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# The Charlotte News

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## **Frolic at dusk**

Just before sunset on Sunday, Jan. 22, some felt conditions were getting uncomfortable and went inside for hot chocolate and warmth, but these two thought the plunging temperatures were perfect and stayed outside.

Photo by Alexandra Z. Lazar



## Selectboard cuts its proposed budget

Voting remains on Town Meeting Day and by Australian ballot

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

A meeting with just two items on the agenda took almost four hours on Wednesday, Feb. 1.

The selectboard had planned a special meeting to discuss reversing its vote on switching to an Australian ballot and to hold an informational discussion about the proposed budget for 2023-24. However, a large crowd showed up, in person and online, and they had a lot to say.

At the outset, board member Lewis Mudge expressed umbrage about allegations that the board's decision to switch to Australian ballot had been made suddenly, once again foregoing a traditional town hall meeting with voting from the floor for some items, most notably on the budget. He said it wasn't sudden, that they had been discussing this change for several meetings.

Mudge took great exception to social media and emails he'd seen where selectboard members were called dictators.

The board and residents in attendance also discussed the relative merits of ways to ensure more public participation in town decisions, and whether voice voting or Australian ballot is the best method to boost resident involvement. More people vote in town elections on issues decided by Australian ballot than attend Town Meeting Day and participate in voice voting. But, an individual resident can potentially have a profound impact on a budget by introducing a motion from the floor in voice voting.

"We want to maximize the number of townspeople who can participate in this decision," board member Louise McCarren said. "If that is in fact the Australian ballot, let's go with that."

Chair Jim Faulkner said they had given the issue a lot of thought. A big factor in their decision was choosing to err on the side of safety and decrease the chance of spreading COVID, with the virus still lingering.

"We were following the governor's suggestion," Faulkner said. "We're thinking that his experts know more than the selectboard."

Christina Asquith asked for the selectboard to reverse its decision because she believes town meeting can be held safely. She supports in-person town meetings because it gives people opportunities to discuss issues among themselves instead of only with the selectboard.

A recently passed bill (H.42), gives towns the authority to postpone town meetings until later in the year, Rep. Chea Waters Evans said.

Board member Matt Krasnow lobbied for moving Town Meeting Day back until early summer, so it could be held outside under a tent to limit the risk of infection.

Lynne Jaunich, who is retiring as Charlotte's representative to the school board, said she had experienced having a budget defeated, and the selectboard should not be afraid of having its budget shot down.

**"Democracy is really messy."**

— Lynne Jaunich

## 'Enchanted' town



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

The second Community Heart & Soul kick-off event was held at the Charlotte Senior Center. It was almost as well attended as the first the Friday before at the Charlotte Congregational Church. Bob Bloch, standing, told the story of his first visit to Charlotte when he was 10 years old and how he was "enchanted." He decided then that someday he would live here — and he has for almost 30 years. See related commentary by Peter Joslin on page 4.

## Very Merry Theatre puts kids center stage

Alicia Wolfram  
Community News Service

Imagine walking into a rustic barn on a rolling Charlotte hill and, instead of finding animals in stalls and hay strewn about, seeing kids busily rehearsing lines, building sets and assembling costumes. That's a typical day at Very Merry Theatre's summer camp.

What started almost two decades ago as only a camp in a local barn has grown into a theater organization serving about 1,000 youths annually from northwestern Vermont.

Based in Burlington, Very Merry Theatre introduces young people to the art of theater by immersing them in all aspects of play production — acting, set design, touring and more. Parents can register their kids online for a variety of classes, programs and camps ranging in price and age group. The nonprofit welcomes participants 4 to 19 years old and offers financial aid.

Plays have included "Peter Pan," "Alice in Wonderland," "King Lear, the Western" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream: The 40s Musical," among others.

From its small start in 1994, the nonprofit now works with kids at local schools, summer camps and at its studio in Burlington to put on more than 40 shows each year. Along the way, it has nurtured a community of kids, parents, volunteers and board members to ensure children take center stage.

The group wants kids to "develop a sense of belonging and a safe place to explore all the many theater arts," said founder Don Wright.

He said the group wants to help kids overcome any obstacles to accessing the program by providing lunch or rides if needed. The organization also partners with schools to stage shows on campus, rather than at the group's studio or on the road. That way, Wright said, transportation and program costs do not limit participation.

Every child who wants a role in a play gets one. Wright makes sure of that — he adapts more than half of the plays and creates as many new characters as needed.

By the mid-'90s, Wright had started his camp and was volunteering at his kids' school when he noticed there wasn't much opportunity for young people in theater. So, he thought up Very Merry. Parents and



Courtesy photo

teachers liked what he was doing, and he kept building. "I just kept knocking on the door of more schools over time, and eventually we got our own space," he said.

Wright held the first camp at a friend's barn on Mount Philo Road in Charlotte. Eight years later in 2002, under the banner of Very Merry, he moved the camp to Staige Hill Farm Barn on Garen Road, where it remains.

"The barn itself is just a very magical place to be rehearsing," said Jessie Heiser, whose 8-year-old twins Maisie and Beatrice attended the camp last summer and plan to return this year.

Heiser said her daughters felt instantly at home, which speaks to the "power of the kindness and openness" of Very Merry. "They really do care and have fun with children and because of that, kids feel welcome and happy," she said.

Wright feels the same about Charlotte. "We were fortunate enough to find a barn there that really fit our needs," he said. "Charlotte's been a huge presence for us. ... It is the genesis of where it started, and we're there every year."

The 7- to 13-year-old "Wagon Tour," one of the signature camps, spans two weeks and consists of six practice days and four performance days, the latter spent in a different town each time. The first week takes place at Staige Hill Farm Barn. The second week, the show goes on the road with a mobile stage — the wagon — which trails behind a truck and folds out fully decorated

for each performance.

The troupe usually sets up on a lawn and attracts a lively crowd: People pour in with lawn chairs, blankets and snacks. "From toddlers to older folks, you really get quite an array of audience members," Heiser said.

The Charlotte Library hosts the wagon once or twice each summer. It expects to host "Winnie the Pooh" this July 4.

"People just love it," said Cheryl Sloan, the library's youth services librarian. "It's a really great space to hold that kind of production."

Behind all the prep and performing, for Wright, is a deep dedication to kids. "My most fundamental philosophy that drives what I do is to not disappoint kids," he said. "I want them to feel important and valued in our productions."

He takes a collaborative approach to directing, and people notice.

"I really like to watch Don work with the students," Sloan said. "He knows how to bring out the best in all of the kids he works with, and he just gives 110 percent to every production he ever does."

Wright calls it an ensemble effort. "We love the creative, imaginative energy and input from all the age groups. Even a 7-year-old still has ideas on how her character, Piglet, should be expressed," he said. "That's part of what's great about art, that discovery."

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



News from The Charlotte News

Joslin joins board as Miller steps down

John Quinney  
President and Publisher

On behalf of the board of directors of The Charlotte News, I am thrilled to announce that long-time Charlotter, Peter Joslin, has joined the board.

Peter and Paula, with their children Nathaniel and Elizabeth, moved from Hamden, Conn., to Guildhall in 1991 then to Charlotte in August 1993.

Peter is known to many of us for his work on the planning commission where he served for 17 years, including five as chair before stepping down in October 2021. He describes this as a fulfilling experience learning about town planning and zoning and all that is entailed. Perhaps his most important takeaway is that issues surrounding development, large or small, can be, depending on one’s perspective, insignificant or hugely consequential.

Less well known is that Peter has been a painter since the mid-’70s and has exhibited in New England and New York. His art is landscape-based and draws on the rivers and mountains in and around his studio.

Before retiring in December 2016, Peter worked in the printing business for many years, initially in the fine art market where he worked with museums, galleries and book publishers. He developed his expertise in the color reproduction process while working for Eastern Press in New Haven, Conn., and then for The Stinehour Press, in Lunenburg. Later in his career, Peter worked for Lane Press, a magazine printer based in South Burlington, where his responsibilities included managing prepress, bindery and distribution operations.

Peter’s interests include the arts, gardening and yardwork, sailing, golf and the Boston Celtics. As far as The Charlotte News is concerned, Peter writes, “At a time when newspapers are disappearing at an alarming rate, the importance of small-town newspapers, both ink on paper and web-based cannot be overstated. They are a vital link to town governance and provide a platform and forum for the community.”

In addition to serving on the board, Peter will continue to write his column, “Where do we go from here” with a focus on planning and development issues in town.

Welcome, Peter.

After serving as a board member for three years, Ben Miller recently decided to step down. He has taken on a demanding new position as the senior analyst of digital strategy and insights at J. Crew where his responsibilities include working to expand digital tools and possibilities at the J. Crew Group. As a result, Ben felt that he no longer had the time available for board service. We are sorry to see him go but are grateful that he agreed to stay on as a member of our digital committee.



By any measure, Ben brought a wide and impressive range of digital skills and experience to the board. He added substantially to our understanding of Google Analytics, SEO (search engine optimization) and online marketing, and provided valuable feedback on website development projects. Ben also took the lead in researching subscription software, so that we could more efficiently manage subscriptions for our out-of-town readers. He introduced us to Billsby, one of the few affordable subscription software products, and we’ve been using it for the past year.

Faced with declining revenues from print advertising over the past decade, many community newspapers have strengthened their online presence and offerings. During his time on the board of directors, Ben guided us in how best to move in this direction.

Reflecting on his time on the board and the relationship between community newspapers and the readers they serve, Ben writes, “It has been a great joy to see The Charlotte News expand and embrace a range of digital technologies. I cannot wait to watch the paper continue to grow over the coming months and years. I’m confident that The Charlotte News will continue to produce an excellent community newspaper and an ever-evolving website, thanks to an experienced and hard-working staff and board.”

Thanks for all your contributions, Ben. We wish you all the best and hope to see you around town.



Freezing cauldron



Photo by Meg Berlin

Lake Champlain on Friday, Feb. 3, when the temperature was minus 11 and the windchill much colder. “It was a giant freezing cauldron,” said Meg Berlin, who took this photo. “The wind was whipping up stiff chop on the water as the lake’s surface evaporated into great columns of steam rising 30 feet into the air.” Standing outside her car felt “vaguely terrifying.”

Letter to the Editor

Charlotte Food Shelf needs new location

To the Editor:

The Charlotte Food Shelf Inc. is a nonprofit striving to provide food and other assistance to our neighbors in the communities of Charlotte and North Ferrisburg.

This letter is being written to give everyone in town an update on the current search for a new location and solicit your assistance and ideas.

As most of you are aware, the Charlotte Food Shelf has been operating out of the basement of the Charlotte Congregational Church for many years. Their generosity in allowing this space to be utilized for this purpose is immeasurable. In addition,

the overwhelming financial support of our community and the dedicated volunteers has supported this effort and made it possible.

For the last year and a half the Charlotte Food Shelf has been looking for a different location. The Congregational Church needs their space for their purposes and the food shelf needs more space. In addition, the current space is not handicapped accessible and is difficult for families and volunteers to navigate.

The space needed is about 600 square feet that is handicapped accessible, has the ability to have heat, electricity and plumbing installed (if it does not already exist in the structure) and have space for parking and receiving large food orders. It could be part of a barn or garage that is capable of upgrades to meet the above needs. The space

could also be a shared space, as other than storage of food the time the food shelf needs to use the actual space, is only several hours a week.

Our communication and outreach to date has not yet resulted in finding a new space so fresh thoughts and perspectives are being sought. Your suggestions and creative solutions are welcome.

The board is still confident that something will work out because of the wonderful people who live here.

Please email me with your thoughts and ideas at ckmj@comcast.net.

Peggy Sharpe  
Charlotte  
(Peggy Sharpe is the secretary for the Charlotte Food Shelf.)



Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

Editorial independence

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

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# BUDGET

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Sometimes having a budget defeated is a good thing, Jaunich said. “Democracy is really messy.”

Jaunich also argued for the board to stick with its original decision to switch to Australian ballot because town meeting is not an equitable opportunity for everyone in the community to exercise their right to vote.

