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The Charlotte News

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Plunge raising

Courtesy photo

In spite of the annual Penguin Plunge being canceled on Feb. 4 because of extremely cold temperatures, the Champlain Valley School District found alternate ways to raise funds for Special Olympics Vermont and managed to collect \$53,000. A team of 12 staff members from Charlotte Central School took a plunge at Charlotte Town Beach on Feb. 15, raising \$4,104 for their frigid philanthropic whackiness.

CVU girls hoops back in familiar position —



STATE CHAMPS

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

When the final second ticked off the clock and the buzzer sounded, signaling a Champlain Valley Union High girls basketball state championship, the team exploded into a massive celebration. Although the Redhawks had led for most of the game, for the last five minutes or so, team members on the sideline had been roiling like a tea kettle on the verge of boiling into steam. When the pent up celebration was finally released, much of the noise was pretty high pitched. With the game ended, the galloping, jumping and hugging began. CVU had won a state title with a 43-29 win over St. Johnsbury. The girls state title game started with both teams looking nervous, making some silly turnovers and fouls, but it didn't take too long for things to settle down. The problem for the Hilltoppers was that the Redhawks had a much more solid and deeper foundation to compete from. Both teams played solid defense and both struggled to penetrate the other's zone, but it wasn't long before CVU

began to work the ball into the paint and back out again, opening up shots closer to the basket. This fit well with coach Ute Otley's strategy for her team. Familiar with how high school players become confused by the larger college basketball court, she'd planned for this. Besides the extra 10-feet in court length, the foot of distance added to the college 3-point line is particularly confusing. Although both 3-point lines are marked on the floor, players just gravitate to the outer college line, Otley said. "So, everybody's shooting from further back, and it just changes the game. I've never seen any teams, that I've either coached or that I've played against, really shoot it well in here," she said of the University of Vermont's Patrick Gymnasium. It wasn't her first time at this hoops rodeo, so Otley came prepared with a game plan that accounted for these differences, encouraging her players to get the ball into the lane where things seem more normal for high school players. Her Redhawks only made one of their 10 attempts at three-pointers, enough to keep St. Johnsbury honest and not



Photos by Scooter MacMillan

This was CVU coach Ute Otley's first outright state title since a streak of five championships in a row ended in 2017. ignoring CVU players with the ball outside. Although there were five lead changes, those came early in the game,

SEE CVU GIRLS PAGE 3

Below are the results from this year's voting for Town Meeting Day. Of the 3,329 registered voters in Charlotte, 29 percent voted. Noteworthy in these results is that the Charlotte Selectboard's budget was narrowly rejected by voters with 493 voting against it and 458 voting for.

TOWN OFFICER RESULTS

Selectboard (3-year term)	
LEWIS MUDGE	731
Selectboard (2-year term)	
KELLY DEVINE	508
PATRICE MACHAVERN	336
Champlain Valley School District board (3-Year Term) WRITE-IN	
MIKE ABBOTT	75
MEGHAN SIKET	112
Road Commissioner (1-year term)	
HUGH LEWIS JR	888
Charlotte Library Trustee (5-year term)	
LINDSAY W. SMITH	729
Town Moderator (1-year term)	
CHARLIE RUSSELL	765
Delinquent Tax Collector (1-year term)	
MARY A. MEAD	760
Trustee of Public Funds (3-year term)	
MATTHEW KRASNOW	756

CHARLOTTE ARTICLES

ARTICLE 2: Approve the selectboard's budget for the fiscal year 2023-24 of \$2,930,908?	
YES	458
NO	493
ARTICLE 3: Approve Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services budget of \$965,806?	
YES	513
NO	440
ARTICLE 4: Approve Charlotte Library budget of \$324,356?	
YES	491
NO	461

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT ARTICLES

ARTICLE VII: Approve school district budget for 2023-24 of \$96,119,804?	
YES	3,084
NO	1,673
ARTICLE VIII: Approve school district allocating \$600,000 from fund balance as revenue for the 2023-24 operating budget?	
YES	3,895
NO	845
ARTICLE IX: Approve district borrowing \$395,000 to buy three school buses?	
YES	3,322
NO	1,436

From senator to singer — Retirement means time for choral endeavors

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Dennis Delaney says he's not that religious. However, if it's true that: "The one who sings prays twice," as St. Augustine is supposed to have said, then Delaney sure has prayed a lot since retiring. Although he grew up singing as a Catholic school student, during his years teaching history and French literature at St. Michael's, as a state senator from Charlotte (1983-1988, 1991-1996) and as a legislative advisor to the parliament of Ghana in the late 1990s, Delaney didn't have time for singing. But since retiring he's been finding time to sing with the Vermont Choral Union, which has concerts planned for Friday, June 2, 7:30 p.m., at the First Congregational Church in St. Albans and Sunday, June 4, 4 p.m., at the Cathedral of St. Paul in Burlington. He and his wife bought a bungalow in Las Cruces, N.M., where he sometimes fills

in teaching language and literature at New Mexico State University for professors on sabbatical. And where he was invited to sing with the university's Masterworks Chorus. According to the New Mexico State University's website, "The Masterworks Chorus provides students, faculty and members of the greater Las Cruces Community with opportunities to perform large-scale monuments of the choral repertoire." That opportunity led to another opportunity. Delaney was part of group of singers invited just before the pandemic by professor Elisa Wilson to perform with the University of Texas El Paso, about an hour east of Las Cruces. He has been making the drive when he's in Las Cruces since. In February, he was part of an event featuring that university's Choral Union and the El Paso Symphony Orchestra performing Mozart's "Requiem." "Some people say it's the most beautiful piece of choral work ever done. And some

say it's the most difficult," Delaney said. It's a piece he has a lot of experience with. He has even performed the "Requiem" in Vienna. The El Paso Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Czech-American Rohuslav Rattay, who Delaney describes as "an ambassador of classical music." "Watching him conduct is like watching a painter creating rich imagery to live music on a large canvas," the El Paso Times said. Delaney said he would have walked to El Paso from Las Cruces to have followed Rattay's baton. Rattay holds degrees from the Prague Conservatory, Rice University and the Peabody Institute of Music. Delaney is amazed by the voices of the students he sings with at the University of Texas at El Paso, some of whom come from Juarez across the border every day for school. "I am overwhelmed with pride to be part of such talent," he said. "Incredible singing voices, and I'm treated like one of them."

Wilson, the Choral Union director who recruited Delaney, will be at Carnegie Hall on March 17 directing the symphony "Lux Aeterna." The Vermont Choral Union performances Delaney will be part of in June are billed as "Hope Conquers Fear." It will feature music by both Johann Christoph Bach and Johann Sebastian Bach, along with Johannes Brahms and Benjamin Britten. "I just love singing and especially classical," Delaney said.



Photo by Dan Velleman
Dennis Delaney at rehearsal with the

Ballot boxing

Photos by Alicia Wolfram

Right: Gerald A. Bouchard, Helen Garve and Janet Yantachka check in residents for Town Meeting Day voting on Tuesday morning.

Below: Michael Krasnow exercises his patriotic right and responsibility on Tuesday.

Below right: Three people from Charlotte standing up for democracy in the ballot booth.



Charlotter wins poetry award for first book

Alicia Wolfram
Contributor

Charlotte poet Bethany Breitland keeps close the wisdom an old mentor once gave her: Don't be a tyrant to your writings — you can't control them like you were controlled.

That philosophy sums up the decisions behind Breitland's upcoming book "Fire Index," a collection in which she tries to find a sense of agency in her traumas through poetry.

"Fire Index," set to release April 4, is the first book by the Indiana-born author, mother, educator and activist, who settled in Charlotte in 2019 after stops in Malibu, Boston and Atlanta. Her cross-country work saw her running poetry courses at a correctional facility, teaching at an inner-city high school and a prestigious prep school and providing adult education to women who had escaped sex trafficking.

She moved to Charlotte after earning a master's from the Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. Last year, she won the latest of several career honors: the annual poetry book award from Sundog Poetry Center, a Vermont nonprofit, for her manuscript of "Fire Index."

Her upcoming collection deals with child abuse, religious trauma, sexual abuse and motherhood, and writing it was, for Breitland, part of her healing process.

"This book was for me a literal process of becoming my own person," she said.

She employs techniques like right justification, use of white space, lower-casing and prose poetry — all of which, she said, helps her move away from a passive outlook and assert herself over the experiences.

"Those pieces are reflective of some agency gained and some real departure from not only the hard patriarchal, religious fundamentalism, abusive background I came from," she said, "but also a departure from the patriarchal elements of language and publication and even poetry."

Breitland's form might appear random to some readers, but her style is purposeful. It reflects "the scattered mind trying to make sense of her own experience," she said.

Those techniques come to her as she writes. "So, the poem becomes what the poem wants to be," she said.

The motif of fire acts as a throughline in Breitland's work, stringing the poems together to form a collective whole. That recurring theme was inspired in part by



Bethany Breitland

a fire in Breitland's home a few years ago but also serves to reflect the burning of past events and their transformation through the healing process into an entirely new entity.

Breitland described it as a dynamic, alchemic nature. "Something burns and it turns into something else," she said.

Instead of nursing her pain, she could channel it into art.

Breitland said she knew she wanted to live in Charlotte as soon as she visited the house she would eventually move into. She was drawn to the town by its peace and quiet and its location halfway between Burlington and Middlebury. After settling down, she discovered just how many other artists flock to Charlotte.

Breitland's book launch is set to take place at 7 p.m., April 4, kicking off National Poetry Month, at Phoenix Books in Burlington, where she plans to do a reading and sign copies. Find more details at tinyurl.com/ye5ahc3h.



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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The Charlotte News NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

March 23

Copy Deadline: Friday, March 17
Ads Deadline: Friday, March 17

April 6

Copy Deadline: Friday, March 31
Ads Deadline: Friday, March 31

April 20

Copy Deadline: Friday, April 14
Ads Deadline: Friday, April 14

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Letter to the Editor

Even with short acquaintance Frank McIntire will be missed

To the Editor:

My husband Jet Advani and I had the pleasure of meeting Frank McIntire a couple of weeks ago. We knew Adela Nunec from our regular visits to Costco, where we learned she and Frank lived in Charlotte. We invited Adela and her husband to come and visit us.

