Slowdown for slowpokes

The Chelydridae, or snapping turtles, are on the move. Many residents are worried about turtle safety on town roads; some have put up handmade, craft signs to encourage turtle awareness.
Ex-Shelburne town manager to consult on town manager switch

Scooter MacMillan and Brett Yates

(A previous version of this story published in the online newsletter has been edited and updated here to include reporting of the June 12 selectboard meeting.)

In the middle of a discussion of three metaphorical buckets to organize townthoughts about changing to a town manager, it was revealed that former Shelburne town manager Lee Krohn might be enlisted to help Charlotte figure out what goes into which bucket.

The bucket analogy was used on June 6 at another special meeting during which both side of whether to switch to a town manager municipal government. Selectboard chair Jim Faulkner said the bucket to a town manager would be for the responsibility of a town manager, one for those of a town manager and one for responsibilities.

Charlotte officials have used the bucket metaphor previously, for example to organize discussions about land-use plan amendments. Faulkner said he was talking for a week or so to Krohn, who recently retired as town manager of Shelburne and who lives in Charlotte. He related that Krohn is not interested in working as an interim town manager, but he’s willing to serve as a consultant. Faulkner proposed for the town to enlist Krohn to organize the advantages and disadvantages of a town manager versus a town manager into the “three buckets.”

Board member Louise McCarren said the question she has come across with from her discussions with town residents is: “What is the problem we’re trying to solve?”

The answer, she feels, is that many residents think the selectboard is preoccupied with mundane things when more important things need attention. The board reached a consensus agreement, which it later violated, to not use curbs as an example of such mundane decisions that it could delegate.

Lewis Mudge, also a board member, said he doesn’t see Charlotte’s situation as a problem, but more as an opportunity. With town manager Dean Bloch retiring, it’s an opportunity for the town to consider what role of that position should be.

“I think it’s normal, and I think it’s appropriate that we do. We might stay with a town administrator,” Mudge said. “What direction do we want to move in?”

Board member Frank Tenney recommended the town look at how and why some towns, which changed to town managers, veered from state statute to modify their town managers’ responsibilities. Such a change from state statute would require a charter approved by the legislature. That process would probably take two years, Faulkner said.

The selectboard is worried about the amount of time it is taking to hire Bloch’s replacement with him leaving at the end of October. Board members discussed, as they have before, how it will affect hiring to fill this position while the nature of that position is unsettled.

Faulkner believes that Krohn’s experience as a town manager could expedite the hiring process.

“If we’re honest, I think it’s pretty special day when everything is working.”

— Lane Morrison

Release of vote petition threatened

Scooter MacMillan

In order to stay current with all the work you’ve done, I think the timing is right to release the petition.”

Chittenden County sheriff to patrol Charlotte

Brett Yates

Starting in July, the Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office will take up traffic enforcement duties on Charlotte’s town roads.

For years, the town, which has no police department of its own, has contracted the Vermont State Police to keep tabs on speeders. Under the current agreement, which expires on June 30, the service costs $78.60 an hour and no more than $33,000 per year.

The Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office will charge $65 per hour and no more than $30,000 per year. It will patrol townswide from Monday through Friday for “up to eight hours per week,” according to the contract, which the Charlotte Selectboard signed at its meeting on June 6.

Board member Lewis Mudge described the absence of weekend enforcement as “a real kick in the pants.” But chair James Faulkner argued in favor of prioritizing weeknays. “Everybody travels on those days, the most, back and forth to work,” Faulkner said. “It would be great if we could have seven days instead of that.”

The Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office previous tenure in Charlotte ended in 2008, when the town hired the Shelburne Police Department to replace what town administrator Dean Bloch remembered last year as the former’s “heavy-handed” and “not very professional” interactions with local motorists. The town subsequently switched to the Vermont State Police after Shelburne raised its rate.

According to data published by the Vermont Fiscal, Vermont State Police issued fines of $40 for town violations in Charlotte in 2022. The agency will continue to patrol Route 7 on the state’s behalf.

In another state statute to modify their town managers’ responsibilities.

board members discussed, as they have before, how it will affect hiring to fill this position while the nature of that position is unsettled.

Faulkner believes that Krohn’s experience as a town manager could expedite the hiring process.

“If we’re honest, I think it’s pretty special day when everything is working.”

— Lane Morrison
A natural gas tanker truck fire on Route 7 in Ferrisburgh late the night of June 1, that easily could have been deadly, did knock power out in the area for awhile, but no one was hurt. Considering the size of the conflagration, damage was minimal.

