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The Charlotte News

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**Bryn Herlihy deliberates
with Santa at the Charlotte
Fire and Rescue Station.**

Photo by Lee Krohn

Community Heart & Soul to kick off next month

Brett Yates
Contributor

Who decides the future of a town? According to Vermont's Orton Family Foundation, it should be everyone who lives there.

That may be easier said than done. But next year, Charlotte will become Vermont's third municipality to undertake a process called Community Heart & Soul, which promises to engage a wide swath of residents in a two-year series of discussions about what they value about their town.

The organization that developed the curriculum boasts that, nationwide, it's helped more than 100 towns gather diverse input for local planners while strengthening bonds among neighbors and spurring volunteerism. Vermonters in Essex and Canaan reported positive experiences, with a few caveats.

Planning commissioners Kyra Wegman and Robert Bloch told The Charlotte News, tentatively, that the first local meeting would take place on Friday, Jan. 20, at 5 p.m. at the Charlotte Congregational Church.

Their hope is for people to come to the church from afterschool activities for some chili and pie. Wegman said, "We can talk about what this is and do a few sample conversations so that people know what we're up to. Hopefully there'll be music and good cheer, and we can all sort of feel why we're so invested in Charlotte."

As a booster for the event, Wegman sought to downplay her role as a public official, characterizing the program as a citizen-led project, not a government initiative. The Charlotte Selectboard has expressed support for bringing Community Heart & Soul to town, but it has not yet fielded a request for its official sanction, let alone for municipal funding.

And while the planning commission anticipates reviewing public comments collected during the process when it updates the town plan in 2026, supporters believe Community Heart & Soul will yield an impact extending far beyond that document.

"This could be a cool way just to get people together and to elevate the level of discourse," Bloch said. "Even though, with this little town, we think we're all lovey



Photos by Brett Yates

Raised in South Burlington, Community Heart & Soul executive director Mark Sherman lives in Charlotte.

and everything, we have some of the same divisions that are around the country."

Community Heart & Soul origins

Community Heart & Soul has its roots in Weston where Lyman Orton, heir to the Vermont Country Store, served on a planning commission that, in his view, mismanaged the public engagement process around a controversial proposal for a wildlife theme park. This created long-lasting conflicts among locals.

Since 1995, Orton's private foundation — which has 11 employees (seven in Vermont) and, as of its last public tax filing, \$20.4 million in assets — has aimed to help small towns avoid the same fate. More recently, it adopted the trade name Community Heart & Soul, devoting itself exclusively to promoting its namesake method of community engagement.

Its executive director, Mark Sherman, lives in Charlotte. He pitched the town on Community Heart & Soul earlier this year.

"We don't come in with any political, social or religious agenda," Sherman said. "We're simply a framework to help the community figure out what its priorities are, based on what the residents feel is most

SEE **HEART & SOUL** PAGE 3

Town moves closer to town-run fire and rescue department

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Charlotte took a major step in the march toward a town-run fire and rescue service on Monday night.

At a special meeting on Dec. 5, the selectboard decided to hire a coordinator to help switch Charlotte Fire and Rescue Service to a department of the municipal government, rather than a separate nonprofit organization.

In August, the board issued a request for bids seeking to hire a consultant for no more than \$30,000 to aid in this transition. But with only two bids being submitted — one for about \$40,000 and one for \$30,000 — the board members instead chose to hire a coordinator for no more than \$20,000.

Actually, the bid from Gallagher, Flynn & Co., a South Burlington consulting firm, was for \$18,900, but chair Jim Faulkner recommended making the motion for a bit more to cover incidental expenses.

Faulkner said he had realized the board

had not submitted the bid for a coordinator for a second round of bids as is prescribed in the town's purchasing policy and initiated a discussion about whether the rest of the board thought this was a problem.

Charlotte has hired Gallagher, Flynn over the past couple of years to help with human resources issues, most notably with an analysis of town salaries, but the firm is not on the town's list of preferred providers, which would have made a second round of bids unnecessary.

Searching the town's website during the meeting, the board did find an exception to the second bid requirement "if the selectboard prefers a vendor because of its history of work for the town or an extensive knowledge of the town's need."

"We've done a lot of work with them," Faulkner said.

The town also has an exception if delay would "result in a substantial impairment of the delivery of important town services,"

SEE **TOWN COORDINATOR** PAGE 2

Raffle against food insecurity



Photo by Lucie Lehmann

Alexandra Lehmann with the sled she restored and painted to raffle off to raise funds for the Charlotte and Shelburne food pantries.

See the full story on page 5

Busy — like blue-assed flies

Dear Reader:

"We're running around like blue-assed flies" is Kiwi slang for "We're really, really busy," a common condition during holiday season.

Like you, we're scrambling to get ready for the holidays, making plans, finding our tree, arranging celebrations with family and friends. We're also making our year-end donations.

In that regard, here's where things stand at The Charlotte News.

We currently have a "triple match" opportunity. That is to say, for every dollar you donate, up to \$6,000 in total, we will receive three.

We could use the push! At just past the halfway point in our year-end campaign, we've received 140 gifts (many thanks for those) but are running behind schedule.

So, if you've been waiting to make your year-end gift, here are two good reasons to do it now: NewsMatch will double all gifts up to \$1,000, and the board of directors and friends of the paper have offered an additional challenge which will triple your gift.

This is amazing. Every gift we receive by the end of the year will be matched three times. Our goal is \$6,000 in gifts which will turn into \$18,000 to support our work.

What will you see in return for your investment in The Charlotte News?



John Quinney



Claudia Marshall

More stories like "Community Heart and Soul to kick off next month" in this issue of the paper, more town histories, news on town affairs and calendar listings for events in town and nearby, more town history and opinion pieces from community writers. In short, we'll continue to work hard to make your local, nonprofit paper even more useful, interesting and fun to read.

With the support of folks like you, The Charlotte News will keep this community connected, informed and entertained, as we've done for almost 65 years.

If you have questions about the paper, are considering a gift of appreciated stock or have thoughts about our plans for the future, please reach out. Our emails are john@thecharlottenews.org and claudiamarshall@yahoo.com. Or give John a call at 802-318-7189. We'd love to hear from you.

This is our last paper for the year. We'll be back on Jan. 12.

All the best for a happy holiday season,

John Quinney

Publisher and President

Claudia Marshall

Chair, Fundraising Committee

- Please make your year-end donation now — it's quick and easy:

- Drop your check in the envelope included with this paper, make your gift at charlot-tenewsvt.org or scan the QR code with your phone camera.



More News from The News on page 4

TOWN COORDINATOR
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

according to the policy.

Faulkner told the board the plan is to have the transition to a town-run fire and rescue service completed by June.

“Since we exhausted the bidding process and had no acceptable bids, we’re moving to a preferred source exemption under the purchasing policy,” Matt Krasnow said. “That’s my quick read of it.”

He said the board had worked hard at casting a wide net, seeking bids nationally from volunteer fire and rescue departments for a consultant to help with the transition.

“I think that was probably one of the broadest that we’ve cast as far as bidding goes,” Krasnow said.

Charlie Russell was a lone dissenting voice in the audience. He objected to the board approving a contract with Gallagher, Flynn, saying the process was rushed and the request for proposals was not viewable by the public.

“I don’t like the fact that you’re discussing a document that the public hasn’t had a chance to see,” Russell said.

The amended request for bids for a coordinator was not included in the “meeting packet” the public can access on the town’s website.

Russell argued for more transparency and taking more time because of the complexity of the town taking over a “million-dollar operation.”

“If it was delayed another year, I think it would be prudent,” he said.

The board appeared surprised, bewildered and offended by Russell’s assertions.

“This is not new. We started this quite a long time ago,” Faulkner replied.

Faulkner objected to Russell raising his objections “at the last minute” when the board is about six months away from completing the transfer.

He also was flummoxed that Russell felt the proposed transition was being done without the assent of the volunteer fire and rescue service. “They are in agreement to go into the municipality. Why are you bringing this up now?”

“You just think we’re doing this from the seat of our pants; I can honestly tell you I take offense to that because we’ve really been trying to figure this out,” Faulkner said.

Frank Tenney, who is the board’s liaison with the fire and rescue department, said Russell was talking as though the fire and rescue service was being forced into becoming a town department and that is not his intention. Acceding to Russell’s complaints would mean starting the whole process over, Tenney said.

Frustrated by the exchange, Tenney got up from the board table, walked out of the main room of the town hall and into another room.

Russell said, “I understand it’s hard to get criticized. I was on the board for 15 years.”

“I can take criticism if it’s legitimate,” Faulkner said.

After a couple of minutes, Tenney returned and the board voted 4-0 to make Gallagher, Flynn an approved vendor and then by the same margin voted to hire them to coordinate the transition.

Board member Lewis Mudge was absent because he was in Kenya.

Before adjourning, the selectboard members agreed that their conversations with Gallagher, Flynn during the transition will be in open session.

Not dead yet



Photo by Hank Kaestner

These trees are not pines, they are not the victim of spongy moths and they are not dead. These are larches, just one of two species of conifers in the U.S. that drops their foliage in the fall. These larches are actually European larches, planted by the Vermont Forest Service on the slopes of Mt. Philo in the 1920s to cover areas denuded by timber harvesting and sheep grazing during the 1800s.

Report from the Legislature



Chea Waters Evans
Representative-Elect

I cry every time I hear the Vermont state song — and I love the part about looking with pride on the golden dome.

So, it’s been

an honor and a thrill to go to work underneath that dome; training for new legislators took place a couple weeks ago, and as January and the start of the next biennium approaches, my work as your new representative in the Statehouse is beginning in earnest.

Legislative training, which was run by the Snelling Center for Government, was enlightening and fun and involved an intense barrage of information and a lot of coffee.

We sat in the House chamber (so exciting!) and committee rooms and learned about everything from parking to tax revenue to ethics to how to introduce a bill. Over four days, we met with and heard from people in the Office of Racial Equity, the Joint Fiscal Office, Legislative Counsel, the Vermont Supreme Court justices and more, and got to watch a mock debate on the House floor.

The energy and enthusiasm of my new colleagues is inspiring — no matter your political views, or your views on politicians, I think it’s truly a group of people who are dedicated to doing their best to improve the lives of Vermonters. I feel the same, and I’m passionate about helping to make our state and our town be the best they can be for young people, families and seniors as well.

This is the largest group of new

legislators Vermont’s ever had; about a third of the House is new and same for the Senate. Every representative is assigned a committee, which is where most of my daily work will focus.

We don’t find out our committee assignments until the session begins, when we get sworn in on Jan. 4. Until then I’m just reading everything I can, watching past House sessions (which are actually available for everyone to watch on YouTube, and are really interesting and informative) and shopping for real pants. It turns out that working from home as a journalist during a pandemic doesn’t translate well, fashion-wise, to state government.

I want to thank you all for your confidence in me, and I’m so appreciative of everyone who voted in November. And speaking of elections, there are several opportunities to run for office or join a committee right here in Charlotte.

One more note:

Winter is here in earnest, and heating a home is expensive. Button Up Vermont offers some rebates that will help finance weatherization and lower your heating bills in the coming months. Check it out here: efficiencyvermont.com/rebates/list/diy-weatherization.

As the session progresses, I’ll keep you updated on my own work on behalf of Charlotte and Hinesburg residents, as well as legislative priorities in general. I always want to hear what you have to say, and I’m here to help if you need it — if I can’t help solve your problem on my own, I’m here to figure out who can. My email is cevans@leg.state.vt.us, and my phone number is 917-887-8231 and you can call or text any time.



Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

- Publishing rigorous, in-depth reporting on town affairs.
- Providing a home for stories from our neighbors and friends.
- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

Editorial independence

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

- The views expressed in letters or opinion pieces are those of the author, and are not endorsed by either the board or the editorial staff of the paper. Opinion pieces and letters to the editor will be clearly labelled as such.
- The 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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HEART & SOUL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

important.” Senior director Sara Lightner described a four-step process that starts by identifying “formal and informal groups” in the area. These groups supply “stories,” whose common themes become the town’s “Heart & Soul value statements.” The statements generate ideas for projects, followed by a plan to execute them.

Implementation is meant to continue long after Orton has left town. “Something like a sidewalk, that probably needs to go back to the municipality,” Lightner observed. “But if we want to have a story-walk along our riverfront, maybe the library says, ‘Hey, that’s totally up our alley.’” Ideally, town pride will undergird the whole effort. Champlain College professor of management Lindsey Godwin linked Community Heart & Soul to a technique called “appreciative inquiry.” Godwin directs the David L. Cooperrider Center for Appreciative Inquiry.

In the 1980s, academics formulated the model as a new way to promote change within businesses and other organizations, but Godwin pointed out that cities like Cleveland, Cincinnati and Tampa later adopted it for the purpose of community development.

“Many of the traditional strategic planning processes try to come from a neutral or a deficit base, where they start with questions about what’s wrong, what’s broken here,” Godwin explained. “Appreciative inquiry has been an approach that has sort of flipped the script on the change conversation to say that, in every community, in every organization, in every team, in every individual, there are successes that have gone under-utilized, under-noticed, under-explored.”

By Lightner’s account, for Community Heart & Soul, the model depends upon local buy-in. “Definitely there are places where it just hasn’t flown, so to speak,” Lightner admitted. “And one example I can give is of a community where the volunteer team that got started to really drive the work — frankly, very few of them were actually from the community. A lot of them were people who worked in nonprofits or different organizations, even a couple of municipal people who didn’t actually live in the community.”

