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The Charlotte News

Thursday, June 1, 2023 | Volume 65 Number 24



Photo by Lee Krohn

The Charlotte News

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Vol. 65, No.24

HONORING OUR LEGACY



Photos by Scooter MacMillan

Above: A group gathered on Memorial Day in Grandview Cemetery behind Charlotte Congregational Church to remember those who died in the military defending the United States. Combat veteran Jordan Paquette asked that, during the day's holiday fun, everyone take time to remember the ultimate sacrifice so many have paid to preserve democracy.

Left: Sarah Stein and Oliver Smith leant a solemn mood to the ceremony by playing "Taps."

After the ceremony, people pitched in to replace the flags on veterans' graves with new ones.

Selectboard looks at pros, cons of town manager switch

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

The selectboard is committed to sharing information with Charlotte residents about the advantages and disadvantages of switching to a town manager form of municipal government versus sticking with a town administrator.

Sharing information about the proposed switch was a goal that members of the selectboard repeatedly promoted at a special meeting to discuss with advocates of the change and other residents the proposed switch on Tuesday, May 23.

But, as it was eventually pointed out later in the meeting, there is a question of whether it will even matter if residents know about the change.

Lane Morrison, the de facto leader of a group that has collected enough petition signatures to require a special vote about the proposed change (but has so far delayed submitting that petition in order to negotiate with the board), said he wasn't sure if informed residents translates into voting residents.

Although he supports continuing to spread information about the pros and cons of having a town manager, Morrison said, there's already been a lot of information about the issue in town newspapers and social media. "This has been going on for two months."

The town budget, that was defeated on Town Meeting Day, and the vote on the revised budget, that was passed, both got a lot of impassioned people speaking at

selectboard meetings and posting on social media, but few residents voted.

Morrison said it could be apathy or it might be that residents have confidence in the decisions town officials are making.

"I think we need to continue to communicate, but on the other hand, I don't think we're going to get 1,300 voters out," he said.

A town manager is like a CEO, who gives a board of directors more time to work on their company's policies, direction and major problem solving. A CEO and a town manager handle more day-to-day routine responsibilities, Morrison said..

A town manager has more responsibility than a town administrator to handle things like purchasing issues, contracts, leases, human resource issues and supervision of town buildings. And, Morrison said, if the town completes the transition to making the Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service a town department, the selectboard could put a town manager in charge of that.

Various selectboard members have criticized the group of petitioners for raising the town manager issue at this time when so much of their attention has been focused on the budget and then revising it. They have wanted to know: Why now?



Morrison said the group was pushing for a town manager now because current town administrator Dean Bloch is retiring in October. Bloch, who may be second in popularity among Charlotte town officials only to road commissioner Junior Lewis, has reportedly rebuffed all pleas for him to stay on.

Things are getting more complex and look to get even more complex, and Bloch's retirement makes this a good time to talk about making this change, Morrison said.

He used the selectboard meeting on Monday, the night before, to illustrate his point. That meeting had an agenda with almost 20 items to cover and was scheduled for two and a half hours but

took three hours.

He argued that with a town manager selectboard meetings would be shorter. The switch wouldn't cost any more in salary because, as an experienced town employee, Bloch's pay is in the average range of town managers' salaries in Vermont.

Both Shelburne and Hinesburg have town managers and their selectboard meetings usually last only two hours.

"The curb cuts, the \$200 refund for the permit," Morrison said, "I don't think you guys should be wasting your time on that."

Other big issues are on the horizon, or even on this side of the horizon, that he believes the selectboard needs to be focused on, include the new town garage and the property reappraisals that are predicted to have many landowners "jumping up and down."

Board member Louise McCarren was very concerned that the switch would mean elected town officials, like the town clerk, road commissioner or auditors, would report to a town manager. Throughout the meeting, she repeatedly asserted she could not support that.

Morrison assured her that the elected town officials did not need to report to a town manager: "Each municipality is unique, and it's kind of a negotiation among the selectboard."

The selectboard can decide what works best and design an organizational chart of authority and responsibility specific to Charlotte.

Alexa Lewis is another member of the group pushing for a town manager, which also includes Jim Hyde, Charles Russell and Peter Joslin. She said one efficiency a town manager would introduce would be in the budget process, describing a process that would begin with the selectboard telling the town manager what its upcoming-year and long-term goals for the town are.

Then, the town manager would have the responsibility of talking to the different departments and committees and developing a tentative budget in line with what their

SEE **TOWN MANAGER** PAGE 2



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Prizes for kids now part of photo contest



John Quinney
Publisher and President

We launched our photo contest, “What Charlotte means to me,” in the last edition of The Charlotte News. Now we’re thrilled to announce that we have special prizes available for everyone under 18 years old:

- First prize — Four tickets to the ECHO Leahy Center (two adults, two kids).
- Second prize — A \$50 gift certificate from Cookie Love.
- Third prize — A \$50 gift certificate from Stones Throw Pizza.

So kids, get out there and get clickin’. We’re especially interested in learning about how young Charlotters feel about our town and what makes it special.

Here are the details: Photos are due by Friday, June 30. They should be submitted by email to Anna Cyr, our production manager, anna@thecharlottenews.org. Photos should be high resolution, 300 dpi. One entry per person, please. Your entry must include your name, age (if you’re under 18), address, phone number and email address (so we can notify you) and a brief description of how your photo expresses what Charlotte means to you.

Allowing wanton killing of coyotes is immoral

To the Editor:
In Vermont, coyotes are subject to hunting 365 days a year. Coyotes are killed any time, day or night, using high-tech game calling devices and thermal night scopes, oftentimes by brutal methods. We’ve seen photos posted by Vermont hunters displaying dead coyote pups strung from utility poles; whole families nailed to trees; coyotes mauled by hunting hounds, and other harrowing images. Coyote hunting standards should be fair, and brought into the 21st century. But Vermont Fish & Wildlife continues to put their head in the sand and promotes the status quo.

Thanks, in part, to wildlife advocacy organizations like the Vermont Coyote Coexistence Coalition and Protect Our Wildlife, Vermont enacted a ban on wanton waste last year. Unfortunately, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife commissioner did not support including coyotes that are hunted in the wanton waste ban. He did, however, mention an interest in pursuing discussions to limit the coyote hunting season. But that was merely lip service.

Based on the commissioner’s purported interest in a limited coyote season, in March 2022, Vermont Coyote Coexistence Coalition submitted a petition to Vermont Fish & Wildlife for a limited season on coyotes taking pup rearing into consideration. It’s important to note that even if Vermont had a limited coyote-hunting season, landowners would still have the right to kill coyotes year-round if they were causing problems under title 10 §4828. Over a year later, Vermont Fish & Wildlife denied our request. The reasoning: killing coyotes 365 days a year does not impact their population. Ethics and science be damned.

The best science available informs us that killing coyotes does not reduce their overall population and may, in fact, cause increased breeding. Problems arise with surviving coyotes when the pack’s delicate social hierarchy is impacted if the mated pair (alphas) are killed. The open season

causes problems with coyotes and humans because of pack disruption. The current open season leaves pups orphaned every year and greatly contributes to wanton waste. This wanton killing is emblematic of a Fish & Wildlife Department and Board that remains unconcerned with animal welfare and promoting hunting ethics. Most animals have hunting seasons out of consideration for birthing and nursing mothers, but not coyotes. That is simply immoral.

A common refrain, that we hear from the most misinformed, is that coyotes are vermin or invasive. We routinely hear Vermont sportsmen say “kill ‘em all” or “the only good coyote is a dead coyote,” and other commentary that conveys total disrespect for these social, intelligent and ecologically vital animals. That kind of rhetoric is largely due to Vermont Fish & Wildlife’s betrayal of these animals; they have tacitly labeled coyotes as worthless. The department is aware of how horribly coyotes are treated and how badly they are maligned and misunderstood.

Coyote hounding, a recreation that is not only antithetical to good science but also tramples on Vermonter’s property rights, is yet another failure by Vermont Fish & Wildlife. During last year’s legislative session, Act 165 was passed that forced Vermont Fish & Wildlife to regulate coyote hounding. Not surprising, they squandered the chance for real change and stayed as close to the status quo as humanly possible. Hounders are still allowed to leave out bait piles to attract coyotes. They can run their dogs miles away from the hounders, and as long as the hounds are wearing GPS and shock collars, they’re considered “under control.” They still allow multiple dogs to chase and kill coyotes.

The only path forward now, for any meaningful wildlife protection, is with legislation. While Vermont Fish & Wildlife remains stuck in the 1950s, our wildlife continues to suffer unthinkable cruelties and wanton killing.

Jane Fitzwilliam
Putney

sounded a little defensive and threatened since the petition came along.

It sounded like the board was upset because they were consumed with revising the defeated budget and that was keeping them from thinking about a long-term change to the town structure, Russell said. “That’s exactly why you want to be able to delegate that stuff to somebody.”

He outlined the budget process as having two parts: One is long-term, policy-driven decisions about what the town is trying to accomplish; the other is the nuts and bolts of moving dollars around to make that happen. The second part would be the responsibility of a town manager.

As others had proclaimed earlier in the meeting, Russell said the switch from a zoning board to the development review board “has been a huge success for this town.” This change would be similar and allow the selectboard to work on planning and policy.

Bill Regan also said he was not part of the petition group, but that he would be the third person that night to comment upon how silly it is for the selectboard to be spending so much time on decisions about curb cuts.

As the meeting wound down, it devolved into a confusing conversation with people talking over each other while the board tried to discuss holding another meeting. It seemed like the board would be talking about posting for candidates to fill Bloch’s position the next time it meets about this issue.

Faulkner said the next discussion of the issue would be at the next regular meeting of the selectboard, but the first regularly scheduled meeting of the board is on June 12. However, on the town’s website there is a special meeting scheduled for this coming Tuesday, June 6, to continue the discussion of a town administrator versus a town manager.

TOWN MANAGER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

research had found and the selectboard’s wishes.

Joslin said there are a lot of action items in the town plan, only one of which has been completed. Some are marked ongoing and a good many have completion dates that have passed. This is a situation this selectboard has inherited, but it is still the board’s responsibility to get these items done.

“Some of them are pretty minor, and some of them are quite major,” he said.

Among issues that come up over and over, which Joslin thinks the selectboard should have more ability to focus on, are lack of growth in the village districts; lack of housing, particularly for moderate- and lower-income folks; the new town garage; the governance of the fire and rescue service; speeding issues; authorizing events at the town beach; and protecting areas of high public value.

He said a town manager could orchestrate so many things that would free up the selectboard to focus on the future and accomplishing goals that are impossible for them to concentrate on now.

The board appears ready to recruit a person to fill Bloch’s position who could perform the duties of either a town manager or administrator.

Pre-COVID, state statute requires that residents approve a change to a town manager in a special town election by voice vote. However, at this time, board member Frank Tenney said, a voice vote is not required because the governor has not lifted the COVID provision allowing votes by Australian ballot instead of voice vote. He thought, but wasn’t sure, that provision will end in July.

Some people have said they want to have more contact with the selectboard, board member Kelly Devine said. “A

“I do think that we have to go through a process where we have to hear from folks in Charlotte what they really want.”

— Kelly Devine
Selectboard, board member

town manager is a fundamentally different reporting structure for the citizens.”

“It’s a big decision to make. I don’t feel like it’s my decision,” she said. “I do think that we have to go through a process where we have to hear from folks in Charlotte what they really want.”

And Faulkner said it was wrong to assume that if the town hires a town manager that “magic happens. There’s no magic.”

“You can hire a bad manager; you can hire a bad administrator,” Joslin said. “The important thing is: You make the decision on the direction that you want to go in and hope that you get a good person.”

Although he believes that selectboard meetings would be shorter with a town manager, Tenney believes that would mean less public input on the town manager’s decisions.

Devine agreed it might mean less public input, but she doesn’t personally think that’s a bad thing. Still, she wants to hear if the public thinks it’s a bad thing.

Mike Russell, who made it clear he was not a part of the ad hoc group lobbying for a town manager, said the selectboard has



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.

