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 change, stated that the group was pushing to have a town manager in charge of that.

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 Shellburne 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, including the new town garage and the property reappraisals that are predicted to have many landowners “jumping up and down.”

Board member Louise McCaren was very concerned that the switch would mean elected town officials, like the town clerk, road commissioner or auditor, 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
## Letter to the Editor

**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 happy to announce we’ve added special prizes for everyone under 18 years old.

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

So kids, get out there and get clickin’! We’re especially interested in learning about how young Charlotteans 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, and the name of your school if 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.

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**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’s budget process, which has been completed. Some are marked ongoing and a good many have completion dates that have passed. Although a new town manager has been selected, Joslin said the 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 focus to focus on the future and accompanying goals that are impossible for them to concentrate on now. The board appears ready to recruit a person to fill Bloch’s position who can perform the duties of either a town manager or administrator.

Pre-COVID, state statute requires residents approve a change to a town manager in a special town election by voice vote. However, this time, board member Frank Tenney said, a voice vote is not required because the town has not lifted the COVID-19 provision allowing votes by the 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. “I do think that we have to go through a process where we have to hear from folks in Charlotte what they really want,” she said.

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**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 dogs and electronic devices and thermal night scopes, oftentimes by brutal methods. We’ve seen photos posted by Vermont hunters displaying dead coyotes pups strung from utility poles; whole families of coyotes mated and pupped in captivity who were painted in white and then left to die. Coyote hunting standards should be fair, and brought into the 21st century. But Vermont Fish & Wildlife continues to allow coyote hunters to drown, strangle, poison and gash in the sand and promote 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 mere lip service to the citizens.

Based on the commissioner’s purported interest in a limited coyote season, in March 2020, Vermont Coyote Coexistence Coalition submitted a petition to Vermont Fish & Wildlife for a limited season on coyotes taking pup raking 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. They have to kill coyotes to protect their livestock. Coyotes can kill dogs miles away from the hounds, and as long as the hounds are wearing GPS and shock collars, they are considered out of 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 remove strays in the 1950s, our wildlife continue to suffer uncontrolled wanton waste.

Jane Fitzwilliam Putney
Legislative session is like a whole year takes place in a day now at least I have six months to prepare such a short period of time to learn it in, but straw.” There was so much to learn, and “sipping champagne from a little silver from a firehose” seem synonymous with experience that makes the phrase “drinking it was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was thrilling and boring and confusing It was 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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 Hydes 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 Hydes say they were changed by the Peace Corps experience was a 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 in 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 Hydes 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, these 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 Hydes’ 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: friendsburkinafaso.org and bfgof.com.

Their Peace Corps experience was a starting 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 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 struggle a very wide cultural and experience gap. Susan Hyde said.

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

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PEACE CORPS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

“...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.

“...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 become 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 Corps 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 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 is that hasn’t changed in 50 years is our general lack of understanding of, or interest in, African affairs. We are further impeded by our seeming lack of interest and concern for what happens on the continent.”

PEACE CORPS

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The Charlotte News

June 1, 2023

Dear和平 corps, I discovered that my 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 cap. After that, the bike ran great.

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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 at unitedwayvt.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, tiding 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 Braines at ibraines@vcsoe.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.

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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The Charlotte News is proud to support this event

Go solar

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 guineas fowl can roam.

Schoolhouse memories

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 1,4 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.

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VSO String Quartet
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Photo by Rebecca Foster

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Photo by Rebecca Foster
Hi! Neighbor

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.

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 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.”
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 development and cognition. If you have questions about the CVSD Act 166 registration process contact Suzanne Curtis at scurtis@cvsdvt.org or 802-985-1963.

New 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.

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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 vyo.org.
• Vermont Jazz Camp — July 24-28 - for details please visit vjazzcamp.com.

The Charlotte News file 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/jwp8bvk or by phone at 819-822-9692. Holmes is a graduate of Charlotte Central School and Champlain Valley Union High.

The Charlotte News file photo.

What Charlotte Means to Me
We would love to know what Charlotte means to you, expressed in a favorite photo and a few words. So, send us your photo – and a two-sentence description for a chance to win one of three prizes and to have your photo published in the paper and on our website.

Deadline: Friday, June 30
Email your high resolution (300 dpi) JPG file to anna@thecharlottenews.org.