When they visited the following week, Jet mentioned that as he is getting old, he is always looking for help. Frank readily offered his help and came over to install a bathroom fixture the following Saturday. I also happened to ask Adela if she knew a seamstress, as I had a couple of pajamas that needed shortening. She instantly offered to sew them and showed up the following Wednesday. Both of them were incredibly kind and helpful even though they had just met us.

Frank and Adela also knew that the following Thursday we were going to get a snow storm, so Frank offered to come by on Saturday to help shovel the walkway. On Friday, Adela sent me a text message saying that her husband had a fatal heart attack the night before and wouldn’t be able to come. I was shocked. I was thinking: Under the circumstances, who would have the presence of mind to think about someone else? Especially someone they had only just met? Later, she recounted that Frank had shoveled their entire driveway and even built a sculpture before tragedy struck, a poetic moment of whimsy.

To top it all off, Adela said she could bring Frank’s son Andrew on Saturday to do the snow shoveling. I told her not to worry about us but to take care of herself and the family. Despite our protests, Adela and Andrew decided to visit us on Saturday. Andrew insisted on shoveling the walkway, as he was driven to complete the job that his father had intended to do, to carry out his legacy in this small way.

In the short time that we got to know them, Frank, Adela and Andrew have won our hearts. Frank made quite an impression on us.

Adela is from Nicaragua. She met Frank in Burlington. Adelita (Adela) Nunec and Frank McIntire have been married for 29 years. Adela had two sons from a prior marriage and Frank had one son and a daughter from a prior marriage. Together they had one more son. They live on Spear Street with their two sons, Adela’s mom and Adela’s two nieces. Adela was very thankful to her husband for not just accepting her with all her family but embracing them as their own. Clearly Frank’s spirit of warmth, kindness and service permeated every corner of his life, and I hope we have many opportunities to better get to know his entire family. It is abundantly clear how special Frank was, and we are honored to have known him even just a little.

Our deepest condolences to his entire family. May he have a peaceful journey into his next life.
Gopi and Jet Advani
Charlotte

CVU GIRLS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Winning the state title was a new experience for this team. The last Redhawk’s girls basketball championship came before they entered high school.

and when the Hilltoppers were able to pull in front they did not stay there long, holding the lead for less than five minutes total.

Eventually, CVU’s depth put the Redhawks on top to stay, although St. Johnsbury played gamely in a contest that was primarily decided by defense.

At the half, Champlain Valley was up 22-16. Although the Hilltoppers put together a 6-0 run early in the third quarter, the Redhawks responded with a decisive 8-0 run of their own to take a 36-25 lead into the fourth quarter. The final frame was basically all defense with CVU just managing 7 points to St. Johnsbury’s 4.

The difference in the game was CVU’s defense, their rebounding which picked up after the first quarter and her team’s depth, Otley said. “We had so many kids that could play that we were able to keep the intensity high when the other team was getting really, really tired.”

After getting beaten by Mount Mansfield in the semifinals last year, it was great to finally win a state championship, senior Addi Hunter said.

“It’s so exciting, something I’ve wanted for a long time.”

“The starting five have played together so many years,” Adam Bunting said. He knows this team better than just his association with them as principal or that his daughter Maddie Bunting is a member of the team. He coached many of them in the eighth grade.

This was Otley’s sixth state title, but first non-COVID title since 2017. When quarantine shutdown play in 2020, CVU, Essex, Mt. Mansfield and Rutland were all named as Division 1 “quad-champs.”

St. Johnsbury and CVU have a history of meeting in title games. The Redhawks took the title over the Hilltoppers in 2017, but fell to them in 2018 and 2019.

From 2011 to 2019, CVU girls teams played in every state title match, winning five in a row 2013-17.

In the Friday, March 3, title victory, Hunter scored 16 points and grabbed 6 rebounds, while Elise Berger had 11 points, 3 assists and 4 blocks. Lauren Vaughan notched 6 points, and Kate Boget and Merrill Jacobs both tallied 5 points apiece.



Courtesy photo

A distracted and allegedly drug-impaired driver hit and knocked down a power pole on Friday on Route 7, shutting down traffic for a while.

Fallen pole shuts down Route 7

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

A wreck on Route 7 south of Ferry Road shutdown traffic for over an hour on Friday, March 3.

Around 2:15 p.m. state police and Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue were dispatched to a wreck near State Park Road where a 2010 Toyota Corolla had sheared off a power pole and a 2021 Jeep Grand Cherokee had gotten caught in fallen power lines wires, fire chief Justin Bliss said.

Charlotte fire and rescue responders quickly stopped traffic and isolated the scene. Traffic was rerouted onto Greenbush Road while rescue responders worked the accident scene, and Green Mountain Power took care of the electrical hazard and removed the downed power pole.

According to state police, Aaron Grzych, 28, of St. Johnsbury was headed south in the Toyota, driving above the

speed limit when he was “distracted by a portable electronic device” and drove off the roadway.

Grzych was placed under arrest for suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs and taken to the Vergennes Police Department. He was eventually released on a citation to appear in court later on DUI and negligent operation charges, state police said.

The Toyota was totaled. The driver of the Jeep was from New Jersey and the damage to his vehicle was minor, the police report says. Neither driver was injured.

Besides Charlotte Fire and Rescue, Green Mountain Power and Vermont State Police, Vergennes Police Department, Ferrisburgh Fire Department, Shelburne Fire Department and AnyTime Towing assisted in dealing with the accident.

By 4 p.m. all responding units had been released.

Hi! Neighbor

Nicole Conley: Keeping Charlotters active and engaged

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

A lot has changed since Nicole Conley was hired by the town of Charlotte in June of 2014 including her title and her hours. Initially, Conley served as recreation coordinator, which was a 20-hour a week job. Now, she is the town’s recreation director for a 30-hour-week position, which also includes overseeing the Charlotte Town Beach.

Conley’s approach to her position is one thing that hasn’t changed over time. Her goal is to get as many people engaged as possible. In furtherance of that goal, she works to improve the popular existing programs while adding new ones. Two of the most popular programs are driver’s education and youth soccer. Both are long-standing offerings with the latter attracting 140 kids each fall. Rounding out the top three, however, is martial arts which is a newer addition and has consistently filled every one of the 25 spots for each of the six sessions.

Conley said that in addition to adding new offerings, Charlotte increased the duration of some existing ones. Driver’s ed is now taught year-round and tennis has jumped

from one season to three. Pickleball has also become a vibrant year-round program with introductory lessons, as well as regular games. Other programs like dance, flag football, art classes and guitar lessons were taken off the schedule as participation dropped, but the spring after-school program has expanded from first and second graders to grades K-4.

The onset of COVID may be one of the reasons for the increasing popularity of the Charlotte Town Beach. For years, 400-500 passes were sold but that number has increased almost threefold to 1,200 passes. Conley thinks the VSO concerts at the beach may have also helped make people more aware of the facilities and the new playground, built courtesy of a generous donor, has also increased visitation. “Whenever I go by there, I see it being used,” Conley said. She is pleased that the town partners with other municipalities for babysitting and boater safety courses, as well as adult volleyball and pick-up basketball. On-line registration has made it easier for people to sign up for Recreation Department activities.

Programming was limited during the

pandemic, but Conley is proud of the way the department rallied to make sure the community remained engaged during those years. One example was the provision of trick or treat bags for Halloween for kids whose parents didn’t want them going door to door.

One popular event that has yet to return after a COVID hiatus is the annual soccer jamboree. The event ran for almost four decades with 60 teams from towns as far away as Brandon coming to play. The jamboree was free, but concession sales would raise as much as a thousand dollars for the Charlotte Recreation Department scholarship fund. Conley has many happy memories of all the smiling faces at the event and hopes it can be restarted again, possibly as early as this fall.

A native Vermonter, Conley comes from an athletic background. She was the athletic activities planner at Champlain College and served as assistant director of athletics, women’s basketball coach and cross-country coach at Vaughn College in New York City. In addition to her municipal job, she is a certified personal trainer at Fitness Options in South Burlington. There, she works primarily with seniors who are either recovering from injuries or hoping to maintain an active lifestyle.

In her spare time, Conley enjoys being active, running at least once a week and keeping up with her 5-year-old son. Her partner Ricky McCollum is the director of student activities at Champlain Valley Union High, and the couple tries to find space in their busy schedules for shared activities including time at Conley’s family’s camp on Lake Champlain.

After the lifting of pandemic restrictions, Conley said many parents reached out



Courtesy photos

Nicole Conley and 5-year-old Jordan. Conley has an athletic background, working as athletic activities planner at Champlain College and assistant director of athletics, women’s basketball coach and cross-country coach at Vaughn College in New York City.

to thank her for the newly available programming. “It was really rewarding to hear them say how happy they were that their kids could take part in sports,” she said. “With so many mental health and other issues for kids, it was nice to hear how important these rec sports are to them.”

Almost nine years into her job, she still enjoys the challenge of the position. “I like the people I work with,” she said. “I enjoy the programs I run, and I don’t get bored with them but when new opportunities arrive, I want to jump on them.”

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Food Shelf News

Changes to hunger relief make donations more important

Maj Eisinger
Contributor

As we look forward to spring, we also note that the pandemic hunger relief program is coming to an end. Nationally, starting in March, \$3 billion in monthly food stamp benefits will cease. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients will each receive about \$90 per month less in benefits.

The universal free meals program in our schools is also set to expire at the end of the school year. If this does occur, the USDA free and reduced-price meal program will likely be reinstated. Under the USDA free and reduced-price meal program, a family of four will not qualify for free lunch if they make more than \$36,100 a year and a family of four making more than \$51,000 a year will not be eligible for reduced price meals. It is predicted that food shelves and little free pantries, already grappling with inflation, will be further stretched to provide a safety net.

In these challenging times, we are grateful for the donation provided by Jeffrey W. and Jolinda D. Smith and the Windham Foundation, as well as receipt of generous support from Donna and Remo Pizzagalli, given in memory of Mary Wright. We also thank Zero Gravity Craft Brewery and the Backyard Bistro for their collaborative donation. Donations of delicious bread remain a source of nourishment and delight; we thank Stewart’s Bakery. Kudos and thanks also to Jack Dore, Martin Kahm and Will Boyce of the eighth grade Charlotte Central School’s Wellness Project for collecting and donating a bounty of canned goods.

