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# The Charlotte News

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## **Two in flight**

Bottom left, a male cardinal and a tufted titmouse jockey for turns at feeding. The tufted titmouse was practically unknown in Vermont 50 years ago, and now is one of the most common feeder birds in Vermont, Charlotte birder Hank Kaestner said

**Photo by Lee Krohn**



## Response to first Community Heart & Soul too big for one meeting

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Moving through the Vestry building at the Charlotte Congregational Church required a good bit of do-si-doing. The room was filled with adults talking and children weaving in and out of a forest of grown-up legs.

A table next to the kitchen was filled with a cornucopia of chili and cornbread choices; a pair of easels with large note boards stood at the ready with an array of markers; the Mansfield Mountain Band was performing a creative assortment of well-loved tunes; and the room was filled with the buzz and bustle of people conversing — and connecting.

Community Heart & Soul got off to a rousing start in Charlotte last Friday evening, Jan. 20.

The program which involves a town committing to a series of meetings to work on community engagement almost got off to a too-rousing start.

Members of the planning commission Robert Bloch and Kyra Wegman have been spearheading the effort to bring Community Heart & Soul to Charlotte. Last week, Bloch sent emails to people who had RSVP'd, asking if they would attend a second kickoff event this coming Friday, Jan. 27. More than 100 had signed up, more than the recommended COVID limit for the Vestry building.

More than 50 agreed to attend the second event, but still the Vestry was filled for the initial event. This Friday's event will be at the Charlotte Senior Center with the same program and chili.

Mark Sherman, the executive director of Shelburne-based Community Heart & Soul, has lived in Charlotte since 2010.



Photos by Scooter MacMillan

Mark Sherman, executive director of Community Heart & Soul, is pleased with the turnout for the first meeting.

Right: Six-week-old Kai Green thinks his mother Marisa Green is the most fascinating person in the world.

He has overseen the program in at least 24 states and more than 100 communities from Maine to Florida to the Pacific Northwest.

"For a little town of 4,000 people, for 100 people to say they want to attend — that's a great problem. It's a really good sign," Sherman said. "We'll usually see 20-30 people at the initial kickoff, so to me, that suggests there's a lot of pent-up demand for this kind of engagement."

Earlier, Sherman had told the newspaper that Community Heart & Soul doesn't come with any political, social or religious agenda, but is a framework to help a community figure out what residents feel is most important.

The usually two-year Community Heart & Soul process involves community residents identifying a goal they want to work on together.

After most of the crowd had eaten, Wegman told the crowd she was inspired when she heard of Community Heart & Soul by the idea of diverse individuals



working as a community to address issues and create a positive change.

"Community engagement creates better understanding of community issues and goals, creates connections, influences decision making and creates more effective and sustainable solutions," Wegman said.

If Charlotte decides to sign on to the Community Heart & Soul program, Trish Sears and Steve Mason of Lowell will be working as coaches for the process.

Mason said they were introduced to the program in Newport and were so impressed

SEE **HEART & SOUL** PAGE 2

## Property tax bills going up even with no rise in tax rate

*Charlotte Selectboard proposes budget based on higher property values after reappraisal*

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

This year's tax rate is not going up, but the amount of taxes Charlotte property owners will pay is. At least, that's what town officials predict.

At the Monday, Jan. 16, meeting of the selectboard, chair Jim Faulkner announced the board is proposing a budget for 2023-24 with a tax rate of 24.22 cents per \$100 of property value, which he pointed out is essentially a flat tax rate increase from this year.

To be specific, the proposed budget would include an increase of only two thousandths of a penny, Faulkner said. Nevertheless, taxes should go up because the town-wide reappraisal property values should be concluded by the end of fiscal year 2022-23 in July, just in time for the upcoming fiscal year's tax bills.

With the stunning rise in property values from the pandemic frenzy of home sales, it doesn't take a weatherman, or a real estate guru, to know which way property tax winds are going to blow — higher.

Members of the selectboard tried to make it as clear as possible that the budget they approved unanimously on Jan. 16 is a proposal. A proposal for budget expenses residents will vote for or against at Town

Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 7. The tax rate shared at the selectboard meeting is a prediction based on estimates of how the property reappraisal will turn out.

Even then, the official tax rate won't be officially set until a town vote in August.

Once again, voting on the budget this year will presumably be by Australian ballot. On Jan. 19, both houses of the Legislature approved H.42, a bill that extends the right of municipalities to decide by Australian ballot budgets and other matters that many Vermont towns decided by voice vote before the pandemic. Because of continuing COVID infections and other viruses that have appeared, Legislators voted to continue the right of towns to utilize the secret ballot rather than requiring a voice vote in person at the annual March meeting.

Charlotte's new representative to the House, Chea Waters Evans, said the governor had not signed the bill as of Monday, but she expected him to do so early this week.

The Charlotte Selectboard voted three days before at this Jan. 16 meeting that, if this option becomes available, the town will take advantage of it, despite some board members expressing loyalty to Vermont's unique, town-meeting election tradition and regret for another year without voting out loud from the floor at Town Meeting Day for



some matters, such as the budget.

Although Matt Krasnow voted with other board members to utilize the Australian ballot again this year, he lamented this change to the voting in Charlotte that he hopes will be temporary.

"The most important and most novel solution to direct democracy that kind of meeting provides is that every citizen has the opportunity and the power to change any line item that's been suggested to levy their property taxes. That's only achievable at an in-person town meeting, where they can make a motion on the floor to change the five selectboard members' suggested budget," Krasnow said. "I think that is something so unique to Vermont and New England towns. There is no way to reconcile or salvage that piece of our democracy by moving to Australian ballot."

Krasnow reluctantly agreed with board member Louise McCarren who said, because of the continuing medical threat, it was best to err on the side of caution.

"I wouldn't want to unfairly count

SEE **BUDGET** PAGE 2

## CVU grapples with difficult issues spawned by racist video

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Using the N-word is wrong in all situations. Now, it should be abundantly clear to every member of the Champlain Valley Union High student body that it is also wrong to use a voiceover of someone else using the word.

A member of the CVU girls basketball team posted a TikTok video in December that included the word in a voiceover. An hour later the video was removed, but it was too late. The damage was done.

This has been a hard lesson for the student-athlete who posted the offensive video in December. Before 2023 was even 24 hours old, she was meeting with principal Adam Bunting and athletic director Ricky McCollum on New Years Day.

"Because she made the video with a family member who is a person of color, she wrongly believed it was OK to post something that used the N-word," Bunting said in a letter to Vermont students. "The student took down the video within an hour, but the damage was done as it was recorded and widely distributed by others."

The consequences were strong, he wrote, including losing her captaincy of the team, being suspended from gameplay and being removed from leadership clubs in the school.

Contrary to what some have said, she was suspended for more than one game. In a phone call, Bunting declined to say how many.

On Jan. 6 Rice and on Jan. 12 Burlington postponed their games at CVU because of the video.

Bunting said other schools have discussed postponing games. In his letter, he asked, before doing this, that other teams consider the consequences the player is facing and "trust that she views the video as the worst mistake of her life — because she is learning how much she hurt others."

If other girls basketball teams want to talk with him about the issue at greater depth, Bunting offered to meet with them at CVU or travel to their school.

He said he didn't know if other basketball teams will postpone their games with CVU, but he hopes they know that the school is doing a lot of work about the issue.

"I think it's elevated the discussion beyond basketball to what's more important. So, the disruptions to the play and to the joy of the game are also kind of worth it for the amount of learning that we're all doing," Bunting said.

This past Saturday, Jan. 14, Burr and Burton played at CVU, and this Monday, Jan. 16, the Redhawks traveled to St. Johnsbury Academy. Both of those games were preceded by the teams standing in a line with the players interspersed and arms interlocked as statements were read about the impacts of racism and discriminatory language and the power of communities working together.

The school has a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Bunting said, "I think our community holds us to a high standard. When we don't meet that standard, then we have to speak to that, and we have to do the work around it."

In past years, there have been news stories about CVU players being subjected

SEE **CVU** PAGE 3



# BUDGET

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out a demographic or a percentage of the population that’s not comfortable meeting in person and take away their right to vote on the levying of property taxes,” Krasnow said.

Board member Frank Tenney joked that he was going to agree with Krasnow — for once. He too was “on the fence” about again postponing a return to a traditional Town Meeting Day, but ultimately felt it was necessary.

A tax rate of 24 cents means that a home and property valued at \$100,000 would owe \$240 in municipal taxes and a \$500,000 home would owe \$1,200.

It is important to remember that property tax bills will be based upon what property values are after the reappraisal, and Faulkner said, they have heard property values could go up by as much as 22 percent.

The proposed budget residents will vote on has total expenses for 2023-24 of almost \$3.1 million. This is an increase of just over \$469,000 from this past year’s budget expense total of just over \$2.6 million, a spending increase a bit over 18 percent.

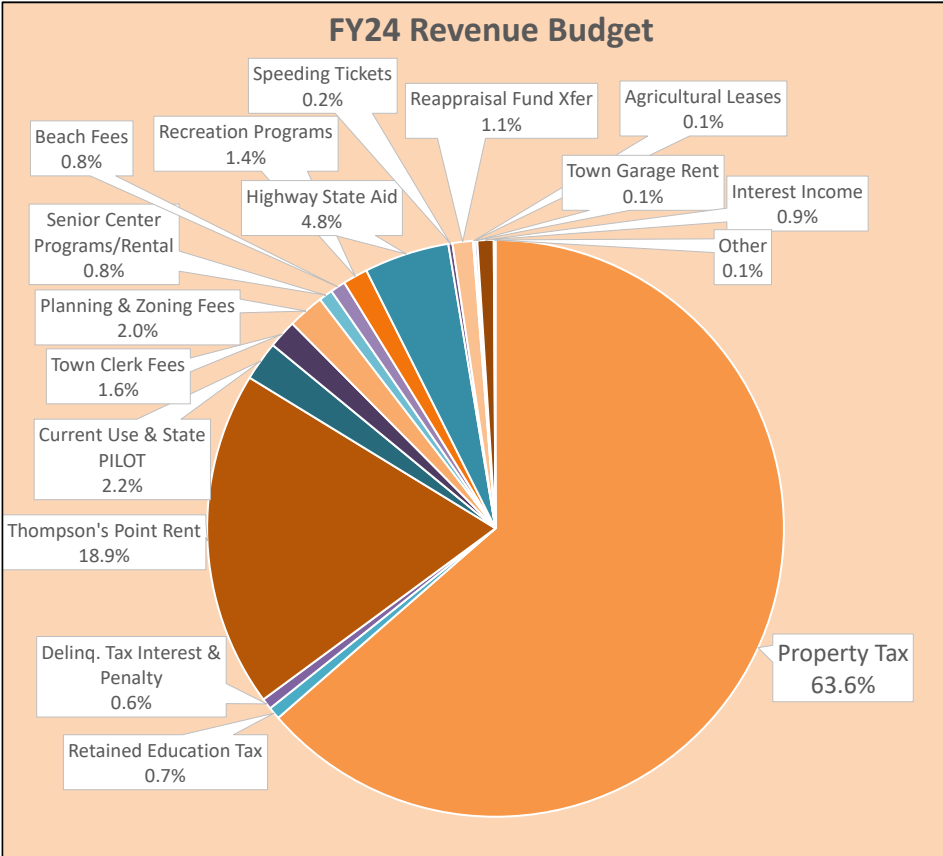
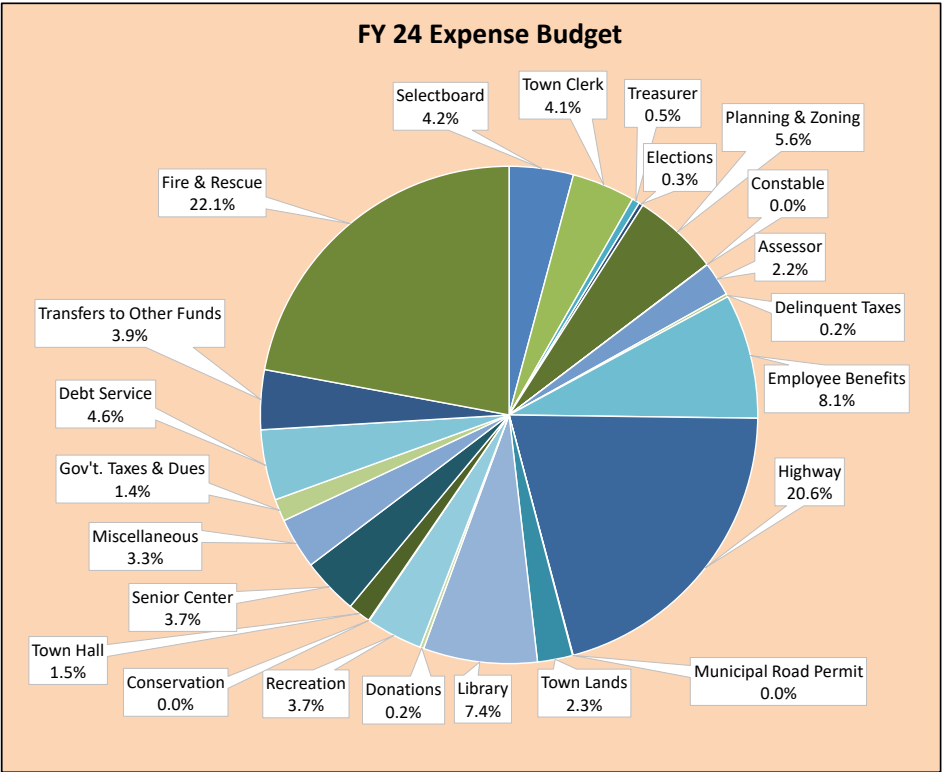
This increase is based upon a predicted \$2.1 million increase in the value of Charlotte’s grand list — from just over \$9.4 million to just over \$11.5 million. The grand list is computed from the combined value of taxable property in a town and is used to determine the tax rate needed to cover estimated expenses.

