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The Charlotte News

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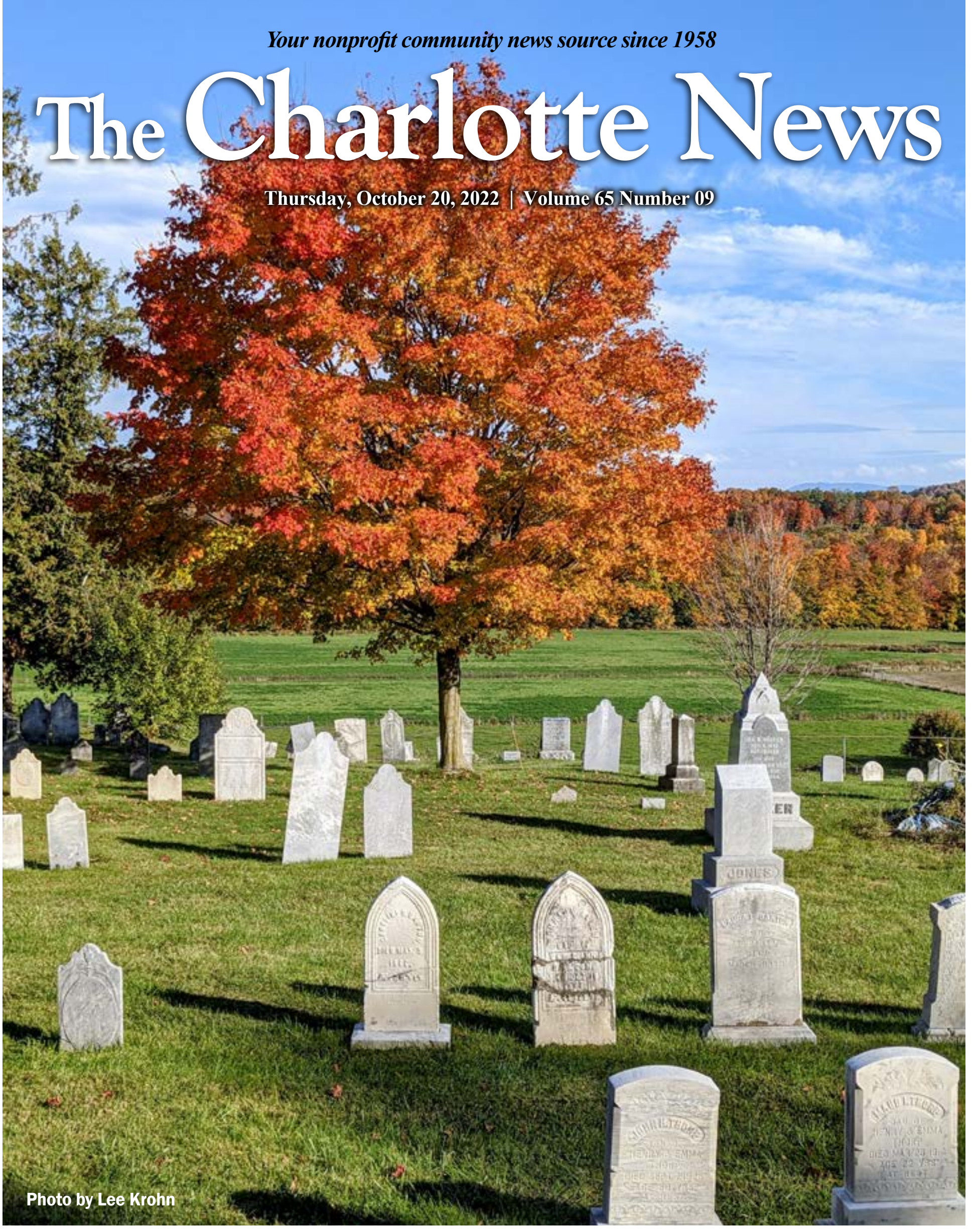


Photo by Lee Krohn

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October 20, 2022

Vol. 65, No.9



Photo by Luke Awtry Photography

Lowell Thompson will perform in the parking lot of the Old Brick Store.

Greenbush Road to be the Halloween treat place

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Greenbush Road has been a destination spot for trick-or-treating for some time, but this year the neighborhood is really bringing its ghosting-or-gifting game.

"This year, we're making it safer, better and more fun," said Greenbush Road resident Eli Lesser-Goldsmith, adding that safety is paramount.

After conversations with a number of people with long memories, it seems no one knows when Greenbush became the Halloween happening place in Charlotte. Many said it probably just happened organically.

As any kid knows, the best place for trick-or-treating is somewhere with houses close together. You want to get the most treats with the least trekking.

This is one holiday that is not well served by the land-use regulation of five acres for every house, and Greenbush was settled before that became a local building standard.

Besides denser, more treat-rich housing, this year the area will have the added attraction of live music. Lesser-Goldsmith has booked local music legend Lowell Thompson and his band, playing from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the parking lot of the Old Brick Store.

In years past, Greenbush Road has been "informally closed" from the Old Brick Store for a mile or so to the north with cars still being allowed through, but with the town constable Josh Flore and state police officers slowing vehicles down and stopping traffic at Ferry and Greenbush roads for trick-or-treaters to cross and hit the houses south of the intersection for candy canvassing.

This year Greenbush will be closed 4:30-8:30 p.m. Cars approaching from the north will be detoured to Lake Road, Lesser-Goldsmith said.

Housing density wasn't the No. 1 priority for Charlotte Selectboard member Matt Krasnow when he was in elementary school; it was the quality of the treats, so he often trick-or-treated elsewhere in town.

"My parents drove me to the houses on One Mile Road. Miss Titus from Titus Farm had the best popcorn caramel balls," Krasnow said.

Lots of people cited Ethel Atkins' fudge as one of the attractions of trick-or-treating on Greenbush Road. Atkins, who cooked in the lunchroom at Charlotte Central School for many years, lived just south of the Ferry and Greenbush intersection. The eyes of those who remembered her fudge rolled back in their heads and they began to salivate with Pavlovian fervor at the memory. After she died, for some years the Charlotte Senior



2021 Jack-o-lantern fest.

Center gave out fudge.

Historically, the fire and rescue station has been a happy Halloween hunting ground, and this year chief Justin Bliss said the station will be participating. They will be handing out candy — presumably not fireballs — at the station and helping to make sure the walk from the senior center and the town hall will be safe.

Lesser-Goldsmith is encouraging people to park in this vicinity and walk up to Greenbush where parking is severely limited. For those coming from the south headed north on Greenbush, there is parking at The Old Lantern.

Marilyn Richardson said, when she and her late husband, dentist Spin Richardson, bought their house on Greenbush in 1974 just north of the Old Brick Store, Halloween was already popular there. They knew they had to do something special. In line with her husband's profession, they gave out toothbrushes.

Every year, the popularity of the area for trick-or-treating grew. The first year they gave out about 80 toothbrushes. In 2015, her last year before she moved to Burlington, almost 300 kids got toothbrushes.

Lesser-Goldsmith said he expects at least 1,000 for this year's spooktacular festivities.

Richardson said one of the things she enjoyed through the years was the number of adults who were costumed. "As much fun as watching the kids, was watching the parents."

For at least a decade the town has paid for gas-powered lights at the intersection, but this year the event will have battery-powered lights that are quiet and sustainable.

The use of the parking lot at the Old Brick Store and electricity for the band is due to the generosity of store owners Whitney and Erich Finley, Lesser-Goldsmith said.

"If you're interested in volunteering the day of, sign up at signupgenius.com/go/10c054fafa2aa3fd0-halloween," he said. "If you would like to help pay for the traffic control and the band, we would love that, too: account.venmo.com/u/charlotte-halloween."

Currently, no business like water flow business

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Wicked.

It's a great word for the Halloween season. Wicked is also the word Steven Owen uses to describe how busy he, and others in the area who work to ensure people have water at their homes, have been.

As in the phrase: "We're all wicked busy."

Owen, owner of Fresh Water Haulers, does just what the name of his business suggests. And in the 19 years he's been taking his tanker trucks of water to fill people's wells or water tanks, this year has been his busiest.

He said this year has been 20-30 percent busier than last year.

Owen hears his friends in the related business of drilling water wells saying the



Image by Rudy and Peter Skitterians from Pixabay

same thing — business is too good because it's too dry.

SEE **WATER** PAGE 2

Town garage gets two bids, both way higher than expected

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

The Charlotte Selectboard got unpleasant surprises at its Oct. 10 meeting.

