent on tax dollars, were allowed to abandon a public mission and take taxpayer funds to a private mission—an astonishing potential transfer of public resources to private purposes.

Every time a public good is privatized, people lose democratic rights over that good. Forced payment of vouchers to religious schools brought that to a head, revealing how far vouchers moved us away from our core Vermont values.

As Justice Roberts wrote last year, “A state need not subsidize private education, but once a state decides to do so, it cannot disqualify some private schools solely because they are religious.”

report provided a grade on this proficiency: “Don’t be an a**hole.” Leadership at another school asserted the right to disenroll children with objectionable parents—in this case, anti-critical race theory, anti-mask parents.

Under newly proposed state board rules, private schools still can choose which students with disabilities they’ll enroll. That’s a bitter pill for children who aren’t allowed to follow friends to the school of their choice.

Vermont’s voucher system—like voucher systems in Florida and Indiana—is undemocratic.

What evidence we have suggests that when schools choose their students, “choice” becomes expensive sorting of kids, not better performance.

Even Milton Friedman, the granddaddy of vouchers, said, “In small communities and rural areas, the number of children may be too small to justify more than one school of reasonable size, so that competition cannot be relied on to protect the interests of parents and children.”

Legislation currently pending in the Vermont Senate doesn’t provide this protection and may make matters worse. By focusing on what private schools can’t do with tax dollars (teach religion), rather than what they must do (provide a high quality, equitable public education), the current bill risks handing the U.S. Supreme Court the case it needs to redefine “religious freedom” as the freedom to use tax dollars to discriminate. And anyway, protections don’t apply out of state.

Vermont legislators can fix this by going back to Vermont values of neighborly fairness and frugality. Treat public education and public education dollars as a common benefit, not a fight for private advantage. And, don’t use school budgets to create gated communities, including in out-of-state prep schools and private schools that close taxpayer-funded doors on our children.

Rebecca Holcombe is a former Vermont secretary of education and a resident of Norwich.

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Opinion - Where do we go from here?

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, hiking or walking in our neighborhoods. Vast open spaces, farmland, beautiful vistas and woodlands abound. 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 it?

Start to mosey 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 the Congress for 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 state and its towns and villages face regarding the lack of affordable housing. Their report is “Enabling Better Places: A Zoning Guide for Vermont Neighborhoods.”

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 the 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 struggling to survive on 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.”

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

“Vermont villages and towns 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 up 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 communities, perpetuate sprawling, 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 46 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 non-profit, that, as stated on their 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 deliberate and 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.

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Farming

Adam’s Berry Farm: Vermont farm life in the winter

Halle T. Segal

COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

With berry season around the corner, the work of Adam’s Berry Farm extends past the harvest season and through these winter months.

At Adam’s Berry Farm, the official harvest season for berries usually begins in June and runs through November, starting with June strawberries, and by late June, raspberries begin blooming. By the time the Vermont winter approaches, the farm focuses on other aspects of care.

“Really, the work is year-round,” said Adam Hausmann, the owner and manager of Adam’s Berry Farm, located on Bingham Brook Road in east Charlotte. “I always say that it’s kind of a myth that we only work from June to October because of the harvest season.”

Hausmann operates the farm with his wife, Jessica Hausmann, and 15 or so employees during the busy harvest season who help to maintain the farmland, run produce stands and support visitors who come to pick berries. Adam’s Berry Farm is one of the largest wholesale suppliers of organic produce to restaurants and markets in the Charlotte area, and the business continues to distribute their berries in the winter months.

“We freeze our produce quite a bit, so I’m still working on those sales throughout the year. The summers, because of the perishability of our crop, are much more fast-paced and manic, due to the nature of what

we grow. But we have year-round distribution of frozen berries to restaurants and local markets, and then different breweries around, as well,” Hausmann said.

In the winter, Adam’s Berry Farm also runs popsicle, sorbet, jam and strawberry-lemonade businesses. The colder months also offer a valuable time for pruning—removing overgrown or dead stems and branches.

“Pruning is the big thing,” Hausmann said, “where, especially being organic, it’s one of our major tools that we have to help combat disease cycles, break pests and promote airflow and penetration, and even just balance harvests. It really helps. There’s a lot of the work that you’re doing in the winters that shapes the upcoming season.”

Perennial plants such as berries are outside year-round, and are exposed to the various conditions of a changing environment. The Vermont winter months and accompanying snow levels offer a certain degree of insulation to the berries, acting as a protective layer to the soil to hold both heat and moisture into the root systems. This process is much different than that used by vegetable farmer, as vegetables are planted and maintained when it’s warm enough for them to be harvested.

Perennial farming, being more permanent and requiring a number of growth cycles before fruit is produced, requires farmers to constantly be looking forward as much as five years ahead. Maintaining the farm is a full-time job, even in the “off-season,” as Hausmann and his team are constantly doing research on new growing techniques

and methods to care for the land as efficiently and effectively as possible.