Resident leadership need

Even more than other Heart & Soul towns, Charlotte may have to rely on ordinary residents’ willingness to roll up their sleeves. When Essex partnered with Orton in 2012, during an earlier iteration of the program, it became one of just five towns nationwide to receive a \$100,000 grant, which it used to hire a pair of full-time local consultants to coordinate planning alongside foundation staff.

Today, with Heart & Soul expanding fast,

Charlotte expects to receive just \$10,000 from the foundation. The grant requires a plan for a local cash match, and to that end, a local high schooler has set up a website — heartandsoulcharlotte.org — that can accept tax-deductible donations through a Shelburne-based fiscal sponsor. Bloch acknowledged that, in the future, Charlotte’s Community Heart & Soul team may ask for an allocation from the municipal budget, which already supports various non-governmental organizations in town.

As a condition of its disbursal, the Orton grant will help pay for the guidance of a “certified coach” from a pool of third-party community development consultants trained by the foundation as experts in Community Heart & Soul. But Charlotte will also need someone to take on the potentially unpaid local administrative work of scheduling meetings and compiling information.

“Our assumption is that we are not going to have to hire a full-time project coordinator, and that through either volunteers or part-time help from someone from the local colleges or universities for whom this would be a relevant internship or something, we would be able to do it,” Bloch said.

An Addison County resident, Lindsay Varner, helped persuade Bloch and Wegman that Charlotte could benefit from Community Heart & Soul.

Before becoming the director of the Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh, Varner worked for the Cumberland County Historical Society, which, through the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, received an Orton grant in 2016 on behalf of a seven-municipality area in the vicinity of Carlisle, Penn. With a doctorate in history, she steered an approach to community revitalization centered on the region’s past.

Among several endeavors that grew out of Community Heart & Soul discussions, the best-known — the Mt. Tabor Preservation Project — took up the task of rehabilitating a circa-1870 Black church.

“I was told over and over again I needed to talk to the Gumby family because they had been there for multiple generations,” Varner recollected. “They gave me this incredible 45-minute interview, talking about the Black history of the area that’s being lost. Their grandfather, who had been enslaved, had moved to the area and had helped to build this church. They kept talking about the church behind their house, and it was so overgrown you couldn’t see it.”

The log structure “is now a National Register property. So, it became this huge project that then spiraled into more projects across the county to start to understand and build a more complete narrative of the African-American history in the county,” Varner recounted.

Change in Canaan took time

Wegman and Bloch have also talked to Trish Sears and Steve Mason of Orleans County, a pair of married consultants who coached the town of Canaan, in Vermont’s northeastern corner, through its Community Heart & Soul process. Sears and Mason appear poised to take on the same role in Charlotte.



Photos by Brett Yates

Previously a mobile cart, Nomad Coffee moved last year into a brick-and-mortar location at 3 Maple Street in Essex Junction.

When Sears was the director of the Newport City Renaissance Corporation, she and Mason encountered Orton through a program called Community Matters, which, as a precursor to Community Heart & Soul, came to Newport in 2012, leading to the grassroots development of a neighborhood garden on donated private land.

“People have become dependent on public services to cure their problems,” Mason said. “I think the Heart & Soul process tells people you can make the change without going that way.”

Sears described Community Heart & Soul as a “strengthening” of a town’s social fabric.

“The process is never a smooth one because you’re dealing with so many different kinds of people,” she said.

In Canaan, Community Heart & Soul lasted four years, starting in 2015. Resident Frank Sawicki attributed delays partly to the municipality’s remote location, which, by his recollection, had made accessing meetings a challenge for its out-of-town coaches.

“It was a little bit slower than we thought,” Sawicki said.

In the end, however, it produced a 501(c)(3), Canaan Naturally Connected, that continues to plan beautification projects; charity drives; and community events, such as teen nights at the American Legion and a townwide scarecrow-building competition. Sawicki sits on the board.

Before Canaan Naturally Connected, he felt that the town “wasn’t cohesive. We had groups doing the same thing and repeating it, and we didn’t know.”

As a “middleman” for various nonprofits, Canaan Naturally Connected has established communication channels extending into New Hampshire and Quebec. And according to Sawicki, its presence “relieves” local government of some of the burden of managing community affairs.

“If it’s something in that category, then they don’t have to deal with it, really,” Sawicki said. “At the start, it was kind of a battle — like, who was in charge? But then, as we communicated more that we’re just wanting to help with the municipalities, they started opening up.”

By Sawicki’s estimation, Canaan Naturally Connected has achieved 85 percent of the goals articulated during Community Heart & Soul. But can-do spirit does seem to have its

limits — specifically, when it comes to the development of much-needed housing for the elderly.

“That hasn’t really come off the ground because we needed land. We needed grants and things like that,” Sawicki said. “It’s very hard to do that when you have volunteerism.”

Sawicki also mentioned Canaan’s demographic struggle to attract and retain working-age adults, particularly between ages 18 and 30. In 2009, Ethan Allen Interiors Inc. laid off 238 workers at Canaan’s Beecher Falls plant, once the largest furniture factory in the eastern United States.

Although Sawicki reported some success in the town’s effort to reverse the trend, the most recent census showed a continued decline for Canaan’s population, which dropped from 972 to 896 between 2010 and 2020.

In the growing Burlington metropolitan area, the relatively bustling, populous town of Essex offered a different venue for Community Heart & Soul between 2012 and 2014.

In the telling of State Representative Lori Houghton of Essex Junction, Community Heart & Soul conversations set parameters for economic development and major investments that followed, filling vacant downtown buildings and turning an asphalt lot into a pocket park.

“We had some crime, and we had one coffee shop, which really was more of a deli than a coffee shop. We said we really want to have more places for the community to go to. And we now have four coffee shops,” Houghton said. “We have definitely more of a vibrant downtown than we had when we started, and to me that’s a success.”

Couldn’t stop Essex, Essex Junction split

As in Canaan, Essex residents incorporated a 501(c)(3), Heart & Soul of Essex, to carry out projects, but it disbanded last year. For Dana Hanley, who served as Essex’s community development director between 2005 and 2019, the data collected during the process found its most crucial application in the rewriting of the town plan.

The 2016 Essex Town Plan won awards from the Vermont Planners Association and the Northern New England chapter of the



Now under municipal ownership, the asphalt lot in front of the Firebird Cafe at Essex Junction’s Five Corners is on its way to becoming a pocket park, with development ongoing.

News from The News

John Quinney
Publisher and President

Welcome aboard, Meredith

This newspaper is thrilled to announce that Meredith Moses has joined the board of The Charlotte News.

Meredith retired a year ago from a 40-year nursing career. She and her husband Peter have lived in Charlotte for 28 years, and their son John (who wrote a music column for The Charlotte News at one time) attended Charlotte Central School, Champlain Valley Union High and the University of Vermont.

In her last 20 years at the University of Vermont Medical Center, Meredith led the office of patient and family advocacy; served on numerous quality, operational and ethics committees; and was involved in policy development, hiring and education. She further trained in mediation and conflict resolution at Woodbury College and worked with plaintiffs and defendants in small claims court. She is a skilled copy editor, and enjoys new learning and problem solving, attributes that are important to daily operations and future developments at The Charlotte News.

Meredith has been involved around town as a Scout leader, as a volunteer with the Charlotte Food Shelf and a participant in a myriad of community and school events over the years. In all seasons, she tries to spend some time outdoors each day. She is grateful to have made her life in Charlotte and is a strong supporter of the paper.

She writes, “The Charlotte News is an important vehicle for building community and elevating a variety of voices and perspectives. This is particularly important in these divisive and isolating times. I am honored to join the board and eager to contribute to the continued success of The Charlotte News.”

The Charlotte News is grateful to Meredith Moses for offering her time, skills and experience to the paper and looks forward to working with her in the months and years ahead as we navigate our way through the many challenges and opportunities that come with the community newspaper business.

Thank you, Gay

Long-time Charlotte resident, Gay Regan has stepped down from the Charlotte News Board. We’re grateful to her for the eight years that she served on the board, for staying on for several months past the date of her intended departure and for continuing to work with us as a member of our fundraising committee.

Gay Regan is well known to many Charlotters, having first visited Thompson’s Point when she was 13. The family camp has been a central point in her life ever since.

Gay has seen many changes in the Thompsons Point community over the



years. In an earlier story in The Charlotte News, she said, “The Country Club used to be quite snobby. You had to have two letters of recommendation and then be interviewed, but now anyone can join.”

On the other hand, she appreciates the importance of traditions, like the annual Fourth of July celebration. “We walk to the end of the point, and someone gives a speech, and we sing the Star-Spangled Banner,” she said.

Gay may have started a Thompson’s Point tradition herself. For the past two years, she hosted a summer thank-you party for staff, board members, advisors and volunteers at her camp. She has offered to bring us together again next year.

I started working with Gay in May of 2019, and in the years since, came to appreciate her informed and thoughtful contributions to the work of the board. She hardly ever missed a meeting, always showed up having done her homework and inevitably sharpened our thinking and improved our decision-making with her questions and ideas. Between meetings, Gay could be counted on to respond to every email request in a timely and sometimes provocative manner. As a member of the fundraising committee, Gay has not only provided financial support, but has also drawn on her extensive community connections to bring others into our community of supporters.

Former publisher Vince Crockenberg writes, “While Gay had no formal training or experience in community journalism, she did bring to her work on the board a deep love of writing, as well as a broad understanding of the Charlotte community, particularly the summer community on Thompson’s Point, which the paper had paid too little attention to before her arrival. For a community newspaper, which depends on the written word to convey the community’s stories, these were immensely valuable contributions to our work.

I was the publisher of the paper during some of its most challenging times financially, and I’m happy to credit Gay, with her community savvy, her constancy and her clear-eyed critique of the ideas and proposals that we discussed — including whether we could actually stay in business — as one of our most valuable board members in helping us get through very tough times and emerge stronger than ever.”

In reflecting on her time on the board, Gay writes, “My connection with The Charlotte News has deep roots. I first became aware of the paper through my friend Nancy Wood. Over the years I have submitted occasional articles. Most recently, while serving on the board, I have been inspired by the teamwork of the staff who produce the paper, by impressive leadership from our publishers and presidents, and the civic generosity of the board who have worked hard to provide good governance and financial stability. I leave the board confident that The Charlotte News is in good hands to move forward even when the news industry is troubled with today’s tough times.”

We’ll miss you on the board, Gay, but are very thankful that we’ll see you around town and at fundraising meetings and events. Take it easy now.



Photo by Brett Yates

Essex Junction turned a disused segment of train track into a multi-use path in 2016.

HEART & SOUL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

American Planning Association. Hanley attributed its success to the plethora of information gathered from Community Heart & Soul’s public engagement.

“What Orton promised was to bring in a more diverse and broad participation than the town usually can achieve, and they delivered,” Hanley said. “It wasn’t just the usual suspects — it was high school students, members of the BIPOC community, members of the clergy, the kinds of representation that we rarely see at planning meetings at night.”

“Community outreach is the most expensive part of community planning processes, and Orton makes sure to get the word out on as many platforms as it takes,” she said. “They develop very sophisticated graphics and logos. It’s a very professionally presented process, and I think that’s what attracted people’s attention to it.”

Meetings offered food and childcare. Not everyone attended, but local organizers made efforts to locate no-shows at the local farmers market or to reach them by inviting them into their own homes for coffee and cookies, which would accompany a group conversation facilitated by a member of the Community Heart & Soul steering committee.

Even so, Essex’s biggest change in recent years took place in seeming contravention of one of Community Heart & Soul’s core objectives. The process had aimed to “find common ground” between the town of Essex and its village of Essex Junction, which Orton’s report described as “overlapping

municipalities grappling with how their futures fit together” amid “sometimes factious” relations.

Earlier this year, Essex Junction voted to separate from Essex after a final failed attempt at a merger that would have gradually equalized the tax burdens of village and town residents.

“Merger and separation were, bottom line, about money and taxes and responsibility, whereas Community Heart & Soul was about what are the values we hold dear,” said Essex Junction’s Elaine Haney, a former village trustee. “We all want walkable communities. We all want safety. We all want well-being and good health for our residents. Those things are universal.”

In Haney’s view, a “very vocal but small group of people” and their “tactics of division” prevented an agreeable resolution to the financial dispute.

“I don’t know that Heart & Soul could have gotten us through it,” she said. “Well, it didn’t get us through it.”

The bitter taste of the subsequent separation hasn’t erased Haney’s fond memories of Community Heart & Soul, which she credited as a driver for new multifamily housing in Essex Junction, an expansion of the recreation department’s afterschool programming, and a bike path from Central Street toward the high school. She wishes Essex well, and she praised its town plan.

The plan “has a really cool vision for that strip between the outlets and the town green,” Haney said. “It’s in jeopardy now because they’re going to have to spend so much money trying to recoup the taxes that they’re losing from the village.”