The children growing within the support of this community benefit from the yearly Clothing Drive, a partnership between the food shelf and the Charlotte Grange. In March, those families using the food shelf are asked to provide sizes required to outfit their children for summer.

In April, the Charlotte Grange will accept donations of gently used clothing for the Grange Rummage Sale. Those of us who are doing spring cleaning might put aside donations of gently used items of children’s clothing for this purpose.

The food shelf is also looking for a new home. We remain grateful for the many years the Congregational Church has provided space to us in their basement. We seek a first-floor space of about 600 square feet with heat, electricity and plumbing and with room for parking and receipt of large food orders. The space could potentially be a shared one. Please email Peggy Sharpe, food shelf secretary, at ckmj@comcast.net with any leads.

The Charlotte Food Shelf remains committed to providing dignified access to healthy food and assistance to those in need. 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.

The food shelf is open for food distribution from 4-6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Our address is 403 Church Hill Road behind the Charlotte Congregational Church. Masking is encouraged during the ongoing pandemic and its new virus variants. For emergency food, please call John at 802-425-3130. If you cannot come to the food shelf due to COVID symptoms or seek further information about the food shelf, please call 802-425-3252.

Monetary donations are appreciated, tax deductible and can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc., P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, VT 05445.

Gardening

Vermont Flower Show blossomed with imagination

Juliann Phelps
Contributor

If any heffalumps were to be found in the 100-Acre Wood, quietly peering from behind budding crabapple trees, visitors to the 2023 Vermont Flower Show might have caught a glimpse.

Little gloom shined on the faces of people as they passed by the murky depths of Eeyore’s dark and gloomy place. Audible gasps of delight could be heard as visitors gazed upon “The Party” from the bridge, centrally located in the grand garden display.

In three and a half days, a team of builders and designers transformed the 15,000-square-foot space inside the Champlain Valley Exposition into a whimsical indoor landscape inspired by the classic story of A.A. Milne’s Winnie-the-Pooh.

“Out of Hibernation, Spring Comes to the 100-Acre Wood” — the event was aptly titled. The first Vermont Flower Show in four years was produced by the Vermont Nursery and Landscape Association. The event’s imaginary forest was inspired by Milne’s view of the real Ashtown forest, located south of London. In addition to the display, the event featured exhibitors, seminars, food vendors and a family entertainment room with crafts and a magic show.

Nate Carr, owner of Church Hill Landscapes in Charlotte, was one of the many volunteers. He’s been helping since 1997. “I volunteered over the years and kept showing up, so they kept asking me to do more,” he said.

Carr is part of a committee who helps the hundreds of trees and shrubs bloom early inside the warm greenhouses at Claussen’s Florist, Greenhouse and Perennial Farm.

“Starting in the beginning of January, every week we bring donated plants into the greenhouse, warm them up and trick

them into thinking it’s spring,” Carr said. Hundreds of plants are donated by local and regional nurseries for the flower show.

Once inside the show, the warm smell of fresh mulch drew visitors to peer behind the wall of black curtains as they waited to enter. The walking path began with a stroll past a large open book built entirely from stone, with the sound of Milne’s voice reading his stories. To the right, Christopher Robin’s house led to a bubbling stream and a view of the tall Bee Tree set in a grassy green meadow.

Visitors moved slowly through the grand garden display pausing at other characters’ houses along the stone-lined pathway. Several were beautifully crafted from wood and natural design elements with a level of detail that was hard to see without pausing to stop and sit on a granite bench or peer in to the windows. Piglet’s house seemed to be entirely constructed of fragrant slabs of evergreen bark and Owls’ House nestled between two large trees. Moss-covered caves rose from the landscape, depicting tiny bedrooms and tea parties, all set among fragrant spring floral of hyacinths and tulips.

The journey ended with steps up to a viewing platform. From here, visitors had a panoramic view of “The Party” — a table set for a picnic in the middle of the landscape of gently rolling hills, flowering trees and party decorations.

“Thousands of hours go into it,” said Carr. “Not just the display, but the exhibitions, the children’s room, the judging.”

Organizers anticipated nearly 10,000 people attended the event.

While there’s only one weekend to enjoy the Vermont Flower Show, for those who wait to stroll through its beauty again, it is as timeless as the story of Winnie-the-Pooh.



Courtesy photos

Above: Piglet’s house in the middle of a “beech tree.”

Below: Pops of color surround the “The Party” and a view of the 100-Acre Wood.



Commentary - Where do we go from here?

Charlotte should consider: Town administrator or manager?

Peter Joslin

In April 2021, Todd Odit became the first town manager in Hinesburg’s history. This change from a town administrator was approved by a town vote at town meeting in March 2021.

What was the impetus for this change? According to Phil Pouech, chair of the selectboard at the time (and now state representative in Chittenden-4): “It was becoming apparent over the last few years, Hinesburg’s continuing growth and the complexity of operating multiple town services requires strong and decisive leadership. This change will also allow the elected selectboard to focus on town policy and forward-looking strategy.”

Pouech added that the main concerns of changing to a town manager included the additional cost and whether or not a town manager would be less approachable by citizens. A town manager would also have more authority and autonomy over the day-to-day running of the town.

Pouech said the selectboard talked about this change for a few years, and it took time for the idea to gain acceptance. The fact that Hinesburg’s town administrator was soon to resign created the impetus, and opportunity, to switch to a town manager.

Pouech said, “I think overall, most people have accepted the change. It was a challenge for some town employees as they now have a manager with full authority. Of course, the town manager always has a target on their back when folks are unhappy, so the town manager probably takes on more public relations responsibility. As a selectboard member, I clearly see the advantages of getting the selectboard out of the weeds and focused

on policy and planning rather than the day-to-day.” Odit said having a town manager “provides the selectboard the time to focus on policy, the town plan, priorities in the budget and the future, without getting buried in minutia.”

Many of the items that would appear on the selectboard agenda are now handled by the town manager. “More is getting done ... the selectboard is more comfortable making decisions ... and meetings are shorter,” Odit said. “Prior to having a town manager, selectboard meetings could run three and a half to four hours.” Sound familiar?

As Odit describes it, Hinesburg is now utilizing the council-manager form of government. He referenced the International City/County Management Association who are proponents of this model of governance. “The International City/County Management Association’s origins lie in the council-manager form of local government, which combines the strong political leadership of elected officials (in the form of a council, board or other governing body) with the strong professional experience of an appointed local government manager,” the organization says on its website. “These

highly trained, experienced individuals serve at the pleasure of the elected governing body and have responsibility for preparing the budget, directing day-to-day operations, hiring and firing personnel and serving as the council’s chief policy advisor.”



Charlotte Town Office

Pouech and Odit both agreed that the added authority which comes with a town manager creates a direct line of communication for town employees.

Prior to hiring a town manager Pouech said, “Town employees could hit up selectboard members with their employment issues or complaints so it would bypass their manager. Having only one person as a manager allows the employee a clear path on what is expected and how to improve their employment position.”

Hinesburg, although not considered a large town, has become increasingly complex over time; adding water and wastewater systems; fire and rescue, police and highway departments.

Charlotte governance is also becoming increasingly complex. We can benefit from learning why and how other towns switched from a town administrator to town manager.

As recently as two years ago I doubt many in town thought Charlotte would have a town garage, let alone the

prospects of a highway department or manage the Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service. Events beyond our control can quickly change the narrative.

I continue to come back to the same question: Will change push Charlotte along or will we grab it by the reins and guide it?

Lee Krohn, Shelburne town manager and a Charlotte resident, offered some sage advice regarding the question of a town manager: “It’s healthy to take a step back to see if what we’re doing still makes sense today. Sometimes you end up back where you started.”

He went on to say, “I think it’s healthy that we rethink from time to time how we do business. ... Are we being efficient and effective with our time? Who needs to be involved in decision making? And does the selectboard have the bandwidth to tackle the big issues?”

We live in a quaint and rural town. We want to retain the things that either brought us here or have kept us here for generations. Doing that requires continued, sound stewardship. The Charlotte Selectboard made a significant and positive step on Oct. 25, 2021, by voting decisively to eliminate the zoning board of approval and enact a development review board. We are at another inflection point; our town administrator is retiring October 2023, which begs the question: Should the selectboard consider moving from a town administrator to a town manager?

I think the answer is yes. (Peter Joslin is a former chair of the planning commission and a member of The Charlotte News board of directors. The opinions expressed here are his own and not necessarily those of the board.)

Report from the Legislature

Town meeting, Affordable Heat Act and cannabis — Oh my

Rep. Chea Waters Evans

We’re on town meeting break this week from the State House. These last couple months have been complete intellectual chaos, but I’m enjoying every second of it. This seems like an abrupt but appropriate segue into a topic people have been talking about: What does the future of town meeting look like?

Town meeting is a lovely tradition. As a kid, and as an interested citizen, and then as a reporter, I’ve attended many. As with many things in our lives, COVID put reality into sharp perspective, especially with so many new options for electronic participation. Town meeting’s purpose is for people to vote on the budget and discuss other matters relating to the town in an open and public forum.

At the risk of sounding overdramatic: Voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. Making voting as easy and accessible to as many people as possible, then, should be the goal, and voice votes at town meeting seem to attract fewer voters than Australian ballot on Town Meeting Day. So, on the surface, it seems like a move to Australian ballot would be the right thing to do. But ... town meeting is such a special Vermont tradition.

It’s not my job to figure it out. My committee, House Government Operations and Military Affairs, will address Town Meeting Day, open meeting law, remote and electronic voting, and other serious issues, over the next months and year. As we do this work, though, we’ve been clear on allowing towns to make their own choices about how to hold town meeting and how to vote. It’s up to the town of Charlotte to find a solution.

I’d hate for town meeting to disappear, but I understand that the more people who vote, the more representative it is of our town as a whole. I hope the selectboard can figure out a way to change the date, change the time, change the setting, something, to keep that wonderful tradition and still make it easy for people to vote.

Speaking of voting: I haven’t had the opportunity yet to vote on the Affordable Heat Act. It came out of the Senate and won’t be directly in front of my committee in the House, but I will have the opportunity to vote on it eventually.