Send submission, questions, photos, etc. to Scooter@thecharlottenews.org

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

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- 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.
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Postmaster/Send address changes to:
The Charlotte News, P.O. Box 251,
Charlotte, VT 05445 Telephone: 802-425-4949
Circulation: 2,100

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Celebrating music

Photos by Scooter MacMillan

Below right: Residents from Charlotte were well represented at Radio Bean in Burlington on Friday, May 26.

Below: World music label Putumayo celebrated 30 years since it was founded by Dan Storper (fourth from left). Charlotter Jacob Edgar (third from left) is head of music research, a job which has taken him all over the world searching for musicians. Putumayo has released about 300 CDs and more than 35 million records. Six international artists performed, some located in Montreal and Burlington.

Right: Haitian Canadian singer Wesli was one of the Putumayo artists helping celebrate the label's three decades of world music.



Report from the Legislature

Legislative session is like a whole year takes place in a day



Chea Waters Evans
State Representative

On a recent night, I cooked a meal for my kids for the first time in maybe three weeks. The house looks like we might have been mildly robbed, the backseat of my car is full of blazers I took off the second I finished my workday and chucked over my shoulder, and my lawn looks like a dandelion farm. But even though no work took place in this house, plenty went on for the final few weeks of the legislative session at the State House.

It was thrilling and boring and confusing and enlightening and complicated and an experience that makes the phrase “drinking from a firehose” seem synonymous with “sipping champagne from a little silver straw.” There was so much to learn, and such a short period of time to learn it in, but now at least I have six months to prepare

for the next session. And in this session, I only dropped one f-bomb and only cried a few times, but all in all, my first year as a state representative was the experience of a lifetime. (We’re heading back for a few days in June for a veto session.)

I’m proud of the work we did as a group on childcare, climate change, school meals, VT Saves and other bills that will hopefully make life better and easier for Vermonters. In my committee, House Government Operations and Military Affairs, we worked on legislation that was as simple as changes to town charters to as complicated as developing a state-wide EMS dispatch system. We started the investigation process for impeaching a sheriff and a state’s attorney, we updated some cannabis laws (more on that next time), and we finalized legislation to legalize online sports betting.

I’ve heard from many Charlotters and Hinesburgers about legislation as it makes its way through the process, and I was surprised and delighted at how much feedback I got — even when it was feedback that instructed me to enjoy

myself because I’m going to get voted out next time. Yay Democracy! I tried really hard to reply to every email, especially to the people who weren’t happy with me, because I truly value all opinions and that’s what informs the way I vote and structure my priorities.

Over the summer, I’m going to work on a few things, including specific concerns that people need some help with. (Did you know you can ask me to help you with stuff? I might not know the answer, but I made some friends and figured out at least who I can ask if I don’t.)


I’m also going to work on seeing if we can develop a comprehensive system for animal cruelty reporting and animal welfare, look at modernizing open meeting laws, and learn everything I can about fossil fuel alternatives and the possible outcomes of the legislation that aims to move energy consumption away from them.

I know some are disappointed that I voted to override the governor’s veto on that bill, S.5, which some affectionately call the Affordable Heat Act and some, less fondly,

call the Unaffordable Heat Act. It’s true that we don’t know if this will work as intended; it’s true that this causes worry for many. I don’t want anyone to think I took this vote lightly, or blindly voted along party lines, or didn’t consider all points of view.

The next two years on that bill will be a test, and I assure you that I’ll be cramming for this test like no other in my life, even more than that test freshman year of college when I had to fill in a blank map of all of the countries in the entire world. The best way to understand a problem is to read about it and talk to people about it, and now I have a lot of time to figure out what we need to see two years from now when it comes up for a vote again. (Assuming, hopefully, that the gentleman who wants me to only have one term doesn’t get his wish.)

I hope to continue updating you until the next session, and I’m happy to get into the nitty-gritty on certain bills or issues if you’d like. Just let me know what they are: cevas@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231.



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Peace Corps experience changed lives of volunteers

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

They came from all over the United States and were going to live in a foreign country for two years where most of them didn't speak any of its languages.

They were enthusiastic and idealistic. They were in their early 20s and had recently graduated, lots from Ivy League Schools. Some of them had teaching, clerical or administrative work experience. A few had done manual labor. In their bios for the Peace Corps, lots of them said they liked tennis and skiing.

It wasn't in their bios, but it goes without saying: They all were going to change the world.

Maybe they did. It's interesting to ruminate on how the world might be different if there had never been a Peace Corps.

Jim and Susan Hyde of Charlotte were part of a group of 40 Peace Corps volunteers who were sent to Upper Volta in 1967. It was a time when so much was new. The Peace Corps had just been started in 1961 by President John F. Kennedy, the darling of that era's optimism. Upper Volta had only recently thrown off the shackles of colonialism, becoming completely independent of France in 1960. In 1984, Upper Volta became known as Burkina Faso.

Over the years, the Hydies have remained close with the other volunteers who went to help in the former Upper Volta. In fact, they've just returned from a spring reunion in Monterey, Calif. Of the original group of 40, 28 attended. There have been several such reunions since the late 1960s.

A few years after returning, Jim and Susan Hyde began to date. They've been married for over 50 years.

The Hydies say they were changed by their two-year experience in the landlocked country in west Africa. Like most of the Peace Corps volunteers, they knew very



Courtesy photo

Susan and Jim Hyde are third and second from the right in this photo from Pacific Grove, which is just south of Monterey, Calif., where 28 of 40 Peace Corps volunteers to Burkina Faso in 1967 joined for a reunion this spring.

little about Africa, little about the country they were being sent to and even less of its languages.

Almost all of the volunteers came back to the United States determined to commit their lives to some sort of service.

"There's not very many of us that are investment bankers or private lawyers. Everybody went into things that have some obvious social engagement involved," Jim Hyde said.

In the years since, Hyde served in public health and nutrition, work which took him back to Africa a number of times, working in areas around Niger and other countries to its east and South Africa.

But neither he nor Susan have been back to Burkina Faso.

"The Peace Corps no longer can function in places like Burkina Faso because it is too dangerous," Jim Hyde said. With the United States and France seeming to have

lost interest, "global politics have entered the lives of people in ways that it was hard to imagine 50 years ago."

Muslim fundamentalists have begun to exert influence in countries in the area such as Mali, Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso.

About a third of the people of Burkina Faso are Muslim but far from fundamentalist, or at least weren't when the Hydies were there. About a third are Catholic and the other third are animist with no organized religion.

Russia and China are also working to exert influence for geopolitical and economic reasons. Besides wanting more world power, those two countries value the area for its mineral resources.

"Mainly, it's all about electric cars and lithium, uranium and everything else — not because anybody cares much about the people," Jim Hyde said.

Russia, in particular, has sought to increase its power the area, while gaining support in the U.N., through the use of proxies such as the Wagner Group, which has been helping prop up authoritarian governments in many of these countries, he said.

The Wagner Group is a private paramilitary organization that Russia has used in military operations.

Other members of the Hydies' group of Peace Corps volunteers did go back to Burkina Faso. They have established programs to support such things as women's education, well drilling and artists and crafts co-ops.

"It's a drop in the bucket, but it's a start," Jim said and shared these links to help: friendsofburkinafaso.org and bfgef.com.

Their Peace Corps experience was a startling experience for both of them. Susan Hyde grew up on a farm in a little town. She went to a relatively big city of 10,000 in Burkina Faso, while her future husband was from Manhattan and was sent to a village of 200.

Training lasted three months in the Virgin Islands where they learned some French. Although the majority of the population of Burkina Faso were of the Mossi ethnic group and spoke Mooré, there were other ethnic



Courtesy photo

Jim Hyde and Marvin, a monkey he purchased to keep him company in the small village in Burkina Faso where he worked to get wells dug.



Courtesy photo

This is one of the children being weighed in a wellness visit that Susan Hyde helped with during her time in Burkina Faso.

groups with different languages. However, many had learned French when the country was a colony.

Many of the chiefs had pretty good French from their experience fighting in Europe during World War II.

With her bachelor's in history from Swarthmore, Sue Hyde didn't know much about maternal and child health, but that was what she worked on, going out to smaller villages to meet with women. They would weigh babies and do shows to illustrate nutrition, wellness and what to do if a baby had diarrhea or if a mother couldn't breastfeed. The polio vaccine had only been out for a short time and hadn't reached the hinterlands of the country, so she helped with polio vaccine drives.

They had to straddle a very wide cultural and experience gap, Susan Hyde said.

SEE **PEACE CORPS** PAGE 5



Courtesy photo

Two of Jim Hyde's fellow Peace Corps well diggers troweling concrete to the sides of a hand-dug well.

PEACE CORPS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“The women were used to listening to their mothers and grandmothers, not to white women who had never had children.”

Much of Jim Hyde’s time in Burkina Faso was spent on a motor bike driving in the bush on dirt roads which were not as good as Charlotte’s gravel roads. He would visit three or four villages a day, trying to convince village chiefs of the advantages of organizing a group of men to dig a village well. He would talk them into gathering sand and gravel that could be mixed with cement so that when the well was deep enough the walls could be covered with concrete.

They dug the wells with shovels, some of which were more than 100 feet deep and might take two or three months to dig. Many are still standing, protected from the rain by their concrete walls.

“It was a very concentrated experience. There was no escaping your life,” Susan Hyde said. “There was nothing to do.”

No TV, bars or some place to get a drink, no soccer arenas. No cars.

They did have books. The Peace Corps gave each volunteer a locker with 300 books. There were three different versions of the book lockers, so when they had read all their own books, they swapped books with someone with a different selection.

And they got to know each other and the people of Burkina Faso pretty well.

Jim Hyde said, “The only option was to just became totally acculturated.”

The well diggers had even less access to the other Peace Corps volunteers because they were spread around the country in small groups. Jim started out in a group of three. They were eventually split up and sent to live in different small villages.

Monkeys are not indigenous to Burkina Faso, but he bought a monkey and named him Marvin. Although they were constant companions for a year and half, Marvin wasn’t the best partner. He wasn’t cuddly and occasionally bit visitors.

Jim discovered that his monkey had another bad habit. His motor bike had started running rough and had become hard to start. One day he saw Marvin take off the gas cap and pee in the tank. Jim Hyde bought a screw on cap. After that, the bike ran great.

When he returned to the United States, he had to leave Marvin behind. He suspects the villagers may have eaten the monkey after he was gone.

The Peace Corps was a life-changing experience. It’s hard not to be shaped by the experience of witnessing people working daily to survive and provide for their families. Jim Hyde said, “Nothing comes easy — not water, not food, not education, not health care.”

Susan Hyde said, “My Peace Corps experience has been the lens through which I interpret the books I read, the events I attend, the volunteer work I do and the people I meet. Experiencing and living in a culture so different from my own allows and requires me to see world news and events from many points of view.”

There are lots of Peace Corp volunteers around Charlotte, Jim Hyde said. The ones he knows all brought back a commitment to thinking of ways to share knowledge and promote understanding of the part of the world where they served with Americans whose lives are “incredibly insular.”

“We use the term Africa as if it were one place when in fact it is composed of 48 countries on the continent plus six island nations, as different as Alaska is from Florida,” he said.

Their story is of one of those countries 50 years ago, Jim Hyde said. Although much has changed, much has stayed the same.

“What hasn’t changed is the diversity of people, geography, language and culture,” he said. “The other thing sadly that hasn’t changed in 50 years is our general lack of understanding of, or interest in, African affairs. We are further imperiled by our seeming lack of interest and concern for what happens on the continent.”

Around Town

CONDOLENCES

Sadly, we said “so long” to **Richard Harry Preston** on April 25, 2023, after a rewarding life of 91 years. A dedicated father, husband, brother, grandpa, friend and veteran.



Richard Harry Preston

Much of his childhood was spent in Charlotte on his uncle’s farm. He left home to join the Navy, the first of many life experiences.