Workers restoring cable and phone service the morning of June 2 said around 11:05 p.m. the night before noticed sparks, apparently from a gas tanker truck’s brakes.

The driver passed the tanker truck and managed to signal the truck driver over. They both dashed a safe distance away and weren’t hurt when the truck burst into flames.

Grass and trees were burned for about 40 feet on both sides of Route 7 south of Dakin Road.

The truck was a total loss. No buildings were burned, although a structure close to the road was not far from the conflagration. The next morning it appeared to have been untouched by the flames.

A week after the fire the Vermont State Police sent out a release saying an investigation of the natural gas truck fire is “ongoing.”

“The investigation into last week’s fire involving a commercial motor vehicle carrying compressed natural gas on U.S. Route 7 in Ferrisburgh remains active,” the release said.

The state police are asking for motorists, or anyone in the area who saw the fire or the tanker before the blaze, to call New Haven at 802-388-4919 and ask for Sgt. Brittani Blanton.

A worker at the scene said the fire had been suppressed by the time he arrived, just after midnight.

Another who lives in Monson said he lost power the night before, but it had been restored in just a couple of hours.

Fire fighters were able to spray the fire with water to cool it down. Wager said, in his 46 years of firefighting, it was one of the biggest he’s seen.

About 80 feet of both the north and south lanes of the roadway of Route 7 were damaged three-quarters of an inch deep because of the high temperatures of the fire, said Daniel Shepard with Vermont Agency of Transportation in a release.

Temporary repairs to the roadway to ensure the safety of the road had been made by the next day, Friday, June 2, but more permanent repairs are needed in the near future, he said.

Nine fire departments, including Charlotte, responded to the fire.

Photos by Scooter MacMillan

Asa Roberts signs a ball for a young fan. As the Red Hawks progressed in the state of ending the regular season ranked No. 1 baseball team achieved its early season goal of winning the conference.

Their No. 1 ranking also earned the Redhawks a bye in the first round, so in their final contest they faced Colchester.

How the Redhawks got here

The Champlain Valley Union High baseball team achieved its early season goal of ending the regular season ranked No. 1 in the state, so it played all its playoff games at home, until the finals. And the final game on Centennial Field is almost a ritual, so the Redhawks may be starting to feel like it’s a home game, too.

The team had visited Centennial Field on a recent day and walked the field where the final contest would be held.

“The thing about walking it visualization that success, just seeing it. The dimensions are a lot bigger but all these kids stepped up,” Eldieron said.

Their No. 1 ranking also earned the Redhawks a bye in the first round, so in their first playoff game, they faced Colchester in the quarterfinals, a team they dispatched 13-0 in a five-inning match shortened by the mercy rule.

In the semifinals, the Redhawks vanished Mount Mansfield (13-5) 6-3 on June 6.

Chris Robinson pitched five innings to take the win for CVU with four strikeouts while yielding three hits.

Robbins Fregola got a hit all four times he stepped into the batter’s box, with two doubles and two singles.

Rickert showed off his hitting prowess on a day when he wasn’t pitching, going 2-for-3 doubles and two singles.

The Charlotte News • June 15, 2023 • 3
Children’s center and church working to expand childcare facilities

For many years, Charlotte Children’s Center and Charlotte Congregational Church have partnered to provide childcare and pre-school education for families in our community through the Children’s Center Extension Program (Voyager). While the main children’s center is on Ferry Road (across from the Charlotte Library), Voyager is housed in rented space in the vestry building of Charlotte Congregational Church. Currently, our two institutions are working together on some exciting projects that we’re pleased to share with the wider community.

Over the past nine months there has been a movement to renovate the playground area on the church campus that serves children from both the Voyager Program and the church. The vision is to replace the fence, expand the play area and replace the main playground structure.

To make the church’s largest classroom into a dedicated infant room while ensuring that there is sufficient preservice space for the existing preschool students and the church’s vibrant children and youth programs, through a grant awarded by Let’s Grow Kids and VT’s Child Development Division to Charlotte Children’s Center, a grant provided by Shelburne-Charlotte-Hinesburg Interfaith Projects (SCHIP), and donations by both institutions, the room should be ready this fall to welcome up to six infants. The grant funds will also help to expand infant and toddler capacity at the children’s center main campus and preschool spaces in the Voyager Program.

The indoor and outdoor improvements represent a significant investment in time and money, but they are also an investment in the future resilience of our community. At a time in our country when there are endless reports of disagreement, division and institutions working against one another, right here in Charlotte we have a different story to tell: A story of shared vision, institutional cooperation, wide-spread generosity and bold action leading to a playground of possibilities.