Although it is a treasured Vermont tradition, times have changed, she said, “It is a privileged opportunity for those who are able to sit in an indeterminate-length meeting.”

Town clerk and treasurer Mary Mead also encouraged the selectboard to stand by the vote they took to hold the vote on Town Meeting Day by Australian ballot.

The board spoke of equity, fairness and safety at the Jan. 16 meeting, Mead said. “I would hope that you would stand by your decision that you made for all the good reasons that you made.”

The board voted down a motion from Krasnow to delay town meeting day until June 3. Krasnow and McCarren were the only board members voting in favor of postponement.

No motion was made to rescind voting by Australian ballot, so there won’t be voice voting at this year’s town meeting.

## Budget revision

After the decision not to postpone Town Meeting Day, the board took the budget to the chopping block for some last-minute expense cutting.

Board member Lewis Mudge noted how many people were upset by how high the proposed budget was: “People aren’t happy. Let’s get this rate down.”

Last year the selectboard cut the budget dramatically late in the budget process. Krasnow applauded the “great job” that Faulkner had done then: “You spearheaded some pretty Herculean efforts to slash the budget at the last minute.”

Krasnow said part of the rise in this year’s budget is due to almost no budget increases for two years, despite having to contend with inflationary pressures and supply chain issues.

“I think it’s important that the public understand that historical arc,” he said. “What we are seeing is two years’ worth of inflationary pressure, not one year.”

After this year’s eleventh-hour budget cutting was done on Feb. 1, the proposed

Charlotte Property Taxes							
	Property Value		FY '23		Property Value	FY '24	Increase
Grand List (1)			\$ 9,444,078		\$ 11,517,168		22%
Municipal Tax Rate (2)			\$ 0.2421		\$0.2282		-6%
Homestead Education Tax Rate (3)			\$1.5062		\$1.5800		5%
Property Tax Calculations: FY '23 & FY '24							
\$300,000 Home		FY '23	Total Taxes		FY '24 (4)	Total Taxes	Increase
Municipal Taxes	\$	300,000	\$ 726		\$ 365,854	\$ 835	15%
Homestead Education Taxes	\$	300,000	\$ 4,519		\$ 300,000	\$ 4,740	5%
Total Property Taxes			\$ 5,245			\$ 5,575	6%
\$500,000 Home		FY '23	Total Taxes		FY '24 (4)	Total Taxes	Increase
Municipal Taxes	\$	500,000	\$ 1,211		\$ 609,756	\$ 1,391	15%
Homestead Education Taxes	\$	500,000	\$ 7,531		\$ 500,000	\$ 7,900	5%
Total Property Taxes			\$ 8,742			\$ 9,291	6%
\$750,000 Home		FY '23	Total Taxes		FY '24 (4)	Total Taxes	Increase
Municipal Taxes	\$	750,000	\$ 1,816		\$ 914,634	\$ 2,087	15%
Homestead Education Taxes	\$	750,000	\$ 11,297		\$ 750,000	\$ 11,850	5%
Total Property Taxes			\$ 13,113			\$ 13,937	6%

### Notes:

- Grand List is defined as the total value of all taxable properties in Charlotte — divided by 100. The fiscal year 2023-24 number is an estimate, pending completion of the town-wide appraisal process.
- The municipal tax rate and the homestead education tax rate may change once appraisals are completed.
- The fiscal year 2023-24 homestead education tax rate has factored in estimated results of the town-wide appraisal process and so it is applied to the fiscal year 2022-23 property values.
- Fiscal year 2023-24 property values assume an average increase of 22% in assessed values.

Chart by John Quinney

estimate for the total budget for fiscal year 2023-24, including the fire and rescue and library budgets, is \$4,221,070. This year’s total budget (2022-23) is \$3,790,108, so the proposed increase for next year over this year is \$430,962 — an increase in spending of just over 11 percent.

The over \$4 million total budget includes spending for the fire and rescue service that will be approved in separate articles on the ballot. Voters will be asked to approve almost \$2,931,000 expenses for what is called the selectboard’s budget in one article, and they will be asked to approve almost \$966,000 in spending for fire and rescue in another article and just under \$325,000 for the library in another article.

The fire and rescue budget article does not include almost \$100,000 in debt service on two fire trucks and an ambulance. Nor does the library budget article include the cost of benefits for library employees. A good bit of discussion was devoted to debate about whether these benefits should be broken out and included in the library budget, but the selectboard decided benefits should be broken out for all town departments in next year’s budget.

Krasnow estimated that about two-thirds of the increase in the municipal budget is due to

cost-of-living increases.

Paying for the town budget is a small portion of a homeowner’s total tax bill. The total tax rate, including the school system’s estimated budget, is predicted to be almost \$1.81 per \$100 of property value. Of this, the Charlotte municipal tax rate is predicted to be almost 23 cents per \$100 of property value and the school property taxes are predicted to be \$1.58. So, if these estimates prove to be correct after the town’s property reappraisal is completed in the summer, town property taxes are less than 13 percent of a homeowner’s total property tax bill.

Town administrator Dean Bloch said. Lowering the town’s tax rate doesn’t have a very significant impact on the total property tax bill: “If the municipal estimated municipal tax rate for fiscal year ’24 is reduced to, I’ll say, 15 cents, that doesn’t change the taxes a whole lot.”

After the reappraisal, town officials estimate property valued at \$100,000 would owe more than \$1,800 in taxes, or more than \$9,300 on property valued at \$500,000. (Obviously, the odds of having a home valued at \$100,000 in Charlotte are very low; that figure is included to make mental calculations easier.)

The property reappraisal will mean that the value of property in town will go up. Various

percentages have been repeated and reported, but according to town clerk and treasurer Mary Mead, the total value of property in town should go up by 18 percent because property is appraised too low now. Property value has gone up during the COVID property-purchasing frenzy.

The reappraisal is required because Charlotte’s common level of appraisal (commonly referred to as CLA) is too low. The common level of appraisal is a method Vermont uses to ensure that each town is paying its fair share of education property tax.

Charlotte’s common level of appraisal is 82 percent now.

“We’re trying to bring our grand list up 18 percent to get to that perfect number,” Mead said. “The property values on average are looking at an 18 percent increase. Some will be more; some will be less.”

After the arduous proposed expense cutting at the Feb. 1 meeting, the remaining four board members (McCarren had left the meeting) voted 4-0 to submit an amended article for voters to approve budget expenses of \$2,930,908 for the coming fiscal year on Town Meeting Day — down by \$163,000 from the \$3,093,908 in estimated expenses in the original Jan. 16 proposal for the town budget article.

# Food Shelf News

# Food insecurity rising as food benefits decline

Maj Eisinger  
Contributor

As I write this, overwintering birds scratch at black sunflower seeds, seemingly preparing to brave the brutal cold forecasted for the upcoming weekend. The food energy they consume will hopefully sustain them through record frigid temperatures.

The Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance stands ready to help those in need as temperatures drop, inflationary pressures mount and winter presents its special economic challenges. We remind the community that, if you or someone you

know in Charlotte or North Ferrisburgh is facing utility shut-off or an unexpected hardship, help is available.

All requests and grants are kept private and are available by simply calling 802-425-3252 or by filling out a request form. Request forms are available during food shelf open hours or on our website charlotteucc.org/copy-of-charlotte-food-shelf-1.

Fuel and food prices certainly challenge the vision of a warm home and full table. According to a recent University of Vermont study, food insecurity, defined by the USDA as a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live

an active, healthy life, affects two in five Vermonters. Hunger Free Vermont reports that food insecurity has increased 10 percent since last year.

Also, Congress’ passage of the omnibus spending bill portends a cut in Supplemental Nutrition Access Program benefits this spring, which will end the boosted benefit that has helped to sustain 70,000 Vermonters. Hunger Free Vermont expects that hunger will rise and notes that one-person families (such as seniors living alone) may anticipate a loss of \$260 per month in benefits.

Community efforts to assure dignified access to food will rise in importance.

Included in these efforts is advocacy for the 2023 Farm Bill. Information is available at hungerfreevt.org and by listening to a Vermont Public discussion about food assistance at tinyurl.com/numtb5st.

Especially in these times, we are grateful to Laura and Trafton Crandall, Nan and Ben Mason, Margaret Berlin, Barry and Susan Cluff, Jan Blomstrann, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Charlotte Congregational Church for their generous monetary donations. Louise McCarren’s donation of 200 pounds of beef and Back Door Bread’s donation of bread are also much appreciated.



## Commentary

# Planning for the future: Planting the seeds of growth

Peter Joslin  
Contributor

It takes time, energy and food for a seed to sprout, and it looks like one has germinated in Charlotte. Based on the impressive turnout at the Community Heart & Soul meet and greet on Jan. 20 and 27, Charlotters are ready to break bread and share ideas, desires and opinions about the future of our town. What was originally planned as one event, became two due to high attendance. Who would have thought?

Paula and I attended the second event, graciously hosted by the senior center; the previous event was hosted by the Congregational Church. At both events, music, chili, cornbread, salad and dessert were the prelude to an introduction to Community Heart & Soul and a brief overview of how it assists towns in organizing and planning for the future.

Kyra Wegman and Bob Bloch, members of the Charlotte Planning Commission, kicked off the event with personal recollections of what drew them to Charlotte, and then introduced Patricia Sears and Steven Mason, who will be the town’s Community Heart & Soul coaches.

Mary Theodore, one of the six organizers of the events, guided attendees through the meeting and asked everyone to break up into small groups with folks we did not know. I was part of a group that included a sixth grader who moved to Charlotte from Turkey and two participants from the West Charlotte village area.

Our task was to share what we love about our town and things we would like to see in the future. After the groups finished, Theodore shared a summary of

collected ideas of all the groups. There appeared to be general agreement on those things we cherish and what we would like to see in the future. According to Community Heart & Soul, it’s this kind of interaction, in small groups, that drives the process.

Kyra Wegman was encouraged by the success of the events: “That just the act of being asked to talk yielded such a strong response seems to reflect how much people care and want to have these substantive discussions about our town.”

Bob Bloch was also optimistic: “The unexpectedly large turnout of over 120 townspeople, their energy and interest in Community Heart & Soul was truly gratifying. I think we are on to something really good for our town.”

The idea of Community Heart & Soul — the who, what and how of it — may seem vague to some who haven’t attended these initial gatherings. What is the goal of working with Community Heart & Soul? It provides guidance through the process by which, collectively, we build a base of understanding about our desires for the future and how we can effect change, rather than letting change affect us. Charlotte is facing significant headwinds: the eventual formation of a fire and rescue department, highway department and a lack of housing. What better time than now to engage the community.

This bodes well for the future, but it will take a lot of work, volunteerism and long-term commitment to sustain and build on the momentum created thus far. Wegman and Bloch are hoping for 800 Charlotters to become involved in the process. Optimistic perhaps, but if the first two gatherings are any indication, we’re on the right path. Stay tuned for updates



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

It was chilly on the outside and chili on the inside at the second Community Heart & Soul kick-off event on Friday, Jan. 27. Inside the senior center, the counters were laden with chili, cornbread, deserts and warm conversations.

for next steps.

Another seed is germinating at Baptist Corners, in the East Village. Jonathan Maguire, who purchased 15.4 acres there, is in the thick of development. As mentioned in a previous article in The Charlotte News, the land includes the historic 1810 Sheehan house on the corner of Spear Street and Hinesburg Road. He plans adaptive reuse of the house as a restaurant and a new structure to be used as a cultural center and residential unit above.

In the future, he has plans for 20 units of senior housing in the southwest corner of the property. On a recent snowy Saturday morning, he gave me a tour of the house and an overview of the project with the energy and optimism of an

entrepreneur. Maguire has submitted his application to the development review board, which has scheduled his sketch plan review for Wednesday evening, February 22.

A major facelift of the Sheehan house, on a very visible corner, is significant and will be a welcome sight, reinforcing the historic settlement pattern and increased vitality of the East Village — consistent with the town plan. Please consider showing your support at the development review board meeting, in person or via Zoom.