I’ve heard from many people who are worried about it, and these are consistently folks who support reducing greenhouse emissions and are worried about the environment, yet who are worried that the

cost of these legislative actions will put the burden on people who purchase fuel to heat their homes. I get it. There are a lot of inflammatory ads and op-eds out there that are trying to scare people into opposing it; these are generally full of wrong information.

Here’s where it gets sticky for me — it’s true that over the coming years, Vermont will save money, and Vermonters will save money, by reducing our dependence on fossil fuels. The difficult part is figuring out what, exactly, it will cost to make that happen, and who, exactly, will pay for it. It’s easy to say that we should all weatherize our homes and get electric heat pumps. It’s a hell of a lot less easy to figure out how to lay out the up-front cost to do that, especially now, when groceries cost so much, and our property taxes are going to increase.

Since it’s just in the process of moving over to the House, and I’m sure there are many more negotiations to come, I hesitate to say where I stand on it. I’d love to hear people’s thoughts and opinions on this.

Finally, cannabis. We’re rural towns out here in Charlotte and Hinesburg, and farming and agriculture looks a lot different than it did 40 years ago; using this land for crops like cannabis seems bizarre to those of us who grew up with it as an illegal substance. But cannabis, whether you like it or not, is legal. Growing it, whether you like it or not, is legal. The state laws in place to manage cannabis grow operations were created to allow municipalities some leeway to make their own guidelines, with the very clear provision that towns can’t make land use regulations so specific and restrictive that it essentially prevents a person with a state-issued permit from growing anywhere in town. If anyone has any questions about this, my committee has jurisdiction over the Cannabis Control Board, so please reach out.

I’m happy to hear from anyone, and I do get lots of emails and phone calls on every issue you could imagine. On that note, I’ve been working on and communicating with people about animal welfare stuff, Medicare Advantage issues, gun control laws and a bunch of other topics. Please email me at cevans@leg.state.vt.us or text or call at 917-887-8231 any time.

(Chea Waters Evans is state representative for Charlotte and a small portion of Hinesburg.)

Translucent display



Photo by Janice Heilmann
Legitimate winter temperatures make an avian pattern on a snowy day window.

Education

As college costs rise, grandparents may be part of solution

Margo Bartsch
Contributor

College costs continue to rise. In the past month, Georgetown University announced that this fall's tuition will increase 4.9 percent to \$64,896. Plus, room and board will jump between 4.5 to 9 percent. How can a typical family cover these expenses without taking out incredible debt?

Consider asking grandparents for help. The reality is today more than half of students rely on grandparents for assistance. According to the 2014 Fidelity Investments report, 53 percent of grandparents were helping or planning to help pay for their grandchildren's college costs. Their reported median contribution was \$25,000. The survey reported that 35 percent of grandparents expected to contribute \$50,000 or more.

Since then, an increasing number of families believe grandparents should contribute to college costs. Fidelity's 2022 College Savings Indicator Study shows that 66 percent of parents agree that it is important for grandparents and other family members to help in funding their children's college education. This is a 12-percent increase from the 2020 report, where 54 percent of parents thought grandparents should provide financial support.

Fidelity's 2022 survey showed that more than 75 percent of parents have started saving for college. However, many felt less prepared to pay because of rising inflation and college costs.

The College Board reports that the average cost for tuition with room and board for 2022-23 is \$53,430 for four-year, private colleges and \$23,250 for four-year, in-state universities.

In 2022, Fidelity reported that the national average in student debt is \$28,000. Ten percent of borrowers are straddled with \$80,000 in education debt or more. The need to pay off exorbitant student loans will likely negatively impact a young adult's ability to save for life events like getting married and purchasing a home.

Asking grandparents to contribute to grandchildren's education can be an awkward conversation. However, educational gifts could provide tax benefits.

In 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 that modifies education planning. This is often referred to as eliminating the "grandparent rule." These changes impact education funding starting this 2023-24 academic year.

When a student completes a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form for need-based financial aid, the new law does not require reporting specific types of non-taxable aid given to the student. Baird Retirement Management explains that this includes distributions from a grandparent-owned 529 account. Thus, the student is not penalized for having additional income from a grandparent's gift that helps pay for college.

With the Baby Boomers expecting to have a large transfer of wealth to the next generation, grandparents contributing to college education

is on the radar. The 2022 article, "How Grandparents Can Help Grandchildren with College" published by Mariner Wealth Advisors explains three ways to contribute to college costs.

First, giving cash gifts limited to \$17,000 by individual or \$34,000 by a married couple is gift tax free. Giving the cash gift to the parent, instead of the grandchild, does not need to be reported income on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

Second, paying tuition directly to the college is not considered a taxable gift under federal law. This helps grandparents avoid using up the federal annual gift tax exclusion. This tuition-specific payment can be in addition to a separate grandchild tax-free gift.

Third, contributing to a 529 college education plan can grow tax deferred. Grandparents can open a 529 account and name a grandchild as beneficiary. Withdrawals used for the beneficiary's education expenses are tax-free at the federal level. Funds can be used at accredited colleges in the U.S. and abroad.

The TD Ameritrade 2018 Saving Survey reports that nearly one in five grandparents have contributed to a grandchild's college savings account.

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation



Image by 3D Animation Production Company from Pixabay

reported in June 2021 that Vermont's 529 plans hit 25,642 accounts and \$573.4 million in assets. Deposits qualify for a 10 percent tax credit on contributions up to \$2,500 per beneficiary each year (\$5,000 if filing jointly).

Getting into college is a daunting task, and paying for college can be an ongoing battle. Researching all financial options can include approaching grandparents for financial help.

As college acceptances begin trickling in this March, many students and families will need to evaluate the cost of each college in choosing which to attend. Consider asking grandparents and other relatives, which is commonplace in many families. There is no "P" in team ... with grandparents as part of the cheering squad.

(Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.)

After a spell without, Charlotte Central School revives spelling bee

Meredith Golek
Contributor

On Friday, Feb. 24, Charlotte Central School participated in its first spelling bee since 2019. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school hasn't hosted a spelling competition for a few years.

Three volunteer judges from the community participated — Cheryl Sloan, Charlotte Library youth services librarian, and Janet and Mike Yantachka, proofreaders for The Charlotte News.

The spelling bee was single elimination and lasted close to 20 rounds, with two special rounds to determine a third-place winner and five rounds to determine first- and second-place winners. Out of the 18 contestants, eighth grader JP Novak was the winner. JP's winning word was "preternaturally," which he spelled correctly in the final round for the win.

As for the second and third place finalists, fourth grader Matilda McCracken finished in second place by spelling "Sanskrit" and fifth grader Caprica Langlinais finished in third by spelling "Zimbabwe."

(Meredith Golek is an eighth grader at Charlotte Central School.)



Photos by Genevieve Trono

From left, fourth graders Eddie Moore, Anna Andriano and Matilda McCracken hung on until six spellers remained. Matilda McCracken finished in second place at Charlotte Central School's revived spelling bee and will be invited to the Vermont state spelling bee on March 13.



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Sports

Band members attend rehearsal with CVU band

Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

Charlotte Central School has had a number of celebrations reflecting the theme of community found throughout the school.

Side-by-side band

On Tuesday, Feb. 21, the eighth-grade band members (along with some seventh graders) were treated to a side-by-side rehearsal with the Champlain Valley Union High School band. They played through some of their programs, worked on warm-ups and had time for a question & answer at the end.

The music was fabulous and smiles were plentiful. The collaboration with the high school is used to advance skills and knowledge, and to share the love of music. The opportunity was much appreciated. Many thanks were extended to CVU band director Andy Miskavage.

PCBs link

When the school received notification that there were areas in the building above action levels of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls, manmade chemicals primarily used in electrical equipment that may be carcinogenic), a letter was sent to families. The organization and implementation of a response plan has been underway.

The school administration is keeping all updated information on the school website at cvsdvt.org/Page/756. Answers to frequently asked questions about PCBs are there.

While the school responds to the level of PCBs in the kitchen, there has been a modified version of the menu, which is updated weekly based on the needs of the kitchen crew.

Voices and leaders

There are a number of opportunities at Charlotte Central School for students to use their voices to make the school learning community stronger. The following groups are voluntary and open to any student who wishes to participate.

- Student Council is an activity for fifth-eighth grades.
- Student leadership training with Champlain Valley School District Diversity Equity and Inclusion and Outright Vermont to develop a culture of “upstanders.” Teachers will continue this training after the break so they can foster a community of advocacy and acceptance for students.
- Third graders are learning to write persuasive essays.

CVU playing for first boys hoops state title

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

CVU 64, BFA-St. Albans 40

The Champlain Valley Union High boys basketball team has the chance to do something the school has never done before — win a Vermont boys basketball title.

On Monday night, the top-seeded Redhawks handily defeated the Bellows Free Academy Bobwhites 64-40 to propel CVU into the Division 1 state-title showdown at 7 p.m. this Saturday, March 11, against No. 2 seed Rice at the University of Vermont’s Patrick Gym.

Rice defeated No. 6 Brattleboro 76-49 in the first semifinal game at Patrick Gym on Monday.

This year has been historic for CVU (21-1) already. Ranked No. 1 for most of this season, the school has not ever been known as a basketball powerhouse. The RedHawks’ only other trip to the state finals was in 2017, a contest the team lost to Rutland in overtime.

CVU scored first and never trailed, but the Bobwhites made things interesting in the second quarter, pulling within one at 19-18 with less than five minutes to go in the first half. But then the Redhawks went on a 10-0 run to close out the second quarter, going into halftime ahead 29-18.

CVU outdistanced BFA-St. Albans even more during the third quarter to enter the final frame ahead 48-27.

Senior Logan Vaughan and junior Tucker Tharpe led the scoring for the Redhawks with 15 points apiece. Vaughan added 10 rebounds and 3 assists to his stats. Tharpe grabbed 5 rebounds.

BFA-St. Albans’ Liam Howrigan led all scoring with 16 points.

Saturday’s contest gives three Redhawks a second opportunity this year to make CVU history. Seniors Alex Provost and Max Destito and junior Ollie Cheer were members of the football team that won the school’s first-ever state gridiron title.

CVU 53, Rice 50

The Redhawks played their way into the semifinals by closing out the regular season at home with a tenacious defense of their No. 1 ranking with a 53-50 win over Rice.

