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The Charlotte News

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Striking out

Photos by Al Frey

Junior Elise Berger of Shelburne can't remember if she's ever held a softball. That's because she plays hardball. And has as far back as her memories go. Berger won her first varsity start, pitching the Redhawks to a 5-0 shutout of Rutland on April 29 and keeping CVU unbeaten.

SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 10



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

The bridge on Dorset Street between Carpenter Road and Hinesburg Road needs major structural repair work and is closed.

Selectboard votes funds to fix bridge

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

A confused and garbled selectboard meeting began on Monday with at least 15 minutes of discombobulation as the online broadcast cut in and out.

After several false starts, when the Charlotte Selectboard's hastily called special meeting at the Charlotte Library finally got rolling, one message came through loud and clear: The board needed to do something about a Dorset Street bridge.

On Tuesday morning, April 25, the town discovered there was a large hole in the bridge and all traffic across it was shut down. Large piles of sand were placed at both ends completely blocking access to the bridge over the LaPlatte River about a quarter mile south of Carpenter Road on Dorset Street.

At the selectboard's meeting on May 1,

the board members hemmed and hawed about how to proceed.

Lewis Mudge expressed frustrations and reservations about spending money on the bridge with a controversial revised budget vote scheduled for Tuesday, the next day.

Chair Jim Faulkner was concerned about violating the board's policy requiring bids from at least three contractors for large expenditures.

Finally, road commissioner Junior Lewis weighed in with absolute clarity that expediency was needed, and the bridge should get a temporary fix as soon as possible.

"I think you guys have already spent enough time on it. I think it should be voted on and move on," Lewis said.

The bridge problem was the reason the special meeting was called, but since the



Courtesy photo

SEE **BRIDGE** PAGE 7

12,500-panel solar farm proposed

Alicia Wolfram
Community News Service

A proposed solar farm in Charlotte would see about 12,500 panels lined in rows across 21 acres on Lake Road.

The project, from the application process to installation and upkeep, will be run by Encore Renewable Energy, a Burlington solar company, and according to town planner Larry Lewack, the earliest it could be built is the spring or summer of 2025.

The 5-megawatt solar farm is expected to run for 25 years — after which the panels would be removed or replaced — and bring in between \$400,000 and \$500,000 in municipal taxes and state education funds. Encore vice president of policy and communications Lauren Glickman said 1.5 megawatts can power about 208 homes in Vermont at any one time. So, the proposed Charlotte farm would power about 693 homes.

The project will need to be approved by the state Public Utility Commission, and Encore expects to have an application in by the end of the summer.

The panels would be set on fixed-tilt, steel racking and enclosed by a fence, said Jake Clark, the firm's vice president of project development. There would be two transformers and an access road running

"Until then, we see our role as keeping folks informed about the project and especially letting people know how they can make their voice heard."

— Larry Lewack, town planner

north from the driveway and leading to the commuter rail station off Ferry Road.

The firm also plans to plant pollinator grasses on the plot and rotate sheep in and out to graze — a practice known as dual-use land, something the Charlotte Energy Committee strongly advocates for, chair Rebecca Foster said.

The hope is that the livestock and grasses would improve soil health on acres that would otherwise only be used for solar generation.

In accordance with goals set in Vermont's Comprehensive Energy Plan goals, Charlotte aims to meet 90 percent of its overall energy needs from renewable sources by 2050. Broken down, this means 25 percent by 2025 and 40 percent by 2035.

According to Foster, the town has roughly 171 solar sites that produce about 36 percent of its residential electricity. She said the

number has probably gone up in the last few months as more and more people are switching to renewable energy.

Under the umbrella statewide goal, Charlotte has its own regulations in place outlined in its town plan.

Whether the Lake Road project will help Vermont make headway toward its energy targets depends on renewable energy certificates, or RECs.

An REC is a form of proof that energy is renewable. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, one REC is issued for each megawatt-hour of electricity generated and delivered to the electricity grid from a renewable source.

Since there is no way of tracking the physical electrons back to their exact source, RECs allow people to claim their electricity

SEE **SOLAR** PAGE 3

Revised budget approved

Voters approved the revised budget in Tuesday's revote.

Of the 852 who voted on the issue, or about 26 percent of the registered voters in Charlotte, 496 voted to approve the budget and 354 voted against, for a winning margin of 142 votes.

The original budget failed by 35 votes.

The original budget defeated on Town Meeting Day in March was for \$2,930,908, while the budget voters approved Tuesday was for \$2,780,713, after the selectboard decreased the budget by just over \$150,000.

The turnout for the budget revote was not much lower than voting on Town Meeting Day, when 29 percent voted.

A town that loves trees

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Charlotte is a town that's proud of its trees. You might even go so far as to say it's a tree-huggin' town.

With Arbor Day in Vermont this Friday, May 5, this is a good time to talk about the town's relationship with its trees.

Gwen Kozlowski of the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program said most of the United States celebrated Arbor Day on April 28, the last Friday in April. In Vermont it's the first Friday in May. The celebration is timed to when it's usually best to plant trees, so it comes a little later in the Green Mountain State.

Many countries celebrate some version of Arbor Day, or Arbour Day. It's believed that the first celebration of trees was in Mondoñedo, Spain, in 1594.

Charlotte celebrates trees year around, and uniquely among Vermont towns, it maintains two lists of significant trees in the town — the Hamilton Champion Tree Roster and the Memorial and Dedicated Trees list. Most towns and the state maintain a champion tree roster, a list of the biggest trees of each

SEE **TREES** PAGE 2

Road scholar



Photo by Amelia Davis

Cordie Leonard, 10 months, is mesmerized, studying Junior Lewis working on Prindle Road.

TREES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

species in a town, whether on private or public property.

But Charlotte also maintains a list of trees that have been planted around town in places like the Charlotte Town Green, the Charlotte Museum, the Barber Cemetery, the town beach and at town ballfields. The trees on the Memorial and Dedicated Trees list have been planted to honor such things as the new millennium, Arbor Day and Green Up Day, and to remember such people as friends, relatives and town notables like long-time town constable Hugh “Cowboy” Lewis and Larry Hamilton.

Hamilton is noteworthy because it is likely that without him Charlotters wouldn’t be as passionate about their trees. There probably wouldn’t have been more than 40 memorial trees planted in town. It’s unlikely that Charlotte would have an active group of volunteers who work to keep the champion tree roster up-to-date and work for the propagation and protection of the town’s beloved trees.

Without Hamilton’s 21 years of proselytizing for trees as town tree warden, it’s a safe bet that the town wouldn’t have the Rutter Tree Fund. The late Bill Rutter, who had a place on Thompson’s Point, established the fund with a \$50,000 donation, and his descendants and others have continued to donate to tree planting in Charlotte.

The fund has just over \$6,000, said tree warden Mark Dillenbeck, who naturally would like to see the current tree currency grow. “We’d like to reach out and get ideas from people in town about where they’d like to see more trees. We’re looking for financial support to support tree planting in the future.”

The tree volunteers were once known as the Tree Tribe, but the group is considering changing to a term that doesn’t seem like cultural appropriation. Maybe Tree Keepers.

Dillenbeck said the tree volunteers have recently been planting trees in the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge and would love to replenish the coffers.

The group works to keep the tree efforts as “a community thing,” Dillenbeck said, trying to get volunteer help and donations so trees don’t cost the town anything.

Because of the Rutter family and others who have donated to the fund, around 500 trees have been planted around town over the years.

In recent years, tree planting has been slowed by COVID, but the group looks to get back to the propogating of trees in a big way. Another activity the pandemic has put a kibosh on is Arbor Day celebrations at Charlotte Central School.

During Hamilton’s 21 years as Charlotte’s tree warden, Linda Hamilton said her late husband really appreciated the fun part of being the tree warden, which for him was outreach, promoting trees on Arbor Day at the school and recruiting an enthusiastic group of volunteers to plant, tend and advocate for trees.

For many years, her husband recruited Charlie Proutt of Distinctive Landscaping and Horsford Garden and Nursery to donate



Courtesy photo

Above: Larry Hamilton

Right: Vince Crockenberg stands in front of a swamp white oak that was planted at the Charlotte Town Green on Larry Hamilton’s 90th birthday in recognition of his two decades of work as tree warden.



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

a tree which the students helped plant. The kids were also given a quiz on trees. There’s a number of trees at the school that were planted on Arbor Day in the past.

And most years the selectboard issued a proclamation recognizing the holiday.

Another thing that has cut down on Arbor Day celebrating is the emerald ash borer. Much of Dillenbeck’s focus has been on the insect that’s decimating ash trees. Dillenbeck said the insect has not been found in Charlotte yet, but it’s possible it’s already arrived and hasn’t been found. The emerald ash borer has been confirmed as close as Essex.

Before there was a tree warden, the road commissioner functioned in that role, Linda Hamilton said. Since one of the road commissioners’ primary responsibilities is keeping roads clear, most of their focus was on cutting sketchy trees in the right of way, not planting them.

Although the tree warden’s official responsibility is to trees on public land, Larry Hamilton did encourage landowners to plant trees, particularly along roads to promote a vibrant tree corridor in Charlotte.

When Larry Hamilton died in the fall of 2016, he and Linda had been married almost 40 years. They met at Cornell when she was working on her master’s in natural resources policy and planning, and she took his forest ecology course.

“He was a much-admired teacher. He had more graduate students than anybody else because he took a holistic approach and really worked with students individually,” she said. He was known for encouraging students to become multi-dimensional professionals, so he might motivate them to also take courses in literature, history or art appreciation.

One of Larry Hamilton’s favorite trees was the American beech, Linda said, and his students lovingly dubbed him “a true son of a

beech.”

People in town really do appreciate, admire and respect trees, and she believes her late husband had a big influence on cultivating Charlotters’ engagement with trees. He helped residents to think of trees as more than just shade.

“Trees are not solitary,” Linda Hamilton said. “We plant them in our yards, thinking it’s an item. It’s one spruce or something. But actually, they are forest trees that we have around here, and they do best with more individuals of their own species and individuals of a suite of species.”

One lasting evidence of Larry Hamilton’s work for trees in Charlotte is the Williams Woods Natural Area, 63 acres of old-growth clayplain forest that has been preserved by The Nature Conservancy on Greenbush Road almost 3 miles south of Ferry Road.

After high winds downed trees in Williams Woods, Hamilton convinced The Nature Conservancy to leave them alone and let the forest recover on its own.

Larry Hamilton died of cancer that came on him suddenly in 2016, Linda said, and he died eight weeks after his diagnosis. Several people commented on how he was working in the woods until just weeks before his death.

The Nature Conservancy and the Charlotte Selectboard rushed to get a proclamation out. He died 24 hours after being taken to Hospice.

