



Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

The Charlotte News

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Photo by Owen Nadeau

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George Lakey is arrested in 2013.

Courtesy photo

Dancing with history, standing up for justice

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

George Lakey didn't realize he was doing anything wrong when, in the 1940s at the age of 12, he gave a sermon calling for racial equality.

He had been picked by leaders of his "Bible-thumping," evangelistic church who had expectations that he would become a boy preacher. Lakey had no idea that calling for racial justice was controversial. He just knew it was God's will that the treatment of Blacks needed to improve.

He didn't realize until after the service that it was not the church leaders' will, nor that it would be the first and last time he would be asked to preach by that church.

"They didn't want to hear any more," Lakey said in a phone conversation. "My entire boy-preacher career was less than one day."

But his career of speaking out for social justice was just beginning.

Lakey will be speaking at Middlebury College at 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 29. He'll give an informal talk at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, April 30, at a Middlebury Friends Meeting.

At 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 27, scenes from a forthcoming movie about Lakey's life will be shown at Middlebury College's Dana Hall.

Also, on Sunday, April 30, he will be talking at the Charlotte Library at 3 p.m. Afterward, his latest book, "Dancing with History: A Life for Peace and Justice," which just came out this past December, will be for sale, and he will be available for book signing.

"Dancing with History," his 11th book, has been praised by such prominent activists and authors as Daniel Ellsberg and Bill McKibben.

Ellsberg, the former U.S. military

analyst who released "The Pentagon Papers," said, "George Lakey stands out for the sheer range of his contributions to peace and justice, especially in strategy and theory, organizing, innovative and risky actions, and teaching and training others. His upbeat, soul-driven spirit underlies it all, as you'll catch in this revealing memoir."

During his Vermont appearances, Lakey will be staying in Charlotte with Ruah Swennerfelt and Louis Cox, who have known him for years.

"He's probably one of the best speakers that I've ever experienced. And partly, it's because he's engaging. He's funny. He has the best laugh, the most wonderful smile," Swennerfelt said. "All of those things are wrapped up into a human being who's very accessible. He loves to meet people."

During the summer when he was 19,

SEE **GEORGE LAKEY** PAGE 2



Celebrate Green Up Day, pitch in for cleaner roads

Kim Findlay
Green Up Day Co-coordinator

Did you know that Vermont was the first state to designate a day of the year to clean up litter along the roadsides?

On that day in 1970, 53 years ago, participation and results far exceeded expectations — 95 percent of the 2,400 miles of the interstate and state roads and 75 percent of the 8,300 miles of town roads were cleared of garbage.

Thanks to Governor Deane C. Davis and Senator George Aiken, we have a wonderful tradition which inspires Vermonters to get out and de-trash this beautiful state.

In our town, Green Up Day has had a robust turnout every year with tons (yes, tons!) of litter removed from our roadsides. This year Green Up Day is Saturday, May 6. We will be at the west parking lot at Charlotte Central School 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

There will also be e-waste recycling brought to you by Sustainable Charlotte.

Things you should know about Green Up Day in Charlotte:

- There are three ways to sign up for a route: 1) on the website at charlottetvgreenupday.com (until 6 pm Friday, May 5); 2) email Kim Findlay at farafieldfarm@gmail.com (until 6 pm Friday, May 5); or 3) at the event on Saturday.
- Signing up for a route makes the effort more efficient by making sure everyone gets a road that hasn't been cleaned up yet.
- Get bags. This year we will be giving out green bags for trash and optional clear bags for redeemable and recyclable plastic containers which get rinsed and recycled. Bags can be picked up at the Old Brick Store, the Charlotte Library and Spear's Corner Store starting April 28 and at the event on Saturday. Please do not leave filled bags on the roadside — they must be returned to the event site.
- Volunteers are needed. We would love to have helpers at the Quonset Hut. Two-hour or longer shifts available.
- Only tires found on roadsides are accepted. This is not the place to get rid of your personal tires.
- Hazardous waste — this is not a hazardous waste drop-off event.
- The website charlottetvgreenupday.com has all the information you need ... and more. Contact farafieldfarm@gmail.com with any questions, to help out or sign up for a route.

It warms the heart to see folks out cleaning up the town together — and it's great not to see junk on the side of the road.

Please join in and help on this very special day.

Earthkeep Farmcommon searches for visionary buyer

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

A visionary Charlotte farming venture that has drawn attention as a way Vermont might rehab agriculture off the bench and back into the economy's starting lineup has come to a critical juncture.

Earthkeep Farmcommon has been put up for sale.

Will Raap bought the approximately 583-acre farm on Route 7 almost 2 miles north of Ferry Road in 2021. He turned the former Nordic Farm into a farming collective, which he saw as a way forward for agriculture in the state.

Raap died unexpectedly on Dec. 12 at 73. Family members are all involved with other businesses and have determined they don't have the "bandwidth" to continue his vision, his daughter Kelsy Raap said.

The family hopes to find a buyer who sees the value and shares her father's dream for Earthkeep Farmcommon, she said.

He hoped to set an example, not just for Charlotte, but also for the state to "find common ground between agricultural



Earthkeep Farmcommon

Courtesy photo

entrepreneurs and Vermont's desire to preserve natural lands," Kelsy Raap said. The opportunities for the farm are really big, but "some of the restrictions are really tricky."

"It was a goal of his to help shape the next phase of Vermont's agricultural economic policy," she said. "My dad was always

SEE **EARTHKEEP** PAGE 3

GEORGE LAKEY

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Lakey was working on a Quaker project in Lynn, Mass. One night he went for a walk on the beach, wrestling with the question of what he should do with his life, and it occurred to him: “Wouldn’t it be an amazing life to just commit myself to making the world better?”

Then, it was as if he had been tapped on the shoulder. “I opened my heart and asked God what my life was supposed to be,” Lakey said. “The answer was clear as a bell,”

Lakey has led a life of taking controversial positions in hopes of making the world better, and he’s been rather successful at it. “My life is such a string of victories,” he said.

He expects to be arrested soon as part of a group blocking the entrances to Vanguard Group’s international headquarters, but he is confident that he will be released well before his Vermont appearances. Lakey said they are protesting because the financial management corporation invests so much of the \$7 trillion it controls in coal, oil and gas.

“Vanguard presents itself as a friend of our future, of our security, and at the same time, it is destroying the future,” said Lakey.

He’s not sure how many times he’s been arrested. He stopped counting at a dozen more than 20 years ago.

In the late 1950s he was active in the ban-the-bomb movement. During the 1960s he was active in the Civil Rights Movement and was arrested at a sit-in in 1963, protesting to get the Woolworth’s chain to integrate its lunch counters.

In 1964, he worked on the Freedom Summer effort, teaching nonviolence to those going south to register disenfranchised Black voters. More than 1,000 students went to Mississippi that summer.

Out of that experience Lakey co-authored with Martin Oppenheimer “A Manual for Direct Action: Strategy and Tactics for Civil Rights and All Other Nonviolent Protest Movements,” a book widely used by organizers, sometimes referred to as the bible of the Civil Rights Movement.

Teaching and learning have been a



Courtesy photo

George Lakey and his family last June.

constant during his life. “If you keep learning, it’s OK to keep making mistakes because you learn,” Lakey said. “I’ve made my share of mistakes in working for justice and peace, and I learned a tremendous lot.”

He’s also been a lifelong educator having led more than 1,500 workshops on five continents, in addition to teaching at Swarthmore, the University of Pennsylvania and Haverford College.

During the 1970s, he was part of the movement that persuaded the U.S. Navy to stop using the Puerto Rican island of Culebra for target practice, helped with the effort that convinced President Carter to de-fund the B-1 bomber program, and came out as gay in 1973 becoming part of what he called “Gay Liberation’s early visionary days.”

After giving so much of his life to equality, justice and peace issues, in 2009 his focus shifted to the climate, because progress on other goals is going to be so much harder “if we are distracted by disaster after disaster after disaster coming because of the neglect of the climate,” he said.

He jumped into the environmental

movement by co-founding the Earth Quaker Action Team to work on building a sustainable economy. It won its first campaign, compelling PNC Bank to get out of the business of funding mountaintop removal for coal mining in the Appalachians.

Working on his latest book proved to be a bit of a struggle since it’s a memoir. “I sweated over it a lot. It’s really something trying to write a life story,” Lakey said.

But his effort to make himself vulnerable in “Dancing with History,” by including both the victories with his human failings, was rewarded by one of the best memories of his life. When he came out on stage for the book’s launch in Philadelphia, he was gobsmacked to see the front row filled with his family — his grandchildren, his children, his ex-wife and his longtime lover.

He’s pleased to be touring to promote the book and sharing what he’s learned from a life of working to make the world better.

“I’m happy to be here right now, 85 years old and able to say, ‘Well, you know, when we ran into that kind of situation in the ’60s, this worked well.’”

Letters to the Editor

Volunteers make Girl Scout programs possible

To the Editor:
April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, and Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains wants every person who volunteers for us to know that we appreciate them.

We have more than 4,000 volunteers across New Hampshire and Vermont who give generously of their time and talent to ensure that Girl Scouts are encouraged to become young women of courage, confidence and character who work to make the world a better place.

They are troop leaders, troop helpers, drivers and Girl Scout Cookie program coordinators and accountants. We are grateful to the new troop leaders who stepped up in the last year to form new troops and create amazing opportunities for their Girl Scouts to make new friends, try new things and explore a world of possibilities.

We could not provide the world’s best leadership program for girls without the

many people who run our activities, take Girl Scouts new places and share their skills in fields like engineering, computers, the outdoors, entrepreneurship and more.

We know that volunteers wear many hats when they give of themselves to Girl Scouts. No matter which hat you’re rocking, volunteers, we thank you for stepping in and stepping up for Girl Scouts everywhere!

Patricia K. Mellor
Bedford, N.H.
(Patricia K. Mellor is CEO of the Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains.)

Who pays for that? We do!

To the Editor:
Hospital executives make big, big salaries. Who pays them? We do.

Insurance executives make big, big salaries. Who pays them? We do.

Drug company executives make big, big salaries. Who pays them? We do.

Drug companies and insurance companies and private equity owners of healthcare facilities make big profits. Where does that

money come from? Us.

The health care industry pays huge amounts of money to lobbyists. Where does that money come from? Us.

The health care industry contributes huge amounts of money to political candidates. Where does that money come from? Us.

Who benefits from all that money that comes from us? Them.

Whether it’s premiums, taxes or the prices we pay directly, every dime these people spend on themselves and their interests comes from us.

When they say universal health care “costs too much,” what they mean is that it costs them too much. And the reason it costs them more is because it costs us less. Please remember that when the opponents of universal health care claim “we” can’t afford it.

Lee Russ
Bennington
(Lee Russ is a retired legal editor who has written about insurance and health care, both in his work and since retiring.)



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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Proofreaders: Mike & Janet Yantachka, Katherine Arthaud
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Sacred Hunter

Hunting for turkeys, gleaning gratitude

Bradley Carleton
Contributor

As I enter the 64th spring of my life, the contrast of age and youth is more apparent than ever. I have lost several good friends this past year and despite my own body in dire need of repair, my spirit soars with the youthful exuberance of spring.

The fragrance of the first lawns to be cut and the antiseptic fragrance of the lake releasing the detritus from the past fall draws me into a state of reverence for all that is recreated each year. The air is cleaner. The grass is greener. Forsythia bushes burst with brilliant yellows. Daffodils and tulips thrust their crowns toward the sunlight and the sacred sun sets later each day.