The contest was a back-and-forth affair



Photos by Amy Vaughan

Two defenders BFA-St. Albans can’t keep Alex Provost from getting his shot off.

with CVU taking a slim 19-18 lead into the second quarter. Their lead had just grown to 30-28 at halftime.

The Redhawks fell behind by six, 40-34, during the third quarter, but a 7-0 splurge closed that frame with CVU ahead again, barely, at 41-40 as the final stanza began.

Critical 3-pointers near the end from sophomore Owen Eaton and junior Russell Willoughby helped the winning effort, as well as timely free throws by seniors Sam Sweeney and Provost.

Provost was scoring leader for CVU with 16 points and 8 rebounds. Vaughan tallied 10 points and 12 rebounds. Sweeney and Eaton both knocked down 8 points.

Closing the regular season at 19-1 tied the regular season CVU record in boys basketball set by the 2016-17 Redhawks.



Logan Vaughan takes the ball to the hoop and slams it home.

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Gardening

Set your inner gardener free to help survive cabin fever

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

It’s that time of year when the groundhog has retreated back into its burrow, but the temperature tempts us with the possibility of spring. We all know there’s still plenty of snow and cold weather yet to come. On those days, when the world outside is gray and dreary, the walls surrounding us can seem much too close.

Fighting cabin fever can be as simple as a bringing home a new houseplant in bloom to raise your spirits or some cut flowers to brighten up a room. Better yet, set your inner gardener free and think spring.

Forcing flowering branches such as witch hazel and forsythia to bloom will bring a touch of spring indoors. Take a walk outside to check your spring flowering shrubs and trees. Look for any branches that you would normally prune in late spring after flowering.

Be sure any branches you select include fat buds that are just waiting for warmer weather to open into flowers. Cut and bring branches indoors, trim to desired size and place in room temperature water in a sunny location. The closer to actual bloom time, the quicker flowers will open. For more detailed information on forcing branches, see go.uvm.edu/branches.

When the weather outside is in full winter mode, sit back with a cup of something warm and browse through the seed and garden catalogs that have been arriving in your mailbox since late autumn. If your stack of incoming catalogs isn’t high enough, visit online



Photos by Deborah J. Benoit

Growing herbs, such as sage and mint, in pots indoors in winter is a fun activity to combat cabin fever.

versions. Make a wish list of plants you’d like to add to your garden this year, but don’t stop there. If you’re planning on ordering seeds or plants, this is the time to do so. The longer you wait, the more likely it is that what you want will be out of stock.

Plants ordered now should ship to you when the time is right for planting. Seeds will likely be shipped when ordered, so there’s no time like the present to make

sure you have everything needed to get those seeds started at the appropriate time.

If you just can’t wait to grow something, there’s no reason not to start some potted herbs or salad greens from seed now. You’ll be enjoying an indoor harvest before the hummingbirds return in the spring. For more information on seed

starting, visit go.uvm.edu/seeds.

On a stormy winter’s day when you’re stuck inside, consult your garden journal and refresh your memory about the details of last year’s garden. This trip down memory lane is also a place to create wish lists, record your plans and sketch garden layouts. It will provide an invaluable reference in years to come.

If you don’t have one, this is a great time to start one. All you need is pen, paper and a binder to hold the pages. For more information on garden journals, see go.uvm.edu/journal.

Don’t limit yourself to plant selection in your spring planning. Make notes and sketch the coming season’s garden.

Take a walk in the garden when weather permits. Record conditions there such as how much snow remains and any damage that will need to be tended to in the spring. Record snowfall, when the snow recedes, when the ground thaws and when the ground temperature reaches 50 degrees Fahrenheit. All of this information can help you plan next year’s garden schedule.

What if you just need to get away from the confines of home?

Take a trip to the library or your local bookstore and make a beeline to the gardening section. There you’ll find volumes of inspiration and instruction that will transport your mind far away from winter’s cold and into the garden.

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

Pease-full, easy feeling



Photo by Mary Landon

The view from Pease Mountain of Mt. Philo to the south was spectacular on a crisp, clear Friday morning, primarily just shared with lots of songbirds — tufted titmice, nuthatches, crows, chickadees, cardinals. It was a peaceful morning with a bluebird sky and an opportunity to soak up lots of vitamin D.

Conservation Currents

Nature loss is real, and it’s time to do something

Sharon Mount
Conservation Commission

To put it simply, humans are using the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain our current way of life and ecosystems cannot keep up with our demands. Humans and livestock make up 96 percent of the biomass of all mammals on the planet. Wild mammals account for only 4 percent.

According to the most recent data, the population of birds across North America has declined by 30 percent in less than 50 years, and 40 percent of the Earth’s insect species are in decline and facing extinction. One million of the world’s species are threatened with extinction. Human actions have significantly altered 75 percent of the Earth’s land surface, including 85 percent of wetland areas.

Nature loss has far-reaching consequences. Damaged ecosystems exacerbate climate change, undermine food security and put people and communities at risk. Although many feel that nature simply has a right to thrive for its own sake, there are other reasons to protect our ecosystems.

As stated in the World Economic Forum’s 2020 Global Risk Report, over half the world’s economy (\$44 trillion) is moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services. In Vermont, a healthy ecosystem is essential for our tourism economy as well as clean water, flood protection, pollinator services, carbon sequestration and the working landscape — to name just a few benefits.

Just to our north in Montreal, the Biodiversity Conference (COP15) was held in December 2022 with the adoption of the global biodiversity framework. The aim of this framework is to address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and protect Indigenous rights. It offers measures to halt and reverse nature loss, calling to protect 30 percent of the planet and 30 percent of degraded ecosystems by 2030. Many scientists believe that in order to halt the decline of nature and the extinction of species, 50 percent of the Earth’s surface needs to be dedicated to nature.

Although the United States was not one of the 188 governments officially participating in the Biodiversity Conference last year, the only other non-participant was the Holy See.

So, what can we do? How can we participate in impactful local action? Consider these suggestions for community action to protect nature:

- Write, support, or reach out to our elected representatives in local (selectboard), state and national offices

and encourage further legislative action to protect our natural world.

- As Charlotte updates our land use regulations, discuss with our neighbors serving on the Planning Commission the importance of using strong language for the protection of nature, taking guidance from the Global Biodiversity Framework. Words such as “must” or “shall” should replace words such as “may” or “should”. It seems trivial. It is not. The land use regulations provide the legal guidelines for the Development Review Board and as such the wording is extremely important in the evaluation of proposed development.

- Learn about ways to support the work of town and state conservation organizations such as the Charlotte Conservation Commission, Sustainable Charlotte, Lewis Creek Association, Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, Charlotte Land Trust, Lake Champlain Land Trust, Vermont Land Trust, Vermont Alliance for Half-Earth. Share your suggestions, thoughts, concerns, ideas and the names of groups I have inadvertently left off this list on social media.

- And even more local — consider reducing your lawn size, cutting out the use of pesticides, removing non-native invasive species and sourcing native plants for your yard.

To find even more suggestions for local action, the recently published book, “Our Better Nature: Hopeful Excursions in Saving Biodiversity” offers stories, essays, resources and a message of hope from the state of Vermont.

To conclude, I would like to share two quotes from the Biodiversity Conference (COP15) Inger Andersen, the United Nations environment program executive director:

- “For far too long humanity has paved over, fragmented, over-extracted and destroyed the natural world on which we all depend. Now is our chance to shore up and strengthen the web of life, so it can carry the full weight of generations to come.”

- “Success will be measured by our rapid and consistent progress in implementing what we have agreed to. The entire U.N. system is geared to support its implementation so we can truly make peace with nature.”

Now is the time for not only for the United Nations, but also for Charlotters, to make peace with nature.

The Charlotte Conservation Commission meets the fourth Tuesday of the month. All are welcome.

(Sharon Mount is a member of the Charlotte Conservation Commission.)

Outdoors

Managing salt in the landscape

Bonnie Kirn Donahue
Contributor

Winter in New England brings snow, ice and ... salt.

Salt can be a great asset in the winter for deicing roads and walkways. Salt prevents ice from forming by lowering the freezing point of water, creating safer surfaces for people to walk and drive on.

However, salt can have a detrimental impact on woody and herbaceous plants in the landscape. Salt can impact plants in a number of ways.

Salt spray that splashes off salted surfaces can coat the outside of a plant’s stems or leaves. It is corrosive and can burn leaves, stems and even buds, impacting flowering in the spring.

Salt on the soil surface can soak into the soil and become absorbed by plants. Once absorbed, it pulls moisture from plant

tissues and dehydrates plants from the inside.

Luckily, there are things that we can do to mitigate these impacts.

First, for existing garden beds that are close to salted roads or sidewalks, flushing the soil with water in the spring is one way to clear salty build-up from the winter. Spring rains may provide enough water to leach the salt from the soil naturally, but watering the plant bed one or two times in a dry spring might be all that is needed. Be careful not to overwater the bed to avoid soil erosion.

Second, when selecting sites for planting new garden beds or trees, it is critical to consider potential salt exposure. Planting trees, shrubs and perennials near salted surfaces creates the possibility that plants

Into the Woods

A tree falls and forest succession hears it

Ethan Tapper
Contributor

Forests are dynamic communities, defined and enriched by change. As forests change, they tend to follow a pattern called succession: a series of developmental stages, each of which follows, or succeeds, the last.

Succession begins following a large-scale — or catastrophic — disturbance. As the forest regenerates, it enters a stage known as stand initiation, becoming an early-successional forest. Early-successional forests are defined by an incredible diversity of trees as well as a variety of shrubs and plants which provide habitat for wildlife species from pollinators to birds, bats and black bears.

After 20-30 years, trees rise above the shrubs and the plants of the early-successional forest. As these trees grow, their crowns knit together and the canopy closes, casting the understory in deep shade. The forest enters stem exclusion, a stage of succession characterized by a single generation of trees engaged in intense competition with one another.

Depending on the species that comprise this initial generation of trees, stem exclusion can last anywhere from around 20 years to well over a century. As the trees in the forest's overstory get older and taller, and as they begin to decline and die, light is finally allowed to reach the forest floor again. A new generation of trees, usually of more shade-tolerant species, establishes in the understory, marking the beginning of the understory re-initiation stage.