When the board opened the two bids that had been submitted for building a town garage, they found both were for almost \$800,000 more than town voters approved.

The board was also surprised that there were only two bids. Those two bids were from Naylor and Breen Builders of Brandon for \$3,795,222 and from Farrington Construction of Shelburne for \$3,796,754.

Board chair Jim Faulkner remarked on how unusually close the bids were. Just over \$1,500 separated Farrington's high bid from Naylor and Breen's bid.

The town had expected to have to spend \$3 million on building a garage on Route 7 just south of Ferry Road.

Even that figure was more than had initially been expected, but after some contention, voters approved the town taking out a bond or loan for \$1.5 million, using \$1 million from the town's American Rescue Plan Act (or ARPA) grant and using \$500,000 from the town's highway reserve and capital funds that road commissioner Junior Lewis saved from his budget.

From pre-bid meetings with contractors Faulkner said they had expected to have five or six bids. Not just two.

Both companies said they have ideas about reducing the cost, town administrator Dean Bloch said, "They'd be open to having a discussion about that, once we see which one perhaps, we're going with."

Faulkner said, "We'll put them on a spread sheet, check them out and see what the next step is."

Understanding proposed land-use regulation amendments: Part 2

Charlie Pughe
Planning Commission Chair

As a follow-up to the background article on the proposed amendments to the Charlotte Land Use Regulations in the Oct. 6 issue of The Charlotte News, here is some additional information for consideration as you decide how to vote.

Q: Why are these changes being proposed now?

A: The town plan and land-use regulations are living documents requiring regular review and updating to stay current with changes in state law and changes within our community. Changes in our community include some of the following examples: an aging population; evolving employment models; school enrollment; diversified housing options; a changing climate, etcetera. Without thoughtful periodic review, we risk the documents becoming outdated and no longer reflecting the values of our community.

Q: Do residents have a say in this process? Was the community involved in developing these proposed rules?

A: Absolutely. Residents have the ultimate say in approving these changes for the town. All of the changes proposed must

be approved by voters during the November election.

The planning commission, whose members all live in Charlotte and serve as volunteers, developed these proposals over the course of the last several months. Every work session was announced in advance with posted notices on the town website, Front Porch Forum and occasional articles in The Charlotte News. Every planning commission meeting is open to the public to attend in person or via Zoom. Additionally, the planning commission held two public hearings on these drafts in August. The selectboard held another set of hearings in September. The proposals were revised based upon resident feedback following these two sets of hearings.

Q: Why are the changes divided into separate articles for the November ballot?

A: There are changes to 19 sections of the land-use regulations, with some sections having multiple changes proposed in this round (exclusive of addressing the change to a design review board). The proposed changes are organized into six articles for the ballot to present them as coordinated

SEE **LAND USE** PAGE 3



Now playing

Photo by Sam Robinson

Sound effects artist Kohl Comtess watches actor David Rapp for a cue in the Valley Players' production of *The Great Gatsby: A Live Radio Play* in Waitsfield. This Friday-Sunday, Oct. 21-23 is the final weekend.



Mission Statement

The mission of The Charlotte News is:

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

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

Editorial independence

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

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WATER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I've never seen the brooks as dry as I've seen them this year. There are islands growing up in the middle of brooks where you've never seen them before," Owen said.

Driving along Route 100 between Waitsfield and Warren a couple of weeks ago, he said the Mad River looked so dry that he thought he might be able to walk across it in some places without getting his feet wet.

Owen said a lot of calls he's gotten in Charlotte this year have been from the Mt. Philo area. A couple of other places where he's been trucking lots of water include Lake Iroquois in Hinesburg and in Stowe.

Although there has been a good bit of rain recently, that doesn't necessarily mean the calls for water will stop. There's not a direct correlation between the water table and rainfall.

A hard rain with a lot of water often doesn't do much to replenish the aquifer because it may run off and into streams without soaking into the ground. The best rainfall to help bring the water table back up is a slow rain that has time to seep in, he said.

And Owen said, it is hard to know if the water table will be replenished during the winter. If there's a hard freeze, the rainfall won't be getting into water table in areas where it's low.

Christina Asquith and her family have lived in the Mt. Philo area for five years and didn't have their well go dry until this year. Over the last year, they've had to have their well filled about six times.

Here again, it is hard to conclusively say the Asquith water woes are due to drought. A neighbor built an accessory dwelling unit with a well which may have tapped into the same aquifer their well was drawing from.

It could be a coincidence or it could be a combination of another well and a drought,

but Asquith, who is on the development review board, would like the planning commission to consider the impact of accessory dwelling units on neighboring wells during its next stage of considering amendments to Charlotte's land-use regulations, which will be developed during the winter for voters to approve in Town Meeting Day voting in March.

Asquith said she wasn't sure how such an amendment might be crafted, but she would like to see the planning commission discuss it.

"People don't know how it feels until they turn that tap on and nothing comes out. It is a real heart-stopping moment," Asquith said.

"It's not a minor inconvenience," she continued, saying you can't give your kids a bath, the dishes and laundry pile up, and you can't even wash your hands.

"You just start to go a little crazy as a mom with three kids because everything gets backed up," Asquith said.

She worries because she suspects lots of people in Charlotte might not have the \$500 needed to pay for refilling their well or a tank.

Selectboard member Matt Krasnow said he hadn't heard from anyone besides Asquith who was having well issues this year, but he thinks it's a habitual Charlotte problem.

His family was on a well when he was growing up, and they periodically had to have water delivered until they put in a cistern. He feels that usually solves the problem because the well replenishes the cistern when people aren't using water, meaning there's water to use when there's high demand and low flow.

Krasnow said his sister who lives in the Mt. Philo area had water problems with a well that produces less than a gallon a minute, but after her family put in 1,000 gallons worth of storage tanks, they haven't had a problem.

One of the solutions Owen suggested people might try is hydrofracking, which involves injecting water into a drilled well at high pressure in hopes of widening fractures in the bedrock to increase water flow.

A lot of people have chosen hydrofracking and it has worked, but Krasnow thinks adding storage is usually an easier and cheaper solution. Although he has heard of wells out west going dry and staying dry, Krasnow said he hasn't ever heard of any wells going completely dry and not replenishing in Charlotte.

Kiesha Richardson with Vermont Well & Pump in Hinesburg said requests for hydrofracking have gone way up since the pandemic. She thinks a combination of people staying home more and lots of people moving into the area has increased the demand for water.

Hydrofracking is not a sure fix for the problem. She said, like other companies, Vermont Well & Pump looks at all sorts of data like the depth of the water table and the proximity and flow rate of other wells in the vicinity, but still it's a gamble. You don't know for sure until you try.

A drilled well is pulling water from a few hundred feet down, so it takes a while for surface water to get that far. Ground water tends to move about a foot a day — either horizontally or vertically, said Scott Stewart, a hydrogeologist with the Agency of Natural Resources' Department of Environmental Conservation.

"It takes days, months, years, hundreds of years for water to actually percolate into the bedrock in a lot of different areas," Stewart said. In most areas it can take several years to reverse the impact of low rainfall.

Rick Kiah, a hydrologic technician in the New England Water Science Center, said for several years the Connecticut River Valley has been trending much below normal water levels, but that's not necessarily a hydrologic drought.

There are three types of drought. A meteorologic drought is when rainfall is below normal for an extended time. When a meteorologic drought, or lack of precipitation, is severe enough it can become an agricultural drought, which is when the soil moisture drops alarmingly. When streamflow, surface water and groundwater are all reduced severely and long enough, then it is considered a hydrologic drought.

The USGS has test wells around the state where it monitors groundwater levels. The closest to this area is a test well in Milton that has been monitored since 1956. Although it wasn't a long enough period to be considered a drought, from December to February last winter, that well tested the lowest it has ever tested.

The Milton well recovered during the spring, but it is dropping again. However, Kiah was not willing to attribute the low test well flow to evidence of climate change.

"Our most severe drought was in the 60s. Basically, that whole decade was in low conditions," Kiah said. "Historically, things are cyclical."

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Letter to the Editor

Over 100 church members for Reproductive Liberty Amendment

To the Editor:

In early July 2022, more than 100 clergy and laypeople of the United Church of Christ in Vermont signed and publicly released a letter in response to the United States Supreme Court's decision in the Dobbs case which overturned Roe v. Wade. This letter included: "We believe that all people have a right to determine what one does with one's own body, recognizing the difficult and painful yet life-supporting and sustaining necessity in making the decision to have an abortion. This is a statement rooted in our Christian faith which opposes any policy,

precedent, statement or law that limits a human being's right to bodily autonomy determination, dignity and respect."