**Wide-open house**

On Saturday, June 3, the selectboard held an open house at the site of the construction of the town garage. From left, board member Lewis Mudge and road commissioner Junior Lewis discuss the project. Chair Jim Faulkner said, although the project is behind by a couple of weeks, the project will be finished long before the snow flies. He said the original finish date was July. Although that date has been moved back, there is still plenty of time for construction to be completed long before the penalty date.

**TOWN MANAGER**

Continued from page 1

would take Krohn about four to six weeks to organize the various points for and against into the “three buckets,” resident Peter Richardson contended that, estimating it should take a couple of hours.

The organization of the various points into a more easily understood format “is not very subtle,” Richardson said. “That’s a short-term assignment that someone with Lee’s experience should turn around in a couple of days.”

Regular selectboard meeting

At the board’s regularly scheduled meeting on June 12, the board’s intention to hire Krohn nearly derailed altogether when Morrison stood up to announce that he might reverse course and file the withheld petition after all.

“In order to stay current with all the work you’ve done,” he said, “I think the timing is right to release the petition.”

Morrison envisioned a special town meeting at the end of July, following the conclusion of Krohn’s research. But Tenney argued that, if Morrison chose to “force the issue” instead of waiting for the selectboard to decide whether to bring the question to the voters, it wouldn’t make sense for the town to contract Krohn to study the pros and cons between the different forms of government for the purpose of informing that decision. “I thought we had a plan,” Faulkner added. “What bothers me the most is that you don’t trust us. You don’t trust that we will follow through with what we’re saying.”

Morrison relented, and the board executed a contract with Krohn for $2,500, with the expectation that he would deliver a report by July 20 for review at the board’s July 24 meeting. The extra time will give Krohn a chance to consult the town attorney during his analysis of the “opportunities, constraints, requirements, and limitations that may flow from state statutes regarding town administrators and town manager,” as the contract puts it.

“I’m not doubting your ability to interpret state statutes,” Mudge said. “It’s just that I think there’s different ways of reading state statutes amongst different people, and I think at the end of the day we’re going to want a lawyer to do that.”

The board also finalized its help wanted ad, which it “will publish later this week, as well as a longer job description to accompany it on the town website. The ad will solicit candidates for a ‘town administrator/town manager,’ with a deadline of July 14.

The town of Hinesburg presented a model for the hiring process ahead. When that town was recruiting and interviewing candidates to fill its town administrator position, it was also considering a switch to a town manager. It hired a person willing to be an administrator but able to step into the town manager role. Ultimately, the residents voted to change to a town manager.

Amid ongoing editing, the board tabled a draft solicitation for a search committee, where, according to the current language, three members of the public will help two selectboard members interview applicants. Board member Kelly Devine said the prime selectboard should look for volunteers in the town with experience in developing “rubrics” or guidelines for evaluating job candidates.

“We think that’s a real resource that we can use to prepare to make this process less expensive, more local, more engaging for our community, and hopefully, get us to a position where, whoever we hire, it’s somebody that everybody’s happy with,” Devine said.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Saturday, June 24
6 p.m.
Point Bay Marina

This is our longest standing event and a summer tradition for our yacht club.

Members: $16 | Non-member guests: $21 | Children (5-12): $10

Sign up on the DIYC website diamondislandyacht.org by Sunday June 18 to secure your place at the table.

**DIYC CHICKEN BARBECUE**

Grange Hall, 2858 Spear Street in East Charlotte Village.

The BBQ includes half a chicken and an array of delicious sides and simple desserts. We will have vegetarian sides for those that want to attend the event but prefer not to eat chicken. Drinks are available, but you are welcome to bring a beverage of choice.

Members: $16 | Children under 5 free | Non-members: $21 | Children (5-12): $10

Sign up on the DIYC website diamondislandyacht.org by Sunday June 18 to secure your place at the table.

**COMMUNITY POTLUCK SUPPER**

Gather with friends and neighbors to share food and conversation at the Grange Hall, 2858 Spear Street in East Charlotte Village.

Sunday, June 25, 5 - 7 p.m.

Bring a dish to share, plate and utensils

Beverages will be provided

Seating is limited; please email charlottegranger@gmail.com if you plan to attend. Visit charlottegrange.org for up-to-date event information.
Preparing to rock

Since robin eggs take about 13 days to gestate, these should be rocking any day now, out-bopping the buzzard and the oriole, hoppin’ and a-boppin’ and a-singing their songs.

Rev. Anne Melendy Hancock

It is with sadness that the family of Rev. Anne Melendy Hancock, 94, previously of East Charlotte, Vermont, announce her death on June 3 at the Arbors in Shelburne, Vermont.