“The more the farm plans and works in the winter months, the better the harvest season is,” Hausmann said.

The fluctuation of temperatures impacts farms greatly, especially as the world continues to face the effects of climate change on our changing agriculture. As a grower, Hausmann is constantly trying to figure out how to inflate his business as best as possible and create stability within the unknown.

“Supporting local farms year-round is simply the big thing, and recognizing that it’s not just the growing season, it’s the growing months, which is a year-round thing for most farms. Incorporating that into people’s buying habits and consumption patterns—it’s great,” said Hausmann.

“There is no comparison to summer berries and local berries versus what you’re getting now. The fruit that you get now looks beautiful, but it’s been bred to be shipped all over the country. It doesn’t have any flavor. It’s definitely a berry, but it’s certainly



Photo by Halle T. Segal

Adam Husmann outside his Adam’s Berry Farm, one of the largest wholesale suppliers of organic produce to restaurants and markets in the Charlotte area.

not the same thing,” Hausmann said. “And being aware of these differences is what makes Vermont unique, really supporting your neighbor. We don’t look like ‘anywhere USA.’ We don’t have tons of big-box-chains all over—local businesses and farms still thrive here.”

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

Omnibus appropriations bill includes \$500,000 for Clemmons Family Farm

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 non-profit 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’ ideas like the farm to school program, to supporting our rural village and downtown spaces, and everything in between, this bill reflects Vermont priorities and ideas and values,” Leahy said.

The Clemmons Family Farm, Inc., a leading Black-led nonprofit organization in Vermont, will receive the funding as a historical preservation grant to improve arts and culture facilities on the farm, which is owned by 98-year-old Jackson and Lydia Clemmons. The farm and three of its historic buildings are under the stewardship of the nonprofit through a 20-year renewable lease, according to a press release.

Leahy worked to restore the practice of Congressionally Directed Spending, after

“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

more than a decade, allowing members of Congress, and not just unelected federal agency officials, to have a direct say in how taxpayer dollars are spent in their communities.

At the Clemmons Family Farm, the Congressionally Directed Spending funds will support major work on the late 1700s Big Barn (a late 1700s dairy and hay barn) and some renovations to its Authentica Art Gallery building.

The two historic buildings will be dedicated to artist studios, art galleries and exhibits, artist residencies, visual and performing arts, humanities, 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 Vermont’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 250 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.

Town

Foreign strife has raised fuel costs, cutting into food budgets

Maj Eisinger
CHARLOTTE FOOD SHELF

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 Purdum 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.

Hi Neighbor!

Gregory Smith: Spreading the pleasures of pickleball



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

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 them to focus on the ball and the motion of their swing and to develop a backhand. He has had children as young as 11 in his pickleball group.

Smith is hoping to recruit even more

pickleballers with 10 a.m. classes for beginners on Saturdays starting in April.

“We’re cultivating a whole new crop of players,” he said. “If people have already played tennis, badminton or ping pong they can pick it up pretty quickly.”

Smith’s group plays Monday and Thursday evenings at the Charlotte Central School with 12 to 14 regulars. The numbers increase to over 20 in the summer.

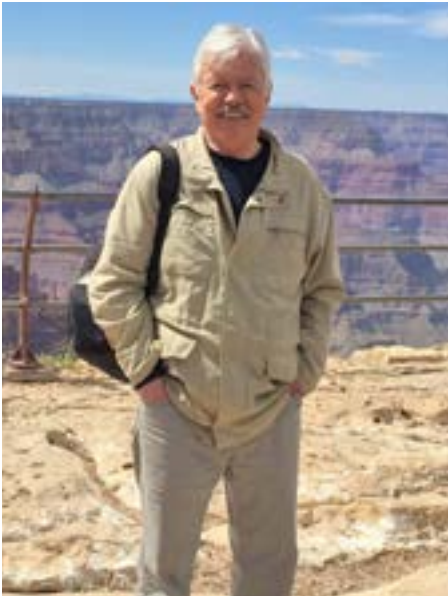
After he began organizing pickleball games, Smith joined the Charlotte Recreation Commission.

“I was interested in all the things going on at the beach,” he said, “and I wanted to see additional sports developed. The work is community building and that is central to my purpose.”

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



Photos contributed

Left: Gregory Smith at the Grand Canyon. Right: Gregory Smith playing indoor pickleball at Charlotte Central School.

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 into 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.

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Photo by Alexandra Z. Lazar
The first crocus of spring is always such a welcome and hopeful sign. According to Greek legend, a youth who died because of his intense and unrequited love for a shepherdess was turned into the flower by the gods. Please don't let this newspaper's love for your submitted photos, hopeful or otherwise, go unrequited. You can send them to news@thecharlottenews.org.