He married Wilma (Ward) Preston, enjoying a marriage that lasted 63 years until her passing in 2019. Together they raised their three children in their Charlotte home of 56 years. Their home became a hub for good times for their grandchildren.

He was a 60-year member of the Freemasons, and along with Wilma, a member of the Order of the Eastern Star, LaPlotte Chapter #64. They made many lifelong friends doing charity work, all the while having fun.

He really came alive when performing, which he and Wilma did together for 25 years with the Order of the Eastern Star group. He was a talented musician, comedian and character, making friends literally wherever he went. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and traveling to new places and seeing the sights. He embraced what life had to offer and left his family with

countless good memories, grateful with full hearts.

Richard is survived by three children: Ward Preston and wife Debbie, Diana Preston Thut and partner Patrick, Laura Mack and husband Steve. Seven grandchildren: Dylan, Morgan and Kacy Preston, Rachel, Sarah and Abigail Thut, Dallas Mack, and four great-grandchildren.

The family offers special thanks to all his caregivers, especially Susan Brewer and the Bayada Team for their kind and compassionate care.

There will be no visiting hours or services per Richard’s request. Please consider a memorial donation to the O.E.S LaPlotte Chapter #64, 9 Jenna Lane #311 Milton, VT 05468 or to the Make a Wish Foundation.

CONGRATULATIONS

Jayce Slesar of Charlotte received his master of science degree on May 20 from the University of Vermont in complex systems and data science.

Isa Kaplan of Charlotte, a member of the class of 2024 majoring in electrical and computer engineering, was named to the Worcester Polytechnic Institute dean’s list for the spring 2023 semester. Kaplan recently completed a project titled Heating Greenhouses without External Power. At Worcester Polytechnic Institute, all undergraduates are required to complete a research-driven, professional-level project that applies science and technology addressing an important societal need or issue.

To Advertise in

The Charlotte News

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Courtesy photo

An agricultural school from 50 years ago that students attended until about the fifth grade, learning reading, writing and what were “modern” farming techniques at that time. When the Hydes were in Burkina Faso, the schools had almost no books, supplies or tools to demonstrate techniques and relied upon the ingenuity of the teachers, who did an amazing job with very little. Rural education has certainly improved since then.

Volunteering

Connect with United Way volunteer opportunities

Megan Bridges
United Way of Northwest Vermont

United Way’s Volunteer Connection site is set up to help connect agencies and volunteers. Agencies are working hard to navigate volunteering during this time, but opportunities are increasing. Link to Volunteer Connection here unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com to learn more about these and other opportunities:

Relay for Life — The American Cancer Society will be holding its annual Relay for Life of Chittenden County at the Champlain Valley Exposition on June 9 and 10, from 6 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. They are looking for volunteers to help plan and execute the Society’s signature event as well as volunteers for the day of the event. The Relay celebrates the lives of people who have battled cancer, remembers loved ones lost and fights back against this disease. Volunteering for Relay for Life is a fun way to meet new people and share their fight against cancer. Contact Tanya Walker at 802-698-0344 or email Tanya.Walker@cancer.org.

Community dinner — ONE Community Center holds community dinners on the second Thursday of the month at 20 Allen Street in Burlington. They are looking for volunteers to serve two- to four-hour shifts 8-9:30 p.m. Additional volunteer shifts are also available during the month. Contact Jess Hyman at jessicahymanvt@gmail.com.

To Market, To Market — Burlington Farmers Market has a broad range of volunteer opportunities available for their Saturday farmers markets in Burlington. Volunteers can greet and direct marketgoers, take photos, collect stories from vendors and customers, process



food benefit transactions, help vendors and help with setup and breakdown. Shift times are flexible between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. Contact Georgie Rubens at manager@burlingtonfarmersmarket.org.

Food To Go — Feeding Chittenden needs volunteers to prepare boxes of nutritious food for delivery to local families. Tasks include repackaging donated bulk food items, organizing the space, tidying up and unloading trucks. Volunteers can also help with home deliveries using their own vehicles. Flexible weekday schedules. A three-month commitment is desired. Contact Edie Braimes at ibraimes@cvoeo.org or apply at www.feedingchittenden.org.

Meals for Kids — The Family Room has available volunteer opportunities to help prepare nutritious kid-friendly food for snacks and lunches for its playgroups and preschool. Tuesdays-Fridays between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. They are also looking for volunteers to help with indoor and outdoor gardening. Flexible scheduling. Contact Sarah Sinnott at sarah@thefamilyroomvt.org.

Go solar



Photo by Rebecca Foster

Solarize Charlotte is committed to helping residents go solar. The first step to paying for your electricity bill with solar power is a free site visit by one of the program’s partner installers. Marcus Shapiro of Green Mountain Solar and Lewis Mudge discuss the best way to get the job done on the Mudge homestead — a ground mount system around which the chickens, dogs and guinea fowl can roam.

Schoolhouse memories



Courtesy photo

Suzanne Foss shared this photo of Charlotte School No. 2. Known as the Spear School, this school was on the north side of Ferry Road, just west of Lake Road. This photo was taken in 1949, Foss’ first-grade year. The next year she was in the new consolidated school at Charlotte Central School, along with all the other Charlotte students from the 14 one-room schoolhouses. Foss (née De Wispelare) is the second girl from the left in the plaid dress. After closing this school building was moved to a nearby residence to use as a garage. If you know who the others in this photo are or have any other information, we would love to hear it at scooter@thecharlottenews.org.



NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

June 15
Copy Deadline: Friday, June 9
Ads Deadline: Friday, June 9

June 29
Copy Deadline: Friday, June 23
Ads Deadline: Friday, June 23

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Music At The Beach

June 7
Vermont Youth Orchestra

July 19, 26 & August 2
VSO String Quartet

Picnicking at 5 p.m.
Music at 6 p.m.

FREE with season beach pass or paid day pass

Donations Encouraged
Rain Site will be at the Charlotte Senior Center
Send questions to billandeva@gmavt.net

The Charlotte News is proud to support this event

Hi! Neighbor

Christy and Knut Feiker: Sharing the power of flowers

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

Christy Feiker came home from a business trip to North Carolina with tales of a flower farm she had seen there.

“She saw how much joy it brought to the people who were coming to that town,” her husband Knut recalled. “She wanted to bring something similar to our community, so people could connect outdoors and have the power of flowers.”

The couple decided to create Glory Flower Farm which opened last year on Church Hill Road.

Christy is a midwife and Knut is a chiropractor, but the pair has some agricultural background. Christy worked in the Kettle Moraine State Forest in Wisconsin restoring native prairies while Knut was part of an organic vegetable farm at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina.

In 2018, the pair moved to Vermont and after renting a place on a farm in Monkton, they moved to Charlotte in 2019.

“We moved because of the land,” Christy said. “The house was a major fixer upper.”

Knut added that the Green Mountain State was a good match for the couple because of their love for the mountains and desire to live in a place where people seemed more in tune with nature.

Knut was worried about the amount of work the flower farm would entail but said he and Christy are passionate about helping both people and the planet to heal. All four of their children – aged 8 to 21 – have been involved in the operation.

Christy described 2022, their first year, as amazing. “I just felt so grateful for all the people who came and gave us great reviews,” she said.

“Life gets busy with kids and work and you don’t always get outside enough, so it gives me an opportunity to be present and out in nature, nourishing myself and my soul.”

— Christy Knut

One woman told her it was the best outing she had ever done with her daughter. Several parents said it was the first place they had taken their newborns.

Last year, Glory Flower Farm was purely a pick-your-own operation, but this year the couple is experimenting with a 10-week bouquet subscription. They haven’t set an opening date but are looking at June 24 as a possibility. The farm will be open from 4 to 7 p.m. on Wednesdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.

They’ve just suffered a bit of a setback with the freezing of 300 cosmos seedlings but believe that was the only damage from an unseasonably cold May night.

Christy and Knut are about to celebrate their 10-year anniversary selling dōTERRA essential oils. The duo are firm believers in natural medicine and feel that the line of oils complements their work. Christy said natural oils provide a solution for problems in areas including emotions, energy, and sleep.

“Essential oils are an empowering tool for the modern family who is looking to take ownership of their health,” she said. “It’s like a flower in a bottle.”

Christy has been a midwife since 2005 and has been in the health care field as a

women’s advocate for over 25 years. She attends home births and assists those giving birth in a hospital as a doula. Christy notes that natural birth isn’t for everyone but for those who want to have the experience at home, she is happy to provide that option.

“Birth is a deeply personal experience and making a profound choice on the way we want to give birth is empowering,” she said.

Knut works at Healing Point Chiropractic in South Burlington. He describes himself as a holistic chiropractor. His specialty is a gentle form of adjustment which focuses on the upper cervical region and helps people with musculoskeletal issues like headaches and back pain.

“I really believe we are much more complex than just our bodies,” he said, “and body, mind, and spirit are important aspects of our health and wellbeing.”

Knut also recommends lifestyle changes and the breaking of destructive habits to go along with the adjustments.

Last year, the Feikers held a Paint and Sip event at the farm which attracted 50 painters and roughly 25 others who were there for the food and cocktails. They are planning a similar event this year and will be hosting yoga with Roam and Om on



Photo by Leah Licari

Christy and Knut Feiker enjoy reveling in the beauty of nature.

July 20.

“Seeing people taking their time, picking flowers and letting their guard down is pure joy,” Christy said.

“Life gets busy with kids and work,” Knut said, “and you don’t always get outside enough, so it gives me an opportunity to be present and out in nature, nourishing myself and my soul.”

Education

Reflecting on this year’s highlights while planning for next

Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

As the 2023-24 school year ends, the administrative team has reflected on highlights of the last nine months and on events yet to come.

Currently, the school is welcoming in a new cohort of kindergarten students, while preparing for eighth grade graduation.

The staff has been assessing the academic growth of students, while also developing curriculum and materials for the coming school year. Charlotte Central School has worked to create an interconnected community, while honoring individualistic traits of all of its members.

The administration has been planning the departures for some staff, while hiring new educators for next year. The school has been appreciating all of the contributions and brilliance Courtney Krahn brought to the learning community as assistant principal, while opening up the hiring process for her replacement.

Summer construction plans

Summer 2023 construction plans are underway for Charlotte Central School. Work will primarily focus on the fire suppression system and electrical. The majority of the work will be external and on the first floor of the building. The community will notice safety fencing around the front of the building, with parking on the west side of the school being restricted. More details will be available when the plans are finalized.

Publicly funded early childhood education

Champlain Valley School District is offering publicly funded prekindergarten for children between the ages of 3 and 5 (on or before Sept. 1, 2023) who live in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George or Williston.

The full registration packet is available on the Champlain Valley School District’s website at tinyurl.com/c33rbswe.

For more information about publicly funded prekindergarten or if there are concerns about a child’s development, please visit the CVSD website or contact Erin Gagne at egagne@cvsdvt.org.

The early education team provides developmental screenings in the areas of communication, social-emotional development, motor skills, adaptive



The Charlotte News file photo.

development and cognition. If you have questions about the CVSD Act 166 registration process contact Suzanne Curtis at scurtis@cvsdvt.org or 802-985-1903.

Now enrolling for the 2023-24 school year

Charlotte Central School would appreciate it if anyone who knows of a family that has moved to Charlotte and is planning on having kids attend the school would please spread the word to them that teams are deep in the placement process for next year. It would be very helpful to have more information about children joining the school for next year.

New families should call or email Naomi Strada at 802-425-6600 or nstrada@cvsdvt.org.

Champlain Valley hockey

For students interested in honing their hockey skills this summer, Champlain Valley Union High hockey is offering skill sessions for incoming freshmen-seniors.

The program will start June 28 and continue most Wednesdays and Sundays until August 13. The sessions will be held at Leddy Park and the cost will be \$175 (scholarships are available). For questions or to sign up, contact head coach J.B. Benoit at cvuhockeycoach@gmail.com.