The peepers have begun their nightly chorus that sings us to sleep outside of bedroom windows intentionally left open.

Old Vermonters know how to read the calendar by the sounds. “The best bullpout fishing is after a warm spring rain, when peepers sing their loudest.”

Spotted salamanders scurry across dirt roads to follow their instincts leading them to love in the vernal pools. Wild turkeys begin to break up into smaller flocks. The young short-bearded jakes chase the broody hens and try to mate with them before the Boss Tom recognizes that they have snuck in front of him. The jakes are like silly teenagers with all the arrogance of raging hormones and no common sense. The Boss Tom gobbles with a thundering full-throated declaration

of supremacy. He struts with the regal confidence of a despot, a full fan for a tail, his head powder blue and white with bright crimson wattles that hang below his beak. His face is adorned with a strange dangling piece of flesh hanging over his beak. This is his pedigree. Like most males obsessed with size, the old tom’s snood hangs lower than any of the young jakes and distinguishes him as the dominant bird in the flock.

May 1. Opening Day of turkey season finds my creaking bones crawling under a barbed wire fence by rolling under it, and after crawling up the steep hill, I am struggling to breathe. Yes, I am out of shape. But the new hip reserved for me on June 5 should change things. But for now, no amount of pain or suffering can compare to the anticipation of that first gobble from the roost just 100 yards away.

I like to note the time of the first gobble each year. It is consistently between 5:10 a.m. and 5:30 a.m. if the sky is clear and much later if it’s cloudy.

The stars are beginning to fade in the eastern sky and the dark purple begins to blend into a deep blue, then a shade of sage appears above the blue arc. As the sage begins to merge into burnt orange, I am lost in meditation with the sky, contemplating the miracle that has allowed me to walk for another day above ground. In that deeply existential moment, as I feel like I am a part of all this, the deep-throated scream of the Boss shatters the silence of the valley. In perfectly

timed response, every other male in the flock asserts their own virility to let the hens know that they, too, are prepared to breed.

Thirty minutes later I hear the heavy wings smashing through limbs and powerful wings beating against their chests as they descend to the forest floor. A couple of quick putts, a few cackles and one last thundering gobble lets the flock know what route the Boss has chosen for the morning.

I am sitting under an old oak and there is another hunter below me a couple of hundred yards downhill. I am close to the roost, so I’m thinking I should get the first crack at the old boy. He gobbles one more time, launches off the roost and coasts down the hill, landing right in front of the other hunter. It’s as if he had thought about this all night and set his flight pattern to land on that exact spot. The hunter below me shoots the magnificent bird and drops him with one shot from a mere 10 yards away.

I walked down the hill to the other hunter to congratulate him and a strategy well played. I introduced myself, and much to my surprise, he already knew me. He tells me that his friend, Caleb Wright, has told him about me and that he needs to meet me if he wants to learn the waterfowl game. I am flattered. This was the beginning of a new partnership.

I congratulate him and ask him if he’s ever done any foraging. Rather than go home without a bird, I turn around and climb back up the steep rocky terrain. I crawl over some slippery old boulders to my secret spot for



Courtesy photo
Harvesting some ramps can make up for not bagging a turkey.

wild ramps. I reach into the large pouch in the back of my vest, meant to carry out a turkey, and instead, fill it with some of the largest ramps I’ve collected. Not too many. Just enough for a meal and a few to pickle with vinegar, honey and ginger.

My heart is filled with gratitude for all that has been offered me. A new friend, ramps and one more Green Mountain sunrise.

(Bradley Carleton is executive director of Sacred Hunter.org, a privately owned limited liability corporation that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature through hunting, fishing and foraging.)

EARTHKEEP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

way ahead of his time in seeing what is possible. He worked really hard to help all the institutions and governing bodies, so that policies and procedures could support what is possible.”

Kelsy Raap hopes they can find someone with her father’s energy and knack for building bridges to buy the farm.

Will Raap purchased the former Nordic Farm for \$4.3 million and turned it into a farm collective, said Averill Cook of LandVest, the real estate company handling the sale. Besides produce grown by Earthkeep Farmcommon, the other and varied agricultural businesses on the farm include Sweet Sound Aquaculture

(shrimp farming), Shrubbly (sparkling water made with organic berries, fruit and herbs), House of Fermentology (brewery), Slowfire Bakery, Clayton Floral, Champlain Valley Apiaries (honey) and Vermont Malthouse (grains for pilsners and malts for breweries and distillers).

Upstate Elevator Supply, a producer of CBD products Will Raap helped his children form in 2017, had been located at the farm. With the legalization of recreational cannabis in Vermont this past October, Upstate Elevator Operators launched as the business’ marketing arm for THC products. Upstate Elevator had to relocate, because the farm had received federal funding via the Vermont Land Trust, so it couldn’t grow federally regulated crops, Kelsy Raap said.

Cook said the farm is offered for sale through a solicitation for offers, so no asking

price has been set. Offers for Earthkeep Farmcommon are due May 23.

About 80 percent of the land is open pastureland and the rest is forested land. Although it is a unique property, Cook said, it was not unusual for LandVest to handle this type of sale because much of its business involve farm and forestry real estate.

There are multiple buildings on the property including two large barns, two farmhouses with four rental units, sheds and six grain silos.

Rob Hunter, the general manager of Vermont Malthouse, has been overseeing the farm after the Raap family downsized operations, putting things on hold while they figured out their next step. He shares the family’s hope that a buyer who embraces Will Raap’s vision for Earthkeep Farmcommon will be found.

Robin Jeffers, who was Earthkeep Farmcommon’s chief operating officer before Will Raap’s passing and the subsequent downsizing, said Raap was an amazing visionary who “really wanted to change the face of farming and agriculture.”

Raap founded Gardener’s Supply in 1983 and four years later began moving the company toward employee ownership. In 2009, Gardener’s Supply became wholly employee owned. The company has more than \$100 million in annual sales and 300 year-round employees.

Although this is a very anxious time as the future of Earthkeep Farmcommon is unsettled, Jeffers said, “I’m personally very hopeful that a buyer will want to carry on Will’s vision.”

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Commentary

An examination of what we will pay in property taxes

John Quinney
President and Publisher

In January, I took on the task of addressing what I thought was a simple question: “What will we pay in property taxes this year?”

Then, as now, the short answer is: “We don’t know.”

However, the longer answer is that, if the selectboard’s revised budget is approved by the voters on May 2, the average increase in our fiscal year 2024 property taxes will be 6 percent. The key word in that sentence is “average.” Some of us will see larger increases in our property taxes; some will see smaller changes.

I’ve summarized the situation in the chart that accompanies this article. Here are the key points:

- The assessed value of our Charlotte homes — the Grand List — will change once the town-wide reappraisal process is completed later this summer. Expectations are for an average increase in property values of 22 percent.
- Both the tax rates that are used to calculate property taxes — the Municipal Tax rate and the Education Homestead Tax rate — will change once reappraisals have been completed. But the total amount to be raised by property taxes will not change (assuming voters approve the selectboard’s proposed fiscal year 2024 budget on May 2).
- After the reappraisal is completed, if your home is assessed at \$500,000, your property taxes will be \$7,571, a 6 percent increase.

Charlotte Property Taxes		Property Value		Revised		Increase
		FY '23 (1)		FY '24 (1)		over FY '23
Grand List (2)		\$ 9,408,460		\$ 11,517,168		22%
Municipal Tax Rate (3)		\$ 0.2422		\$ 0.2142		-12%
Total to be raised by Municipal Taxes (4)		\$2,278,651		\$ 2,466,554		8%
Homestead Education Tax Rate (3)		\$1.5062		\$1.3000		-14%
Total to be raised by Education Taxes		\$14,171,022		\$14,972,318		6%
		FY '23		FY '24 (5)		Increase
\$350,000 Home		Total Taxes		Total Taxes		over FY '23
Municipal Taxes		\$ 286,000 \$ 693		\$ 350,000 \$ 750		8%
Homestead Education Taxes		\$ 286,000 \$ 4,308		\$ 350,000 \$ 4,550		6%
Total Property Taxes		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,300		6%
\$500,000 Home		FY '23		FY '24 (5)		Increase
Municipal Taxes		\$ 408,500 \$ 989		\$ 500,000 \$ 1,071		8%
Homestead Education Taxes		\$ 408,500 \$ 6,153		\$ 500,000 \$ 6,500		6%
Total Property Taxes		\$ 7,142		\$ 7,571		6%
\$750,000 Home		FY '23		FY '24 (5)		Increase
Municipal Taxes		\$ 612,500 \$ 1,483		\$ 750,000 \$ 1,607		8%
Homestead Education Taxes		\$ 612,500 \$ 9,225		\$ 750,000 \$ 9,750		6%
Total Property Taxes		\$ 10,709		\$ 11,357		6%

Notes:

1. Charlotte's fiscal year runs from July 1 of one year until June 30 of the next year. FY '23 ends June 30, 2023; FY '24 starts July 1, 2023, and ends June 30, 2024.
2. Grand List is defined as the total value of all taxable properties in Charlotte divided by 100.
The FY '24 Grand List number is an estimate, pending completion of the town-wide reappraisal process.
3. The municipal tax rate and the homestead education tax rate are estimates that assume the Grand List will increase by 22%.
The final tax rates will be determined once reappraisals are completed.
4. The total to be raised in FY '24 by municipal taxes (which includes the library and CVFRS budgets) is \$165,885 less than the amount voted down on Town Meeting Day.
5. FY '24 property values assume an average 22% increase in assessed values over current property values.

- Charlotte’s share of the Champlain Valley School District’s fiscal year 2024 budget makes up 86 percent of our property taxes, so changes in the town budget, recently reduced by almost \$166,000, have only a small impact on our total property tax bills.
- Many thanks to the several town and Champlain Valley School District employees who helped me better understand how our property taxes are calculated.

(John Quinney is publisher of The Charlotte News and president of the board of directors. The opinions expressed here are his own and not necessarily those of the board or the paper.)



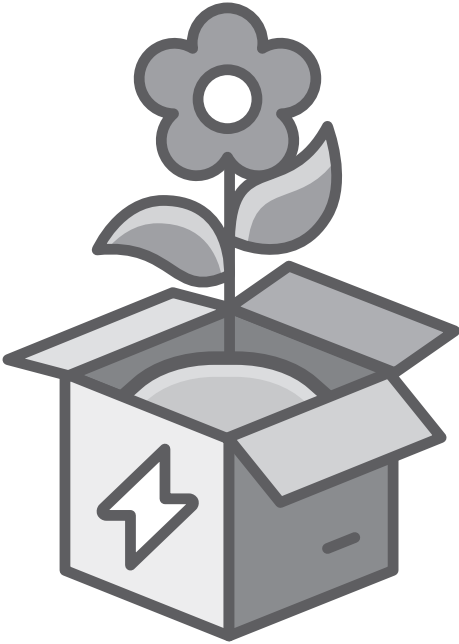
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Stronger Together

Historic Charlotte Grange Hall reopening in summer

Linda Hamilton
Charlotte Grange

After many months of being closed to public events due to not only COVID precautions but also some needed building repairs, Charlotte Grange anticipates resuming regular programs and gatherings in our historic hall this summer.

We are happy to welcome you back (or perhaps for the first time) to the charming over 150-year-old building at 2858 Spear Street in East Charlotte Village, home of the Grange for the past 65 years.