Fundraiser encourages celebrating Charlotte by supporting the Grange

Mike Walker
CHARLOTTE GRANGE

The Grange's Celebrating Charlotte auction will be live and open to the community April 2-10 with the opportunity to bid on more than 125 products, services and experiences donated by more than 90 Charlotte residents and business owners. There's something for everyone. There are gift certificates for everything under the sun, including: tool sharpening, property maintenance, riding lessons, dog training, computer problem-solving. Yearning for a new experience? There's tennis, singing lessons, massage, homeopathy, acupuncture, yoga, sailing and more. Hungry? The auction has donations from more than two dozen Charlotte farmers and restaurants, offering everything from pizza to shrimp bisque, honey and maple syrup to CSA shares. To participate, go to the Charlotte Grange's website on April 2 to view the auction and bid at charlottegrangevt.wixsite.com/website. Once on the secure auction website



Charlotte News file photo
The Charlotte Grange.

it's easy to bid on items or "buy it now." To make life even simpler, the Grange is offering delivery for many of the items, too. So, remember to Celebrate Charlotte and support the Grange the first week of April.

Rotary sponsoring leadership academy for sophomores

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 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 susang821@gmail.com.

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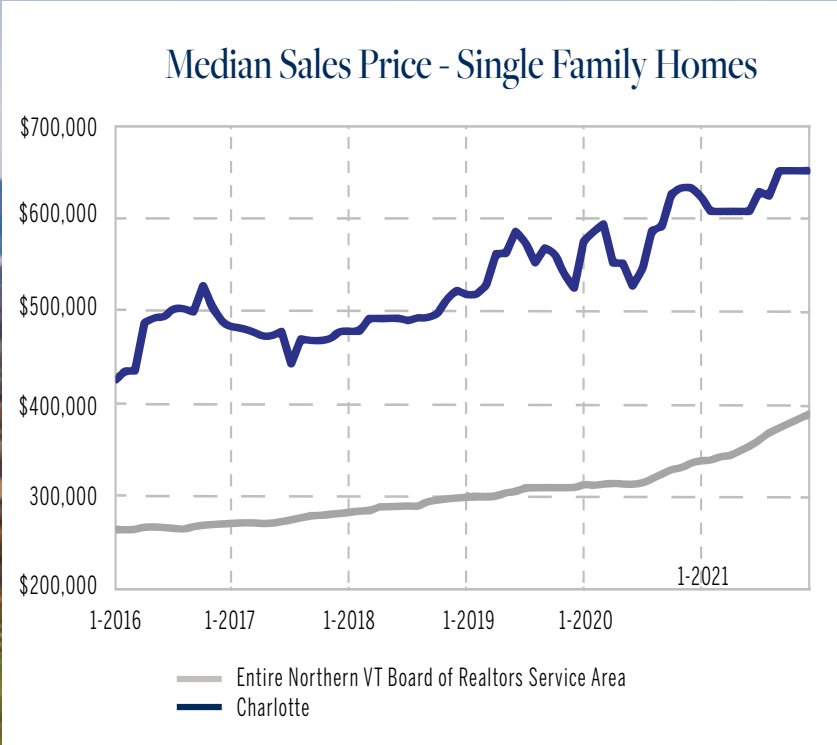
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Charlotte Real Estate Update

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1-2016	\$430,000	\$260,000
1-2017	\$480,000	\$265,000
1-2018	\$470,000	\$280,000
1-2019	\$520,000	\$300,000
1-2020	\$580,000	\$310,000
1-2021	\$650,000	\$390,000



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Education

The college essay can tip the balance in admissions process



Margo Bartsch
CONTRIBUTOR

“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 admission’s review process that usually has teams of readers, independent evaluators and committee reviews. 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 build its community overlaps with predicting the student’s contribution to campus. Selingo details three trends that colleges are using to determine fit: the college’s agenda, the holistic application review process and the student’s essays.

First, the review process begins with a focus on satisfying the college’s agenda, specific to each college’s goals in shaping

their campus community. “Every college has different needs that change over time, sometimes even from year to year. Goals for the admitted class are set by university leaders and then left to the admissions staff to carry out,” Selingo said.

Some priorities could be outside of a student’s control, such as where they are from. For example, with the freshman college class of 2024, fewer international students were able to enroll because of pandemic limitations to study abroad. Thus, geography could influence upcoming needs to admit more international students.

Second, the “holistic” review process is the buzz phrase that includes how a college awards points to various elements of the student’s application. Selingo details the Emory rating scale in four areas: strength of the high school curriculum, extracurricular activities, recommendations and intellectual curiosity (demonstrated by their leadership and essays). These set categories allow for multiple readers to apply consistent scoring parameters when evaluating applications.