While Hamilton was in the hospital he got a call from Lane Morrison, who was chair of the selectboard then. When Morrison told him the trail in Williams Woods had been named the Hamilton Trail, Larry Hamilton said, “I have 300 academic publications with my name on it. They pale in comparison to the pleasure I feel and how it warms my heart to know that in this protected forest my name is on the trail.”

Letters to the Editor

S.100 degrades our involvement in planning

To the Editor:

Under current state statute, rural communities like Charlotte can require the town to vote on changes to zoning bylaws (our land-use regulations) during regular elections or special meetings. Charlotte currently does this. That is why our ballots on Town Meeting Day include articles to approve changes to bylaws.

S.100 is now in review by state House committees. In its latest version, the bill would remove the ability of Charlotte and all rural towns to require a town vote on changes to zoning bylaws. Instead, S.100 would put the decision to require a vote in the hands of the Selectboard, who could approve changes without a town vote at all should they wish to – a dramatic departure from our current process.

One of the things that makes Vermont special is our level of public engagement in

the decisions that affect our communities and how they develop. That engagement fosters a strong sense of town stewardship and ownership among residents. It provides a crucial way for us to democratically review, analyze and vote on planning decisions made by appointed boards.

These changes to state statute in S.100 pose a real and significant harm to the vitality of our local efforts to grow as a community. As a town and a state, we should be working to involve more folks, not fewer, in the process of determining our collective futures.

At the time of writing, these changes to S.100 are close to being finalized, but there is still a window to ask lawmakers to reverse them. Please reach out to our representatives in the state House and Senate and tell them how much you value having input in the direction of our town and to leave the procedure for adopting bylaws as-is.

Mathew Citarella
Charlotte

Students need to be included in harassment protections

To the Editor:

We are the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network, a statewide group of students working to promote anti-racism in our schools and communities. We believe that by starting by fostering anti-racism with the youngest members of society — students — we can build a better society as a whole.

We are writing about S.103, an act relating to amending the prohibitions against discrimination. This bill would lower the standards necessary to pursue a harassment claim, which would be beneficial to all Vermonters. According to the Human Rights Commission, only one out of 200 harassment cases actually make it to be heard. This bill would work to address this inequity, while also extending the harassment protections to students.



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.

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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Motorcyclist dies in wreck on Route 7

Staff report

A fatal motorcycle wreck closed Route 7 for a while on Saturday, April 22. Timothy Williams, 34, of Essex was traveling north when he struck a Toyota Rav4 from behind. He died from the injuries he sustained in the crash. A couple from Hinesburg were in the car that was struck south of Church Hill Road, and one of them was taken to the University of Vermont Medical Center with minor pain,

as a precaution, the police report said. The investigation and witness statements indicate that Williams was traveling well over the 50-mph speed limit. The Vermont State Police Crash Reconstruction Team assisted in investigating the scene. Besides the Vermont State Police, Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue and Shelburne Police and Fire and Rescue helped with the wreck.

LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The section of this bill, that is especially applicable to students, is the part that would implement these harassment standards in our schools. Students across the state and in our schools face racism, ableism, sexism and other inequalities daily throughout their educational journey. We are already fighting for our right to safe education; we shouldn't have to fight to have our harassment complaints heard. We believe that the provision which would include students under the harassment protections is an extremely vital part of this bill and needs to be included in order for it to pass. Imagine this: A teacher and a student both experience harassment from their principal. Under the current harassment standards, only the teacher would be able to file a claim on this. The student would not be able to. We believe this is an injustice. An argument voiced by legislators and others is that education officials and schools do not have the capacity to deal with the harassment complaints being heard. We understand the many demands that are put on educators and staff members by their schools, but allowing students to pursue harassment claims is vital to our mental and

physical health. If schools are for students, then they are worth our safety. The Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network is passionate about building inclusive and just school systems that are centered on student well-being and safety. We believe that the S.103 bill would accomplish this goal. There is no harm to ensuring that we, as students, feel protected in our schools where we spend roughly 35 hours per week. Our question to you is: Why wouldn't we want to prioritize the safety of the next generation across our state? We hope legislators and advocates will hear our request for S.103 to be passed with the student section. If you want to learn more, visit legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2024/S.103 and write to the House Education Committee with your thoughts. We appreciate all the work of Vermonters on this issue and hope that we can see positive change come out of it. Hudson Ranney Windsor (Submitted on behalf of the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network.)

SOLAR

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

is coming from a renewable source. They also give people who cannot access or produce their own renewable energy the ability to support the industry. RECs can either stay in the state where the energy is produced and used, or they can be sold to other states. In the latter case, the energy does not count toward the producing state's energy goals but rather those of the buying state's. Green Mountain Power plans to purchase the 5 MW of power generated at the Charlotte site. It is still too early in the process to say for certain, said Kristin Carlson, the company's vice president of strategy and external relations and chief energy services executive, but if the project qualifies for one of the company's cost-effective solar programs for low-income Vermonters — the Shared Solar Program — then the RECs would stay in state. "For that program, anything we purchase would stay in Vermont and be retired," said Carlson. Clark, who also spoke to the town planning commission April 6, said Encore is in the process of gathering all the data needed to form a complete petition package for the state commission. "To a large extent that work is seasonal, so a lot of the data collection that we need to do to assess the site needs to be done during warmer months when plants and animals are active and present here in northern New England," he said. After the application is submitted, approval can take anywhere from eight to 16 months. "Until then, we see our role as keeping folks informed about the project and especially letting people know how they can make their voice heard," said Lewack. Charlotte has the right to participate in the commission process, he said. This means the

town could, for example, request a hearing to give residents an opportunity to speak directly to the members of the commission. Some residents have expressed concern regarding the project's interference with scenic views and wildlife habitats. Lewack said that, while those are legitimate concerns, he does not anticipate they will change the commission's decision. "What might be an impact on a few people but have no discernible disadvantages to the rest of town is not going to cause the Public Utility Commission to deny a project," he said. According to the planning commission meeting notes, the project would pay into a decommissioning fund to cover the cost of removing the panels after 25 years. The project will also require easements from Vermont Transco and the Vermont Agency of Transportation to cross their properties. (Community News Service works in a partnership with The Charlotte News and other local media outlets to provide opportunities to University of Vermont students.)

The Charlotte News

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June 1

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Commentary

Was budget vote failure the canary in the mine?

Peter Joslin
Contributor

The good news is Charlotters are becoming increasingly engaged about local issues. The skeptic in me wonders for how long.

The failure of the proposed budget to pass, primarily due to compensation and benefits, got people talking. Why? Because it has a direct impact on one's finances and relative income compared to those who work for the town.

During selectboard meetings and on Front Porch Forum posts there was also discussion about the town's wealth, countered by those who are not wealthy. Most of the discussion focused on town expenses with little time spent on the elephant in the room — school tax. There was cursory discussion about finding ways to generate additional income beyond relying on the golden egg that is Thompnon's Point.

Only so much can be squeezed out of a town which is barely growing. Sooner or later, something has to give, or break. Was the failure of the first budget the canary in the mine? Time will tell.

Charlotte's future was the topic at two events I attended over the last month. Both focused on building consensus to develop a roadmap for the town's future. The first on March 19, held by Braver Angels, was a four-hour exercise hosted by the Charlotte Library. "The Common Ground Workshop" was described by the library as "an event that brings together people with differing opinions on land use and development, a topic on the minds of many Charlotters." Clearly it was on the minds of those in attendance. How far this extends into the community, I wonder.



There were about 20 participants, all eager to talk land use and the town's future. The goal was to reach general points of agreement and then carry these action items further into the community.

Braver Angels states on its website: "Launched in 2016, Braver Angels is a national movement to bring liberals, conservatives and others together at the grassroots level — not to find centrist compromise, but to find one another as citizens. Through workshops, debates, campus engagement and more, Braver Angels helps Americans understand each other beyond stereotypes, form community alliances and reduce the vitriol that poisons our civic culture."

There certainly wasn't any vitriol at this workshop, and I had no sense of strong political polarity amongst the group. My takeaway was a lengthy discussion concluded with agreed-upon concerns and goals of a general nature and ones which have been on the minds of those of us concerned about development: preventing sprawl in the rural district; lack of growth in the village districts; expensive housing; lack of municipal infrastructure (water and wastewater) to support village growth; protecting areas of high public value

including farmland; and needed changes to the land-use regulations. As the old cliché goes, the devil is in the details, and that's where things get complicated, and very localized.

The second event was April 1 at which Community Heart and Soul hosted an organizational meeting at the Charlotte Library. This event was a training session that ran about two hours. The purpose was to provide an overview of the roughly two-year process which consists of four phases. This meeting focused primarily on phase 1. The Heart and Soul Community Workbook states that in phase 1 the task is to "gather partners and a diverse team of volunteers. Together, you will use your collective hopes for the future to set goals and build awareness, interest and commitment across the community. This is also an important time to identify who lives, works and plays in the community and to develop a communications plan to reach them all."

This meeting was well attended and a good follow-up to the two initial meetings held a month or so earlier at the Congregational Church and the senior center. Attendees were eager to begin the process and spread the word.

Back in September 2022, Taylor Newton, planning program manager of the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, gave a presentation to both the planning commission and selectboard titled "Audit of Charlotte Village Regulations." Newton, based on his assessment of the Charlotte Town Plan and Land-Use Regulations, made numerous recommended changes to the land-use regulations to stimulate growth in the village districts. These included reducing the number of districts and conditional uses, excessive dimensional standards and excessive subdivision standards, and the need for infrastructure: wastewater, water, stormwater treatment and streets and pedestrian network. Newton's next step was to "create a multi-year planning work program for the town of Charlotte to support village planning."

Newton will do just that on May 4 before the planning commission and May 8 before the selectboard. At these meetings he will present a draft timeline and work plan for fiscal years 2024-26 to provide planning support to Charlotte for land-use regulations and town plan work. I encourage anyone interested in the future of our town to attend these meetings.

Our community is currently engaged in many issues and, I think, boiled down to its most basic, is the future of Charlotte. An engaged community, including all the governing bodies and committees, should look ahead and develop goals and detailed plans for the future.

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

The fix was in



Photos by Ruah Swennerfelt

Jamey Gerlaugh and Scott McGrath fix a sewing machine at the Repair Café on April 15 at the Charlotte Congregational Church. Fifty-two people got stuff repaired, so at least 52 things were saved from the landfill.



Chrissy Bedard and Mickey Davis make sewing repairs.

Affordable clean energy



Photo by Rebecca Foster

On Saturday, April 22, Earth Day was celebrated from the porch of the Charlotte Library with the launch of the Solarize Charlotte program. The Charlotte Energy Committee hosted Efficiency Vermont, VSECU (Vermont State Employees Credit Union) and two solar vendors — Green Mountain Solar and DC Energy Innovations — to explain how Charlotte residents can affordably join the clean energy revolution. Philo Ridge Farm and Red Onion Cafe made sweet contributions to the event.