Two seeds, possibly becoming two trees?

*(Peter Joslin is a new member of The Charlotte News’ board of directors and former chair of the planning commission.)*



## Arts and Entertainment

# Free curriculum and contest for Black History Month

Clemmons Family Farm

In honor of Black History Month, the Clemmons Family Farm is releasing “Two Bessies on Two Wheels,” an African American history curriculum for grades K-5.

The curriculum is available online as part of the nonprofit farm’s Windows to a Multicultural World K-12 program. It features two women who were pioneers in airplane and motorcycle travel: Bessie Coleman, the first African-American and Native American to obtain a pilot’s license, and Bessie Stringfield, the first African-American woman to ride a motorcycle across the United States. Both women broke through barriers of gender and race discrimination to pursue their joy of freedom, travel and adventure.

The online curriculum includes lesson plans and resources from trusted sources for teachers and parents. There are also downloadable worksheets, coloring pages and art projects that enrich students’ learning as they create collages, songs and poems about the two African American women pioneers in travel.

Clemmons Family Farm approached Vermont singer-songwriter KeruBo to commission a new song that would help bring to life the stories of the two African American women. KeruBo wrote Vroom! which Clemmons Family Farm used to produce an animated video.

“I felt honored to be chosen to write



Photo by Nani Clemmons  
Left: KeruBo, a Vermont singer-songwriter, created the song “Vroom” for the “Two Bessies on Two Wheels” curriculum.

a song about their experiences. These two wonderful, courageous women who were determined to overcome all barriers stacked against them — during a time when discrimination based on race, skin color and gender was legal — ended up becoming icons in U.S. history,” KeruBo said. “It made me delve deeper into the history, music and culture of their era to give me inspiration for Vroom!’s style and genre.”

The song utilizes jazz rhythms of the

1920s through 1940s.

Vroom! is also the subject of a statewide contest for Vermont K-5 classrooms, which are invited to create and submit music video storyboards for the song during Black History Month. The classroom that produces the winning storyboard will work with KeruBo to co-produce and co-star in the music video.

Contest resources include a “Music Video Storyboard Imagination Practice Activity” that helps students learn to create storyboards by reviewing the lyrics, song and a sample storyboard for the Janet Jackson music video Made for Now shared in a downloadable worksheet.

“The ‘now’ generation is so creative. I can’t wait to see what they come up with,” KeruBo adds.

The “Two Bessies on Two Wheels” curriculum and Vroom! music video storyboarding contest are designed to mobilize the arts to help catalyze learning and dialogue about African American history in classrooms, homes and communities. The contest guidelines help K-5 students share the history of Bessie Stringfield and Bessie Coleman with their local communities and discover the motorcycle and airplane adventure stories of their family members, neighbors and other community members. The Wilkins Harley-Davidson dealership in Barre is partnering with Clemmons Family Farm on the Vroom! music video storyboarding contest and will be one of the

locations for the filming of the Vroom! music video.

“Wilkins Harley-Davidson is proud to partner with the Clemmons Family Farm to share the story of Bessie Stringfield with grade K-5 Vermont students. Together we hope to inspire these young minds as to what is possible when they are confronted by challenges in their lives,” said John Lyon, co-owner of Wilkins Harley-Davidson. “The story of Besse Stringfield perfectly illustrates the triumph of the human spirit over racial and gender barriers. We cannot think of a better message to deliver to the youth of Vermont.”

Clemmons Family Farm is seeking partners who are in Vermont’s airplane industry to help share news of the curriculum and to provide locations for the filming of parts of the Vroom! music video. Airplane industry representatives are encouraged to reach out to Clemmons Family Farm to discuss opportunities to collaborate on the project.

“Clemmons Family Farm has again produced an excellent learning resource, ready to use by teachers of our youngest learners,” said Clemmons Family Farm board member Steven Berbeco.

“The Two Bessies on Two Wheels” curriculum is available online for free during Black History Month at windows-to-a-multicultural-world.clemmonsfamilyfarm.org/courses/black-history-month-2023-two-bessies-on-two-wheels.

# 252 community concerts performed for a cooler climate

Brady Jalili  
Contributor

Last May composer-pianist David Feurzeig embarked on Play Every Town: 252 free concerts in each of Vermont’s 252 towns to combat climate change through the power of community and music. With this project David will become the first musician to perform in every Vermont municipality.

Feurzeig is traveling in his solar-charged electric vehicle throughout the state, offering free concerts to bring attention to the interrelated issues of climate and community,

while bringing the joy of music to his audiences. He will perform at the Charlotte Congregational Church at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 12.

“I want to support Vermont’s local communities with live performance in village centers and downtowns, while fulfilling the University of Vermont’s mission to serve as a resource for the whole state,” Feurzeig said.

A professor of music at UVM since 2008, Feurzeig specializes in genre-defying recitals that bring together music of an astonishing variety of musical styles, from ancient and classical to jazz, avant-garde and popular

traditions.

Each program includes local customization. At Charlotte Congregational Church, the choir will sing music of 19th-century Vermont hymnodists, and music director Cameron Brownell will join Feurzeig for a set of songs by Gabriel Fauré.

Like every performance on the tour, this one will include its own unique Domenico Scarlatti keyboard sonata: Sonata No. 24 for this 24th concert in the project. The bulk of the concert will be made up of ragtime in surprisingly varied styles from Joplin to contemporary works, including

Feurzeig’s “Stride Rite,” a ragtime parody of Stravinsky’s “Rite of Spring,” and “Celebration Rag” by Vermont composer Preston Murphy.

Short classical pieces will round out the program, including “Another Time” by Vermont composer Eve Beglarian.

Feurzeig finds his approach attracts new audiences to so-called “classical” concerts and brings new insight to existing fans.

“Classical music culture puts the ‘great composers’ on an almost religious pedestal.

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CONCERTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



Photo contributed  
Pianist David Feurzeig will perform in Charlotte on Feb. 12 for the 24th concert.

Once this was an indication of the audience’s love and respect, but it distances people from the music. It turns away new listeners, who feel like they’re in a stuffy museum instead of a live concert,” Feurzeig said. “Sure, the music can be serious, but there’s no reason anyone should feel intimidated. And if I don’t get a laugh from the audience in the first two minutes, I get worried!”

Follow Feurzeig on his journey on Instagram, find up-to-date events via Facebook or visit the website at PlayEveryTown.com.  
Feurzeig said, “Like so much of our everyday life, routine jet travel is unsustainable — which means something it’s literally not possible to keep doing. I want to model a performance culture that doesn’t require hopping on a plane and flying all over the world.”  
*(Brady Jalili is public relations coordinator for David Feurzeig’s Play Every Town project.)*

Report from the Legislature

Taking a gamble with sports wagering

Chea Waters Evans  
State Representative

The big bill in front of my committee right now would legalize online sports wagering in the state of Vermont. As we hear testimony from people from different industries and perspectives, my thoughts on the bill have changed from, “Why on earth would we ever do this?” to “I understand how this could be a good idea.” I’m still not 100 percent yet, though.  
The Sports Betting Study Committee had members from various legislative and commission backgrounds: Wendy Knight, the commissioner of the Department of Liquor and Lottery, chaired the committee, which also consisted of Christopher Curtis, designee for the Office of the Attorney General; John Gortakowski, designee for the Department of Taxes; Chris Winters, designee for the Secretary of State; Tayt Brooks, designee for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development; Sen. Kesha Ram Hinsdale; Sen. Dick Sears Jr.; Rep. Carol Ode; and Rep. Matthew Birong.  
The committee’s final recommendation was to legalize online sports wagering in Vermont. Their rationale was that people are crossing state lines to place these bets

anyway (we’re surrounded here in Vermont by states and a province that allow it), so the revenue would be better supporting our own state budget, plus we would have our own consumer protection laws in place.  
I didn’t know there was such thing as a geofence — basically, there’s an electronic “fence” around the state that prohibits Vermonters from logging into gambling sites and apps. A study showed that there were about 18,000 attempts in a year to do so, so it seems like Vermonters are certainly trying to get online and bet. The problems that lead to a need for consumer protection come up when people try to get around the geofence and use illegal, offshore and unregulated sites. I think we can all agree that it’s a terrible idea to fork over your bank account information to an illegal gambling website.  
Honestly, though, I still feel kind of gross about it. I worry about addiction, about adolescents somehow getting access to these sites even when the legal age will probably be 21, and about the societal repercussions. I’ve been known to put a couple bucks down on the Kentucky Derby, so I understand the fun of it, but I also have seen how devastating a gambling addiction can be for a family.  
A sizable chunk of the tax revenue that comes into the state from sports wagering

would go to funding gambling addiction assistance and mental health supports, which actually don’t really functionally exist in the state right now. As it’s written, the law would also allow for people to self-exclude themselves from the gambling sites, essentially having the ability to ban themselves from betting. I joke that we need a self-exclusion policy for the cookies in the State House cafeteria — but the reality is that once a person realizes they’re not in control, they can remove the temptation permanently.  
The legalization of sports betting has been compared to the legalization of cannabis: by bringing it above board, it offers regulation and stability that protects consumers. It will leave my committee for the Senate over the next week or two.  
So, in the meantime, how do you feel about it? Are you excited to potentially be able to place bets on next year’s Super Bowl? What are your concerns? I’d love to know everyone’s thoughts, and if you’re interested in reading more about it, here’s the link to the study committee report: bit.ly/3YeBmNY.  
As always, please reach out with thoughts, questions, opinions, concerns: cevans@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231.

Hi! Neighbor

Slater bets all his marbles on wooden toy factory

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

When Patrick Slater started making wooden toys, his hope was that baby boomers would buy them for their grandchildren. He was right about the first part.  
Baby boomers are some of his biggest customers, but they are keeping products from Slater’s Vermont Wooden Toy Factory on their own desks and coffee tables, rather than giving them away.  
After college, Slater got a job as a financial analyst, but six months later, he met the head of the company’s IT department who was also the commissioner of a fantasy football league. When Slater successfully automated the league, he got offered a job in that

department and embarked on a career in IT which eventually moved into hardware and the back end of websites.  
Slater dabbled in woodworking throughout his life but never had the time or tools he needed to do more with his hobby. He and his wife moved to Charlotte in 1992 and after a stint in Shelburne, they returned in 2008. Slater wanted to take a hands-on approach to building the family’s new home and that got him reacquainted with his woodworking tools.  
When he left the IT world in 2016, Slater dedicated more time to his craft. His first goal was to carve a spiral in a dowel. It only worked half the time, so he contacted a woodworker he had been following on YouTube for assistance. When the man told him he didn’t think it was possible, Slater

decided to prove him wrong.  
Slater doubted there would be much of an audience for what became the Marblelous Wooden Spiral, but a friend convinced him to put it on Etsy and Vermont Wooden Toy Factory was born. After the spiral, Slater created the Crank which allows users to propel a marble upwards before heading down a spiral. Then came the Mother-in-Law which has one crank and two spirals.  
One of the joys of toymaking is the time Slater spends at craft fairs. He recalls an event at the Billings Museum where a young girl repeatedly ignored her mother’s entreaties to keep moving, even rejecting an offer of ice cream so she could continue playing.  
Slater used to purchase wood from suppliers in Bristol and Essex, but in 2018 he and his wife downsized and bought a 20-acre wooded parcel on Lewis Creek. Slater took down the trees that were in danger of falling. He started milling using a chainsaw mill but found it too time consuming, so he invested in a bandsaw mill. This year, the apple, black cherry and white and red oak that he milled is dry enough to work with, fulfilling his goal to be self-sustaining on his property.  
In addition to his own designs, Slater takes requests for new creations. He made a series of saxophone reeds at the suggestion of a musician friend. His stacking stones began as a request from his niece who is a special educator. Initially he only made two sets, but they became really popular at craft fairs, so he has been making more.  
Slater said he often hears from people who want him to recreate childhood toys. He made a letter opener with marbles for a woman from Missouri and it has become a popular holiday gift. One customer in



Courtesy photo  
Patrick Slater has found a new career in his woodshop.