The Holidays are Coming



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New Year’s resolution suggestion

If you’re looking for a New Year’s resolution, I’ve got a suggestion. If you like sports or the idea of giving back to the Champlain Valley Union community, I’ve got a suggestion. If you’re applying for college and are looking for something to help separate your application from a massive stack of applications, I’ve got a suggestion. If you or your child is passionate about CVU sports, I’ve got a suggestion. If any of the above is even just a little bit true, I’d love to hear from you. We’re looking for someone to help us cover CVU sports for The Charlotte News. This might mean writing stories or briefs

about games, or it might mean checking in with coaches for results, some game stats and a couple of quotes about competitions — it’s up to you how much you’d like to participate and if you want to actually write. If you’re a CVU student thinking about college, this kind of community activity will look good on your application. And if you’re thinking about studying sports journalism, well, it would be a slam dunk. If any of this resonates with you, please give me a call at 802-881-4728 or email scooter@thecharlottenews.org.

Scooter MacMillan

Community

Local artist rejuvenates sled for local food shelves

Lucie Lehmann
Contributor

’Tis the season of giving back, and a Charlotte artist, Alexandra Lehmann, has once again used her talents to create something beautiful and jolly — this time, a whimsical winter scene on a restored children’s sled — that will be raffled off and go to a new home, all to benefit two local food pantries.

This is the fourth time that Lehmann, who grew up in New York but spent much of her life in her parents’ native country, Switzerland, before settling in Charlotte 22 years ago, has created a work of art to be raffled with the proceeds going to a local non-profit.

“It all began 10 years ago with a fairy house that my friend Ted Roberts and I created at the monument garden outside the Old Brick Store, which turned into an impromptu raffle when so many people wanted to buy it,” the slender and shy 67-year-old said. “That raised \$2,000 for COTS that year, and it lit a spark of possibility that something creative could attract people’s interest enough to buy a raffle ticket.”

Popularly known as COTS, the Committee on Temporary Shelter advocates for long-term solutions to end homelessness and provides emergency shelter, services and long-term housing for Vermonters who are experiencing homelessness or are marginally housed, according to its website.

Between now and Dec. 20, the restored, cobalt-blue children’s sled is on display at Village Wine and Coffee at 5288 Shelburne Road in Shelburne. Interested people can purchase a raffle ticket for \$5 and enter a drawing to win the sled and take it home for the holidays.

Cash or checks are the only forms of payment being accepted, and the raffle is being run on the honor system. There is a payment box under the sled, as well as a tin in which to deposit the filled-out raffle stubs. Checks can be made out to either the Charlotte or Shelburne food shelf. The proceeds will be equally divided between the two food pantries.

“She’s been a customer pretty much since we’ve opened, and she’s also donating all of the proceeds

to the local food shelves, which is the most important,” said Kevin Clayton, owner of Village Wine and Coffee, which regularly showcases local artists. “Most people don’t understand how much food insecurity there is around here.”

Lehmann said, “I like to find an unusual, found object that I can turn into a creative project that will then offer a raffle potential.”

A graduate of Columbia University with a degree in history, Lehmann finds inspiration in nature and loves working with her hands. For years, she created and maintained four seasonal displays around the World War I monument in Charlotte, before Roberts and his wife, Beth Sytsma, eventually took it over.

“Having always loved anything creative, from carving soap bars as a child to working in fused glass and textiles, if my hands can make it, I love it and I’m always engaged. I find it thrilling that you can make something beautiful out of simple objects and that they then go out into the larger world for someone’s enjoyment.”

This is the second sled that Lehmann has restored and raffled off. She found this one by the side of Lewis Creek Road, all rusted and with the paint mostly gone. Over several weeks she took the sled apart, stripped, sanded, reassembled, painted and then added the forest scene that covers most of the sled’s surface. Finally, she varnished it to protect the antique, which she estimates is at least 60 years old.

It would make a wonderful seasonal display on a covered porch or under a Christmas tree; however, she doesn’t recommend using it in the snow.

Lehmann hopes the Shelburne and Charlotte communities will rally for the local food shelves by supporting this raffle and raising several thousand dollars to help neighbors in need. “I’m grateful to Kevin and his great community spirit, which is allowing me to showcase the blue sled in a favorite community setting.”

Clayton will pick the winning ticket on Dec. 20 at 3:45 p.m.

(Lucie Lehmann is the artistically challenged sister of Alexandra Lehmann, as well as her biggest fan. Village Wine and Coffee is open Monday-Saturday from 8 a.m.-4 p.m.)



Photo by Lucie Lehmann

This is the fourth time Alexandra Lehmann has created a work of art to be raffled for a local nonprofit. It started 10 years ago with a fairy house at the monument garden outside the Old Brick Store.



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Hi Neighbor!

Lampman finds his sweet spot in family business

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

It’s not always an easy transition when you take the helm of your family’s business, but Eric Lampman made that move when he took the reins from his father in 2016. Lampman thinks the process was easier in his case because the company in question is Lake Champlain Chocolates.

“It’s different from other lines of work,” Lampman said. “It’s pure joy and indulgence and at the end of the day you’re always smiling.”

Lampman graduated from Skidmore College with a degree in management and business and a minor in economics. He enjoyed the fact that the program included case studies of local businesses, as well as some as far away as New Zealand. Although he already knew the family business well, Lampman felt he had a better grasp of it after graduation.

First, however, Lampman headed to Aspen to ski and work in the restaurant industry which, coincidentally, was something his parents had also done, albeit briefly. Lampman got to experience one of the best snow years Aspen has ever had and worked numerous positions, starting with runner but eventually including barbacking, waiting tables and high-end catering.

“That was a great experience in a quick amount of time,” he said. “A lot of my passion for food solidified there.”

Returning to Vermont, Lampman briefly tried to become a professional golfer but that didn’t pan out. His skills at the sport are evident since he was the men’s champion at the Vermont National Country Club in 2003 and 2007-12. Lampman

learned the sport from his paternal grandfather at a very young age and he continues to play.

Lampman also plays hockey with a local group and enjoys getting out on frozen ponds. He also plays paddle (sometimes called platform tennis) outside in the winter on what looks like a miniature tennis court, lifted off the ground and surrounded by chicken wire.

“It looks a little like racquetball,” he said, “but it’s outside under the lights. The colder the better.”

Lampman has also been getting his oldest son out on skis and skates.

For years, Lake Champlain Chocolates has used only Fair Trade-certified cocoa beans. All the sugar and coconut and most of the vanilla beans are also certified, and they try to work solely with organic suppliers.

For a time, the company was certified by Fair for Life which goes beyond the supply chain to include a company’s treatment of its workers. Unfortunately, the composite nature of chocolate and the different processes involved in creating product became too complex and it shifted to becoming a certified B corporation in May of 2018. Lampman believes this certification allows the company to focus on their product, their workers and the sustainability of the planet.

Initially, all production was done on Pine Street in Burlington, but that building was sold to Dealer.com. Roughly 10 years ago, the company moved warehousing and shipping to Williston but after some time they realized that dual locations meant trucks moving from one building to another several times a day. All production was moved to Williston in May 2021. The Pine Street facility is still used to make ice



Courtesy photo

Eric Lampman is continuing a delicious family tradition.

cream and retail specialties and houses the research and development team.

Prior to taking the role of president, Lampman led the research and development team, working with cocoa farmers in Africa and Central America. Lampman sees a parallel between those farms and the dairy farms and apple orchards of Vermont.

These days, Lampman is focusing his efforts on developing new products. “One of the things I really enjoy,” he said, “is creating new and interesting small-scale products for stores and then gearing them up for longevity and sustainability.”

Lampman was born in Charlotte and returned to his roots six years ago with his wife Willa. His sister, Ellen Reed, lives in Hinesburg and heads up purchasing and décor initiatives for the company.

Maybe a few years down the road, another Lampman might join the management team and keep Lake Champlain Chocolates a family business for many generations to come, but that may take a while. The Lampmans’ three children are all under 4.

“My kids have all shown they enjoy chocolate and ice cream,” Lampman said, “so the building blocks are in place.”

Time to get cracking on town office campaigning

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

’Tis the season when “it’s” loses its most-favored contraction status and “’tis” often supplants it as the preferred contraction for “it is.”

’Tis also the season when ’tis a good time to start thinking about running for vacant town offices.

If this sounds too early, consider: The deadline to have the candidate consent form and the candidate petition submitted to town clerk Mary Mead is less than two months away — 5 p.m. Jan. 30, 2023. The petition needs to have 30 signatures by that time.

Both of these forms are available on the town of Charlotte’s website by clicking on the town clerk tab in the column on the

left of the homepage at charlottetvt.org. This year Charlotte will hold its first ever Saturday Town Meeting Day on Saturday, March 4. That’s less than three months away.

Open offices include auditor (three-year term), cemetery commissioners (three-year and two-year terms), library trustee (five-year term), Champlain Valley School District board member (three-year term), delinquent tax collector (one-year term), town moderator (one-year term), road commissioner (one-year term), selectboard (three-year and two-year terms) and trustees of public funds (three-year and two-year terms).

’Tis time to get cracking. Don’t wait until ’twas the night before Town Meeting Day.

Community Roundup

Antiques Roadshow announces Shelburne Museum air dates

The 2023 Antiques Roadshow schedule has been announced and the segments that were filmed at Shelburne Museum last summer will air in spring 2023. The broadcast dates for the three episodes from Shelburne Museum are Mondays, April 24, May 1 and May 8 at 8 p.m. on PBS. Antiques Roadshow visited the Shelburne Museum on July 12 and attracted a crowd of more than 3,000 people. The filming of this sold-out antique appraisal event took place throughout the museum campus. Antiques Roadshow is PBS’s most-watched ongoing series and is seen by around 6 million viewers each week.

CVU graduate selected for art recognition

A 2022 Champlain Valley Union High graduate is featured in the 2022 Advanced Placement Art and Design digital exhibit. A photo by Iain Mahaffey of Charlotte is included in the exhibit. The exhibit features 50 high school artists from six countries selected from more than 62,000 portfolios.

The exhibit is designed not only to showcase the rigor and excellence of the AP Art and Design portfolio but also as a teaching tool shared with AP Art and Design students worldwide. In this capacity, high-achieving students’ artwork and statements, teacher statements, and school leader statements help teach best practices and support arts advocacy. Student participation in AP Art and Design requires that each student’s work is informed and guided by observation, research, experimentation, discussion, critical analysis and reflection, relating individual practices to the art world. Students document their ideas and practices to demonstrate conceptual and technical development to create a work portfolio. In May, students submit portfolios for evaluation. “AP Art and Design students consistently demonstrate innovation and creativity,” said Trevor Packer, head of the AP program. “Their portfolio development based on personal experiences continues to impress and inspire viewers.” The Advanced Placement Art and Design program was founded in 1972, and as of 1978, about 4,500 students had completed



Photo courtesy of Shelburne Museum
Lark E. Mason, appraiser of Asian arts on Antiques Roadshow, at Shelburne Museum this summer.

portfolios for submission to the program. Over 62,000 students participate annually. Research shows that AP students are better prepared for college, and those who receive a score of three or higher (on a scale of one to five) are eligible to receive college credit. AP

students are more likely to enroll in college, stay in college, do well in their classes and graduate on time in four years. Success on AP exams helps students save money on college tuition and graduate with less student debt over the course of their education.

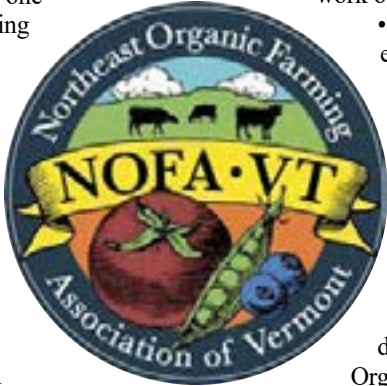
Stronger Together

Grange aligned with Northeast Organic Farming Association

Linda Hamilton
Contributor

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) and the Charlotte Grange are like two sides of the same valuable coin. The mission and vision of both are closely aligned and we share core values. Our programs reinforce and build on each other, with Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont uniquely able to also offer technical services and specific advice related to organic agriculture. Not familiar with Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont? Let me introduce you. Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont is part of the Northeast Organic Farming Association network which coalesced in the region in 1970-80 after rising disillusionment with industrialized agriculture among those concerned with its environmental, social and health impacts. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont is one of the oldest organic farming associations in the U.S., founded in 1971 by a group of Vermont farmers who believed that commercial farming could be done in a much healthier way. Its mission is to promote organic practices to build an economically viable, ecologically sound and socially just Vermont agricultural system that benefits all life. Its vision is for thriving organic farms and agriculturally based communities that nourish people and enhance the environment. Basic values which both organizations believe in and support:

- Food Security and Equity. All people, regardless of circumstance, should have access to nourishing local, organic and affordable, fairly-traded food.
- Farm Viability. Government and local community policies should support farmers’ ability to make a living on the land and support themselves, their families and their employees. Policies should also support the ability of farms and farm enterprises to pass those enterprises on to subsequent generations of farmers. Both organizations advocate at all government levels for laws and regulations which support farm and rural community viability and just practices.
- Ecological and Human Health. Organic practices are promoted because they enhance soil, plant, animal and human health by



producing nourishing food and protecting ecological systems and biodiversity for current and future generations. Organic certification obtained through Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont’s rigorous process verifies these practices, ensuring that organic products are produced with integrity and transparency. The Vermont Organic Farmers (VOF) label and certification process is a high-integrity application of the USDA National Organic Program regulations, making it a credible and valuable tool for both producers and consumers.