She was born May 2, 1929, in Burlington to Horace and Dorothy Melendy. She grew up on Shelburne Road, where one of her favorite activities as a little girl was sitting with her dad on his Vermont State Police Escalation-Henderson motorcycle. As a teenager she was a fine equestrian and loved to ride her horse, Starr, through the woodlands and meadows around her home. She graduated from Burlington High School.

In 1949, she married John E. Hancock, a handsome farmer from East Hardwick. After one cold winter in a poorly heated farmhouse with a newborn daughter, that career path ended. They moved back to Shelburne Road before moving to Proctor, Vermont, for several years, later settling in East Charlotte where they would live much of the remainder of their lives.

After her four children were grown, she began her years of academia. In 1976, at the age of 47, she attended Trinity College in Burlington, graduating summa cum laude. In 1984, she graduated from St. Michaels College with a master’s in science and counseling degree.

During and after her years in school, she was also a licensed lay minister with the United Church of Christ, serving many churches in Vermont. She was one of three women in Vermont to establish the order of St. Luke’s Healing Ministry with the United Church of Christ, an ecumenical ministry of healing, prayer, the laying on of hands and the sacraments. She had absolute faith and experience that prayer healed. Deciding to become an ordained minister, she studied and worked under the tutelage of Rev. John Nutting and on April 30, 2000, at the age of 71, she earned the title of Rev. Anne Hancock at the Cornwall Church. She continued to serve as their pastor for three more years, retiring at the age of 74.

Our mom was a beautiful seamstress, community leader and ardent supporter of women’s rights. She was passionate about serving the underprivileged, whether it was hosting a Fresh Air child, fostering children, welcoming all the folks her children brought home from Camp Jenel or supporting Heifer International and Save the Children. Never to be forgotten are the summer vacations in Wells, Maine, where she and our father gathered all their children and grandchildren together for some of the best and most memorable times of their lives.

Anne is predeceased by her husband of 62 years, John Hancock (2011), her second husband, Gene Rothman (2018), her brother, Irving Melendy (2021) and her longtime companion, her little dog Willy.

“Nanny” is survived by her children Betsy Hartman (Ed), John Hancock, Stephen Rose and Melissa Hancock (Toby). Her grandchildren: Radiance Yafah (Shahin), Etienne Hancock (Jill), Jaliil Hartman, Elise Hancock, Anna Dyer (Kelly), Juliette Volk (Niki), Michael Fitzgerald, Kate Fitzgerald, Julia Sumner (Tom), Maliyah Kent (Kev), Brookes Clemmons, Luke Clemmons, Olivia Carrmons and Emile Hartman. She is also survived by 13 great grandchildren: Munir, Bashir, Nabil, Brooke, Sasha, Celia, Hadrian, Pharah, Niri, Theron, Lila, Eva and Riley.

Services were held June 6 at the Charlotte Congregational Church, where she was a lifelong member. She was interred in the Grand View Cemetery. Donations can be made in her memory to the Vermont Food Bank or Grand View Cemetery.

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Services were held June 6 at the Charlotte Congregational Church, where she was a lifelong member. She was interred in the Grand View Cemetery. Donations can be made in her memory to the Vermont Food Bank or the charity of your choice.

“The progress of the human spirit in the divine world after its connection with the physical body has been severed, is either purely through the grace and bounty of the Lord or through the intercession and prayers of other human souls, or through the significant contributions and charitable deeds which are offered in its name.” Abd’l-Baha

James M. Lawrence

James Merton Lawrence of Shelburne, Vermont, passed away peacefully on May 7, 2023, with family at his side.

James was born on November 11, 1946, in Binghamton, N.Y., the son of the late Merton Grover Lawrence and Anne (Sperniak) Lawrence. The first in his family to attend college, James enrolled at Cornell University intending to pursue a veterinary career. After taking
an elective class in Communication Arts, he fell in love with the field of journalism. Upon graduating in 1969 he joined the Peace Corps and worked in Putumayo, Colombia for two years.

Returning home, James enrolled in a magazine journalism program at Syracuse University graduating with a masters in 1974. With family ties in Canada, he landed a job as a reporter for The Kingston Whig Standard, moving from police reporting to editing the op-ed page and doing investigative journalism.

The start of James’ incredible entrepreneurial career was in 1976 with the kitchentable launch of a laid-back magazine titled Harrowsmith, after a nearby Ontario town. The first issue had the eye-catching cover of a large green tomato imprinted with a lipstick kiss and the cover line: “Kissing Supermarkets Goodbye.” This was followed in 1981 with the launch of Equinox, The Magazine of Canadian Discovery. Both titles earned prestigious Canadian national magazine awards.