Our popular Grange on the Green summer music concerts will continue to be held ... well ... on the Charlotte Town Green. But if there is interest, we hope to resume the fun open mic musical gatherings in the hall this year, featuring budding and wannabe artists from the area. Let us know if you are interested.

We’re planning to offer a tour of the historic building to not only show off its significant architectural features but also to share some of its history and stories, including its many years as district school No. 10, also known as the Lyceum Schoolhouse.

Why Lyceum? There’s an interesting story about that, which you’ll hear on the tour.

Charlotte’s burgeoning 4-H group is interested in using the Grange Hall for meetings and special events as the youngsters explore subjects related to the 4-H club pledge, something which is consistent with Grange’s own goals: “My head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service and my health to better living for my club, my community, my country and my

world.” While having fun. We are very pleased that Grange educational programs on timely topics with speakers or discussion groups can be held in the hall once again with up to 50 participants. And we hope it won’t be long before we can revive the much-loved Grange tradition of potluck suppers and other opportunities for Charlotters to eat and socialize with each other.

Many of Grange’s activities do not depend on using the hall, but it certainly will be more fun to have the building available once again. If you have suggestions or would like to help make events happen, please let us know. Email us at charlottegrangevt@gmail.com. We look forward to this being a year of Charlotters gathering together more easily and feeling stronger together.

Current members of the Charlotte Grange are Trina Bianchi, Alicia Cooper, Louis Cox, Katie Devoid, Scott Devoid, Tai Dinnan (president), Jim Donovan, Frances Foster, Bill Fox, Lynn Fox, Linda Hamilton, Lucie Lehmann, Susan Ohanian, David Perrin, Mary Provencher, Toni Sunderland, Ruah Swennerfelt, Dean Tuininga, Karen Tuininga, Sally Wadhams and Margaret Woodruff.

We greatly appreciate the support we receive from the community as we strive to honor our agricultural roots and help build a resilient future for all. For more information about Charlotte Grange and how to become a member, see charlottegrange.org.

Note: In recognition of the role the Grange has played in Vermont communities and helped in raising agricultural awareness, Gov. Scott proclaimed April as Grange Month this year.



Courtesy photo

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Hi Neighbor

John Creech and Cobey Gatos: Fully in tune with one another

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

Cobey Gatos and John Creech met while playing basketball at Charlotte Central School. The two musicians hit it off and in 2009 they performed as a duo at the Charlotte Library. Almost 15 years later, their musical and personal connection remains strong as they record and perform as Greenbush, named for the road where they both live.

Creech grew up in North Carolina and his earliest musical memories are of sitting on the floor and feeling the vibrations from his mother's piano playing. As a teenager, he picked up the guitar and formed a band with his older brother and he's been part of musical collaborations ever since.

Gatos spent his childhood in Massachusetts. His father was an amateur musician, so he was expected to take piano lessons starting at age six. He also picked up the French horn in elementary school. Gatos quit lessons as soon as he was allowed to, but he continued to play, starting a rock band in fifth grade. Ironically, two of his childhood bandmates — Peter Moses and Ken French — are also now living in Charlotte. Recently, Gatos sat in with French's band, the Doughboys, 53 years after the first time the two men played together.

By 2010, Creech and Gatos were performing regularly either as a duo or as a trio with a drummer. Lucas Adler was their first percussionist, but for the last five years they have worked with Dov Schiller. Greenbush has played at venues throughout Chittenden, Addison, Lamoille and Washington counties with some upcoming gigs scheduled for June.

Creech said Greenbush's music is roughly 40 percent original pieces and 60 percent cover tunes. Even though most of their music comes from other sources, the men try to create a personal connection to each piece.

"We have a strong commitment to playing music by both known and lesser-known jazz masters," Gatos said. "We make an effort to play them in a way that is accessible."

Gatos and Creech describe themselves as an improvisational group. "It's about composing music on the spot, in the moment," Creech said, noting that the improvisation can be based on a chord, a rhythm or even just a feeling.

Gatos said that despite the improvisation, the cover tunes they play are always recognizable. "There are parts we play in a similar fashion, but we never play them the exact same way."

Creech used to own Burlington Guitar and Amp, but since the store closed, he has been focusing on tai chi and cooking, as well as music. He teaches private guitar lessons and has also taught the instrument at the Waldorf School, adult living communities, the Charlotte Senior Center and through the CVU ACCESS program. He teaches tai chi at many of the same locations and has done some private catering and cooking for the Waldorf School, as well as providing music therapy.

After college Gatos made part of his living as a musician, playing weddings and other events, but even when that wasn't the case, music has always been a major part of his life. He works remotely from his backyard office as a computer programmer for a company that makes music hardware.



Photo by Oliver Creech

Cobey Gatos (left) and John Creech have been making music together since 2009.

After so many years together, it's not surprising that the two men feel a strong connection to one another. Creech describes their music as finding a middle ground between his guitar background and Gatos's keyboard roots. Despite growing up in different parts of the country, they both gravitated to the same music in their youth, listening to jazz composers who Creech described as being unheralded in their time but who may now be enjoying more acclaim. "There is a little bit of a mission to pay homage to our heroes who may not have gotten the recognition they deserved," he said.

"We're extremely comfortable with each other but there is always a different

approach to the music," Creech said. "Often, I can hear what Cobey's doing but there will be a startling surprise which can be incredibly energizing." Gatos noted that one important aspect to their music is their willingness to take risks.

Gatos moved to Vermont in 1989 and Creech arrived four years later. Although much of their music was written outside the state, they both feel that there is something local about what they play.

Every Thursday, the two men head to Gatos' backyard for a jam session. "We play for a couple of hours and have a beer or two," Gatos said. "We play old songs and new material, and it's always the highlight of the week."



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Charlie Proutt



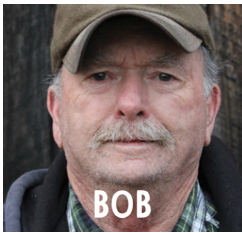
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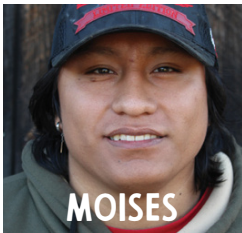
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Report from the Legislature

Affordable Heat Act looks more affordable than the alterative

Chea Waters Evans
State Representative

There's a lot of information (and misinformation) flying around about S.5, the Affordable Heat Act, which comes up for a House vote this week after moving out of the Senate. It's a bill that aims to lessen carbon emissions, incentivize Vermonters to use cleaner heat methods and provide a path for fuel dealers to diversify their businesses.

Here's a link to the bill, which I encourage you to read: tinyurl.com/bdhe4tby.

Initially, I shared the same concerns that many people currently have about the financial impact this bill would have on Vermonters, especially without a clear vision of exactly what the costs will be and who will eventually end up paying them. As I've mentioned before, bills frequently look very different by the time they are presented for a vote, and this bill is no exception.

The bill does establish a Clean Heat Standard, much like the climate bill from last year, but it does so with some provisions that I think really address some of my issues with last year's bill.

OK: the cost. The 70-cents-per-gallon cost increase that many are worried about came from an admittedly non-rigorous financial analysis of the possible cost by someone who said it was a "back-of-the-envelope" calculation. The backs of envelopes are for jotting down phone numbers that you immediately forget about and throw away; they're not for figuring out the complicated financial impact of a climate change bill and the future costs of not making changes to current fuel-use practices.

So, what will it actually cost? Honestly, it's hard to be sure. The Vermont Climate Council estimates that by the year 2030, the bill will save each household an average of \$7,500, around \$2 billion for the state. But who will pay the fuel costs? Hopefully, Vermonters and fuel dealers will be able to find a path forward that doesn't increase costs for consumers. But if it should ...

The bill requires the Legislature to create detailed studies on the costs, benefits and logistics of the Affordable Heat Standard, including the projected impact on fuel prices. The next two years will be setting the stage for a finalized Clean Heat Standard, and the required check-back in 2025 will require the Legislature to review and amend the program. That makes me feel a lot more at ease with the bill and allows me to support it with confidence.

When that check-back occurs, the Legislature will do all the things we usually do when we're learning about a bill — listen to expert testimony, have an opportunity to influence amendments, or even in this case, scratch the whole thing and start over. The appropriated cost at the moment to implement the program is \$1.8 million; this does seem like a pretty significant amount of money to spend on a program that's still in development.

In my mind, though, the financial and environmental costs will be much greater if we don't start doing something about it now. Last week, students from all over the state were on the Statehouse lawn, marching in support of climate change action. I had the opportunity to meet with a bunch of students from our district; their passion, sincerity and concern was a good counterbalance to my more fiscally moderate concerns about the costs of this program.

I'm more than happy to get more specific with anyone who wants to talk about this more; I have a lot of information I can share with you. And if you really want to do a deep dive, I suggest hopping on YouTube and watching the Senate and House energy committee hearings. You can see how the language and the ideas evolved over time, and how many concerns were addressed.

I'm free for phone calls, texts and emails any time, and can meet on Mondays in town. My number is 917-887-8231 and my email is cevans@leg.state.vt.us. We're wrapping up the legislative session in mid-May; you'll hear from me in the paper again right before we finish up.

Agriculture

Raising backyard chicks this spring? Know the health risks

Ben Truman
Vermont Department of Health

As more people start raising their own backyard chickens — whether to enjoy the ultimate in local eggs, or just for fun — it's important to know the health risks associated with poultry so you can take basic steps to protect yourself, your family and your flock.

Any domesticated bird kept for producing eggs or meat can carry harmful bacteria, including Salmonella, Campylobacter and E. coli, that make people sick. Backyard flocks can also be breeding grounds for viruses, such as avian influenza, also known as bird flu.

"Raising baby poultry like chicks, ducklings and goslings in your backyard can offer many benefits, such as fresh eggs, opportunities to connect with nature and education for children and families," said Dr. Natalie Kwit, Vermont's public health veterinarian. "But it's very important to take steps to help minimize the spread of diseases." Dr. Kwit said that certain people are more likely to get severe illness from the bacteria poultry can carry, such as children younger than 5 years old, older adults and people with weakened immune systems.

Viruses naturally spread among wild birds and can infect domestic poultry and other animals. Some strains of avian flu can cause severe illness or death of infected domestic poultry flocks. While avian influenza viruses usually do not infect people, there have been rare cases of human infection.

Whether you are building your first coop or are a seasoned poultry owner, take precautions to protect yourself, your family, and your flock, including:

- Wash your hands with soap and water after touching live poultry or any objects in the

area where they live or roam, including eggs.

- Supervise children around poultry, and make sure they wash their hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Don't kiss or snuggle backyard poultry and then touch your face or mouth.
- Keep backyard poultry and items used to care for them outside of the house, and especially away from areas where food or drinks are prepared, served, stored, or where dishes are cleaned.
- Don't eat or drink in areas where poultry live or roam.
- Set aside a pair of shoes to wear while taking care of poultry, and keep those shoes outside of the house.
- Stay outdoors when cleaning any equipment or materials used to raise or care for poultry, such as cages or food and water containers.
- Clean the coop, floor, nests and perches regularly.

Officials with the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets said the best thing you can do to protect your birds from getting avian influenza is to prevent contact with wild waterfowl. Anyone involved with poultry production — from small backyard coops to large commercial producers — should review their biosecurity plans and activities to ensure the health of their birds.

Learn more about backyard poultry safety at cdc.gov/healthypets/pets/farm-animals/backyard-poultry.html.