Following understory re-initiation, the forest slowly and inevitably goes haywire. Through tree mortality and natural disturbances, generations of trees establish and grow, and the forest reshapes itself again and again. Over time, the forest becomes diverse and complex, with many different sizes and ages of trees, some large, old trees and a patchy, irregular canopy. Over decades — but more commonly centuries — the forest

passes into late-succession, a stage of forest development which is sometimes called old growth.

In truth, succession is not a straight line — it is a cycle that forests pass through again and again, with many detours and false-starts along the way. While it is tempting to think of late-successional forests as the endpoint, pinnacle or climax of forest development, each stage of succession is normal and natural. Over millennia, the tens of thousands of species that comprise our forest communities have adapted to every stage of forest development, from early-succession to late-succession. A vibrant and resilient landscape is not a monolith, but rather a diverse mosaic of forests of all different ages and types and expressions. Each stage of succession is vital, and none is a means to an end.

As a result of Vermont's land use history, nearly all of our forests are just 60-100 years old, still at the early stages of succession. As they try to move forward, and to regain the diversity and complexity that once defined them, forests are confronted with an array of threats and stressors — including non-native invasive plants, pests and pathogens, the loss or functional-loss of native species, altered disturbance regimes, and a climate which is changing in unpredictable ways — all of which threaten forests' vitality, their biodiversity, and their resilience. As comforting as it would be to believe that a forest will naturally proceed down the road of succession, it is increasingly clear that we will not protect our forests and our biodiversity solely through inaction. We cannot afford to do nothing.

So, what can we do? There is no single solution. Protecting existing old growth forests and allowing some forests to be relatively unmanaged are important tools in our toolkit, but will not address all of these issues. We must take radical action, both within individual forests and across our landscape, to simultaneously address the legacies of the past, the realities of the present and the



Courtesy photo

A fallen hemlock tree in Westford

uncertainty of the future. Forest management can help forests build diversity, complexity and resilience and create habitats — like early-successional forests — for wildlife species of concern. None of these strategies will be effective unless we also act to control threats and stressors like climate change, non-native invasive plants, deer overabundance, deforestation and forest fragmentation.

As always, forests challenge us to embrace nuance and complexity, to form a more ex-

pansive vision of what a forest is and what it means to care for it. As forest stewards, our job is not just to protect the trees in our forests but to protect and to celebrate how they change.

(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.)

ROAD SALT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

will struggle, so consider what is adjacent to your garden bed or tree.

Finally, in areas where you can't avoid salt exposure, select plants that are more tolerant of salt.

For trees, several native oak species have some salt tolerance, including white (*Quercus alba*), red (*Quercus rubra*) and swamp white oaks (*Quercus bicolor*). Native shrubs such as winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) and nannyberry (*Viburnum lentago*) also are known to have some salt tolerance.

Perennials such as daylilies (*Heemerocallis* spp.), catmint (*Nepeta racemosa*) and yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) perform well with exposure to salt.

Research on salt tolerance of plants varies, so look for Cooperative Extension resources in your area online or ask your local nursery or greenhouse grower for advice.

Salt is a reality of winter, but it doesn't need to ruin your garden in the spring. Try these tips and see how you can have the best of both worlds.

(Bonnie Kirn Donahue is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener and landscape designer from central Vermont.)



Photo by Bonnie Kirn Donahue

Although salt is beneficial in winter for deicing roads and walkways, it can be detrimental to trees, shrubs and landscape plants that are planted near salted roads or sidewalks.

Calendar of Events

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

**Huneck dog art
A pioneering naturalist
Thursday, March 9, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**
Based on her book “Woman, Watching: Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and the Songbirds of Pimisi Bay” Merilyn Simonds presents an online discussion of the early environmentalist known as Canada’s Rachel Carson. Info and link to join the free presentation at tinyurl.com/4sb356jy.

**Rock in Middlebury
Friday, March 10, 7 p.m.**
Celebrate the music of Elton John and Queen with some of Vermont’s favorite musicians. Concert is at Middlebury’s Town Hall Theater. Tickets available ahead or at the door. See tinyurl.com/3x6492ek for more info.

**Secular and sacred works
Friday, March 10, 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**
The Middlebury College Choir performs at All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne, under the direction of Ronnie Romano. Free tickets required; more info at tinyurl.com/49tuntx6.

**Dover Quartet
Friday, March 10, 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.**
Haochen Zhang, pianist, joins the string quartet for a concert at the Mahaney Arts Center in Middlebury. For more info and tickets (including streaming option), see tinyurl.com/yc2zhm8v.

**Teen comedy theater
Friday-Sunday, March 10-12**
Burlington’s Very Merry Theatre brings their new production of Monty Python’s classic comedy, Spamalot, to the stage. Performances are at the Old North End Community Center in Burlington. Donations are gratefully accepted for these free performances, appropriate for all ages. For more info and showtimes, including many upcoming shows, see verymerrytheatre.org/performances.

**Air guitar theater
March 10-26**
Vermont Stage presents Airness, the feel-good, music-filled show about finding your joy through hit rock and roll songs from the 1980s. The performances are held at Main Street Landing, Burlington; tickets available prior or day of the show. Best for ages 13+. For showtimes, tickets and more info, see vermontstage.org/airness.html.

**Lake Iroquois ice fishing
Saturday, March 11, 9 a.m.-noon**
Weather and ice permitting, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife holds an intro to ice fishing clinic at Lake Iroquois in Williston. Topics will include instruction, safety, equipment and regulations. All equipment provided for use. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/ysrhjv9z. Cancellations will be at vtfishandwildlife.com/calendar or on Instagram at vtfishandwildlife.

**Fuel the spark
Saturday, March 11, 10 a.m.-noon**
Young Inventors Program holds an invention fair at Vermont Day School in Shelburne, with projects and prototypes created by students in grades K-8. Top inventors from each age group have a chance to attend the New England Regional Convention in New Hampshire. Come support the young people and see what technologies may be part of our future. To learn more, see tinyurl.com/4cacmz2c.

**Saturday seed swap
Saturday, March 11, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.**
Bring seeds to exchange with others at this event organized by Burlington’s Vermont Garden Network. Swap is at the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington; gardening, seed and soil resources will be available. Free event and all welcome. To read more, see vtgardens.org/events.

**Black film festival
Saturday, March 11, 3 p.m.-5 p.m.**
This month’s Black is Beautiful film is The Glass Shield, directed by Charles Burnett. Free film is screened at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington. To read more, see tinyurl.com/2p9es8dk.

All you can eat pie

Saturday March 18, 8 a.m.-noon

Charlotte Shelburne Hinesburg Rotary invites everyone to their Pies for Breakfast event, held in the Shelburne Town Hall building at 5420 Shelburne Rd. Shady Rill entertains from 9 a.m.-noon; Irish dance performance from 11 a.m.-noon. Coffee, beverages and, yes, lots of pie to try. Tickets at the door. Info at tinyurl.com/m7f5v8mp.



**Unique clay plates
Saturday, March 11, 5 p.m.-7 p.m.**
Using rolled slabs of clay and molds, form plates for home use with your unique design flourishes. Pick up finished projects two weeks after class. The Old School Art Studio offers this class in Richmond for all levels of experience. For more info and registration, see tinyurl.com/36ahbann.

**Irish heritage festival
Saturday, March 11-18**
The kickoff event for this Burlington festival is a tribute concert at St. Michael’s College in Colchester to honor Sen. Patrick Leahy’s retirement. Schedule at burlingtonirishheritage.org.

**Purim party
Sunday, March 12, 9:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.**
Ohavi Zedek Synagogue in Burlington invites families for a morning of magic, a costume parade, games, singing and hamantaschen, the symbolic Jewish pastries. More at tinyurl.com/4erbhrrx.

**America’s founding father
Sunday, March 12, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.**
Fort Ticonderoga, historic site in Ticonderoga, N.Y., presents author David Stewart in a Zoom talk about his book George Washington: The Political Rise of America’s Founding Father. Register at tinyurl.com/377pfx6p.

**25th annual concert
Sunday, March 12, 2 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.**
The Hinesburg Artist Series presents its annual spring concert at St. Jude’s Church in Hinesburg. Featured will be the South County Chorus and the Hinesburg Artist Series orchestra, under the direction of Rufus Patrick. Info and tickets at hinesburgartistseries.org.

**Call to action
Sunday, March 12, 7 p.m.-8 p.m.**
Land Ethic Vermont presents a free online talk by Doug Tallamy, author of Nature’s Best Hope. He will discuss his approach to conservation for the future of the natural world. Info and registration at tinyurl.com/4pbv2h3y.

**Wings Over Water
Daily, 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.**
Burlington’s ECHO Leahy Center offers a selection of 20-minute 3D movies. Wings Over Water is about birds that live along rivers and wetlands. Info at tinyurl.com/5n6a36ky or call 802-864-1848.

**The art of mycology
Tuesday, March 14, 6 p.m.**
Photographer, artist and author Meg Madden presents a slideshow of her work and shares her knowledge about the mushrooms she’s found in Vermont. Free event is at the Jackson Gallery downstairs at the Town Hall Theater in Middlebury. Her photography show continues through March 19. For more info, see townhalltheater.org/jackson-gallery.

**Rokeyby book discussion
Tuesday, March 14, 6 p.m.**
Free discussion, via Zoom, about the book All That She Carried by Tiya Miles. More at rokeyby.org/visit/programsevents.

**Form follows function
Wednesday, March 15, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**
Louis Sullivan was an American architect, referred to as the ‘father of modernism,’ who grew to fame in the late 1800s. Burlington City Arts presents a documentary about his life at Contois Auditorium in Burlington. The film, The Struggle for American Architecture, is free and may be live-streamed the day of the screening. More at adfilmseries.org.

**Cold climate landscapes
Thursday, March 16, 5 p.m.-6 p.m.**
Vermont artist Liz Nelson paints the vast, sometimes dark and harsh, landscapes of Iceland, Norway and Vermont. Her current exhibit North is at The Front gallery in Montpelier. The artist discusses her process and what draws her to these bleak and rich landscapes. Free. Info at tinyurl.com/y34xufkk.