Australia asked him to replicate a marble cannon she remembered from her youth in an orphanage. Slater said he was willing but warned her that, in addition to being labor intensive, shipping would be incredibly expensive. Since then, she has purchased each of Slater’s toys, with some of them going to the children’s hospital where she works. One of Slater’s creations was purchased by a museum in London, and another was a gift to former NHL star P.K. Subban from his sister.  
For now, Vermont Wooden Toy Factory is just Slater with some seasonal help from his wife and two of his daughters. He recently turned down a student in France who wanted an internship. He has received inquiries from people who want to buy wholesale, but at this point, he doesn’t have the set-up to mass produce items, and he’s not sure he wants to go that route.  
Slater is currently working on a modular marble run activity for the library which would include several different parts that kids could put together. He envisions 10 different runs and six different diversions with perhaps a marble lift or elevator.  
“For me to be stimulated, I need to do new things,” he said.  
For that, kids — and their grandparents — are grateful.

**The Charlotte News**  
**NEXT PUBLICATION DATES**

**Feb. 23**  
Copy Deadline: Friday, Feb. 17  
Ads Deadline: Friday, Feb. 17

**March 9**  
Copy Deadline: Friday, March 3  
Ads Deadline: Friday, March 3

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# Around Town

## Condolences

Mark David Williamson died the afternoon of Saturday, Feb. 4, 2023, in the presence of his loved ones at University of Vermont Medical Center. Mark was recognized for an infectious smile, unmistakable voice and quick wit. Mark was a hardworking man who found joy in the simple pleasures in life, whether it be a slow afternoon in the hammock or a cold beer on the water with friends. He was a loving and steadfast father, husband, brother, cousin and uncle who brought relentless compassion to every relationship he held. On top of his laidback nature, Mark was a furiously hard worker who valued the 43 dynamic years of his career at Fletcher Allen, now UVM Medical Center.

Mark was born Jan. 9, 1948, in Burlington, Vermont, to Harold and Eleanor Williamson of Bristol. He is survived by his wife,



Gretchen and his two children, Kyla (28) and Tyler (26), as well as many extended family members who loved him dearly, including his three surviving brothers, Jack, Bruce and Chris. In his youth, Mark was elected the Governor of Boy’s State in June 1965 and later affectionately called the Mayor of Charlotte. After completing all the courses at Bristol High, he transferred to Champlain Valley Union High School in the fall of 1965 where he was elected class president. He graduated in June 1966.

After completing high school, Mark attended UVM and held a variety of interesting jobs. Mark became a legend at ski mountains across the state, working as an instructor at Okemo and a patrolman at Sugarbush. After his time on the patrol, he spent the rest of his years skiing at Bolton, Mad River and Sugarbush, where he skied his final day. In 1973 Mark joined the UVM Medical Center where he spread joy, laughter and kindness to everyone he touched. He then graduated from the University of Vermont in 1984 while continuing his career at Fletcher Allen. One of Mark’s lifelong

goals came to fruition when he settled at Cedar Beach, where he lived for over 50 years, the remainder of his life. He was commonly found sharing a laugh and drink with his family and friends, out on the lake in the summer or tearing up Mount Ellen in the winter. In his children’s youth, Mark would be found cheering them on through their many sports games, school events and successes.

He will be dearly remembered and greatly missed. His legacy will live on in the stories he told and the lives he affected. Those who knew him will carry with them the sound of his voice and the passion for life he always held and cherished.

A funeral mass will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 10, 2023, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Charlotte, Vermont, with a reception to follow at Backyard Bistro. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting donations be made to Three Peaks Medical Clinic at Sugarbush Mountain Resort.

### Congratulations

The University of Vermont announced

that the following students from Charlotte have been named to the dean’s list for the fall 2022 semester:

- Henry Bijur — neuroscience
- Olivia Hagios — English
- Skyler Heininger — biomedical engineering and computer science
- Seamus Higgins — chemistry
- Alyssana Lasek — biological science
- Henry Lunde — environmental sciences
- Antonio Pugliese — English
- Thomas Wright — mechanical engineering.

Sophie Pidgeon of Charlotte has been named to the dean’s list for the fall semester at the University of New England.

Angela Fortin of Charlotte has been named to the dean’s list for the fall semester at Quinnipiac University.

Vladislav Moore of Charlotte was named to the Community College of Vermont’s dean’s list for the fall.

Hannah Cleveland of Charlotte, who is majoring in applied sociology, made the dean’s list at The University of Tampa for the fall semester.

# Community Roundup

## League Of Women Voters hosts program on non-citizen voting

The League of Women Voters of Vermont is sponsoring a free program on non-citizen voting at the Fletcher Free Library at 235 College Street in Burlington 2-3:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 18, in the Fletcher Room.

Town Meeting TV will live stream the program on YouTube at [youtu.be/Z01ZXiE2KRk](https://youtu.be/Z01ZXiE2KRk).

In Vermont, Winooski and Montpelier allow non-citizen residents to vote in local elections. Both cities undertook a complicated process to gain that right for their non-citizen residents. Burlington will consider a question to approve non-citizen voting at Town Meeting Day on March 7. So, what is non-citizen voting? Should other Vermont cities consider non-citizen voting? Marguerite Adelman of the League of Women Voters of Vermont will present information about the two Vermont towns that have all resident voting, historical facts on the subject, non-citizen voting at the state and national levels, and arguments for and against non-citizen voting. The program will be educational in nature, providing time for questions and discussion.

Please contact League of Women Voters of Vermont with questions about the program at [league@lwvofvt.org](mailto:league@lwvofvt.org).

## Volunteer with United Way’s Volunteer Connection

United Way’s Volunteer Connection site is set up to help connect agencies and volunteers. Agencies are working hard to navigate volunteering during this time with opportunities increasing.

### Parenting education

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont invites

skilled professionals, experienced parents or grandparents and grad students seeking field work to join a team facilitating virtual parent education classes and support groups. Help parents learn the skills to strengthen themselves and their families. Volunteers are also needed to translate materials into Spanish and French. Fill out a volunteer application at [pcavt.org/volunteer](https://pcavt.org/volunteer).



### Ending domestic violence

Steps to End Domestic Violence has many ways to get involved: 24-hour hotline shifts are available Monday-Friday from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; legal advocates can volunteer at legal clinic appointments and court hearings; and others can staff tables at local events to provide information, serve at special events and children’s programs. A 20-hour community advocate training is required. To learn more, visit [stepsvt.org/volunteer](https://stepsvt.org/volunteer).

### Pre and apres ski

Cochran’s Ski Area in Richmond welcomes inner city children from the Boys and Girls Club in Burlington each Wednesday and equips and teaches them to ski. The program needs volunteers, from teens to seniors, to ski with and assist the children. Following skiing, the children are treated to dinner, and volunteers are also needed to help prepare and serve the meal. To inquire, email [skiarea@cochransskiarea.com](mailto:skiarea@cochransskiarea.com).

### Cook and share a meal

Burlington Dismas House is looking for members of the community who love

great conversations and connections to be volunteer cooks at their home on Buell Street. Volunteers purchase and prepare dinner for up to 10 residents and one staff member and sit down together to enjoy a family dinner. For more details, call 802-658-0381.

## Organic dairy conference planned for March 9

Farmers who register for the 2023 Vermont Organic Dairy Producers Conference will learn about strategies to manage high feed costs, satellite imagery for better pasture management and research on bedding and mastitis, among other topics.

The eleventh annual conference will be held March 9 in Judd Hall on the Vermont Technical College campus in Randolph Center. It is sponsored by University of Vermont Extension’s northwest crops and soils program.

The registration fee is \$25 and includes lunch. Registrations accepted until March 6 at [go.uvm.edu/2023organicdairyconference](https://go.uvm.edu/2023organicdairyconference).

Anyone without internet access or with questions should call the Non-Credit Registration Office at 802-656-8407. To request a disability-related accommodation to participate, please contact University of Vermont Student Accessibility Services at [access@uvm.edu](mailto:access@uvm.edu) or 802-656-7753.

The conference will open with a presentation by Greg Brickner, a staff veterinarian and grazing specialist for Organic Valley in Wisconsin. He will describe new satellite imagery technology that will allow graziers to predict pasture inventory weeks in advance and monitor

plant health in paddocks.

There will be presentations by a variety of speakers on topics including key production and financial benchmarks, updates on research, ways organic dairy producers can manage high feed costs in the coming year, the impact the choice of housing and bedding systems have on mastitis risk among organic dairy cattle, what’s new in mastitis and mastitis control, parasite management and major health challenges on pasture during the grazing season.

## University of Vermont sponsors no-till and cover crop conference

The 2023 No-Till and Cover Crop Conference, set for March 2 in South Burlington, will provide information and research updates to farmers and field crop growers on cover crop and manure management.

Speakers hail from New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Vermont.

Registration is \$75 and \$50 for students, payable by Feb. 24 at [go.uvm.edu/2023ntcc](https://go.uvm.edu/2023ntcc). Registrations also can be made at 802-656-8407. For disability-related accommodation requests, contact University of Vermont student accessibility services at 802-656-7753.

Aaron Ristrow, American Farmland Trust, will open the conference with a talk on the Genesee River Demonstration Farms Network in western New York and biomass productivity and decreased inputs from planting green. He is followed by Kirsten Workman, Cornell University, with a discussion on cover crop alternatives to winter rye, and Glen Arnold, Ohio State University Extension, on precision manure management and sidedressing in corn.





## Sports

# Servin named Vermont Boys Cross Country Player of the Year

Contributed

In its 38th year of honoring the nation’s best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced Matthew Servin of Champlain Valley Union High School is the 2022-23 Gatorade Vermont Boys Cross Country Player of the Year.

Servin is the second Gatorade Vermont Boys Cross Country Player of the Year to be chosen from Champlain Valley Union High School. Tyler Marshall won for the 2016-17 school year.

CVU girls have won the award three times — Alice Larson 2018-19, Sophia Gorman 2015-2016 and Autumn Eastman 2013-2014.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Servin as Vermont’s best high school boys cross country player. He is now a finalist for the Gatorade National Boys Cross Country Player of the Year award to be announced this month.

“Matthew exemplifies the spirit of this prestigious award,” said Nicole Gorman, Champlain Valley Union High cross-country coach. “He is an outstanding student, athlete and person.”

The 6-foot, 150-pound senior raced to victory at the Division 1 state championships this past season with a time of 16:36.7, a margin of 29 seconds ahead of his next-

closest competitor, pacing the Redhawks to second place as a team.

Servin said he was honored to win the Gatorade Vermont Boys Cross County Player of the Year Award and wouldn’t have without his family, coaches and teammates: “I love running and I hope to be lucky enough to continue doing it for as long as possible.”

Servin took ninth at the New England Championships and clocked a personal-best 15:37.10 to win the Burlington Invitational. He crossed the line sixth at the Nike Cross Northeast Regionals in 15:37.3, one place out of qualifying for nationals.

Servin has volunteered locally as part of the Environmental Action Club, the Awareness Change Training program and with CVU’s Leadership Council.

“Champlain Valley Union senior Matthew Servin effectively ‘ran the table’ in going unbeaten against in-state rivals this past season,” said PrepCalTrack editor Rich Gonzalez. “The biggest highlights for the Bowdoin College commit came in winning the Division 1 state meet and then crossing the line sixth at Nike Cross Northeast Regionals.”

Servin has maintained an unweighted 4.14 GPA in the classroom. He will attend Bowdoin College this fall, where he will compete in cross country and track.

Servin joins recent Gatorade Vermont Boys Cross Country Players of the Year Evan Thornton-Sherman (2021-22, St. Johnsbury



Courtesy photo

Matthew Servin of Charlotte was named Gatorade Vermont Boys Cross Country Player of the Year. He plans to attend Bowdoin College in the fall and compete in cross country and track.

Academy), Brady Martisus (2020-21, Essex High School), and Henry Farrington (2019-20 & 2018-19, Essex High School), among the state’s list of former award winners.