1st prize: Lake Champlain sunset cruise.
2nd prize: Photography outing with Lee Krehn.
3rd prize: Gift certificate from Head over Fields.

We also have special prizes for kids:
1st prize: 4 tickets to the ECHO Leahy Center
2nd prize: $50 gift certificate to Cooke Loun
3rd Prize: $50 gift certificate to Stones Throw

Winners will be announced in the July 13 newspaper.

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The Charlotte News
Contact ads@TheCharlotteNews.org
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 the native species, 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.

In Town Farm Bay, there was over 50 percent cover throughout the wetlands. The LaPlatte Natural Area had lower frogbit levels to begin with, due to earlier detection. 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 lewiscreek@gmail.com. Even better, get a group of friends together and sign up together to make a difference.

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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 fast-paced and varied setting, collaborative ethic, and ability to use and create reports and spreadsheets.

A bachelor’s degree or equivalent work experience will be preferred. As well as past library experience preferred.

A full job description can be found here: https://bit.ly/3QqT3t3. The pay range is $17.00 to $21.55 depending on experience.

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

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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 activity in the natural world, even if it’s obscured by leafy canopy, verdant understory and fast-growing ground cover (yrs, 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 piddle, 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 over the side of the nest. A teaching moment when a single female.

The Vermont Center for Ecostudies writes that they then search for mates, multiple males competing for the attention of a single female.

The 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 opposite sex at night. It’s a wonderful, silent light show.

As we move into summer, heat shapes our activities and daylight approaches 16 hours.

Last year, she chose not to cross our driveway to take advantage of the heat.

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.

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.

A no-till approach means that 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.

To start a no-till raised bed, in the spring, add 1-2 inches of compost on 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.

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

Joan Weed
Contributor

It’s here. Finally!

Time to fully plant heat loving veggie plants in the garden. Usually, Memorial Day in our neighborhood is the official “safes date.”

Today we’re going to discuss tomatoes. Everyone’s favorite to grow and eat. By this date you should have started and encouraged your seedlings.

If not, there are plenty to be had at the nurseries around town. The choices will be limited but you should be able to fulfill your wishes for however you like to eat tomatoes. There are salad types, paste or sauce offerings, cherry or grape-sized, and of course, big slicers. The color palette is amazing; red of course but also orange, yellow, green, purple and almost black.

The main two types for the home gardener are determinate and indeterminate. The former means the plants produces prolifically but all at once and then are done. Indeterminate do what they say. They go on growing till the season stops them. Thus, they grow tall and vine-like whereas determinate are shorter and more shrub-like.

I’ll mention a few that I have had experience with but there are hundreds of varieties. Often the same tomato goes by different names depending on who’s offering it. Brandywine was the reputation of the finest tasting for large beefsteak types. It comes in yellow as well as red, and there are strains to look for to get the best taste. Siddah’s is the one I am familiar with.

Costoluto Genovese is an heirloom, oddly shaped, a large Italian slicer.

I like a little-known paste tomato called gilbertite. I got my first seeds for it from High Mowing seeds. The fruits are large and fairly dry, with few seeds so it’s good for making a sauce. The shape is long and hooked at the end. It’s the last to ripen for me.

Amish paste is easily found at nurseries and commonly used for canning sauce. Amna orange is a determinate offering and produces medium-sized, round fruits. Another orange tomato but of a diminutive size is sungold. It’s also known as “candy on the vine,” probably because it’s delicious for snacking in the garden.

Jubilee is a nice small oval variety. Aunt Ruby’s German green is a fine tasting fruit. Green zebra is another popular green tomato. Stupice (pronounced Sue-sti-pe-kah) is a Polish heirloom of moderate size and a good sauce maker. Perfect for me.

Yellow and red pear are small and very prolific snacking types. They keep producing all season until frost. You only need one plant.

I could name so many others I’ve tried over the years, but this is a start.

Surely, the danger of frost has passed, so dig deep planting holes and add 1 tablespoon of 10-20-10 fertilizer and water it in. Place your plant deep into the hole and surround with soil.

I even remove the bottom couple of leaves and sink the plant deeper than it grew in the pot. Every part underground will produce roots and make your plant stronger.