For example, the author dives deep into explaining how the high school’s curriculum component reflects academic rigor. Emory evaluates each high school’s academic options, such as the number of advance placement courses, dual-enrollment college classes, grade point average and test scores. The admissions committee looks for consistent performance across various elements to assess the student being prepared for college coursework.

Colleges also trace a student’s academic performance over time with grade improvements, challenging classes and involved leadership. Selingo discusses an



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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 how 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.

Charlotte Central School newsletter

With the arrival of spring comes conference time for school families

Naomi Strada

(Condensed by Tom Scatchard, Contributor)

It may be hard to believe, but the school year has reached a midpoint of sorts in the latter half of the school year. For middle school students, it is the closing of their second trimester, and for all families it is Spring Conference time.

The staff was treated to a luncheon organized by the PTO. This tradition had sadly been on hold for the last two years. Seeing caregivers, volunteers and staff together again, was heartwarming.

Upcoming events

Speaking of traditions, several exciting events are being planned for the coming months:

- “High School Musical” performed by 7th and 8th graders. Everyone is invited March 31–April 2.
- An upcoming music concert in early April for 5th and 6th graders
- Student Council is organizing a few dances scheduled for 7th and 8th graders and is hoping to invite in the 6th grade

for one.

- Omega students will begin to plan their 8th grade for Thursday, June 9.
- Spring sports begin Monday, April 4. The Charlotte Central School’s website has details under the dropdown menu for “families,” click “athletics/sports.”


Families should send students to school with an inside pair of shoes and an outside pair of boots.

The school’s playground and fields are for kids. Dogs should not be allowed to run free leaving behind stinky messes.

Resources for world events

Here is an article Charlotte Central School educators recommend for tips about how to talk to older kids and help them process what is happening in Ukraine: tinyurl.com/ka6abk6p.

This resource from PBS may be more appropriate and helpful for younger kids (pre-K to elementary): pbssoical.org/education/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-the-ukraine-invasion.



**The Town of Charlotte
TOWN MEETINGS
AND AGENDAS**
Visit charlottetv.org
for more information

Selectboard
Monday, March 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Charlotte Park & Wildlife
Tuesday, April 5 at 6:00 p.m.

**Charlotte Energy Committee
Monthly Meeting**
Wednesday, April 6 at 7:00 p.m.

**Monthly Meeting of the Trails
Committee**
Tuesday, April 5 at 6:30 p.m.
to 8:00 p.m.

**Planning Commission
Regular Meeting**
Thursday, April 7 at 7:00 p.m.
to 8:30 p.m.

Numbing fundraising



Courtesy photo

Once again Champlain Valley Union High School made a big splash at the 27th Penguin Plunge on Saturday, March 12, collecting \$48,000 of the \$110,000 total raised for Special Olympics by area schools. The frigid fundraisers more than earned their donations, keeping their pledge commitments in a driving snowstorm.

Charlotte History.....

Dan Cole
CHARLOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

List of Scholars as returned by the District Clerks in the month of March 1814

District No. 1	number of Scholars	62
2		59
3		54
4		112
5		40
6	Revd. April 4 th	82
7		105
9		92
10		115
11		32
	Total	762

*Recorded from the originals
Attest Gadock Wheeler Town Clerk*

Charlotte’s 1814 list of school districts and number of scholars.



District #4 from the 1869 Beers Atlas of Chittenden County.

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).



School #4 from the Charlotte Historical Society collection.



Photo by Dan Cole

The current house where School #4 was located.

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



Elizabeth Bassett
CONTRIBUTOR

Stop doom scrolling, please, long enough to digest some slivers of good news. Open your eyes. A tsunami of courtship and mating is underway: bees are probing crocuses and snowdrops, birdsong pierces the early hours, honking geese rustle 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. Competition is fierce as males outnumber 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 Ecotudies, 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 ducks, fish, birds, insects, mammals; entire ecosystems develop. Water seeps into the ground, recharging aquifers, which in Charlotte means water for our wells. Silt and pollutants settle instead of rushing into the lake. Win, win, right?

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

“We are fortunate that Junior Lewis, our road commissioner, is open to working with us,” said Julian Kulski, a volunteer at Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge. “We have installed beaver deceivers 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 Surprising, 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 pioneer 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 material annually. These huge nests are generally 5 to 30 feet below the top of a living tree, helping to shield the young from airborne predators.

Bald eagles in our region lay eggs, usually one to three, from early March through early May, with 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.



Photo by Cathy Hunter

Another sign of spring — this adult eastern newt entering a vernal pool at the Raven Ridge Natural Area. This newt is presumably going to breed and lay its eggs on stems and leaves of water plants which will hatch into larvae. Newts spend three-four months in the larvae stage before they emerge as red eft. The efts spend several years on land before returning to the water to breed.