Being a Gatorade Player of the Year means paying it forward for the next generation. Through Gatorade’s Play it Forward initiative, every Player of the Year receives a grant to give to one of Gatorade’s social impact partners, supporting Gatorade’s ambition to fuel the future of sport. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners’ grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

### CHARLOTTE PROPERTY TRANSFERS DECEMBER 2022

**Dec. 2** Joseph & Emily Rosenberg to Paul & Andrea Hawkins, 1700 Greenbush Rd. 5.1 acres \$1,501,000 w/dwelling

**Dec. 7** Amanda Havemeyer Herzenberger LV & Jeffrey D Herzenberger Living Trust to Sarah Waldo & Jeffrey Keefe, 2.5 acres \$480,000 226 Quaker Mile w/dwelling

**Dec. 9** Van Vleck Nominee Trust to Pamela Powell 26 Common Way .07 acres \$419,000 w/dwelling

**Dec. 19** Joanne Baker & Riger Teese to Andrew & Sarah Helming 20.38 acres \$2,350,000 488 Guinea Rd. w/dwelling

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



## Future looking bright for CVU boys basketball

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

The Champlain Valley Union Redhawks boys basketball team continues to dispatch opponents, and the outlook is bright with a handful of games remaining and postseason just around the corner.

Coach Michael Osborne said he is enjoying this year’s team as much as any he has ever coached.

“We are deep and balanced. All five starters average between 10 and 8 points per game,” he said.

And the Redhawks have been excelling on defense as well. CVU is holding its opponents to an average of 41 points. Only one team has reached 50 points against the Redhawks and that was early in the season (St. Johnsbury on Dec. 30 — CVU 55, St. Johnsbury 50).

### CVU 66, BFA-St. Albans 45

The Redhawks had jumped out to a 20-6 lead when the first period ended at Bellows Falls Academy this Monday (Feb. 6), led by three treys from Kyle Eaton.

Eaton’s 14 points led all scorers. He was hot from long distance with a total of four 3-pointers for the game.

The Bobwhites made a contest of it in the second quarter, so the Redhawks only took a 30-21 lead into halftime.

Led by senior Logan Vaughan, who knocked down seven points and senior Sam



Sweeney, who drained a pair of three-pointers, CVU was able to build a 53-29 lead to take into the fourth.

The win increased CVU’s record to 14-1 and dropped BFA-St. Albans to 7-6.

The Redhawk’s next game is at 7 p.m. this Friday, Feb. 10, at Essex High. The junior varsity contest starts at 5:30 p.m.

### CVU 70, St. Johnsbury 48

Although they came close on Monday, Jan. 30 at St. Johnsbury, ultimately the Hill-toppers were not able to top the 50-point peak they had scaled against CVU exactly a month earlier.

The first half was a nail-biter with the Redhawks managing to take a slight 29-28 lead into halftime.

However, they erupted in the third quarter with a 15-2 run, and the Redhawks took a 51-38 lead into the fourth. The final quarter began with a 20-3 CVU scoring run.

CVU finished with four players in double figures. Eaton was the high scorer with 18, while senior Alex Provost notched 15. Junior Tucker Tharpe tallied 14. Tharpe may have made the difference in the game with 13 of his points coming in the second half.

**CVU 51, Mount Mansfield 31**

The Redhawks’ defense held the visiting Cougars to 11 points in the first half to take a 30-11 lead into halftime on Jan. 27.

CVU held visiting Mount Mansfield to 11 first-half points en route to victory.

In the end it was a relatively easy win for CVU, with Sam Sweeney leading the scoring with 12 points.

### CVU 49, South Burlington 43

The outcome of a Jan. 24 tilt at South Burlington was undecided until the closing minutes before CVU finally prevailed.

South Burlington was ahead 24-22 at halftime.

Although the Redhawks outscored the Wolves 16-7 in the third quarter to take a 38-31 lead into the final frame, the contest was not over.

South Burlington managed to climb back to a 43-all tie in the fourth, but CVU scored the final six points of the game to seal the win.

Logan Vaughan led the scoring for CVU with 12 points. Tharpe had 11 and Provost 9.



## Education

# Lunches limited to sandwiches and salads because of PCB levels

Naomi Strada  
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

### PCB testing and a plan for Charlotte Central School

In November, PCB testing was performed at Charlotte Central School. PCBs are human-made chemicals that were used in building materials before 1980. The Charlotte Central School results showed the kitchen area to have a PCB level above the state recommended level. The school district will be working with a PCB consultant to address a level of 110 ng/m3 in the Charlotte Central School kitchen. The state threshold is 100 ng/m3.

Charlotte Central will be taking immediate actions to reduce the time our Charlotte Central School kitchen crew spends in the kitchen while working through a course of mitigation including:

- Food prep will relocate to the cafeteria.
- Menu options will be limited to the daily cold food offerings — ham, turkey, sunbutter sandwiches and chef or garden salads. The school will not offer hot lunches listed on the

district menu until further notice.

- All food service will happen in the cafeteria, keeping students out of the kitchen.
- Food will be served on compostable trays instead of reusable trays.
- Carbon filtration systems will be procured and located in the kitchen as steps are taken to mitigate the cause of the PCB contamination.

The safety of all staff and students is key in all school planning.

### World Read Aloud Day

Feb. 1 was World Read Aloud Day, and Charlotte Central School welcomed authors Grace Lin, Kate Messner, Tara Dairman and Tanya Lee Stone.

World Read Aloud Day has become an event with millions of readers, writers and listeners from communities all across the world coming together to honor the joy and power of reading and sharing stories.

Across the United States, students participated in virtual read alouds with authors to spread the love of reading and writing. Charlotte students in the second and third

grades heard Kate Messner and Grace Lin shared details about how they collaborated on the book “Once Upon a Book.”

Illustrator Grace Lin shared the artistic details that went into the creation of a picture that became the inspiration for their book.

Kate Messner told students, “My writers’ notebook is where I go to play.” This is the place where she drops ideas that she can use as story starters.

Author connections continued with students from the Omega Team having a Q&A with Tayna Lee Stone, Vermont author of more than 105 books.

### 2023-24 kindergarten registration

Charlotte Central School will be opening 2023-24 kindergarten registration for next school year on Feb. 1. The Champlain Valley School District is asking families to register their kindergartners by Feb. 24, in an effort to get more accurate enrollment numbers the upcoming school year.

Contact Naomi Strada (nstrada@cvsdvt.org or 802-425-6600) to pre-register your child for the next school year if they will turn 5

years old by Sept. 1.

After you have indicated that you will be sending your child(ren) to Charlotte Central School, Strada will email instructions so you can register your child online through our PowerSchool Parent Portal. The kindergarten page on the registration section of the district’s website provides more information.

After this is completed, more detailed information on kindergarten registration dates and visits will be coming in the spring.

### Intra-district K-8 school choice

Children entering grades preK-8 who live in the towns of Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George and Williston may exercise school choice. The goal is to both allow options for families and also make balanced class sizes to provide a positive learning environment for all children. Processes for intra-district choice of school will be guided by the needs of students, space availability and existing resources. Great effort will be made to meet as many families’ needs as possible. Contact the school office for more information.

# Watershed science grant benefits teachers

Ashley Eaton  
Contributor

The Lake Champlain Basin Program recently awarded an education grant to the University of Vermont Lake Champlain Sea Grant program to create the Watershed Alliance Teacher and Researcher Partnership.

This new partnership will support middle and high school teachers employed by schools in the Lake Champlain Basin in Vermont and New York, helping them foster stronger connections with researchers to integrate watershed science into their classroom. The year-long program includes hands-on learning opportunities aboard the Marcelle Melosira, the University of

Vermont’s state-of-the-art research vessel, involvement in ongoing water research projects and development of educational materials and lesson plans.

Although there is no cost to participate, space is limited, so teachers will be selected through an application process. Applications will be accepted until Feb. 24 at go.uvm.edu/watr with successful applicants notified by mid-March.

Priority will be given to teachers from schools with a high percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch and/or diverse student bodies. Teaching teams are encouraged to sign up together.

Once accepted, if a disability-related accommodation is needed to participate,

teachers should contact Ashley Eaton at 802-391-4410 or akeaton@uvm.edu by May 1.

Participants will receive a stipend for their time and purchase of supplies to implement their lessons. Graduate credits are available although teachers are responsible for paying the applicable tuition fees.

During the intensive summer session, July 31-Aug. 4, teachers will work alongside researchers to conduct field assessments, water quality monitoring and limnological sampling of Lake Champlain and learn about the watershed’s unique characteristics.

They also will begin to brainstorm ideas for a watershed STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) based unit and be matched



Photo by Ashley Eaton

A teacher and her students examine a phytoplankton sample aboard the University of Vermont research vessel on Lake Champlain.

with a researcher to collaborate on the development of their new curriculum. After being tested in the classroom, these individual lessons and corresponding materials will be compiled into a larger curriculum to be shared with other teachers in the Lake Champlain Basin.



# Into The Woods

# Slight changes can ripple through a forest

Ethan Tapper  
Contributor

Each of our native species occupies an ecological niche, influencing the ecosystem around it in different ways. The more we learn about forests, the more we discover how critical each species is to their health and function: from towering trees to tiny invertebrates, from the bats that regulate populations of defoliating insects to the rodents that disperse acorns, seeding future generations of oaks.

It is relatively easy to understand the profound impact of an extinction on an ecosystem. What is less apparent is when the role of a native species changes as a result of climate change, historic land use, non-native invasive pests and pathogens, and the many other components of global change. Our modern world has given rise to a phenomenon known as cryptic function loss: when the function of an ecosystem is altered by the extirpation (local extinction) of a species, a change in its abundance or a shift in its behavior as a result of global change.

An example of cryptic function loss is the case of American beech. Historical records

suggest that beech once accounted for 40-60 percent of the all trees in Chittenden County. While most of us know beech only as a sickly tree with cracked, pock-marked bark, it used to be very different. Once, beech trees were capable of becoming massive and ancient, living 400-600 years. One can only imagine how many habitats healthy beech trees once provided, how many species relied on their abundant beechnuts, in how many ways they shaped the forests of the past.

Today, beech is still common in our forests, but its behavior has changed entirely. With the introduction of beech bark disease (a non-native pathogen), most beech trees live only 40-60 years, dying centuries before they can reach the stature of their ancestors. When beech trees are stressed from beech bark disease, they produce clones from their root systems which can dominate the forest understory, creating a monoculture of trees destined to be as unhealthy as their parents.

Another example of cryptic function loss is the shape of our modern forests themselves. Vermont's forests have regenerated from the near-complete deforestation of the 1800s,

SEE **FOREST** PAGE 11



Courtesy photo

A forest understory dominated by diseased beech clones. Once beech trees were massive, lived for 400-600 years and were 40-60 percent of all the trees in Chittenden County.

# Gardening

## Greening up office space

Deborah J. Benoit  
Contributor

Whether your office is in a traditional workspace or tucked away in a spare room at home, practicality rules and, above and beyond all else, your office is a place for productivity. That often means a computer, printer and related equipment, along with a lot of paper and hard surfaces. Adding something living and green just might help alleviate the tedium of hours at the keyboard and stress of looming deadlines.

Adding plants to your workspace can provide some of the same benefits as an escape to the garden, all without leaving your desk. Houseplants or, in this case, office plants can distract the senses and ease stress, especially during winter months when a visit

to the park or garden for some green therapy isn't an option.

To successfully incorporate plants into an office setting, there are several things to consider. How much space can you devote to a plant or plants? What are the growing conditions in your office? What are the sources of light? Does the temperature fluctuate? And finally, how much time do you have to maintain your office plants?

Generally speaking, an office will have limited light sources, either few or no windows and artificial light. The climate may or may not include air conditioning, and conditions may be quite different on weekends if the office is closed.

The peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*) will do

SEE **OFFICE** PAGE 11



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Incorporating houseplants, such as a prayer plant and golden pothos, into an office setting helps create a more pleasant work environment and reduce stress and elevate mood.