Dates to remember:

- Charlotte Central School Jazz Band at the Discover Jazz Festival on Wednesday, June 7, on the Mall Block of Church Street from 1:40-2:20 pm.
- Family Fun Day for Vermont Make-a-Wish Foundation — Saturday, June 10, 4-7 p.m. at CVU. Music, games and more. Tickets required.
- Summer Symphony Camp — June 26-30 - learn more at vvo.org.
- Vermont Jazz Camp — July 24-28 - for details please visit vtjazzcamp.com.

Sleeper hit



Courtesy photo

Charlotte resident Schuyler Edgar Holmes, a drama major at Bishop’s University in Sherbrooke, Quebec, appears in the school’s production of “The Drowsy Chaperone.” The musical runs through June 10. Tickets are available online at tinyurl.com/yjwp8vkh or by phone at 819-822-9692. Holmes is a graduate of Charlotte Central School and Champlain Valley Union High.

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Sports

CVU ends regular season No. 1 with first-round bye

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Entering the playoffs, it’s home sweet home for the Champlain Valley Union High baseball team.

The team started the season with one of its goals to enter the playoffs ranked No. 1, so they would hold home-field advantage. Mission accomplished.

After stumbling and losing two games in a row (to South Burlington and Mount Mansfield), the Redhawks regained their balance and won out the rest of the regular season, ending with an 11-2 record.

Another advantage of the high seed is that it came with a first-round bye in the single-game elimination playoff tournament.

The first game of the Redhawks’ postseason will be a quarterfinal match at CVU at 4:30 p.m., this Friday, June 2, against Colchester. Colchester defeated St. Johnsbury 7-1 in a first-round game on Tuesday.

“We have shown throughout the season that we deserve to be there in the end, by playing the hardest schedule,” assistant coach Samuel Fontaine said. “However, we know that it will not be given to us, as there are many great teams out there.”

With limited varsity experience and not much time playing together when the season started, Fontaine said the team had to discover its identity. The players have proven to be hard working and found mettle.

“Many believe that at CVU, it is a championship-or-bust mentality, which is simply not true,” he said, adding the program “is about the positive experience for the fans, the coaches, and most importantly, the student-athletes. Success is just an added bonus.”

CVU 5, BFA-St. Albans 1

On Thursday, May 25, CVU ended its regular season with a win at Bellows Free Academy in St. Albans.

Stephen Rickert picked up the win for the Redhawks, pitching five innings. He gave up a walk and three hits, while striking out seven.

Russ Willoughby led the scoring for CVU, going 1-for-3 at the plate with a double and an RBI.

CVU 7, Colchester 6

The Redhawks celebrated Senior Day with a squeaker win over Colchester on May 23 at CVU.

Tied at 6-all in the seventh inning, CVU won the game on a walk-off error by the Champs.

Elise Berger was credited with the win after an inning of relief pitching.

Robbie Fragola led the scoring for CVU with two RBIs. Chase Whitman and Malaki Callahan each had an RBI.

The Redhawks got on the board first with two runs in the second inning, but Colchester pulled in front with four runs in the third and added to their lead with two more in the sixth to go up 6-2.

CVU knotted things up with four runs in the sixth.

The graduating seniors honored at this game were Fragola, Jason Douglas, Zach Santos, Colby Galipeau, Chase Whitman, Chris Robinson, Asa Roberts, Lewis Kerest, Jack Richburg, Kyle Tivnan, Evan Statton and Alex Provost.

CVU 8, Essex 5

The Redhawks added to their win total on May 20 with an 8-5 defeat of Essex on the Hornets’ home field in a win that was also

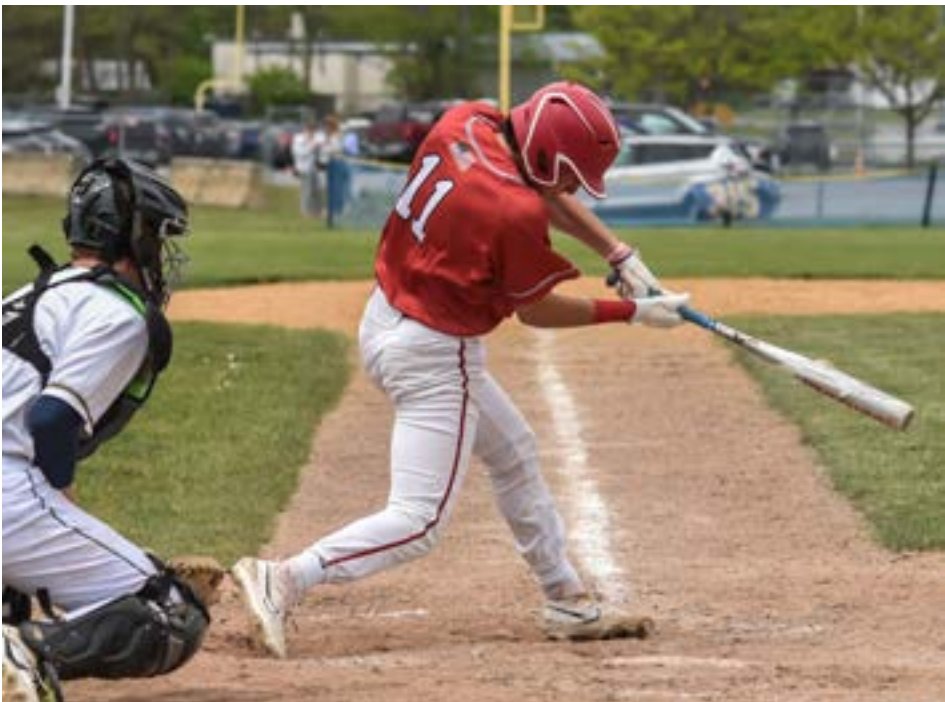


Photo by Al Frey

Calvin Steele knocked in a go-ahead single in the sixth inning, setting up an 8-5 win over Essex High on May 20.

undecided until late in the game.

Rickert went 1-for-2 at the plate with a single, which brought in the game-tying run in the fifth inning.

Calvin Steele put the Redhawks ahead for good with an RBI single in the sixth.

Jack Richburg tossed six innings for the win, giving up five hits, five errors and six walks to go with three strikeouts.

Berger came on for one inning of relief in the seventh inning and sealed the win, giving up a hit but striking out two.

CVU 4, Rice 3

The Redhawks began a stretch of three close, late-inning wins with an eight-inning victory over Rice 4-3 at CVU on May 18.

Rickert performed the heroics for CVU with a game-winning RBI single in the eighth for the walk-off win.

Travis Stroh led at the plate and on the mound, knocking in two RBI and claiming the win with two innings of relief pitching. Stroh was 2-for-3 at the plate with a triple.

Outdoors

Volunteer to remove aquatic invasive species and improve wetland health

Kate Kelly
Lewis Creek Association

Have you heard about all the non-native invasive species in Lake Champlain? These include 50 species of plants, animals and pathogens that were introduced to the Lake Champlain basin. Some were planted because they had pretty flowers. Others got here through ballast or bilge water from boats. These non-native species (species that were not present at the time of European settlement) can, in some cases, spread and take over (becoming invasive) because they have no natural predators. This can cause a major problem for ecologically rich natural areas, not only for our native plants and animals that get choked out by these intruders, but also for people who like to recreate on the water.

Plants like water chestnut, European frogbit and Eurasian watermilfoil can grow so thickly that it is difficult or impossible to boat, swim or fish in. Some of the aquatic invasive species you’ve likely heard about (like zebra mussels) can be difficult to control. Others, like European frogbit, are more easily removed in order to limit their spread. Lewis Creek Association has been working closely with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and the Lake Champlain Basin Program since 2009 to monitor and remove European frogbit, water chestnut, yellow iris and flowering rush in Town Farm Bay in Charlotte and the LaPlatte Natural Area in Shelburne. These two areas are very diverse ecologically, and many people recreate there, making control of non-native invasive species critical.

When frogbit was first discovered in Town Farm Bay in Charlotte, there was over 50 percent cover throughout the wetlands. The LaPlatte Natural Area had lower frogbit levels to begin with, due to earlier detection. Lewis Creek Association (funded by the towns of Charlotte and Shelburne) organized groups of volunteers, such as the Charlotte Land Trust, Lake Champlain boat launch stewards and other interested community groups, to rake frogbit off the surface of the water in these areas. Through this work, the cover has been reduced from 50 percent to 5 percent or less annually and has held there thanks to long-term and annual maintenance efforts of volunteers. This spring, the Lewis Creek Association will be leading volunteers again to remove frogbit. We will lead groups in June and July to remove frogbit in Charlotte and Shelburne.

The specific dates will be set later. All the equipment is provided, so all you have to do is show up and paddle a canoe or kayak, raking plants off the water surface and putting them into a bucket or laundry basket on your boat. While paddling, your leaders will help identify as many animals and plants as possible. You’re almost sure to learn something new out there. If you’re interested in joining Lewis Creek Association for an enjoyable paddle, while making a difference in the health of your local wetland, contact Kate Kelly, Lewis Creek Association program manager, at lewiscreekorg@gmail.com. Even better, get a group of friends together and sign up together to make a difference.

Circulation/Saturday Librarian

The Charlotte Library is looking for a community-minded team player to serve as Circulation/Saturday Librarian beginning July 1, 2023.

Duties for the 16-hour a week position include:

- Maintain circulation records such as patron registration and collection tracking
- Communicate with patrons and other libraries regarding overdues, restrictions and invoices
- Assist Inter-Library Loan Librarian with management of ILL services
- Manage and coordinate library operations on Saturdays.


Ideal candidate will have excellent communication skills, organized work habits, eye for detail, comfort working in a busy and varied setting, collaborative ethic, and, ability to use and create reports and spreadsheets.

A bachelor’s degree or equivalent experience as well as past library experience preferred.

A full job description can be found here: <https://bit.ly/30qT3rt>. The pay range is \$17.00 to \$21.35 depending on experience.

To apply, please send cover letter and resume to Margaret Woodruff, Library Director: margaret@charlottepubliclibrary.org. Deadline: June 5, 2023.

The Charlotte Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



In the Outdoors

June introduces lots of fauna pleasures to Vermont

Elizabeth Bassett
Contributor

What unfolds in Northern Vermont during the month of June?

As we move into summer, heat shapes our activities and daylight approaches 16 hours. The giddy energy and excitement of spring have dissipated yet there’s still plenty of action in the natural world, even if it’s obscured by leafy canopy, verdant understory and fast-growing ground cover (yes, dandelions, too).

We await the annual visit of our neighborhood snapping turtle. For many years she dug a nest hole for her eggs in our driveway to take advantage of the heat that would incubate her offspring over the summer. Last year, she chose not to cross the busy road (a good decision) and laid her eggs at the edge of the pavement not far from the pond she calls home.

I’ll be on the alert during the first two weeks of June. Over the years I have been startled to encounter her while hanging laundry or weeding our garden. One never wants to mess with an adult snapper.

Birds and waterfowl are sitting on eggs or caring for their young. Through binoculars on a recent paddle, I spotted an adult osprey returning to the nest carrying a fish. It then used its hooked beak and talons to tear off pieces of flesh for an attentive juvenile, whose head was visible over the side of the nest. A teaching moment at the dinner table.

It’s common to see parades of goslings trailing a pair of Canada geese on land or water. These families will remain together through the summer, as well as both fall and spring migrations. Only next spring will the yearlings, not sexually mature for

another year or two, leave their parents as the latter start another family.

Later this month and into early July, loon chicks will hatch. They are immediately capable of swimming and diving for minnows. Most loons in the state nest on quieter lakes with less traffic than Lakes Champlain and Iroquois, but both have supported loons in recent years. If you spot a nest, keep a safe distance and slow down as wakes can swamp and endanger a family of loons.

Vermont is home to 12 species of snake. The world has warmed enough by late May that these reptiles are out and about. In recent weeks I’ve been startled by a few garter snakes, tongues wagging as they slither across the leaf litter. Common garter snakes and eastern ribbon snakes are most numerous in the state. The tongues of snakes are information gatherers, collecting chemical information signals. If a scent is stronger on one side than the other, the forked tongue delivers that data to an organ below the nasal passage that interprets — is this food or danger?