Education

Staff appreciation days at Charlotte Central School

Naomi Strada
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

PTO and administration organized events for Staff Appreciation Week, May 1-5, to show gratitude to the staff.

For each of the Appreciation Week days, students drew pictures, wrote a poem, sang a song or brought in flowers. Monday was Administrative Assistants Day, while on Tuesday, classroom teachers, special educators and essential arts educators were celebrated on National Teachers’ Day. Wednesday was National School Nurse Day, as well as a day to honor school counselors and bus drivers, while Thursday is the day to celebrate support staff, custodians and the behavior system team. Friday will be National School Lunch Hero Day. The PTO luncheon is scheduled for Friday.

Jazz Band at Discover Jazz Festival

The Charlotte Central School Jazz Band will perform as part of Burlington’s Discover Jazz Festival on Wednesday, June 7, on the Mall Block of Church Street 1:40- 2:20 p.m. This culminates a year of dedication and hard work by the students.

Also, don’t forget about the Charlotte Central School chorus, the fifth, sixth and seventh-eighth grade and jazz bands in concert on Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room.

The Charlotte Central School bands and choruses will also be performing the national anthem at the Lake Monsters’ game at Burlington’s Centennial Field on May 24.

Family Math Night

Wednesday, May 10, 6-7:30 p.m. will be an opportunity for kids and parents to have fun with math. Math enthusiasts of all ages

will gather in the Multi-purpose Room for a free evening of games, raffles, prizes and more. For those interested in attending, they should RSVP to ccspto@cvsdvt.org. Please include the name of each child who will attend.

ACCESS CVU

The school district’s community education program, ACCESS CVU, is asking for your nomination. They are competing in the “Seven Daysies,” where

locals pick the best of Vermont. Nominate ACCESS CVU by going to sevendaysvt.org and clicking on the Seven Daysies link on the upper right of the home page through May 7. The program is competing in the categories of Best Place To Take an Arts Class, under the “services” section, and Best Cooking Class in the “Food” category.

For the latest information on ACCESS CVU you may sign up for the ACCESS

CVU Newsletter at cvsdvt.ce.eleyo.com or follow on Instagram [@AccessCVU](https://www.instagram.com/AccessCVU). On the website is the current course catalog where a number of spring classes still have open enrollment.

ACCESS CVU has also started to plan for the fall semester and is accepting new instructors. You can find the New Instructor Form near the bottom of the cvsdvt.ce.eleyo.com website or call ACCESS CVU for more details at 802-482-7194.

Spring is blossoming



An unknown rider on an unidentified horse takes in the beauty of spring on Lake Road.

Photo by Janet Morrison

Report from the Legislature

Good outweighs unknowns in HOMES bill, S.100

Chea Waters Evans
State Representative

The last two weeks of the 2023 legislative session are here. For me, that means a lot of time in the State House — some of it frantically working and trying to figure things out, and some of it sitting around for hours, bored and snacking, waiting for a bill to move or an amendment to be written, and then getting whirled up in the chaos again.

This week I’m going to touch on the housing bill, also known as S.100, also known as the HOMES bill. (HOMES stands for Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone. This acronym seems like a bit of shoving a chubby baby into some tiny pajamas, but it works.)

This bill is an excellent example of how a bill can change significantly as it moves through the legislative process. Introduced in the Senate early in the session, it looked very different then than it does now. As I



write this on Tuesday afternoon, the bill worked its way out of the Senate and is now in its third committee in the House. It’s listed on the current House calendar at tinyurl.com/4tdn9j3b. You can always log on to the Vermont General Assembly web site and search for a bill to find out where it is at the moment.

This is a good time to give a little lesson about reading a bill. If you’re looking at the text of a bill and there’s just regular type, that’s statute (law) that already exists. If you’re reading a bill and the text is underlined, that’s new text — in essence, the stuff that’s going to be added to the bill. If you’re reading text and there’s a strike through ~~like this~~, that’s text that was either old law that’s being removed, or new language that used to be part of the bill but is now being removed.

As far as S.100 is concerned, I know there has been talk that this bill is going to remove the ability of local voters to decide on their town’s land-use regulations. This is not part of this bill; if it was, it’s gone now. The municipal parts in general don’t affect

Charlotte too much, since most of the zoning changes apply to towns that have municipal water and sewer, which we don’t have.

Keep in mind that this could change later today or at any point before the end of the session. One difference that will apply to all towns, including Charlotte, is that a duplex will be allowed from a zoning standpoint in any place where a single-family home would be.

This doesn’t mean you can put a duplex with eight bedrooms on a place where you could build a four-bedroom house. It means the zoning rules would all still apply, but that the structure could be divided into two separate residences. So, if you were allowed to build a four-bedroom home in a spot, this would allow you to build a duplex with two two-bedroom units. The dimensions allowed would remain the same.

S.100 also removes the 10-person requirement for an aggrieved person to petition against a municipality and allows a single person to do so. However, the law adds that “a particularized interest shall not include the character of the area affected if

the project has a residential component that includes affordable housing.”

The “character” complaint can be perceived as a sort of secret code for discriminating against people based on socio-economic, racial or other reasons; specifically stating that it’s not a reason to appeal the approval of affordable housing and removes one of the roadblocks toward achieving more diverse housing in villages.

As it stands, I feel like the good outweighs the unknowns in this bill; I support it as it currently stands, but of course there are a couple more committees it’s going to go through, who knows how many amendments, plus a vote in the House and then to the governor. I’ve been assuring folks who reached out over text, email and phone that I’m definitely not in the business of restricting voters’ right to weigh in on important matters, and I’m not in favor of any bill that would give too much power to one municipal board or committee. This bill doesn’t do that, so I’m good with it.

As always: cevans@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231.

BRIDGE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

board was meeting anyway, several other items were added to the agenda. After the meeting was finally called to order, at least four items were cut from the agenda because board member Kelly Devine was absent. It was felt that a full contingent was needed to consider those items.

Selectboard member Frank Tenney, who drives a school bus for the Champlain Valley School District, said, “I drive over that bridge every day with my school bus. I have kids on both sides of it.”

He said he did not think the board should leave the bridge unrepaired and keep the road closed, waiting for the state to do something.

“I think that it’s something that should be repaired,” Tenney said. “Hopefully the repair that we’re going to do will last long enough until the state decides what they’re going to do, if they’re going to replace it or not.”

Lewis said making the fix was “a no-brainer.” Although it will cost around \$23,000, he said, he thinks there is almost \$800,000 in reserve funds he hasn’t spent from previous years’ highway department budgets.

So, the town won’t have to spend any more money, Lewis said. This money has already been allocated and this reserve is for critical situations that suddenly come up, like the bridge.

After Lewis spoke, the board quickly voted 4-0 to approve the bridge repair for no more than \$23,000. By the same margin the board also voted to give the contract to Parent Construction, a Hinesburg company whose website says among its specialties are bridge and commercial concrete construction. The company said it could get to work on the bridge in two weeks.

Faulkner said they are looking for used steel sheets 8-feet wide by 12-feet long for the fix.

The board discussed placing a weight limit of 15 tons and limit vehicles using the bridge to two axles until permanent repairs can be made, but no motion was made on this.

George Rorbaugh who lives next to the bridge on Dorset Street asked the board to put a four-way stop at Carpenter Road to slow traffic down as it approaches the bridge.

The selectboard has a regularly scheduled meeting at 6:30 p.m. next Monday, May 8.

Hi Neighbor

Kathy T. Luce: Helping others find their homes

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

Kathy Luce has a passion for helping others find affordable housing. She does it for a living as vice president and board member of Maloney Properties, a Boston-based company, and as a director of the board of the Champlain Housing Trust.

Luce grew up in a blue-collar Massachusetts town and later moved to Boston. After some time in the city, she and her husband Dan thought they'd try the rural life for a while, but upon moving to Charlotte in 1994 they realized they didn't ever want to leave.

Luce's connection to Vermont preceded the move. Back in the late 1980s, the owners of the Northgate Apartments in Burlington wanted to turn the building into condo units which would have displaced hundreds of families. Bernie Sanders, then the mayor of Burlington, objected to the plan and pulled together a group of people, including Brenda Torpy who was the assistant director for housing in the Burlington Community and Economic Development Office. They invited Luce's company to come and help.

Maloney Properties was known for their efforts to develop affordable, mixed-income housing. Luce had a history of work on public housing developments in Boston with a focus on multi-family and senior



Courtesy photo

Kathy Luce is passionate about helping others find affordable housing.

housing owned by non-profits with resident involvement. She was called in to manage the transition of Northgate to a resident-controlled community.

"It's an extremely successful community by any measure," she said. "There is an active resident component and there are

volunteers from the greater community." Luce noted that residents have been hired for a variety of positions and at this point, 100 percent of the staff is either current or former residents.

When Torpy left municipal government for what was then called the Burlington Community Land Trust, she invited Luce to serve on the board.

"Brenda is one of those people who, when she asks you to do something, you're just inspired to say yes," Luce said. She has been involved with what is now called Champlain Housing Trust for at least 25 years on and off with the gaps due to term limits.

Luce said that Champlain Housing Trust provides a wide spectrum of affordable housing opportunities including the creation of affordable apartments across northwestern Vermont. One important part of their work is their shared equity program, which offers people a chance at home ownership in an affordable way.

"It's a wealth-building opportunity for low-income Vermonters," Luce said.

Eligible applicants are able to buy a home without a down payment which allows them to enter a housing market which might otherwise be closed to them. If they sell the home, they get a percentage of the sale price but the rest of the cost stays with the home which remains perpetually affordable.

"There are roughly 3,000 homes we've

been involved in which will stay affordable in perpetuity," Luce said. "It's vital because home ownership has been the path to building wealth in our country and this increases access for people, especially people of color."

In fact, Champlain Housing Trust has developed a BIPOC home ownership program.

The organization has received both state and national acclaim. "We're recognized by numerous foundations for cutting-edge work in promoting housing opportunities," she said.

Champlain Housing Trust has developed a new farmworker housing program to assist with loans for renovations and to create homeownership opportunities for farmers and farm laborers. They also teach home buyer education classes which are open to anyone looking to purchase a home. The non-profit now has roughly 150 people on staff and a budget of \$25 million.

Luce finds serving on the board of Champlain Housing Trust is a perfect match for both her professional life and personal values. "Housing is such a critical need, so it's great to be volunteering at an organization that is doing so much. I don't see retirement in my immediate future because I really enjoy what I'm doing."

Town

Petition for switch to town manager on hiatus

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

The group pushing Charlotte to switch to a town manager form of municipal government has put its petition on hold for the time being.

Lane Morrison, who has been at the forefront of the petition signature collection, agreed at the selectboard's meeting on April 17 to wait on discussions about the proposed change until after this Tuesday's town budget revote. (See results on page 1.)