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## Gardening

# Houseplants: toxic for pets?

Jodi Larison  
University of Vermont Extension

In their book, “How to be your Dog’s Best Friend,” the Monks of New Skete suggest that for many people, dogs and houseplants are the only readily available touchstones with the natural world. They also say that owners must reflect on their canine’s environment and make it as healthy as possible.

I recently brought a new member into my pack, Betty, a 9-week-old French bulldog. I knew bringing Betty home meant that I needed to puppy-proof my condo as many plants are toxic to pets including puppies, kittens, dogs and cats. So, part of preparing for Betty’s homecoming was determining which of my houseplants might need to be relocated.

Since I live in a small condo, I do not have many houseplants, just chives, oregano, philodendron, rosemary and spider plants. Of these, chives, oregano and philodendron are toxic for both dogs and cats, while rosemary and spider plants are not. So, I relocated my toxic houseplants to places where Betty cannot access them.

How did I determine which plants were safe for my puppy?

I did some online research and found information on plants that are poisonous and non-poisonous to pets on the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website. You can check out [go.uvm.edu/toxic-plants](http://go.uvm.edu/toxic-plants) to determine if your plants are safe for your pets. Plants are listed both by common and scientific names.

While many types of plants are toxic to both dogs and cats, the toxicity level often varies by animal species as well as by plant. One of the most common symptoms of plant poisoning in both dogs and cats is vomiting.

However, many plants are not toxic to dogs and cats. Before I add any new plants, I make sure that they won’t harm my fur baby if eaten, especially if they are indoor plants.

Whether bringing home a puppy or kitten or already living with a dog or cat, research your houseplants and determine whether they might be toxic. If they might be, move them to a place where your pet will not have access to them. This advice

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## FOREST

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today covering about 75 percent of Vermont. This fact masks a complex reality: as a result of historic deforestation, the loss of wildlife species, the functional-loss of tree species like beech, elm, butternut and chestnut to non-native pests and pathogens, soil degradation and much more, our modern-day forests have been transformed. While Vermont’s forests (for the most part) consist of the same tree species that were here prior to European colonization, many components of pre-colonial forests — a diversity of tree species and forest types, structural diversity (trees of different sizes and ages), deep, well-developed soils, dead wood, and old trees — and the critical functions and habitats that they once provided are underrepresented or missing from our modern forests.

Cryptic function loss demonstrates a complex and important idea: that in ecosystems it is not enough for something (a species, a forest) to exist — the nuances of how it exists matter. Our forests are resilient and adaptive but also very sensitive. Slight changes in environmental conditions, or the presence or absence or behavior of a single species can have consequences that ripple throughout a forest community, causing

harmful and destabilizing impacts.

To me, cryptic function loss is a call to action. In the midst of a climate crisis and a biodiversity crisis, it is our responsibility to protect the health and the resilience of forests, and the tens of thousands of species that rely on them, and to help them recapture the critical functions that have been lost. Actively managing for diversity and complexity is part of this, as is controlling biodiversity threats like non-native invasive plants, deer overpopulations, deforestation and forest fragmentation, as is promoting resistance to the causal agents of cryptic function loss — such as the non-native pathogens that affect native tree species like beech.

Considering the impact of cryptic function loss on our forests is alarming but also oddly hopeful. Unlike extinction, cryptic function loss is a phenomenon of things that still exist, of species and functions that may yet be rediscovered. Our modern forests have lost so much, but with our help they may find a better path forward.

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

## OFFICE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

well in an office environment. It thrives in low light or bright, indirect light, but avoid direct sunlight. A weekly watering is best, but if you get sidetracked, it will let you know when it’s thirsty. One look at its sad, drooping leaves will send you off for the watering can.

Prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura*) with its patterned leaves adds more than just green to the office color scheme. It adds interest as its leaves fold up at night and relax during the daylight hours.

It prefers bright, indirect light, but avoid placing it in a sunny window, which will cause the color to fade. Keep the soil moist (but not wet), and mist to increase humidity.

Rex begonia (*Begonia rex-cultorum*) is a great choice for the desktop. Foliage is the star, with many options for leaf color and texture. Rex begonias do fine in low light. Foliage can burn in direct sunlight. Allow the top of its soil to dry between waterings, and then water well.

Lucky bamboo (*Dracaena sanderiana*) is an easy-to-care-for plant that’s tolerant of low-level and artificial light. It prefers moist

soil or can be grown in water alone.

If you’re looking for a little drama, include a trailing vine such as golden pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*). Grow it in a hanging basket in bright, indirect light, keeping soil moist, but not soggy. Placed on a shelf, pothos will cascade in a green waterfall and, as it grows, the vines will happily drape along the top of a bookcase.

But what if you have absolutely nowhere to put a plant? Try an air plant (*Tillandsia*). These are unobtrusive plants, requiring no soil, not even a pot. They do need light (bright, indirect) and water (weekly by a thorough misting, more often in a very dry setting).

There are many plant possibilities for the office. For the small amount of time needed to care for them, they can bring a bit of the natural world into the workplace, help reduce stress, elevate mood and simply make the office a more pleasant and attractive place to be.

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





Photo by Jodi Larison

Philodendrons and other houseplants are toxic to puppies, so they need to be placed out of reach with a gentle reminder to not touch.

applies even if your dog or cat does not normally eat plants.

Before Betty, I had a mammoth bulldog, Lola Brooke (aka B), who liked to eat grass when outside but did not munch on other plants, indoors or out. One time, I brought a potted hot pepper plant inside in October before the first frost. That plant remained untouched until April when B decided she would try some hot peppers.

I did not see her eat them, but I knew there was a problem when she started racing around and vomited numerous times. Luckily, after a call to an emergency veterinary practice, I learned that water mixed with milk, along with a side of bread, would resolve this issue.

Bottom line, as a pet owner, it is your responsibility to create a safe environment for your pet, young or old. Should you have an issue with your pet ingesting a plant, look up information on the plant to see if it is potentially toxic.

If it is, contact your local vet, emergency vet or a poison hotline for animals, such as the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435. Note that pet poison hotlines probably will charge a consultation fee for handling your call.

*(Jodi Larison is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener intern from West Dover.)*

On Books

Staying warm with Demon and Phuc

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

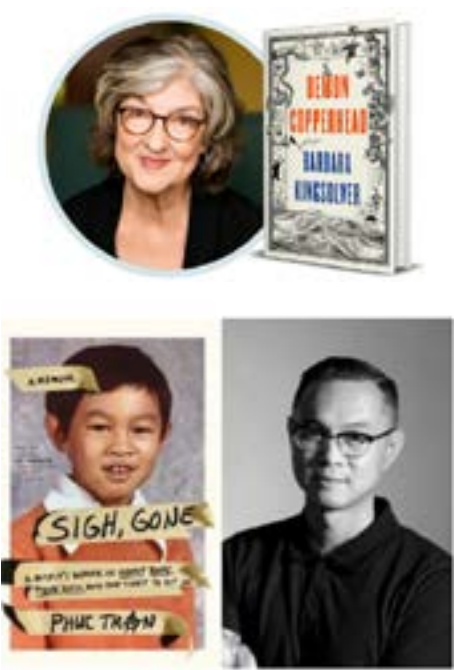
It is morning and the temperature is falling. According to my weather app it “feels like” negative 29 degrees, and yet as I look out my window, I see sun and blue sky. I took the dogs for a short walk earlier and, honestly, it wasn’t too bad — but they say it’s supposed to get colder before it warms up. A good time to have a reliable heating system and a few books on hand to pass the time.

I have a couple of good ones to recommend.

Top on my list is Barbara Kingsolver’s newest, *Demon Copperhead*. Named one of the “10 Best Books of 2022” by The Washington Post and The New York Times, it is a masterpiece. I am a fan generally of Kingsolver — I especially loved her collection of essays, *High Tide in Tucson* (1995), and novel, *The Poisonwood Bible*, about a missionary family who move from Georgia (USA) to a small village in the Belgian Congo (1998), but I have to say, this latest one takes the cake. I am listening to it on Audible, which I notice takes a lot longer than reading it, but it sure makes driving more interesting. (It is also very well read.)

I am far from alone in my enthusiasm for this novel. It is an Oprah’s Book Club selection, as well as a New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post bestseller. Beth Macy, author of *Dopesick*, calls *Demon* “a voice for the ages — akin to Huck Finn or Holden Caulfield — only even more resilient.”

Inspired by Charles Dickens’ epic novel, *David Copperfield* (first published as a serial in 1849 and later as a book in 1850), *Demon Copperhead* takes on some of the 19th century novel’s themes, such as institutional poverty and its devastating effects on children, braiding them into a new context: the mountains of southern Appalachia — Lee County, Virginia, to be specific — where the narrator *Demon* (or *Damon Fields*, as he is officially named by his mother) is born to a strung-out but well-meaning teenage mom in a single-wide trailer. His father, we learn early on, drowned before he was born.



*Demon*’s story starts with his birth and takes us through his boyhood, his friendships, enemies, foster care, first love, football stardom, hope, disappointment, injury, pain . . . . It begins, “First, I got myself born. A decent crowd was on hand to watch, and they’ve always given me that much: the worst of the job was up to me, my mother being let’s just say out of it.”

There are dark and troubling themes here, the most pronounced being drug addiction and poverty, which run rampant in the lives of most of *Demon*’s community, along with abuse, negligence and neglect, yet the voice of *Demon* himself somehow holds steady and strong; warm, insuppressible and, even in the very lowest of times, humorous. One of *Demon*’s superpowers (besides, as it turns out, football) is a talent for drawing — specifically creating superheroes and comic strips. Over the course of the novel, one comes to feel that, despite his weaknesses, failings, misfortune and plain downright bad luck, *Demon* is himself a superhero. His wit, his lifeforce and his resilient spirit will stay with me for a long time. At least I hope they will. This book is a must read. Highly recommend.

Another book, which lay tucked in an embarrassingly tall stack in my bedroom for a long time before I finally picked it

up and started reading it, is *Sigh, Gone: A Misfit’s Memoir of Great Books, Punk Rock, and the Fight to Fit In* by Phuc Tran. Did I read a review of this book at some point? Was I drawn to its cover? Honestly, I don’t remember. However it happened, I am so glad I read it.

Like *Demon Copperhead*, *Phuc* is an engaging and resilient narrator. He was a toddler in 1975 when he and his extended family fled the fall of Saigon. After spending time in a refugee camp, the Lutheran Church helped relocate his family to a small town in south-central Pennsylvania, where they basically stood out like sore thumbs in the all-American white community. Tran writes, “Random strangers had saved us. And random strangers were cruel to us, too.”

Critics have called Tran’s writing “loose and rambling,” but I found his style to be companionable, fresh and refreshing. Gamboling might be a good word to describe it. The chapters are named after famous books, because one of the things that saves the narrator from loneliness and despair, besides skateboarding and punk rock, is: books.

At one point the author tells us how one day while working as a page at the local library, he came upon a discarded copy of Clifton Fadiman’s *The Lifetime Reading Plan*, which “listed and summarized all the books that (the author) thought educated, cultured Americans should read over their lifetime, beginning with the Bible and ending with Solzhenitsyn.” He bought it. “The Plan,” he writes, “would be the most powerful cannon in my war for assimilation.”

Phuc read what he could in no particular order: Flaubert, Twain, Kerouac, Bronte, Kafka, Thurber, Shakespeare . . .

“But in the course of reading great books, something happened,” he writes. “My reading molded me, the tool hammering its hand into shape. By some miracle — and by miracle, I mean great teachers — I pushed past the shallowness and stupidity of my own motivations. I fell in love with the actual literature and the actual ideas of great literature. As an immigrant, as

SEE **BOOKS** PAGE 14

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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.

**Crevice gardening**

**Thursday, Feb. 9, 2-3 p.m.**

The Garden Conservancy presents a Zoom talk about gardening in rocky, dry, exposed areas with native plants. Speaker Paul Spriggs is an accomplished garden planner of crevices and rock or hillside gardens. For more info or to register, see [tinyurl.com/5d6ppdta](https://tinyurl.com/5d6ppdta).