At town meeting, voters will also be asked to approve an article for almost \$1 million to be allocated to the Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service and another article for just over \$324,000 to be allocated to the Charlotte Library.

At 22.1 percent of the proposed expenses for fiscal year 2024, fire and rescue is the biggest part of the town’s budget with the highway department budget a close second at 20.6 percent. Employee benefits is 8.1 percent and the library is 7.4 percent of the town’s estimated costs.

Property tax is projected to bring in 63.6 percent of Charlotte’s revenues and Thompson’s Point rent to add 18.9 percent. By a large margin these two revenue streams are Charlotte’s biggest sources of revenue.

As always, it is important to remember that the municipal tax is a small part of the property tax bill. School property taxes make up the lion’s share of the total of property tax bills..



# HEART & SOUL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that they trained as coaches.

The process is about more than community involvement; it’s also about inclusion because they work very hard to get the ideas of people who don’t show up for events, but who do have ideas.

“The real secret is in this room. It’s at these tables. It’s everybody working together,” Mason said.

Although “everybody working together” may be an overused phrase, he said, team spirit can have a big impact when a town discovers it.

As the group divided up into tables, people were encouraged to sit with people

they didn’t know well. After making sure that everyone had shared their name, the first exercise was for each to share a story about themselves that was funny or embarrassing.

They were given five minutes. It would have taken this reporter the rest of the evening to share embarrassing stories.

Then people were asked to share short phrases about what they like about Charlotte. The preponderance of responses were weighted toward appreciation for the natural beauty, for rural and small-town values. “Entrepreneurial spirit” was the only response pertaining to financial matters.

After informal and formal groups in the community have been identified, the second phase of the process will be collecting

stories about what people love about Charlotte. From these stories, the aim is to generate statements it is hoped will indicate a project people want to accomplish.

Projects in other towns have included such goals as working to get sidewalks, improving a park, renovating an old church or fostering economic development.

Bloch has said he hopes in Charlotte the Community Heart & Soul will help in uniting the voices of the residents with the efforts of town hall. He would like for the process to help in revising the town plan.

If the town signs on to Community Heart & Soul, its project should come from a grass-roots, bottom-up initiative. And more chili.

# Letter to the Editor

## January is national radon action month

To the Editor:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated January as National Radon Action Month and urges homeowners to take action by testing their homes for radon gas. Radon is an invisible, odorless, tasteless, radioactive gas that occurs naturally during the decay of uranium in the soil. Because uranium is especially prevalent in rocky areas and around granite, buildings in Vermont and New Hampshire have a greater risk of having elevated radon levels than the national average.

Long-term exposure to radon gas is the number one cause of lung cancer in non-smokers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates radon is responsible for

21,000 lung cancer deaths per year. This is more than drunk driving-related fatalities.

Testing for radon is simple: You can obtain a radon test kit through the Department of Health, the hardware store or a certified lab. Alternatively, you can hire a certified radon measurement provider, who is trained in testing protocols, to conduct the test for you.

If elevated levels of radon are found, in most cases it can easily be fixed with a fan and pipe mitigation system.

The EPA and the Department of Health urge homeowners to take action by testing their homes for radon. For more information on radon, log onto [epa.gov/radon](http://epa.gov/radon).

Test. Fix. Save a life.

Braden Arnold  
Rutland

## The Charlotte News NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

**Feb. 9**

Copy Deadline: Friday, Feb. 3  
Ads Deadline: Friday, Feb 3

**Feb. 23**

Copy Deadline: Friday, Feb. 17  
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To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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- Providing a home for stories from our neighbors and friends.
- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

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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:

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- 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.
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- Submission requirements:
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  - 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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## Stronger Together

# Little Free Pantry plugs food insecurity gap

Linda Hamilton  
Contributor

Most people are familiar with community food shelves. They are reliable sources of food on specific distribution days and often of temporary assistance with heating or other monthly bills, available free to those in need. They are underwritten by the local community with donations of foodstuffs and cash.

Tragically, the need for hunger relief is great, and in response, an additional community-supported food program has emerged called Little Free Pantries. Many communities across the U.S. have them, including Charlotte and several neighboring towns. Cute name, but what is that?

A Little Free Pantry is literally a small food pantry — an accessible, modest-sized cabinet created and stocked by community members with mostly non-perishable food and open all day every day for whoever wants to add or take things. The simple instructions on the cabinet are usually: “Take what you need. Give what you can.”

These mini-pantries are part of a national grassroots movement to give individuals and communities a way to do something direct and immediate to help relieve food insecurity in their area. The pantries quickly provide nourishing food to those who need it and nourish the community by creating ways to help each other.

They do not replace food shelves or government-funded nutrition programs. They build on and complement them. An estimated 30 percent of those experiencing food insecurity in the U.S. today do not qualify for federal nutrition programs. Even though local food shelves can be more flexible with rules about who can participate and how, the need for hunger relief today is still much greater than these formal programs can address.

The beauty of a Little Free Pantry is its simplicity and ease of use. It may be sponsored by a church, a community organization or even a neighborhood. Food can be restocked routinely in an organized way by the sponsors or randomly and anonymously by those who can. People who use the pantry do not need to apply in

advance or qualify in any way, so their use is private. They can draw on the pantry as often as they need to, whether that is regularly or only occasionally.

Trust is a core value of this system — trust that users will take only what they need, trust that donors will do their best to keep the shelves stocked and trust that the community will respect the physical pantry and protect it from damage or vandalism. The national website [littlefreepantry.org](http://littlefreepantry.org) provides helpful guidelines.

Churches or food shelves are the most common sponsors of Little Free Pantries, taking responsibility for creating a weatherproof cabinet, then finding ways to keep it stocked. How they do this is up to them. There are at least 20 Little Free Pantries in Vermont, with the first started by the United Church of Hinesburg in 2017. Charlotte Congregational Church opened one in 2022.

Hinesburg and Charlotte use different approaches to manage their Little Free Pantries, but both are dependent on the involvement and generosity of their communities. Hinesburg has a sophisticated system for handling the high volume of food they soon realized they needed. And Hinesburg fundraises as a team of volunteers spends about \$1,000 a month to supplement food donations.

Charlotte Congregational Church sees its Little Free Pantry as a common responsibility shared among all those wishing it to succeed. Instead of a designated coordinator or volunteers assigned to check and replenish, it operates on the looser system of motivating the congregation and other community members to monitor and attend to the pantry’s needs as they can. Apparently, food flies out the pantry door and needs replenishing two to three times a week. The Charlotte Food Shelf shares whenever it has extra, but the system relies on Charlotters turning their concern and generosity into meaningful acts — either in food or money.

Charlotte is a wealthy town. Nevertheless, we still have neighbors who face food insecurity. This is a disturbing picture. The complicated issues behind hunger won’t be quickly sorted out, but in the meantime, we



Photo by Sally Wadhams  
The Charlotte Little Free Pantry is behind the Charlotte Congregational Church.

have a Little Free Pantry offering a way to help, one which is immediate. It funnels the desire of many people to share some of their abundance with their neighbors in need.

Remember that the pantry complements but doesn’t replace our food shelf, which also runs on community support. Don’t stop contributing money and food to the food shelf, but please also consider investing in the Little Free Pantry. Think in terms of healthy foods with a long shelf life and toiletries which can tolerate freezing temperatures (no cans or glass jars since they might break). Financial donations can be sent to the church marked in support of Little Free Pantry.

Questions can be directed to Hadley Abernathy Bunting through the Congregational Church office at 802-425-3176.

Thank you for whatever help you can give!  
*(Linda Hamilton lives in East Charlotte and is a member of Charlotte Grange.)*

## CVU

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

to discriminatory taunts and slurs at other schools. “It’s hard for me to imagine that any team in the state hasn’t experienced something like that,” he said.

Girls basketball coach Ute Otley said her team is super aware of any harm that’s been done and the consequences for using poor judgement.

“All of the girls are learning some really important lessons through this experience, but this has kind of been the predominant topic for three weeks,” Otley said. “We’re really eager to return to being able to be a basketball team and focus primarily on playing basketball.”



Champlain Valley Union High School

Photo contributed

## News from The Charlotte News

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## Commentary

# What will you do to remember the Holocaust?

Rabbi David Fainsilber  
Contributor

Last month we lost another child Holocaust survivor, Erika Hecht, as that generation finds its final resting place.

Erika recalls a story of her wartime experience in her memoir *Don't Ask My Name*:

“One night, my mother wakes me and asks me my name.

“‘Erika Bleier,’ I say.

“‘What did you say?’ she asks. Her voice is dangerous.

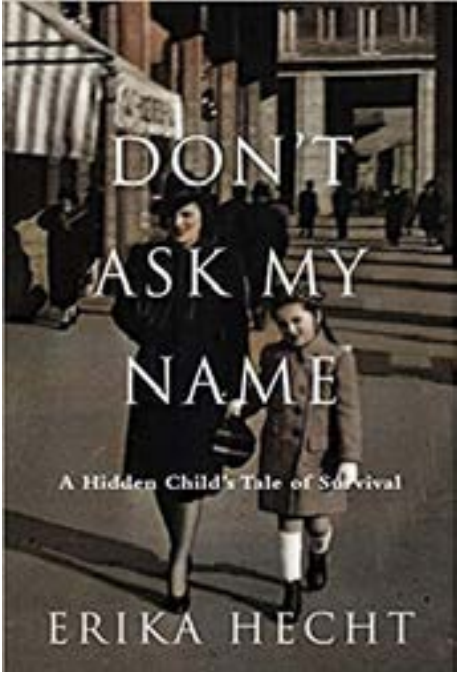
“‘Erika Bleier,’ I repeat fearfully, realizing too late that I made a mistake. Even to her I was supposed to lie and use my fake name, Erika Bankuti. Her anger boils over. She hits me with her open palm across my face and hisses through clenched teeth, ‘If you ever make that mistake again, we will be killed!’