For more information about avian flu preparedness and poultry biosecurity, visit the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets at agriculture.vermont.gov/animal-health-0/disease-information-and-prevention/avian-influenza-preparedness.

Agriculture

Proposed small-farm grant cut in legislative process

Abby Carroll
Community News Service

A bill to help small farmers diversify their products with a new grant program crossed over from the House to the Senate, but not without a significant cut in the money behind it.

The House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and Forestry originally sought for a \$500,000 appropriation for the program, which would be created through H.205. The committee wanted \$250,000 of that to be in regular, general funding — or base funds — and the other half as a one-time appropriation.

But before the bill went to the Senate, the House Committee on Appropriations changed the funding to a one-time appropriation of \$350,000.

Each grant would still be capped at \$15,000, but the number of recipients could be affected by the reduction in funding for the program. Under the original plan, if all recipients received the max of \$15,000, 33 farmers would receive grants. With the new version, that figure would go down to 22 farmers.

“Our concern was, putting it into base (funds), before the program had been piloted, it didn’t make sense to the majority in the room,” said Rep. Tristan Toleno,

D-Brattleboro, in an interview.

Committee members also cited similar programs already in place, such as the agriculture agency’s Working Lands Enterprise Initiative, in describing their hesitancy to fully fund the new program.

The working lands program provides business grants to farms, but those grants are typically for larger sums of money and highly competitive, which presents challenges for small farmers.

“As we know, the majority of grants are very oversubscribed, and likely this one would be as well,” said Rep. Heather Surprenant, D-Banard, during a meeting with the Senate Committee on Agriculture in March.

One of the goals of the new bill is to provide a less competitive avenue for small farms to access aid. Surprenant explained in that committee meeting that many other grant programs include financial match barriers and hyper-specific eligibility criteria. The bill’s program would forgo a financial match and be open to all small farmers in any sector of agriculture.

“This program is just a small piece targeted at one particular problem, which is small producers who are having trouble diversifying, and making sure they feel they can meaningfully access these funds because Working Lands is so competitive



Philo Ridge Farm Photo by Lee Krohn

that a lot of small farmers are opting out of putting in applications,” said Toleno in an appropriations committee meeting in March.

Toleno also discussed in an interview how the committee has made similar decisions for other new programs this session to allow the Legislature to test-run initiatives before dedicating a larger sum of money to them. Toleno noted that legislators “softened the blow of cutting it” by raising the one-time fund from \$250,000 to \$350,000 to give the program a proper test run.

“Let’s get started, see what the impact is and then address it in future years,” he said.

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

Spring chickens



Photo by Lee Krohn

Town of Charlotte Beach Attendant

Looking for a fun summer community based job? Charlotte Recreation is seeking part-time beach attendants to work at the beach starting Memorial Day Weekend. The beach attendant will be responsible for the maintenance of the beach area and the facilities located near it. The shift schedule is completed at the beginning of the season allowing flexible hours and shifts. Dependent on the shift, the attendant will be responsible for set-up or clean-up of the beach. During their shift, the beach attendant will supervise the parking area and manage the sale of all parking passes. There will be daily responsibilities to help maintain the cleanliness of the beach and its facilities.

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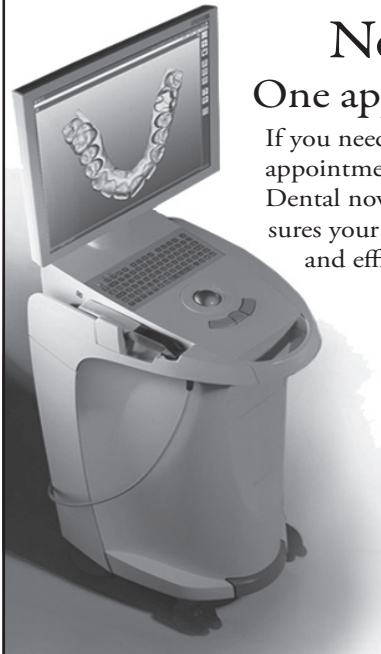
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Educaton

CVU students direct and produce spring one-act plays

Anne Mollo
Contributor

The word theater has a long history, deriving from the ancient Greek word “theasthai,” which means to behold. The spring one-act plays at Champlain Valley Union High School have their own history and traditions, and the plays are definitely something to behold.

This year’s plays are a one-act comedy by Christopher Durang, “The Actor’s Nightmare,” and a truncated one-act version of William Shakespeare’s “Hamlet.”

In the spirit of collaboration, there are five student co-directors for the two plays, two stage managers, and an assistant stage manager who is also in charge of props and publicity.

By CVU tradition, the spring plays are wholly produced by the students. They direct, act, operate the lighting and sound, make all the costumes, do hair and make-up, create publicity pieces, and design and build the sets. Many students have an opportunity to contribute in a multitude of ways, with

a focus on inclusivity and commitment to creative collaboration.

Gabbie LindenMeyr, Ian Story and Eric Carroll are co-directors for “The Actor’s Nightmare.” Carroll suggested Durang’s play, and the others agreed. “It’s a wonderful show. I’ve always wanted to direct a comedy,” said Carroll. Story nodded and smiled in agreement.

Rory McDermott and Francesca Krol share directorial responsibilities for “Hamlet.” Hamlet works as a one-act play, McDermott said, “We still have all the important contextual bits that tell the original story.”

Krol added, “We’re putting a lot of trust in the actors, particularly in Clark Clark who plays Hamlet, to emphasize the aspects of the play that aren’t included. I’ve always viewed directing as a very inclusive process with the actors, so it’s been a team effort.”

Asked for any personal insights about the experience, LindenMeyr said, “Everything is different than I thought it would be. Blocking, for instance. Blocking is harder than acting.”

“I’ve worked with adult and student

directors for various productions, and working with student directors is always really fun — especially when you know them. The collaboration tends to be more fun from a tech point of view,” said Will Richardson, assistant stage manager. “Also, the student directors don’t tend to ask for quite as much, technically.”

“I’m really impressed with the entire tech team,” said Izora Hart, one of the stage managers.

The entire set for “Hamlet” was assembled in less than a month.

Performances are at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 5, and Saturday, May 6, and 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 7, at the CVU High School theater. Purchase tickets at ticketsource.us/cvutheater or at the door. (Check the ticket site first to ensure the show is not sold out.) Online tickets are \$10 for adults; \$8 for students, children and faculty; and \$11 and \$9 at the door.

Courtesy photo
Rose Lord of Charlotte wields an axe during a rehearsal of “The Actor’s Nightmare” at Champlain Valley High.



Vermont universal school meals bill looks to boost local farm food

Abby Carroll
Community News Service

As lawmakers aim to make universal school meals a permanent measure, they are also looking to make sure more of those meals are made with local food.

The state would be able to do that by combining a local food grant program for schools created in 2021 (legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/H.106) with the proposed universal meals fund. The Agency of Education already distributes those grants to schools based on the percent of Vermont-produced foods they use in their meals, but current law only allows public schools to apply. The proposed arrangement would open up the grants to approved private schools too.

The goal of the program is to have at least 20 percent of all foods purchased by schools be locally produced by this year.

When the universal school meals bill, H.165 (legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/H.165), was originally drafted, it did not contain any information pertaining to local foods. But House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry members added the local food measure to the bill before it passed from the House to the Senate.

These programs are “part of a larger conversation about making sure we’re providing access to food, to breakfast and

lunch, to all of our students. And then also, how do we make that food as nutritious as it can be, as exciting as it can be, as sort of connected to community as it can be?” said Rep. Mike Rice, D-Dorset, member of that House committee.

Schools need to meet certain qualifications to receive the grants. They must have a local purchasing plan, have developed a process for tracking the purchase of local foods and designate a person to coordinate those purchases. The first year a school applies for the grants, it doesn’t need to prove the amount of local foods purchased; the first year of funding is meant to help establish the program. If accepted a school will receive \$0.15 for every school lunch.

After the first year, both the reimbursement rates and the grant money are based on the percent of food that comes from Vermont. Schools need to demonstrate that, during that first year, at least 15 percent of their food bill went to Vermont producers. Proving that allows a school to apply for funding every year after that, with funding based on the school’s percentage.

There are three reimbursement tiers. If

the school purchases at least 15 percent of the food locally, it receives \$0.15 for every school lunch. If the school purchases at least 20 percent of the food locally, it receives \$0.20 for every lunch. At 25 percent a school gets \$0.25 per lunch, and that’s the highest the rates go.



“We heard a lot of testimony about how universal school meals in itself already is making it more possible for schools to be more thoughtful with their purchasing and turn more toward locally grown food to serve in school meals,” Rice said. “We really want the conversations about access to food and where food comes from and sort of the educational pieces that can really grow out of what is served in the cafeteria.”

Combining the two programs will make it so that approved independent schools eligible for the universal school meals supplement can participate in the local food grant program.

“We just wanted to make sure that all of the schools that were qualifying for the universal school meal reimbursement would also qualify for the local food purchase incentive so that we were really making sure

to maximize both things,” Rice said.

Lawmakers say combining these programs also would encourage a consistent relationship between schools and farmers, which is beneficial for both groups. Farmers could have a more stable income while children could access local food.

“The universal aspect of this program — including students from all economic backgrounds — creates the scale necessary for farmers to conduct reasonable business at a profitable volume while lowering the cost-per-plate for the school,” said sponsor Rep. Esme Cole, D-White River Junction, in an April 6 meeting with the Senate Committee on Education.

The grant program has been a boon to Green Mountain Farm-to-School, a group that works to get local foods to businesses, hospitals and schools in Vermont. The group makes it easier for farmers to get their products to schools, and the grant program makes it easier for schools to buy the farmers’ food, the organization’s leaders say.

“School sales have shot back up in the past couple of years,” said Becca Perrin, the group’s food hub account manager. “So, if there’s incentives and extra money that allows them to purchase local, that’s always going to be beneficial to the producers that we work with.”

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



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Spring assessment tests on the school calendars

Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

State level student testing

Charlotte Central School students in third-ninth grades and juniors at Champlain Valley Union High will soon be taking the spring state-mandated assessments. These assessments will help the school to better know the learners.

The 2023 Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program replaces tests that were used in previous years. The tests are administered in the following subjects and grades:

- English language arts — third-ninth grades
- Mathematics — third-ninth grades
- Science — fifth, eighth and 11th grades.

Older students will be using their school-provided Chromebook computers. Mobile phones and smartwatches will be put away for test security.

These tests are adaptive for most students, meaning that the test adapts to student ability level based on their responses to previous questions.

Request for help with language project

Charlotte second graders would like to learn to say “hello” or a similar greeting in as many languages as possible. They are working on the 20 languages with the most native speakers in the world as reported for 2023 by statisticsanddata.org.

Students are using the Google pronunciation tool, but they would love to record people from the Charlotte community speaking. If you, a friend, family member or co-worker speaks another language fluently and are willing to record a “hello,” they would love to include it in their project.

If you are able to help, the recording will take approximately 2 minutes. Please send an email with the language you could record to sspellman@cvsdvt.org or dhallpotvin@cvsdvt.org. The second graders will then email you directions on how to record or make an appointment for you to be recorded.

At this time, French, German and Japanese have already been recorded. If you speak a language that is not included on the top 20 list, we would also be grateful to include your greeting in our language journey.

Spring concert

The fifth, sixth and seventh-eighth grade bands, jazz band and chorus are excited to present a spring concert on Wednesday, May 17. The event will be at 6:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room. The concert is free and open to the public.