- Community. Both organizations recognize that resiliency in the face of today’s rapidly changing environmental and social conditions is critically important for both food producers and communities. Both believe that engaged communities are more resilient communities. A vibrant local food system provides opportunities to create genuine connections among people, to nurture those relationships and to honor the work of those who feed others.
- Education. We both emphasize the sharing of trustworthy information because that benefits everyone. Education at all levels is a basic element of a culture of sharing, which in turn builds community through mutual aid, civic engagement and leadership development. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont also provides production, business planning and technical assistance; access to relevant information; funding opportunities; and help with farms’ major transitions.
- Fellowship is Food for the Soul. The Grange has a long tradition of gathering people together regularly to share good food and conversation, celebrate artistic and other talents, play and have fun together, engage in dialog around issues of community concern and do community service. The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont also understands that this kind of fellowship is food for the soul and serves up regular opportunities to both learn and laugh together through public on-farm events (which often include their mobile pizza oven), interactive technical workshops, inspirational educational conferences open to all, with plenty of time and space for social interaction and networking, including the famous (free) ice cream social.

Membership in both the Grange and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of

Vermont is open to everyone supporting these values, whether you come from a farming or homesteading background or not, and whether you wish to engage in the programs or just support them through financial contributions. We all have a stake in the success of the programs of these organizations because we all eat, and we all want our communities to be resilient and food secure. To learn more, please visit our

websites: nofavt.org and charlottegrange.org. And hey ... No farms, no food. So don’t let a week go by without thanking a Vermont farmer either in person, or better yet, by buying what they produce in a market or directly from them. (Linda Hamilton is a homesteader in East Charlotte and member of both the Charlotte Grange and the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont.)

Outdoors

Trail committee finds a sign is more than just a sign

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Putting up trail signs is a lot more than digging a hole, putting in a post and nailing a sign to it.

Members of Charlotte Trails Committee can tell you about the many things that are involved in marking a trail so users know the way once they’re on the trail, putting up other signs so people can find the trail and signs to show where to park to access a trail. But they can also tell you about all the things that happened before they had the different signs to put up.

“There’s a lot of behind-the-scenes work that goes into something that might seem as simple as just putting up signs,” trails committee chair Bill Regan said.

Before volunteers could even start putting up signs, the committee had to find a design firm, Brault & Barnes Design in Vergennes, which came up with several options. Then committee members had to go before the selectboard to see if it would endorse the designs the committee preferred for the various signs needed.

The design of a roadside sign needs to be different than a trailhead sign, which needs to be different than a wayfinding sign, which goes up where there’s a trail junction.

With all of the different signs required, the committee realized it needed to have an inventory of the number and location of all the places where signs should go. That involved a GPS mapping project as well, Regan said.

Luckily, Brault & Barnes was not only able to come up with a design the committee and the selectboard liked, it also was able to help with the mapping and inventory.

Then the committee had to put the project out to bid for a company to actually



Left: A sign at Plouffe Lane and Carpenter Road that someone used a shotgun on. ‘We are better than this,’ selectboard chair Jim Faulkner said of the vandalism.



Right: Larry Sommers, left, and David Ziegelman stand next to one of the many signs they worked many hours on over the past year to help upgrade signs on Charlotte’s trail system.

manufacture and help install the signs. That bid was awarded to an Essex company with the creative name of Design Signs.

And then the signs were made and have been going up for the past couple of months. All the credit for seeing this work through

to completion should go to David Ziegelman and Larry Sommers, the members of the trails committee who spearheaded the sign project, Regan said. “They really had the vision.”

“They’ve done enormous amounts of work, untold hours behind the scenes to make this happen. It’s taken really the better part of the year to go from start to finish, so it was a ton of volunteer time on their behalf,” he said.

And the project has come in almost \$100 under the just over \$17,600 allocated for it.

Unfortunately, the work wasn’t over once the signs were installed. Someone shot up two trail signs at Plouffe Lane on Carpenter Road.

(In the interest of full disclosure: Bill Regan is a member of The Charlotte News board of directors.)

‘Tis the season to prevent holiday decoration fires

Mary Brant
Contributor

Most home fires involving candles happen in December, when one in five home decoration fires also occur.

“As more of us light candles to celebrate the holidays, we want to ensure everyone stays safe from home fires — the nation’s most frequent disaster,” said John Montes, of the Red Cross. “Help protect your family by using battery-operated candles, testing your smoke alarms monthly and practicing your two-minute escape plan with everyone in your household.”

Follow these safety tips and visit redcross.org/fire for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family:

- If you must use candles, keep them away from anything that could burn, and place them out of reach of pets and children. Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Check all holiday light cords to ensure they aren’t frayed or broken. Don’t string too many strands of lights together — no more than three per extension cord.
- Ensure outside decorations are for outdoor use and fasten lights securely to your home or trees. If using hooks or nails outside, make sure they are insulated to avoid an electrocution or fire hazard.
- If buying an artificial tree, look for the fire-resistant label. When putting it up, keep it away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat. Never use electric lights on metallic trees.
- If getting a live tree, make sure it’s fresh and keep it watered. To test if the tree is fresh, bend the needles up and down to make



The Charlotte News file photo

sure no needles fall off.

- Don’t light the fireplace if hanging stockings or other decorations on the mantel.

You can also download the free Red Cross emergency app by searching “American Red Cross” in app stores.

(Mary Brant is regional communications manager with the American Red Cross’ northern New England region.)

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In The Outdoors

Share gratitude for outdoors through gift giving

Elizabeth Bassett
Contributor

December is a month for taking stock of what we appreciate and how to support the people and organizations we care about. Some year-end free associating follows.

Charlotte is rich in outdoor resources: Vermont's first state park and three Nature Conservancy preserves, Williams Woods and Raven Ridge, both with marked trails and parking, and Lewis Creek Hill Natural Area, 123 conserved acres on Spear Street that has neither parking nor marked trails.

Charlotte Trails, including the Town Link Trail and Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, are volunteer-driven resources being improved by dedicated Charlotters with a mission and vision. If you are able to make a financial contribution, tax-deductible donations go to: Town of Charlotte, with Trails Committee or Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge in the memo lines. And, next time you have a chance, thank the volunteers who make your enjoyment possible.

Gifts of experience, nourishment and knowledge

Shelburne Farms membership

Membership supports the stewardship of Shelburne Farms and its educational and agricultural missions. Members receive free admission to walking trails, including the Children's Farmyard, advance notice of events, discounts and newsletters. shelburnefarms.org.

CSA membership

Community-supported agriculture (CSA) memberships make great gifts. Subscribers invest in a farmer's cost in exchange for a share of production. Consider a gift card to a local farm market. Charlotte is home to a number of both, with more appearing each season. (I hesitate to list them for fear

of leaving out a farmer.) Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA) is a source for local farms and keep reading The Charlotte News.

Green Mountain Club membership

Green Mountain Club is the non-profit steward of Vermont's Long Trail and membership is a year-round gateway to the outdoors. The Green Mountain Club offers classes and clinics and its volunteers organize outings year-round. Other tangible benefits include notification of hikes, member rates for Green Mountain Club workshops (learn winter hiking or how to be safe in the woods) and discounts at some inns and outdoors stores. greenmountainclub.org.

Be prepared

Slippery season

Ice has already settled on some shady stretches of trail. Traction devices to keep us upright abound, a worthwhile investment for anyone who plans to walk or run during the winter months. The number and types of grippers have proliferated, perhaps because climate change has delivered more ice and less snow and perhaps because baby boomers are aging and developing brittle bones. My repertoire includes YakTrax, MicroSpikes, Get-A-Grip and Icebugs, boots or shoes with spikes embedded in the soles. Shop at a local outfitter to explore the options and see and feel the differences among the offerings. Even the most expensive are cheaper than a broken bone.

Winter hiking

If you plan to winter hike there's a lot to consider. The Green Mountain Club urges hydration, fuel and staying dry. Make sure to drink water even if you don't feel thirsty. Carry high-value foods: cheese, peanut butter, trail mix or bars and chocolate.

Remember the three Ws: a wicking layer next to the skin; a warm layer (or several)

of wool or fleece; and a waterproof and windproof top layer. Leave cotton at home. Once cotton gets wet it stays wet and will leech heat from your body. Wear insulated boots designed for winter hiking. Pack extra clothes — mittens, hats, layers, chemical hand warmers, an extra jacket — even a protective layer in case you get stranded.

Winter days are short so always carry a headlamp. Make sure someone knows where you are heading and when you expect to return. Be smart to stay safe.

Snowshoes

When there's almost no snow or a fresh dump that's too deep to navigate on skis, snowshoes are a salvation. They are available in many shapes and sizes and can last for decades (mine have). Variables include bindings, materials, size, shape and crampons.

The most basic plastic models for kids start at \$30 and new adult snowshoes can be found for about \$100. Look for used ones at swaps or second-hand stores. Shoe from your back door or on preserved lands in Charlotte. Float over deep snow, scale steep slopes and stride over stumps and rocks. You'll burn up to 1,000 calories per hour, stay toasty and see fresh tracks, scat and the landing trail of raptors.

Final thoughts

Shop locally

For every \$100 spent in independently owned stores, \$69 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other expenditures. If you shop at a national chain only \$43 stays local. Spend it online and nothing comes home.

Charlotte Food Shelf

Many of our neighbors struggle to keep a roof over their heads, food on the table, gas in the car and heat in the radiators. No gift-wrap required. Give as generously as you can. P.O. Box 83, Charlotte 05445.



Photo by George Dolgikh

Outdoor non-profits

Local non-profits add value and safety to our outdoor experience. Local Motion's Trail Finder, trailfinder.info, is an invaluable resource for walking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing and in-line skating. Your gift supports education, advocacy, the bike ferry, bike and pedestrian safety and special events: localmotion.org.

Other non-profits that support our natural world: Charlotte Land Trust, Lake Champlain Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, Lake Champlain Committee, Intervale Center and The Nature Conservancy.

If you are able, consider a tax-deductible donation to The Charlotte News where you are reading this. All contributions will be doubled by a grant from NewsMatch. May your generosity and thoughtfulness bring joy this holiday season.

Happy Holidays & Happy New Year from the Gals!



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Next to the Shelburne Meat Market



Into the Woods



Photos by Alyssa Bennett

Contrary to the story told in cartoons, bats also live in trees. Managing your forest for bats is important for the health and habitat of these valuable members of the ecosystem.

Managing for bats — an important member of the forest community

Ethan Tapper
Contributor

Scientists from the University of Illinois recently studied the effects of removing bats from a forest, finding that a forest without bats had three times as many insects and five times as much defoliation as a forest with bats.

The researchers postulated that this increased defoliation would increase forest vulnerability — making trees more susceptible to other stressors at a time when forests are already stressed from climate change, invasive species, deforestation, forest fragmentation and more. This research made me consider the many pieces and parts that make forests work, and, more specifically, the role that bats play in forests.

There are over 1,400 species of bats, accounting for about 20 percent of the mammalian species on Earth. Besides being diverse, bats are extremely numerous: about 25 percent of all the mammals on Earth are bats.

Vermont’s bat species can live 20-30 years or more (the little brown bat has been documented living as long as 34 years).

Most species have only one pup (young) per year, making their populations especially vulnerable to decline. The United States is home to 50 species of bats, nine of which live in Vermont. Five of Vermont’s bat species are state and/or federally threatened or endangered.

All of Vermont’s bats are insectivores, eating about half their body weight — as many as 1,000 insects — per hour. Though there are many predators of insects, bats are the primary predator of nocturnal insects, including many moth and beetle species. In forests, insect defoliation is normal and natural, but insects exist in a dynamic balance with ecosystems and with their predators. Too many insects and too much defoliation — such as could be caused by the loss of bats — can create a major imbalance in our forests, with ecosystem-wide implications.

Bat populations in Vermont have been declining for a variety of reasons, but most dramatically from “white-nose syndrome,” a disease caused by the fungus *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*. White-nose syndrome, first discovered in Albany, N.Y., in 2007, has killed millions of bats, including 90-100 percent of the bats on some sites.

Of Vermont’s nine bat species, six (five of which are threatened or endangered) congregate in large numbers in hibernacula

— caves and abandoned mines — for the winter, while the other three migrate to southern climes. All nine species spend much of the summer in our forests, foraging, mating and raising their young.

Besides protecting hibernacula and water sources, managing forests for bats largely consists of encouraging two types of habitat: roosting habitat (where bats sleep during the day and raise their young) and foraging habitat.

In the forest, bats roost under shaggy tree bark, in crevices and cavities (holes) in trees, in the foliage of large trees and on sunny cliffs and talus slopes. Active roost trees can be absolutely full of bats: some harbor hundreds of females with their flightless young.

You can improve roosting habitat by leaving or creating dead-standing trees (“snags”) in a variety of sizes and at different stages of decay. If snags aren’t naturally abundant in your forest you can create some by “girdling” a few unhealthy trees per acre. Additionally, retain legacy trees — large and old trees that are allowed to decline and die naturally — and all shagbark hickory, which are a particularly important roosting species for the federally endangered Indiana bat. If you are planning on cutting any potential roost trees, avoid doing so from April through October, when bats are active in the forest.