Another way to plant, especially if your plant is leggy, is to dig a trench instead of a hole and lay the tomato down, gently bending the top upward and fill in the trench. By the way, 10-20-10 refers to the three main nutrients in the fertilizer. The numbers stand for nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. Easy to remember as they are in alphabetical order. You don’t want too much nitrogen as that produces foliage. The others are responsible for fruit production.

Tomatoes need about an inch of water each week while growing. Inconsistent watering is a prime reason for failure of crop or blossom end rot. When watering be careful not to splash leaves as disease can be spread from soil.

Mulching will help. As the season progresses add 2-3 inches of materials such as straw or cloth each month per plant. Mix into soil with a trowel.

You might notice some common capital letters after the tomato name in your catalogues. This refers to the breeding for reducing or eliminating certain diseases such as verticillium wilt.

Space your tomatoes to allow light to reach fruit and roots room to grow. The usual is 2-feet between plants. A rule I often break.

Your plants will need support and there are many ways to do this. The simplest is a strong wooden spike and garden twine or strips of cloth. I found many suggestions on line so you can do research to see what feels right for you. Many commercially sold towers are not strong enough to last all season.

Each variety has its own time schedule. Once a tomato has started to color up it can be picked and finish ripening inside. We often have to rely on this with our short season. If it has a ways to go, you can wrap unripe fruits in parchment, waxed paper or newspaper and store in dark, cool place. You can extend your season by doing this. Keep picking the ripe fruits so they won’t burst from too much weight.

A favorite way to use up a glut of fruits which come at once is roasting. Cut the larger ones and just add the smaller cherry types. Season with salt, herbs and garlic if you like and roast at 400 degrees until collapsed and heated through (about 40 minutes). Then, blend in food processor, blender and freeze for a different tasting sauce. It solves the problem of so many tomatoes and so little time.

When canning, I suggest you look to the Ball canning book or some similar resource. Adding a couple of table spoons of lemon juice or vinegar to canned tomatoes will ensure the proper environment for safe storage.

I hope I have given new gardeners some helpful information or renewed what the experienced veggie producers know. Aside from the amazing tomato sandwiches we have to look forward to, I like to use my harvest in sauce, gravins, Provencal, ratatouille, Caprese, mixed with other seasonal vegetables. Here’s a couple easy ideas:

Colache
(from “The American Heritage Cookbook”)
4 summer squash
1 small onion, chopped
4 ears of corn
salt and pepper
3 ripe tomatoes
1/4 cup of butter
Wash squash and cut into small pieces; cut kernels from cobs; skin tomatoes and cut in cubes.

Heat butter in sauce pan, add chopped onion. Stir till translucent. Add squash, corn, tomatoes, salt and pepper. Cover and cook over low heat for 30-40 minutes stirring occasionally. Makes 6 servings. Great when all these are fresh from the garden. Don’t skimp on the butter.

Tomato gratin
Slice medium to large tomatoes thickly (1/2 inch). Choose enough for your diners.

In a suitable oven-proof casserole, coat with olive oil and layer your tomatoes overlapping. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and either minced garlic or dried garlic powder.

I usually add dollops of my homemade basil pesto but use whatever chopped herbs you have. Sprinkle the top with Panko breadcrumbs and then some grated pecorino Romano cheese.

A drizzle of olive oil on top helps crisp the dish. Bake at 350 for half hour or so. You might have to pour off some liquid.

Caprese
This is a favorite appetizer or light lunch using fresh uncooked tomatoes.

Slice large round tomatoes about 1/2 inch thick and similarly fresh buffalo mozzarella. Alternate the two, overlapping on a plate.

Sometimes I like to add finely sliced sweet onion. Drizzle with aged, syrupy balsamic vinegar.

A good crunchy baguette goes well.
Gardening

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.)
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.

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

Greta Soltaa
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, water and more.

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 farmland 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. 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 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...
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 for one season, 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 hardness. 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 return. To make it easy 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? 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 purchased. However, if you like to create a new garden design each year, annuals offer the opportunity to experiment with garden layouts and plant 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 the garden is partly 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
Send please 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 Rokeye 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 rokeye.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 Swezy 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; toy waste bags. For more info on the lineup, see snowfarm.com/summer-concert-series. 

Vineyard 25th anniversary
Thursday, 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/422znmpf.

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, and more. Many events are free; food, wine tastings and some music require payment or tickets. For complete schedule and details, see tinyurl.com/52vzm267.