Lake Monsters game

The bands and choruses will perform the national anthem at the May 24 Lake Monsters game at Centennial Field in Burlington. The Lake Monsters will provide tickets to musicians who want to stay to see the game.

Baseball fans should keep an eye on the weather. If the game is canceled due to rain, that call may not be until the last minute. Fans should check the Lake Monsters website before heading out. .

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions at asmith@cvsdvt.org or 802-425-6653.

2023 summer camps

This list of summer camps is provided as a convenience to Charlotte families. Charlotte Community School does not

Censorship essay finalists



Courtesy photo

Parker Wildey (second from left) of Charlotte, an eighth grader at Vermont Day School, was one of four finalists for the state Lincoln Essay contest. Other finalists, from left, were Jesse Kim (Burlington), Oonagh Guyer (South Burlington) and Margot Dater (Shelburne). The topic of the essay, hosted by Hildene, President Lincoln’s family’s estate near Manchester, was censorship and the rise of book bans in the United States.

endorse any particular camp but provides the list as informational only:

- Champlain Valley School District Band Camp (Aug. 14-18) — For more information please contact Tim Buckingham at tbuckingham@cvsdvt.org.
- Jazz Jivin’ Summer Camp (June 26-30) — Isham Family Farm. Available for rising fifth-ninth graders. More information and registration at willistoncommunitytheatre.com.

- Must Love Yarn Fiber Arts Summer Camp — Half-day, one-week summer camps in Shelburne. Ages 8-12. See mustloveyarn.com.
- Summer Symphony Camp (June 26-30) — Learn more at vyo.org.
- Vermont Jazz Camp (July 24-28) — For details visit vtjazzcamp.com.

History

Shelburne Museum launches statewide initiative to locate and document samplers

Kristen Levesque
Shelburne Museum

The Vermont Sampler Initiative has launched a statewide effort to locate, photograph and document all American samplers and related girlhood embroideries held in the public and private collections of Vermont.

This initiative is a collaborative effort with local museums, historical societies, historic homes, private collectors and descendants, and seeks to contribute to a broader understanding of the state’s early history and the women who devoted their

lives to educating Vermont’s daughters.

Sampler ID Days will be held at Shelburne Museum on Friday, April 21, 1-4 p.m., and Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Members of the Vermont Sampler Initiative will assist in the identification and documentation of samplers.

All are welcome to bring in samplers for identification and documentation purposes.

The initiative aims to create an online searchable database of American schoolgirl needlework called the Sampler Archive (samplerarchive.org), with all samplers documented in Vermont included. In addition, future programs will include an exhibition and a book about Vermont schoolgirl samplers and early female education in the state.

Shelburne Museum’s founder Electra Webb collected many European and American needlework samplers and the collection has grown over the years with purchases and donations.

American schoolgirl samplers are vital artifacts of early female education, providing insight into family dynamics, local history and community values. They are made by daughters from all socio-economic levels, all racial and ethnic populations, all religions and

all geographic regions of the nation. Unfortunately, samplers made by girls and young women living in Vermont are less well known and less frequently studied than those of any other New England state.

Additional Sampler Days will be held at the Vermont Historical Society in Barre on May 12 and 13, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Anyone interested in participating or learning more about the initiative can contact Vermont Sampler Initiative at samplersvt@gmail.com.

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The Charlotte News



Photo by Andy Duback

Amanda Jewel, pictorial and alphabet sampler, 1816. Silk on linen, 18 1/2 x 12 1/2 inches. Collection of Shelburne Museum, gift of Marilyn Idle. 1986-51.

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Community Roundup

Farm Stand Together gets nonprofit status

Farm Stand Together, a Charlotte-based nonprofit organization that provides mutual food aid to food insecure households throughout the state, has received 501c3 status from the government, marking a significant milestone in the organization’s growth and development.



With this new charitable status, Farm Stand Together can now receive donations to support its mission of creating a more equitable food system in Vermont through sustainable farming practices.

Founded in 2022 as a pilot program by Justin Reidy and Meaghin Kennedy, Farm Stand Together was created as an experiment in a new way of addressing food insecurity. The organization realized that small farms throughout Vermont had adopted digital point-of-sale systems as a result of the COVID pandemic, which could be used to purchase gift cards to give directly to people in need.

In its first year, Farm Stand Together invested about \$10,000 to support families from 125 households across the state, with positive feedback from farmers and recipients.

Now, as a nonprofit corporation with 501c3 status, Farm Stand Together is expanding from six to nine farms and plans to provide up to five times as much funding to food insecure households.

The organization supports organic farming practices, particularly small-scale organic vegetable farms with an emphasis on soil health. Participating farms include Bread and Butter Farm in Shelburne, Sweet

Roots Farm in Charlotte, Hudak Farm in Swanton and Jericho Settlers Farm in Jericho.

Recipients of Farm Stand Together gift cards can use them at these farms’ full-service farmstands to purchase not just produce and meat, but also value-added goods like cider and frozen meals.

The application period is now open until mid-May. To apply for a farm stand gift card, please visit farmstandtogethervt.org/ apply. To donate to Farm Stand Together, visit givebutter.com/farmstandtogether2023.

Ascension Lutheran named Cool Congregation for energy saving efforts

The Ascension Lutheran Church of South Burlington was awarded the Cool Congregation Energy Saver award from Interfaith Power & Light.

The award comes with a \$1,000 prize that the congregation, which includes a number of Charlotters among its members, plans to use on additional action to address the climate crisis, said Sam Swanson, the chair of the church’s Caring for Creation Committee.

Swanson said the church has engaged in a 17-year effort to address the congregation’s contribution to climate change.

Since 2000, Interfaith Power & Light of San Francisco has partnered with thousands of congregations and has 40 state affiliates working to get Interfaith Power & Light programs in every state.

Ascension Lutheran Church’s almost two decades of effort has reduced its carbon footprint by 60 percent through energy-saving measures — upgrading lighting,



heating and cooling, and ventilation systems, insulating the buildings, and purchasing solar from a community solar farm. These modifications have prevented 40 tons of carbon emissions annually, the church said in a release.

Mast, Lyman join Charlotte-based communications firm Junapr

Junapr, a Vermont-based communications and public relations firm, announces the addition of two new team members in newly created positions. Charlotte Lyman joins as senior communications manager and Debbie Mast as operations and marketing manager.

Lyman brings nearly 11 years of experience to Junapr, most recently working in the publishing industry and, before that, in an agency setting. Her work at Junapr will focus on team members’ development, national media relations and leading the implementation of clients’ communications plans.

Before joining Junapr, Mast owned and operated Green Mountain Mini Baked and Cookie Doe of Vermont. Both companies had clients in all 50 states — Green Mountain Mini Baked was featured on The Today Show, and Ellen DeGeneres was a client, serving Mast’s baked goods at her holiday party. Mast was also active in marketing and operations in her family business, Bond Auto Parts. She will oversee Junapr’s marketing and help manage the operational challenges that go hand in hand with growth.

“I have had the pleasure of working with Charlotte previously and I have known her to be a thoughtful and action-orientated publicist,” Nicole Junas Ravlin, president of Junapr, said. “Charlotte’s depth of experience will round out our team’s national and regional media relations and client service.”

“In the short time since Debbie joined

Junapr, she has made a big impact,” Junas Ravlin said. “Junapr’s growth over the past year necessitated adding to our internal operations and marketing team — with Debbie’s prior experience running her own business, it was a natural fit.”

Mast is based in the Vermont office and Lyman works from Massachusetts.

‘Missing middle’ house photo could win \$50 gift card

AARP Vermont, the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development, and Vermont Natural Resources Council are asking Vermonters to snap a photo of a “missing middle” house or property and submit it for a chance to win a \$50 gift card, with the goal of raising awareness of this type of housing.

“Missing middle housing types with multifamily dwellings are one of the more affordable forms of housing in Vermont — though currently in short supply,” said Department of Housing and Community Development commissioner Josh Hanford. “The Great Housing Hunt photo challenge will highlight the diverse style and various types of ‘missing middle’ housing while spreading awareness of this key part of the housing sector.”

Such mid-sized, often moderately priced homes, are referred to as “missing” because very few have been built in the U.S. since the early 1940s. The shortage is largely due to zoning constraints, the shift to car-centric patterns of development and the challenges of financing multiunit dwellings.

These housing options are particularly suitable for residents 50-plus because they allow family members to live with or near each other while still maintaining their own space, says Kelly Stoddard Poor, AARP Vermont’s associate state director. But, it “doesn’t really exist for a lot of people.”

If you spot this type of housing, snap a photo for the Great Housing Hunt photo challenge and submit it to vnrc.org/greathousinghunt. Those who enter will have a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate. All entries must be made by May 31. Six winners will be awarded.



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Gardening



Photo by Tom Herman/Unsplash

Tomatoes, which were first discovered growing wild in the Andes Mountains of South America, are the most popular home-grown vegetable crop in the United States today.

You say ‘tomato,’ centuries ago natives said ‘tomatl’

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

Tomatoes (*Solanum lycopersicum*) have been on our tables and in our gardens for so long, it’s nearly impossible to think of them as growing in the wild. Once upon a time they did just that.

That’s not to say that a typical supermarket tomato or a tasty, red mortgage lifter or big boy could be enjoyed back then. Tomatoes have undergone centuries of cultivation and hybridization and have changed much during that time. Today, there are more than 10,000 varieties of tomatoes.

Hundreds of years ago, long before Europeans had set foot in the New World, tomatoes grew wild in the Andes of western South America. The indigenous people cultivated them, eventually bringing the plant northward through Central America and into Mexico. When the Spanish arrived in the early 16th century, they found the inhabitants growing a food crop called “tomatl” in the native language.

Tomato seeds were brought from Mexico to Spain by those early explorers. From there the plant spread to Italy by the mid-1500s where it began to be incorporated into regional cuisine. Over the following decades, tomato plants were cultivated throughout Europe, but primarily as an ornamental plant.

Along the way, the tomato was known by a number of names, including wolf peach and gold apple. In France, it was called a love apple (*pomme d’amour*) and thought to be an aphrodisiac. Because the tomato was mistakenly considered to be poisonous by many, it was referred to as the “poison apple.”

It’s a fact that the leaves, stems and roots of the tomato contain solanine, a neurotoxin, and thus should not be eaten. The tomato also is a relative of deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*).

The apparent proof of the tomato’s poisonous nature was based on a false assumption. While it was true that upper-class Europeans did die after consuming tomatoes, the fault was not with the tomato but with the pewter dinnerware used. The high level of acidity in tomatoes leached lead from the pewter, and those wealthy enough to afford to dine on pewter dinnerware died from lead poisoning after consuming tomato-based dishes.

In the early 1700s, the tomato returned to the Americas with European

colonists. At that time it was still grown primarily as an ornamental plant in the northern colonies but grown for its fruit in southern regions. Its popularity continued to increase.

Thomas Jefferson reportedly grew tomatoes in his vegetable garden at Monticello and enjoyed eating the fruit. It wasn’t until the early 1900s that tomatoes’ popularity became widespread throughout the United States.

Today, tomatoes are grown around the world and are a star of international cuisine. They are grown in home gardens and on commercial farms.

They are eaten raw, served cooked in a variety of dishes and processed into products that line our supermarket shelves. Tomatoes are the most popular home-grown vegetable crop in the country.

However, are tomatoes really a vegetable?