In general, great foraging habitat for bats consists of diverse, complex and multi-generational forests. You can encourage habitat like this by cutting small groups of unhealthy trees, which will both create canopy gaps (an important foraging feature for both bats and insectivorous birds) and encourage the development of new generations of trees. Between canopy gaps, you can improve bat habitat by thinning the forest: cutting unhealthy trees which are in competition with healthier trees. As you manage your forest, make sure to leave plenty of legacy trees, snags and cavity trees.

While it’s easy to forget about them, bats are an important piece of the complex community that is a forested ecosystem. Managing for bats is another way to help safeguard the health and the future of our forests.

(Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Dept. 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.)

A hellebore by any other name



Photo by Elizabeth Bassett

Bassett says her Christmas rose gives her such joy by flowering in winter. Actually, the hellebore family, of which this is one, has no relation to roses. Hellebore is thought to come from Greek words meaning fawn or beast (helle) and eat (bore), which is not a good idea since many hellebores are poisonous, in spite of an old belief that they cured madness.

Sixth graders meet with Phillies baseball scout

Charlotte Central School Committee Work
Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

The whole Charlotte Central School staff spent part of Wednesday’s professional learning time working in committees to enhance the experiences of the students. By design, these committees have a diverse team of staff members who share their expertise and passion for continuous improvement of the school.

The School Safety Committee leads school safety work by developing protocols, training and communication with guidance from the Vermont Agency of Education.

The Sustainability Committee is responsible for the school environment (including the gardens and compost shed), the Farm to School initiative, and supports students and teachers as stewards of our environment.

The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Committee coordinates staff training, shares data trends with the staff and plans school celebrations.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee promotes equity and inclusion, as well as working to disrupt systems of inequity. The team creates learning experiences for students, professional learning for staff and aligns school practices to the Champlain Valley School District equity policy.

The Program Council is made up of representatives from all cohorts of the school and focuses on big systems work such as the continuous improvement plan, the multi-tiered system of supports, and the systems and structures efforts.

Charlotte Central School is a very busy place as the school heads into the holidays. The fifth-eighth grade classrooms will be gathering donations until Dec. 16 to fill 16 food boxes for the local food shelf. These boxes are needed to sustain our local families throughout the winter break. There are three extra boxes in the lobby for anyone who is inspired to contribute.

Tips from a baseball scout
Members of the Alpha sixth grade team

were thrilled to attend a question-and-answer session with community member Erick Dalton this week during morning advisory.

Dalton, a pro scout for the Philadelphia Phillies, opened the floor to any questions students had. Some of the messages that resonated from his visit can be applied far beyond the realm of sports: What do you do when no one else is looking? How can you build up those around you to have a stronger team? How do hardships offer opportunities for resilience and perseverance? What is the power of an honest apology?

The school is grateful to Dalton for giving his time and energy to Charlotte Central this week. These questions could be used as conversation starters at home.

Preschool lottery open
The Champlain Valley School District Early Education Program is now accepting applications for a random preschool lottery drawing for the 2023-24 school year.

This lottery is for an opportunity to enroll in one of the school-based classrooms which run 10 hours per week. (Note: Any eligible students from Charlotte who are drawn would attend classes at Hinesburg Community School.)

Children who will be age 3 or older by Sept. 1, 2023, and who have not enrolled in kindergarten are eligible to enter the lottery.

All applications must be received by Feb. 3, 2023, and are located on the district’s early education website at tinyurl.com/3bu4z678. Paper applications are available upon request.

For more information, please visit the district website or contact director of early education Erin Gagne at egagne@cvsdvt.org.

Brief reminders
The last two district budget development meetings will be held on Jan. 10 and 17 at 6 p.m. in room 160 at the high school and online (more information at cvsdvt.org/budget).

The Charlotte Central School Winter Concert will take place this Monday, Dec. 19, at 6:30 in the multi-purpose room. The fifth-eighth grade chorus and four of the school bands will be performing.

Education

Do’s and don’ts of transferring colleges

Margo Bartsch
Contributor

The college admissions buzzword is finding the “fit” between the student’s interests and the college’s environment. Students select a college after evaluating the choices from their list of admitted colleges. While at college, what if this living and learning “fit” is not ideal? The next step is to consider transferring colleges.

Nationally, more than one-third of students transfer before earning a degree. Top reasons to transfer include finances, the pandemic and school fit. Forbes published in 2021 that highly selective colleges received the largest increase in transfer applications. The University of Vermont reports that 15 percent of their entire student body are transfer students.

The Common Application is the standard form when a high school student applies to college. This is the same process when applying to transfer colleges; however, the student’s application lists their college activities, classes and recommendations. The transfer application does not include the high school transcript or activities.

For example, the University of Vermont requires a minimum of two semesters of full-time undergraduate courses and a 3.4 minimum GPA. The Common Application for transfer students includes honors and activities, college transcript, teacher recommendations, additional references and essays. Some colleges have a supplemental application with specific information and additional essays.

The transfer essay questions vary in topics and word counts. Many essay prompts ask for a personal statement, academic interests, reason to transfer, and desire to attend the new college.

Since a college student’s mindset is typically different than their high school mindset, it is important to consider the qualities that draw them to the new colleges. Ideas to write about include their interests in academic majors, abroad programs, internship opportunities and social clubs to join.

Reaching out to current college professors is important to request an engaging reference letter. With winter break approaching, now is the time to contact professors to write a recommendation. Be sure to include the deadline to submit their letter. The student will need to nominate the teacher in the recommendation section of the Common Application.

In contacting a professor for a recommendation letter, here is an example of a short note:

Dear Professor, I hope you had a great semester. I am considering transferring

colleges for the fall of 2023. Since your class is one of my favorites, I am hoping that you would write me a recommendation. Your class projects (elaborate) and academic topics have sparked my interest in my future major. I will keep in touch with updates. Thanks again! Sincerely, Happy Student.

Transfer application deadlines vary for each college. Check the websites for specific dates and application requirements. For example, some colleges charge a fee in sending transcripts to each transfer college. Some colleges might request standardized test scores and AP results to be sent directly to the college.

In developing a transfer list, it is helpful to cast a wide net of options since a student’s priorities can change by the end of the second semester. Some students initially do not want to include local colleges on their list, but later decide that the cost, social environment and geographic familiarity are benefits.

If a student is currently at a big university, they could consider a smaller campus for more personal connections with peers and professors. Conversely, if a student feels that a small college has limited classes and social choices, they could explore a bigger environment. The goal is to find a new environment that covers academic and personal priorities.

Transfer students should research costs, living situations and career support to make a smooth adjustment to the new college. Transferring is a change with the intent to find a campus community that is supportive of the student’s concerns and goals. College admissions offices typically have campus and online information sessions that can answer specific questions.

With many colleges loosening pandemic restrictions, visiting the college and local town can provide a feel for the campus pulse. Some colleges allow prospective students to attend a class or visit the cafeteria to experience the social interactions.

Learning is an ongoing process with twists and turns along the way. Considering transferring colleges is a way to compare alternatives, including remaining at the current college. By exploring new opportunities, the knowledge gained can be potentially life changing.

Your college experience can be the springboard to personal and professional success. Transferring college can create a fresh path forward. Nothing ventured, nothing gained!

(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.)



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Sports

Once upon a time: A hockey team in Charlotte

Juliann Phelps
Contributor

Over 77 years ago, Charlotte came together as a community to build a hockey rink and cheer on the Charlotte Rockets, an amateur team who donned their white sweaters and hit the biscuit nearly every winter weekend — weather permitting.

Playing in the Champlain Amateur Hockey league the Rockets suffered losses and skated to victories, playing against teams like the Lakeside Hockey Club, the National Guard and the Service Station Six.

According to “Busy Work,” a book by S. Russell Williams, the genesis of the rink came about in 1954 when townspeople who played elsewhere decided to develop McNeil’s Pond, a popular skating spot on Greenbush Road, into a hockey rink. William’s book, published in 1980 by the Charlotte Historical Society, is a typewritten manuscript featuring a collection of 22 colorful stories capturing aspects of Charlotte history.

Williams describes the rink construction in detail. Players and volunteers collected lumber and built “chest-high heavy wooden boards in Bill William’s barn and Albert LeBouf’s blacksmith shop.” An innovation using metal hinges between the boards enabled them to be folded or removed for rink maintenance.

The first wooden goals were later upgraded to metal and the nets procured by Harry Webb, who “came up with them

from some unnamed source.” And thus, Charlotte’s first hockey rink was in business, bustling with weekend games officiated by Lefty Joyal and Doc Wainer.

Wainer also “once in a while acted as the team physician, stitching players back together again.”

With the popularity of the games bringing spectators from other towns, Williams said “an old fishing shanty on shore was manned (womanned) by ladies of the Library Association selling hot dogs and coffee. A really festive affair!”

A Jan. 24, 1950, Burlington Free Press brief headlined, “Service Station Six tops Rockets,” said, “One of the first hockey games of the Vermont winter season was played in Charlotte Sunday when the Barcelou and Teller Service Station sextet, formerly the Lakeside team, defeated the Charlotte Rockets 9-6. D. Joyal and Allard scored three goals each while N. Ritchie had two and Meunier one. Webb pulled the ‘hat trick’ for the Rockets.”

The rink was maintained by volunteers who kept the pond clear with varying equipment. A Feb. 11, 1953, article from the Burlington Free Press, “Hockey Game Planned Sunday in Charlotte,” reported on the excellent condition of the pond for skating which would “be kept clear of snow by a snowblower donated by Douglas Burden, Harry H. Webb and Dunbar Bostwick.”

Surprisingly, access to the rink wasn’t limited with “the lights also in operation,”



Photos courtesy of the Charlotte Historical Society

The Charlotte Rockets.

adding “anyone wishing to skate at night may obtain the key from William Horsford after 6 p.m.”

Perhaps the most colorful part of Williams’ story about the Charlotte Rockets was the Jeep that fell through the ice, “with Henry Webb and Rhodes Bucklin aboard” 10 feet from shore.

“Henry Lane, with a well-balanced sand truck, pulled them out.”

Another time a tractor broke through the pond ice, with Henry Parker “to the rescue with his half-truck.”

While there are a few news articles here and there, the “official” team roster and record seem to be lost to history.

We’ll never know who the duster (benchwarmer) was or if there was a celly (celebration) after a clapper (slap shot goal).

According to Williams, the Charlotte Rockets “did very well — winning many and losing some.”

He lists the players’ names as: Guy Cheng, Dick Thurber, Rhodes Bucklin, Neil Frink, Roy Thorpe, Romeo Bolduc, Gene Couture, “Pat” Moore, Harry Webb (Shelburne), Ned Jennison (Shelburne), Dunbar Bostwick (Shelburne), John Dobson (Shelburne), Alan Cobb (Middlebury). Lastly he writes, “any omitted names would be welcomed by the Charlotte Historical Society.”

The team decided to keep the momentum going, forming a softball team in the spring of 1949, according to another Burlington Free Press article, “Members of the squad already signed include Roy Thorpe, Sid Falby, John Sheehan, Don Dolliver, Rodney Dolliver, Rhodes Bucklin, Ed Crane, Bill Horsford, Bill Williams, Carroll Wrisley, Thomas Schermerhorn, Harry Webb, Larry Johnson, Pat Moore, Neil Frink, Dick Thurbert and Bill Root.”

McNeil Pond remained a popular skating spot until a new rink was built across the road, said Jenny Cole, the Charlotte Library’s interlibrary loan librarian and a local historian. The pond and new rink are on



A brief on a Charlotte Rockets game, Burlington Free Press, Jan. 24, 1950.



Ladies of the Library Association concession stand.

Greenbush road approximately a mile north of the Ferry Road intersection.

“You can see the contours where they made the rink,” she said, noting it included lights, a warming hut and equipment shed.

This rink was featured in a winter 1971 Vermont Life article, “Charlotte’s On the Ice All Winter” written by David Bredemeier. “The first skaters to arrive start a fire in the warming hut’s oil drum stove. Wood is brought in to dry. As more skaters arrive, everyone takes time to clear the ice.”

The article, as well as ice skating photos and S. Russell Williams’ chapter about the Charlotte Rockets, are currently on display at the library.

Bredemeier paints a vivid picture of a community skating rink: “The city, resort and school rinks are fine in their way, but are too distant and too expensive for many skaters — especially the children living in small towns. Of course, there are the farm ponds

SEE **HOCKEY** PAGE 13



Photo courtesy of the Charlotte Historical Society
Charlotte Rockets playing defense.

Calendar of Events

Mary Landon
Please send event listings to
calendar@thecharlottenews.org at
least three weeks in advance.

Audubon bird count
Weds., Dec. 14-Thurs., Jan. 5
The Audubon Christmas bird count is under way. To participate in this rewarding science project, see tinyurl.com/pmzptm56.

Online open studio
Thursdays, Dec. 15 & 22, 6-8 p.m.
The Poartry Project of Charlotte hosts an online meeting place for creatives. Drop in, work on your project or craft at home and enjoy sharing inspiration and interacting with others. To register, see poartry.org/open-studio. More info at poartryproject@gmail.com.

Very Merry Oklahoma!
Friday, Dec. 16, 6:30 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 17, 2 & 6:30 p.m.
The Very Merry Theatre troupe presents Oklahoma! at its Old North End Community Center location on Allen Street in Burlington. Performances are free and appropriate for all family members. Donations gratefully accepted. More info at verymerrytheatre.org/performances.