“I never utter that name again.”

Countless times through her childhood, Erika was moments away from her own death, and that of her immediate family, amidst bombs crashing down on either side, bullets inches away, living for days on end without food, while hiding in exile as a refugee between two warring armies.

So harrowing was Erika’s experience through the Holocaust, even her name, the very root of her identity, was taken from her. She was stripped of the fullness of her humanity. That was the Nazi ideology and terror: to strip away the humanity of the Jews and the many others, to attempt to take away dignity, and to ultimately, take away their very lives.

This past week, I had the privilege of attending a press conference at the Vermont Statehouse where the Vermont Agency of Education and the Vermont



Holocaust Memorial announced the launch of the state’s first Holocaust Education Week. President and founder of the Vermont Holocaust Memorial ([holocaustmemorial-vt.org](http://holocaustmemorial-vt.org)), Debora Steinerman, said there: “It’s timelier than ever, considering increasing displays of antisemitism in Vermont and across the country.”

I experienced chills when one of the speakers at the press conference expressed dismay when an adult Vermonter, born and raised here, shared with the speaker how that person had never heard of the Holocaust before. Once again, the time is now to educate the next generation about the atrocities that took place then, not only to set the historical record straight, but because the early signs of what



Courtesy photos

“Don’t Ask My Name” is Erika Hecht’s book about her experiences as a Holocaust survivor.

brought about the Holocaust — increasing antisemitism, racism and division; the assault on truth; and the erosion of democratic values and safeguards — are in clear and present danger in 2023.

This online, statewide program runs Jan. 23-27 and is meant to teach seventh through 12th grade students about the history of the Holocaust, and includes presentations by Holocaust survivors, as well as children and grandchildren of survivors.

At our Jewish Community of Greater Stowe, we have partnered with the Hecht family, East End Press and the Vermont Holocaust Memorial, giving out complimentary copies of Erika Hecht’s haunting memoir, as we host a book reading on Jan. 28 at 5:30 p.m., in person and online, followed by a lite reception. All are invited to attend.

Marion Hecht, Erika’s daughter, will read and discuss excerpts of the recently published memoir. Copies of the memoir will be available that evening, as well as during Jewish Community of Greater Stowe office hours (M, W, Th 10-3, F 12-5). In this way, we hope to lift up Erika’s memory as she would have wanted, while remembering the heroic acts and righteous Jews and gentiles that preserved her life and other survivors.

Jan. 27 marks United Nations-designated International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

The implications of forgetting are near our doorstep. Will you do your part to never forget?

*(Rabbi David Fainsilber is spiritual leader of the Jewish Community of Greater Stowe.)*

## Commentary

# We can do something about Vermont’s health care crisis

Deborah Richter  
Contributor

Legislative leadership has already laid out their agenda for this session. Despite the dire state of health care for the almost half of Vermonters under the age of 65 who are “underinsured,” it is clear that they have no intention of doing anything meaningful to address the state’s health care crisis.

Underinsured is an abstract idea that is easy to dismiss, but it has serious, potentially deadly real-life consequences. The underinsured have two alternatives when they are sick:

Delay care and risk their health  
Pay for care and risk falling into debt, getting evicted, etcetera.  
Delaying care can cost them dearly. Two examples:

- A diabetic with a huge deductible fails to get routine checkups and ends up needing a foot amputation
- A person with a high fever and shortness of breath waits days to seek care and dies of bacterial pneumonia

The other alternative, paying for care you can’t afford, also costs them dearly. That’s how “around 30,000 Vermonters” ended up with medical debt turned over to collection agencies, while “tens of thousands more ... are paying down medical bills” that have yet to be turned over to collections, according to state treasurer Mike Pieciak.

If you want to see what medical debt does to your life, read over some of the stories collected by the state’s Health Care Advocate at [vtmedicaldebt.org](http://vtmedicaldebt.org). Medical debt has dramatic effects on these people’s lives, from ruined credit to skimping on food to postponing retirement. It goes without saying that these people avoid getting future medical treatment for fear of running up even more debt.

This kind of deciding between a rock and a hard place goes on every day in Vermont. It amounts to the worst, most unfair kind of health care rationing. Why do we allow it? Here are the excuses we hear from some of our legislators:

Excuse No. 1: Because Medicare and Medicaid are federally directed, we can’t change the rules they have in place.

This is simply not true. Waivers of federal rules are very common in Vermont and other states. In Vermont, the Vermont Homeowner Assistant Program, Dr. Dynasaur, and the All Payer model and the ACO running it all operate under waivers of federal rules. And anyone watching the recent circus in Washington knows that we cannot expect a national universal health care system anytime soon.

Excuse No. 2: We don’t have enough primary care clinicians and expanding coverage would just make this worse.

Again, not true. Implementing universal primary care would be a magnet drawing primary care clinicians to this state. Including all patients in one program, with one set of rules and regulations rather than hundreds they now face, would vastly reduce the amount of time and effort they are forced to spend on administrative tasks. Few people outside the medical profession appreciate how heavy that burden is now: 15.9 hours a week for family medicine doctors, according to a 2020 survey.

Excuse No. 3: It is too expensive to expand coverage to everyone.

In fact, we already spend more than enough to provide comprehensive care to all Vermonters. That has been shown in study after study. Administrative costs eat up 34% of what we now spend and half of that is not necessary—pure waste. Implementing a universal system would save massive amounts; as much as \$1 billion, according to



Photo by Karolina Grabowska

some studies.

Excuse No. 4: We need to address cost of care before expanding access.

The truth is that we will never be able to make health care affordable until we implement a universal access system. First, keeping people out of the current system is administratively very costly, as discussed above. Second, our current system encourages delayed care which ends up costing more because people get sicker during the delay.

Note that these arguments against needed reforms are generalities while avoiding real reform inflicts very specific and extensive damage on a large portion of Vermonters.

Everyone agrees that health care needs to be fixed. Admittedly it is a gargantuan task to try and fix the whole system at once. After all, health care is nearly 20 percent of the Vermont economy with big, entrenched “stakeholders” who exercise considerable influence over what legislation gets “moved” in the legislature.

So why not start with a smaller piece: Universal primary care. That makes primary care — including mental health and substance use disorder services — a public good like police protection and firefighting. Commercial insurers would no longer have to pay the cost of primary care, and premiums would be reduced accordingly.

Universal primary care is a small but important piece of the answer. It comes with a small price tag for taxpayers — less than 6 percent of total spending — and that is offset by lower premiums. But it would make a big difference; everyone needs primary care, even healthy people.

Make no mistake, this legislation is within the power of the Vermont legislature. Ask your legislators to support universal primary care.

*(Deborah Richter is a practicing family physician in Cambridge. She lives in Montpelier.)*



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## Report from the Legislature

# Swimming in the alphabet soup of state government



Chea Waters Evans  
State Rep.

I now live in the land of acronyms and abbreviations. ARPA, ESSR, GOMA, EGWP, TIF, ADS, VIC, USGS. If you have some spare time, look up all of those things and I'll quiz you next time I hold a Chat with Chea gathering.

I was assigned to my first-choice committee here in the Vermont House of Representatives. Government Operations and Military Affairs (HGOMA) covers a wide range of topics, from the Department of Liquor and Lottery to municipal government to elections to open meeting laws to military and police to public safety to the Cannabis Control Board and so many other things. I like it because it covers a broad array of topics, touches on issues that are important and is also interesting to me personally.

Our first bill in HGOMA was one of the first to hit the floor of the House and

Senate — an extension of temporary laws that were in place for the past two years because of COVID. H.42 allows municipal governments to, among other things, hold votes by Australian ballot and hold meetings online.

It also allows towns to move their town meeting date and requires that they record any public meetings. The bill passed in both chambers, and while I'm writing this, Jan. 24 at 11:45 a.m., it's on the governor's desk waiting for a signature. The bill is urgent because towns are legally obligated to warn voters before town meeting, and there are printer deadlines for the town report.

I had no idea that basically everything your state government does is online. If you're so inclined, you could watch all the committee meetings live all day on YouTube or watch them at night instead of Netflix or football. It's equally as entertaining. Each chamber of the General Assembly has its own YouTube channel, as does every committee. And the legislature.vermont.gov web site has every document we review, every PowerPoint

presentation we watch and the progression of every bill as it makes its way through.

I've so far cosponsored two bills: H.66, which introduces paid family and medical leave insurance, and H.89, which is a shield law protecting healthcare providers and others who provide reproductive or gender-affirming healthcare. I feel quite strongly that both bills will have a profound positive effect on the life of Vermonters and are in line with what Charlotte and Hinesburg voters want — I've heard a lot from people about these issues.

The other topics I've heard the most about from constituents are the governor's proposal to move health care pension benefits to a program called Medicare Advantage and cannabis. The Medicare Advantage issue isn't solvable by the legislature at this point; since it comes from the executive branch, the best way to get your voice heard is to contact the governor's office.

My understanding regarding cannabis growers and planning and zoning is that the state's laws are intentionally

left somewhat open in order to allow municipalities to mow their own path — with the clear directive that towns can't make so many restrictive laws that it effectively makes it impossible to grow cannabis. There are a whole lot of unknowns here, particularly since until recently, it wasn't legal to grow cannabis in Vermont, and it's still not legal on the federal level. As a decision-maker, I like to rely on facts, figures and data as much as possible. Unfortunately, in this industry, there aren't a lot of those to rely on yet because it's so new. I'll let you know more about this as things progress.

I had fun this week at the Charlotte Senior Center holding an informal drop-in; anyone is welcome from Charlotte or Hinesburg, or anywhere, really. We had great discussions about compost, cannabis, vehicle inspections, zoning laws and more. I'll be doing it again on Feb. 27 at 1 p.m., and I'd love to see you. Call or text any time at 917-887-8231 or email me at [cevans@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:cevans@leg.state.vt.us).

## Hi! Neighbor

# Lydia Clemmons: Keeping her family's farm alive and vibrant

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

Lydia Clemmons believes she was the last of her five siblings anyone would have expected to take over the role of running her parents' farm.

Of the five, she was the only one who lived far away, having left town for college and then moved to Africa, only returning to Charlotte for brief vacations. Nevertheless, she is the one who serves as president and executive director of the non-profit Clemmons Family Farm.

Clemmons was initially set to follow in the footsteps of her parents — a doctor and a nurse — but in the early 1980s she left her pre-med program at Stanford University to join the Peace Corps. That trip sparked a 35-year career of working in Africa as an applied medical anthropologist. Clemmons thoroughly enjoyed her life in Africa but when her parents asked her to return to the family farm in Charlotte in 2013, she decided it was time to come home.

Clemmons has a master's in public health from the University of Michigan and a PhD in medical anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. Most of her work has been in the fields of public health, nutrition and agriculture.

Although the programs she shepherded were mostly in rural areas, they were often national or even multi-national in scope. One example was a World Health Organization program based in Burkina Faso to help treat river blindness. The goal was to get thousands of people to take a pill annually, but many were skeptical of the medicine. "You have to understand what the community perceives as well as your own cultural perceptions," she said.