Grange Hall tour plus pie
Sunday, June 1, 1-2 p.m.
Come to the Grange on Searl Street in East Charlotte for a building tour with local historian Don 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 fresh and 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 burlingtonca.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.-6 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 event for their free summer music series.

Museum’s First Free Friday
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/rbksx5et. 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/4yd226uf.

Focus on feathers
Saturday, June 3, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Artist Rachel Minus 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/2itwspw7.

Reading the landscape
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 describing 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/2z4rmsiz2.

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 containingHarvest and sharing counterpoint essentials. No experience required; all materials and instruction provided. For more info and registration, see tinyurl.com/yce486mr.

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 seats down and make a variety of stops and have a festive lunch. Get the convertible seats down and travel through our beautiful area. For more info, see tinyurl.com/4yzd26uf.

Enjoy your own picnic lunch after the Grange Hall tour.

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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 Victorian Garden, both in Hinesburg. To read more and buy tickets, see tinyurl.com/ycy83mms.

House and garden tours
Sunday, June 4, 1-3:30 p.m.
Visit historic Shrewsbury, tour the Inn and learn about the surrounding formal gardens. To register and see a complete list of available dates, see tinyurl.com/2p9d1an2.

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 Electa Havener Webb, museum founder. Ticket includes garden-party theme food, house tours and one drink ticket. Peony bouquets for sale onsite. Read more and buy tickets at tinyurl.com/365csecb.

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/3zs5w4.

Drakonawake
Monday, June 5, 5:30-6 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 Coat Guard Station. This short ceremony is open to the public; find out more about joining a team or contributing to the organization. More info at drakonheartvermont.org.

The science of forests and carbon Wednesday, June 7, noon-1 p.m.
University of Vermont Extension forester Alexandra Daniels 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/mryj8b.B5.

Charlotte

The Full Circle Theater
Charlotte, VT - 754 Main St. 802-881-7465

ART & CRAFT

Watercolor in the garden
Wednesday, June 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
Artist Alice Eckles teaches garden watercolor classes, a perfect way to learn. (For more info, see tinyurl.com/37b5c9w5.)

Relay for Life
Friday-Saturday, June 10-11, 6:50 a.m.-3 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 kindly offered to pass along what she’s learned and how she gathers and organizes the events calendar (every two weeks).

If you do not love it, your comments will be taken into consideration. If you do love it, we wish to thank you for your continued support.

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Mary Landon has produced it for nearly a year and a half. Now, she’s moving on, and we need your help 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 it 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@thecharlotteneighbor.org.

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 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 of walking, mostly on gravel paths. A shuttle is available at tour end for those wishing a return ride from the farm. For more info and sign up, see tinyurl.com/37cux8a.

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/ctwhv49.

Watercolor in the garden
Wednesday, June 14, 1-2:30 p.m.
Artist Alice Eckles teaches garden appreciation with watercolor at Horsford Gardens. (For more info, see tinyurl.com/3yc76c.)

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. 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/vmcs696y.

The Charlotte News
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Calendar of Events
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 Trininger 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 bounce 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

Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

This reading time 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/bbuhb6d6.

Men’s book discussion group

Wednesday, June 14, 7:30 p.m.

For 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, unforggettably, 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 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 in 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  

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Library contact information:
Margaret Woodruff, director  
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 Tuninga 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 Tuninga at dean.tuninga@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 Lynda McIntyre, 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 use. This session will include a brief overview on advance directives 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 use. This session will include a brief overview on advance directives and palliative care. Registration required. Cost: Free.

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 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 nickcarterr11@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, 12:30-2 a.m.
Fill a fun and half learning that you can draw by looking at things differently. Local artist Mickey Davis brings everyone into the innate hidden artist in others. She has offered drawing classes for 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 is 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. Registration required. *There will be no class on July 14.

Library

Thirty organizations were represented at the first Senior Resource Fair held at the Charlotte Senior Center.

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 Fridays 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

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Need more volunteers to revive twice-a-week lunches

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

At BottleRock Napa Valley you get a deep-fried corn dog stuffed with fish mousse and chopped lobster, topped with remoulade and cavair. 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 wiener 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 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 bulgur or rhubarb, so let’s return to macaroni. “Yankee Doodle” started out as a song sung by British military officers to mock the scruffy 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/mr9kjpw.

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