Within Christianity there is a diversity of understandings about what our faith requires of us. Moved by our faith as laity and clergy in the United Church of Christ we affirm God's gift of free will and proclaim our support for reproductive liberty. Not in spite of our Christian faith, but because of it, we encourage every Vermonter to vote in favor of Proposal 5/Article 22 "Reproductive Liberty Amendment" to the Vermont Constitution.

Sally Kerschner
Charlotte

LAND USE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

changes and allow each to be voted on separately.

Q: What are the core elements of an affirmative vote for each of the proposed articles?

A: Article 1 proposes several changes to the land-use regulations that would bring them into alignment with changes in state law enacted in recent years. Towns derive their authority from state law; Charlotte cannot enforce zoning rules which contradict state statute.

These amendments would align the town's role with state law in: permitting telecom facilities, permitting for renewable energy projects (such as solar panels) and removing non-compliant local restrictions on constructing multi-family housing and accessory dwellings.

Article 2 clarifies and coordinates language across several sections of the land-use regulations, providing better guidance for property owners and the development review board for what projects can and cannot be permitted. Among the proposed changes are technical updates and new (or revised) definitions to standards for projects that serve the public, consolidation of small lots, additions to buildings that are built partly within a required setback and adaptive re-use of historic structures.

Article 3 coordinates language that proposed accessory dwelling units in non-conforming structures have to follow the existing land-use regulations for approval. It also clarifies that temporary structures require a zoning permit.

Article 4 updates references in the land-use regulations to reflect the selectboard's December 2021 decision to consolidate the permitting responsibilities previously shared by the planning commission and zoning board of appeals into one entity, the development review board.

Article 5 proposes to increase the allowed size of accessory dwelling units from 1,000 square feet or 30 percent of the home's finished floor area, whichever is larger, to 1,500 square feet or 30 percent of the home's finished floor area, whichever is larger. Currently, only homes with a footprint larger than 3,333 square feet can take advantage of the 30 percent larger allowance. The proposed change would allow homes up to

5,000 square feet to all build the same size accessory dwelling unit.

Article 6 clarifies the intent of the land-use regulations requiring all lots meet the dimensional requirements of the land-use regulations or be developed as planned residential developments.

Q: Who would benefit from these changes?

A: For additional information regarding the purpose, rationale and effect of these proposed changes, please see the Users Guide posted to the land-use regulations Working Drafts web page on the town website at [Users_Guide_to_draft_LURs_amends_v4-DB\(1\).pdf](https://www.charlottevt.org/users_guide_to_draft_LURs_amends_v4-DB(1).pdf) ([charlottevt.org](https://www.charlottevt.org)).

Taken as a whole, the proposed changes would:

- Strengthen the land-use regulations by bringing them in closer alignment with state law, which reduces legal exposure of the town to successful appeals of granted permits based on a claim our bylaws don't line up with state law.
- Clarify for residents, planning and zoning staff and the development review board how to interpret and apply key standards for permitting.
- Bring the land-use regulations into alignment with current permitting roles in Charlotte (via the development review board).
- Provide property owners with houses smaller than 5,000 square feet the opportunity to build a larger accessory dwelling unit on their property.
- Clarify that proposed subdivisions of properties not meeting the dimensional standards of the land-use regulations are required to file for subdivisions as planned residential developments.

Q: Where can I learn more? What key documents to review before voting?

A: The following page on the town website hosts all the key documents about the six proposed articles: [bit.ly/PC_draft_2022_LURs_amendments](https://www.charlottevt.org/bit.ly/PC_draft_2022_LURs_amendments).

The planning commission hopes that residents will take the time to understand these proposed changes before they cast their votes. To obtain a hard copy of materials posted to the town website, or if you have other questions not addressed here, contact Larry Lewack, town planner at 802-425-3533 ext. 206 or via email at townplanner@townofcharlotte.com.

Campaigning on the town green



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

From left, Democratic candidates Charity Clark for state attorney general and Sarah Copeland Hanzis for secretary of state visited Charlotte for a meet and greet on the town green on Tuesday. It was a beautiful day with the town dressed in its fall finery, and the candidates seemed impressed with Charlotte and pleased with the around 15 supporters who showed up for the opportunity. And they both pronounced Charlotte correctly.

NOTICE OF VACANCIES ON TOWN BOARDS AND OF TOWN OFFICIAL POSITIONS October 12, 2022

The following boards and positions currently have unfilled seats:

- Recreation Commission (1 seat; term ending April 30, 2025)
- Conservation Commission (1 seat; term ending April 30, 2024)
- Clean Water Advisory Committee of Chittenden Regional Planning Commission (1 seat; term ending June 30, 2023)
- Chittenden Solid Waste District, Alternate Representative (1 seat; term ending on May 31, 2024)

If you have interest in serving the Town by participating in any of these capacities please send a short statement explaining your interest and any relevant background information to Dean Bloch, Town Administrator at dean@townofcharlotte.com. If you have questions, please e-mail or call 425-3071 ext. 5, or stop by Town Hall.

Community Roundup

Rokeby Museum receives grant from the Trout Lily Foundation

Rokeby Museum has received a three-year \$75,000 grant from the Trout Lily Foundation to support organizational work at the institution.

Beginning this year, the grant will be paid in \$25,000 yearly installments and is intended to target the museum's capacity-building and sustainability, including staff support, the preservation of the site, conservation/preservation and storage of the museum collections, and updates to the museum's exhibitions.

The funding will support ongoing and expanded staff work, including much-needed updates to the site's interpretive signage and storage updates for the museum's collection of Robinson family artifacts.

"With this work we will be able to enhance the visitor experience to Rokeby by sharing more information on the nationally significant Robinson family," said Lindsay Varner, Rokeby Museum director.

For more information on Rokeby Museum visit rokeby.org.

Hannaford donates \$100,000 to Age Well meal delivery program

Hannaford Supermarkets and the Hannaford Charitable Foundation today announced a \$100,000 donation to Age Well in support of its healthy meal delivery program, which prioritizes wholesome, fresh and nutritious foods as part of a comprehensive health care plan for older adults with chronic health conditions.

The donation is one component of a more than \$1.5 million commitment from Hannaford to support healthy meal programs in New England and New York through its new Eat Well, Be Well — A

Path to Better Health initiative. The program highlights the importance of nutritious food in achieving long-term wellness for food insecure individuals with a history of chronic illness.

"At Hannaford, we have long believed that wholesome, fresh food is a critical ingredient to ensuring the vitality of our communities," said Hannaford Charitable Foundation Board chair Peter Forester.

The \$100,000 donation to Age Well will support the introduction of a new component to the non-profit organization's Meals on Wheels program, which delivers nutritious and balanced prepared meals to homebound older adults throughout Vermont.

In addition to their meal, program participants will now receive a snack as part of their daily delivery. The participants are broken into two sectors: the first group receives a nutritious snack tailored to their health conditions; and a second group which receives a different snack. Individuals will be monitored for results over the course of a one-year period to assess the impact of the nutritious snack on their overall health and wellness. All participants also take part in monthly meetings with a registered dietitian to help navigate best strategies to support the management of their chronic health condition.

Vermont 4-H seeks new members and volunteers

If you think that 4-H is just an agricultural program, think again.

Although that is partly true, according to Sarah Kleinman, University of Vermont Extension 4-H state program director, 4-H provides much more for youths, ages 5-18.

"The Vermont 4-H program offers all kinds of opportunities for young people

to explore a passion, try something new and connect with their peers in a fun, supportive environment," Kleinman said. "They can learn about coding and robotics, health and fitness, photography and the arts, among many other projects."

Agriculture continues to be an important part of 4-H with many club members enrolled in dairy, horse, working steer, poultry, sheep and beef projects.

"With its emphasis on learning by doing through club work, community service and local, county and state activities, 4-H also builds strong leadership, civic engagement and life skills. 4-H helps young people find their spark and opens the door to a pipeline that can lead to education and career," Kleinman said.

In the next few months, many 4-H clubs will enroll new members as they gear up for the upcoming project year. Adult volunteers also are needed to support 4-H programming and events as well as organize and lead new clubs.

Older 4-H'ers also may volunteer to assist with events or be a teen leader in their club. And they may participate in teen leadership programs such as Teens Reaching Youth, a teen-led environmental education program, or the just-launched UVM 4-H Health HEROES (Health Education Resources for Outreach, Engagement and Service) program as a teen health and wellness ambassador.