At least 200 signatures have been collected, enough to require a vote on the town manager issue, but for now the petition will not be formally submitted.

Morrison mentioned returning to the town manager discussion later in May, while selectboard chair Jim Faulkner mentioned July.

Morrison is a former chair of the selectboard. He thinks the town, and in particular selectboard meetings, would run more efficiently with a town manager rather than a town administrator.

And with town administrator Dean Bloch retiring at the end of October, Morrison thinks now is the time to make the switch —

or at least consider it.

"Things are getting more complicated. The purpose of the town manager is to leave the selectboard with key duties," Morrison said. "A town manager by state statute is able to take on a lot of responsibilities to manage contracts and manage employees, but all under the supervision of the selectboard."

He pointed out that 73 percent of Vermont towns with more than 2,500 residents have a town manager. Although a town manager may be paid more than a town administrator, Morrison thinks it would not be more costly to the town because of the functions a town manager can perform and by saving money by requiring less consultants.

Faulkner repeatedly asserted the need for town employees and residents to be informed about the pros and cons of switching to a town manager.

"All the people who are affected by that change need to be informed, be part of the process and part of the decision," Faulkner said. "There's a lot of pros, but there are some cons. I think we really need to establish the pros and cons."

Rather than rushing to switch to a town manager before Bloch's replacement is hired,

Faulkner would like to hire a replacement that started as a town administrator and transitioned into a town manager. Although it is six months before Bloch retires, Faulkner said the town has four months to find a replacement because he would like for the new hire to work with Bloch for two months to smooth the transition.

If Charlotte decides to go to a town manager, it will have another big decision to make about whether the duties of a town manager would be defined by state statute or would the town choose to draft a charter outlining the new position. If it chose the charter route to a town manager, it could take up to a year to change to the position because, besides the process of drafting the charter, the charter would have to be approved by both houses of the state legislature and signed by the governor.

Morrison said if he "pulls the trigger" by submitting the petition for a town manager, the town would have 60 days to schedule a town meeting where the issue would be confirmed or denied by voice vote.

"I think it's a little too soon to do that. I'd like to see more discussion, more feedback on it," Morrison said. "Some of the folks that signed the petition said, 'You know, I signed it. I support the concept. I don't necessarily support going to a town manager yet, but I want to hear more about it.'"

As chair, Faulkner has been diligent about trying to keep selectboard meetings on task and sticking to each agenda's timeline, but still meetings often extend to four hours. He is attracted to the notion of shorter meetings.

Morrison promised that a switch to a town manager would shorten selectboard meetings, pointing out that Shelburne and

Hinesburg both have town managers and their agendas usually have just three items. And selectboard meetings in both towns run for two hours.

He pointed out that a good bit of time at that evening's meeting had been taken up with nominating people to town boards and commissions and said that could have been handled by a town manager. He also mentioned curb cuts and permits as examples of things that could be taken off the selectboard's "radar," so it could more effectively respond to bigger items.

One of the most important things the selectboard should be doing is focusing on the future, said former member of the planning commission, Peter Joslin. "We want to be leading the changes that we want to see in the future, not be kind of dragged by them."

When the town was discussing changing from a zoning board of adjustment to a development review board in 2021, there was a lot of opposition and claims about what would happen if that change was made, said chair of the development review board Charlie Russell. "A lot of the claims about what might happen didn't come true, and the reality is the planning commission has been able to focus on land-use regulation changes."

Board member Frank Tenney expressed concerns that, if a town manager is taking care of a lot of things the selectboard handles now, it will reduce opportunities for public input on those issues.

Russell responded, "With a town manager you can get an answer five days a week, just like that. Whereas, to try to come in front of you guys, you've got to wait two weeks."



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In the Outdoors

Azores’ claim of ‘world’s best pineapples’ not bragging

Elizabeth Bassett
Contributor

Just as greenhouses in Vermont produce salad greens in March and zucchini in April, pineapples flourish under glass in the Azores at the same latitude as Richmond, Virginia. Plantations in the Azores have been exporting the tasty tropical treat since 1864.

On a recent visit, I ate plenty of delicious pineapple and visited a plantation where I learned a lot.

The Azores is a chain of nine volcanic islands in the Atlantic Ocean, isolated about 1,000 miles west of the coast of Portugal, of which it is an autonomous region. The islands produce wine, cheese and beef as well as growing tea and pineapples. Seafood and fresh vegetables are also abundant with a year-round growing climate and plenty of rain. Two ocean currents meet in the region, the warm Gulf Stream and an Artic current flowing south. Temperatures are quite moderate and uniform throughout the year.

In the 19th century a fungus destroyed the orange trees in the Azores, its main export crop and financial mainstay. Ships departed from the port at Ponta Delgada carrying slightly under-ripe citrus, sailing as far as the United States while they ripened in the hold. Searching for a replacement crop, farmers manipulated the smooth cayenne pineapple, brought to the islands from South America in the 18th century as an ornamental, and a new export was born. Pineapples grow on the biggest island in the chain, Sao Miguel.

It’s not warm enough to grow the fruit outdoors, so farmers built 3,000 greenhouses, graceful buildings with decorative wood trim and hundreds of glass panes, including some panels etched with pineapples. Many of these still stand. Glass creates heat to simulate the native habitat of pineapples. Initially ferns, heather and moss collected from the mountains created the planting beds. As they decomposed, they generated additional heat in the greenhouses. Today native plants have



Photos by Elizabeth Bassett

Left to right: Greenhouse floor art and an original greenhouse exterior with about 800 plants inside.

been replaced with other agricultural surplus and sawdust that augment the volcanic soils.

Rain that falls on the greenhouses is collected in tanks for irrigation during hotter, drier months, providing water and humidity in the enclosed spaces. In spring and summer, farmers whitewash the glass with lime, using long-handled brushes, applying calcium hydroxide to prevent the sun from burning the leaves. Ventilation through open windows and doors moderates the temperature. By comparison, Dole’s flagship plantation in Wahiawa, Honolulu County, Hawaii, sits outdoors at 21 degrees North Latitude. Similar to the geography of Sao Miguel, Dole’s fields lie in a valley between volcanic mountains that bookend the island.

Bringing fruit to market is a lengthy process. From the time a cluster of leaves, essentially suckers, are planted until they are ready to bloom is about two years.

Pineapples do not need to be pollinated and would develop seeds if they were. Smoke, which contains the flower-inducing plant hormone ethylene, triggers fruiting of all the plants in the greenhouse simultaneously. If the pineapples were allowed to develop on their own timeline, harvest would be difficult and not economically feasible. Doors and windows are kept closed as smoke, once again provided by burning local invasives or other natural surplus, fills the air and the temperature rises to about 100 degrees Fahrenheit. The pineapples will begin to grow and take about six months to ripen.

By the mid-1800s, production stood at 2,000 tons a year and the first pineapples were exported to England in 1864 where they were featured at British royal banquets. Today

thousands of growers produce pineapples across Sao Miguel.

Many are familiar with wine appellations that guarantee quality and the location, or terroir, of its production. Similarly, Azorean pineapples have sported a POD (protected designation of origin) tags since 1996.

The leafy crowns of the fruit are trimmed to be smaller than those sold in the States. The unique fertility of the island’s soil and the maturation methods inside the greenhouses produce a sweeter and less acidic fruit.

I’ll let the Azorean authorities have the last words: The PDO label placed in the crown of the Best Pineapple in the World attests that its production has been supervised by the Agricultural Market and Nutrition Institute.

I can’t say I disagree.

Around Town

Condolences

James L. Morse

There will be a “Celebration of Life” for the Honorable James L. Morse on Friday, June 2, 2023. at 2 p.m. at All Souls Gathering, 291 Old Bostwick Road, Shelburne. Jim died on January 13, 2023, at home in Charlotte. A quintessential public servant and so much more, Jim once wrote: “At death I have a resume, but where I’m going experience doesn’t count, like a merchant mariner moving to Omaha.”

Join us for this remembrance of Jim’s life and experience — a time of common understanding that his love for us, his respect for all living things and his quest for justice does count and we are better off for having been here on Earth with him.



Sports

In first varsity start, Berger continues CVU’s win streak

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Things on the diamond are sparkling so far for Champlain Valley, with the Redhawks’ baseball team undefeated after its first five games.

Although encouraged, assistant coach Sam Fontaine is not taking anything for granted.

“It has been great to see the success we have had, and we have not even played our best yet,” Fontaine said. “Our schedule from here on out will be a real grind, playing at least three times a week. We just have to take it one game at a time with the goal of continuing to get better.”

With significant opponents in the week ahead, CVU’s fortunes could turn.

“Anybody can beat anybody on a given day, which is why we can’t take any days off,” said Fontaine. “Essex knocked us out last year and are the defending state champions. Brattleboro beat us last year at their place, and Burr & Burton is always a tough opponent.”

CVU 5, Rutland 0

This past Saturday, April 29, Elise Berger pitched a shutout for a win in her first starting varsity game for the Champlain Valley Union High boys team at home, keeping the Redhawks undefeated at 5-0.

Berger has been demonstrating her pitching prowess for years, having played baseball, never softball, since she was in elementary school. She played on the U.S. Women’s National Team.

Berger pitched five innings, giving up three hits and two walks and striking out six.

Andres Lowkes took the loss for Rutland (1-5), pitching into the sixth inning and giving up nine hits, five runs and a walk while notching two strikeouts.

CVU created separation in the fifth inning when a homerun by Travis Stroh scored two runs and added another in the sixth on Chris Robinson’s RBI double.

Declan Cummings went 3-for-3 at the plate for CVU with a double and two singles.

The Redhawks were schedule to host Essex High for a game on Tuesday that was postponed because of rain. They’re slated to host Brattleboro at 4:30 this afternoon, Thursday, May 4.

CVU travels to Manchester to take on Burr and Burton Academy at 4:30 p.m. this Saturday, May 6/

CVU 8, Mt. Mansfield 5

On Thursday, April 27, the Redhawks traveled to Mount Mansfield Union and came away with an 8-5 victory.

CVU took advantage of four Cougar errors in the fifth inning to pull away.

Robinson pitched three innings to take the win for the Redhawks, giving up a hit and a walk while striking out five.

Robbie Fragola led the scoring for CVU, going 2-for-2 at the plate with a single, a double, a walk and three RBIs. Stephen Rickert went 1-for-2 at the plate with a walk and an RBI.

CVU 4, South Burlington 2

The Redhawks (3-0) continued to collect Ws with a win over South Burlington at the Wolves’ field.

Stephen Rickert pitched a complete game for the Redhawks, giving up just four hits, while striking out eight.

Although Nick Kelly notched 12 strikeouts for the Wolves, it wasn’t enough because he also gave up eight hits and committed three errors. The game was South Burlington’s first loss, dropping its record to 4-1.