After they emerge from winter slumbers, green, black and yellow-striped garter snakes sun themselves near their dens. The Vermont Center for Ecostudies writes that they then search for mates, occasionally creating “mating balls,” multiple males competing for the attention of a single female.

The less common ribbon snake is found most frequently in fields and open areas near water. It sports black and yellow stripes with a deep chestnut stripe running along its side and white markings on its face.

Anyone who reads Front Porch Forum



knows that bears, both adults and young, are out and about in Charlotte. If you have not already done so, please, please take down your bird feeders. Once bears find an easily accessible source of calories, they are likely to return, putting residents at risk, particularly if there is a cub with the mother. Bears that return may be tagged and ultimately euthanized if they become an ongoing risk to humans.

An unalloyed pleasure of summer is the sparkle of fireflies. Starting life as larval glowworms, they pupate in late spring and soon emerge as winged beetles. These fireflies court mates during our dark hours.



Each species of firefly has a characteristic pattern of flashes used to attract the opposite sex at night. It’s a wonderful, silent light show.

Savor the pleasures of June!

Gardening

Maximize enjoyment, minimize effort with no-till raised beds

Bonnie Kirn Donahue
University of Vermont Extension

Raised beds are a great way to minimize effort and maximize enjoyment of vegetable and flower gardens.

Plants grown in raised beds are easier to access because they are higher off the ground and have less surface area that needs to be weeded. The compact size also limits the space and number of plants you can grow.

One issue is that it can be difficult to maintain fertility and essential nutrients in raised beds. The best way to determine what nutrients are needed is to take a soil test. Soil samples can be collected and submitted to the University of Vermont Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab.

It is best to request a saturated media test for \$25 since soil in raised beds are more like high tunnel or container gardening soils as opposed to field soils. For information, go to go.uvm.edu/soiltest.

Another way to keep the soil in raised beds healthy is to experiment with no-till gardening. A no-till approach means that the soil structure is never tilled or turned over, staying intact year-round. When cut back, plants that are grown in the beds are returned to the soil to break down and provide nutrients.

To start a no-till raised bed, in the spring, add 1-2 inches of compost to the top of the soil without mixing it in. Plant your garden in the compost.

In the fall, cut back your plants without pulling up the roots. Disease-free plant material can be cut into smaller pieces and spread over the surface of the bed to break down through the winter.



Photo by Bonnie Kirn Donahue
No-till gardening in raised beds, a practice in which the soil structure is never tilled or turned over, is a low-maintenance approach that will help build healthy, fertile soils for healthy plants and good yields.

Plant a cover crop such as grain rye in the bed or add a layer of straw, hay or leaves to protect the soil through the winter. Wood chips also may be used but will take longer to break down, so should be used sparingly.

By the following spring, the organic material will have broken down. Without disturbing the soil, apply another one to two inches of compost on top without mixing it in, and then plant your garden in this.

Over time, the layers of organic material will break down and boost soil fertility and structure, providing healthy, strong and delicious produce for your table.

Looking for more details? Check out this University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension article at go.uvm.edu/no-till or your local library for books on the subject.

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

Weed’s in the Garden

Time to celebrate homegrown tomato season



Above: Colache Right: Caprese

Photos by Joan Weed



Spring garden checklist



Photo by Mel Green/Pixabay

Starting a backyard compost pile helps keep food scraps and yard waste out of the landfill while providing nutrient-rich matter for the garden.

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

Spring may be upon us, but winter is reluctant to let go. In the meantime, we’re all eagerly awaiting the time when we can head back to our gardens and get them into shape for the coming growing season.

If you didn’t do so during garden downtime, now is the time to order seeds, plants, shrubs and trees online or make a to-get list for shopping at your local nursery. While you’re at it, sketch out plans for new beds or additions to existing garden plots.

Temptation is all too real when browsing garden catalogs. The old adage that begins with “a place for everything” can help keep random purchases and dreaming too big under control.

Before the ground is workable, take some time to clean out and organize your garden shed or greenhouse. Make an inventory of garden supplies, in particular, tools. If you didn’t do so in the fall when you stored them for the winter, clean tools and perform any needed maintenance.

Do you need to replace hoses, or are you planning on putting in new beds? Make a note of anything that needs to be replaced and put those and any new items on your shopping list.

Now is also a good time to consider what additional gardening supplies you may need. Are you planning on growing crops that require support such as tomatoes? A wide variety of tomato cages and trellises are available. If you decide now, you can put supports in place at the time you plant to avoid disturbing the roots later on.

Once you have access to your garden, prune trees and shrubs as needed, but leave those that bloom in spring alone. If you prune spring-blooming shrubs such as lilacs and azaleas now, you’ll be cutting off this year’s flowers. Wait to prune those shrubs until after they bloom.

Even though you’ll be tempted to clean up the garden when the snow clears, wait until after daytime temperatures reach 50 degrees Fahrenheit for about a week before removing leaves and flower stalks that weren’t dealt with last fall. That will give beneficial insects that have been overwintering in the garden time to emerge.

If you don’t already have a compost pile, now is the time to start one. It’s the perfect way to recycle food scraps and yard waste with many options available for container size and type of composting. For more on composting, see go.uvm.edu/composting.

While you’re cleaning up the garden, watch for signs of perennial weeds and newly emerged annual weeds popping up in beds and along pathways. Remove them now while they’re young.

They’ll only hold on tighter the longer you wait. A few minutes weeding now is far easier than spending an afternoon fighting established weeds once warm and sunny spring weather has settled in.

Spring also is a good time to divide or transplant perennials. Take note of which plants need dividing and where you’d like to put them. Prepare any new beds.

Build, repair or replace trellises and other plant supports. Consider using tree and shrub prunings from the garden to build your own.

If you’re planning on starting seeds indoors, check to see if you have all the supplies you’ll need. Seed packets should include information on when to start those seeds. For more on starting seeds indoors, see go.uvm.edu/seedstarting.

Before you know it, the garden will be awake, and it will be time to venture outside and get down to work.

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



Photo by Kate Cox/Pixabay

Before the start of the growing season, gardeners should take an inventory of tools and other garden supplies, to determine what needs to be cleaned, maintained or replaced.

Commentary

Invest in farms, food and infrastructure for a healthy Vermont

Anson Tebbetts
Contributor

As spring comes to the Green Mountains, shades of green slowly paint the contours of our rolling hills, valleys, and farm fields. Farmers are planting crops; gardeners are sowing seeds in earnest. Food and beverages are making their way to market. Visitors are traveling to Vermont for food, drink, experiences, and beauty. Vermont once again unfolds into a new season, and the Green Mountains continue to provide the backdrop for farmers, producers and those making their living off the land.

Life meanders on, but clouds hang in the air as the Vermont Legislature, too, moves toward summer recess. If we do not invest in our food and farms, the system will suffer and along with it, the Vermont economy. Small communities in our rural regions are at risk. That is why the Governor, and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets are proposing that the Legislature invest more in Vermont’s aging agriculture infrastructure. It’s our turn.

The Legislature is considering a \$14-million-dollar package that will help Vermont produce more food for the region and make our farmers more viable. Investing in those who make their living growing produce means more local food can be sold at our grocery stores, farm stands, institutions, and farmers markets. It also means we can rely less on produce that is hauled thousands of miles before reaching our plate.

Investing in our hills and valleys means encouraging farmers to keep more animals

on the land. More Vermonters would like to raise beef, lamb, and goats but aging meat processing facilities are challenged and stretched to capacity. That’s why investing in meat processing is good for Vermont’s future. We benefit by being able to eat more local meat, and animals keep our land open.

Maple is rooted in Vermont’s history, while also blazing a trail to the future. This iconic industry is growing, with care and investment. The Governor’s proposal ensures that sugar makers of all sizes, shapes, and practices would be able to invest in their operations, expanding their reach to bring this natural sweetener farther into the market. Vermont is the leading producer of maple in the United States. Let’s stay on top by investing in our sugarhouses and sugarbushes.

Lastly, our working lands will retire unless we invest in their future. This is the 10th anniversary of the Working Lands Program. It has supported dozens of small businesses in the past decade, including entrepreneurs in Vermont’s dairy industry. For example, the Working Lands Program has supported new creameries, new products, and new companies. The Governor’s proposed budget invests \$4 million dollars in Working Lands because active agriculture supports the food and forest economy, the benefits of which are turned back into our rural communities. Let’s keep the momentum in our Working Lands moving forward before the Legislature adjourns for the year.

As the Legislature winds down, we encourage you to connect with your Representative or Senator about the importance of investing in Vermont’s



Field, flowers and sky in Cabot.

Photo by Anson Tebbetts.

future by supporting programs that help our rural villages and towns grow. This includes direct investment in Agriculture, but also financing expansions in broadband, water, sewer, and transportation. All these areas are also critical to the future of our Agriculture and those who feed us.

Those who work the land contribute to so many businesses, from hospitality to people who rely on farmers to purchase

supplies, feed, and fertilizers. Now is the time to invest in rural Vermont and Agriculture. Our farmers and those who support them in the Green Mountains are worthy of support and celebration - today, tomorrow, and every day.

(Anson B. Tebbetts is Secretary of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.)

Agriculture

Vermont farmers dealing with conservation rigmarole

Greta Solsaa
Community New Service

Vermont is the only state in the country where farmers cannot readily access a program meant to pay them back for restoring habitats around their farms.

It's called the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program — almost always referred to as CREP — and is run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency. Farmers who agree to use some of their land for wildlife habitats, runoff buffer zones or other conservation-focused projects over a 15-year contract get reimbursed.

But the program doesn't pay for projects that are required by regulations, and because Vermont's standards for conservation on farms mandate the same practices CREP covers, farmers here have to go through a separate application process with Washington, D.C., to get the funds.

"I am on the ground with farmers, and I see that what farmers need is for this to be simplified and streamlined, and they need access to more consistent, reliable funding," said Jennifer Byrne, manager of the White River Natural Resource Conservation District, one of several agencies around the state that have to sign off on CREP applications.

Vermont farmers must follow rules from the state called required agricultural practices, which aim to mitigate the impact of farmwork on wildlife, water and more. Even though the program covers more than what's necessary under Vermont rules, federal legislators didn't like the idea of paying for practices that are required by the state. So, in the 2014 federal farm bill, they made land subject to state conservation regulations ineligible for enrollment in

CREP.

Legislators tried to address that in the 2018 farm bill by creating a way for farmers to get approval for the funding, and now there is a special application process for Vermont farmers to enroll their land in the program. Farmers can also automatically re-enroll their land after 15 years and access CREP funding if their land was already enrolled in the program before the legislative change.

Before the change in federal law, farmers had been using CREP in Vermont: The state has more than 2,000 acres enrolled in the program. But in the first few years after the 2018 farm bill, the program was halted until officials were able to figure out the specifics of the application process.

Vermont remains the only state where farmers have to go through this rigmarole to get their land in the program, according to legislators, agricultural officials and farmers.

Neither of the farm bureau presidents in Addison, Windham or Orleans counties had heard of the program and found it difficult to find farmers in their networks who had experience with the program either. But some agricultural leaders pointed to Ramsey Mellish of Cutting Hill Beef Company in Hinesburg, who said he was able to renew the enrollment of his land in CREP and conserve the wetlands on his property.

"If you have area on your property that you're not using and you can't use — basically because it's too wet or too rocky or something — you can enroll and they pay you to do exactly what you're already doing, which is not using that parcel," Mellish said.

He said he recommends the conservation program to any farmers who have land they can't use for production purposes.

However, Ben Gabos — who coordinates CREP for the Vermont Agency of



Adobe Stock

Agriculture, Food and Markets — said the process to enroll land in CREP is unnecessarily backlogged.

"We need a specialist, a CREP specialist at the Farm Service Agency, and until we get that, that's really the backlog," Gabos said. "The local offices — they don't have the wherewithal to really deal with the sign-up."

According to Gabos, the solution would be to hire one person at the local level trained to handle the paperwork, rather than disbursing responsibilities between staff in different agencies who are not properly trained on the software to handle the requests.