**Newsies
Thursday-Saturday, March 16-19**
The Vergennes Union High School music department presents the historical musical comedy, Newsies. The story is loosely based on the newsboys’ strike of 1899; its timeless message is perfect for the whole family. Info and tickets at showtix4u.com/event-details/71884 or at the door.

**English country dances
Friday, March 17, 7 p.m.-9:30 p.m.**
Wear your comfy clothes and learn authentic English dances in a casual atmosphere. Newcomers get a lesson at 6:30 p.m. Free class at the Elley-Long Music Center at St. Michael’s College. Class continues April 14 and 28. For info email val.medve@gmail.com.

**Danceable rock music
Friday, March 17, 7:30 p.m.**
The Town Hall Theater in Middlebury hosts a soul and rock show featuring The Doughboys, with favorite tunes from the 1950s to today. Perfect for a St. Patrick’s Day celebration. Info and tickets at tinyurl.com/zfwhctw4.

**Cochran’s Rope-a-Thon
Friday-Sunday, March 17-19**
Fundraising marathon at Cochran’s Ski Area in Richmond with entrants skiing a number of runs on the rope tow. Info or registration at cochranskiarea.com/rope2023.

**A somewhat true tale
March 17, 18, 19, 24 & 25**
The Shelburne Players present a funny retelling of the classic Robin Hood story, The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood. The play is held at the Shelburne Town Center at 5420 Shelburne Road. Times and tickets at tinyurl.com/ypnh93en.

**Curling event
Saturday, March 18, 8 a.m.-6:30 p.m.**
The South Burlington Rotary Club presents Curling Classic, a fundraising event on the ice at Cairns Arena in South Burlington. Free to watch any time during the day. More at tinyurl.com/pcc5n9v8.

**Fruit tree pruning
Saturday, March 18, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.**
Ralph Fitz-Gerald leads a fruit tree pruning workshop in Monkton. Rain date is March 19. Park in the Town Hall parking lot; meet at 288 Monkton Ridge Rd. just down the road. Suggested \$20 donation benefits the Monkton Little Free Pantry Fund. Register at forms.gle/hi6iCiV1qqGEjPAA8.

**Good Gravy bluegrass
Saturday, March 18, 6 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**
Burlington bluegrass group Good Gravy performs at the Shelburne Vineyard. Info at tinyurl.com/36rw3et5.

**Tango milonga
Saturday, March 18, 7-10 p.m.**
Milonga is a style of Argentine dance that is similar to tango, but looser, less complex and faster. Queen City Tango of Burlington brings their high energy and spirit to the Shelburne Town Hall for an evening of open dancing and spicy music. Wear green for St. Patrick’s Day, if desired; clean, smooth-soled shoes required. Snacks and water available to purchase, or BYO snacks and non-alcoholic beverages. Arrive at 6:30 p.m. if you can

help set up the room. Info at tinyurl.com/mvbyyzfu.

**Glass lampshade workshop
Saturdays, March 18, 25, April 1**
Learn the basics of the copper-foil method of stained glass pioneered by Louis Tiffany. All materials and instruction are provided in this three-Saturday workshop at the Shelburne Craft School, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. each day. Info at tinyurl.com/3mcmvnuw.

**Black trailblazers
Sunday, March 19, 2-3 p.m.**
Author Elise Guyette gives a free, in-person talk at the Ethan Allen Homestead in Burlington on Black trailblazers between 1790 and 1860. Donations gratefully accepted. To watch online, see ethanallenhomestead.org.

**Children’s art on display
Through Thursday, March 30**
On display at Burlington’s Fletcher Free Library is a collection of art by young adults from Ukraine, Moldova and the Republic of Georgia. Their show is called Let’s Build a Roof Over the World. Gallery is open every day 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

**Spruce, fir and pines
Tuesday, March 21, noon-12:30 p.m.**
Join the Vermont Land Trust for this free, online talk about identification of these species. Donations gratefully accepted. Register at tinyurl.com/3rw2cnj3.

**Changing woodlands
Wednesday, March 22, noon-1 p.m.**
A changing climate is affecting the health of Vermont’s beloved forests. Two expert foresters and researchers speak to the science, the data and the research into how our forests may change in time. Free program via Zoom. Info and registration at vtcoverts.org/calendar.html. Click on the March 22 block in the calendar.

**Poetry at the Fleming
Wednesday, March 22, 5:30 p.m.**
Hear poet and artist Shanta Lee read from her newest book of poetry, Black Metamorphoses. Lee also has two exhibitions at the Fleming Museum in Burlington: Dark Goddess and Object-Defied through May 20. The museum exhibits and the reading are free. Info at uvm.edu/fleming/dark-goddess.

**Garden webinars
Thursday, March 23, 2 p.m.**
Join a Zoom webinar series from The Garden Conservancy, following the course of a gardening year at the English garden of Sissinghurst. Sissinghurst Castle Garden was created in the 1930s by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson. Info and registration at tinyurl.com/bdzcwpss.

**Vermont’s bats
Thursday, March 23, 6 p.m.-7 p.m.**
The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department presents an in-person talk by the state wildlife biologist about bat diversity, behavior and migration in our state. Free at the Ferrisburgh Town Offices at 3279 Route 7. Info at 802-434-7245.

**Blossom In yoga
Thursdays, March 23-May 11, 6 p.m.-8 p.m.**
For this season of renewal and reinvigoration, a nine-session series of yoga classes at All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. Info and registration at tinyurl.com/2p92czfv.

**Sugar on snow
Saturday, March 25, 1 p.m.-3 p.m.**
Audubon Vermont in Huntington holds a Pride Hike followed by sugar on snow. Tap a tree, collect sap from buckets, tour the sugarbush. Appropriate for all ages, families and allies. Free but donations gladly accepted. Service dogs only. Dress appropriately. Info and registration at tinyurl.com/3sdfxs5w.

**Teen science cafe
Saturday, March 25, 5 p.m.-7 p.m.**
This month’s teen science pathways event at the University of Vermont focuses on flow cytometry and the technology that allows scientists to conduct certain research on human cells. Info and registration at tinyurl.com/yc38d7hx.

**See more events on our website:
charlottenewsvt.org/category/local-events**

Library News

Hankering for garden time? Check out the library

Margaret Woodruff
Director

March came in like a lion this year, with nearly a foot of snow covering the landscape. If you’re hankering for some garden time despite the weather, there are a host of programs for you, starting with a garden chat on Friday, March 10.

If you need a bouquet to brighten your day, pick up a flower-button craft kit at the circulation desk for a burst of spring.

Children’s programs

Young children’s story time
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

No registration required.

Kindergarten/first grade story time
Tuesdays, 3 p.m., starts March 14

Please contact youth services librarian Cheryl Sloan for information about this session at youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

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.

Stillwater Meditation
Saturdays, 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.

Garden chat: getting started
Friday, March 10, 11:30 a.m

Join seed library coordinators Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton to share questions and ideas for how to get ready for your food garden this year. Very brief review of garden guidelines and then open discussion related to planning your space, deciding what to grow, choosing seeds, maybe starting some inside, and lessons learned in past gardens. Whether experienced or just getting started, come share your dreams, schemes and concerns, gardener-to-gardener. Registration required for the Zoom link.

Art opening
Sunday, March 12, 2-4 p.m.

Join Theresa Petrow for an informal gallery review of her paintings, currently on display at the Charlotte Library.

“Gaia’s Garden” book study
Mondays, March 13-April 3, 7-8 p.m.

Back by popular demand. Join Karen Tuning and Linda Hamilton for this four-part study of Toby Hemingway’s classic on home-scale permaculture. New and experienced gardeners are welcome. Expect interesting reading (about 70 pages in preparation for each session) and lively discussions. Whether you missed our first Gaia’s Garden discussion series in 2020, or want to come back for more conversation and a deeper dive revisiting this wonderful book, we hope you will join us. Registration is required at tinyurl.com/mw3rj2zs. Copies of the book are available at the library. Note: Meet in-person at the

Charlotte Library, but with the option to use Zoom in bad weather.

Short story selections
Wednesdays, March 15, April 15 & 19, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will include a variety of authors and two to three stories will be featured. Copies of the stories are available at the circulation desk or via email. Register at bit.ly/3QmFrwy.

Charlotte water quality
& McCabe’s Brook
Wednesday, March 15, 7 p.m.

Join the Lewis Creek Association and the Charlotte Conservation Commission for a presentation and discussion about water quality in Charlotte and how it affects Lake Champlain. What causes our stream’s and lake’s poor water quality? What can you do as a landowner to help improve water quality? Learn about some potential projects along McCabe’s Brook that could help improve water quality in Charlotte and downstream in Shelburne and Lake Champlain. Brought to you by tactical basin planning funding from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Join online at bit.ly/3SQrF6y or register to join in person at bit.ly/41MqQQn.

The Most Costly Journey
Wednesday, March 15, 7:30 p.m.

This non-fiction comics anthology presents stories of survival and healing told by Latin American migrant farm workers in Vermont and drawn by New England cartoonists as part of the El Viaje Más Caro Project, a health care outreach effort addressing their overlooked mental health needs. Originally distributed to farm workers as individual Spanish language comic books, this collected edition brings the lives and voices of these workers to an English-language audience, granting insight into the lives of the people vital to producing the food we eat. Come to the library or on Zoom at tinyurl.com/2cea9b54.

Celebrate St. Patrick’s Day
Saturday, March 18, 10:30 a.m.-noon

Traditional Irish music and tunes in the Celtic genre on harp, fiddle, flute and box, played in the informal style of Irish house sessions by Mary’s Lane. Come for the



good “craic” (Irish for good company and entertaining conversation. For all ages.

Braver Angels Common
Ground Workshop
Sunday, March 19, 2:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Join us for the Common Ground workshop, an event that brings together people with differing opinions on land use and development, a topic on the minds of many Charlotters. Participants on each side of the issue will talk about their views on land use (to be further defined) and their thoughts about possible solutions, assisted by Shana Ratner, who will co-moderate the event with Vermont Braver Angels chair, Lincoln Earle-Centers.

Billy Boyle
Monday, March 20, 10 a.m.

Join book group to discuss this World War II mystery. Copies available at the circulation desk. Billy, who had never left Boston before he enlisted and was sent to Officer Candidate School, is not sure how good a detective he really is. But when Eisenhower asks Billy to undertake this task, he dutifully sets off for Beardsley Hall, where the Norwegian government in exile is in residence. His mission is to catch a spy who may have been planted there.