Create a succulent planter
Saturday, Dec. 17, various times
Red Wagon Plants in Hinesburg is offering a make-and-take class. Participants complete an arrangement of succulents in a container, your own or one from the shop. Class offered at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., or 1 p.m. Sign up at tinyurl.com/yc4e85rv.

Messiah sing
Sunday, Dec. 18, 2 p.m.
The Congregational Church in downtown Middlebury hosts a public singalong featuring selections from Handel's Messiah. Donations gladly accepted. Learn more by calling Jeff at 802-989-7355.

Hinesburg choral concert
Sunday, Dec. 18, 2 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.
Under the direction of Rufus Patrick, the South County Chorus and the

HOCKEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

and low fields that sometimes freeze over, but these aren't reliable and are often spoiled by snow."

The essence of a community ice rink in Charlotte continues today. After a few iterations, the current rink sits nestled behind Pease Mountain at the Charlotte Central School. It's still maintained by volunteers, tirelessly flooding and clearing the snow from the ice each season.

This year Craig Reynolds, Bill Fraser-Harris, Ed Sulva and Dave Schermerhorn will be making sure the surface is glassy, the lights remain on and the warming hut stands ready to keep the chill off hands and toes.

Charlotte Recreation is currently promoting its annual ice-skate swap at the town hall.

"Any project run by volunteers cannot always boast the most smooth sailing or the finest equipment," Bredemier said in Vermont Life, "but it is a tribute to the enthusiasm and effort put forth by townspeople and their children, an affirmative test of its value, a source of pride and pleasure to the whole town."

Who knows, maybe local pick-up hockey games could come around like Little League baseball has again at the town beach ball field.

(Thanks to Jenny Cole, the Charlotte Library and the Charlotte Historical Society for the images and articles, and NCAA.com for the colorful hockey slang.)

Vergennes singalong

Saturday, Dec. 17
5-6:30 p.m.

Local families are invited to gather at City Park in downtown Vergennes for a community singalong around the fire pit. Roast marshmallows, sing carols, sip hot chocolate and feel festive. Free family event. More info at vergennesdowntown.org.



Hinesburg Artist Series orchestra present their holiday concert at St. Jude Catholic Church. Two free performances; donations accepted. You are also encouraged to bring a non-perishable item for the Hinesburg Food Shelf.

Mushroom medicine
Monday, Dec. 19, 6-7:30 p.m.
Spoonful Herbs offers a class on fungi folk wisdom, processing techniques and medicinal benefits of wild and cultivated forest fungi. Class is at City Market, Burlington's south end location; see tinyurl.com/bdd8ejuj for more info and to register.

Teen winter retreat
Tues., Dec. 27-Sunday, Jan. 1, 2023
The ReTribe organization in Underhill hosts a winter retreat for teens to connect with their community, set intentions and cultivate compassion

in a safe and non-judgmental group. Celebrate the passage into a new year with cooking, games, winter sports and more. For info and to register, see retribe.org/winter-retreat.

Palette knife skills
Wednesday, Dec. 28, 6-8 p.m.
Join Charlotte poet, author and artist JC Wayne, founder of the Poartry Project, in a virtual art class for students wishing to increase their comfort with palette-knife painting. Materials list provided upon registration at poartry.org/workshops.

Bird monitoring
Saturday, Dec. 31, 8-9:30 a.m.
All levels of bird enthusiasts are welcome to the Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington for an outdoor walk along forest trails and meadows,

SEE **CALENDAR** PAGE 14



The Town of Charlotte
MEETINGS
Visit charlottetvt.org
for more information.

Planning Commission:
Regular Meeting
Thursday, Dec. 15, 7 - 8:30 p.m.

Selectboard
Tuesday, Dec. 27, 6:30 p.m.

Development Review Board
Regular Meeting - CANCELLED
Wednesday, Dec. 28,

Monthly Meeting of Trails
Committee
Tuesday, Jan. 3, 2023, 6:30- 8 p.m.

CHARLOTTE PROPERTY TRANSFERS NOVEMBER 2022

Nov. 1 Patrick & Lisa Roche to Gregory Bright & Kathleen Quinn 981 Church Hill Rd..55 acres \$430,000 w/dwl

Nov. 1 Braxton Robasson & Penninah Ragasa to Walnut Grove LLC 175 Church Hill Rd. 5.10 acres \$545,774 w/dwl

Nov. 2 Cody G. & Kylie Spiegel to John H. & Katie F. Bowman 4728 Mt.Philo Rd. 1.04 acres \$765,000 w/dwl

Nov. 3 Lee & Deborah Smith to Patrick & Lisa Roche 394 Wildwood West 1.04 acres \$530,000 w/dwl

Nov. 10 Kevin & Dawn Wipaki to 5483 Greenbush Revocable Trust 5483 Greenbush Rd. 40.52 acres \$1,376,665 w/dwl

Nov. 16 Erin Hyer & Christopher Brown to Charles Ashley & Mayo Fujii 2030 Greenbush Rd. 4.08 acres \$985,000 w/dwl

Nov. 18 David & Jane Akin to Douglas Schneilde & Anita Royer 1711 Greenbush Rd. 5.9 acres \$750,000 w/dwl

Nov. 21 Michael Marshall to Stonehouse Properties LLC 449 Prindle Rd. 25.0 acres \$250,000 land only

Nov. 22 Cynthia Marshall to Allen Brook Partners LLC 396 Prindle Rd. 10.0 acres \$479,000 w/dwl

Nov. 22 Jeffrey & Tammy Hall to Muddy Brook Field Farm LLC 993 Hinesburg Rd. 156 acres \$2,400,000 w/dwl

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



Calendar of Events

CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

watching for local species. Bring binoculars if you have them and dress for the weather. Free program; register by calling 802-434-2167 or see tinyurl.com/2xxz425z. Donations gratefully accepted.

Out with the old
Saturday, Dec. 31, all day
Burlington hosts Highlight, a celebration of the transition from 2022 to 2023. Daytime and evening events for all ages. For complete schedule, see highlight.community.

New Year’s Eve opera concert
Saturday, Dec. 31, 3 p.m.
Vermont Opera in Concert presents local and national artists at McCarthy Arts Center, St. Michael’s College, Colchester. Pre-concert talk by Mary Jo Heath, commentator on Saturday Afternoon at the Metropolitan Opera. Purchase tickets in advance at tinyurl.com/mrzazwps or call 802-654-2000.

NEXT YEAR
Blood drive
Thurs., Jan. 5, 11:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
St. Jude Parish in Hinesburg holds a Red Cross blood drive. Give in January for a chance to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LVII. See redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED-CROSS to schedule a time to give.

French cafe music
Thursday, Jan. 5, 6-8:30 p.m.
Tournesol performs at Shelburne Vineyard with music reminiscent of Paris in the 1930s and 1940s. Free event, two sets of music. See tinyurl.com/mpze274f for more info.

Register for Access
starting Friday, Jan. 6
The next season of Access classes at Champlain Valley Union High School in Hinesburg runs from Feb. 1-June 2, 2023. The program offers numerous courses for adults and young adults. Classes are of varying lengths. Start registering online Jan. 6 at cvsdvt.ce.eleyo.com.

Bells of good cheer
Fri., Jan. 6, 7 p.m.
St. James Episcopal Church, Essex Junction.
Saturday, Jan. 7, 7 p.m.
South Hero Congregational Church, South Hero
Sunday, Jan. 8, 3 p.m.
Faith United Methodist Church, Burlington
The Northern Bronze Handbell Ensemble presents its holiday program for all ages. Tickets available at the door. More info at northernbronze.org.

Cabaret
Fri., Jan. 6, 7 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 7, 2 & 7 p.m., Sunday, Jan. 8, 4 p.m.
The Very Merry Theatre performs musical at the Old North End Community Center in Burlington. Free performances are appropriate for older kids and adults; donations gratefully accepted to support programs for 5-18 year olds in all aspects of theatre production. More info at verymerrytheatre.org/performances.

Winter bald eagle survey
Jan. 6-20
Audubon Vermont asks local residents to report any sightings of bald eagles during these dates to gather data about overwintering birds. Online submissions may be made at tinyurl.com/45vsjnx9

or by using a free eBird account through the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The Pieces I Am
Sunday, Jan. 8, 2 p.m.
This documentary about author Toni Morrison is part of the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival and will be screened at Town Hall Theater in Middlebury. For tickets or more info, see tinyurl.com/2n222xxb.

Afghan musicians
Thurs., Jan. 12, 7:30-9 p.m.
Heart of Afghanistan features musicians whose music is currently banned in Afghanistan. With harmonium, piano, violin, tabla and voice, the four men perform pieces representing the historical progression of traditional music in their country at the Mahaney Arts Center at Middlebury College. For more info and tickets, see tinyurl.com/rkar5j4r.

Vineyard bluegrass
Friday, Jan. 13, 6-8:30 p.m.
Shelburne Vineyard welcomes Vermont trio, Hot Pickin’ Party, to its loft stage for a free evening of traditional and original bluegrass tunes. For more info, see tinyurl.com/yvu96uhp.

Frey movie, part 2
Weds., Jan. 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
See Part 2 of the movie about Swiss architect Albert Frey, called The Architectural Interpreter. Movie is shown at Burlington’s Contois Auditorium and is part of the Architecture + Design Film Series. Free; doors open at 6 p.m. To read more, see adfilmseries.org/films.

Vermont’s young forests
Saturday, Jan. 21, 1-3 p.m.
Join Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper for a program at the Hinesburg Town Forest. Tapper will discuss how he and others plan to increase forest health and create habitat in our relatively young forests. Free to register at tinyurl.com/2etb9uea; directions to location given during registration. Donations gratefully accepted to the Vermont Land Trust.

Teen Agro-Tek cafe
Saturday, Jan. 21, 5-7 p.m.
Area youth in grades 7-12 are invited to learn more about careers in agro-tech innovation. Meet faculty, learn about work in this field and discover how researchers apply new technologies to agricultural endeavors and studies. Held at the University of Vermont, the Science Pathways Cafes offer free registration, including pizza and drinks. They are planned and run by teens, for teens. To learn more and register, see tinyurl.com/4h8tt2ac. More info at uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements.

Discover engineering
Saturday, Feb. 18
Registration for this day-long free event begins in early January 2023. The University of Vermont’s College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences welcomes youths in grades 5-12 who want to learn about engineering careers, build skills and ask questions of engineering students and faculty. Food provided. To learn more, see tinyurl.com/mrymsn5y. Watch the webpage for registration info coming soon.

View more events at:
charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events

Local holiday services

(Masks are recommended indoors, at all locations.)

Charlotte Congregational Church
Christmas pageant
Sunday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m.
Outdoor family carol sing
Saturday, Dec. 24, 4 p.m.
Indoor lessons and carols services
Saturday, Dec. 24, 5 & 7 p.m.
(5 p.m. service may be live-streamed. Call 802-425-3176 for instructions.)
Christmas service with Holy Communion
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10 a.m.

United Church of Hinesburg
Route 116
Fourth Sunday of Advent and children’s pageant
Sunday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m.
Family and friends service with special music and candlelight
Saturday, Dec. 24, 6 p.m.
Lessons and carols service with choir and candlelight
Saturday, Dec., 24, 10 p.m.
Prayer and carols service
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10 a.m.

Lighthouse Baptist Church
Mechanicsville Road, Hinesburg
Christmas Eve service
Saturday, Dec. 24, 5 p.m.
Christmas Day service
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:30 a.m.

Community Alliance Church
Pond Road, Hinesburg
Live Nativity outdoors
Sunday, Dec. 18, 5-8 p.m.
Cocoa, treats and carols inside (Reservations encouraged for Nativity tours at hinesburgcma.org.)
Christmas Eve candlelight service
Saturday, Dec. 24, 6 p.m.

Trinity Episcopal Church
Route 7, Shelburne village
Christmas Eve service and children’s pageant
Saturday, Dec. 24, 4 p.m.
Christmas Day service
Sunday, Dec. 25, 9:30 a.m.
(For information go to trinityshelburne.org or call 802-985-2269 to watch via Zoom.)

St. Jude Catholic Church
Route 116, Hinesburg village
Christmas Eve
Saturday, Dec. 24
The Old Lantern in Charlotte, 4 p.m.
St. Jude, 7 p.m.
Christmas Day
Sunday, Dec. 25, 10 a.m.
New Years Eve
Saturday, Dec. 31, 4:30 p.m.
New Years Day
Sunday, Jan. 1, 9:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel
New Years Day
Sunday, Jan. 1, 11 a.m.

All Souls Interfaith Gathering
Bostwick Farm Rd., Shelburne
Holiday service
Saturday, Dec. 24, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
Prayers for World Peace evening service
Saturday, Dec. 31
(To confirm time, call Tammy at 802-985-3819 or see allsoulsinterfaith.org.)

Gifts for the gardener

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont

The daylight hours keep growing shorter, and the days are flying by. Before you know it, the holidays will be here. If you have a gardener (or garden lover) on your holiday gift list, you may be wondering what might make them smile during a season when the garden is buried beneath the snow.

For new gardeners or those who like to dream and plan their next gardening adventure during the cold winter months, consider a book that focuses on their favorite garden subject. Books are available covering all aspects of gardening from regional how-to to growing specific plants such as roses and techniques such as square-foot gardening.