While botanically a fruit (actually a berry), due to their sugar content being well below that of other fruits, tomatoes are used as, and popularly considered, a vegetable.

In addition, legally speaking, as a result of the case of *Nix v. Hedden*, which was decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1893, tomatoes are considered a vegetable according to the Tariff Act of March 3, 1883.

The real question isn’t whether it’s a fruit or vegetable. The question is, with so many choices, what type of tomato will you choose to grow in your garden this year?

For more information on the history of tomatoes, see go.uvm.edu/tomato-history.

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



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Gardening

Spring pruning important for highbush blueberries

Vern Grubinger
University of Vermont Extension

Blueberries are a popular backyard fruit. Once established, they will provide lots of delicious, healthy berries for many decades with proper care.

To succeed with blueberries, plant winter-hardy varieties and maintain soil pH between 4.5 and 5.5. Mulch every few years with several inches of wood chips or sawdust. Apply a non-nitrate source of nitrogen fertilizer in early spring, irrigate as needed and use netting to exclude birds.

What’s also important, and frequently overlooked, is annual pruning. Late winter to early spring is a good time to prune.

Pruning is essential to maintain the vigor and yield of blueberry bushes. It promotes larger fruit, shapes the bush so it is easier to harvest and helps avoid insect and disease problems.

Pruning may be overlooked because the benefits are in the future. You don’t see them quickly. Another reason is that bushes with lots of leaves and quite a few berries may seem just fine, but without a well-pruned blueberry bush for comparison, it’s hard to see the benefits of pruning.

Early in life, blueberries don’t need much pruning. In years one and two, remove all flower buds by rubbing them off or cutting off the shoot tips. This directs the plant’s energy into cane growth.

Starting in year three, remove all twiggy or low-growing canes, and leave only two or three of the strongest, well-spaced new canes produced the previous year. In subsequent years, continue to remove all but two or three of the newest canes produced, leaving only upright, strong canes with



Photo by Vern Grubinger
Annual pruning is needed to maintain high yields of large blueberry fruit.

space between them.

Different varieties produce different numbers of canes each year, so they vary in how much pruning they require. When a blueberry bush has reached full size in about eight years, it ideally will have 15 to 20 canes of all different ages.

Old bushes should not have a lot of old canes. These reduce yield because thick, older canes need more leaves to support fruit growth than they did when they were young. They also make it difficult for new canes to emerge and thrive, which is needed for sustained production.

If you don’t know the age of the canes, a rule of thumb is to remove canes before they reach one inch in diameter. These are usually gray with lichen growing on them.

If you’ve fallen behind in pruning, it’s time to remove several “dinosaur” canes per plant to create space for younger canes. Up to one fifth of all canes can be removed per year without yield loss. Berry numbers will be reduced, but fruit will be larger on younger canes and more space and light will benefit new canes that emerge.

Regardless of their age, it’s always good to remove dead, damaged or diseased



Photo by Vern Grubinger
Annual pruning is needed to maintain high yields of large blueberry fruit.

canes, along with any that stick out too far sideways or grow very low to the ground. If two canes are growing very close together, one should be removed, so they don’t compete.

Try to open up the plant canopy. If it’s dense in the middle then air and light can’t get in, leading to high humidity. That promotes diseases and also provides comfort for the insect pest called spotted wing drosophila.

Use by-pass pruners to cut canes off as close to the ground as possible. High pruning cuts do not stimulate new canes to emerge from the crown. Instead, weaker side shoots will grow. Try not to leave any stubs.

Pruning every year, or every other year, really pays off in the long run. Your blueberry bushes will thank you — with plentiful berries.

(Vern Grubinger is a vegetable and berry specialist with the University of Vermont Extension.)



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You'll be glad you did.

Our friend flicker returns



Photo by Lee Krohn

Northern flicker with the downy woodpecker sitting and watching. The northern (or common) flicker is a medium-sized bird of the woodpecker family. It is native to most of North America, parts of Central America, Cuba and the Cayman Islands. It is one of the few woodpecker species that migrate.

Gardening

Invasion of the nutrient-depleting jumping worms

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

You may have heard of jumping worms, sometimes referred to as “snake worms.” Worm castings that resemble coffee grounds on the soil’s surface are likely the first thing you’ll notice.

Jumping worms (*Amyntas agrestis*, *Amyntas tokioensis* and *Metaphire hilgendorfi*) pose a threat to home gardens, agriculture and woodland areas. Their presence disrupts the soil structure and chemistry, depletes nutrients in the soil and can result in loss of plant vigor or death.

Jumping worms exhibit violent thrashing when touched. An adult can be up to 8 inches long and 1/5- to 1/3-inches wide. Their most distinctive feature is the clitellum, the pale, flat band that entirely encircles its body. By contrast, the clitellum of common earthworms does not extend completely around the body and is darker and slightly raised.

Adult jumping worms don’t overwinter in Vermont, but their cocoons (eggs) do. Because they’re so small, it’s difficult to see them. The cocoons hatch in spring when temperatures are above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Adults will be present in summer, producing more cocoons. As temperatures drop in the fall, adult worms die.

As we add plants, expand garden beds and tidy things up with fresh mulch, jumping worms, in their various stages of life, can arrive in soil, compost, mulch and manure delivered to our gardens. They also hide in the soil of potted plants. The cocoons can easily be moved on the soles of garden shoes.

Unfortunately, there are currently no

approved pesticides or other treatment to prevent or eradicate jumping worms. Research is ongoing by Josef Gorres, a University of Vermont Department of Plant and Soil Science professor, and others around the U.S. Prevention is the most effective action, and there are several things you can do to limit their presence in your garden.

Any organic materials should be solarized prior to being introduced into the garden. To do so, make a pile 6-8 inches high of organic material on a clear plastic sheet, allowing plenty of uncovered plastic on the outer edges. Cover with another piece of plastic, pulling up the edges from the bottom and tucking the upper piece below the bottom to prevent worms from escaping.

Leave the enclosed pile in the sun for two-three days. The internal temperature needs to exceed 105 degrees Fahrenheit to kill the jumping worms and their cocoons. Materials purchased in plastic bags can be solarized right in the bags.

When ordering plants, shrubs and trees, consider ordering them bare root. If purchasing potted plants, jumping worms or cocoons may be in the soil. Even when purchasing plants at annual plant sales of local organizations where the plants are grown nearby, jumping worms and cocoons may be present.

To avoid introducing them into your home garden, remove the plant from its pot and wash its roots. Fill two buckets with water. Remove as much soil as possible, and then submerge the roots in the first bucket of water, gently swishing.

When most of the soil has been removed, inspect the roots for worms or cocoons. Rinse the roots in the second bucket to



Photo by Josef Gorres

An adult jumping worm, with its distinctive clitellum, the pale, flat band entirely encircling its body, can grow up to 8 inches long and 1/5- to 1/3-inches wide.

remove any remaining bits of soil. Repot in fresh soil that has been solarized.

Solarize any soil removed from incoming plants before adding it to your compost or garden. For more information on preventing jumping worms, see go.uvm.edu/jumping-worms.

Growing from seed or taking cuttings to root are other options that will prevent including jumping worms when adding plants to your garden.

If you do find jumping worms in your yard, you can hand pick and destroy them by dropping them in a bucket of soapy water. While hand picking worms won’t

eliminate the problem, it can reduce the number of adult worms present, which will in turn reduce the number of cocoons and future generations of jumping worms.

For more information on jumping worms, see vtinvasives.org/invasive/jumping-worms.

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

Calendar of Events

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

Looking for volunteers
Thursday, April 20, 6 p.m.
People interested in learning about volunteer opportunities at Rokeby Museum may join a Zoom presentation led by staff and current volunteers. Discover ways you can help out and be involved. Register at tinyurl.com/mtvm4cje to receive the virtual link.

Seussical the Musical Jr.
Thursday & Friday, April 20 & 21, 6 p.m.
Students in grades 4-6 at Vergennes Union Elementary School present their heartwarming rendition of Seussical the Musical Jr., performed at the Vergennes Opera House. Tickets are free but must be reserved online in advance; doors open 5:30. Donations taken at the door. Tickets and more info are at tinyurl.com/mtr73jh2.

Music by Reed Foehl
Friday, April 21, 7 p.m.
Grammy-nominated songwriter and musician Reed Foehl performs at the Shelburne Vineyard in a seated show, featuring his brand of folk Americana. Doors open 6:30 p.m.; advance tickets and more info at tinyurl.com/ydhcrpf8.

Music of Rachmaninoff
Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m.
Cellist Sophie Shao is joined by other chamber musicians in an all-Rachmaninoff program at Middlebury College’s Mahaney Arts Center to celebrate the composer’s 150th birthday. In-person and streaming tickets available. More info at tinyurl.com/3awatps2.

Solarize campaign kickoff

Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Charlotte Energy Committee is celebrating Earth Day this year by kicking off their 2023 Solarize Campaign with Green Mountain Solar with a celebration at the Charlotte Library. To achieve this, partnering solar companies offer discounted rates, depending on how many Charlotte residents and businesses decide to go solar. Green Mountain Solar will have representatives at the kickoff explaining the basics of solar, answering questions and scheduling property assessments with their team’s solar experts.

Teach others to fish
Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife offers a free instructor training program to become certified Let’s Go Fishing instructors. If you desire to introduce the sport to others at clinics around the state, consider signing up for the training. Training takes place in Essex Junction. More info is at tinyurl.com/yurbw886.

Sheep at Shelburne Farms
Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Stop by Shelburne Farms for this family-favorite event. Watch sheep shearing, learn about wool processing and make a woven bracelet. Meet some ewes and lambs. No need to register: \$5 (cash/check only) per person at the door. Event and parking are at the Farm Barn. Only service dogs allowed at the Farm. To read more, see tinyurl.com/2p8p3j8y.

Every day is Earth Day
Saturday, April 22, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Family-friendly events happen in various local towns to celebrate our planet, our environments and our responsibilities to them both. On the Church Street Marketplace in Burlington, families

gather for music, games, food, ice cream, information booths and hands-on activities centered around responsible care of the Earth. For more info, see tinyurl.com/34vsszt or call 802-863-1648.

Wadjda
Saturday, April 22, 1-3 p.m.
This is the first movie to be directed by a Saudi Arabian woman. Wadjda is the story of an independent Saudi girl who wants to ride a bike. Presented at the Pierson Library in Shelburne, the film is appropriate for ages 8+.

Jazz at the Vineyard
Saturday, April 22, 6-8:30 p.m.
Bob Gagnon and his Jazz Trio offer up a free evening of originals and standard tunes in the jazz and blues repertoire with guitar, bass and saxophone at the Shelburne Vineyard. The trio has collaborated for over 30 years. To read more, see tinyurl.com/bdejcke3.

Draft horse driving clinic
Saturday, April 22, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday, April 23, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
This is a hands-on clinic for adults wishing to learn from experienced

teamsters. Organized by the Green Mountain Draft Horse Association and held at Shelburne Farms’ historic Breeding Barn, the two-day clinic is geared toward instruction for beginners, but experienced horse people can brush up on skills. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/yc2h7tvj.

Space-tacular
Saturday-Sunday, April 22-30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
The ECHO Leahy Center in Burlington kicks off a week-long celebration of Earth Day called Earth and Space-tacular. Each day, visitors learn about our planet, participate in science activities and have out-of-this-world fun. Event is free with admission or membership. To learn more, see tinyurl.com/4pyyyvba.