Hike, paddle or pedal with Green Mountain Club

Green Mountain Club, Vermont’s preeminent non-profit dedicated to the Long Trail and other hiking venues, is branching out in its spring offerings. The schedule for April through June includes not only hikes and work parties but bike rides and paddles. Check out the offerings at greenmountainclub.org.

Savor our spring.

Into the Woods

Saving the butternut — important part of saving forests

Ethan Tapper
CHITTENDEN COUNTY FORESTER

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*) is an enigmatic tree. Also called white walnut, butternut is the hardiest member of the walnut genus, with a range stretching north into southern Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, as far west as Minnesota, Iowa and Missouri, and south to Tennessee.

In Vermont, butternut trees are usually found on rich, moist soils, growing alongside sugar maple, basswood, white ash and plants like maidenhair fern and blue cohosh. It is shade-intolerant, needing lots of sunlight to thrive. While butternut was likely never a common or long-lived tree in Vermont’s forests, it is becoming increasingly uncommon and shorter-lived due to the prevalence of a non-native pathogen called butternut canker.

Butternut trees produce butternuts: a hard-shelled, fatty nut — much like a walnut — encased in a fleshy, green, football-shaped husk. Butternut has a compound leaf of 7 to 17 pointed leaflets, unfurling

from brown twigs with distinctive large, light-brown terminal buds and leaf-scars that look like little “monkey-faces” with yellow “unibrows.” Their bark is patterned with narrow, interlacing ridges, similar to that of ash trees but darker in color. When stressed or afflicted with butternut canker (as they usually are), butternut bark is black and ashy-gray and its ridges look “sanded-off.”

Butternut is culturally important to the Abenaki, who call butternut bagon. Abenaki and other indigenous peoples eat butternuts and use their fleshy husks and the tree’s bark as a dye; the abundance of butternuts at archaeological sites suggests that indigenous peoples may have planted and dispersed the species for millennia. After European colonization, butternut trees were widely planted by colonists and butternuts became an ingredient in traditional New England cuisine.

While butternut trees were historically prized for their nuts (rather than their wood), today butternut lumber is used for a variety of purposes — most of them ornamental. Butternut wood is soft, light and pretty,

an excellent carving wood. Butternut logs can be sold living or dead, and butternut lumber is often full of character, including the wormholes prominent in dead trees. Butternut is an awful firewood — as an old-timer once told me: “It burns as well as a snowball and produces half the heat.”

In today’s forests, healthy butternut trees are extremely rare due to a fungus called butternut canker (*Sirococcus clavigignenti-juglandacearum*). Butternut canker was first discovered in Wisconsin in 1967, perhaps introduced on Asian walnut trees. Dispersed by wind, rain and insects, this pathogen creates black cankers on butternut’s bark which proliferate until they girdle and kill the tree. According to the US Forest Service, close to 100 percent of butternuts in its native range are infected, with mortality rates exceeding 90 percent.

Efforts have been made to study and promote resistance to butternut canker using a variety of methods, including crossing butternuts with 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 heartnut, have been planted in North America since the 1800s. This species naturally hybridizes with butternut, creating a tree called “buartnut,” which was noted in the United States by the early 1900s. While buartnuts 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’s 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 stopping deforestation and forest fragmentation, controlling non-native invasive plants and addressing the many other threats to forest health and to 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.

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Health Matters

Later in life is not too late to begin regular exercise

Laurel Lakey
DEE PT

Staying active benefits our health in more ways than one, but why does it continue to be an important lifestyle choice as we get older? How do we stay active if we are concerned about falling, our joints hurt and activities we once enjoyed no longer feel doable? Keeping a regular exercise routine can pose some new challenges in the later years of life, but with thoughtful selection and a willingness to adapt it can still be achievable, enjoyable and beneficial for your health.

How does exercise benefit seniors?

Regular exercise helps maintain healthy muscle mass and bone density which are critical in preventing falls and bone fractures, a very real concern among older adults. Research has also demonstrated that exercise can reduce arthritic 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. Research has also indicated that routine exercise can slow or prevent cognitive decline, lowering the risk of dementia. And a regular exercise program has been shown to help mentally by lowering anxiety and improving sleep.

Staying active safely as you grow older

There is not a one-size-fits-all exercise prescription for older adults. There are those who are able to climb tall peaks, run marathons and ski down steep slopes into their 70s and 80s. More commonly, however, this type of heavy impact activity usually becomes challenging for our joints to sustain as we grow older. It can be a frustrating experience to consider giving up an activity you love. While these feelings are very understandable and not to be dismissed, there are several alternative 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. 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 research has shown to be particularly beneficial for older adults include tai chi, aquatic exercises or swimming, 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 harder than you would at rest but still being able to talk. 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 in the colder months especially challenging for older adults. If you are concerned about falling outdoors, there are several ice cleat products available 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 that offers a variety of exercise classes which can provide you a well- balanced exercise diet no matter what the weather is 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



Photo by Anna Shvets from Pexels

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. Laurel Lakey is a physical therapist assistant with her bachelor's in dance and is a certified yoga teacher. She lives in Charlotte with her husband, toddler daughter, dog and farm family of sheep and chickens. You can reach her by emailing laurellakey@deept.com.