Vermont 4-H also offers after-school programs and activities such as the Natural Resources Management Academy, teen science cafés and the Youth Environmental Summit, which engage non-4-H members. The latter is a full-day program designed to help middle and high school students find their voice and take action on environmental issues.

To learn more about joining a 4-H club or becoming an adult 4-H volunteer,

contact Kleinman at 802-651-8343, ext. 521, or sarah.kleinman@uvm.edu.

More giving out non-candy Halloween treats this year

Halloween is fast approaching, and this year more trick-or-treaters are looking for inclusive treats than ever before. Recent studies found that one in 13 children suffer from a serious allergy, making Halloween more of a trick than a treat for some.

MedStar Health conducted a survey of adults taking part in Halloween festivities to better understand plans for the spooky holiday this year. Here's an overview of the results:

- 45 percent of households will be giving out non-candy treats this year.
- Handing out non-candy treats (such as small toys or stickers) can help avoid food allergies, intolerances or other medical conditions.
- A majority of respondents plan on giving non-candy treats to better include children with diabetes or other medical conditions.
- A majority of parents (nearly 75 percent) limit candy consumption on Halloween.
- By limiting candy consumption, parents can help their kids avoid the dreaded sugar crash, along with health hazards such as stomach aches, vomiting and diarrhea.
- Only 14 percent of adults know the meaning behind "teal" pumpkins.
- Putting a teal pumpkin on your doorstep means you have non-food or allergy-safe treats available, promoting inclusion for trick-or-treaters with food allergies or other sensitivities.

Prizes for Vermont prose and poetry announced

Kristin Carlson
Green Mountain Power

Two Vermont writers can win \$1,250 in the Vermont Writers' Prize for Prose or Poetry and be published in Vermont Magazine.

Entries are being accepted through Jan. 1, 2023. There will be a prize for prose and one for poetry.

The prize celebrates writing about all things Vermont and is a collaboration between Green Mountain Power and Vermont Magazine. The prize was established in 1989 to honor Vermont historian Ralph Nading Hill Jr., who also served on Green Mountain Power's board of directors.

"The idea is to give writers a way to flex their creativity in showcasing what Vermont means to them through the written word, whether they pen a poem or craft a short story or essay," said Kristin Carlson, a prize judge. "The Vermont experience can mean so many different things, and it is inspiring to see what writers share through their work."

Works must be previously unpublished, and writers cannot be previous winners. Works of prose must be less than 1,500 words and poems must be less than 40 lines. You can be an amateur or professional writer and students are



encouraged to enter.

Prize details and how to enter are at vermontwritersprize.submittable.com/submit.

"We encourage everyone to get writing and enter," said Kristin Carlson, a Writers' Prize judge and Green Mountain Power vice president.

Entries are focused on "Vermont — Its People, Its Places, Its History or Its Values."

"Old Mill Road Media is thrilled to partner again with Green Mountain Power on the 34th Annual Vermont Writers' Prize," said publisher Joshua Sherman. "We look forward to receiving stories of Vermont and sharing them with the readers of Vermont Magazine."

Entries are being accepted now and the deadline is January 1, 2023. Writers must live in Vermont. Green Mountain Power and Vermont Magazine employees are ineligible.



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Charlotte Grange

Nov. 11 is a federal holiday with powerful significance.

Like Memorial Day in May, it recognizes and honors those who have served in the U.S. military during times of armed conflict and war. Memorial Day focuses on those who died in combat, while Veterans Day focuses on those who served in combat zones and survived to come home.

Veterans Day originated in the celebration of the signing of the World War I ceasefire or armistice on Nov. 11, 1918 in that "war to end all wars." In several European countries, Nov. 11 is still commemorated as Armistice Day. President Woodrow Wilson recognized it here in 1919, saying: "To us in America, the reflections of Armistice Day will be filled with solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service and with gratitude for the victory, both because of the thing from which it has freed us and because of the opportunity it has given America to show her sympathy with peace and justice in the councils of the nations."

From a solemn acknowledgment of the horrors of war and a commitment to work for peace, that day has drifted somewhat from its original intent. World War I was not, in fact, "the war to end all wars" and the U.S. continues to engage in overseas military conflict on a disturbingly regular basis. After being designated a federal holiday by Congress in 1938, the name was changed to Veterans Day in 1954 to honor the veterans of all U.S. military conflicts. After Congress shifted the date between October and November for several years in an effort to create three-day holiday weekends for workers, President Gerald Ford returned Veterans Day to Nov. 11 in 1975 to recapture at least some of the original intention of committing to and celebrating peace as a universal principle.

Today, some typical Veterans Day activities do harken back to the original intent, like the wearing of red paper poppies to symbolize the determination for life to regrow after the ravages of war. Community parades and commemorations typically focus on patriotism, military pride and appreciation of the service and sacrifice of military personnel and their families.

But occasionally, there will be a contingent from Veterans for Peace, whose symbol is the white dove of peace and whose discussion points throughout the year include an honest look at the true costs of war. A wreath will be placed on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery and flags flown at half-mast. Communities and individuals often observe two minutes of silence at 11 a.m., the hour the 1918 armistice was signed.

Charlotte does not hold a special Veterans Day event, although churches, some community groups and families create their own ways to remember. Shelburne welcomes participants from the area to a public remembrance at the Veterans Memorial on the parade ground, starting at 11 a.m. on Nov. 11.

A less familiar opportunity is through the national group, Vets Town Hall. They offer a unique way to acknowledge the personal significance (both positive and negative) that military service carries and especially the impact that combat has on a person. Some war wounds are clearly visible, and some are not. Many are poorly understood by either the veteran or those in a position to help. But we know combat is traumatizing in complicated ways and can make adjusting to life back home extremely difficult.

Vets Town Hall is a model for organizing local public events which provide a safe opportunity for veterans to speak honestly about what their military service meant in their lives. Veteran and non-veteran audience members listen without comment. It is a powerful way

to promote understanding of a veteran's experience and how it has influenced their life. Being part of the audience to hear these stories is a uniquely supportive way to show your care and appreciation for fellow Americans who went to war on our country's behalf.

The final Vermont Vets Town Hall this fall will be held Nov. 6 in Colchester at the McCarthy Arts Center of St. Michael's College at 1 p.m. Veterans of any era who served in any active-duty capacity during military conflict are invited to speak for up to 10 minutes about that experience and its impact on them. Non-veterans are especially encouraged to attend and listen. This facilitated event is non-political and non-judgmental. There will be no debate on American foreign policy. We will simply listen and learn. You are encouraged to register in advance at vtvetstownhall.org to speak or attend.

Veterans are all somebody's friends, neighbors, family members — fellow Americans whose military service sent them into war. Yes, they survived and came home. But who could go through war without being changed, and without wounds that need time and help to heal?

Despite the U.S. Veterans Administration providing government-funded services, the current suicide rate for veterans is 1.5 times higher than that of the general population, and the rate among female veterans is 2.5 times higher than that of non-veteran women.

Don't we owe our veterans not only appreciation but all the support we can give to help them move forward with their civilian lives? Whether we know



Image by Robert Pender from Pixabay

individual veterans or not, we are their grateful community, and our job seems clear: Both to work for peace and non-violent resolution of conflict and to listen to and honor their stories.

Only then perhaps we as a country can find more effective ways to help heal the wounds that war inflicts.

(Linda Hamilton is a member of Charlotte Grange charlottegrange.org and associate member of the Will Miller Green Mountain Chapter of Vermont Veterans for Peace wmgmvfp.wixsite.com/vermont.)

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Education

Scratch beneath the surface of college rankings

Margo Bartsch
College Essay Coach

If an athletic team dropped in rankings from number 2 to 18 in just a year, would alarm bells go off? This unprecedented decline is the case of Columbia University in New York City. It fell to 18 in the U.S. News Best College Rankings 2023 after being second last year and claiming a top spot for years.

A Columbia math professor, Michael Thaddeus, asserted the college was self-reporting false data on class size, instruction spending and full-time faculty. Shortly thereafter, Provost Mary C. Boyce acknowledged that Columbia relied on “outdated and/or incorrect methodologies” and consequently overstated class size and faculty degrees.

Thaddeus explained that submitting false data helped to increase Columbia’s rankings. His report published a detailed analysis exposing “inaccurate, dubious or highly misleading” statistics submitted to U.S. News. Thaddeus questioned how Columbia was able to catapult its ranking compared to other top universities: ranked 18 in 1988, top five in 2011 and second in 2021.