Gabos thinks his agency would fund that position, but he said the structure of the Farm Service Agency has hindered that goal.

Eileen Powers, an agricultural program specialist at the Vermont branch of the Farm

Service Agency, agrees there is a backlog. Part of the reason why is the convoluted application process for a waiver. Farmers first ask for a recommendation from agency staff in their county; then they have to be approved by a county-level committee and a state committee before going to Washington, D.C., for a final yes or no.

"There's delays on three or even four levels," she said, and even once the application gets to the federal level, it typically takes two to six weeks to be approved. Powers said the pandemic also put stress on Farm Services Agency offices and slowed down the process.

But she said a solution will require more than just hiring one extra person at the local

AGRICULTURE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

level. The reason the agency has not yet created a position like Gabos mentioned, said Powers, is because rules prevent the agency from sharing data with non-federal employees. Since the position would be with the Vermont agriculture agency, the person who would be hired to fill it would have limited capacity to help process applications, Powers said.

But representatives of state and federal agencies are in negotiations to figure out what a role could look like to speed up applications.

There are other concerns in the bureaucratic maze. Byrne, the White River conservation district manager, said county-level agencies like hers in other states typically are highly involved in forming conservation plans with farmers for CREP projects. But that is lacking in Vermont, Byrne said.

District officials are supposed to sign off on conservation plans included in farmers’ applications, but they are not included in the development of those plans before that point, she said.

There are only two employees at the Agency of Agriculture who can intake farmers’ applications and create conservation plans — Gabos and fellow program coordinator Phillip Wilson — and Byrne said her district has well-trained field staff who, if enlisted, could help accelerate the process. But those staffers haven’t been included by the state, and Byrne doesn’t feel comfortable approving plans her group

hasn’t been a part of. She said there hasn’t been any improvement on that front.

Byrne also worries about equity with the program. She said farmers need to be in the know to seek out CREP resources and that there is a lack of transparency and accessibility about the application process.

“A really worthy approach would be to take a critical look at our programs and see what we can consolidate so that we could equitably get money out in a reliable way,” she said, “so farmers could do real financial planning, viability planning and conservation planning and actually make strides to address climate change.”

John Roberts, the executive director of the state Farm Services Agency branch, was a dairy farmer for more than 40 years and had his land enrolled in CREP. He said that “all of the players are aware” the language of the 2018 farm bill has caused complications for both government agencies and farmers — something he hopes legislators will address next time around.

“I believe that the (Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Farms and Markets) made this position clear to former congressional representatives that a change in the farm bill ... would hopefully remove this sort of extra step in the process,” he said.

He doesn’t think the back-and-forth over waivers provides any benefit to the government.

“And,” he said, “certainly it doesn’t to the applicant.”

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

Perennials for the long term

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

You’ve probably heard plants described as annual, biennial or perennial. You may have even heard some called a “tender perennial.” When planning a garden, knowing the difference can help you decide which type of plants you want to include.

An annual plant is one that completes its life cycle in one year. That means a seed is sown, germinates, grows, flowers, fruits, goes to seed and dies during one growing season.

A biennial plant completes its life over the course of two years. A seed will germinate and grow foliage during the first year, and in the second year it will flower, produce seeds and die. Foxglove (*Digitalis*) and hollyhocks (*Alcea rosea*) are examples of biennials.

In contrast, a perennial plant can live many years, depending on its cold hardiness. While it may take more than one year for a perennial to flower or reach its mature size, it will come back year after year.

Some, such as moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*), will remain evergreen over the winter. Others, such as hostas (*Hosta*), will die back to the ground after a killing frost although their root system will survive beneath the surface.

In the spring, they’ll reemerge. To make it easier to recognize them, it’s a good idea to mark the location of such perennials, particularly those that emerge later in the spring after weeds have begun to grow.

Some plants are referred to as “tender perennials.” These perennials will thrive outdoors only in warmer climates.

U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zone information can be found on perennial plant tags and in online descriptions. A higher zone number means a warmer climate, so a plant suitable for Zones 9-11 won’t survive the winter in Zone 4.

Tender perennials are often sold and treated as annuals in colder climates. You can check the hardiness zone for your location at planthardiness.ars.usda.gov.

Many houseplants are tender perennials. What does this have to do with selecting plants for your garden? Tender perennials such as fuchsia (*Fuchsia magellanica*) that are annuals in your garden can be overwintered indoors like houseplants and returned to the garden in the spring.

Perennials tend to be more expensive than annuals, but they’re an investment for the long term. They’ll come back each year, while new annual plants will need to be



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Although perennials, such as moss phlox, heuchera and hostas, are more expensive to purchase than annuals, one big benefit to adding perennials to the garden is that they will come back year after year, making the long-term investment worthwhile.

purchased. However, if you like to create a new garden design each year, annuals offer the opportunity to experiment with garden layouts and plant size, color, shape and leaf texture.

Flowers are another factor to consider. Annuals tend to have a longer bloom time than perennials. If you like colorful flowers all season long, annuals may be the best choice. Even if you prefer the longevity of perennial plants, including annuals in the bed will add variety and extend bloom time.

In new garden beds, allowing sufficient space between perennials to accommodate their size at maturity means there initially may be more space between plants than you would like. Annuals are a good solution. They will fill the empty spaces between young perennials. Each year fewer annuals will be needed as the perennials grow and mature.

Using annual plants is more labor intensive than using perennials alone. Annuals need to be replaced each year. In addition, annuals are likely to require more frequent watering since their root systems aren’t as extensive or deep as those of perennials.

Whether an annual or a perennial is the better choice for your garden is purely a matter of personal preference. Knowing the difference will help you build the best garden for you.

(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.

**Lift Every Voice
Through Saturday, June 10**

An exhibit of hooked rugs is on display through June 10 at Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh. The show, called “Lift Every Voice,” is included in museum fee. The rugs are reproduced from the “I Am the Black Woman” series by Elizabeth Catlett in 1947. For more info, see rokeby.org/lift-every-voice.

**Folk rock in South Hero
Thursday, June 1, 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

Snow Farm Vineyard in South Hero hosts the Ryan Sweezy Band at this kick-off event for their free summer music series. On-site food vendors, wine and other beverages available. No outside alcohol allowed; bring blankets or lawn chairs and picnics if desired. Dogs on leash are allowed; byo waste bags. For more info on the summer lineup, see snowfarm.com/summer-concert-series/.

**Vineyard 25th anniversary
Thursday- Sunday, June 1-4**

Shelburne Vineyard is celebrating 25 years over a four-day span with live music, food trucks, tours, tastings and more. Many events are free; food, wine tastings and some music require payment or tickets. For complete schedule and details, see tinyurl.com/422dm6rp.

**Richmond Farmers Market
Friday, June 2, 3-6:30 p.m.**

Volunteer Green in Richmond comes alive on Friday evenings, through Oct. 13, with live music, prepared foods, vegetable and craft vendors and more. Learn more at richmond-farmers-market.square.site.

**Burgers are back
Friday, June 2, 4:30-7:30 p.m.**

Tickets are available for all of the Bread and Butter Farm burger nights. Event is outdoors, rain or shine, so dress accordingly. To learn more and buy tickets for Burger Nights at tinyurl.com/bde3m8e4.

**Grange Hall tour plus pie
Sunday, June 11, 1-2 p.m.**

Come to the Grange on Spear Street in East Charlotte for a building tour with local historian Dan Cole. The Grange Hall served as a school for over 80 years. Cole will discuss the history and importance of Charlotte’s one-room schools. Enjoy a piece of homemade pie, with coffee or tea, and sit a while with neighbors and friends. More info is at charlottegrange.org



**Museum’s First Free Friday
Friday, June 2, 5-7:30 p.m.**

Enjoy the Ray Vega Latin Jazz Sextet at Shelburne Museum and purchase fine local foods from a variety of food trucks. Play lawn games or wander the campus. This is the season’s opener of free first Fridays. To learn more and see the full summer schedule, see shelburnemuseum.org/calendar/.

**Swing band in the park
Friday, June 2, 7:30 p.m.**

Burlington City Arts holds midday and twilight concerts, free and open to the public in City Hall Park. The Green Mountain Swing Band opens the evening series. For a complete calendar of all music, plus the Saturday art markets, see burlingtoncityarts.org/events.

Bixby Library book sale

Saturday, June 3, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Peruse used books and find bargains in Vergennes at the Bixby book sale.

Market in Montpelier

Saturday, June 3, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Montpelier’s farmers market is at 133 State Street in the capital city. Lots of vendors, food, music and community. Every Saturday through the season; free parking. More info at capitalcityfarmersmarket.com.

Girls on the Run 5k

Saturday, June 3, 10 a.m. race start
Sign up to be a running buddy or a community runner in this fund-raising 5K held at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction. Day-of registration opens at 7:30 a.m. onsite. To read more, see gotrvt.org/5k-essex.

Fungi foray

Saturday, June 3, 10 a.m.-noon
John Atkinson of the Catamount Outdoor Family Center in Williston takes all ages and levels of fungi familiarity on a trail walk at the center in search of specimens. Bring water, snacks, bug spray, camera and a container for your finds. For more info and registration, see tinyurl.com/rsbkx5et. Atkinson leads a fungi foray on bikes from 1-3 p.m. the same day. Explore the trails but go a little further afield. For all ages and abilities. More info and registration at tinyurl.com/4yzd26uf.

Focus on feathers

Saturday, June 3, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Artist Rachel Mirus leads an illustration workshop inspired by birds and feathers at the Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington. Field sketching materials provided. Bring your own natural materials to illustrate, if desired. Enjoy your own picnic lunch after the workshop; bring any items you need to be comfortable outdoors. Best for ages 13 and up. To register, see tinyurl.com/2p934yzv.

Woodside hike

Saturday, June 3, 1-3 p.m.
Audubon Vermont holds a Pride hike at Woodside Natural Area off Route 15 in Essex. All families and allies are welcome; bring water and whatever you need to be comfortable outdoors. Free. Register at tinyurl.com/2xtswpa7.

Evening of improv

Saturday, June 3, 6-8 p.m.
The Joslin Memorial Library in Waitsfield will come alive with historical vignettes,

acted out by Mad River Valley locals. In honor of the library’s 1913 birthday, actors perform short improv scenes depicting life when the library first opened. Free. For more info, see joslinmemoriallibrary.com/events.html.

**Student film festival
Saturday, June 3, 7 p.m.**

The Beyond the Peaks student film festival, held at the Strand Center Theater in Plattsburgh, N.Y., presents the award showcase featuring short films created by high school students in New York, Vermont and Quebec. Free. More info at tinyurl.com/224amsz2.

**Reading the landscape
Saturday-Sunday, June 3-4, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.**

Take part in an intensive field course for naturalists, professional or amateur, organized by the North Branch Nature Center of Montpelier in the Burlington area by Alicia Daniel. For more info on this and similar courses, see northbranchnaturecenter.org/biou.

**Weave a kitchen basket
Sunday, June 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.**

During this workshop at Red Wagon Plants in Hinesburg, participants will complete a small woven basket, perfect for collecting berries or storing countertop essentials. No experience required; all materials and instruction provided. To learn more and register, see tinyurl.com/yc4e85rv.

**Ladies rally
Sunday, June 4, 9 a.m.**

Fill your car with friends, tie on a colorful scarf and prepare to travel the roads in and around our beautiful area, making a variety of stops and having a festive lunch. Get the convertible ready for adventure during this fundraising event for the Vergennes Opera House. Any road-worthy vehicle may join this guided tour and all folks welcome, not just ladies. Leave the Vergennes Green promptly at 9 a.m. More info will be announced on the vergennesoperahouse.org site; register now at tinyurl.com/52vnzm7p. Call 802-877-6737 with questions.