CVU 12, Middlebury 2

CVU went to Middlebury on Tuesday, April 17, for its second game of the season after an opening game 7-6 win at Rice on April 13.

In a game that was moved to the Tigers’ field because of field conditions at the Redhawks’ field, CVU (2-0) kept its record unblemished with a 12-2 win.

The Redhawks jumped out to an early lead they never relinquished, scoring 8 runs in the first inning.

Signs of spring



lumwort



bloodroot



bleeding heart

Photos by Lee Krohn

The forest wildflowers of early spring are not garishly pretty and would never star in ‘The Real Wildflowers of Hollywood’ if there were such a thing. They are all the more stunning for their subtle beauty and the effort it takes to find them.

Charlotte History

An archeologist is like a historian with a trowel

Dan Cole
Contributor

If we historians wish to study a particular time period, there are often multiple sources we can consult. Not so the archeologist. Most often, the archeologist must use infinite patience to create that record through observation of details left behind by those being studied. An archeologist needs to have a genius of inference and the intuition of an artist.

Sherlock Holmes said, “From a drop of water, a logician could infer the possibility of an Atlantic or a Niagara without having seen or heard of one or the other. Thus, all life is a great chain, the nature of which is known whenever we are shown a single link of it.”

Yet even Holmes acknowledged it takes years of study, and it is an art.

A shard of pottery, discarded flecks of chert or flint, tools and other implements can provide dating evidence that establishes certain lifestyles and practices over time, and can give clues to infer a culture’s existence where no written records have survived.

Jess Robinson is our Vermont State Archeologist, and his presentation at the senior center on April 11, sponsored by the Charlotte Library and the Historical Society, was on one of the most difficult studies in local archeology and anthropology, pre-contact history of the First Nations to arrive around our lake. This study is difficult because the indigenous peoples of the Champlain Valley built with wood and hide, following the receding glacier northward when only oral histories existed.

The single clue of an ancient campsite may only be a darkened area in the earth that to the trained eye reveals intentional burning. What appears to us as merely a stone may be a prehistoric axe or grinding implement. I have been an enthusiastic follower of the BBC archeology series “Time Team,” which is on YouTube if you wish to check it out. One of their lead archeologists, Mick Aston, once said that archeology is a form of destruction of the site, so a dig must be done with patience and scrupulous attention to detail and documentation, in order to disturb as little as possible. Normally, their digs are sketched, photographed, GPS data points recorded and artifacts dated before being covered back over.

Robinson spoke of known or suspected indigenous sites that are surmised, but not excavated, primarily for their own protection. Due to limitations of money and staff, most often the state archeologist is called in to dig only when an area is threatened by development. Test pits are dug with extreme care to observe evidence at its proper strata, which can aid in dating it. United States archeology seems to favor

test pits over the Time Team’s extensive use of trenches.

However, technology, called geophysics, can be employed to assist. These tools can include magnetic gradiometry, ground penetrating radar, MRIs for preserved bodies, and even laser scanning, known as LiDAR (light detection and ranging). Anomalies are located by the geophysics, which are then interpreted by a technician to suggest what is unseen beneath the soil surface, such as burn pits, burials, mud ovens, post holes or boundary ditches. Metal detectors are sometimes used to sweep the spoils pile, seeking small metallic objects that might have been overlooked.

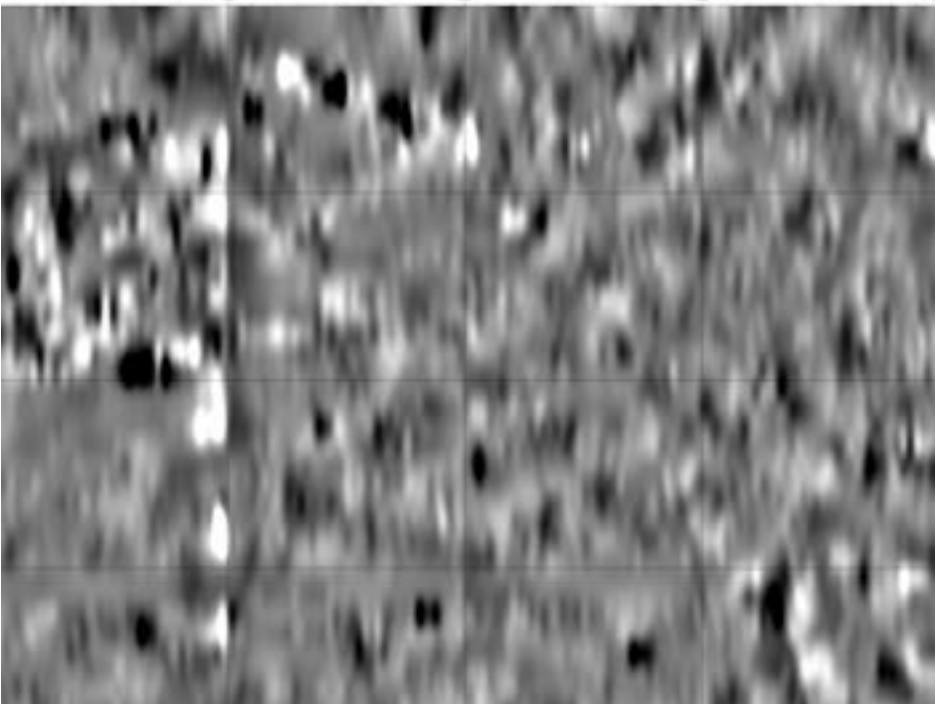
The Charlotte Cemetery Commission has used geophysics twice. The University of Vermont archeology department completed a magnetic gradiometry survey of the Bradley Cemetery (East Burying Ground), which is on the west side of Spear Street a little more than a half mile north of Hinesburg Road and the Barber Cemetery (West Burying Ground) that is on Greenbush Road, south of Ferry Road.

Check the accompanying photo of the Bradley Cemetery; can you identify the graves? And then there are the underwater archeologists ...

Photo from The Valley Reporter
A traditional series of test pits at a dig near Warren Falls in West Haven using trowels and shovels.



Photo from Charlotte Historical Society
A magnetic gradiometry image from the east side of the Bradley Cemetery (East Burying Ground) on the west side of Spear Street about a half mile north of Hinesburg Road. Areas of high magnetic resistance are lighter in color; the white areas are stone. Areas of lowest resistance are dark or black in color, suggesting the ground has been dug. Graves appear black and are cigar shaped.



Calendar of Events

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

World music trio

Thursday, May 4, 6-8:30 p.m.

Elijah Kraatz and Trio de Rumba bring their lively music to Shelburne Vineyard. No tickets required; show is free and open to all, featuring music inspired by the gypsies of Spain and France. For more info, call 802-985-8222.

Jazz ensemble recital

Thursday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.

The University of Vermont Jazz Guitar and Post Bop Ensembles present their spring recital at the school's recital hall. For more info, call 802-656-3040.

Performance on human displacement

Friday, May 5, 7 p.m. & Saturday, May 6, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Paula Higa Dance presents an interactive dance performance at Isham Family Farm in Williston. Themes explored by the Brazilian-American choreographer are security, demography, human rights and who is not a migrant. To read more and buy tickets, see tinyurl.com/y9kc4vpn.

Time for high school one-acts

Friday, May 5, 7 p.m.

Saturday, May 6, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Sunday, May 7, 2 p.m.

Champlain Valley Union High School (CVU) presents two student-directed plays, Hamlet and The Actor's Nightmare, in the CVU theater in Hinesburg. Purchase tickets ahead at ticketsource.us/cvutheater or at the door. Check ticket site to see if shows are sold out.

Ticonderoga open for season

Saturday, May 6, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Fort Ticonderoga, in Ticonderoga, NY, opens today for visitors and programs. Experience guided tours, special events, gardens and outdoor activities. More info at tinyurl.com/4a5372ax.

Wildflower and wildlife hike

Saturday, May 6, 1-3 p.m.

All ages, allies and families are encouraged to attend a Pride hike at Red Rocks Park in South Burlington. Look for spring ephemerals, bird arrivals and emerging trees. Free hike; learn more and pre-register at tinyurl.com/3642vjhz.

Reusable produce bags

Saturday, May 6, 5-7 p.m.

Print cotton bags with wood or linoleum block designs. Or carve your own design and make decorative bags for kitchen use. Bring clean cotton bags from home to print. Class is in Richmond at Old School Art Studio. Learn more and register at oldschoolartstudio.com and click on Workshops.

Handbell concerts

Saturday, May 6, 7 p.m.

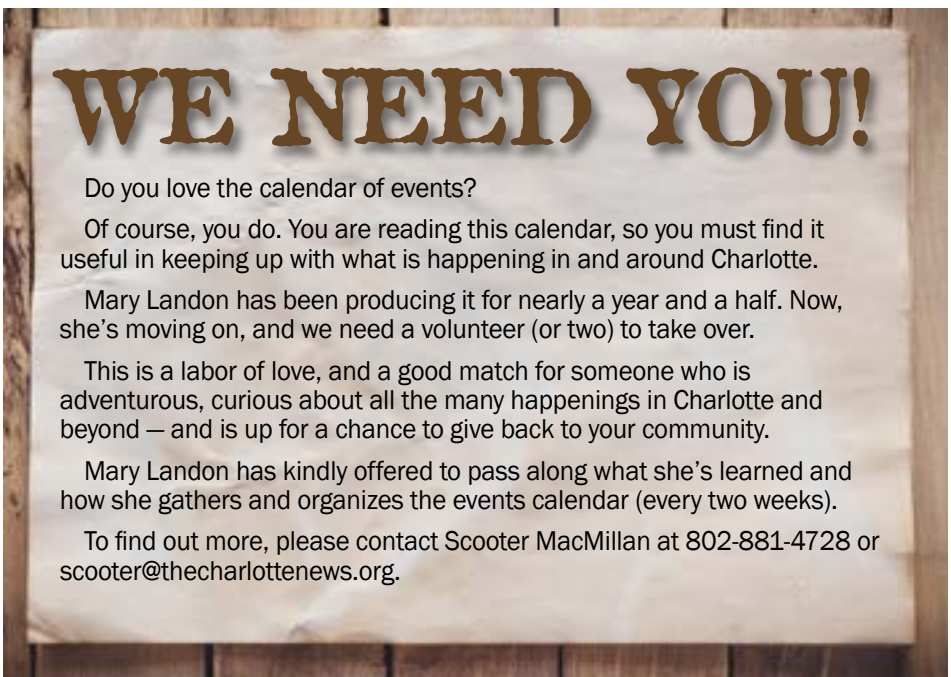
Sunday, May 7, 3 p.m.

Listen to the angelic sounds made by the Northern Bronze Handbell Ensemble. They perform at Faith United Methodist Church on Dorset St. in South Burlington. Tickets available at the door.