In response to these false data revelations, U.S. News initially designated Columbia as being unranked; however, later it demoted Columbia to be ranked 18 in its published magazine and website.

Although U.S. News is not the only college ranking publication, it is one of the most popular. It focuses on schools’ priorities that include more subjective measurement criteria. For example, it is the only ranking survey that separates national universities and liberal arts colleges, each with their own ranking list. This allows liberal arts colleges not to be directly compared against

universities.

Liberal arts colleges are usually smaller than national universities. Liberal arts colleges mostly focus exclusively on the undergraduate experience. Universities typically have graduate schools whose professors, resources and research can trickle into the undergraduate programs.

Columbia’s disputed data factored into the Undergraduate Reputation criteria, which represents 20 percent of the U.S. News’ overall score. This information is self-reported by each school’s president, provost and dean of admissions. This reputation measurement could be biased on how each school defines each attribute. For example, class size could average in lab sessions, which typically have fewer students.

Surprisingly, U.S. News weights Graduate Indebtness at 5 percent of the overall score. With the attention on escalating student loans and debt, assigning lower weights to these factors lessens their impact and enables colleges to sweep under the rug high student debt. The Wall Street Journal reports that 40 million people have federal student loan debt.

Another rankings list to analyze is the Forbes America’s Top Colleges for 2022. It combines universities and colleges into one list with its own unique measurement criteria. Columbia University is ranked 5, which is consistent with last year’s 2021 ranking. This ranking analysis was published online on August 30, 2022, before the Columbia dispute erupted. Forbes published Columbia’s student-to-teacher ratio at 7 to 1, which was doubted by Thaddeus.

The Forbes data primarily focuses on student outcomes. It collects information principally from two federal databases: the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and College Scorecard. Additional



Image by Nikolay Georgiev from Pixabay

data is compiled from: PayScale; Third Way; the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics; and Forbes’ own lists.

Alumni Salary represents 20 percent of the Forbes calculation. Interestingly, U.S. News does not include salary as a measurement criterion.

Forbes computes 15 percent each to: Debt; Graduation Rate; Forbes American Leaders List; and Return-on-Investment. Finally, Retention Rate and Academic Success each account for 10 percent

Families should have a frank conversation to identify the priorities for their student’s college experience. In some cases, the student’s goals may be different from their parents. For example, if a student wants to be recruited for a varsity sport, liberal arts colleges may be a better fit to compete on a team. Liberal arts colleges are typically Division-2 or Division-3, compared to many national universities as Division-1.

Not all ranking criteria are created equal. Each publication has different variables with distinct focuses. Each list has specific definitions and weights: it can be like comparing apples to oranges. Especially with self-reported information, it is important to understand the data components.

College planning can be an emotional journey, where rankings might cloud the process. Various ranking publications provide numerical guidance to compare and prioritize. Colleges can include specific rankings in their marketing materials to reinforce the school’s positioning and goals. Scratching beneath the surface of ranking criteria can uncover structural biases that are not obvious.

(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.)

Making steps toward community at Charlotte Central School

Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

Early last year, as Charlotte Central School was preparing to ease out of the pandemic, the school and the town revealed in a survey that they hoped a priority would be the building of community at Charlotte Central School.

Families and caregivers hoped for schoolwide experiences. They hoped students would find opportunities to experience generosity and to give to others. Families and caregivers wanted all students to feel cared about and appreciated for being themselves and there was a hope that students could have time to help others within their community.

Last week the students in fifth grade led a whole-school morning meeting. The greatness of these student-led activities is the modeling of leadership, empathy, caring

and acceptance. The students shared a book called “I’m Here” by Peter H. Reynolds and talked about what “being here” means to those around us. The multi-purpose room was filled with smiles.

Another example of boosting community comes from the Community Wellness class led by Matt Kent and Amy Sayre for seventh and eighth graders. They have spent a couple of classes talking about what it means to be a part of a community — what it looks, feels and sounds like. After that, groups of up to four students began community action projects which can be school, town or statewide.

Digital Citizen Week Oct. 17-21

Students will continue learning about how to be safe consumers of technology and online resources with some special activities provided by the Champlain

Valley School District digital learning leaders. The instruction will include the integration of digital tools in the delivery of curriculum to enrich teaching and learning, and strengthening the technology skills and knowledge of students.

Day of Racial Equity

On Friday, Sept. 9, a group of 24 Charlotte Central School students visited the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network’s Day of Racial Equity on the Statehouse lawn in Montpelier. The students got to hear from speakers, attend workshops, meet state-level policymakers and talk with other students committed to anti-racism from throughout the state. Diversity, equity and inclusion coach Ainaka Luna and educators Katie Fraser and Heidi Huestis coordinated an awesome day.

First LEGO League

Charlotte Central School is pleased to announce the start of an afterschool club for students from fifth-eighth grade that focuses

on teamwork, robotics and coding. The mission of the Charlotte Central School First Lego League team is to foster a collaborative and diverse community of STEM-curious members that will build and compete in a mission-based robotics game using the LEGO Education SPIKE Essential platform. Tim Holcomb has offered to lead this club, and interested parents willing to help are always welcome.

Charlotte Central School Holiday Market

Calling all artisans. The Charlotte Central School Holiday Market will be back on Dec. 10. There will be two gyms filled with exhibitors, a children’s DIY craft table, as well as several on-site food options. All proceeds from the holiday market will go directly to the Charlotte Central School PTO to support a variety of student enrichment programs including STEM, theater, athletics, as well as the community Emergency Care Fund. Community support is greatly appreciated. Contact ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com with any questions.

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Playoff outlook rosy for a couple of CVU teams

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

CVU 28, Essex 21

The Essex and Champlain Valley Union high schools have a long tradition of gridiron rivalry, and this Saturday, Oct. 15, was more of the same — although it wasn't apparent at the start.

Junior Ollie Cheer returned the opening kickoff for a touchdown to put the Redhawks up 7-0 right out of the gate on the Hornets' home field.

At halftime the score was 21-0 and those unfamiliar with this rivalry might have thought it was going to be smooth sailing for CVU.

But in the second half, the Hornets' offense woke up and the Redhawks' defense bent a bit. Essex scored once in the third quarter and twice in the fourth to pull within 7, but CVU hung on to come away with the 28-21 win and remain the only undefeated team in the division.

Besides his kickoff return, junior returner and backup quarterback Cheer passed for a touchdown and snagged two interceptions on defense, while senior starter Max Destito passed for two touchdowns.

"We made it more exciting than it had to be, but at the end, we had enough of what we needed, when we needed it, to get the win," coach Rahn Fleming said.

The RedHawks' final game of the regular season is Senior Day at 1 p.m. this coming Saturday, Oct. 22, against Bellows Free Academy (BFA-St. Albans) at CVU.

A win will take the Redhawks into the postseason with a No. 1 seed.

CVU 38, Burr and Burton 35

The Redhawks downed the only other unbeaten team on Oct. 8 when the Burr and Burton Bulldogs came to Hinesburg.

This was another game that the coach said "was closer than it needed to be."

CVU had 38-28 lead in the fourth quarter, but a late fumble on the Redhawks' part gave the Bulldogs the ball.

Burr and Burton capitalized on the turnover, turning it into a touchdown to pull within 3 points at 38-35. On the ensuing drive with the clock winding

down, the Redhawks uncharacteristically went three plays without gaining a first down and had to punt.

With 28 seconds left on the clock, the Bulldogs came storming back but, with just 4 seconds left, were forced to settle for a 38-yard field goal attempt to tie the game.

The attempt was right down the middle but about 2 yards short.

As time expired, Fleming said he was filled with a feeling "somewhere between relief and elation."

Field hockey

Champlain Valley 1, Essex 0

CVU beat Essex 1-0 this Monday, Oct. 17, in field hockey to improve its record to 10-2.

The Redhawks began the season with a string of wins to start with a 5-0 record, but fell to Rice and South Burlington in successive games. Since those two losses, the team has returned to its winning ways.

With a game against Mount Mansfield Tuesday that wasn't finished by press time and a game today (Thursday, Oct 20) against Middlebury, things looked promising for the post season when this newspaper went to print.

Essex's field was muddy and wet for Monday's game.

"Despite terrible field conditions, both teams played a good game," said coach Tucker Pierson said.

It was a defensive contest with neither team scoring until late in the game. Finally, with 2:31 left in the fourth quarter Carly Strobeck scored off a rebounded shot from a penalty corner.

Goalie Grace Ferguson had two saves for the Redhawks, and Adowyn Byrne had three saves for Essex.