Area Calendar Events

Calendar compiled by Mary Landon.

Please send event listings to
calendar@thecharlottenews.org.

Weather cancellations and COVID guidelines
are available on individual websites.

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 ways hunting can be enjoyed and accessed by individuals in the community. To pre-register, see nature.org.

Traditional music and dance
Friday, March 25, 7 p.m.

Timeless melodies are interwoven with lyrical and deft traditional Irish dance at a concert at the Richmond Free Library with Allison de Groot, Nic Gareiss and Winslow Solomon. Presented by Young Tradition Vermont and the Garrett School of Irish Dance, the performance features old- time banjo and fiddle for foot-stomping entertainment. To buy tickets or for more info see youngtraditionvermont.org.

The Seeds of Vandana Shiva
Friday, March 25-30

Rural Vermont offers a free screening of this new award-winning documentary. The movie looks at the remarkable life of Gandhian eco-activist Vandana Shiva and her fight against corporate industrial agriculture. The film screens between March 25-30. The movie is followed by a free online panel discussion on Wednesday, March 30, 7-8:30 p.m., with board members and staff of Rural Vermont. For the movie link or panel registration see ruralvermont.org. For more info call 802-223-7222.

Audubon Society Lakewatch
Saturday, March 26, 8-11 a.m.

Now is a great time for local birding, watching for species that are returning after their migration north. Join the Green Mountain Audubon Society for Lakewatch. Observe birds, starting at Shelburne Bay fishing access and driving (or carpooling) south to several stops, ending around Fort Cassin Point. Bring scopes or binoculars and dress to be outside. For more info or to register see greenmountainaudubon.org.

All about crabapples
Saturday, March 26, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

Learn the best pruning techniques and test



Vermont Maple Open House

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

This weekend is the second chance to celebrate all things maple. Numerous local producers of maple products will be participating, including Pat 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.

your skills in the crabapple collection at the University of Vermont Horticulture Farm. Bring loppers and pruners. Dress for an outside workshop. Pre-register at fhfv.org

Family Art Saturday
Saturday, March 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Families are invited to drop in at Burlington City Arts on Church Street to create art inspired by current exhibitor Eric Aho's grand paintings of the natural world. Aho's current exhibition, Headwater, features big-as-life semi-abstract works. Free program for ages 3 and older. For more info call 802-865-7166.

Unpacked: Refugee Baggage
Saturday, March 26, 12:30-2 p.m.
Take an in-depth tour of this multi-media art installation at the University of Vermont's Fleming Museum. The thought-provoking work, a collaboration between Mohamed Hafez and Ahmed Badr, looks to humanize what it means to be a refugee. Their pieces are stories of real people, violence and war, triumph and resilience. The tour with Alice Boone requires pre-registration at uvm.edu. For more info call 802-656-5817.

Pruner's workshop
Saturday, March 26, 2-4 p.m.
Practice while you learn from Tom Shea during a workshop at the University of Vermont Horticulture Research Center, also known as the Hort Farm, in S. Burlington. Shea and participants use the Hort Farm collections for shrub and tree pruning instruction. This free event, sponsored by the Friends of the Hort Farm, requires pre-registration at fhfv.org.

Pruning 101
Tuesday, March 29, 6-7:30 p.m.
Local garden expert Charlie Nardozi leads a webinar to help homeowners tackle their own pruning jobs. Nardozi discusses tools, timing, and proper techniques for caring for shrubs and trees, whether young or overgrown. For more info or to register see gardeners.com.

Climate Change: Global Issues, Community Response
Wednesday, March 30, 6 p.m.
As part of its Winter Wednesdays Speaker Series, the South Hero Land Trust presents a free educational webinar. Three climate change professionals present different perspectives on this far-reaching issue in a panel discussion. To register see shlt.org.

Lucioni: Modern Light
Wednesday, March 30, 6 p.m.
This webinar, with Shelburne Museum curator Katie Wood Kirchhoff, coincides with the launch of an online exhibition of works by Lucioni. Kirchhoff talks about his life, his local connections, and his realistic scenes, many of which were painted in Vermont. A museum exhibition will open to visitors in June. To register or for more info see shelburnemuseum.org.

Media Literacy Take 2
Wednesday, March 30, 7-8 p.m.
Join the conversation with Adam Davidson, Chea Waters-Evans, and Jesse Wegman about media literacy: misinformation, conspiracy theorists, and declining trust in news sources. Pre- register at

charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Old forests in plain sight
Wednesday, March 30, 7-8 p.m.
The Vermont Land Trust presents a free webinar which gives participants a virtual tour of unusual examples of old forests in Vermont. To register or for more info see vlt.org.