Another large project involved trying to improve the nutritional practices of farmers in Tanzania who were struggling to put food on the table. Clemmons' area of expertise is social and behavior change communications and she used those techniques to find strategies to improve the eating habits of the farmers. She described the techniques as a more ethical version of those used in marketing and advertising.

"I was having a wonderful life in Africa," Clemmons said, "but coming home was also a way for my son to have a sense of grounding in Vermont."

Upon her return, Clemmons threw herself into the preservation of the family farm which became a non-profit organization in 2019. She was delighted to find a new community of African immigrants in her home state, a change from the more homogenous population she recalled.

The Clemmons Family Farm is now a hub of art and culture and Clemmons said some of that is a by-product of her time in Africa. She noted that a lot of her work in



Courtesy photo

After 35 years in Africa, Lydia Clemmons has come home to her family's farm.

social and behavior change communication was done through the arts. Some of the rural communities in which she worked have low literacy rates, so information is sometimes conveyed via proverbs, spoken word, song, theater and visual arts.

The truth is that art and culture were always part of her family's activities. After visiting Clemmons in Africa, her mother (also named Lydia) opened Authentica African Imports to bring African art to Vermont. Clemmons' mother also got

together with friends to cook African food for dinners to raise money for the Flynn during the 1980s.

Despite her new role at the farm, Clemmons never stopped working in Africa. Initially, she stayed in Charlotte and travelled at least once every quarter to Africa, visiting both the rural sections and the seats of power in the larger cities. When she first moved back, she estimates that she worked a regular 40-hour week for her full-time job plus 60 hours at the farm. The pandemic means that all her African work is now done remotely and is down to 25 to 30 hours a week, but her farm hours haven't changed.

Since returning to the farm, Clemmons has won a number of awards including the Con Hogan Award from the Vermont Community Foundation and the Arthur Williams Award for Meritorious Service to the Arts from the Vermont Arts Council, and under her stewardship, the farm has received a number of other accolades. Awards, however, are not what motivate her, and she would be perfectly happy to stay behind the scenes.

Clemmons' mother had a number of miscarriages and her pregnancy with her namesake daughter might have ended the same way if friends had not intervened and put her on mandatory bedrest.

"My mother always said she knew I had a special purpose," Clemmons said. "I feel that coming back and saving the farm is that purpose. It's immensely gratifying."



# Around Town

## Condolences

The Honorable James L. Morse, 82, died on Jan. 13, 2023, at his home of 52 years in the little red house by the covered bridge on Lewis Creek. He was embraced by his wife Gretchen, and his two daughters, Rebecca and Rachel.



Jim’s home was his sanctuary where he nurtured his loving family, was a steward of the land, protected all living things and welcomed friends and neighbors with an open door. His home gave him inspiration and solace to write poetry, record his thoughts in “Doodles & Jots” and capture the beauty and irony of life through his photography and drawings.

Jim was born in New York City to Isabel and Robert Morse on Sept. 11, 1940. He moved to Middlebury, Vermont, when he was a teenager. He graduated from Deerfield Academy in 1958 and Dartmouth College in 1962. After serving as a line officer in the Navy on destroyers,

he attended Boston University Law School, where he was editor-in-chief of the law review, graduating in 1969 with the highest honor for service and scholastic achievement. He then clerked for Vermont Judge Sterry R. Waterman on the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in New York.

Jim was passionately committed to the constitutional promise of “justice for all” and making life better for everyone in our “brave little state,” and beyond. After private practice he served as Vermont assistant attorney general and later as Vermont defender general. Jim was appointed to the Vermont Superior Court in 1981 by Gov. Richard A. Snelling and later appointed associate justice of the Vermont Supreme Court in 1988 by Gov. Madeleine M. Kunin.

As a member of the judiciary for 22 years, Jim authored hundreds of opinions and earned a reputation as one of Vermont’s most compassionate and conscientious jurists. He especially enjoyed mentoring law clerks and creating opportunities for judicial education.

In addition to public service in Vermont, Jim participated in rule-of-law initiatives in Russia and Ukraine and was a consultant

to the war crimes tribunal at Sarajevo in Bosnia.

After retiring from the bench in 2003, Jim served nearly three years as a commissioner for the Agency of Human Services re-organizing economic services, child protection, early childcare and education and juvenile justice into the Department for Children and Families. He fully retired in October 2005.

Jim was a trustee of New England Association of Schools and Colleges after serving as a commissioner on NEASC’s Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. Jim served as a trustee and president of the board of Hunger Free Vermont. He also served as a board member and president of the board of the Vermont Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Jim leaves his wife of 57 years Gretchen, his daughter Rebecca Morse and her husband, Jerry Swope and three grandchildren, Emma and William Downey and Henry Swope; and his daughter, Rachel Scarborough and her husband Mitch and two grandsons, Samuel and Nathaniel. He is also survived by his sister-in-law and brother-in-law Nancy and David Barry, his

nieces Samantha Baker, Elizabeth Bain and Katherine Speede, and their husbands and children.

Our family is grateful for friends and neighbors who supported Jim through his last months of life. We are also thankful for the tenderhearted team at UVM Home Health and Hospice, and Jim’s oncologist, Dr. Shahid Ahmed at UVM Cancer Center.

To honor Jim, please consider donating to Vermont ACLU, the Lewis Creek Association or United Way of Northwest Vermont.

A memorial service will be held in the spring when Jim’s favorite poet, Robert Frost, reminds us that “nature’s first green is gold!”

## Congratulations

Mason Otley of Charlotte was named to the dean’s list at Lehigh University for the fall semester.

Wiley Simard of Charlotte was named to the Castleton University president’s list for the fall semester.

Cole Boffa of Charlotte was named to the president’s list at James Madison University for the fall semester.

# Community Roundup

## Coaches needed

Girls on the Run Vermont needs coaches. Girls on the Run is a physical activity-based, positive youth development program that inspires students in third to eighth grades to be joyful, healthy and confident.



The 10-week program incorporates movement to empower participants to develop critical life skills, build confidence, cultivate positive connections with peers, manage their emotions and stand up for themselves and others.

Locations in this area that still need coaches include Charlotte Central School, Hinesburg Community School, Shelburne Community School and Williston Central School.

Volunteer coaches utilize a curriculum to engage teams of girls in fun, interactive lessons. The spring season begins the week of March 27. Teams meet twice a week for 90 minutes and the program culminates with all teams participating in one of two noncompetitive, celebratory 5K events in Essex and Manchester.

Coaches do not need to be runners. Girls on the Run Vermont provides training so volunteers have all of the tools needed to facilitate the season and to have a positive coaching experience.

All volunteer coaches must complete a background check. The program welcomes high school students to volunteer as Junior Coaches. Please visit [gotrvt.org/](http://gotrvt.org/) coach for full details or email [info@](mailto:info@)

[girlsontherunvermont.org](http://girlsontherunvermont.org).

Participant registration opens on Wednesday, Feb. 22. More information about the program and registration can be found on the Girls on the Run Vermont’s website: [gotrvt.org](http://gotrvt.org).

## Scholarships

The New England Newspaper and Press Association awards up to 10 scholarships each year to aspiring high school seniors and college journalists to encourage and support young people who plan to pursue a career in the newspaper industry.



College students and high school seniors who are studying and acquiring work experience that will prepare them to work in the field of journalism are eligible to apply. The application deadline is March 31.

For more information, contact [students@nenpa.com](mailto:students@nenpa.com). You will receive an email confirming the receipt of your application with a link to a Dropbox folder to upload the required documents.

## Programs to help low-income residents get solar energy

Green Mountain Power is launching two programs to connect income-qualified customers with solar energy.

The Shared Solar Program unlocks

incentives in the federal Inflation Reduction Act to create a qualified low-income program that saves participants money, Green Mountain Power said in a release. The Affordable Community Renewable Energy pilot will use a state grant so eligible customers can take part in new Vermont solar projects, providing them discounts for five years.

The projects built for this program will be some of the first in Vermont sparked by the renewable energy provisions of the Inflation Reduction Act and state recovery funds.

“We’re looking forward to seeing strong proposals from local solar developers to make sure we can connect our customers with cost-effective solar energy, and to partner with them to add storage to these projects too,” said Candace Morgan, Green Mountain Power’s director of corporate and legislative affairs.

Green Mountain Power plans to start enrolling customers for solar savings as soon as this summer with projects starting to generate power by the end of the year. To apply or for more information, go to [dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/eap](http://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/eap).

## League of Women Voters speakers on climate change

The League of Women Voters of Vermont and Montpelier’s Kellogg-Hubbard Library present the fourth in its 2022-23 lecture series on the impact of climate change on Vermont.

The lectures look at climate change’s effect on personal, economic and ecological levels, closing with action that has been

taken and what we can do individually and as a community.

The program, at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 8, includes a legislative initiatives update, a preview of relevant state legislation and the impact of past legislation.



Panel members are Sen. Andrew Perchlik and Rep. Gabrielle Stebbins. Jared Duval, executive director of Energy Action Network, will moderate.

The program will be hosted via Zoom and is open to the public. Attendance is free, but guests must register at [kellogg-hubbard.org/adult-programs](http://kellogg-hubbard.org/adult-programs).

The League of Women Voters of Vermont lecture series is designed to bring outstanding speakers to discuss contemporary issues related to democracy and social justice.

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**The Charlotte News**



# Charlotte History

## District No. 9: A school district with a progressive history

Dan Cole  
Contributor

The historical society has in its collection several notebooks of meeting notes from Charlotte’s historic school districts. This time we are looking at District No. 9, known as the Carpenter Road School and, in the early 20th century, as the Stacy School, for the landowner next door, Alfred G. Stacy.

Most casual readers would peruse these meeting notes, notice some of the names and then close the book with little comment. But there are hidden stories of a district that might have been more enlightened for its time than others — if you dig deeper.

Elizabeth M. Sheldon was 18 years old when hired to teach 28 weeks of school in 1884, for which she was paid \$84. Young Frankie Jacobs was paid \$4 to start the fires in the school woodstove that year. Sheldon eventually married Frankie’s older brother Henry William Jacobs.

The voters of the district met to conduct school business that included electing officers for each ensuing year. Despite being decades before women were enfranchised, Emily (Porter) Jackman and Orphana Paulina Newell served as officers in District No. 9.

George Doolittle Sherman, a cousin of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, was orphaned in Streetsboro, Ohio, in 1849 at age 6 following the deaths from consumption of his father Almon and his mother Eloisai (Doolittle).

He had a younger brother, Charles Gould Sherman, who had just turned 4. The brothers were split up. George, unhappy with his new home, moved to Charlotte to be with his cousin John H. Sherman, who operated a large farm on Carpenter Road just east of Dorset Street. John and his wife Sarah (Brigham) never had children. John was substantially

older than George, and their relationship became almost as close as the bond between father and son.

George Sherman joined the First Vermont Cavalry at the start of the Civil War. He was wounded and captured by John S. Mosby near Dranesville, Va., on March 31, 1863. After Sherman was released by the Confederate army, he rejoined the Union and fought at Gettysburg, later developing pneumonia and chronic bronchitis, and was admitted to the hospital. His was a bad case, and he was discharged for total disability in January 1864. He returned to the Sherman farm. His brother Charles came to Charlotte to help nurse him, but George died Dec. 29, 1864.

Charles Sherman, born in 1845, stayed in Charlotte and became active in the school district, serving as its clerk for many years. Through the district meetings he became acquainted with Emma Tomlinson, also born in 1845, sister of one of the leaders of the school district, Herschel Tomlinson. Charles and Emma married in 1866.