Champlain Valley 5, Rutland 0

The Redhawks galloped to a 5-0 shutout of Rutland on Friday, Oct. 14, at Champlain Valley High.

Miranda Oppenheimer and Emily Gay each had two goals to lead the CVU scoring attack, while Emma Kim had one and Tess Everett had an assist.

The Redhawks kept the ball on the Rutland side of the field for most of



Photo by Al Frey

Alex Provost blocks for quarterback Max Destito in Champlain Valley's 28-21 victory over Essex on Saturday, Oct. 15.

the contest, which is reflected in the goalies' stats for both sides. None of the Redhawks' goalies had a save, while Rutland's Emma Cosgrove had 15.

Champlain Valley 1, Mount Abraham 0

CVU hosted Mount Abraham and ultimately prevailed with a 1-0 victory on Oct. 12.

Tess Everett finally managed to carry the ball through traffic and put the winner in the net behind the Eagles' goalie for an unassisted score.

It was another contest largely fought in front of their opponent's net, so Eagles' goalie Greta Jennison had nine saves, while Redhawks' goalies Grace Ferguson and Rianne Nagelhout had none.

CVU 2, Burlington High 0

Champlain Valley shut out Burlington High 2-0 on Oct. 8 in a home game for the Redhawks.

Emma Kim scored for CVU on a penalty stroke in the second quarter.

That was all the scoring in this defensive contest until the game's waning moments when Claire Marcoe scored with 49 seconds left in the fourth quarter with an assist from Emily Gay to make it 2-0.

CVU goalie Rianne Nagelhout had five saves and Sasha Whithouse had five saves for Burlington.

Into The Woods

Need to cultivate adaptability in forest and ourselves



Image by Joe from Pixabay.com

Ethan Tapper
Chittenden County Forester

Vermont's forests tell a story of adaptation undertaken over massive expanses of time and across a dynamic landscape. Along this continuum of change, our flora and fauna have evolved and co-evolved, exploited niches, developed complex relationships with one another and with their environment — eventually becoming the species that comprise our modern-day forests. Over tens of thousands of years, these species have formed natural communities: ecosystems which are unique, resilient and biologically diverse.

In the last 300 years, Vermont's forests have undergone a similarly remarkable transformation but in much less time. Over just a few centuries, many wildlife species have been lost from our forests, some of which have returned or been reintroduced and some of which have not. Nearly all our forests have been cleared, many maintained as agricultural land for a century or more. Vermont has lost huge amounts of forestland and continues to lose thousands of acres each year. Our remaining forests are increasingly fragmented by deforestation, roads and development and degraded by a variety of introduced stressors, including non-native invasive plants and non-native pests and pathogens which have caused the loss or functional-loss of several important tree species. We are in the midst of a biodiversity crisis, species across the globe going extinct and racing towards extinction at an alarming rate. We are in the midst of a climate crisis, with a climate that has changed and is changing faster than ever.

When change occurs slowly and in small measures, ecosystems and species are able to adapt as they have for millennia. Today, this immense volume of changes and stressors — known collectively as global change — is occurring all at once and at an incredible rate. There is no going back, no returning to when Vermont was endless old growth forests, undammed streams and expansive networks of beaver wetlands. While mitigation — slowing these changes — is critical, the health and resilience of our forests will also depend on their adaptability.

Simply put, adaptability is the ability of a forest to adapt, to change. A key consideration in managing for adaptability is the recognition of uncertainty. We don't know exactly how global change will manifest in the future, and so we need to

ensure that our forests have the tools to adapt to a wide variety of potential future conditions.

One of the key ingredients in adaptability is diversity. On a landscape in which forests are generally young and simple, managing for forests with lots of different tree species (“species diversity”) and different sizes and ages of trees (“structural diversity” or complexity), buffers forests from stressors which may affect a single species or a single size or age of tree, giving forests a range of potential adaptive pathways forward. Also critical is managing for diverse landscapes — with many different types of forests and other ecosystems.

Forests are more than trees. Managing for adaptability includes helping all our native flora and fauna adapt to a changed and changing world. In addition to managing for diverse and complex forests, which will provide habitat and refugia for many species, we need to protect threatened species and unusual habitats and to take action to create important habitats that are underrepresented across our landscape. We also need to ensure that ecosystems are connected, so that species can move between them as they are faced with changes and challenges, and so that they can maintain the genetic diversity necessary to adapt.

Another important part of managing for adaptability is addressing threats. Deforestation, forest fragmentation, non-native invasive plants, animals, pests and pathogens and deer overpopulation all undermine forests' ability to regenerate, to change, to become diverse and complex, thus threatening their adaptability. All of these threats are human-caused, and only we have the power to address them.

How will we help forests adapt to an uncertain future? We are in uncharted waters, off the map and becoming more so each day. Responding to this moment will mean making uncomfortable decisions — doing things like managing forests, controlling invasive plants, changing our behavior in many ways. Adaptability is a quality that we will need to cultivate both in our forests and in ourselves. The choices we make, the way we change, will dictate the world that we give to future generations.

(Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. See what he's been up to, check out his YouTube channel, sign up for his eNews and read articles he's written at linktr.ee/chittendencountyforester.)

Hi Neighbor!

Many twists and turns on way to writing a memoir



Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

JoAnna Easton doesn't believe people with learning disabilities should be defined by what they can't do. Through her LittleWing Learning Center, she tries to ensure they won't be.

She describes her practice as being the intersection of neurology, cognition and psychology.

"I absolutely love my work," Easton said. "I'm really lucky because I have loved all the work I've done."

Easton provides educational services for adults and adolescents. "I love the questions adolescents ask," she said. "The gifted learning disabled profile is where our diversity lives. I don't work from a deficit model but by looking at what these brains can do."

Easton noted that from a very early age, children are measured and graded and therefore painfully aware of what they can't do.

"In many ways I think that there is a healing aspect to this work," she said. "I am intent on trying to help students fill in their identity and not see themselves as wounded. I loan them my frontal lobe for a while and there is no end of joy in that."

Easton's career has taken a number of

twists and turns. She spent a year at Boston College before transferring to the University of Wisconsin.

The summer before heading to the Midwest, her brother gave her a camera. Easton majored in English, but she discovered that the head of the photography department was a protégé of famed photographer Minor White and made that her minor.

She and a friend went to Europe for a summer vacation, but Easton enjoyed herself so much that she stayed for seven years. She worked as an English tutor while earning additional money photographing artists, musicians and opera singers.

Returning to Wisconsin, Easton finished her degree and obtained her teaching license in English and German. She taught photography and opened Sunprint Gallery, a combination European café and photography center in Madison.

"In those days there were no Starbucks," she said. "I was enamored with the café life in Europe, so I opened one with a partner. It became quite well known and I exhibited some famous photographers, as well as some of my own work."

Easton moved to Charlotte in 1985, raising a family while combining her love of photography, writing and food. She started a certificate program in graphic design and photography at Church Street Center, worked as the events manager for Wings Point Club, became a food writer for Harrowsmith Magazine, and edited cookbooks. After a divorce, Easton got her master's in education



JoAnna Easton

Photo contributed

at St. Michael's College with a concentration in special education. She worked with younger children with learning disabilities at the Stern Center before opening LittleWing Learning Center in 2001.

Along the way, Easton found time to pen a memoir.

"I had been writing for many years," she said, "mostly poetry and journaling, and I

was just ready. I had a summer when I was working less than usual so I set up my books and journals and just got started."

The resulting book, "I Live in the Land of Apples," is a combination of poetry and prose was published in 2019.

Easton has been honing her writing skills for years. She was accepted into the Middlebury Breadloaf Writers' Conference and received a grant from the Vermont Studio Center in the 1990s, relishing the opportunity to learn at both venues.

"I've been writing for a long time," she said. "I write both poetry and prose every day."

During the pandemic, Easton penned 28 personal essays and speculates that they might become part of a sequel to her memoir one day.

Although she writes poetry, a memoir and personal essays, she sees all these forms of writing as connected. "They are all experiential. Journaling is different because it's less objective and there is no awareness of audience. It's more outlet writing, but sometimes I start journaling and in the middle of writing I fall into a poem which I take out and type separately. It's part of the mental flow."

When Easton moved to Charlotte, she fell in love with the landscape. She grows much of her food, as well as herbs and flowers.

"I have a deep sense of place and I think that's an important part of my creativity," she said. "The solitude, isolation and beauty of living rurally is a petri dish for me. This is a town that allows a toad to be a toad."