**Sunken chocolate cake**

**Thursday, Feb. 9, 5:30-7 p.m.**

City Market offers this free virtual class, taught by The Pie Guy, on making a wickedly delicious Valentine (or anytime) treat. Registration required at [tinyurl.com/y85ymra8](https://tinyurl.com/y85ymra8).

**Myra Flynn and band**

**Friday, Feb. 10, 7:30-9:30 p.m.**

Vermont singer-songwriter Myra Flynn performs two sets of her soulful songs in the loft at Shelburne Vineyard. For more info and tickets, see [tinyurl.com/yajemwsr](https://tinyurl.com/yajemwsr).

**Snowshoe and scavenger hunt**

**Saturday, Feb. 11, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

Try out snowshoes at Chipman Hill in Middlebury and do a scavenger hunt at your own pace. This family event, organized by Middlebury Area Land Trust, has a limited enrollment. Snowshoes are provided or bring your own. Participants may drop-in at their convenience; all snowshoes must be returned by 1:30 p.m. No restrooms onsite. Dress for outdoors; event will wrap up with a fire and cocoa. For more info or to register, see [tinyurl.com/h4a8zzuf](https://tinyurl.com/h4a8zzuf).

**Hoops competition**

**Saturday, Feb. 11, 10:15 a.m.-noon**

Boys and girls ages 9-14 may register for a basketball free-throw event at Vergennes Union High School gym. For more info 802-877-2558.

**My Brother’s Wedding**

**Saturday, Feb. 11, 3-5 p.m.**

As part of its Black is Beautiful film festival, the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington is screening the film My Brother’s Wedding. Film is free; learn more at [tinyurl.com/3st3z4bb](https://tinyurl.com/3st3z4bb).

**Handmade cards**

**Saturday, Feb. 11, 5-7 p.m.**

This workshop is held at Old School Art Studio in Richmond. Enjoy printing heart-themed cards while enjoying light snacks. All supplies included. 21 and older may BYOB. To register, see [oldschoolartstudio.com/registration](https://oldschoolartstudio.com/registration) and scroll down.

**Community orchestra**

**Saturday, Feb. 11, 7:30-9:30 p.m.**

Vermont’s oldest community orchestra celebrates their 64th season. Enjoy the Vermont Philharmonic at the Elley-Long Music Center on the campus of St. Michael’s College in Colchester. For more info and tickets, see [vermontphilharmonic.com](https://vermontphilharmonic.com).

**Little City Jazz**

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

Come to the Vergennes Opera House for a free community concert with the Little City Jazz Orchestra. The winter-thaw event offers great music, a 17-piece band and singers. Bring dancing shoes; doors and cash bar open 6:30

## Sunday in the kitchen

**Sunday, Feb. 12  
10-11:30 a.m.**

Join a virtual cook-along making healthy Valentine’s Day desserts. Recipes are free of gluten and refined sugar. City Market offers this free class via pre-registration at [tinyurl.com/jd66ey62](https://tinyurl.com/jd66ey62).



p.m. For more info and tickets, see [tinyurl.com/b8p9ujnm](https://tinyurl.com/b8p9ujnm).

**Revolutionary War author**

**Sunday, Feb. 12, 2-3 p.m.**

Author Claire Bellerjeau speaks, via Zoom, about her book Espionage and Enslavement. The book has a connection to Fort Ticonderoga’s history and is presented by the historic New York site. To learn more and register, see [tinyurl.com/2arb8wcw](https://tinyurl.com/2arb8wcw).

**Faculty concert**

**Sunday, Feb. 12, 2-3 p.m.**

The University of Vermont Music Department presents its faculty scholarship concert in the Recital Hall. Admission is by donation and all proceeds benefit student scholarships. Program features jazz and classical works. For more info, call 802-656-3040.

**Kittens on stage**

**Tuesday, Feb. 14, 5 p.m.**

The Very Merry Theatre troupe presents its new musical based on Beatrix Potter’s story, The Adventures of Mittens, Moppet and Tom Kitten. The free show is at the Old North End Community Center in Burlington; donations gladly accepted. For more info on upcoming winter and summer performances, see the entire calendar at [verymerrytheatre.org/](https://verymerrytheatre.org/) performances.

**Music in the loft**

**Tuesday, Feb. 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

The duo Cricket Blue entertains at Shelburne Vineyard as part of the Wine & Chocolate celebration. Doors open at 6 p.m. for the free concert; seating is limited. For more info, see [tinyurl.com/24m62xcb](https://tinyurl.com/24m62xcb).

**Where do bats go?**

**Wednesday, Feb. 15, noon-1 p.m.**

Vermont Coverts presents two speakers in this online webinar about the hibernation habits of our local bat species. To learn more and register, see [vtcoverts.org/calendar.html](https://vtcoverts.org/calendar.html).

**Black Vermonters 1790-1870**

**Wednesday, Feb. 15, noon-1 p.m.**

The Vermont Historical Society hosts historian Jane Williamson in a talk highlighting the contributions of African Americans to Vermont communities during these years. Her free talk is via Zoom; more info and registration at [tinyurl.com/2p8k5au4](https://tinyurl.com/2p8k5au4).

**Yoga with live mandolin**

**Wednesday, Feb. 15, 5:30-6:30 p.m.**

Enjoy a vinyasa practice for all levels at All

Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. For more info or to register, see [tinyurl.com/mvks635j](https://tinyurl.com/mvks635j). Class repeats Wednesday, March 15.

**Washington wilderness hiking**

**Thursday, Feb. 16, 7-8 p.m.**

The Green Mountain Club presents Adam and Ruthie LaRoche, Vermonters who spent 10 days backpacking in the North Cascades. Free to register for this Zoom event; donations gladly accepted. For more info, see [tinyurl.com/em2xmfeh](https://tinyurl.com/em2xmfeh).

**Organic farming conference**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.**

The Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont (NOFA-VT) will hold its annual event in person in Burlington (some live-streamed options). Intensive workshops are held on Sunday, Feb. 19. For more info and to register, see [tinyurl.com/4fvanaur](https://tinyurl.com/4fvanaur).

**Discover engineering**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**

The University of Vermont College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences presents a free event for any youth in grades 5-12. Learn about the field of engineering, meet students and talk to professionals in the field. Discover different kinds of engineering and career pathways through workshops, exhibits and presentations. Lunch included. Learn more and register at [tinyurl.com/5c9jxhcd](https://tinyurl.com/5c9jxhcd) or call Lauren at 802-888-4972, ext. 402, even if it’s past the registration deadline.

**Hand art workshop**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-noon**

Working with flat slabs of clay, participants trace their hands and use the clay shapes to form useful items, such as trinket dishes. Program is held in Richmond at Old School Art Studio and includes light snacks. For more info and to register, see [tinyurl.com/2prrd94d](https://tinyurl.com/2prrd94d).

**Stained glass workshop**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Learn the basics of stained-glass construction and create a colorful jewelry or treasure box. Register for this class at the Shelburne Craft School at [tinyurl.com/mrxydckk](https://tinyurl.com/mrxydckk).

**Living history**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.**

At Fort Ticonderoga in New York, experience life on the eve of the Revolutionary War. Discover what everyday life was like for the British soldiers and their families, living at the fort in 1774. To learn more and get tickets, see [tinyurl.com/2p8z4wx6](https://tinyurl.com/2p8z4wx6).

**Audubon Vermont hike**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 1-3 p.m.**

A pride hike happens in Burlington at the Ethan Allen Homestead for all ages, allies and families. Register in advance for this free hike at [tinyurl.com/mtvb4pc4](https://tinyurl.com/mtvb4pc4).

**Duo M**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 3-4:30 p.m.**

The Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival presents a violin and piano duo at the College Street Congregational Church in Burlington. Tickets and more info are at [tinyurl.com/2kz2kbpd](https://tinyurl.com/2kz2kbpd).

**Jazz orchestra**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 7:30-8:30 p.m.**

The Brian McCarthy Jazz Orchestra plays at the

University of Vermont Recital Hall in Burlington. The 17-piece band features faculty member and trumpeter Ray Vega in a program of classic standards and Latin jazz originals. Free and open to all. To see complete schedule of music department performances, see [tinyurl.com/mr2xc7sf](https://tinyurl.com/mr2xc7sf).

**Music and spirituality**

**Saturday, Feb. 18, 7-8 p.m.**

The music director at All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne, Ronnie Romano, presents a free concert featuring pieces on piano and organ. To obtain free tickets, see [tinyurl.com/mwt6rrh7](https://tinyurl.com/mwt6rrh7). Donations gladly accepted at the door.

**Horse-drawn rides**

**Saturday, Feb. 18- Mon., Feb. 20**

Shelburne Farms offers its popular rides by wagon, or sleigh if there is adequate snow and frozen ground. Several time slots each day, each for about one-half hour. To register see [tinyurl.com/39bkuk7f](https://tinyurl.com/39bkuk7f).

**Vermont film screening**

**Sunday, Feb. 19, 2 p.m.**

The Vergennes Opera House shows the movie, The Summer of Walter Hacks, in a rare screening. The 50s-era drama was filmed almost entirely in Vermont, and the director, producer and co-writers will be in attendance. It’s a movie with no fancy effects, but good storytelling. For tickets and more info, see [tinyurl.com/mrx6yznj](https://tinyurl.com/mrx6yznj).

**Spotted lanternfly**

**Tuesday, Feb. 21, noon-1 p.m.**

The spotted lanternfly, an invasive pest indigenous to parts of China and Vietnam, has spread to the U.S. and is impacting the viticulture, stone fruit and timber industries in the Northeast and elsewhere. Join a free webinar and learn about what can be done to prevent its damage. More info and free registration at [tinyurl.com/2p9y545w](https://tinyurl.com/2p9y545w).

**Online book discussion**

**Tuesday, Feb. 21, 6 p.m.**

For One Day of Freedom will be the topic of a Zoom discussion organized by Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh. Free event requires pre-registration at [tinyurl.com/4c3na2mt](https://tinyurl.com/4c3na2mt). The next book talk will be on March 14.

**Ice fishing clinics**

**Wednesday, Feb. 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.**

This free event is for anglers in grades 5-8 to learn and practice ice-fishing techniques and safety. Head out on the ice at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Vergennes and learn from Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department instructors. All gear is supplied; dress warmly and wear winter boots. Add ice cleats if you have them. Pre-registration required at [tinyurl.com/mpmfzxcr](https://tinyurl.com/mpmfzxcr). There will be another clinic on Friday, Feb. 24.

**Hidden hands talk**

**Wednesday, Feb. 22, 7-8 p.m.**

Fort Ticonderoga staff explore the role of men of African descent in the military experience of the 18th century by researching military artifacts in their collection. More info for this Zoom presentation, including registration, is found at [tinyurl.com/4p2e73ax](https://tinyurl.com/4p2e73ax).

**See more events on our website:**  
[charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events](https://charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events)



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BOOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

a Vietnamese kid, as a poor kid, I had collected so many scarlet letters of alienation that I connected profoundly to the great works. ... The snarl of my journey was untangled and laid out clearly by books.”

Author Sara Corbett comments that Sigh, Gone is “the great American nerd-punk boyhood memoir, a story that’s rollicking and laugh-out-loud funny while also offering a piercingly profound look at race, the challenges of assimilation, and the inherently defiant act of growing up. ... I’ll follow this writer anywhere.”

I completely agree and couldn’t have said it better myself. And speaking of following this writer anywhere, I have never ever in my life had any desire for a tattoo, but I confess I am seriously thinking of getting one. Why? Because Phuc Tran runs a state-of-the-art tattoo parlor in Portland, Maine. Tsunami Tattoo, 583 Forest Avenue. If you read this book, let me know; you might want to join me on a road trip. Maybe we can get a twofer.

That’s enough for today. So many books, so little time. Please stay warm and maybe scan the internet for some plane tickets to someplace warmer. In the meantime, hand and toe warmers make a big difference. Along with a roaring fire and a good book. Bye for now.