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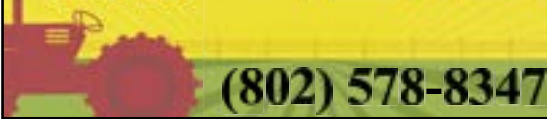
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Calendar of Events

Private gardens open
Sunday, June 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
The Garden Conservancy is pleased to invite the public to visit two private area gardens: Hidden Garden of Lewis Creek Road and Lincoln Hill Botanical Garden, both in Hinesburg. To read more and buy tickets, see tinyurl.com/ycye8mns.

House and gardens tour
Sunday, June 4, 1-2:30 p.m.
Visit historic Shelburne Farms, tour the Inn and learn about the surrounding formal gardens. To register and see a complete list of available dates, see tinyurl.com/2p89danz.

Brick House gardens
Sunday, June 4, 2-4 p.m.
Stroll through the lush gardens at the Brick House, part of Shelburne Museum and the home of Electra Havemeyer Webb, museum founder. Ticket includes garden-party themed food, house tours and one drink ticket. Peony bouquets for sale onsite. Read more and buy tickets at tinyurl.com/3653cehh.

Bach, Bach, Brahms and Britten
Sunday, June 4, 4 p.m.
Hear the Vermont Choral Union in their program, Hope Conquers Fear, at St. Paul’s Cathedral in Burlington. The acoustics are wonderful in this space. Tickets available at the door. Upcoming concerts are on the website at tinyurl.com/7nv73n47.

Brot Bakehouse School and Kitchen
Monday, June 5, 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Brot Bakehouse in Fairfax offers a workshop in sourdough techniques. Make flatbreads with the group and bring home a starter. Work with baker Heike Meyer and learn her sourdough tips. To learn more or register for this City Market class, see tinyurl.com/bd5pw6fv.

Dragons awake
Monday, June 5, 5:30 p.m.
It’s time to prepare the dragon boats for their season on Lake Champlain. Join members of Dragonheart Vermont, the local breast cancer support dragon boat organization, by getting boats ready for launch at Burlington’s Coast Guard station. This short ceremony is open to the public; find out more about joining a team or attending a practice session. More info at dragonheartvermont.org.

The science of forests and carbon
Wednesday, June 7, noon-1 p.m.
University of Vermont Extension forester Alexandra Kosiba discusses how forests sequester carbon and steps landowners can take to maximize sequestration

on their own land. Free online event requires registration at tinyurl.com/mryb88f5.

CHARLOTTE
Summer beach music
Wednesday, June 7, 5-8 p.m.
The Vermont Youth Orchestra kicks off the summer music offerings at the Charlotte Town Beach. Arrive at 5 p.m. for picnicking and music begins at 6 p.m. Free for season beach pass holders; all others pay regular parking fees. Cash or check donation hat is passed during these events. Please leave dogs at home. The series continues with appearances by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra quartet on Wednesdays: July 19, July 26 and Aug. 2. More info in future calendars.

CHARLOTTE
Charlotte Walks
Thursday, June 8, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
Meet with other Charlotters for a one-hour walk on the Town Link Trail. Pull in to Sweet Roots Farm on Route 7 and bear left toward the ballfield parking lot. Walk is at an average adult walking pace. Walks will be scheduled every second Thursday of the month, so watch this calendar for future walks.

Art reception
Thursday, June 8, 5-7 p.m.
Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury holds a reception for its new summer exhibits. Free event with live music. More info at henrysheldonmuseum.org/events.

The Pie Guy bakes
Thursday, June 8, 5:30-7 p.m.
Gary Stuard is known locally as the Pie Guy. Follow along with Gary as he demonstrates his unique recipe for raspberry rhubarb pie. Free online class, through City Market, requires registration at tinyurl.com/mtdvkcup.

Flights of fancy in Vergennes
Thursday, June 8, 5:30-7 p.m.
The Bixby Library in Vergennes holds its Summer Soiree fundraiser with live music, auctions, raffles, food and cash bar. A new art show featuring works by the Vermont Pastel Society will be on exhibit. For more info and tickets, see tinyurl.com/hpyz9khx.

Alicia Daniel in Shelburne
Thursday, June 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Alicia Daniel is a local professor, field naturalist, ecologist, author and botanist. She will give a free talk at Shelburne’s Pierson Library with suggestions for helping our state’s wild places and animals. For more info, call 802-985-5124.

Friday nights at the farm
Friday, June 9, 5-8 p.m.
Sisters of Anarchy ice cream company begins their season of Friday night family fun at the Fisher Brothers Farm on Spear Street in Shelburne. Bring blankets or chairs and the whole family to enjoy live music, food, ice cream and a farm-fresh celebration. Event repeats Friday evenings through Aug. 25. More info at tinyurl.com/36p5am4y.

Shelburne book sale
Friday-Sunday, June 9-11
Find some summer reading, or gather a stash for the winter, at the Pierson Library’s book sale. June 9 hours are open to Friends of the Library; Saturday and Sunday are open to the public. For more info, call the library at 802-985-5124.

Relay for Life
Friday-Saturday, June 9-10, 6 p.m.-5:30 a.m.
Walk laps at the Champlain Valley Exposition in support of the American Cancer Society’s Walk for Life. Cheer on survivors, help raise money and remember those who have passed.

WE NEED YOU

Do you love the calendar of events?

Of course, you do. You are reading this calendar, so you must find it useful in keeping up with what is happening in and around Charlotte.

Mary Landon has been producing it for nearly a year and a half. Now, she's moving on, and we need a volunteer (or two) to take over.

This is a labor of love, and a good match for someone who is adventurous, curious about all the many happenings in Charlotte and beyond — and is up for a chance to give back to your community.

Mary Landon has kindly offered to pass along what she's learned and how she gathers and organizes the events calendar (every two weeks).

To find out more, please contact Scooter MacMillan at 802-881-4728 or scooter@thecharlottenews.org.



More info and registration at tinyurl.com/2s64hvub.

Cabaret and dinner
Friday, June 9, 7 p.m.
The Full Circle Theater Collaborative presents an Evening at the Tonys, their fundraising cabaret and dinner held at the Isham Family Farm in Williston. Read more and get tickets at fullcircletheater.com.

Respite House Jiggety Jog
Saturday, June 10, 8 a.m.
Run, jog or walk in support of the McClure Miller Respite House in Colchester. Gather for the start at Malletts Bay School on Blakely Road. All funds raised go to supporting residents’ expenses regardless of their ability to pay. Read more and sign up at tinyurl.com/mphf6y8d.

Women’s mountain biking clinic
Saturday, June 10, 8 a.m.-noon
Catamount Outdoor Family Center in Williston offers an introductory level mountain biking clinic for women. To read more and sign up, see tinyurl.com/27h85sk2.

Biodiversity Jamboree
Saturday, June 10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
This summer nature festival in Montpelier is perfect for all ages, with field outings, exhibits, kid’s activities, live raptors, music, food and more. Held at the North Branch Nature Center, the jamboree will have something for everyone. The day is full of free events; donations gratefully accepted. Keynote speaker Doug Tallamy, author of “Nature’s Best Hope,” will speak at the Pavilion Auditorium in Montpelier and requires tickets. The schedule may be seen at tinyurl.com/4at38ywt.

Big Beautiful Life
Saturday, June 10, 10 a.m.-noon
Take part in the Big Beautiful Life Run, Walk and Roll event at Founder’s Memorial School in Essex Junction. In-person or virtual options. This event raises money to provide joy kits to kids in medical crisis. Learn more and sign up at tinyurl.com/swxurw3.

Family magic show
Saturday, June 10, 2 p.m.
Popular magician and entertainer Alyx Hilshey brings her family-friendly show to the Isham Family Farm in Williston. Read more and get tickets at tinyurl.com/5n8wpxxk.

Get ready for Vermont Days
Saturday-Sunday, June 10-11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Vermont Days is an annual weekend with free admission to day-use areas at Vermont State Parks as well as state-owned historic sites. Free fishing day

on June 10 gives residents and non-residents the chance to fish without a license. At the Ed Weed Fish Culture Center in Grand Isle Fish & Wildlife staff hold a family fishing festival: fishing basics, lure making, fly casting and fish biology for young anglers and their families. For more info, see tinyurl.com/rrtstabv.


CHARLOTTE
Local 4H meeting
Monday, June 12, 6:30-7:30 p.m.
Families of 4H members, as well as friends and community members, are encouraged to gather at the Grange for the final 4H meeting of the year. Students will present some of their work from the year. For more info, email Katie Devoid at katie_devoid@hotmail.com.

Landscape walking tour
Tuesday, June 13, 4-6 p.m.
Join in a walking tour of the Shelburne Farms landscape with Patricia O’Donnell and Greg DeVries of Charlotte’s Heritage Landscapes. Learn from these landscape architects about the design concepts used by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., as he designed the farm’s rolling acres. The tour covers 4 miles roundtrip, mostly on gravel paths. A shuttle is available at tour’s end for those wishing a return ride from the Inn. Read more and sign up at tinyurl.com/37cuxt8a.

Preparing herbs for tea
Tuesday, June 13, 5-6:30 p.m.
Learn what medicinal herbs to grow and how to best dry them for making tea blends, in this workshop at Red Wagon Plants in Hinesburg. To read more or sign up, see tinyurl.com/chtvhw49.

Watercolor in the garden
Wednesday, June 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
Artist Alice Eckles teaches garden appreciation with watercolor at Horsford Gardens and Nursery. Eckles guides and encourages with techniques for capturing the ever-changing beauty of a flower garden. To read more and sign up, see tinyurl.com/ymcs696y.

Trapping and hunting discussion
Tuesday-Thursday, June 20-22
The Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife is holding three public hearings about new proposed regulations for trapping and for hunting coyotes with the aid of dogs. The new proposed rules may be read at tinyurl.com/2p8mb2tp. For info about time and place of the two in-person hearings, see tinyurl.com/yckjmbkm. The hearing on June 22 is virtual, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.; see tinyurl.com/h7tfj383 for the link. Comment period on these issues is open now through Friday, June 30, by emailing ANR.FWPublicComment@vermont.gov.



Town of Charlotte

MEETINGS

Visit charlottetv.org for more information.

Planning commission: regular meeting.
Thursday, June 1, 7-9 p.m.

Trails committee: monthly meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 6:30-8 p.m.

Selectboard: special meeting for discussion of town administrator vs. town manager
Tuesday, June 6, 7 p.m.

Energy committee meeting
Wednesday, June 7, 7 p.m.

Charlotte park & wildlife: beaver deceiver informational meeting for town road commissioners
Thursday, June 8, 9-10 a.m.

Library News

Experience the library’s dirty side — in the garden

Margaret Woodruff
Director

Join the Garden Circle volunteers who will tend the educational gardens around the library this year. Contact Garden Stewards Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton at seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org to sign up and join in the merry work sessions Wednesdays, 4:30-6 p.m., this growing season.

Many hands make for light work, and there is always interesting conversation about plants and gardening.

The Rain Garden is establishing itself as an effective way to manage the rainwater coming off the library roof, and the Welcome Garden on the south side is filling out with colorful and pollinator-friendly blooms. The results of our efforts are paying off for everyone who visits the library.

Games for the green

With the help of grant funding, we’ve got bocce and corn hole games to play on the town green. Be on the lookout for our “play dates” and bring your family to try these fun outdoor activities.

Children’s programs

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

No registration required.

Preschool free play Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, play dough — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned

for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library. Ages 2-4. No registration required.

Programs for adults

Book Chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

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.

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

Join 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 in advance for the Zoom link at tinyurl.com/bdnhn86f.

Men’s book discussion group Wednesday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

From pole to pole and across decades of lived experience, in his book “Horizon” National Book Award-winning author Barry Lopez delivers his most far-ranging, yet personal, work to date. “Horizon” moves indelibly, immersively, through the author’s travels to six regions of the world: from Western Oregon to the High Arctic; from the Galápagos to the Kenyan desert; from Botany Bay in Australia to finally, unforgettably, the ice shelves of Antarctica. Copies available at the library circulation desk. Join by Zoom or at the library.

Mystery book group Monday, June 19, 10 a.m.