Gardening

Lots of options for decorative or utilitarian gourds

Andrea Knepper
University of Vermont Extension

It's the time of year when strangely shaped, multi-colored, warty gourds begin to appear in gardens, markets, CSA boxes and on front porches. If you planted any type of gourds in your garden this year, enjoy peeking under leaves now to see what variations have developed.

Decorative gourds belong to the cucurbit



Photo by Andrea Knepper

Gourds come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors, making them an ideal choice for both autumnal displays and crafts.

family and can be classified into two types. Miniature pumpkins, warty varieties, winged and others with soft shells belong to the genus Cucurbita.

Those with hard shells, such as bottle, birdhouse and calabash gourds, are members of the genus Lagenaria. Both types are easy to grow at home and share some basic harvesting and curing strategies to extend their decorative life. Lagenaria gourds, however, require an additional step to fully utilize their unique characteristics.

Gourds can be harvested when the stem begins to turn brown. Clip the stem a few inches from the gourd. Gourds can be left on the vine to dry completely but should be harvested before a frost.

Fully ripe gourds will have a tough skin that cannot be pierced with your fingernail. Underripe gourds can still be used but will begin to rot sooner.

To extend the life of your mature gourds, they also need to be dried to prevent decay. Wash the surface of harvested gourds and dry thoroughly.

Place gourds somewhere out of direct sunlight to continue drying. They can be set on a screen to increase air circulation or hung with string tied around their stems. Be sure to

check regularly for moisture and prevent mold growth if you are drying the gourds on a solid surface.

The skin of Cucurbita gourds will be dry and hard in a couple of weeks. Now that your gourd is dry, it will last on display throughout the season. Gourds can be polished with vegetable oil for an attractive shine.

You may also choose to wax, shellac or paint your gourd at this point. If you do, remember that some decorative treatments should not be composted.

Lagenaria gourds require additional drying time to dry out the interior flesh as well as the outer skin. This drying process can take

several months.

These varieties will be ready to use for displays or crafts when you can hear the seeds rattle inside. Historically, fully dried gourds of this type have been used for art or as musical instruments, utensils and containers.

Compost your gourds when they begin to show signs of deterioration or when you are done with them. You may find a surprise in your compost pile next spring. Gourds love the warm, nutrient-rich environment of the compost.

(Andrea Knepper is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from Bolton.)

Fall in love with fall



Sunset on Ferry Road

Photo by linda williamson



Viewers at Mt Philo.

Photo by Vince Crockenberg



Photos by Lee Krohn

Gardening

Spring-blooming miniatures brighten winter's end

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

There's an old saying, "Good things come in small packages." That's certainly true of the tiny flowers that bloom in the spring. And fall is the perfect time to plant these bulbs.

We're all familiar with the drifts of daffodils and tulips that brighten the view at winter's end, but have you considered the supporting players in that panorama? Crocus probably comes to mind, but there are many other options for spring flowers that grow a mere 3-6 inches tall.

Among the first to bloom in the spring, snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) live up to their name. These tiny white flowers with their drooping heads push through frozen ground as ice and snow begin their retreat. Snowdrops make a lovely show, particularly if planted in drifts.

Glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa*) can often be seen as a flash of blue among the dull post-winter landscape, but they also are available in white and pink. They may be small, but mass planting makes quite an impact.

If you're partial to blue, Iris reticulata, a dwarf iris, sports petite blue flowers with white and yellow markings. Grape hyacinth (*Muscari*) offers clusters of cobalt blue flowers atop its stem. Either will create a vibrant contrast when planted among bright yellow daffodils or a peaceful mood when combined with white tulips.

Another interesting spring bloomer is winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*). This relative of the common buttercup is low growing with bright yellow flowers and forms mounded clumps.

And, of course, there are crocuses (*Crocus vernus*). These ever-popular spring-blooming bulbs can be found not only at garden centers but in grocery stores and other local retailers throughout the fall season. They come in a variety of colors, including white, yellow and purple.

The method you choose for planting will depend on the result you're looking for. For individual placement, dig a hole 3-4 inches deep (see package directions for the specific bulb), place the bulb pointed end up and cover with soil. If you plan to line a path or walkway, you may find it simpler to dig a shallow trench that deep, scatter the bulbs in the trench, cover with soil and water the area.

If you're planning to plant a larger area or a combination of bulbs such as daffodils and glory-of-the-snow, dig out the area you intend to plant to the depth needed for the largest bulb. Place those bulbs either individually where you'd like them to grow or, easier still, scatter the bulbs for a more natural look. Next, cover the larger bulbs with soil to the depth of the next smaller bulb.

For example, if you planted your larger bulbs (such as tulips) at 6 inches deep, you would cover them with soil until the planting area is at the depth for planting the smaller bulbs (such as crocus), approximately 3 inches deep. Again, place the bulbs individually or scatter them across the area. Then cover the bulbs with soil to reach the level of the surrounding ground and water the area.

Where to plant? Choose an area that will provide adequate sun, such as under deciduous trees or bushes that may provide full sun before they have leafed out in the spring. Soil should be moist and drain well. If too wet, the bulbs may rot.

When to plant? Now is the time. Even though most plants in the garden are fading and the air is chilly, as long as you can dig in the soil, you can plant spring-blooming bulbs. So, go for it.

Select your favorites and get them in the garden. When spring arrives, you'll be glad you did.

(Deborah J. Benoit is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from North Adams, Mass., who is part of Vermont's Bennington County Chapter.)



Photos by Deborah J. Benoit

Snowdrops with their tiny white drooping heads are among the first flowers to bloom in the spring, often pushing up through ice and snow to emerge in the sunlight.



Crocus and glory-of-the-snow (*Chionodoxa*) bulbs are among the many spring-blooming miniature bulbs available for purchase at garden centers and other local retailers in the fall.

Library News

Spooky, but not too spooky, events to haunt library



Margaret Woodruff
Director

Join us at the library for two special, not-so-spooky events. From 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 29, the library porch is home to our second annual jack-o-lantern fest. Julie Holmes' music students will entertain us with "The Ghost of Nicholas Greebe" to put us in the right spirit. Bring your creativity and a pumpkin to carve.

And, don't forget trick-or-treat on the library porch, Halloween night from 5 to 8 p.m. Sweet treats and library treats for all!

Book chat on the porch Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet on the library porch to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, Margaret selects a theme and highlights related titles from the library collection. Please check library calendar for dates.

Short story selections

First and third Thursdays, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will include a variety of authors, and one or two stories will be featured each session. Copies of the stories are available at the library circulation desk or via email. We meet the first and third Thursdays of each month.

Book chat via Zoom

Fridays, 9:30 a.m.

Meet on Zoom to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Friday is a recap of the Wednesday porch session. Please check library calendar for dates. Register in advance for Zoom link: bit.ly/3BtbDj.

Children and family programs

Preschool story time

Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

Come to the Charlotte Library for preschool stories, crafts and activities. No registration required. Age 2 and over.

Kindergarten-first grade story time

Tuesdays, 3 p.m.

Please call the Charlotte Library to register for this event.

Preschool free play

Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Play in the preschool years enables



children to explore and make sense of the world around them, as well as to use and develop their imagination and creativity. Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks or play dough— these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning on the Charlotte Library porch. Ages 3 and 4.

Adult programs

Stillwater Meditation

Saturdays, Oct. 1-Nov. 19, 9 a.m.

Gather together for eight weeks this fall as the light changes to explore poetry and meditation as sacred community. Respect for all beings and faiths is a foundational quality of our time together. Beginning and experienced meditators are welcome. Come to one, many or all meetings. Free. Stillwater Meditation is an offering of Rain Elizabeth Healing Arts.

One-on-one tech help sessions

Thursday, Oct. 20, 1-2:30 p.m.

Email enigma? Kindle conundrum? Computer question? App apprehension? Or maybe you want to learn how to use your library card to read or listen to books on a device. Sign up for a 40-minute one-on-one session with Susanna Kahn, Charlotte Library's technology librarian, to get some tech support. Make sure to bring your device and any necessary login information. Registration required, please call 802-425-6345.

Seed-saving workshop

Saturday, Oct. 22, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of local food systems, as interest in gardening has



Photo contributed

Last year's Jack-o-lantern fest brought a variety of talent.

exploded. With higher demand, many experienced difficulties in accessing seed, which illuminated the critical role that seeds hold in food systems and generated increased interest in seed systems. To respond to the increased interest in seed saving, your local seed library has connected with a team of University of Vermont researchers and seed-saving expert and Vermont resident, Sylvia Davits, to offer a seed-saving workshop. Registration required at bit.ly/seedsavingcharlotte.