Backyard biodiversity
Wednesday, March 22, 7 p.m.


You’ve heard about the plight of the honeybee — a real concern. Our native bees are in serious trouble and the biodiversity so essential to a healthy ecosystem in general is at great risk. You can make a difference right in your own backyard. Join local master gardeners Julie Parker Dickerson and Karen Tuininga. Register for Zoom at tinyurl.com/3u927677.

The Hummingbird’s Gift
Thursday, March 23, 7:30 p.m.

Hummingbirds fascinate people. Miraculous creatures who are also very vulnerable when they emerge from their eggs. That’s where Brenda Sherburn comes in. With tenderness and patience, she rescues abandoned hummingbirds and nurses them until they can fly away and live in the wild. In “The Hummingbird’s Gift,” Sherburn shows us how amazing hummingbirds are. Copies available at the circulation desk. Register in advance for the Zoom link at bit.ly/3kAGAoc.

Library contact information:
Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: 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 tonight, this Thursday, March 9, online and in-person. Please contact the library for additional information.



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

Planning Commission:
Special meeting.
Thursday, March 9, 7-9 p.m.

Selectboard
Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:30 PM

Planning Commission:
Regular meeting (CANCELLED)
Thursday, March 16

Development Review Board
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 22

Senior Center News

Charlotte Senior center has the cure for cabin fever

Lori York
Director

Feeling a bit of cabin fever these days now that winter weather has arrived? Looking for some inspiration for travel?

Experience Italy from the senior center with a presentation about Tuscany, including images of Rome, Siena and Spoleto, Montecatini and Montalcino.

Or how about some outdoor activities to embrace March with a snowshoeing or birding trip? There are also plenty of opportunities for some inside activities whether it be listening to a cello performance or attending an exercise or art class.

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. The “Week Ahead” email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus, and special programming for the upcoming week.

Programs

An Italian Odyssey Wednesday, March 15, 1 p.m.

Nicole Librandi will show images of her recent week-long odyssey in Tuscany, including some “must-see” names: Rome, Siena and Spoleto, as well as wine and olive oil destinations like Montecatini and Montalcino. Her travel was built around the fascinating history of La Foce, the centuries-old Origo family estate connected to the likes of Bernard Berensen and Frederick Law Olmstead, renowned in the worlds of art and architecture. On this Italian odyssey, Librandi delved into Etruscan history, hunted for truffles and discovered unexpected pleasures and treasures. No registration required. Cost: Free.

Snowshoe expedition Wednesday, March 15, 10:30 a.m.

Let’s snowshoe. Weather permitting, the group will meet for a snowshoe adventure. The outing will be approximately two hours with a location to be determined on trails around Charlotte or a neighboring town. Bring your own equipment, snacks and water. Registration is required. To register, contact Susan Hyde at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com. Cost: Free.

Birding expedition Wednesday, March 15, 9 a.m.

There are a wide range of birding habitats in Chittenden County. Join avid bird watcher, Hank Kaestner and learn to identify the various bird species and habitats right here in Vermont. Registration required and group size is limited. To register for this trip, create an account on the Charlotte Senior Center website under the Registration tab and follow the instructions for registering. Cost: Free.

Solo Cello Performance Wednesday, March 22, 1-1:45 p.m.

Jonah Hutchin is a premier young adult performing cellist of Charlotte, Vermont. Join us for this solo cello performance at the Senior Center. You can listen to his music at <https://www.jonahhutchin.com/>. Cost: Free. No registration required.

Exercise & health

Chair yoga with accessible poses Mondays & Wednesdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

The gentle chair exercises work on strength, balance and flexibility with accessible yoga poses. The class uses chairs for balance and includes gentle yoga poses, making exercise accessible to those who are challenged by balance, the ability to get on the floor or any physical limitations. The exercises are specifically for individuals

who need additional support or who are recovering from a recent surgery. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

Meditation (new start date) Tuesdays, March 21-April 11, 5-6 p.m.

Spring is in the air and it’s time to clean out old habits and start some new, healthy ones. Join Charlie Nardozzi and meditate. Meditation is an easy-to-learn practice that has been proven to reduce anxiety, stress, pain and depression. This five-part series will explore breathing techniques, chants and guided visualizations to lead into meditation. Learn ways to deal with an unruly mind, difficult relations and personal stress by applying meditation philosophy. No experience necessary. Cost: \$40 for the four-week session. Pre-registration and payment due by March 14.

Pilates Fitness Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

This pilates class is designed to be challenging and safe. It includes upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises. The students will work core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture. Cost: \$8 a class. No registration required.

T’ai Chi Ch’uan for beginners Thursdays, 10-11 a.m.

T’ai Chi is an excellent balance, memory and coordination practice. The flowing movements and postures will increase flexibility, improve balance and strengthen core muscles. Cultivate a deeper sense of relaxation, gain an increased energy level and experience a sense of confidence. Cost: \$8 a class. No registration required.

Art and language

“Still Life - Matisse inspired” Friday, March 17, 10:30 a.m.-noon.

Unlike traditional paint & sips, this Matisse-inspired “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. Cost is \$25 (all materials included). Register by March 14.

Knit & Crochet for a Cause Thursdays, 2-3 p.m.

This new group will meet weekly to work on projects that will be donated to local organizations in the community, to include COTS, Lund and UVM Oncology. Bring a skein of yarn and needles or hook and let’s stitch. Patterns will be available, but feel free to bring your own project to work on. All skill levels are welcome. Registrations appreciated, but not required.

Italian- Beginner II Fridays, 10-11 a.m., April 7-May 23 (no class May 12)

Interested in learning Italian? This class is for those who have a beginner level of Italian and is a continuation of the Italian for Total Beginners class. Join us to explore the beauty of the Italian language and culture. If you have questions about whether this class would be appropriate for your specific skill level, please reach out to Nicole Librandi at nicolelibrandi2@gmail.com. Cost: \$60 for the six-week session. Register by March 31.

Watercolor spring fling Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-noon, April 4-25

Students will be painting spring-themed subjects in this fun four-week class. Beginners and intermediates are welcome. Cost: \$160 for the four weeks. Register by March 28.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday Lunches

Served weekly. Lunch is served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or until the food runs out.



Photo by Lori York

Susan Cartwright volunteers weekly as a host welcoming visitors to the senior center and helping with registrations. There are many volunteer roles at the senior center.

Lynn Cummings provides regular watercolor classes at the Senior Center for beginner and intermediate levels. The next four-week session will be spring-themed.



Below: Wendy Bratt prepares her canvas.

Photo by Lynn Cummings



Suggested lunch donation \$5. No registration required.

Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals

Pick up on Thursdays 10-11a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. \$5 suggested meal donation but not required. To register, contact Carol Pepin at 802-425-6345 or at meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Senior Center contact info

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

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

Write Ingredients

March food holidays sort of meh

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Probably no one is excited to learn that March is National Frozen Food Month (marking Clarence Birdseye's 1930 patent) and National Celery Month.

Fannie Farmer, widely credited with inventing the modern recipe, was born in March 1857, but so far nobody has proclaimed March as National Cookbook Month, surely just as important as National Noodle Month and National Umbrella Month.

We can only wonder about these other March occasions: National Weed Appreciation Day and National Turkey Neck Soup Day.

George Washington would probably have appreciated National Corn Dog Day, also in March. By the time he was 45, as a result of cracking walnuts with his teeth as a boy, Washington had only one tooth left. Maybe that's why one of his favorite foods was hoecakes — fried cornmeal patties, also known at Johnnycakes, cornpone, spider bread or bannock. It's most common name comes from the practice of being cooked on the back of a hoe.

Abraham Lincoln's first food memory was eating corncakes for breakfast, and as an adult one of his favorite treats was corn bread with honey. In "Dinner with the Presidents: Food, Politics, and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House," Alex Prud'homme calls Lincoln "a near corn-aholic." He joked he could "eat corn cakes twice as fast as anyone could make them."

Corn cakes were not on the bill of fare for Lincoln's second inaugural ball, held in March 1865: Besides pheasant, quail, venison, turkey, chicken, grouse, duck, and ham, there were platters of beef cooked four different ways, three kinds of veal, 12 kinds of cake, six kinds of ice cream. And lots more. You can see the bill of fare at the Smithsonian: tinyurl.com/p7ev.

This meal made front-page headlines at The New York Times, where the reporter showed his disgust: "The American people ... have not yet learned how to behave at table ... certainly not at public suppers ... a demolition in the twinkling of an eye of all, the confectioner's handiwork, the frantic snatching of viands from the tables."

Prud'homme tells us that even when he ate dinner alone at the White House, Pres.

Calvin Coolidge dressed in a formal dinner jacket. When his wife Grace baked an apple pie, he remarked that the crust could be used to pave a road. Prud'homme does not tell us if she ever baked another one.

At press time, menus for Monday Munch were not available, but we can assure you that on Mondays from 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. there's plenty of good food with no inedible crusts, no need to dress formally and no food cooked on the back of a hoe.

By the time the paper appears, you can check menus on the Charlotte Senior Center website.

Wednesday, March 15 Special meal

Italian lunch cooked by Residence at Shelburne Bay. The number of places is limited so be sure to register: meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org or 802-425-6345.

Thursday March 16, 10-11 a.m. Grab & Go Meal pickup

Beef round, boiled potatoes, cabbage, carrots in beef stock and leprechaun cake. Remember to register by Monday.

Thursday, March 23 Grab & Go Meal pickup

Roast pork in sauce, mashed potatoes, peas & onions and oatmeal-raisin cookie.

As a lead-in to a song recommendation, we note that Dan Barry outdid himself in a piece about a New York City hotel that is no more. Here's a gift link to the article: tinyurl.com/2p82hbvv.

The hotel may be gone, but the song lives on. The Hotel Pennsylvania's telephone number was immortalized by Glenn Miller with a 1940 pop standard "Pennsylvania 6-5000," for which the complete original lyrics are:

"Pennsylvania 6-5000
Pennsylvania 6-5000
Pennsylvania 6-5000
Pennsylvania 6-5-0-0-0."

That's it: playback.fm/charts/top-100-songs/video/1940/Glenn-Miller-Pennsylvania-65000.



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