If the gardener on your list likes nothing better than hands-on “playing in the dirt,” there are all sorts of possibilities that will be useful in the garden come spring. Pruners, trowels and other hand tools come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

A gardener can never have too many pairs of garden gloves, but a pair of garden gauntlets can particularly come in handy when pruning roses or working with berry bushes or any other thorny plant. They not only protect the gardener’s hands, but forearms as well.

Something as simple as a foam kneeling pad can make garden tasks far more comfortable. Even better, a combination bench/kneeler that folds flat for storage (and gift wrapping) can be used as a seat or turned upside down to become a kneeler, complete with side handles to make getting back up much easier.

If you’re looking for something perhaps a bit less practical, decorative gifts can add interest and a focal point in the garden. Wind spinners, sculptures, birdbaths and birdhouses are all possibilities.

A themed selection of seed packets can form the basis of a special garden — a

flower cutting garden, a pollinator garden or the ingredients for the salad of their dreams. Even just a few packets make a handy stocking stuffer.

For indoor gardeners who prefer houseplants to garden plots, plants such as jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*) or gardenia (*Gardenia jasminoides*) can fill the indoors with sweet fragrance and make the winter months seem to melt away. If not available at a local nursery, check online for sources that will ship safely even in winter.

Seasonal plants like amaryllis (*Amaryllis*) are another option. These large bulbs are available in stores leading up to the holidays. They are easy to pot up according to directions provided with the bulb and fascinating to watch as the leaves and tall stem emerge and produce a showy display of flowers.

An easy homemade gift is a selection of spring bulbs packaged to force into bloom indoors well before their outdoor counterparts have awakened from their slumber beneath the snow. Bulbs are still available in many stores or can be ordered online.

Select a container, fill it with potting soil, plant a selection of spring bulbs and include instructions on how to force the bulbs to bloom. Information on forcing bulbs can be found at go.uvm.edu/bulbs.

Still not sure? Consider a gift certificate to their favorite nursery. The recipient will certainly enjoy checking off an item on their garden wish list. Or perhaps your local plant store offers classes. Creating a terrarium or learning the basics of seed starting can be a taste of spring on a cold winter’s day.

Whether it’s packets of seeds as a stocking stuffer, plants or something for the tool basket in anticipation of spring, gardening-related gifts can help spring seem a little closer for gardeners and garden lovers.

(Deborah J. Benoit is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit
Holiday gift ideas for gardeners run the gamut from a garden sculpture or gift certificate to a favorite nursery to garden gloves and gauntlets to wear when pruning roses and other thorny plants.

North Adams, Massachusetts, who is part of Vermont’s Bennington County Chapter.)

Gardening

Growing orchids easier than their reputation

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

Do you admire orchids from afar but haven’t considered growing them or gifting them to a plant lover you know? Sure, they’re a pretty plant, but orchids have a reputation as being difficult to grow.

When you think of orchids, do you picture a climate-controlled greenhouse devoted to a collection of beautiful but fussy plants? The truth is, orchids can be grown as easily as any other houseplant. All it takes is a little know-how and some TLC.

Most orchids require similar care, but there’s one orchid you’re likely to see more than the rest. Moth orchids (Phalaenopsis) are so common you can find them not only at your local nursery or florist, but also in department and grocery stores.

Orchids come in many shapes, sizes and colors that are hard to resist when in bloom. If you’ve given in to temptation

and brought home an orchid in full bloom only to give up on the plant and its plain-looking foliage when the flowers have faded, you aren’t alone.

Moth orchids aren’t particularly expensive, so many people consider them a temporary houseplant, to be replaced once the flowers are gone. After all, that’s what we do with cut flowers. But if you give them a chance, you can enjoy their flowers for years to come.

While your first inclination may be to select the plant with the most flowers, think again. Choose an orchid with many buds. Even small buds will develop into flowers, giving you an extended bloom time with flowering lasting weeks, sometimes months.

When the last of the flowers have finally faded, you may be tempted to cut the stem back, but wait. As long as the stem of a moth orchid is green, it may produce additional buds.

Once the stem begins to turn brown and die on its own, cut it back to where it meets the leaves so that the plant can use



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Moth orchids, which come in a variety of flower colors, shapes and sizes, can be enjoyed for years to come if given the proper care. Moth orchids do best when placed in a location with bright, indirect sunlight and temperatures between 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit.

its resources to grow and rebloom. During this time, continue to care for the orchid as usual.

Like any houseplant, an orchid will thrive in conditions it favors. Moth orchids prefer temperatures between 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit along with bright, indirect sunlight. A grow light also can be used. Orchids are potted in moss or bark rather than potting soil. If repotting, use a similar media.

Water as needed. Depending on growing conditions, that may be weekly or less frequently. Some moth orchids come with instructions to water using ice cubes. While convenient, if the ice contacts the roots or foliage, damage may occur.

A better method is to use room temperature water when the moss is dry. Give the orchid a good watering, letting excess water drain from the pot. Allowing the moss to remain too wet can result in damage to the roots.

Fertilizer can be beneficial, but over fertilizing can burn leaves and roots. An orchid fertilizer can be used according to directions on the package. Alternatively, a urea-free houseplant fertilizer can be used either at half strength once a month when watering or at one-quarter strength each watering.

When your moth orchid is ready to rebloom, it will send up a green stalk that points upward and has a more pointed tip than the paler, rounded end roots. Soon you’ll see buds develop and then the main event, flowers.

So, the next time you’re tempted by the fancy floral display of an orchid, give it a chance. Bring it home. With a little TLC it will bloom again and again for years to come.

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

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Children’s Books

Some stars from the children’s picture book universe

Emily Raabe
Contributor

Happy December, all. As I type this some flakes are gathering (finally) on the ground, and it’s dark at 4 o’clock ... ahh, winter.

I’m happy to report that 2022 was a bumper year for particularly gorgeous, poetic picture books. With that in mind, there are a few blockbusters not reviewed here, mostly because they are on everybody’s list this year and don’t really need a plug from me (Jon Klassen’s hilarious “Billy Goats Gruff,” I’m thinking of you).

Here are the ones that did make the cut, all available at The Flying Pig bookstore. And yes, the list begins with a bit of a blockbuster:

- “Farmhouse,” written and illustrated by Sophie Blackall.

“Over a hill, at the end of a road, by a glittering stream that twists and turns, stands a house,” begins Sophie Blackall’s latest magnificent picture book.

“Farmhouse” began with the author’s discovery of an abandoned house full of the broken, torn and forgotten artifacts of a family’s life. Blackall tracked down the last remaining child from that family, and by combining the woman’s memories with the found objects, she creates a collage of images, textures, story and verse that is wholly original and absolutely beautiful.

I thought Blackall’s 2020 “If You Came to Earth” was a tour de force. This one is at least as good. Ages 4-8.

- “The Mermaid Moon,” written and illustrated by Briony May Smith.

I have been waiting for another book



from this author since I first discovered “Margaret’s Unicorn,” a book that gets my vote for the best unicorn book out there (no glitter). Like “Margaret’s Unicorn,” “The Mermaid Moon” is about friendship, this time between a little girl named Molly and her mermaid friend.

On one night each year, the seafolk can swim through the air and visit the human world. Under the author’s careful attention to detail, the mundane items of Molly’s world are made magical through the eyes of Merrin, the mermaid. But the friends must call on mermaid magic to return Merrin home before the moon’s reflection vanishes from the surface of the sea. Ages 4-8.

- “Night Lunch,” written by Eric Fan and illustrated by Dena Seiferling.

Described on the flap as “an ode to Victorian lunch carts” this exquisitely original book begins, “Clip clop, a midnight moon/The night lunch cart rolls in.”

Fox gets mince pie, badger wants a sandwich, upside-down bats choose sausages and peppers by candlelight. The food is served by a snowy owl who chops and cooks for all the nocturnal animals, even the lowly street-sweeping mouse. Seiferling’s softly-rendered images glow alongside Fan’s quiet story of compassion and kindness. Ages 4-8

- “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” text by Robert Frost and illustrated by P.J. Lynch.

The hushed and intimate voice of Frost’s poem is perfectly matched here by Lynch’s



paintings. This book is oversized, and it deserves to be so — anyone reading this will want to fall into the dreamy, double-spread watercolor and gauche illustrations.

Last year I raved about Lynch’s illustrated “Night Before Christmas.” This one is even better. Ages 3-7.

- “The Lodge That Beaver Built,” written by Randi Sonenshine and illustrated by Anne Hunter.

For a change of pace (and tone) I give you a non-fiction (ish) book. The beauty of this book lies in the balance between the poetry of the language and the specificity of the natural world: “This is the buttonbush, alder and sedge/hiding new ducklings from Hawk on her ledge/shielding the lodge that beaver built.”

Children hungry for information will get it here, but from within the comforting rhythm of a familiar rhyme (the text is a retelling of “The House That Jack Built”). They will also get Anne Hunter’s lively ink and colored pencil drawings. Hunter is the creator of “Possum’s Harvest Moon,” a long-time favorite in our house. Her delicate drawings give life and personality to every creature depicted in the book and make it fun to return to again and again.

Listed at ages 4-8, but I would not hesitate to go a bit younger as well.

- Now for a slightly older book, this one listed at ages 6-11. “The Wolf Suit,” written and (hilariously) illustrated by Sid Sharp.



This book is a knockout. Really all you need to know is that the illustrations are listed as “pencil, watercolor, ink, acrylic and dirt.” “The Wolf Suit” is a graphic novel, but one that is art-heavy, with relatively brief text.

Bellwether Riggwelter needs more blackberries, but he is afraid of the forest. As a solution, he sews himself a wolf suit ... and off we go. Lyrical, funny and warm, this one would work for the recommended ages, but also as a read-aloud for a slightly younger child.

- I usually include a Christmas book and a Chanukah book in this list, but this year I am doing something slightly different. I’m breaking my books-published-in-2022 rule and giving you my favorite holiday book by one of my favorite authors — Susan Cooper’s “The Shortest Day,” illustrated by Carson Ellis.

The text is a poem welcoming Yule, or the Winter Solstice, when the year dies, “And everywhere down the centuries/of the snow-white world/Came people singing, dancing/To drive the dark away ...”

“The Shortest Day” celebrates all the festivals taking place at the turn of the darkness back towards the light. I hope that it, and all the choices on this list, bring light into darkness and celebrate the beauty and the love to be found in the world around us.

Happy Holidays, everyone. Enjoy the light.



On Books

Nonfiction thriller — you can’t make this stuff up

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

Ho, ho, ho. Here we go ... on a toboggan ride, sliding rapidly towards Christmas, picking up speed the closer we get. That’s always the way it feels to me around this time of year.

People who know me well know that I don’t love it, this holiday ... any more, really, come to think of it, than those toboggan rides of my youth — my wild cousins hooting and hollering in their woolen mittens and hats, all of us hanging on to each other for dear life in a desperate attempt to remain on the slippery, hard, ice-cold slab of hardwood zipping down the hill, snow whipping up in angry plumes into our red and quickly numbing faces.

But on to books ... the very thought of which, I am noting, is calming my galloping heart (galloping at the thought of toboggans and the fast-approaching holiday).

A book that I am wrapping up and giving away this season to the avid readers in my life is Michael Lewis’ *The Premonition, A Pandemic Story*. Though it’s nonfiction, it reads like fiction — hashtag: youcantmakethisstuffup.

Lewis writes in an introduction that his job is “mainly to find the story in the material.” And that he has done, I would say, artfully, masterfully. The story he tells is mind-blowing, ever the more so because it is the truth.

Back in October 2019, nearly three years into the Trump administration and before anyone had heard of such a thing as COVID-19, a group of smart people called the Nuclear Threat Initiative collaborated

with Johns Hopkins and The Economist Intelligence Unit “to create what amounted to a preseason college football ranking for 196 countries.” The Global Health Security Index, as the initiative was called, was “a massive undertaking involving millions of dollars and hundreds of researchers.”

After many polls, statistics, models and consultations with experts in the field, countries were ranked for their pandemic preparedness. The United States came in first.

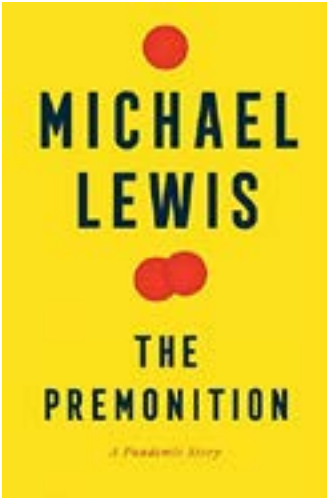
“The United States,” says Lewis, “was the Longhorns of pandemic preparedness. It was rich. It had special access to talent. It enjoyed special relationships with the experts whose votes determined the rankings.”

So, what the hell happened?

Read this book and you will have a much clearer idea ... and see once again, or maybe for the first time, that truth is often stranger and more eye-popping than fiction.

Lewis (author of *The Undoing Project*, *Liar’s Poker*, *Flash Boys*, *Moneyball*, *The Blind Side*, *The Big Short*, etcetera) is definitely a writing pro, making the reader loathe to take a break from this rich and gripping story “about the curious talents of a society, and how those talents are wasted if not led. It’s also about how gaps open between a society’s reputation and its performance.”