Visual art film
Sunday, April 23, 11 a.m.-12:15 p.m.
The Fletcher Free Library in Burlington screens the film “Black is the Color,” which presents a history of Black contributions to the world of visual art. In particular, it surveys the contributions to

CALENDAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

the art world by some long-uncelebrated black artists. Film is free and appropriate for all ages. For more info, see tinyurl.com/2fwh8urb.

The Absence of Light
Sunday, April 23, 12:30-2:15 p.m.
“Black Art: In the Absence of Light” is a documentary that shines a light on the contributions of some of today’s foremost African-American contemporary artists. Shown at Burlington’s Fletcher Free Library, the film is free and appropriate for all ages. More info is at tinyurl.com/bdfaj2y7.

Antiques Roadshow airs
Monday, April 24, 8 p.m.
Three episodes of this popular PBS show were filmed at Shelburne Museum last summer. The completed episodes are scheduled to be shown on local PBS stations on three Mondays: April 24, May 1 and 8. Shelburne Museum says that thousands of people showed up with their items to be appraised. More info at tinyurl.com/mr2ws4w3.

The techniques of braising
Tuesday, April 25, 3-5 p.m.
Attend a how-to class at Bread and Butter Farm in Shelburne on proper braising techniques. Learn how to make dishes where the meat virtually falls apart, tender and full of flavor. For more info and to sign up, see tinyurl.com/yva4a36c or call 802-985-9200.

Pasture science and soil health
Thursday, April 27, 1:30-4:30 p.m.
Join Allen Williams for a pasture walk in Shelburne. He shares methods of pasture assessment, determining soil health and improving yields with practical and applied science. Event is outdoors; dress appropriately and bring what you need to be comfortable and protected for this field walk. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/38yhm756.

Wild about wildlife
Thursday, April 27, 7-8:30 p.m.
Wildlife biologist and researcher Susan Morse speaks online about the need for wild habitat that our Vermont species require. Her focus is on the Champlain Valley. For more info about her free presentation and to register, see familyforests.org/wild-about-wild-habitat/.

World percussion sounds
Thursday, April 27, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
The University of Vermont (UVM) Percussion Ensemble performs a free recital of music from around the world. Event is held at the UVM Recital Hall, South Prospect Street in Burlington. More info on all the UVM Music Department recitals is at tinyurl.com/mr2xc7sf.

Express your creativity
Friday, April 28, 9 a.m.-noon
Author and pastoral psychotherapist Nancy Kilgore leads a mini-retreat called Writing with Spirit at All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. Take time to slow down, quiet your mind, share and access your creative voice. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/ys4r6hjk.

Wit and wine
Friday, April 28, 7:30 p.m.
Shelburne Vineyard presents an evening of comedy with four of Vermont’s top stand-up comedians. Show is for ages 21+. Doors open 7 p.m.; for more info and tickets for shows, see tinyurl.com/yc5p3wdr.

Grounds clean-up
Saturday, April 29, 9 a.m.
Join others at Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh for an hour or more of volunteer grounds clean-up, opening buildings and preparing for the season. Rokeby officially opens Saturday, May 13. Check in when you arrive and spend as long as you want. Drinks and snacks provided. Dress comfortably; bug spray, hats and sunscreen recommended. More info at rokeby.org.

Emerge and connect
Saturday, April 29, 9:45 a.m.-4 p.m.
Gather with a small group of women for a day of joyful connection. Tune into your body, mind and soul as spring unfolds with possibilities and discoveries. Some tickets remain for this special day at All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. More info and registration at tinyurl.com/w28nwndh.

Vernal pool residents
Saturday, April 29, 10 a.m.-noon
The Middlebury Area Land Trust invites families for some hands-on exploration of the inhabitants of a vernal pool near the Otter Creek Gorge in Middlebury. See what you find in the way of spring critters as the pool wakes up. Free event is great for all ages; dress for woods walking and bring whatever you need to be comfortable outside. Pre-registration is required. For details on this and future events, see maltvt.org/events.

Music and community
Saturday, April 29, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
The Vermont Folklife Center presents a workshop for those interested in using digital media and community interviewing to create polished audio stories. The focus is on the role of music in our lives. Discover ways of connection with your subjects to promote social engagement and change at the Old North End Community Center in Burlington. For more info and registration, see tinyurl.com/yjhkn69p.

Fruitful foraging
Saturday, April 29, 1-5 p.m.
In this practical workshop, learn to

recognize edible plants and responsibly forage for home use at North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier. The walk covers about a mile; dress and bring with you anything you need to be comfortable outside. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/mse82bup.

Focus on the stars
Saturday, April 29, 6-8 p.m.
Families are invited to build a telescope at Catamount Outdoor Family Center in Williston. Learn about telescope history and engineering, then head out for a stargazing adventure. No experience necessary. Class is led by Cheryl Owens of Art Adventure Box. Read more and register at tinyurl.com/2dtzrbzh.

Pink Talking Fish
Saturday, April 29, 8 p.m.
Pink Talking Fish calls themselves a hybrid tribute fusion act. Their show at the Essex Experience in Essex Junction celebrates the musical phenomenona that are Pink Floyd, The Talking Heads and Phish. Expect to be transported into the rich musical past with the lights and songs you love. More info and tickets at tinyurl.com/msm5xd7c.

Costumes encouraged
Saturday & Sunday, April 29 & 30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
All things sci-fi and fantasy will be at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction. Family-friendly event with activities, characters, workshops, vendors and lots more. More info is at tinyurl.com/27588ux5.

Intervale nature day
Sunday, April 30, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Burlington’s Intervale comes alive with families and activities on this day organized by City Market. Learn about local climate initiatives, flora and fauna, foraging, conservation efforts and help plant some ferns to establish and reclaim habitat. Dogs welcome when on leash. Free event requires pre-registration at tinyurl.com/2fjrffxd.

Steel-string Americana
Sunday, April 30, 3-4:30 p.m.
Locally known blues guitarist Paul Asbell brings his variety of bluesy jazz and roots music to the First Congregational Church in Essex. More info and tickets are at tinyurl.com/4myfb9xu.

Play with the orchestra
Sunday, April 30, 4-5:15 p.m.
A community play-along with members of the Vermont Youth Orchestra takes place at the Elley-Long Music Center at St. Michael’s College in Colchester. Event includes a rehearsal and program run-through. Please RSVP by Friday, April 21. More info and access to all music parts at tinyurl.com/6wbv3zf4 or call 802-655-5030.

Farm to Ballet tickets
Monday, May 1
Locals know that tickets for the popular Farm to Ballet productions go fast. The troupe performs at seven Vermont locations in July. Tickets for all shows, including one at Shelburne Farms, go on sale Monday, May 1. More info at tinyurl.com/4kjvv3mj.

Chamber music ensembles
Monday, May 1, 7:30-8:30 p.m.
University of Vermont music department students are joined by community musicians in this program for strings and piano at Recital Hall on South Prospect Street in Burlington and is free. For more info and calendar of future events, see tinyurl.com/mr2xc7sf.

Grab-and-go meal
Wednesday, May 3 deadline to order
Age Well and St. Catherine’s of Siena Parish in Shelburne provide a to-go meal, ready to pick up between 11 a.m. and noon on Tuesday, May 9, for anyone aged 60 and older. To order a meal, please contact Kathleen, by Wednesday, May 3, by emailing agewellstcath@gmail.com (preferred) or calling 802-503-1107. Meal pick-up is in the parking lot at 72 Church St. in Shelburne.

Cookbook author shares passion
Thursday, May 4, 6-7:30 p.m.
Vermont transplant and chef Gesine Bullock-Prado speaks about her new cookbook “My Vermont Table” at the South Burlington Public Library on Market Street. Hear about the Vermont products she loves to use in her recipes. Learn more about this free event at tinyurl.com/dpmn9buu.

Tree planting event
Thursday & Friday, May 4 & 5, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Help plant small trees along the Lewis Creek in Hinesburg to improve habitat, prevent erosion and promote clean water. This Vermont Land Trust event is free, and you’ll receive much gratitude and satisfaction for your efforts. Suggested to bring: shovels, gloves, bug spray, water, sunscreen, hats, snacks and waterproof shoes. For more info and to register, see tinyurl.com/yckzd4th.

Old cemetery spring meeting
Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m.
The Vermont Old Cemeteries Association will hold its spring meeting social and lunch with a social hour 9-10 a.m. with coffee, tea, water, cider, muffins, quick breads or coffee cake, and lunch at noon with tossed salad, mac n cheese, chili, corn muffins, fruit bowl, cookies and assorted beverages at St. Peter’s Parish Hall, 85 South Maple Street, Vergennes. Make reservations by mailing a check for \$15 payable to: St. Peter’s Church (cemetery). Mail to: Jeanne Jackson, 420 Jackson Road Panton, VT 05491-9734. Please let us know if you have any food allergies. The speaker will be Gary DeCarolis, operator of the Burlington History Tours. He has written three books including “A View from the Balcony” and most recently his autobiography “My Way.”

Traditional music festival
Thursday-Sunday, May 4-7
Young Tradition Vermont, part of the Vermont Folklife Center, presents numerous concerts showcasing young musicians who play or dance to traditional music. Most events are at Contois Auditorium in downtown Burlington. For all the info and tickets, see tinyurl.com/n9ps9sk5.

Famous burger nights
Fridays beginning May 19
Friday burger nights 4-7 p.m at Bread and Butter Farm in Shelburne sell out fast, so check the website at tinyurl.com/fm36pzsfto to sign up. Six dinners are held during the summer with homegrown food and live music.



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

Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 20, 7-9 p.m.

Trails Committee Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, May 2, 6:30-8 p.m.

Charlotte Energy Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 3, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Regular Meeting
Thursday, May 4, 7-9 p.m.



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Library News

Help with this spring’s edition of library garden

Margaret Woodruff
Contributor

Spring has sprung. The daffodils are up and the garden is emerging from winter’s chill. If you’d like to help out at the library gardens, email seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org to join the Garden Circle.

Seed Library requests are coming in fast and furious. If you’re looking to add to your vegetable garden with tried and tested seeds, from local gardens, check out the 2023 seed library catalog at bit.ly/3F8S75D.

New programs include “Mending Matters” hands-on workshop with Colleen Brady on May 1, as well as a three-part webinar series on Sustainable Fashion and Textiles on Wednesdays beginning April 26.

Children’s programs

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

No registration required.

Kindergarten/first grade after-school story time Tuesdays, 3 p.m.

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.

Project Micro

Monday, April 24, 2 p.m.

Jan Schwarz will bring microscopes, hand lenses and lots of spring material to study. Registration required, ages 7 and up. This is a live event on the Charlotte Library porch. Registration required. Please email youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org

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. Note: No Book Chat on April 19.

Crochet & Knit Night

Wednesdays, 5:30-7 p.m.

Claudia Marshall is your host for a casual weekly session of crocheting and chatting, knitting and catching up. Bring your project or start a new one with yarn and needles

available at the library, along with plenty of books to instruct and inspire. For teens and adults.

Book discussion: Treeline

Monday, 7 p.m., April 17-May 22

“The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth” has been called a page-turner that poetically challenges us to confront the elephant in the room. This will be a six-part discussion of this landmark book. Join us in-person (tinyurl.com/2p8zx2cj) or via Zoom. (bit.ly/3E3RPwE).

Book discussion: Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow Thursday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.