In “Voice” by Arnaldur Indriðason, the Christmas rush is at its peak in a grand Reykjavik hotel when Inspector Erlendur



Courtesy photo

Curt Lindberg, author of the book “Our Better Nature” will join patrons and librarians from the Hinesburg, Shelburne and Charlotte libraries to talk about his book while walking at Geprags Park in Hinesburg on June 23.

is called in to investigate a murder. Erlendur and his fellow detectives find no shortage of suspects between the hotel staff and the international travelers staying for the holidays. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Library book discussion group Thursday, June 22, 7:30 p.m.

Have you ever wondered what those bright, squiggly graffiti marks on the sidewalk mean? Or stopped to consider why you don’t see metal fire escapes on new buildings? Or pondered the story behind those dancing inflatable figures in car dealerships? In “The 99% Invisible City: A Field Guide to Hidden World of Everyday Design,” host Roman Mars and coauthor Kurt Kohlstedt examine the various elements that make our cities work, exploring the origins and other fascinating stories behind everything from power grids and fire escapes to drinking fountains and street signs. Copies available at the library circulation desk. Join the discussion on Zoom at tinyurl.com/4ch2xzap.

Walk & talk book club Saturday, June 23, 11 a.m.

Join the librarians and readers from Carpenter-Carse Library, Charlotte Library and Pierson Library at Geprags Park for an outdoor perambulation and discussion of books on the subject of our big, beautiful world. For this session, we will meet at the park in Hinesburg at 554 Shelburne Falls Rd. The book we’ll discuss is “Our Better Nature” by Curt Lindberg. We’ll be joined by the author and by members of Hinesburg’s Conservation Commission for a walk featuring a landscape shaped by beaver activity. In the event of rain, we will meet in the community room at Carpenter-Carse Library, 69 Ballards Corner Road, Hinesburg. Please contact your home library to pick up a copy of the book.

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 is today, Thursday, June 1, online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.



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Senior Center News

Over 30 organizations shared senior resources with 90 attendees

Lori York
Director

The senior center’s first Senior Resource Fair was a great success. Over 30 organizations were present and close to 90 individuals attended during the two hours of the fair. It was a great opportunity to learn about the wide variety of services available to seniors.

With June here, summer programming is underway with plenty of opportunities to spend time outdoors. Join the first paddling trip of the season, go on a birding expedition, or be part of the new group forming to do some walking and gentle hiking.

The next art exhibit at the senior center is At Water’s Edge by Fran MacDonald of South Burlington. It includes both expansive vistas and detailed views of landscapes with water, the edges of water or flowing water.

Outdoor activities

Birding expedition Thursday, June 15, 9 a.m.

Join avid bird watcher, Hank Kaestner and learn to identify the various bird species and habitats right here in Chittenden County. Registration required and group size is limited. To register for this trip, create an account on the Charlotte Senior Center website under the “registration” tab and follow the instructions for registering. Free.

Recreational paddling trip Saturday, June 17, 9:30 a.m.

There’s a new recreational paddling group starting up at the Charlotte Senior Center. Please join Karen and Dean Tuininga for the first paddling trip on Saturday morning, June 17, on Lewis Creek. The group will meet at 9:30 and plan to spend a couple of hours on the water. This trip is open to everyone 18 and older, but space is limited to 10 boats plus leaders, so be sure to sign up early. Questions? Contact Dean Tuininga at dean.tuininga@gmail.com. Registration required. Cost: Free.

New walking or gentle hiking group

There is interest in starting a new walking, gentle hiking group at the senior center. Interested in finding out more? Contact Penny Burman at 916-753-7279.

Events & presentations

Red Cross blood drive Thursday, June 8, 2-7 p.m.

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

Navigating Family Dynamics at End-of-Life Wednesday, June 14, 1 p.m.

This session by Lisy McIntee, a hospice and palliative care social worker, is for you and your family together. Some common factors that complicate family dynamics at end-of-life include estrangements, conflict, death, kids living far away and substance abuse. You will learn how the hospice team, specifically social workers, approach and support this time in your life. The session will also include a brief overview on advance directives and appointing a health care agent. It’s free but registration is recommended.

MIND diet presentation Wednesday, June 14, 3 p.m.

Join Hannaford registered dietitian Callie Flynn to learn about the MIND diet, an eating plan which aims to reduce dementia and maintain brain health. It’s free but registration is recommended.

World Music Day & Make Music Wednesday, June 21 1-4 p.m., Charlotte Senior Center, & 4-8 p.m., Charlotte Library

Vermont Make Music Day is part of World Music Day. Musicians of all ages from all over the world play music for their communities, celebrating how music crosses borders and brings people together. The Charlotte Senior Center and Charlotte



Thirty organizations were represented at the first Senior Resource Fair.

Photo by Sarah Dickinson

Library will be hosting a full afternoon and evening of live music. If you are a musician, a singer or both, young or maybe just wiser, serious player or impassioned amateur, and would like to share your talent and love of music with the community, please email nickcarter011@gmail.com to participate. More info about the overall event at bigheavyworld.com/makemusicvt.

Upcoming Programs

Drawing for those who think they can’t Friday, June 9, 12:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Fill a fun hour and half learning that you can draw by looking at things differently. Local artist Mickey Davis enjoys bringing out the innate hidden artist in others. She has offered drawing classes for (she thinks) over 20 years, but at 85 says she has trouble recalling what she ate for breakfast. No fee but donations accepted to benefit the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration required.

Peonies & tea party Tuesday, June 13, 1-2:30 p.m.

Please join us for a lovely afternoon tea party, with antique place settings and simple little sandwiches and cookies, similar to a high tea in England. Everyone will leave with a bouquet of peonies to decorate your home. Registration required as space is limited. Cost: \$5.

Italian-Beginner I Fridays, June 23, 30, July 7, 21, 28, Aug. 4 10-11 a.m.

Interested in beginning your study of Italian? Join us to explore the beauty of the Italian language and culture. Cost: \$60. Registration required. *There will be no class on July 14.

Looking for a job?

The Charlotte Senior Center is seeking a part-time senior center coordinator. Responsibilities include database management and volunteer coordination. The full job description can be viewed at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. Pay rate is \$16.50-\$17.75 an hour. Position is 15 hours a week with a set schedule of three hours per day each morning, Monday-Friday. Please send a letter of interest and resume to Lori York at lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

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.

Men’s breakfast Thursday, June 8, 7-9:30 a.m.

On the second Thursday of the month, the men gather for breakfast and conversation. This month, the speaker will be Lewis Mudge. He is going to talk about his work with Human Rights Watch in Africa. Specifically, he’ll discuss the role of the



Photo by Lori York

A steady stream of people filed through the presentations at the Senior Resource Fair held at the Charlotte Senior Center.

Wagner Group as proxies for Russia in supporting authoritarian regimes across the continent. Register by Tuesday, June 6, by noon. The suggested donation is \$6. Please register for the men’s breakfast through the database at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/registration. You may also call the senior center at 802-425-6345 to register.

Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals

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

Senior center info

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are 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 programs for the upcoming week.

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

Write Ingredients

Need more volunteers to revive twice-a-week lunches

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

At BottleRock Napa Valley you can get a deep-fried corn dog stuffed with fish mousse and chopped lobster, topped with remoulade and caviar. It will set you back \$26; doctor's advisory not included.

Read on for the multitude of good eats that are yours for \$5 at the Charlotte Senior Center.



Monday Munch, June 5 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., or until the food is gone.

Bacon cheeseburger sliders, macaroni salad, chips, brownies with ice cream and Arnold Palmer to drink.

White Castle offers two stories about the history of those sliders. One is that these sandwiches are so small they slide down your throat. The second is that once you sit at the counter and order a burger, a server puts it on a ceramic plate and slides it down the counter to you.

Please note that whether it's sliders or salad, guests at the Charlotte Senior Center eat off porcelain, and this is why volunteer dishwashers are so important. Also, please note that lunch used to be served twice a week. We need more volunteer cooks to be able to do this again.

This is a call-out to everybody, young and old. So far, the youngest volunteer was a homeschooler dropped off by her mother. We've also had high schoolers on work-study and college students during semester break.

When we think pasta, we think Italy, but although the exact origins of macaroni salad are unknown, everyone agrees it's as American as apple pie — and brownies.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his wife held a picnic at their "Summer White House" in Hyde Park, hosting ambassadors, the Secretary of the Treasury and the publisher of the New York Daily News. Eleanor and friends broiled wieners and made macaroni salad.

Macaroni salad has even appeared in obituaries: "My mom was never the life of the party, but often making the macaroni salad to make the party a success."

These days, macaroni salad ingredients abound: mayonnaise, oil, vinegar, buttermilk, cream, tahini, capers, chunks of cheese, crab,

tuna, shrimp, eggplant ... It's a choose your own salad adventure.

When The New York Times Cooking offers a macaroni salad recipe, opinionated readers weigh in. One expresses enthusiasm; another says, "The most godawful mac salad I've ever tasted." And another adds, "If that's how they make macaroni salad in New York, I won't go."

There are many reasons we need to support newspapers, local and national. Recipes and the discussions they provoke are one good reason for signing up for The New York Times.

Forbes Magazine noted that Palmer House brownies, were featured at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, along with the first Ferris wheel, the world's first moving walkways, Juicy Fruit gum and Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer. Read the history at tinyurl.com/3jubfuzd.

Brownies were listed in the 1897 Sears Roebuck catalogue.

According to The Guinness Book of Records the largest brownie, cooked in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Sept. 23, 2022, was made out of 210 packs of Betty Crocker brownie mix and 504 eggs. It weighed over 335 pounds and took three hours to bake.

You may think a brownie is a brownie but scroll through recipes and you'll see amazing variety. For me, NYT Cooking's "formidable new creation" — chocolate cheesecake brownies — sounded like formidable excess. Look elsewhere and you'll find brownie recipes calling for stout beer, coffee, or raw beets. To each her own.

The potato chip is another food with a story. Popular legend credits a Saratoga Springs chef with inventing it, maybe for a Vanderbilt, in 1853, but "The Cook's Oracle" a best seller by William Kitchiner, published in 1817, has a recipe for "potatoes fried in slices or shavings."

So come for Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center on June 5 and Eat American. Then come back on June 12 and Eat Worldwide. Enjoy bulgur, which is a staple in Asia and the Mediterranean basin.

Monday Munch June 12, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

A trio of summer salads: bulgur salad with grapes, feta and mint; corn salad; green salad and rhubarb brownies.

Bulgur is believed to have been first eaten in the Euphrates Valley as far back as 5,000 B.C. Some 4,000 years ago, Biblical

references mention that it was prepared by ancient Babylonians and Hittites. Around 2,800 B.C., the Chinese emperor Shen Nung acknowledged bulgur as one of five sacred crops along with rice, barley, soybeans and millet. It's been a staple in the Balkans since the 14th century, when it was introduced there by the Ottoman Turks.

Enjoy your bulgur and be sure to eat your vegetables. Admittedly, in 1947 the U.S. Customs Court in Buffalo, N.Y., ruled rhubarb a fruit, but botanically, it is a vegetable.

In England, rhubarb custard is popular; in Norway, rhubarb soup. In Afghanistan, they add rhubarb to spinach. In Poland, it is cooked with potatoes, and in Iran you'll find rhubarb in stews. In Italy, "rabarbaro" is a low-alcohol aperitif. "The Escoffier Cook Book" lists rhubarb jam, "confiture de rhubarbe," noting that "it is one of the most difficult and tedious to make" because in boiling, it tends to burn on the bottom of the pan.

It's hard to find a happy tune about bulgar or rhubarb, so let's return to macaroni. "Yankee Doodle" started out as a song sung by British military officers to mock the scrubby colonial Yankees serving with them in the French and Indian War, picturing a stereotypical Yankee who thought he was stylish if he borrowed from a macaroni wig from rococo dandy fashion. But Americans turned the song around, adding verses hailing George Washington and turning an insult into a song of national pride.

Here's the U.S. Army Band: tinyurl.com/mr9kjpz4.

Remember: Register for the Thursday Age Well meal pickup by Monday.

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