“After a catastrophic season,” he writes,



continuing the football theme, “management always huddles up to figure out what needs to be changed. If this story speaks to that management in any way, I hope it is to say: there are actually some things to be proud of. Our players aren’t our problem. But we are what our record says we are.”

The players in this book are admirable, unusual, unexpected, often eccentric and, more often than not, marginal, off the grid. They are the true and largely unsung heroes of the pandemic. The visionaries. The prophets. One gets the strong sense, as one reads on, that had leadership listened to these players, we wouldn’t be down a million Americans, and counting.

One of the first heroes we learn about is Laura Glass, a 13-year-old eighth grader at Jefferson Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico (talk about unexpected), the daughter of Bob Glass, a scientist at Sandia National Laboratories, created in the mid-forties to research nuclear weapons. One day, looking over her dad’s shoulder at his computer screen, she is struck by the thought, “It’s almost like the red dots are infecting the green dots.” Which gives her an idea for a project for the upcoming school science fair. A model to study how disease spreads.

Laura’s project inspires her father, who at some point in the process finds

himself thinking, “Hmmm, if one could understand the way disease moves through a community, one might find ways to slow, maybe even stop, it.” He commences to read everything he can get his hands on about disease and the history of epidemics, including a book by historian John Barry about the 1918 flu pandemic, and soon comes to the realization that his daughter’s science fair project is dealing with a very important and real-life problem. The 1918 flu epidemic that killed 50 million people derived from a small number of mutations in a bird virus. This, along with his research and his daughter’s model, leads him to think about disease abatement in modern times.

The rest is history. A rich, multivalent, deeply unsettling history of real science, sincere, well-intentioned scientists and dedicated public servants pitched too often against a government whose job is supposedly to protect us. At one point Lewis writes, “The root of the CDC’s behavior was simple: fear. They didn’t want to take any action for which they might later be blamed.”

Another good sound bite: “Experience is making the same mistake over and over again, only with greater confidence.”

In this season of sledding, I recommend you jump on this toboggan ride of a nonfiction thriller and invite your friends to do so, also. I guarantee an exciting ride, and that you will never ever again see science, public health and our country’s government the same way. Excellent read. Highly recommend.

Oh, and happy holidays. Grit your teeth and hold on; it will be over soon.

Library News



Margaret Woodruff
Director

Looking for a heartfelt gift with a local touch?

Visit the mini-sale event at the library for cards, bookmarks and other goods made by local artists Dec. 14-21. A portion of the sales go to the Friends of the Charlotte Library Program Fund.

Are you a knitter, crocheter or just like to shop? The mitten tree is up at the Charlotte Library and waiting to be decorated with handmade or new cold-weather gear.

The library is also a designated food shelf drop-off location. All items collected will be going to a local non-profit organization.

Consider gift subscriptions to the library. The cost of subscriptions continues to climb. Many magazines offer a free gift subscription with renewal. If you happen to have a gift subscription available, the library would be grateful to receive it.

Sponsoring one of the library’s newspaper subscriptions is another way to support the library. Contact Margaret Woodruff at margaret@charlottepubliclibrary.org if you are interested.

Ongoing programs for all ages

Kids crafts

See what fun activity youth services librarian Cheryl Sloan has concocted for younger library fans. Pick up your monthly craft kit in the library entryway.



Take & make kits

Celebrate the birds of winter. Craft a felt bird bookmark using our take & make kit at the circulation desk.

Freedom & Unity: A Graphic Guide to Civics and Democracy in Vermont

Copies of this graphic novel are now available at the library circulation desk. Stay tuned for details about our bite-size book talk coming next month.

Book chat at the library Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

Short story selections First & third Wednesdays, 1 p.m.

Join Woodruff Dec. 7 and 21 via Zoom 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.

Book Chat Fridays, 9:30 a.m.

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

Human Rights Week Expression Wall Through Dec. 17

Human Rights Week is a week of events to commemorate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed by the United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948. In recognition of this, the library is hosting a “Free Expression” wall in the program room and inviting the community members to share what human rights mean to them by word or illustration.

One-on-one tech help Thursday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m.

Email enigma? Kindle conundrum? App apprehension? Computer questions?

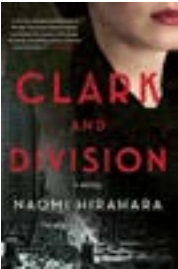
Or maybe you want to learn how to use your library card to read or listen to books on a device. Sign up for a 30-minute, one-on-one session at the Senior Center with Susanna Kahn, Charlotte Library’s technology librarian, for some tech support. She will troubleshoot with you and provide suggestions for next steps. Make sure to bring your device and any necessary login information. When registering, please provide a specific topic or item that you need help with and include the device you will be bringing to the session (e.g. Windows laptop, Mac laptop, Kindle, iPhone, iPad, Android phone, etc.). Registration required, please call 802-425-6345.

Winter Crafternoon Friday, Dec. 16, 1 p.m.

From 3D forest critters to pompom garlands to woven hearts, there will be something for everyone. We will also have our Cricut cutting machine available to try out. Registration is required by emailing susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Mystery book group: Clark and Division Monday, Dec. 19, 10 a.m.

Set in 1944 Chicago, Edgar Award-winner Naomi Hirahara’s eye-opening and poignant new mystery, the story of a young woman searching for the truth about her revered older sister’s death, brings to focus the struggles of one Japanese American family released from mass incarceration at Manzanar during World War II. Copies available at the library circulation desk.



In-service day Tuesday, Dec. 20, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The library will be closed Tuesday morning, Dec. 20 for a staff in-service session and will open at 1 p.m.

Men’s book group: This is Happiness Wednesday, Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m.

Harking back to a simpler time, This Is Happiness by Niall Williams is a tender portrait of a community — its idiosyncrasies and traditions, its



paradoxes and kindnesses, its failures and triumphs. This is a coming-of-age tale like no other. Copies available at the library circulation desk. Discussion will be via Zoom.

Holiday hours

The library will be closed Friday, Dec. 23, through Monday, Dec. 26; and Friday, Dec. 30.

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. The next scheduled board meeting is 6 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 5.

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Senior Center News

Classes at the senior center make a great present



Lori York
DIRECTOR

Are you still searching for a holiday gift or looking for something new to try out in 2023? How about a class at the senior center? There is a wide range of offerings ranging from beginner guitar, ukulele, watercolor or mediation.

The center has expanded its programs to include late afternoon and some evening and weekend classes.

Other exciting news: Garnet Healthcare is back offering COVID-19 and flu vaccines at the senior center starting in January.

The senior center offers programming for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? 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.

Community Events

Christmas morning breakfast Sunday, Dec. 25, 8:30-11 a.m.

The holidays are a time to be shared with others. The senior center is extending an invitation to those interested in gathering for community and connection over breakfast to join at the senior center on Christmas morning. Please register by calling 802-425-6345, but also know that drop-ins will be welcome as well.

Do you need a ride to the senior center or have questions? Contact Suzanne at 802-324-8853.

COVID-19 & flu vaccine walk-in clinics Wednesdays, Jan. 11 & 25, 1-6 p.m.

In January, Garnet Healthcare is back offering COVID-19 vaccines, updated (bivalent) boosters and flu* vaccine walk-in clinics at the Charlotte Senior Center. No appointments necessary. *Flu vaccines are only available for those under 65 years.

Cello performance

Thursday, Jan. 26, 1-1:45 p.m.

Enjoy a solo cello performance at the senior center with Jonah Hutchin, a premier young adult performing cellist of Charlotte, Vermont. Check out jonahhutchin.com. Free.

Art Exhibit

Wind Castles — and Beyond

Photography exhibit by Rachel Doran is on display through the end of January. Doran has been exhibiting for about 25 years, and this exhibit includes many photographs of Vermont landscapes, as well as glimpses of New York State and Ontario, Canada.

Upcoming Programs

Beginner guitar II

Wednesday evenings, 7-8 p.m., Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 15, 22 and March 1

Interested in learning guitar? 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. There will be no class on Feb. 8. Cost is \$75. Register by Friday, Jan. 13.

Meditation class

Tuesday evenings, 5-6 p.m., Jan. 10, 17, 24 & Feb. 7

Kickstart the New Year with some self-care as your resolution and join Charlie Nardoizzi for this four-week meditation class. Has your meditation practice fallen

to the wayside? Or are you curious about meditation and interested in starting a practice? This class is for beginners and experienced meditators alike. All are welcome. Meditation is an easy-to-learn practice that has been proven to reduce anxiety, stress, pain and depression. Cost is \$40 for the four-week session. Pre-registration and payment due by Jan. 9.

Kirtan

Sunday, Jan. 15, 3-5 p.m.

Join Charlie Nardoizzi and Heidi Kvasnak for a Sunday afternoon Kirtan. Kirtan is an ancient Yoga gathering where musicians play traditional instruments and sing simple chants. Some chants are call and response and others are singalongs. Feel free to simply sit, listen and enjoy. The goal is to create a peaceful, quiet and soothing space inside. Song sheets will be provided, an explanation about the chants before singing, and some brief, quiet times between chants for meditation. All are welcome and no experience is necessary. Register by Friday, Jan. 13. Cost is free. Questions? Please contact Charlie Nardoizzi at cnardoizzi124@gmail.com.

Ukulele

Wednesday evenings, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Jan. 18, 25, Feb. 1, 15, 22, & March 1

Join John Creech as you learn to play the ukulele in this fun and easygoing class. Ukuleles are easy to learn, even if you have no musical background. This group is for anyone who already plays and just wants to play in a group as well as beginners interested in learning. Bring a ukulele, along with an electronic clip-on tuner, and the curiosity for learning something new. There will be no class on Feb. 8. Registration required by Friday, Jan. 13. Cost is \$75.

Watercolor in winter

Tuesdays, Jan. 31-March. 7, 9 a.m.-noon

In this six-session class with Lynn Cummings, a variety of topics will be explored ranging from “painting whites” and winter wildlife, to details that can be added to paintings, like insects, bubbles and water droplets. Cost is \$240 and registration and payment by Jan. 20.

Volunteer opportunities

Alzheimer’s Association support group facilitators

The senior center is seeking volunteers to serve as support group facilitators to help start a new support group for people caring for someone with dementia. Facilitators create a safe, open environment where people share their feelings, thoughts and experiences in a combined effort to better cope with and manage the shared problems of dementia. If you are interested, please contact Jordan Cotto at jtcotto@alz.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. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. To register, contact Kerrie Pughe at 802-425-6345 or kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Suggested meal donation \$5.

Holiday hours

- Friday, Dec. 23, closing at noon.
 - Monday, Dec. 26, closed in observance of Christmas.
 - Tuesday-Friday, Dec. 27-30, the senior center will be closing at noon.
- Please check the website calendar at charlotteseniorcentervt.org to confirm that



Photo by Jim Hyde

Great turnout for December men’s breakfast with 25 people attending. The guest speaker was John Cohn, an IBM/MIT fellow on artificial intelligence, speaking about distinguishing fantasy from reality.



Photo by Lori York

On Dec. 1, members of the Quinlan Schoolhouse committee gave a presentation about the old one-room school that is now behind the library. There was a video followed by a tour of this historical gem.

a program is being held.

- Monday, Jan. 2, closed in observance of New Years Day.

Senior center contact info:

Lori York, director, lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org
Kerrie Pughe, coordinator, kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org

charlotteseniorcentervt.org
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte
802-425-6345
charlotteseniorcentervt.org

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

Write Ingredients

Celebrate Fruitcake Month at the senior center

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Since December has been labeled Fruitcake Month, we can be forgiven for a few more observations on the topic. Fruitcake happened to be one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's favorite foods, and General George S. Patton was known to have devoured an entire brandied fruitcake at one sitting. But according to Alexander Thoreaux's "Einstein's Beets," after doing this, worried about weight gain, Patton went immediately afterwards to the hospital to have his stomach pumped.

Thoreaux notes that fruitcake, designed to be given away rather than eaten, may in fact be the ultimate diet food, because it is never actually consumed.

Not to worry: Monday Munch offers plenty of delicious food crafted to be consumed in a room filled with good company.

Monday Munch

Dec. 19

Meal to be announced.
Check the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals.

Thursday, Dec. 22, 10-11 a.m. Grab & Go Meal pickup

Macaroni and cheese, carrots, peas and mushrooms, pumpkin cookie with raisins and white chips.

Thursday, Dec. 29, 10-11 a.m. Grab & Go Meal pickup

Beef stroganoff with onions and mushrooms, rotini noodles, Brussel sprouts, dinner roll, seasoned apples with cinnamon and milk.

Although these Thursday meals come ready-made by AgeWell, please remember that the Charlotte Senior Center needs volunteer hosts and servers, as well as Monday cooks and dishwashers.

Speaking of noodles, the food section of the New York Times reports that the most popular dish in their pages this year was San Francisco-style Vietnamese American garlic noodles. Besides recipes, this section offers comments from readers who have tried the dishes. In this case they offer tips on how to prepare the required 20 cloves of garlic. If you'd like the recipe, contact me and I'll send you a gift article.

As you watch icicles form,



Photo by Lori York

There's always a good crowd for the Monday Munches where the volunteers serve 50-60 meals weekly.

listen to Billie Holiday singing
"I've Got My Love to Keep
Me Warm" at youtube.com/watch?v=d-hOTVi61-8.

For more warmth, come
enjoy food and friendship at the
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