Visit the dairy

Sunday, May 7, 1-4 p.m.

Shelburne Farms is pleased to invite all ages to the dairy buildings for Dairy Day. Calves,



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.

milking, dairy machinery and a cow parade are just some of the highlights. Drop in anytime; \$5 per car, walkers free! To read more, see tinyurl.com/2p8n9e3m.

Walk for a cause

Sunday, May 7, 1-4 p.m.

Take a 3.5 mile walk (or a 1-mile option) in a fundraising walk for Burlington's Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS). This is a family-friendly event that takes a route around downtown Burlington, starting at 2 p.m. To learn more or sign up, see tinyurl.com/4zcru5dv.

Italian cinema day

Sunday, May 7, 2-9 p.m.

The Vermont International Film Festival presents three fine Italian films at Main St. Landing in Burlington. Bar and snacks available between screenings. For more info, see vtiff.org/events/italian-cinema-day/.

Youth orchestra season finale

Sunday, May 7, 3 p.m.

Vermont Youth Orchestra seniors play their final pieces with the Orchestra before graduating from high school. Their program, The Lost World, is performed at Burlington's Flynn Theater. To learn more and buy tickets, see vyo.org/may-7-the-lost-world/.

Cookbook author visits

Sunday, May 7, 4 p.m.

Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne hosts Vermont author, Gesine Bullock-Prado, for a reading and book-signing at the Pierson Library in Shelburne. The author will share stories about creating her new book titled My Vermont Table. Free and open to all.

Sourdough for beginners

Monday, May 8, 5:30-7 p.m.

Make sourdough starter from scratch as you follow along, via Zoom, in a 3-part class introducing sourdough techniques. Recipes and instructions provided one week in advance. This City Market class is free; pre-registration required. Future classes in this series are Monday, May 15 and Monday, May 22, same time. To learn more and register, see tinyurl.com/ycks59tz. Each class requires separate registration.

Vocal and organ recital

Monday, May 8, 7:30 p.m.

University of Vermont (UVM) vocal and organ students take to the stage at the UVM Recital Hall for their spring recital, featuring classical and Broadway pieces and more. Performance is free, in Burlington. More info at 802-656-3040.

Pests in our forests

Tuesday, May 9, noon

Vermont's forests are changing due to many factors, including climate change and pests. Join a free webinar for Forest Pest First Detectors, or anyone interested in learning more about the threats. Learn more and access the meeting link at tinyurl.com/sstf9bzk.

Floor loom weaving

Tuesday, May 9-Tuesday, June 27, 6-8 p.m.

This class is best for experienced weavers who can work independently, with support. Some previous loom experience required. The 8-week class allows for project development, working alongside a structured group of fellow weavers, instruction and trouble-shooting. Held at the Shelburne Craft School, more info may be seen at tinyurl.com/yuhnp4v4.

Vermeer and Roach films

Weds., May 10, 11 a.m. or 7 p.m.

Two movies are screened at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater: at 11 a.m. is Vermeer, an Exhibition on Screen film offering viewers a close-up look at the Rijksmuseum's exhibition of this Dutch Master. At 7 p.m. is a screening of Max Roach: The Drum also Waltzes. The film follows the story of this jazz musician and composer who was, at times, an outspoken cultural activist during his complicated life. For more info, trailers and tickets, see townhalltheater.org/grid/.

Goat farm tours

Weds., May 10, noon-2 p.m.

Meet with goat dairy producers and tour their farms in this series of four free events organized by the University of Vermont Extension Service. Also on hand will be Extension dairy specialists to discuss participants' questions. The first tour takes place in Hardwick on May 10; all tours are at a distance. To learn about all the tours and to register, see tinyurl.com/mr4fexx7.

Abolition and women's rights

Weds., May 10, 7 p.m.

Vermont Humanities presents a free, online discussion called Thriving Communities: The Winding Vermont Road to Abolition and Women's Rights. To learn more and register, see tinyurl.com/jk66ejeb.

80s tunes become bluegrass

Thursday, May 11, 7 p.m.

The Neon Ramblers (fka Dojo) is a group taking classic pop tunes and turning them into bluegrass hits. They perform at Middlebury's Town Hall Theater. The six musicians are part of The Grift, who perform the following night, same place and time. Learn more about these unique performances at tinyurl.com/56t2y226.

Six short plays

Thursday, May 11- Saturday, May 13, 8 p.m.

Stories of love, betrayal, hope and self discovery are the themes in six plays to be presented at Shelburne Vineyard by a group of Vermont actors. Tickets and more info are at tinyurl.com/bdda2epf. Some adult themes and language.

Museums open for season

Saturday, May 13

Today is opening day for Shelburne Museum and Rokeby Museum in Ferrisburgh. Stop in and see what's new for this season.

Annuals, perennials and pies

Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The United Church of Hinesburg holds a plant and homemade pie sale. The annuals are freshly delivered from Paquette's in Williston. Read more at tinyurl.com/38jutywn.

Natural History workshop

Saturday, May 13, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Join this immersive field workshop with presenter Jonathan Shapiro, as he takes participants on an exploration of the natural history of the north woods. We live at the meeting place of the boreal forest to the north and the temperate deciduous forest to the south. Learn about the diverse animal and plant life here through classroom and field work, discovering what is unique about the north woods community. Class is held at and near the North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier. More info and registration are at tinyurl.com/2p8z3wac.

Farm tour and tea

Saturday, May 13, 2:30-4 p.m.

Spend a few hours touring Farm Craft VT in Shelburne. Learn about the herbs, beehives and the farm lab where they make natural, botanically-based home and body products. End the tour with herb teas and treats. For more info and dates of upcoming tours, see tinyurl.com/mskc7vv.

Violin and piano chamber music

Saturday, May 13, 3 p.m.

The Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival presents a violin and piano recital at Burlington's College Street Congregational Church. Learn more and see the program at tinyurl.com/yc6hhb7b.

Arts celebration

Saturday, May 13, 3:30-6 p.m.

St. James Episcopal Church in Essex Junction holds a spring art celebration, including works by many local artists, a silent auction and refreshments. Church address is 4 St. James Place, at Gate F of the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds. For more info, see stjamesvt.org/about-1.

CHARLOTTE

Mother's Day pansies

Saturday-Sunday, May 13-14, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Horsford Gardens and Nursery in Charlotte will be giving away a four-pack of pansies, in store only, one per family, while supplies last. Also on Sunday will be a pop-up shop from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. with Only Cannoli, Vermont's only authentic Sicilian cannoli bar. Cannolis and coffee will be available to purchase. Bring Mom out for a treat and a stroll in the emerging gardens. Horsford's website lists many upcoming art events and classes.

Hinesburg Artists Series

Sunday, May 14, 4:30 p.m.

The Hinesburg Community Band is joined by the South County Chorus for their spring concert. The family-friendly event takes place at Champlain Valley Union High. It's free event, but donations gratefully accepted.

Reckless ideas

Tuesday, May 16, 6 p.m.

Smart machines and A.I. are a part of life now. Come to a free public lecture on how A.I. is used. Generator in Burlington hosts Reckless Ideas: This Changes Everything, a series of lectures on current topics with expert panelists. For info, see tinyurl.com/3bv6c3tn.

Shared stories

Tuesday, May 16, 7-9:30 p.m.

Come to Shelburne Vineyard, try a glass of wine and listen to shared stories — or share one of your own. Sharing not required; feel free to simply listen. This event repeats on multiple Tuesday evenings through November, so check their calendar. Story-telling starts at 7:30 p.m. To sign up in advance, email rharmrell@together.net or sign up at the door. Learn more at tinyurl.com/2p9dhec3.

Vegetarian Indian cooking

Saturday, May 20, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Shelburne's Vermont Zen Center holds a cooking class with Manju Selinger. The group will prepare an authentic North Indian meal which will be shared for a group lunch at 1 p.m. To learn more and register, see tinyurl.com/3nuydms5.

Casey and McCaffrey

Saturday, May 20, 7:30 p.m.

Patti Casey and Colin McCaffrey perform at the Vergennes Opera House with special guest Eric O'Hara. Hear the harmonies of this trio of singer/songwriters and their folk tunes. Tickets and more info are at tinyurl.com/4rzmysty.

Play Every Town VT


Sunday, May 21, 2 p.m.

Pianist David Feurzeig performs one of his series of 252 Vermont concerts at the United Methodist Church in Shelburne. Feurzeig has a message about the unsustainability of concert appearances that may only be reached by plane travel. He travels throughout this state in his solar-powered EV and says he will no longer fly to perform. For more info on his undertaking, see tinyurl.com/yjenwye6.

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 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.



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

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

Selectboard
Monday, May 8, 6:30 p.m.

Development Review Board
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 10, 7-9:30 p.m.

Planning Commission:
Regular meeting
Thursday, May 18, 7-9 p.m.

On Books

Trio of engrossing whodunits

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

“Nobody owns life, but anyone who can pick up a frying pan owns death,” wrote William S. Burroughs. Murder is a most distasteful and troubling concept. To contemplate a human being deliberately taking the life of a fellow human being is indeed terrible to contemplate. It is certainly nothing that a normal, healthy person would wish on themselves or on anyone they love, or like, or care about, or even someone they don’t like or care about. We don’t tend to wish murder on anyone. No one in their right mind likes or wants murder. Murder in real life is a thing to be avoided.

So why, then, is there nothing so satisfying, so engrossing, so cozy, so alluring as a good murder mystery?

I will not attempt to answer that question. But I confess: I do love me a good murder mystery. And I have just read three of them.

Many of you are fans of Louise Penny, the Canadian writer, good pal of Hillary Clinton and author of 18 books featuring Chief Inspector Armand Gamache of the Surete du Quebec. Her most recent novel, “A World of Curiosities,” is one of her best.

Very briefly, the plot involves a man and a woman (Sam and Fiona Arseneault, brother and sister) reappearing after many years in the lives of Gamache and his son-in-law and colleague, Jean-Guy Beauvoir.

Sam and Fiona were children when their mother’s body was discovered one bleak November day on the shore of a lake northeast of Montreal. Gamache was called away from Sunday breakfast with his young family to investigate the morbid scene. “It was hard to tell her age. Not young. Not old. The water, and death, had slackened her face, washing away age lines. Though she still looked worry-worn.”

Years have passed since that day. But with the sudden reappearance of the now-adult orphans, memories and thoughts begin to percolate and stew, along with new mysteries, including a dread-filled 160-year-old letter from a stonemason; a hidden room; a finely detailed, bizarre work of art; a ticket to an art exhibit; a brick; and the sense that, as Gamache says to his son-in-law Beauvoir, “This was not a puzzle. It wasn’t an exercise. It wasn’t even a job. This was a sacred duty. To the dead, and those who wept.”