The next story begins with the Civil War draft of 1863. One of the Charlotte draftees was an 18-year-old freeborn Black youth named Isaac S. Prince. African Americans were assigned to the Black troop where they would serve, but the state of Vermont protested, arguing a Black draftee should have the same rights as a white draftee to enlist wherever he wished. This was approved, and Isaac, his brother Henry, his father Isaac and his uncle Daniel, all enlisted in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the second African American regiment formed in the North during the Civil War. The 54th Massachusetts suffered 50 percent casualties leading an assault on Fort Wagner, S.C.

At the close of the war the 54th had been active in North Carolina and southern Virginia,



where they made contact with a formerly enslaved 17-year-old named Gilbert Farmer from Danville, Va. Farmer came north with the Prince veterans. Farmer married Paulina Prince, Isaac’s sister, about 1870 in Shelburne and moved to the John H. Sherman farm. The record shows that Gilbert Farmer bid on contracts to supply wood for the school and won several. He died of consumption in 1889.

Another former slave named Joshua Aldrich accompanied the Prince veterans. Aldrich was born about 1847 in North Carolina and settled in District No. 9 in 1870 with the Carlos Higby household. Higby was also one of the officers of the school district. I have not been able to trace Aldrich or find records after he and the Higby family moved from Charlotte.

Also on the Sherman farm and neighbor to

Gilbert and Paulina, was the Charles Billings family. Charles was a freeborn Black from Beekmantown, N.Y., who had married Medora Green in Waterbury on Nov. 28, 1870. What makes this notable is that she was white. Mixed-race couples were not common at that time, yet they and their seven children appear to have lived comfortably among their primarily white neighbors in School District No. 9.

For more about the history of African Americans in this area, read Elise Guyette’s “Discovering Black Vermont: African American Farmers in Hinesburgh, 1790-1890.”

*(Dan Cole is president of the Charlotte Historical Society.)*

## Education

## Standardized testing a path to consider on learning journey

Margo Bartsch  
Contributor

As the pandemic hits the three-year mark, the number of students taking standardized tests and submitting scores to colleges has declined. Most colleges continue to be “test-optional” with their admissions requirements. For the college graduating class of 2026, College Transitions reports that half of students submitted scores compared to 77 percent before the pandemic.

The 2022 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report published that around half of Vermont high school students in the classes of 2022 and 2023 took standardized tests. With this 50-50 split in deciding whether to test, are there benefits to standardized testing?

Most colleges publish the score ranges of their admitted students. Some test-optional colleges have detailed their testing trends. For the college class of 2026, here are the percentage of students admitted without submitting scores: University of Virginia at

28 percent, Boston College at 33 percent and Brown University at 42 percent. There is a significant difference between those admitted with scores compared to those without.

Last year, Georgetown University changed from being test-optional to being test-required. Georgetown explained that during prior years of being test-optional, they still admitted most students with scores. With their applicants, 80 percent submitted scores. Of those admitted, 92 percent submitted scores. This shows an advantage to submitting scores.

There are four different test policies that each college can consider for its admissions requirements. The first is test-required for the SAT or ACT. University of Florida-Gainesville has always required scores, before, during and after the pandemic. Massachusetts Institute of Technology recently reverted to requiring scores.

The second option is test-flexible. Students choose which type of standardized test to submit, such as SAT, ACT, AP exams or IB tests. The Common Application allows students to submit various score reports as part

of their application credentials.

The third option offered by most colleges is test-optional. Applicants can decide whether to submit scores. Colleges have a holistic approach to evaluating the application including the transcript, essays, activities and recommendations. Test scores can be an additional element to consider.

The fourth alternative is test-blind, where colleges do not consider scores at all. For example, The University of California schools will not consider test scores in admissions decisions or scholarship awards.

Standardized testing typically begins with the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test) in early October of junior year. Scores are released in December. Students are not required to take the PSAT. For the Vermont high school class of 2023, 49 percent took the PSAT, according to the 2022 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report.

The PSAT is a nearly three-hour timed test that gauges a student’s results and identifies areas for improvement. The PSAT is an indicator for NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test). Historically, around 3 percent of overall PSAT test takers are recognized as scholarship candidates.

Each state has a specific NMSQT selection score index. This score range identifies top students who may qualify for various academic scholarships and recognition.

The estimated NMSQT index for the Vermont high school class of 2024 is 210 to 215. Across the border in Massachusetts, the score range is 219 to 222. This means that Vermont top-scoring students have an

advantage for this honor compared to many other states.

Junior year is also the time that students can choose to take the SAT and ACT. These are three-hour exams. For the Vermont high school class of 2022 (current college freshmen), 48 percent took the SAT, according to the 2022 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report, with 53 percent female and 46 percent male.

Vermont SAT benchmark results for English, reading and writing report 78 percent of females and 80 percent of males hit the competency. In math, 61 percent of males and 46 percent of females achieved the benchmark in Vermont.

It is important for the student to discuss the usefulness of standardized testing with their guidance counselor, teachers and family. Test prep is a commitment based on a student’s ability and attitude. Like the athletic ethic, practice makes perfect.

Even if a student takes standardized tests, they are not required to submit them to test-optional colleges. Evaluating scores can help in developing a college strategy and list.

The Robert Frost poem, “The Road Not Taken,” represents the choice between two paths. Standardized testing is an option to consider depending on a student’s goals. Scores can be another tool in the overall learning journey.

*(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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## Education

# Charlotte Community School works on families’ hopes

Naomi Strada  
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

A year ago, the families of Charlotte students were asked to reflect upon their hopes for their community school and upon the experiences which should be prioritized for the kids.

From the survey responses, the administration developed some goals to work on for school year 2022-23. Some of these goals and their implementations are:

- Opportunities for students in older grades to connect with younger students
- Monthly school-wide morning meetings with each grade taking a turn to host
- Some Omega seventh and eighth graders reading with youngsters weekly, some reading a book to tables in the cafeteria

- Seventh and eighth graders creating projects to be generous and compassionate with others
- Supporting food-drives in November and December
- Develop bonds between primary and middle school students
- Enrichment opportunities so kids can pursue their passions and stay connected to peers.
- Expanded co-curricular activities opportunities in soccer, cross country, ultimate Frisbee, basketball, volleyball, baseball and track and field
- A spring theater production directed by Alex Hudson meeting with students.

**Mentors**  
For anyone interested in a way to engage

in our community, the opportunity exists to mentor a youth in the school. There is a growing list of students who wish to spend an hour a week in a one-to-one relationship with a caring adult.

**Spelling club**  
Third through eighth grade students have been invited to join the Charlotte Central School spelling club. The club will meet at lunch or recess on Mondays and Fridays until the school spelling bee on Friday, Feb. 24. Winners will be able to compete in the Vermont Spelling Bee in March.

**Penguin Plunge**  
On Feb, 4, several staff members are participating in the Penguin Plunge. The annual event raises funds for the Special Olympics by collecting pledges for taking a dip in Lake Champlain. Help reach

the fundraising goal by donating at give.specialolympicsvermont.org/team/470373.

**Preschool lottery**  
The Champlain Valley School District’s early education program is accepting applications for a preschool lottery for the 2023-24 school year for the opportunity to enroll in one of the school-based classrooms which run 10 hours per week. Students from Charlotte who are drawn will attend classes at the Hinesburg Community School. Children who will be age 3 or older by Sept. 1, who have not enrolled in kindergarten from Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George or Williston are eligible. Applications are available from director of early education Erin Gagne at egagne@cvsdvt.org.

## Sports Roundup

# CVU dominating on the hardwood and on the mat

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

**CVU 60, St. Johnsbury 37**  
In spite of other distractions, the Champlain Valley Union girls basketball team continues to play fantastic basketball.

The Redhawks are atop the Division 1 rankings, riding an unbeaten 9-0 record. CVU kept its unblemished win streak alive on Jan. 16, traveling to St. Johnsbury Academy and coming away with a 60-37 victory.

Shelby Companion led all scorers with 16 buckets for the Redhawks. Addi Hunter scored 11 to go with 10 rebounds, and Elise Berger notched seven assists.

The game went CVU’s way from the get-go with the team leading 27-19 at the break. After three quarters, they were up 40-25.

**CVU 65, Burr and Burton 35**  
On Jan. 14, the Redhawks hosted Burr and Burton, playing another dominating game. At halftime, CVU was up 31-17 and was up 47-29 after three quarters.

Merrill Jacobs hit a 3-pointer to end the first quarter and begin the second, both coming from the same exact place in the post. She led the scoring with 16.

Hunter added 11 points for the Redhawks.

Berger was busy, getting six points, six rebounds, four steals and four assists.

**Boys basketball**  
**CVU 52, Burlington 42**  
The Champlain Valley Union boys basketball team joins the girls atop the Division 1 rankings. The Redhawks boys team has a 10-1 record.

On Friday, Jan. 20, the Redhawks traveled to the University of Vermont’s Patrick Gym for a tilt against Burlington.

Things started nervously for CVU as Burlington (2-6) sported at 16-12 lead after the first quarter. In the second quarter the Redhawks began to impose their will, scoring 14-5 during that frame to take a 26-21 advantage into halftime.

A big difference for CVU during the second half was free throws, with the Redhawks going 9 of 10 from the line.

The Redhawk’s Alex Provost led all scorers with 22, and Kyle Eaton added seven points.

**CVU 43, Colchester 41**  
On Jan. 17, the Redhawks hosted Colchester in a game that turned into a nail-biter. With no time left on the clock and the teams knotted at 41, Logan Vaughan grabbed an offensive rebound and dropped it in to



Photo by Lisa Brace

Camden Ayer tries to pin an opponent in the 120-pound weight division at the Champion Commodore Invitational in Vergennes.

frustrate the Lakers’ efforts at a comeback. The 43-41 win gave CVU a 9-1 record, dropping Colchester to 5-5.

The Redhawks were led by Eaton who tossed in 13 points. Sam Sweeney notched eight.

CVU got up by as much as 10 during the third quarter, but were just up by seven at 34-27 as the fourth quarter began.

The Redhawks led 12-9 after the first period as junior Tucker Tharpe scored four points and Eaton and Sweeney each connected on 3-pointers. CVU grew the lead to five at halftime at 22-17 as Eaton scored six points in the second period.

CVU would grow the lead to as much as 10 in the third period but led by seven at 34-27 as the teams went into the final quarter.

Three-point shooting got the Lakers into the chase and two free throws gave them the lead at 41-39, but Sweeney got a pair from the charity stripe to tie it up with 30 seconds left.

After Colchester inbounded the ball, CVU set up a trap and successfully stole the ball with seconds counting down. Eaton missed a jump shot, but Vaughan rebounded and sealed the win.

**Wrestling**  
Thomas Murphy of Charlotte has been a dominating presence on the mat for the Redhawks so far this season. Murphy was named as one of the Burlington Free Press Varsity Insider Athletes for the week of Jan. 9-15, after he took the 182-pound division title at the Michael J. Baker Classic at Essex High on Jan. 14. At Champion Commodore Invitational in Vergennes on Saturday, Jan. 21, Murphy was once again at the topmost platform for the medal ceremony, after winning the 182-pound weight class. Camden Ayer also medaled for CVU in Vergennes, taking third place in the 120-pound weight division.



## In The Outdoors

# With cold winter finally here, might be time for a book

Elizabeth Bassett  
Contributor

Temperatures in the 50s and sap running in early January? An unsettling start to winter.

Even as folks hike in the mud or head up to the sugar house, animals are employing age-old behaviors and adaptations to survive the rigors of winter that may yet lie ahead. As for humans, this might be the moment for a few books about nature.