Spanning 30 years, from Cambridge, Mass., to Venice Beach, Calif., and lands in between and far beyond, Gabrielle Zevin’s “Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow” is a dazzling and intricately imagined novel that examines the multifarious nature of identity, disability, failure, the redemptive possibilities in play, and above all, our need to connect: to be loved and to love. Yes, it is a love story, but it is not one you have read before. Register in advance at tinyurl.com/2p8ckaaz.

Landscape History with Samantha Ford Sunday, April 23, 2 p.m.

Landscape historian Samantha Ford “peels back the layers of time” in this talk to interpret 300 years of land-use history in Vermont through cultural clues left in our wooded hillsides. Stone walls, cellar holes and forgotten ornamental plantings help to piece together the history of these old farms, which are often hiding in plain sight. Learn how to recognize these clues and piece together the story of the land. Co-sponsored by the Chittenden County Historical Society, the Charlotte Library and the Charlotte Senior Center. This program takes place at the Charlotte Senior Center.

Sustainable Fashion Innovations Wednesdays, April 26, May 3 and 10, noon

Sustainable fashion, or eco-fashion, is the movement towards more “responsible” methods throughout apparel production, consumption and more. This follow-up webinar will highlight sustainable solutions to combat fashion’s unethical practices. We will learn what being more “responsible” means for all the affected stakeholders. As an expert in sustainable fashion, Kelly McDowell will provide solutions for you to be a more conscious and ethical consumer. Register at tinyurl.com/379aakhw.

“Transition”

Wednesday, April 26, 7 p.m.

Feature-length documentary film by

Sas Carey about a young woman doctor whose life shifts from a reindeer-herding settlement in the taiga to Mongolia’s capital Ulaanbaatar. Discussion with Carey. Co-sponsored with Sustainable Charlotte.

Men’s Book Discussion: Empire Falls Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 p.m.

Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Walk & Talk Book Club:

Changes in the Land

Saturday, April 29, 11 a.m.

Rescheduled. Join librarians from Hinesburg, Shelburne and Charlotte for our next tri-town book walk. We’ll discuss William Cronon’s book, “Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England” on a walk through the Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge led by Vermont master naturalist Jane Dorney. Look at the landscape through Cronon’s lens. Meet at the Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge entrance on Greenbush Road.

George Lakey: Dancing with History Sunday, April 30, 3-5 p.m.

George Lakey, activist and author, will speak in Charlotte about his memoir, “Dancing With History: A Life For Peace And Justice,” about a whole range of issues he has embraced. Lakey has been active in direct action campaigns for seven decades and was first arrested at a Civil Rights demonstration in March 1963. His most recent arrest was in June 2021, during a climate justice march. A Quaker, he has been named Peace Educator of the Year and was given the Paul Robeson Social Justice Award and the Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Award. His previous books include “Viking Economics: How the Scandinavians Got it Right — and How We Can, Too” and “How We Win: A guide to Nonviolent Direct Action Campaigning.” Registration required at tinyurl.com/2p8u4nb8.

Mending matters

Monday, May 1, 6-7 p.m.

Give life to your old clothes. Learn how to hem pants, replace a button, fix a hole in a sock and more. Bring in your old favorite (clean) clothes in need of mending to take part in this hands-on workshop with Colleen Brady. For all ages from tweens to adults.

Edward Hitchcock: America’s First Dinosaur Expert, Tuesday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Edward Hitchcock was one of 19th-century America’s most eminent scientists. He was the first American scientist to publicly embrace the theory of continental



glaciation, but he is better known for his landmark research on what he called the “fossil footmarks” of the Connecticut Valley. In his Zoom presentation, Robert McMaster will review the life and legacy of Hitchcock, particularly his central role in developing our understanding of dinosaurs and his work in Vermont where he completed the first geological survey of the Green Mountain State in 1861. Register at bit.ly/3DVjRuc.

Short story selections

Wednesday, May 3, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will include a variety of authors, and one or two stories will be featured each session. Copies of the stories are available at the library circulation desk or via email. Register at tinyurl.com/bdnhh86f.

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 this Thursday, April 6, online and in-person. Please contact the library or visit the library website at charlottepubliclibrary.org for more information.

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October 1–March 31, seven days a week, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
April 1–September 30, call Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.



In-Person Medicare Products Seminars

Monday, April 24
2:00 p.m.

Core Burlington
Senior Center
20 Allen Street
Burlington

Thursday, May 25
10:00 a.m.

MVP Health Care
62 Merchants Row
Williston

Online Medicare Products Seminars

Thursday, May 11
2:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 18
1:00 p.m.

Dates and times are subject to change.

MVP Health Plan, Inc. is an HMO-POS/PPO organization with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in MVP Health Plan depends on contract renewal. For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings, call 1-800-324-3899 (TTY 711). Other physicians/providers are available in the MVP Health Care network. MVP Health Care complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex (including sexual orientation and gender identity).

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Senior Center News

Celebrate spring by birding, kayaking, paddling or perusing plant sale

Lori York
Director

With the warmer weather, it's the time of year when everyone wants to be outside. Senior center volunteers are gearing up for outdoor activities ranging from birding, kayaking and paddling, to the annual senior center plant sale. Now is also the time to get into shape for summer activities by attending one of the daily exercise classes offered at the center.

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.

Senior Resource Fair Wednesday, May 24, 3-5 p.m.

Stop by the senior center for the first annual Senior Resource Fair and learn about all the great resources available to seniors in the community. Check out the Charlotte Senior Center website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/senior-resource-fair for a list of the 30 organizations who will be attending.

Annual plant sale Saturday, May 27, 9 a.m.-noon.

Stop by the senior center's annual plant sale and stock up on a great selection of annuals and perennials at great prices. Rain or shine.

If you're dividing perennials in your garden, pot (and label) a few to donate to the sale. Drop off plants at the center any time between Friday, May 19, and Wednesday, May 24. Need help digging? Please call 802-425-6345 and leave your name, address and phone number. Questions? Call Sukey Condict at 802-877-2237 or email Polly Price at ppolly62@ymail.com.

Grow a pollinator garden Thursday, April 20, 7-8 p.m.

Everyone is becoming more aware of the importance and plight of pollinators. Pollinating insects, birds and other creatures are essential not just for flower gardens, but also the food we eat. Charlie Nardozzi will discuss the essential ingredients of a successful pollinator garden, including habitat, water, shelter and best gardening practices for pollinators, including pollinators besides honey bees and plants that are best for pollinators, with emphasis on the open pollinated varieties. Cost: Free. Registration recommended.

Watercolor painting Tuesdays, May 2, 9, 16 & 23, 9 a.m.-noon

Join Lynn Cummings in this four-week workshop exploring spring-themed subjects and techniques to achieve spontaneous, fresh looks in your paintings. Cost: \$160. Registration and payment required by April 25.

Kirtan Friday, May 5, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Charlie Nardozzi and Heidi Kvasnak welcome the sweet energy of spring by singing together, Kirtan style. Kirtan is a heart-centered community practice of singing ancient yogic chants (songs) that are simple and repetitive accompanied by the harmonium, sitar, tambura and drums. Chant sheets will be available and there will be time between the chants for short, quiet meditations. Registration required; space is limited. Free but donations appreciated.

Women's kayak trips planning meeting Friday, May 12, 11 a.m.

It is time to plan the kayak trip season. Please email Susan Hyde at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com if you are interested in leading or finding out more about becoming a leader.

New Paddling Group forming!

There is interest in starting a new paddling group at the senior center. Open to all skill levels. To find out more contact Dean Tuininga at dean.tuininga@gmail.com.

Segel Family piano concert Wednesday, May 10, 1 p.m.

The Segel children will play piano at the Charlotte Senior Center. Juna (15), Jack (13), Hannah (8) and Ada (6) will be playing pieces from all different genres, including both classical and sacred music. The music they will be playing includes a trio, a violin duet and the Tarantella by Peczsonka. Cost: Free. Registration recommended.

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

Join Phyllis Bartling in this Pilates class, for folks 55 and over. The workout includes upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises. The exercises will work core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture. Cost: \$8 a class. No registration required.

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

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

Meals

Menus are posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Thank you

A heartfelt thankyou to Fat Cow Farm in Charlotte for their donation of humanely-raised, antibiotic and hormone free meat for the Monday lunches. The volunteer cooking teams and participants greatly appreciate this generous gift.

Monday Lunches

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

Weekly Age Well Grab-&-Go meals

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

Senior Center contact info

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

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at charlotteseniorcentervt.



Photo by Lori York

Carol Pepin, senior center Age Well volunteer, left, and Kerry Batres from Age Well at a recent Monday Munch promoting the Age Well restaurant ticket.



Photo by Phyllis Bartling

A recent hybrid pilates fitness class at the senior center.



Photo by Lori York

A workshop by Peg Maffit about important documents that your family would need to access in an emergency drew a large crowd.

Write Ingredients

Travel world of shepherd's pies at senior center

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Come for Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center and enjoy food from around the globe.

Cottage pie, also known as shepherd's pie, is a savory dish of cooked minced or ground meat topped with mashed potatoes and baked.

Wikipedia lists how this dish is known in other countries:

- Empadão: Portugal. Meat, often veal, stewed in a tomato-based gravy and layered several times between mashed potatoes. Poultry or fish is sometimes used instead of meat.
- Escondidinho: Brazil. The name, indicating "hidden," describes the way sun-dried meat is covered with a layer of manioc purée. The dish often includes cheese and chicken; cod is sometimes used instead of beef.
- Pastel de carne: Uruguay. Sliced hard-boiled eggs are added to cottage pie.
- Pastel de papas: Argentina, Chile. Similar to cottage pie, may also contain peppers.
- Pastel tutup: Indonesia. Made with any of several meats, with vegetables such as carrots and green peas and eggs.
- Pate Chinois: Canada. A bottom layer of beef, a middle layer of creamed sweetcorn, topped with mashed potato.
- Shepherdless pie: a vegetarian version.

Although it's unlikely you'll see the busy volunteer cooks dancing, the mashed potato dance has been around since the 1950s. Watch at [youtube.com/watch?v=oVj0wIP_a1E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVj0wIP_a1E).

Coleslaw comes from the Dutch term koolsla, meaning "cabbage salad."

Sherbet finds its origins in Turkish and Persian words that trace back to the Arabic word sharba, meaning "drink."

Here's your chance. In 2003, in Anzola dell'Emilia, near Bologna, Italy, Gelato University was established, with the aim of teaching students from around the world

how to make gelato ice-cream, a second cousin to sherbet. Among many online offerings, an upcoming course offers instruction in the best teas to use in gelato recipes.

Monday, April 24

Register for Thursday's Grab-&Go Meal

Register at meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org or 802-425-6345.

Monday Munch

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

Cottage pie, cole slaw, dinner rolls and rainbow sherbet.

Thursday, April 27

Grab-&Go Meal Pickup time 10-11 a.m.

Chicken with gravy, mashed potatoes, sliced carrots with parsley, Texas toast with butter, pumpkin custard with cream and milk. You can find out all about Texas toast at Wikipedia.

Monday, May 1

Monday Munch

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

At press time, the volunteer cooks are still planning for a happy May Day. For a menu update, go to [charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals](https://www.charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals).

Thursday, May 4

Grab-&Go Meal Pickup time 10-11 a.m.

Chicken with Marsala sauce with mushrooms, mashed potatoes, carrots, wheat bread with butter, blueberries and strawberries in yogurt and milk.

Thursday Grab-&Go Meals are provided by Age Well. As with all meals at the senior center, a donation of \$5 is suggested but not required. Pay what you can, when you can.



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