Five women Olympians
Thursday, March 31, 7 p.m.
The Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum in Stowe hosts a panel discussion with five women Olympians, many of them Vermonters. They helped pave the way for today's medal-winning women Nordic Olympians. The five speakers are featured in the book Trail to Gold: The Journey of 53 Women Skiers, a volume of bios and stories of their journeys as female athletes. A donation is suggested for this Zoom event. To reserve a ticket see vtssm.org.

An evening With Paul Asbell
Thursday, March 31, 7-8:30 p.m.
Musician Paul Asbell has been on the Vermont music scene since the 1970s, writing and playing a mix of blues/folk/jazz. An internationally recognized finger-style guitarist, Asbell's free performance will highlight the history and evolution of the American guitar. He'll perform at the Mahaney Arts Center at Middlebury College to a vaccinated, boosted and masked audience. For more info see middlebury.edu.

Me and My Guy dance
Friday, April 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
This dance at the Shelburne Town Gym has evolved into a dance for all children (grades kindergarten through fifth grade) with their special person (Mom, Dad, Grandma, Grandpa, etc.). For tickets or more info see shelburnevt.org or call 802-985-9551.

Metalwerx
Friday, April 1, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
Metalwerx will present a recital of the University of Vermont. The tuba/euphonium quartet features students and faculty in a free performance that "showcases the awesomeness of the tuba family." The recital hall is off North Prospect Street in Burlington. For more info call 802-656-3040.

Town

Coding, seeds, books and more at the library



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

Book 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/3H0X4wr.

Seed library presentation
Wednesday, April 6, 1 p.m.

Coordinators Linda Hamilton and Karen Tuininga explain how the library’s Seed Library program works and how to join. Get access to not only small quantities of heirloom vegetable, herb and edible flower seeds, but also educational and technical support for growing at least some of your own food in environmentally friendly ways that promote healthy soil and support biological diversity. Learn how to save seeds. Call 802-425-6345 to register for this program.



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
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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:

INFO: Click <https://bit.ly/COVIDhelp05445> for information sheet with general information and links to more detailed and reliable masking/testing/vaxxing information.

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.

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Town

Senior center buzzing with in-person participation



Lori York
DIRECTOR

If you’ve driven by the Charlotte Senior Center recently, you may have noticed the parking lot was full—or even overflowing.

There’s lots of excitement about the return of in-person participation for most programs. The senior center feels alive with lots of conversation, laughter, many new faces and returning friends.

To learn more about all that’s happening, take a moment to look through the April newsletter insert. Follow the senior center at “Charlotte Senior Center VT” on Facebook and Instagram or check out their website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

But the best way to learn more is to stop by and spend some time at the center.

Volunteers needed

The senior center needs your help. Do you have a couple of hours weekly or monthly to volunteer? Volunteering is a great way to be of service while making new friends and connections within the community. Adults of any age are welcome to volunteer.

Do you enjoy the center’s weekly Monday lunches? Or would you like to see the return of Wednesday meals?

Consider volunteering on the kitchen teams, and, as a perk, you will receive your lunch for free. To find out more, contact Susan: susanfosterhyde@gmail.com about the cooking teams.

Available to help with dishes? Contact Brian at brian@bock.com.

The senior center is also looking for reception desk hosts to welcome visitors and help answer questions. Interested? Stop by or call 802-425-6345.

April programs

New knitting drop-in
Wednesdays, 5-7 p.m., Charlotte Library
Fridays, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Senior Center

Do you enjoy knitting or crocheting? Bring a project that you are working on and spend your morning at the senior center or attend Knitting Night at the library.

Shape-note singing
Sunday, April 1, 1-3 p.m.

This traditional, a cappella, four-part harmony has been called “full-body, shout-it-out singing” and is also known as sacred harp (1750-1850). No performances or auditions; a “good voice” is not required.

Stop by to listen or sing with Mark Williams and leave whenever you wish. Free. For more info: Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com.

Watercolor and Spring Inspiration
Tuesdays, April 5, 12, 19 and 26, 9 a.m.-noon

Support one another’s creative efforts in exploring various techniques and subjects with Lynn Cummings in this fun and informative class. Some watercolor experience is helpful, but all levels are welcome. Cost: \$160. Registration required.

‘West Side Story’
Fridays, April 8 and 22, 1:30–3:30 p.m.

Sean Moran will host two screenings of “West Side Story,” the 2021 reimaged musical with Ansel Elgort and Rachel Zegler as the young lovers torn apart by a climate of intolerance and hate. Free but registration required because there’s limited seating.

Board and card games
Backgammon
Wednesdays, 2:30-4:30 p.m., and Sundays, 1-4 p.m.

Bridge
Mondays, 12:30-4 p.m.
Cribbage
Thursdays, April 7 and 21, 1 p.m.