Great horned owls are courting now, among the first to brood eggs in winter. Their hoots echo in the night, long who-who-whos that can carry up to a mile. One of my favorite nature books, the abridged edition of Bernd Heinrich’s “One Man’s Owl,” is available at the Charlotte Library. Heinrich, a naturalist, scientist and artist, was living in Hinesburg when he found a nest that had plunged to earth during a heavy snowstorm. In it, he found a baby great horned owl, any older siblings likely having escaped with the parents. Great horned owl eggs hatch sequentially, giving the earlier born a survival advantage.

Heinrich took the tiny handful of fluff, weighing just ounces, into his home where he nurtured and raised it for three years. In addition to being a knowledgeable scientist, Heinrich draws exquisite and accurate sketches of animals and plants. In “One Man’s Owl,” he documents and illustrates his adventures with Bubo as he endeavors to teach the owlet how to hunt, defend himself and eventually survive on his own.

On long walks, Heinrich collects roadkill for Bubo’s meals. By turns poignant, nail-biting as crows attack the naïve little owl and humorous as Bubo tricks and taunts his host, this small volume is a love story packed with ingenuity, adventure and misadventures. Having bought a used copy of this out-of-print tome, I open it at random from time to time to read a chapter and smile at Bubo’s antics and learn more remarkable facts about owls. A delightful way to spend a dreary afternoon.

Another literary favorite, also in the collection of the Charlotte Library, is “Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter” by Ben Goldfarb. Millions of beavers were hunted nearly to extinction in North America for hats and the fur trade.

Today, after reintroductions and



population growth during the 20th century, beavers are being rediscovered and valued for their importance in offsetting some manifestations of climate change: fire, drought, flooding, silting of rivers and lakes, deforestation and species extinctions. Goldfarb has a storyteller’s gift as he tells us of beavers’ skills and idiosyncrasies.

In one of my favorite chapters, we read about love hotels. Researchers in Washington state found that lonely beavers reintroduced to improve water quality for salmon, walked hundreds of miles back home to reunite with family in familiar territory. Thus, the need to place “compatible” couples on the landscape who will settle in, build a lodge and produce future generations of nature’s engineers. Who knew?

Charlotte’s busiest beavers are at Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge with numerous dams on which their survival depends. Like all rodents, beavers have incisors that never stop growing. If they don’t gnaw, they will die as their teeth grow into the opposite jaw. Family groups work together, chewing a groove around a tree trunk until it falls. They prefer poplar, willow and birch over the harder oak and maple. Generally, they avoid evergreens. Beavers drag their quarry to a dam site, adding smaller sticks, mud and rocks to complete construction.

A lodge is a platform of sticks and saplings covered with a dome-shaped mound. Shredded and chewed plants make a soft carpet and water drains out through the floor. Underwater entrances keep the beavers’ home safe from predators. Winter food rafts, leafy branches anchored to the pond bottom, are also protected by water and ice. Beavers eat as much as possible before winter, storing fat in their large tails. With short legs and a heavy build, these rodents searching for food are an easy target for nimble predators.

Steam rises from lodges as the heat of family groups keeps them toasty. Beavers can be heard chatting as they groom one another’s fur with special waterproofing oil. A beaver family may be joined in the lodge by muskrats or mice who want to share warmth and safety.

Dammed streams create ponds that attracts frogs, deer, fox, otters, bobcats, waterfowl and turtles. These green islands, particularly in drought-afflicted areas, provide fire breaks on the landscape and host a wide range of species. Dams slow stream water, reducing scouring, erosion and flooding, a win-win until a basement fills with water or a road is undermined and washes out.

As with most things in life, good and not-so-good seek balance. When winter presents challenges, it may be time to curl up with a good book.

challenges for producers. Any entity may apply, but projects must benefit more than one specialty crop business, individual, or organization.

To apply, download the request for applications at [agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop](http://agriculture.vermont.gov/grants/specialtycrop). Applicants must submit a pre-application by Feb. 28 at 11:59 p.m. A review committee will invite the top-ranking projects to submit full applications.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets will conduct an information session webinar for all prospective applicants on Feb. 2 at 3-4 p.m. Register for the information session webinar at [bit.ly/2023scbgpwebinar](http://bit.ly/2023scbgpwebinar).

*(Scott Waterman is policy and communications director for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets)*

## Vermont ag agency announces grants for specialty crops

Scott Waterman  
Contributor

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets announces \$200,000 in grant funds to strengthen Vermont’s specialty crop industries and producer associations. Specialty crops are defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, horticulture crops (including honey, hops, maple syrup and mushrooms), and nursery crops (including Christmas trees and floriculture). Interested applicants should apply by Feb. 28 at 11:59 p.m.

Grant funds will enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops by (1) leveraging efforts to market and promote specialty crops, (2) assisting producers with research and development, (3) expanding availability and access to specialty crops, or (4) addressing local, regional, and national

## Weed’s In The Garden

# Cold weather calls for old-fashioned comfort foods

Joan Weed  
Contributor

When there’s a nice thick blanket of snow on the ground and you can hear the wind whistling through the walls of your home, it’s time for a rib-sticking sort of dinner to greet the family.

I am an old-fashioned cook with no crock pot, air fryer or even a toaster oven anymore. My two Dutch ovens of different sizes and trusty cast iron skillets and two sturdy saucepans serve me well.

Wooden spoons, wire whisks and carbon steel knives (sharpened often) are the tools I reach for most often.

Oh, and a wooden cutting board. I find therapeutic value in careful chopping and peeling.

The aroma of something simmering is the perfect inspiration to anticipate a delicious dinner. I thought I’d share a few hearty main

dishes for beginners or perhaps a reminder for long-time cooks.

Paraphrasing Julia Child here, I am not “slavishly dependent” on recipes either. Mostly I see what’s in the fridge or freezer and set to work. We all keep those must-haves in our pantries, so use what’s available. Using learned skills, I produce from my memories and experiment with what goes well together.

For a simple and not time-consuming meal, I offer chicken pieces or pork chops in a creamy sauce cooked in the oven, giving you time to relax or prepare sides for your meal. This calls for the short cut of a can of soup. Please don’t diss it as it really makes the dish taste good and have a creamy consistency.

### Baked pork chops or chicken

4 bone-in pork chops or chicken thighs  
1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup  
1/2 cup dry white wine or sherry  
1/2 cup sour cream  
3 tablespoons diced shallots or yellow onion  
4 ounces sliced button mushrooms  
salt and pepper to taste

In a shallow, oven-proof casserole dish, place seasoned chops or chicken. Sprinkle with the chopped onion and mushroom slices.

In a separate bowl, mix canned soup, wine and sour cream with a whisk till blended. Pour over meat and bake in 350° oven for about one hour until bubbly and browned slightly on top.

Serve with rice or egg noodles and a colorful vegetable to round out this meal for four.

### Kielbasa and sauerkraut casserole

This is another quick and easy to assemble favorite:  
1 package of kielbasa cut into 1-2 inch pieces  
1 bag of prepared sauerkraut, rinsed if you prefer (Boar’s Head)  
1 crisp apple peeled and diced finely  
1 small yellow onion diced  
4 small potatoes such as Yukon gold, peeled and quartered

Rinse sauerkraut if you like less vinegary taste. Layer in a shallow oven-proof casserole dish. Stir in the chopped onion and apple. Nestle the Kielbasa and potato pieces in the kraut. If very dry add about 1/2 cup



Kielbasa and sauerkraut casserole

water.  
Cover dish snugly with foil. Bake at 350 degrees for 3/4 hour and remove foil to finish cooking for 15 minutes more. Serve with good whole grain mustard and perhaps horseradish.

### Short ribs and vegetables in gravy

This is the long, slow simmering kind of dish, good for the weekend:  
four meaty, bone-in short ribs  
1 large onion diced  
2 large cloves garlic minced  
4 carrots, peeled and chopped into 1-inch chunks  
4-6 ounces of button mushrooms, shitakes or cremini, quartered  
flour for dusting  
salt and pepper to taste  
1 teaspoon dried thyme or marjoram  
vegetable oil

In a paper bag, place about 1/2 cup of flour, salt, pepper and herbs of your choosing. Dredge the ribs in the closed bag to coat with flour and seasonings. I shake it.

Meanwhile heat about 1/4 cup oil in a Dutch oven large enough to hold the four ribs without crowding. Brown each side of the ribs.

When that is done, stir in chopped onion



Photos by Joan Weed

Short ribs and vegetables in gravy

and minced garlic. Don’t brown them but just soften. Add mushrooms and carrots. Mix all and add enough water to cover. Add pot lid and simmer in oven or on stove top for an hour to one and half hours.


Usually, the gravy makes itself because of the dredging earlier but if not thick enough you can use some of your leftover flour, added to cold water and shaken to thicken the gravy. If I have some, I add Gravy Master or occasionally Better Than Bouillon when I need more flavor but rarely do.

This dish calls for mashed potatoes. Your vegetables are included so, though it takes some time, the dinner is nearly complete with just the added mash.

None of these recipes are cast in stone. If you like parsnips in the short ribs, do it. Other herbs or more seasoning than I like? It’s up to you. Experiment. Farro, barley or quinoa make a more interesting pilaf than rice? There you go.

These are just guidelines. I know some of my kids are naturals at cooking — others ... not a clue and the absolutely need specific directions.

You do you; make the above recipes yours. Think: Nutrition without sacrificing deliciousness. A warm dinner is the best sort of self-care.



**The Town of Charlotte**  
**MEETINGS**

**Visit [charlottevt.org](http://charlottevt.org)**  
**for more information.**

**Emergency Planning**  
Thursday, Jan. 26, 6:30-9 p.m.

**Planning Commission:**  
**Regular meeting.**  
Thursday, Feb. 2, 7-9 p.m.

**Recreation Commission Meeting**  
Monday, Feb. 6, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Development Review Board**  
**Regular Meeting**  
Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7-9:30 p.m.

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# Calendar of Events

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

**In the kitchen with Audrey**  
**Thursday, Jan. 26, 5:30-7 p.m.**

Join chef, jazz singer and flower farmer Audrey Bernstein for a free virtual cooking class through City Market. On the menu is chicken marbella. Instructions sent upon registration at [tinyurl.com/22km9vu9](https://tinyurl.com/22km9vu9).

**Men’s group**  
**Thursday, Jan. 26, 6-8 p.m.**

Find support and build caring connections with others in this ongoing group that meets online Thursday evenings, a program of All Soul’s Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. For info on joining, email [mmuzzy@allsoulsinterfaith.org](mailto:mmuzzy@allsoulsinterfaith.org). More info at [allsoulsinterfaith.org/mens](https://allsoulsinterfaith.org/mens).

**Magical Schubert**  
**Friday, Jan. 27, 7:30-9:30 p.m.**

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center performs at Middlebury College’s Mahaney Arts Center. In-person and streaming tickets available at [tinyurl.com/uwsttfr6](https://tinyurl.com/uwsttfr6).

**Potato print Saturday**  
**Saturday, Jan. 28, 10 a.m.-noon**

This family event, best for ages 6 and older, involves carving designs into potatoes and printing the shapes in ink on paper. To learn more or register, see [oldschoolartstudio.com/family-fun](https://oldschoolartstudio.com/family-fun). This Richmond studio offers youth and adult art and craft courses through March; schedule at [oldschoolartstudio.com](https://oldschoolartstudio.com).