Penny has a knack for invoking the ominous, the looming shadows of evil and the devious psychopathic manifestations of the criminal mind, yet no author I can think

of so handily and sentimentally portrays familial love and loyalty, the joy and comfort of a good marriage, the bonds of true friendship, the stabilizing warmth of home and hearth and the enjoyment of excellent food. Penny fans will delight to meet up once again with old friends like ex-therapist and bookstore owner Myrna, innkeeper duo Gabri and Olivier, artist Clara, Gamache’s gracious wife Reine-Marie, and tippler/poet Ruth and her companion and often profane pet duck, along with the cozy village of Three Pines, not far from the Vermont border, happy home base for all the above.

The narrative is peppered with the poetry of the difficult, eccentric Ruth, adding an interesting literary layer to the novel. For example: “When Jean-Guy left, Armand stood in the living room and opened the thin volume of poetry. ... To the poem. ‘Waiting.’ And after all it is nothing new / It is only a memory, after all / a memory of a fear. ... A Memory of a fear / that has now come true.”

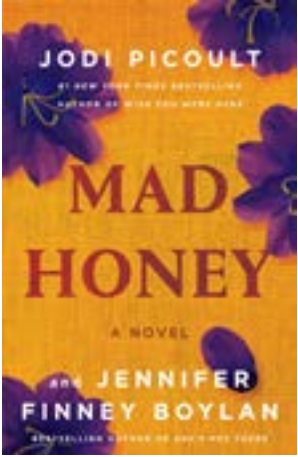
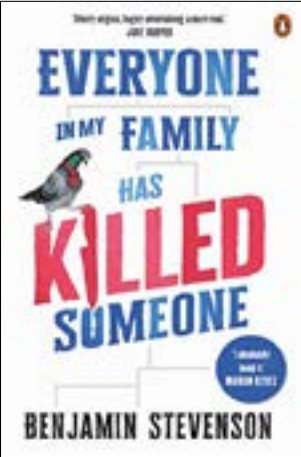
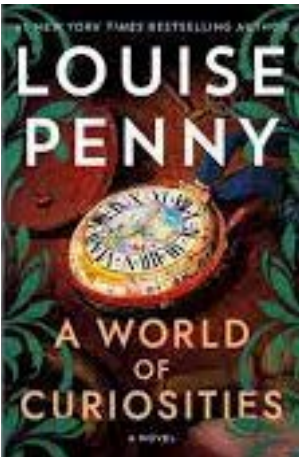
As I said, this is one of Louise Penny’s very best. Highly recommend.

Another murder mystery, of a slightly different ilk, is one that Elizabeth at The Flying Pig recommended to me one day when I stopped by: “Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone” by award-winning stand-up comedian Benjamin Stevenson.

It begins, “Everyone in my family has killed someone. Some of us, the high achievers, have killed more than once.” Early on in this novel, the reader is told on what pages the deaths will occur, including “a hat trick on page 81,” and informed that “there are no sex scenes.”

The narrator of this fresh, witty, funny novel is Ernest Cunningham, known to his friends and family as Ern or Ernie. He is a writer of how-to guides for the murder-mystery genre. “Look,” he explains, “we’re not a family of psychopaths. Some of us are good, others are bad, and some just unfortunate. Which one am I? I haven’t figured that out yet. ... Have I killed someone? Yes. I have. Who was it? Let’s get started.”

But hold on. Because before we “get started,” readers are made aware of the “10 Commandments of Detective Fiction” (Ronald Knox, 1929), as well as the membership oath of the Detection Club, a 1930s secret society of mystery writers including Agatha Christie, G.K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox and Dorothy L. Sayers: “Do you promise that your detectives shall well and truly detect the crimes presented to them using those wits which it may please you to



bestow upon them and not placing reliance on nor making use of Divine Revelation, Feminine Intuition, Mumbo Jumbo, Jiggery-Pokery, Coincidence or Act of God?” (The Detection Club was really a thing. How do I know this? Because I looked it up. G.K. Chesterton was the first president, there was a fanciful initiation ritual, and the abovementioned oath was written by Dorothy L. Sayers.)

“Everyone in My Family Has Killed Someone” is a murder mystery that is also about writing a murder mystery. At times extremely amusing and laugh-out-loud funny, it takes place at a family reunion at a secluded snowy mountain retreat. It couldn’t be more different than the Louise Penny, but very worthwhile, very fun.

Last, but not least, we have “Mad Honey,” Jodi Picoult’s most recent novel, written with Jennifer Finney Boylan. I am a big fan of Jodi Picoult, whose novels are typically good solid page-turners that wrestle with an assortment of hot ethical topics. I think I have read almost all Picoult’s 28 books, and am recalling: stem-cell transplant, teen suicide, eugenics, fertility issues, the death penalty, mercy killing, reproductive rights, school shootings, the Holocaust, COVID-19 ...

“The act of writing,” Picoult says, “is the act of trying to understand why my opinion is what it is. And ultimately, I think that’s the same experience the reader has when they pick up one of my books.”

She writes, she says, about subjects that keep her awake at night.

The book’s co-author, Jennifer Finney Boylan, is also quite prolific. She has written 16 books and since 2008 has been a contributing opinion writer for the op/ed page of The New York Times. Finney is a well-known advocate for human rights and has appeared several times on the Oprah Winfrey Show, as well as Larry

King Live. She is a member of the faculty of the Breadloaf Writer’s Conference of Middlebury College, just down the road.

I had a hard time putting this book down. I want to tell you all about it, but I don’t want to ruin any surprises. I will tell you this: Olivia has a great life living in Boston, married to a heart surgeon, raising a young son named Asher. But then things I’m not going to discuss with you get ugly, and Olivia and Asher end up moving to the small New Hampshire town where Olivia grew up. There, Olivia takes over her father’s beekeeping operation. There are lots of details about bees and beekeeping, which I thoroughly enjoyed and is also the reason I gave this book to my sister, an amateur but ardent beekeeper. There are many interesting and hither-to-unknown (to me) details about bees and beekeeping.

OK, so where was I? In New Hampshire, teenage Asher ends up dating a classmate named Lily. But then there is a death. Is it a murder? Sure looks like it. Which means that things start to slowly get uncovered and revealed. And the reader finds herself plunged into a quintessentially Picoult-ian ethical pickle stew. Whodunit is only one of the questions in this well-crafted and suspenseful novel, which is also, by the way, a love story.

“Mad Honey” is one of my favorite Jodi Picoult novels, and I have great respect and appreciation for the co-author, Jennifer Finney Boylan, who has added depth, texture and expertise to this very good book. Highly recommend. A great gift for a book-loving, beekeeping sister, or friend, or for anyone on your list who enjoys being entertained, educated and challenged.

A great line from the book: “How similar does someone have to be to you before you remember to see them, first, as human?”

Enjoy.

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Library News

Library focusing on conservation during May

Margaret Woodruff
Contributor

Libraries have a responsibility to preserve, to conserve for their communities. From antiques to textiles to natural habitats to landscape design, this month we feature several programs with a specific focus on conservation. See below for details about these events and more.

Children’s programs

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

No registration required.

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

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

Preschool free play
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, play dough — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library. Ages 2-4. No registration required.

Star Wars Day
Thursday, May 4

On May the Fourth ... in a library not so far away ... a great adventure will take place. Drop in and celebrate Star Wars Day. Enjoy a display of Star Wars-themed trivia games, crafts and books to check out. Intergalactic fun for the whole family.

Programs for adults

Book Chat
Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

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.

Library Board of Trustees meeting
Thursday, May 4, 6 p.m.

Agenda available at the library website: charlottepubliclibrary.org. Zoom link: bit.ly/40N2FPV.

Naturally Curious: A Green-Up Day event
Saturday, May 6, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

A visual journey through the 12 months of the year, as seen through a naturalist’s eyes. Mary Holland guides us through a selection of each month’s most memorable events with objects as well as images and information about amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, insects, spiders, plants and fungi of New England. A family program for kids age 8 and up with parent or caregiver. Register at bit.ly/3lDwl3q

Conservation clinic
Tuesday, May 9, 7-8 p.m.

Rick Kerschner, former director of preservation and conservation at the Shelburne Museum, holds a conservation clinic at the Charlotte Library. Discover if your family treasures require conservation. Bring a reasonable-sized antique such as a small painting, work of art on paper, textile such as a quilt or coverlet, or a decorative artifact made of ceramic, glass, leather, metal, rubber, plastic, wood, etcetera, for review. Please note that Kerschner is a conservator, not an appraiser, and cannot estimate the value; however, a list of appraisers will be available. Reserve a spot at bit.ly/libevents05445.

Sustainable Textiles:
Clothing is Agricultural
Wednesday, May 10, noon

Natural fiber is the seamless technology of a closed-loop future and circular time. In this third and final webinar of the series, fiber

artist and farmer Laura Sullivan will share the journey of growing hemp for fiber on the University of Vermont extension research farm. Register at tinyurl.com/mr22py9d.

Better Together Book Club:
‘This Is How It Always Is’
Wednesday, May 10, 7 p.m.

Join this group that reads and discusses books related to parenthood. “This Is How It Always Is” by Laurie Frankel is a novel about revelations, transformations, fairy tales and family. And it’s about the ways this is how it always is: Change is always hard and miraculous and hard again, parenting is always a leap into the unknown with crossed fingers and full hearts, children grow but not always according to plan. Families with secrets don’t get to keep them forever. Books are available at the circulation desk. Registration appreciated, email susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Mystery book group:
‘Fortune Favors the Dead’
Monday, May 15, 10 a.m.

“‘Fortune Favors the Dead’ has razor-sharp style, tons of flair, a snappy sense of humor, and all the most satisfying elements of a really good noir novel, plus plenty of original twists of its own.” —Tana French. Join us to discuss the 1940s-era mystery featuring a former circus performer turned hard-boiled private detective. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Short story selections
Wednesday, May 17, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new. The reading list will include a variety of authors, and one or two stories will be featured each session. Copies of the stories are available at the library circulation desk or via email. Join on Zoom at bit.ly/3VjaknZ.

Men’s book group: “Horizon”
Wednesday, May 17, 7:30 p.m.

“Horizon” by Barry Lopez moves indelibly, immersively, through the author’s travels to six regions of the world: from Western Oregon to the High Arctic; from the Galapagos to the Kenyan desert; from



Botany Bay in Australia to the ice shelves of Antarctica.

Creating an Edible Landscape
with Dani Baker
Thursday, May 18, 7 p.m.

If you want to create an edible hedge, an edible bed, a foundation planting or a forest garden, you will discover there are a variety of native food plants to choose from to fill your space. This illustrated talk will describe the growth habit, preferred habitat, care required, food value, other users, aesthetic appeal and propagation techniques for over 25 native perennial plants you can include in your edible landscape. Join us online or in person for this timely presentation from Dani Baker, whose work promotes acting as good stewards of the land and water resources entrusted to us on her farm in upstate New York and through presentations like this. Register for Zoom at bit.ly/3GC458U and for in-person attendance at bit.ly/3oduCmk.