Library contact information

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

The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets the first Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. For information about agenda and Zoom access, please contact the library director.

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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Senior Center News

As seasonal chill sets in, activities blooming



Lori York
DIRECTOR

As the beauty of fall foliage is all around us and the mornings get chilly, many activities are blooming at the senior center for the final weeks of October.

There is an AARP Safe Drivers program, an Autumn Inspiration Coffee & Canvas workshop and a free evening introductory meditation class.

Starting in November, there will be a free Bone Builders exercise class that meets twice weekly, a presentation with poet and author Dan Close about Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge and a second session of evening Beginner Guitar.

Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening at the senior center? Sign up for the email newsletters at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The “Week Ahead” email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programming for the upcoming week.

Artist reception

Join us for an artists’ reception on Friday, Nov. 4, 1-2:30 p.m.

The Friday morning arts group’s exhibit includes multiple artists with a variety of mediums. Meet the artists, view the exhibit and enjoy some light refreshments. The Friday morning arts group will be exhibiting through the end of November. This group meets on Friday mornings for coffee, conversation — and inspiration.

Presentations and programs

Learn to meditate

Tuesday, Oct. 25, 7-8 p.m.

Interested in learning more about meditation? Then plan on attending this free introduction to meditation class. During these trying times everyone needs a place to go for quiet, peace, balance and understanding. Meditation can be that refuge in the storm of this world. During this class you will learn about what meditation is, you will be led through some simple relaxation, breathing techniques and then will experience guided meditation with eyes closed. There will be time for questions as well. No experience necessary and participants will be seated in chairs or on the floor, depending on your preference. Contact Charlie Nardozzi with any questions cnardozzi124@gmail.com.

AARP Smart Driver course

Wednesday, Oct. 26, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

The AARP Smart Driver course is designed especially for drivers age 50 and older, will help with refreshing driving skills, and may even help save money on auto insurance. Members can take the course at a discounted rate. Please plan to bring lunch. Register early as class size is limited to 15. Checks should be made out to AARP. The cost is \$25 or \$20 for AARP members. Register by Friday, Oct. 21.

Coffee & Canvas—Autumn Inspiration

Friday, Oct. 21, 10:30 a.m.–noon.

Unlike traditional Paint & Sips, this “Coffee & Canvas” will allow for exploring and creating a unique painting. But don’t worry—there will be plenty of autumn inspiration from landscapes to still life objects from nature. No prior painting experience needed. All materials included. The cost is \$25. Register by Wednesday, Oct. 19.

Guitar – Beginner II

Wednesdays, Nov. 2, 9, 16, 30, Dec. 7 and 14, 7-8 p.m.

Interested in learning guitar? Join us for adult guitar lessons on Wednesday

evenings at the senior center. This class is for those who have a basic understanding of beginner guitar and is a continuation of the fall beginner guitar six-week class. If you have questions about whether this class would be appropriate for your specific skill level, please reach out to John Creech at sonjohncreech@gmail.com. Registration required by Monday, Oct. 31. The cost is \$75 for the six-week session.

Poetry about Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge

Thursday, Nov. 3, 1 p.m.

Join Dan Close, poet and novelist and member of the Poetry Society of Vermont, Burlington Writers and Peace Corps Writers, as he presents his poetry about the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge. The reading will be accompanied by slides of the wildlife refuge.

Shape-note singing

Sunday, Nov. 6, 1-3 p.m.

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing . . . not as a practice for performance. Search “sacred harp” on YouTube for examples, then come and sing with us. Introduction to shape notes and scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each first Sunday singing. Contact Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com to schedule. There is no cost.

Exercise classes

Meditation

Fridays, 8-9 a.m.

Meditation is an easy-to-learn practice that reduces anxiety, stress, pain and depression. Charlie Nardozzi will lead the class in techniques to quiet the body and mind by doing simple breathing exercises and a seated, eyes-closed guided meditation. All are welcome, no experience necessary. The cost is \$10 a class. No registration required.

Bone Builders

Starting Nov. 1, Tuesdays and Fridays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

RSVP Bone Builders, a program of United Way of Northwest Vermont, is a no-impact, weight-training program designed to prevent and even reverse the negative effects of osteoporosis in older adults. Bone Builders consists of a warmup, balance exercises, arm and leg exercises, and a cool down with stretching. No cost or pre-registration required, but there will be paperwork to complete for the RSVP Bone Builders program.

The senior center offers daily exercise programs for a wide range of fitness and activity levels. A complete list of exercise programs and class descriptions is on the website charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday Lunches

Served weekly. Lunch is served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or until the food runs out. No registration required. Suggested lunch donation \$5.

Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals

Pick up on Thursdays 10-11 a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. October menus are posted on the Charlotte Senior Center website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. To register, contact Kerrie Pughe at 802-425-6345 at kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Suggested meal donation is \$5. *Please note, as of Oct. 1, all current participants will need to complete an Age Well Congregate Meal Registration Form for Age Well’s 2023 fiscal year. There will be copies available at the Senior Center and on the Age Well website at agewellvt.org.



Photo by Janet Yantachka

On a fall hike at Sucker Brook Trail to 5 Tree Hill in Williston are, from left, Lorraine Koffman, Lynne Hale, Alison Williams, Maureen O’Brien, Barbara Motyka, Marjorie London, Penny Burman and Mike Yantachka.



Photo by Lori York

An artist reception at the Senior Art Show.



Photo by Arthur Hynes

Charlie Nardozzi meditating.

Senior Center contact info

Lori York, director, lyork@CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org
Kerrie Pughe, coordinator, kpughe@CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte
802-425-6345
charlotteseniorcentervt.org

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Write Ingredients

Waiting for Great Pumpkin and spaghetti

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

When planning late October meals at the Charlotte Senior Center, Monday Munch follows Cinderella's wisdom: "I'd say the first thing you need is a pumpkin."

Linus, of course, shows similar pumpkin fervor: "The Great Pumpkin will appear and I'll be waiting for him! I'll be there! I'll be sitting there in that pumpkin patch ... and I'll see the Great Pumpkin. Just wait and see, Charlie Brown."

At Monday Munch, pumpkin pie is just the grand finale. You'll find plenty more on the menus.

Whether or not pumpkin is on the menu at the French Laundry in Yountville, California, we learn from The San Francisco Chronicle that this place is "so hot there's a black market in reservations." Read more here: sfchronicle.com/food/restaurants/article/french-laundry-17488932.php.

Admittedly, at the Charlotte Senior Center you won't get grilled Wagyu topped with fried barbajuan or sesame tuiles filled with red onion and crème fraiche crowned with salmon tartare and a fresh coat of sesame seeds — constructed to look like an ice cream cone.

But lunch seats are easy to come by and you'll pay \$345 less for a meal at our place.

Monday Munch

Oct. 24, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., or until the food is gone

Spaghetti with beef Bolognese sauce, Caesar salad, crusty garlic bread and pumpkin pie with whipped cream

Grab & Go Meal

Thursday, Oct. 27, pick up: 10-11 a.m.
Beef steak, BBQ sauce, Italian rice risotto with diced tomatoes, Italian vegetables with black beans, wheat bread with butter, berry crisp with cream and milk. Registration required by the prior Monday at 802-425-634 or kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Meals are provided by Age Well at no charge, but they appreciate donations.

Monday "Halloween" Munch

Oct. 31, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join us for a festive Halloween lunch — with treat bags. We invite you to wear



Photo by Lori York

From left, Sue Foley, Carol Geske, Carol Strobeck and Karina Warshaw at the senior center's Octoberfest Monday Munch.

your mask, hat or costume. This attire is optional but there will be a costume contest. Don't worry: No tricks. Festive food abounds: Assorted sandwiches, potato salad, pumpkin pie in a cup and Halloween surprise.

Grab & Go Meal

Thursday, Nov. 3, pick up: 10-11 a.m.

To be announced. Check the Charlotte Senior Center website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals.

It's October, a time to relish the leaves. As it happens, Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf Rag" was named after a club, not autumn leaves, but in every season it's ragtime to enjoy: songfacts.com/facts/scott-joplin/maple-leaf-rag.

Impresario of Baroque music, Antonio Vivaldi, gave us the famous "Four Seasons." Here's the Netherlands Bach Society with "Autumn": tinyurl.com/hzpbsfxd.

Here it is on the organ of St. Lamberti, Munster, Germany: tinyurl.com/3xk5j6bd. You can also find it on solo guitar, by a rock band and in lots more variations. Whatever you choose, we hope you also choose Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center.

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