**Day of contemplation**  
**Saturday, Jan. 28, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.**

A day of deep meditation and silence is held at All Soul’s Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. Participants bring their lunch for a mindful and silent group meal. Free to register; donations gladly accepted at the door. For all the info and registration, see [tinyurl.com/mr34tpaf](https://tinyurl.com/mr34tpaf). All Souls hosts a variety of classes and activities, including yoga, breath work and a grief support group.

**Collage creation**  
**Saturday, Jan. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Create a collage map of your neighborhood in this drop-in Family Art Saturday at Burlington City Arts on Church Street. Based on a current exhibit, the collages can represent our understanding of freedom, home and borders. Free event, just stop by. For all ages and families.

**Folk meets classical**  
**Saturday Jan. 28, 1 p.m.**

Capital City Concerts in Montpelier presents a free family concert featuring a mother and son flutist and violinist duo at Montpelier’s Unitarian Church. More info is at [capitalcityconcerts.org](https://capitalcityconcerts.org).

**Tree talk Tuesdays**  
**Tuesday, Jan. 31, noon-12:30 p.m.**

The Vermont Land Trust presents this first of four online educational programs, each talk featuring two Vermont tree species. The forestry team talks about hemlocks and red maples: how to identify them and how they fit into the forest ecology of our state. Free to register and donations gladly accepted at [tinyurl.com/4nchha7n](https://tinyurl.com/4nchha7n).

## Rotary speech contest

**Tuesday, Jan. 31, deadline to register**

The contest’s topic is: Why are diversity, equity and inclusion important? High-school age youth prepare and deliver a five-minute speech either in person or via Zoom on Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7:30 a.m., at Shelburne United Methodist Church. For details and entry forms, see [rotaryclubofcsh.org](https://rotaryclubofcsh.org) or email [amandarosevincent1@gmail.com](mailto:amandarosevincent1@gmail.com).



**Virtual book discussion**  
**Tuesdays, Jan. 31, Feb. 21 & March 14, 6 p.m.**

Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh holds its winter book discussion series. Each Tuesday evening talk, via Zoom, discusses a different title. Jan. 31 book is Teaching White Supremacy by Donald Yacovone. All talks are free but require registration at [tinyurl.com/4c3na2mt](https://tinyurl.com/4c3na2mt).

**First Wednesdays**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 1, 7 p.m.**

This evening, Vermont Humanities presents three digital events. Topics include city monuments, farm memories and trauma-informed journalism. All events are free and require registration. For all the info, see [tinyurl.com/33hssbte](https://tinyurl.com/33hssbte).

**Folk Talk Trio**  
**Thursday, Feb. 2, 6-8:30 p.m.**

This folk/Americana band entertains at Shelburne Vineyard with classics, originals and high energy. They have some Vermont roots, too. Free concert. For more info, see [tinyurl.com/2p7wc5fv](https://tinyurl.com/2p7wc5fv).

**Biking across Canada**  
**Thursday, Feb. 2, 7-8 p.m.**

At the Richmond Free Library, cyclist Mary Lou Recor shares photos and stories from her three-month ride to Nova Scotia, starting in Vancouver. This talk is part of the Outdoor Adventure Series of speakers through the Green Mountain Club. Free but donations gratefully accepted. Register at [tinyurl.com/46jucdt7](https://tinyurl.com/46jucdt7).

**Winter trees and tracks**  
**Saturday, Feb. 4, 9 a.m.-noon**

Join a community science naturalist at the Green Mountain Audubon Center in Huntington for an educational walk along its trails, photographing animal tracks and tree species. Sightings will be contributed to the popular identification app, iNaturalist. This morning is a bioblitz, a time when people gather as much information as possible about the flora and fauna in a given area on a particular day. Appropriate activity for beginner or experienced outdoors-lovers; all families welcome to this free event. To register and get info, see [tinyurl.com/bdehsrdf](https://tinyurl.com/bdehsrdf).

**Frame drum workshop**  
**Sunday, Feb. 5, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Construct a 16-inch Native American-style

drum during this workshop at Spirit Dancer Crystals and Gifts, now located off Flynn Avenue in Burlington. It may not be too late to register. For info or to register, see [tinyurl.com/yhu4ncdx](https://tinyurl.com/yhu4ncdx) or email [turtledrums.vt@gmail.com](mailto:turtledrums.vt@gmail.com).

**Ted K movie**  
**Sunday, Feb. 5, 2-4 p.m.**

The Middlebury New Filmmaker’s Festival presents a narrative film based on the diaries and writings of Ted Kaczynski. Director Tony Stone will attend and participate in a Q&A following the film, held at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury. More info and tickets at [tinyurl.com/2eajw7wk](https://tinyurl.com/2eajw7wk). March film is about Golda Meir; April film is about Yogi Berra.

**La fiesta at the Flynn**  
**Sunday, Feb. 5, 3-5 p.m.**

The Flynn Theater in Burlington presents the Vermont Youth Orchestra in a winter concert with a Mexican theme. Members of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra will join the youth orchestra for two works. For more info and tickets, see [vyo.org/la-fiesta](https://vyo.org/la-fiesta).

**Full moon gathering**  
**Sunday, Feb. 5, 4-9 p.m.**

Sleepy Hollow Ski and Bike Center in Huntington is hosting, weather permitting, an evening that includes lighted Nordic ski trails, food, a bonfire, local music and more. No alcohol is sold there, but BYOB is permitted. Ski passes and event tickets available at [sleepyhollowstore.square.site](https://sleepyhollowstore.square.site). Direct questions to Carol at 802-434-2283 or email her at [info@skisleepyhollow.com](mailto:info@skisleepyhollow.com).

**Earth Repair Homeschool**  
**Mondays, Feb. 6-April 3, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Registration due by Thursday, Jan. 26: an eight-week science exploration class for homeschoolers ages 9-13 will be held at Burlington Co-housing Community, near Centennial Woods on East Avenue. Instructor Jess Rubin covers diverse topics relating to the natural world, earth science and sociology 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. each Monday. To register, email Jess at [yepeth@gmail.com](mailto:yepeth@gmail.com) and put Earth Repair Homeschool in the subject line. For more info, see [mycoevolve.net/2019.html](https://mycoevolve.net/2019.html).

**Theatre for all ages**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 8, noon**

The story of Buster Bear, a character in Thornton Burgess’s classic tale, is presented on stage by the Very Merry Theatre in Burlington. Free performance is great for all ages and genders and takes place at 20 Allen Street in Burlington’s Old North End. For more info, see [verymerrytheatre.org/performances](https://verymerrytheatre.org/performances).

**March and Run**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 8, 7:30 p.m.**

Andrew Aydin is co-author, with the late congressman and civil rights icon John Lewis, of the graphic novel trilogy “March.” Aydin is the former policy advisor to Lewis. The first book in the authors’ subsequent series is called “Run,” which Aydin will speak about the writing and creation of, at the Statehouse. It is a continuation of the extraordinary life story of Lewis, in graphic novel format. Free but more info at [tinyurl.com/ypd8mts4](https://tinyurl.com/ypd8mts4) or by emailing [jpelletier@vermonthumanities.org](mailto:jpelletier@vermonthumanities.org).

**Valentine dance**  
**Friday, Feb. 10, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

The Me and My Special Person Dance takes

place in the Shelburne Town Gym and made possible by the Shelburne Rec Department. The dance is for young people in grades kindergarten-fifth, accompanied by their special adult friend or relative. Tickets may be purchased in advance or at the door. For more info, see [tinyurl.com/muyh4c9j](https://tinyurl.com/muyh4c9j) or call 802-985-5110.

**Birding at the Causeway**  
**Saturday, Feb. 11, 8-10 a.m.**

Join a small group of bird enthusiasts, of all levels, to watch and identify winter birds on the Colchester Causeway, a former railway bed that is now a bike path extending into Lake Champlain. Organized by the Green Mountain Audubon Society in Burlington, registration is required for this free event. Donations are gratefully accepted. To learn more and register, see [tinyurl.com/5n6hpprm](https://tinyurl.com/5n6hpprm).

**Block print on fabric**  
**Saturday, Feb. 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**

Shelburne Craft School offers a workshop on using carved blocks and ink to print designs on clothing or pieces of fabric. Class is for ages 14 and older. All block printing supplies included; students may bring their own clothes or fabrics, but there will be fabric available for practice. For all info and registration, see [tinyurl.com/y6bfpr83](https://tinyurl.com/y6bfpr83).

**Classical concert on the rug**  
**Saturday, Feb. 11, 11 a.m.-noon**

This program by the Vermont Youth Orchestra in Colchester introduces small children to instruments, singers and composers of classical music. Meet the musicians and their instruments up close. This free event is held at the Elley-Long Music Center on the campus of St. Michael’s College in Colchester. More info at [vyo.org/rugconcerts/](https://vyo.org/rugconcerts/).

**It is rocket science**  
**Saturday, Feb. 11, 5-7 p.m.**

Teen Science Café at the University of Vermont Davis Center for seventh-12th grade students with an interest in science and engineering. Free educational event with an aerospace engineer. Learn how to design your own functional model rocket. Free pizza and drinks. To learn more or register, see [tinyurl.com/mwbra5rk](https://tinyurl.com/mwbra5rk).

**Winter jazz**  
**Saturday, Feb. 11, 7:30 p.m.**

The Vergennes Opera House presents one of its most loved events, a winter thaw concert with music by the Little City Jazz orchestra. Tickets for general admission are free but must be reserved. Doors and cash bar open at 6:30 p.m. Come in out of the cold and get ready to dance. Donations gladly accepted to benefit the Little City Jazz high school music scholarship fund. Tickets at [tinyurl.com/b8p9ujnm](https://tinyurl.com/b8p9ujnm).

**Forester for a day**  
**Saturday, Feb. 25, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Registration fills quickly for this Shelburne Farms event for ages 5 and older with an adult. Wear a hard hat, watch a tree being felled and learn about the importance of trees in our lives. Work in the woodshop to make a wooden product for your home. Dress for outside. Info and registration at [tinyurl.com/yz9fcdx4](https://tinyurl.com/yz9fcdx4). See the Shelburne Farms calendar for info about winter horse-drawn rides.

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# Library News

## Learn how to use scat to explore the landscape



Margaret Woodruff  
Director

Get outside this winter and explore the Vermont landscape in a unique way with Vermont Fish & Wildlife Scat and Track Family Program.

Each week for four weeks, your family will watch a pre-recorded video highlighting a particular critter focusing on the habitat, life cycle and identification before diving into how to locate signs of the species. Then head outside to see what you can find and record in a nature journal.

The species covered this year will be white-footed mouse, ruffed grouse, mink and skunk. Vermont Fish and Wildlife have informative videos on their website to learn more about different Vermont species highlighted in past years at [vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/conservation-education/scat-and-tracks-program](http://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/conservation-education/scat-and-tracks-program).

Pick up a packet at the Charlotte Library and make sure to leave your email so the weekly videos can be sent to your family.

### Data Privacy Week

This Saturday, Jan. 28, Data Privacy Week ends. The week is designated to highlight the importance of keeping our personal data safe.

A few tips from the National Cybersecurity Alliance include:

- Create long, unique passwords and store them in a password manager
- Enable multi-factor authentication
- Recognize and report phishing
- Update software.



You can get help with any of these steps at the library. Pick up informational handouts to get started and contact Susanna for a one-on-one session if you need additional help.

### Braver Angels: Bridging the Political Divide Sunday, Feb. 12, 2:30-5:30 p.m.

In our current polarized political environment, many people avoid or dread conversations with friends, family or community members whose outlook differs from their own. Braver Angels' Skills for Bridging the Divide workshop teaches skills for having respectful conversations that clarify differences, search for common ground and affirm the importance of the relationship. The workshop also gives participants a safe environment to practice those skills. You are warmly invited on Feb. 12 from 2:30-5:30 p.m. to engage in this helpful and meaningful work.