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.

Write Ingredients

Brisket goes by different names but all called delicious

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Monday Munch, May 8
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or until the food is gone

Come for Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center and enjoy a New England update on a food that in southern Texas dates back to indigenous Native Americans. These days, plenty of Texans consider smoked brisket the national dish of Texas.

Eaten around the world, brisket is the basis of a spicy soup in Korea, a dish with green vegetables in Australia and braised in dark beer in Germany. It’s called bollito misto in Northern Italy, nihari in Pakistan, suea rang hai in Thailand. At the Charlotte Senior Center, beef brisket cabbage soup is cooked with tomatoes, carrots and onions, and it is called delicious.

Let’s give a special nod to the cabbage in this soup. Sometimes called the friendless vegetable, with the U.S. Department of Agriculture explaining that it stopped collecting data on it in 1982 because they found “no special interest.” But please note: Cabbage may lack the influential punch provided by a special interest lobby, but the American Cancer Society applauds the fact that cabbage is loaded with fiber and is high in vitamin C. This is plenty of evidence for you to come to Monday Munch and eat up.”

Carrots in this soup offer another benefit. Nutritionists say that eating a carrot a day,

with its calcium and vitamin A, is like signing a health insurance policy. And, for scientific reasons we won’t go into here, the cooked carrots in Monday’s soup are actually better for you than raw ones. Another reason to come eat up.

As for singing, “Boiled Beef and Carrots” is a comedic music hall song published in 1909, extolling the virtues of a typical English food favorite at tinyurl.com/4yumum95.

Chorus:
Boiled beef and carrots,
Boiled beef and carrots,
That’s the stuff for your
“Derby Kell,”
Makes you fit and keeps you well.
Don’t live like vegetarians
On food they give to parrots,
Blow out your kite, from morn ‘til night,
On boiled beef and carrots.

Here’s the Eastenders’ version of the same song on BBC — tinyurl.com/4xetds9h.

Thursday, May 11
Men’s breakfast, 7-9 a.m.

To register, contact Tim McCullough at cubnut5@aol.com. Register by the Tuesday before the breakfast. Suggested donation is \$6.

Grab-&-Go Meal pickup 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Lasagna roll-up with tomato marinara meat sauce, vegetable blend, wheat bread, strawberry cake and milk. Registration required by the prior Monday.

Monday Munch, May 15
11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Menu to be announced. See charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals.

May 15, 1856:
L. Frank Baum was born. He had trouble finding a publisher for “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” because it was judged “too radical” a change from traditional books published for children. Finally, the

book was published in 1900 on Frank’s 44th birthday, after he and the illustrator paid all the expenses. The list of writers expressing affection for Oz is long, including Ray Bradbury, Angela Carter, Arthur C. Clarke, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Shirley Jackson, Salman Rushdie, James Thurber, William Styron, John Updike, Gore Vidal and Eudora Welty.

There were several roads nearby, but it did not take Dorothy long to find the one paved with yellow bricks. Within a short time, she was walking briskly toward the Emerald

City; her shoes inherited witch shoes (that were not red as in the movie but silver in the book) tinkling merrily on the hard, yellow roadbed.

You don’t need any special shoes to sing along with Judy Garland in the 1939 film at youtube.com/watch?v=6QoELNjcc9w.

Here, you can listen to a variety of interpretations of “Over the Rainbow,” from Judy Garland to Ella Fitzgerald at tinyurl.com/29h6e7jt.

Not making back production costs after its first release, the film was rereleased in 1949. In 1956, it premiered on television. According to the U.S. Library of Congress, it is now the most viewed film in movie history. I would only add that when I was 8, as a very special treat, a family friend took me to see the film. Thereafter, I have remembered that as the scariest time I ever experienced in a movie theater.

Though a voracious reader, I never went near Baum’s book until I did research of a Chicago public school second grade. There, I saw children’s great enthusiasm for the book.

Thursday, May 18
Age Well meal pickup 10-11 a.m.

Chicken breast with vegetable sweet-n-sour sauce, brown rice pilaf with veggies and cannellini beans, Brussels sprouts, wheat roll with butter, ricotta cookie and milk. Suggested Age Well donation is \$5, but it’s not required. Pay what you can, when you can.



Senior Center News

Senior Resource Fair sharing lots of senior resources

Lori York
Director

May is shaping up to be a busy month at the senior center, with a highlight being a Senior Resource Fair with over 30 organizations participating.

Learn more about the services available through Age Well, the Alzheimer’s Association, Homeshare Vermont and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program. There will be representatives from the Consumer Assistance Program, AARP Fraud Watch and the Shelburne and Charlotte food shelves. There will be free hearing tests, hearing aid cleanings, and if you are a veteran, you can find out about military veteran services and benefits. Don’t miss out on the opportunity to discover all the great resources available to seniors.

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 newsletter at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The “Week Ahead” email is sent Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the coming week.

Events

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

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

Opera discussion: Cavalleria Rusticana by Pietro Mascagni & Pagliacci by Ruggero Leoncavallo
Tuesday, May 16, 1 p.m.

Presented by Toni Hill of the Chittenden County Opera Lovers, this discussion will include video excerpts of both operas showing how the music and drama combined to draw upon the literature of Italian verismo, an offshoot of the Balzac school of realism. “Cav and Pag” (so called since first shown together at the Met in 1893) are considered the essence of the verismo style. Free but egistration recommended.

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

Stop by the senior center for the first annual Senior Resource Fair and learn about all the great resources available to seniors in the community. Check out the Charlotte Senior Center website at tinyurl.com/ftbzz3hx for a complete listing of the organizations who will be attending.

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

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

Make Music VT
Wednesday June 21

The Charlotte Senior Center and Charlotte Library will be participating in Make Music VT. Info at bigheavyworld.com/makemusievt. Stay tuned for details about this free event. Are you a musician interested in performing at the senior center or on the library porch? Contact Nick Carter at nickcarter011@gmail.com.

Programs

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

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

“Stories For All Time” legacy project
Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30 p.m., May 9-30

Have you always meant to give voice to an important family story or personal anecdote before it’s forgotten? Perhaps you’d like an opportunity to honor someone special or express gratitude to a loved one but have never gotten around to it. Your completed project may take the form of a written record or, in “StoryCorps” style, may be recorded as a brief audio file for you to keep and share with loved ones. Questions? Contact Lin Kalson at 608-345-9321 or lin.linkalson7@gmail.com. Registration required. Cost: Free with donations accepted to support the Charlotte Senior Center.

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

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

New paddling group forming

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

Beginner guitar
Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m., May 24-June 28

Interested in learning guitar? Join John Creech, a composer and guitarist for over 40 years, as he shares his love of this instrument. The session will cover the basics of learning acoustic guitar in an easy-going and supportive environment. Registration and payment required by May 16. Cost: \$75 for the six-week session.

Writing Our Way Through
Thursdays 1-3 p.m., May 25, June 1, 15, 22 & 29

Join Pamela Powell as she guides you through this generative writing workshop. Questions? Reach out to Pamela at mermaidpamela44@gmail.com or 781-646-6708. Registration and payment required by May 17. Cost: \$100 for the five-week session.



Photo by Jennifer Segel

The Segel siblings — from left, Ada (6), Juna (15), Jack (13) and Hannah (8) — will perform on May 10 at the senior center.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Men’s breakfast
Thursday, May 11, 7-9:30 a.m.

On the second Thursday of the month, men gather for breakfast and conversation. This month, the speaker will be David Pearson, whose his photography exhibit is on display at the senior center. He will talk about his work over several decades and what he has learned about environmental change and animal behavior. Register by noon on Tuesday, May 9. Suggested donation of \$6.

Monday lunches

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

Weekly Age Well Grab-&-Go meals

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

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

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

Weed's in the Garden

Plant gifts or trades bloom with memories

Joan Weed
Contributor

You know, as I drive around these lovely spring days, I notice that there are themes of blooms at this time of year in nearby yards. Daffodils galore, forsythia, violets in the lawn and, if you have planned, tulips popping up everywhere.

If you're able to drive slowly enough, you might spot trilliums or trout lilies along the damp roadsides.

Even farther into the woods and up higher are blossoms on ancient apple trees either left over from an orchard of yore or perhaps transplanted by wildlife. A haze of lemony green or rosy red makes a halo on the hardwood trees. Catkins appear on birches.

It seems each farmstead had lilacs and daffodils and later in the year day lilies. One of the reasons so many had matching gardens is that pass-along plants were the way to enlarge your garden beds. Trading plants was a necessary occupation when money was scarce.

Care must be taken to be vigilant, as anything prolific enough to be given freely is often invasive as well. But many are also gems and remind us of the friend who offered it.

I wander my own gardens and see Em's "champagne" iris and Mona's white and purple bearded iris. Bev's Mormon spider daylily is a favorite. My sister Nan has gifted me many plants over the years. Kathy offered ligularia and that is a nice clumping gold, late in summer. Peter offered heritage red dahlias whose simplicity I love. Kelly's tete-a-tete daffodils delight each year.

We are fortunate to have one of Nick's apple trees, a true Charlotte tree. My kind new neighbors were good to leave a dolgo crabapple in place when clearing out, as it dangled fruit over my driveway. From that fruit came lovely apple-cinnamon jelly. Yes, I shared some of it, too.



Photos by Joan Weed

These are the appropriately named queen of the night tulips.

Friendship and kindness often accompany gardening. Have you noticed? Those who nurture plants are also the kind of people who nurture humankind.

Taking care of bees and other pollinators is part of that plan as well. Native species offer the best choice of nectar and timing as well as the physiology needed for a pollinator to access. I try to offer some but am also tempted by hybrids and newer versions of old plants. What would we do without certain imports, roses, peonies, citrus and oh so many that we've learned to love. Balance is the key here.

Early May in my area is when I begin looking for the spring ephemerals which are mostly native and I love them. Have since I was a child. Red and white trillia, hepatica, uvularia, bloodroot, trout lilies, corydallus. I have bought some and they are expensive because they usually take years to get to blooming age, and if propagated properly, take extra care. Please don't ever dig them in the wild. One reason is that they rarely survive and many have symbiotic relationships with surrounding plants and trees. I planted mine near windows to watch their progress



Double blood root.



Trillium is a sure harbinger that spring has arrived.

and in safe places so workers don't step on them.

April's chores include cleaning up debris from winter, planting hardiest flowers and vegetables. We are in waiting for most tender plants for a few more weeks. Water features need cleaning and set-up, garden furniture can come out. Garden beds can be mulched and edged.

Another season has come for those of us who love getting our fingers in the soil. Hope you're ready.



Spring has come to the garden.

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