Mahjong
Tuesdays, 12:45-3:45 p.m.

Scrabble
Tuesday, April 5, 1 p.m.

Texas hold ‘em
Starting in May.

Game afternoons
Fridays, noon–4 p.m., starting in May
Bring your friends and stop by the senior center on Friday afternoons for drop-in game afternoons. Dominoes, canasta, Texas hold ‘em, bridge, backgammon, cribbage, Scrabble ... the opportunities are endless.

Ongoing exercise and health classes
We offer daily exercise programs for a wide range of fitness and activity levels. Unlike health memberships, you only pay for



Photo by James Hyde.

April’s monthly men’s breakfast happens Thursday, April 14, 7-9 a.m. with guest speaker Andrea Rodgers, founding member and former CEO of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. See the information below on how to register.

the classes you attend.

Essentrics
Wednesdays, 8:30–9:30 a.m.
Fridays, 9:30–10:30 a.m.
\$8 a class.

Mindfulness meditation
Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30 p.m.
Via Zoom, Free.

Meditation
Fridays, 7:30–8:30 p.m.
\$10 a class.

Pilates fitness
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30–9:30 p.m.
\$8 a class.

Strength maintenance
Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-noon
Fridays, 11:30 a.m.-12:30p.m.
Free.

T’ai Chi Ch’uan for beginners
Thursdays, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
Via Zoom. \$8 a class.

T’ai Chi for practice
Thursdays, 11 a.m.–noon.
Free.

Chair yoga
Mondays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Wednesdays, 10-11 a.m.
Free. \$10 a class.

Gentle yoga
Mondays, 11 a.m.–noon.
\$10 a class.

Monthly men’s breakfast:
Thursday, April 14, 7–9 a.m.
The guest speaker: will be Andrea Rodgers, founding member and former CEO of the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. To register, email Tim McCullough at cubnut5@aol.com by Tuesday, April 12. Suggested breakfast donation of \$5.

Questions?
The Charlotte Senior Center is at 212 Ferry Road in Charlotte. Hours are Monday to Friday 9 a.m.–4 p.m. Call 802-425-6345 or email Lori York, senior center director, at lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Residents from other communities are always welcome. Our mission is to serve those over 50.

‘Come on-a’ senior center for tasty meals

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 Cartier’s third voyage in 1541.

Later, Thomas Jefferson documented as many as 32 varieties of cabbage in his garden, and he was known to give fine cabbages as gifts. The Charlotte Senior Center offers a delicious gift of cabbage coleslaw.

Monday Munch
Monday, March 28, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Shepherd’s pie, coleslaw and cake. Take-out available. A \$5 donation is appreciated.

Grab-and-Go
Thursday, March 31, Pick up 11 a.m.-noon
Turkey burger with vegetable gravy, mashed potatoes, Brussel sprouts, peach and raisin crisp.

Some say Britain possesses only three kinds of vegetables—and two of them are Brussels sprouts. When someone dislikes a food, the verbiage can be colorful. Here’s

Dave Barry on Brussels sprouts: “We kids feared many things in those days—werewolves, dentists, North Koreans, Sunday School—but they all paled in comparison with Brussels sprouts.”

Monday Munch
Monday, April 4, 11: 30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Carrot soup, green salad with deviled eggs, challah bread, chocolate mousse. The added attractions are edible table decorations for Easter and Passover.

The most ancient of foods, the carrot was popular with our most committed presidential gardener. Thomas Jefferson recorded the sowing of carrots 30 times, anticipating a 10-bushel harvest every year. He was on to a good thing, as are people who lunch at the Senior Center. Three-and-a-half ounces of cooked carrots contain a whopping 15,000 units of vitamin A.

Grab-and-Go
Thursday, April 7, Pick up 11 a.m.–noon
Sweet-n-sour pork with vegetable sauce, brown rice with lentils and vegetables, green beans, Congo bar.

There is no expectation of payment for these Grab-and-Go meals, but Age Well always appreciates donations.

Remember: For these Thursday meals you need to register by Monday: Call or e-mail: 802-425-6371; lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.



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.

In the spirit of enjoying good food with friends, listen to this Rosemary Clooney tune, written by Ross Bagdasarian and his cousin, Pulitzer author William Saroyan (youtube.com/watch?v=mriXncI96lw). Their name ending is a clue that they were Armenian and their song is based on an Armenian folk song, reflecting the custom of inviting people over to enjoy good food.

Listen and come on over to the senior center, where good food abounds — along with good conversation.

Classifieds

Reach your friends and neighbors for only \$12 per issue. (Payment must be sent before issue date.) Please limit your ad to 35 words or fewer and send it to The Charlotte News Classifieds, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte, VT 05445 or email ads@thecharlottenews.org.

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CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

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 100 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, 6-7:30 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/](http://charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events/)**

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