Power customer rebates rise while emissions down

Kristin Carlson  
Green Mountain Power

Green Mountain Power (GMP) announced renewed savings opportunities for customers in 2023, to continue to switch away from fossil fuel for driving, heating and more. These rebates are available to all customers to make the switch and help cut carbon and costs for customers.

“Our customer rebates and programs are all about making it simple to save money while reducing your carbon footprint. The two biggest sources of carbon emissions in Vermont are driving and heating, so we offer robust rebates for electric vehicles and heat pumps with additional savings for customers who are low income,” said Tiana Smith, who leads electrification initiatives at Green Mountain Power.

Green Mountain Power’s rebate for all-electric vehicles (AEVs) at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/ev-rebate](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/ev-rebate) is increasing for 2023, to \$2,200 for qualifying new vehicles, up from \$1,500 last year. Income-eligible customers can still get an extra \$1,000 rebate for up to \$3,200 in savings. If you purchase or lease from a participating dealership, they can apply the rebate as a discount during the transaction for immediate savings. This bigger AEV rebate is valid through June of 2023, and it can be combined with up to \$4,000 in state EV rebates and \$7,500 in

federal tax incentives for qualifying vehicles, adding up to big savings. Green Mountain Power’s base rebate for used AEVs is also increasing — to \$1,500, up from \$750 last year.

“We love our Bolt EV and we appreciate having GMP help make it possible to reduce Vermont’s carbon footprint with rebates like this,” said Raven Walters, a Green Mountain Power customer in Waterford who is looking forward to getting a second EV with the new bigger rebate, too.

Green Mountain Power’s popular rebates for heat pumps, e-bikes, motorcycles, yard care equipment, and induction stoves will continue through December of 2023.

Business customers can also save through custom programs at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/business-innovation](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/business-innovation) to help them shift their operations to using clean electricity instead of fossil fuel. Green Mountain Power has a team of experts who will consult with your business free of charge, and offer financial incentives based on the amount of carbon emissions offset by switching away from fossil fuel. This consultation and planning service is free, and Green Mountain Power has helped businesses with everything from installing electric ovens and coffee roasters, to electric snowmaking equipment, to one-of-a-kind kilns for industrial applications. Incentives are also available for electric vehicles and chargers, forklifts, backhoes and more.

Together, Green Mountain Power business and residential customers helped to offset 306,000 metric tons of carbon emissions through Green Mountain Power programs last year, which is the equivalent of taking about 66,000 fossil fuel vehicles off the road for a year.

More details on all of Green Mountain Power’s rebates and programs for residential customers are online here: [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs) and include:

- Heat pumps, \$400 rebate with up to \$1,000 in savings for income-eligible customers at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/heat-pump](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/heat-pump)
- Motorcycle, \$500 rebate at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/electric-motorcycle-rebate](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/electric-motorcycle-rebate)
- E-bike, \$200 instant rebate at participating shops at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/electric-bike-rebate](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/electric-vehicles/electric-bike-rebate)
- Induction stove, \$200 rebate at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/induction-cooktop-rebate](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/induction-cooktop-rebate)
- Lawn tractors and mowers, up to \$100 rebate at [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/electric-mower-rebate](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/home-and-yard/electric-mower-rebate)

More details on services and incentives for business customers are online here: [greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/business-innovation](https://greenmountainpower.com/rebates-programs/business-innovation).

Library News

Celebrate worm love with a snowy, story-walking tour



Margaret Woodruff  
Director

From birds to books, pets to people, February is the month for love. Enjoy the Charlotte Library’s new outdoor story, Worm Loves Worm StoryWalk, that has been installed on the library green. Just in time for Valentine’s Day, bundle your family up for a snowy walk and discover how worm meets a special worm and they fall in love.

This book is written by J.J. Austrian and illustrated by Mike Curato, and the StoryWalk project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier.



As part of our celebration, we’ve transformed our Mitten Tree into a book-lover’s Valentine. Use a library heart to tie to the tree if you have a favorite book title to share. Visit our romance book list if you’re looking for Valentine inspiration: [bit.ly/3wYSTxy](https://bit.ly/3wYSTxy).

**Arts and crafts at the library**

Flex your fingers and your creative muscle with some Spirograph. Try your hand at our hometown jigsaw puzzle. Grab some yarn and needles to knit up something cozy. The library has ideas and supplies for all kinds of fun activities at [bit.ly/3JDfqrq](https://bit.ly/3JDfqrq).

Black History Month

**Clemmons Family Farm**

During Black History Month, enjoy a free curriculum for grades K-5 about two courageous African American women who were pioneers in travel. Commune and create with people in your community around modern-day connections with Bessie Coleman and Bessie Stringfield’s joy in motorcycles, airplanes and adventure. Check out the curriculum outline at [bit.ly/3Y3tWgC](https://bit.ly/3Y3tWgC) and enroll to access the curriculum, which will be released on Feb. 1.

**Black History Month email series**

During February, the state of Vermont Human Rights Commission and Office of Racial Equity will share events, art, resources, facts, and literary excerpts that are from or for the Black community. There will be a weekly raffle, where you could win a book or a package of coffee from a featured Black-owned roaster. Sign up for the email series at [tinyurl.com/y7tzz5ur](https://tinyurl.com/y7tzz5ur).

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 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.

**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.

**Library Books on Your Kindle**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 15, 11:30 a.m.**

Learn how you can read library ebooks for free on your Kindle. Tech Librarian, Susanna Kahn, will walk you through the process of finding, checking out and sending ebook titles to your Kindle. Detailed instructions provided. Registration required, please call the Charlotte Senior Center, 802.425.6345.

**Abenaki food & food security**  
**Wednesday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.**

Chief Don Stevens will talk via Zoom about the Nulhegan band’s overall food security programs which include traditional



gathering, Abenaki Land Link, seed banks and meat production. Learn what more the tribe is doing for the health of the people and the land. He encourages a healthy question and answer period where participants can learn more about the culture and beliefs and what kind of support would be helpful. Register at [us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZUrf-GgrT8sG9193k2DwnCMoD6633I7y7G1](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tZUrf-GgrT8sG9193k2DwnCMoD6633I7y7G1).

**Stillwater Meditation**  
**Saturdays starting Feb. 25, 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.

**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, March 9, online and in-person. Please contact the library for additional information.



## Senior Center News

# Variety is the spice of Charlotte Senior Center life



Lori York  
Director

Interested in learning about the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer’s? Do you have questions or concerns about what is happening with legislation in Montpelier? Or would you rather be inspired by a new art show?

There is a variety of programming this month at the Charlotte Senior Center. Join a new class focusing on yoga strength building or celebrate Valentine’s Day by attending a “Heart Art” coffee and canvas workshop. Learn how to read library ebooks on your Kindle, sign up to take a beginner guitar class or join a Spanish conversation group.

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](mailto: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

#### Art show: Portraits

A collection of paintings and drawings of people from the community, created by a group of artists who gather to paint on Thursday afternoons at a local studio on Mt. Philo Road in Charlotte.

#### The 10 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. Cost is free.

#### 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. Cost is free. Registration required.

#### Chat with Chea Monday, Feb. 27, 1 p.m.

Bring your questions and concerns for a legislature meet and greet with Chea Waters Evans. Chea is your newly elected Chittenden-5 representative and is interested in hearing from you so she can bring forward your issues in Montpelier.

### Upcoming programs

#### Beginner Guitar II Wednesdays, 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.)

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

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.

#### Heart Art Friday, Feb. 10, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Unlike traditional paint and 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.

#### Spanish conversation Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

¿Hablas español? This free group will meet weekly. At each session one member of the group will announce the topic of conversation for the following week. Come join the group for conversation in Spanish. Questions? Contact Bernice Wesseling at [Bernice.Wesseling@uvm.edu](mailto:Bernice.Wesseling@uvm.edu).

#### 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).

#### 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).

#### 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 10-11 a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. To register, contact Kerrie Pughe at 802-425-6345 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)

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

212 Ferry Road, Charlotte  
802-425-6345  
[charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org)  
Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org).




Photo by Lori York

From left, Cyndie White, Kathy Ayers, Lin Kalson, Penny Burman and Diane Boucher play word games at the senior center. These Wednesday sessions feature a variety of games including Scrabble, Boggle and Bananagrams.



Photo by Lori York

Bone Builders is a free exercise class designed to prevent the effects of osteoporosis offered on Tuesdays and Friday mornings.



### The Town of Charlotte

## MEETINGS

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

**Planning Commission:**  
**Regular meeting**  
Thursday, Feb. 16, 7-9 p.m.

**Presidents’ Day holiday**  
**(Town offices closed)**  
Monday, Feb. 20

**Development Review Board**  
**Regular Meeting**  
Wednesday, Feb. 22, 7-9:30 p.m.



# Write Ingredients

## Great soup with no green turtles at the senior center

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

Don't fret if you missed Homemade Soup Day on Feb. 4. You'll find excellent soup at the Charlotte Senior Center on Feb. 13.

And we can promise the cooks won't follow President Eisenhower's recipe for green turtle soup, which begins, "Cut off the head from a live green turtle and drain the blood." Fortunately, green sea turtles are now classified as endangered.

Come to the Monday Munch on Feb. 13 and you will see that the soup is red and the cooks definitely make this red pepper-tomato soup with heart. Besides the heart-y appearance, check out the ingredients and you will know that the tomatoes and red peppers make this an especially heart-healthy food.

In the 1980s chef, cookbook author (32 books) and pioneer of American cooking shows, James Beard said, "I am convinced that I am the one who introduced quiche to America."

Considered a classic French dish, according to The Oxford Companion to Food, quiche actually has German roots in the medieval kingdom of Lothringen.

Here's Judith Viorst on chocolate sundaes: "If I were in charge of the world, a chocolate sundae with whipped cream and nuts would be a vegetable."

Vegetable or not, you can get your sundaes on Feb. 20 at the Charlotte Senior Center.

**Monday, Feb. 13,  
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

### Monday Munch

Tomato and red pepper soup, quiche, light green salad and Janet's homemade dessert.

**Reminder:** Registration for Thursday Grab & Go Meal meals is due by Monday at 802-425-6345 or [kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:kpughe@charlotteseniorcentervt.org).

**Thursday, Feb. 16,  
10-11 a.m.**

### Age Well Grab & Go meal pick up

Swedish meatballs w/sauce, rotini noodles, Brussel sprouts, French green beans, wheat dinner roll and pineapple tidbits. Suggested donation: \$5. Registration required by the prior Monday.

Note the international content of this Grab & Go meal: And there's lots of history embedded in the pineapple. Indigenous to Brazil, a 1493 Columbus expedition discovered pineapple on Guadeloupe, taking a load back to Spain. Only one survived the trip, which Columbus gave to his sponsor, King Ferdinand, who loved it.

**Monday Munch  
Feb. 20, 11:30 a.m.-  
12:30 p.m.**

Comfort food — homemade mac and cheese, tossed salad, warm bread and hot caramel ice cream sundae.

In "The Decameron," Day 8, Giovanni Boccaccio, who died in 1375, showed us that macaroni has been a comfort food for a very long time: "There was a mountain made entirely of grand parmesan cheese, on which people did nothing but make macaroni."

Cooks at the Charlotte Senior Center make a whole lot more than macaroni.

**Thursday, Feb. 23 10-11 a.m.  
Age Well Grab & Go meal pickup**

Oven-fried chicken, red mashed potatoes, capri blend vegetables with lentils, pumpkin custard with cream.



**Tidbit:** Henry David Thoreau declared, "I was determined to know beans."

You can follow his path when the Charlotte Library celebrates legume love. Stop by and pick up a Bean Bag Kit, packed with info, recipes and ingredients (black beans from Morningside Farm in Vermont) for making a delicious black bean dish at your house. On Feb. 21, the library will keep a pot of beans simmering, so you can stop by for a sample.

It's February, and here's Sarah Vaughan singing the Rogers & Hart tune "My Funny Valentine" at [youtube.com/watch?v=Q8VRwEVZw04](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8VRwEVZw04).

Here's Frank Sinatra: [youtube.com/watch?v=zlpP7icU3rg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zlpP7icU3rg).

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