Stay tuned for further information about the follow-up workshop on March 19 on land-use issues in Charlotte, an opportunity to put those skills to use. Here's the link to register for the workshop on Feb. 12: <https://bit.ly/3k6gppn>.

Braver Angels is a national movement committed to helping people cultivate skills that foster constructive engagement across our differences.

### Children's programs

#### Young children's story time Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

No registration required.

#### Kindergarten/first grade story time Tuesdays, 3 p.m., through Feb. 21

This after-school program has a few openings for this session. If you were part of the last group in the fall, you are on a waiting list.

#### Preschool free play Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, play dough — these

are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library. Ages 2-4. No registration required.

### Programs for adults

#### Book discussion: Our Better Nature Mondays, through Feb. 6, 7 p.m.

Grounded in experience and science, Our Better Nature: Hopeful Excursions in Saving Biodiversity presents readers with stories, essays and resources to guide and inspire action in favor of nature everywhere. This beautiful new book inspires individuals and communities to carry Vermont's thriving framework for sustaining biodiversity beyond all borders and into meaningful actions that protect nature around the world. At the final session, Feb. 6, we'll be joined by Eric Hagen and other contributors. Books are available to borrow or purchase through the library.

#### Stillwater Meditation Saturdays starting Jan. 14, 10 a.m.

Beginning and experienced meditators are welcome. Come to one, many or all meetings. No registration necessary. Stillwater Meditation is an offering of Rain Elizabeth Healing Arts.

#### Book Chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet each week to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, Woodruff selects a theme and highlights related titles from the library collection. No registration necessary.

#### Book discussion group: This is Happiness Thursday, Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.

Copies of the book by Niall Williams are available at the library circulation desk. Via Zoom.

#### Short story selections Wednesday, Feb. 1 & 15, 1 p.m.

Join Library Director, Margaret Woodruff, to share and discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will



include a variety of authors and two to three stories will be featured each session. Copies of the stories are available at the library circulation desk or via email. Register at <http://bit.ly/3QmFrwy>.

#### Craft night for adults & teens Wednesday, Feb. 8, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for a fun evening of crafting. There will be a few project options and we'll have our Cricut cutting machine available to try out. Registration is required by emailing [susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org).

#### Library contact information:

Margaret Woodruff, director  
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian  
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian  
Phone: 802-425-3864  
Email: [info@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:info@charlottepubliclibrary.org)  
For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter: Charlotte Library Newsletter.

The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. The next meeting takes place on Thursday, Feb. 2, online and in-person. Please contact the library for additional information.

## Write Ingredients

## Celebrate belated ice cream day with sundae on Monday

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

Be of good cheer. Feb. 1 is Ice Cream for Breakfast Day!

And here's the good news: Whether you celebrate with an ice cream breakfast or not, you can enjoy an ice cream sundae at Monday Munch on Feb. 6.

The sundae, with chocolate sauce, was invented at an ice cream parlor in Two Rivers, Michigan. At least that's what the folks in the Dairy State say. You'll find a different story in Ithaca, New York. Here are two different accounts of sundae drama:

- [fingerlakesfamilyfun.com/ithaca-origin-ice-cream-sundae](http://fingerlakesfamilyfun.com/ithaca-origin-ice-cream-sundae)
- [wisconsinlife.org/story/how-two-](http://wisconsinlife.org/story/how-two-rivers-invented-the-ice-cream-sundae)

[rivers-invented-the-ice-cream-sundae.](http://wisconsinlife.org/story/how-two-rivers-invented-the-ice-cream-sundae)

Pasties have an interesting history. Rest assured that Charlotte Senior Center cooks do not follow the medieval tradition of filling the pasty with whole birds or fish. On fast days they used porpoise.

Writers from Shakespeare to F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote of pasties. Famous for his 17th century diary, Samuel Pepys wrote, "Dined at Sir W. Pen's ... on a damned venison pasty, that stunk like a devil."

The young wizards of J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series are enthusiastic about pumpkin pasties. But take a look at this 1940s playground rhyme:

"Matthew, Mark, Luke and John ate a pasty 5-feet long,  
Bit it once, bit it twice. Oh my Lord,

it's full of mice."

Though pasty recipes can be found as early as 13th century in France, Cornish pasties date back to 17th and 18th century England where they became especially popular with miners, who found it useful to have food that didn't require cutlery.

Miners who emigrated to the U.S. brought their pasty tradition with them. Miners also introduced the pasty to Mexico, and in Hidalgo you can enjoy the International Pasty Festival (Festival Internacional del Paste). There, pasty fillings might include tongue, brain, sausage, beans and yellow cheese. Not to worry: The Monday Munch crew at the Charlotte Senior Center have listed their tasty pasty ingredients.

### Monday, Jan. 30

No meal today at the Charlotte Senior Center, but officially, it's Croissant Day, so celebrate.

Register for Thursday's Grab & Go Meal at [kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org) or 802-425-6345

### Thursday, Feb. 2, 10-11 a.m.

Age Well Grab & Go meal pick up For menu, [charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals).

### Monday, Feb 6, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Monday Munch



Individual Cornish pasties (potato, carrots, onions, and hamburger), cranberry-sesame spinach salad, cranberry juice with seltzer, ice cream sundaes with chocolate sauce and homemade sugar cookies.

Lighten your step with "Dancing with the Stars," a fun article in The New York Times. Using this gift link, you can read it without a subscription at [tinyurl.com/2jzuethu](http://tinyurl.com/2jzuethu).

For more dancing fun, "Old Movie Stars Dance to Uptown Funk" is sure to inspire you to look for some of these golden oldie films at [youtube.com/watch?v=M1F0lBnsnkE](http://youtube.com/watch?v=M1F0lBnsnkE).

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# Senior Center News

## Cello performance at senior center this Thursday afternoon



Lori York  
Director

Looking for something to do? How about joining a new backgammon league or yoga strength building practice? Check out the variety of programming; there is something for everyone whether it be snowshoeing, a guided autobiography class or attending a presentation to learn what the warning signs are for Alzheimer’s.

A new visitor at the senior center commented that with all the programs at the Charlotte Senior Center it is “like a camp for adults” and that they could not wait to retire.

The senior center offers programming for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programming is open to adults of all ages.

Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://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 & Presentations

#### Cello performance Thursday, Jan. 26, 1-1:45 p.m.

Join us for this solo cello performance at the senior center with Jonah Hutchin, a premier young adult performing cellist of Charlotte, Vermont. Check out [jonahhutchin.com](http://jonahhutchin.com). Free.

#### Blood drive Wednesday, Feb. 8, 2-7 p.m.

Please consider donating blood. The Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in over a decade. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: CHARLOTTE to schedule an appointment.

#### Ten warning signs of Alzheimer’s Thursday, Feb. 9, 1 p.m.

This presentation will help you recognize common signs of the disease in yourself and others. Learn about next steps to take, including talking to your doctor. The program will last about 30 minutes and will be followed with time for Q&A. Free but register by Tuesday, Feb. 7.

### Upcoming programs

#### Watercolor in winter Tuesdays, Jan. 31-Mar. 7, 9 a.m.-noon.

Join Lynn Cummings in this six-session class where students will explore a variety of topics from “painting whites” and winter wildlife, to details such as insects, bubbles, water droplets and other subjects. Cost is \$240. Register by Jan. 26.

#### New backgammon league Tuesdays, 6-8:30 p.m. & Saturdays, 2-4:30 p.m.

Backgammon is a tactical table game with a 5,000-year history. Open to all skill levels from beginner to advanced. If you are interested in joining the Tuesday evening or Saturday afternoon backgammon league, please contact Jonathan at [jonathanhart1@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanhart1@gmail.com).

#### Shape note singing Sunday, Feb. 5, 1-3 p.m.

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing ... not as a practice for performance. Search “sacred harp” on YouTube, then come and sing with us. Introduction to shape notes and

scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each first Sunday singing. Cost is free. Contact Kerry Cullinan ([kclynxvt@gmail.com](mailto:kclynxvt@gmail.com)) to schedule.

#### Yoga strength building practice Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon.

New starting Wednesday, Feb. 8: join Heidi Kvasnak weekly in this integrative practice that builds strength and stability, while maintaining a sense of ease and spaciousness in both body and mind. The class will practice longer-held postures that strengthen muscles, bones and core, as well as breath-led flowing movement, including sun salutations. Prerequisite: Must be able to easily get down to and up from the floor with or without props. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

#### Coffee & canvas Friday, Feb. 10, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Unlike traditional Paint & Sips, this “coffee & canvas” will allow you to explore and create your own unique painting. But don’t worry — there will be plenty of inspiration. No prior painting experience needed. All materials included. Cost is \$25. Register and payment by Wednesday, Feb. 8.

#### Snowshoe expedition Wednesday, Feb. 1 & 15, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Let’s snowshoe. Weather permitting, the group will meet on the first and third Wednesdays of the winter months. The outings will be approximately two hours with locations to be determined on trails around Charlotte and neighboring towns. Bring your own equipment, snacks and water. The group is also looking for some trip leaders. The cost is free. Registration is required. To register or indicate your interest in leading a snowshoeing trip, contact Susan Hyde at [susanfosterhyde@gmail.com](mailto:susanfosterhyde@gmail.com).

#### Library books on your Kindle! Wednesday, Feb. 15, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Learn how you can read library ebooks for free on your Kindle. Join us at the senior center as tech librarian, Susanna Kahn, will walk you through the process of finding, checking out and sending ebook titles to your Kindle. Detailed instructions provided. Free. Registration required.

#### Beginner Guitar II Wednesday evenings, 7-8 p.m. Feb. 15- March 29\*

Interested in learning guitar? This class on Wednesday evenings is for those who have a basic understanding of beginner guitar. 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](mailto:sonjohncreech@gmail.com). Cost: \$75. Registration required by Friday, Feb. 10. (\*There will be no class on March 1.)

#### Meals

Menus are posted on the website: [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://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 10-11a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. To register, contact Kerrie Pughe at 802-425-6345 at [kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org). \$5 suggested meal donation but not required.

#### Senior center contact info

Lori York, director,  
[lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org)



Photo by Lori York

There is a different team of volunteers who cook the Monday lunches every week at the Charlotte Senior Center. From left, the team was Susan Whittaker, Chea Evans, Janet Morrison, Maura Kehoe, Susan Hyde and Beth Merritt on Jan. 9.



Photo by Lori York

On Friday morning, a group of artists get together for coffee, conversation and some artistic inspiration.



Photo by Barbee Hauzinger/Owl's Iris Photography

Yoga strength building practice with Heidi Kvasnak on Wednesdays.

Kerrie Pughe, coordinator,  
[kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org)

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at [charlotteseniorcentervt](http://charlotteseniorcentervt).

212 Ferry Road, Charlotte  
802-425-6345  
[charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org)





Above: An American tree sparrow pauses. It used to be called just a tree sparrow, but in order to differentiate it from the Eurasian tree sparrow, an adjective has been added to its name, Hank Kaestner said. The “field marks” for identification are the chestnut cap and black spot on the breast. They breed in northern Canada and come to Vermont in the winter. Below: A yellow-bellied sapsucker, the only breed of woodpecker in eastern North America that is completely migratory, feeds on suet.



Photos by Lee Krohn  
A cardinal feeds on suet while a dark-eyed junco hops impatiently. Kaestner said the cardinal is a “southern” bird that has moved north into Vermont over the past 100 years or so. Global warming is the cause for the migration of cardinals and tufted titmouses.

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