James had big ideas and the determination to bring them to life through a combination of hard work and the unerring ability to find and convert talented people to his cause. The pivotal book-publishing companies, Camden House (Canada and U.S.), produced titles in the fields of natural history, gardening, food, country skills, astronomy, and ecology. With an eye towards a larger audience and to establish a U.S. base of operations, James and his family moved to Charlotte, Vt., in 1985 where he launched Harrowsmith Country Life. In 1990, EatingWell Magazine was launched, riding the growing interest in healthful eating and reliably delicious recipes. After an acquisition, the new parent company shuttered the magazine in 1999. James went on to open a new book-publishing venture and beautiful destination bookstore in Shelburne, Vt., both called Observatory. The new venture, he chose as the winner of various awards, including the James Beard Award and Julia Child Award for Excellence in Cookbook Publishing.

The ups and downs of publishing led to the next adventure, Microcosm Books, specializing in publications about the natural world, notably ocean life and aquarium-keeping. James’ keen interest in butterflies, collecting and mounting prized specimens from all over North America, culminating in a highly valued private collection. His collection will be donated to Harvard’s Department of Entomology later this year.

“Slairstein ‘Norm’ Ranall” ran his first marathon with a very respectable time, crossing the finish line holding the second of two beers that he claimed were necessary to keep hydrated. He was a voracious reader, student of the English language, possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of sports and music trivia, and was a prankster extraordinaire. Often content to linger in the background but always affable, people gravitated to his intellect, offbeat humor and gift for storytelling. His yen for adventure, combined with a healthy distrust of authority, was chronicled in his memoir “Cursing Across America in the Age of Innocence,” which detailed his summer adventures bouncing from city to city in America in the Age of Innocence.

Bob will be greatly missed, as will his unique sense of humor and deep repertoire of accounting jokes,” said Beth Anderson, CEO. “He leaves behind a legacy of human resources activities, including budgeting, grants and human resource management for 32 years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A scholar and teacher, Bob was a voracious reader, student of the English language, possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of sports and music trivia, and was a prankster extraordinaire. Often content to linger in the background but always affable, people gravitated to his intellect, offbeat humor and gift for storytelling. His yen for adventure, combined with a healthy distrust of authority, was chronicled in his memoir “Cursing Across America in the Age of Innocence,” which detailed his summer adventures bouncing from city to city in America in the Age of Innocence.”
Got a hankerin’ to drive?

John Quinney
Publisher & President

I love driving over the stunning Lake Champlain Bridge. If you share the feeling, we have an unusual opportunity for you.

We’re looking for someone to drive across the lake and back once every four weeks, late at night or very early in the morning. Every second Thursday, by no later than 7 in the morning, the printer delivers our papers in two batches: about 1,850 are dropped at the Shelburne post office and another 200 go to the senior center. We pay about $4,000 a year for this service — and that’s a lot of money for a small, nonprofit community newspaper. Hence this request.

There are two options for meeting the post office’s 7 a.m. deadline: picking the papers up around 5 a.m. every second Thursday or on the Wednesday evening before around 9 p.m.

We realize that this “opportunity” may appeal to only a tiny number of our readers. But, we need only two of you, taking this in turns, once every four weeks — and I would be your backup, as needed.

All 2,050 papers will fit in a mid-sized car. And we’re happy to reimburse you for the cost of gas — or electricity if you own an EV.

Photo by Trey Cambern Photography/Courtesy of HNTB

The Lake Champlain Bridge at Crown Point is part of the scenic drive a volunteer would experience picking up newspapers at the printer in New York once a month.

Still time to send in photos for newspaper’s contest

John Quinney
Publisher & President

As you may know, we’re running a photo contest, asking for your photos and thoughts on “What Charlotte means to me.”

In promoting the contest for us, three people had this to say about what Charlotte means to them:

• “After a long weekend in and around suburban NYC, I was surprised at how much I felt a longing to be back in Charlotte while driving up I-87 yesterday afternoon. Many of us have those feelings when we go away.”

• “I love that retired CEOs are comfortable sitting down for a breakfast sandwich at the Old Brick Store with the local farmers dressed in workday clothes and sharing smiles and laughter that prove that our community embraces and includes all people. … We have so much to learn from each other, if we just take the time to inquire with an open mind what our neighbors find brings them joy and soothes their fears.”

• “A compassionate people, rooted in tradition, walking wide-eyed into the future; a community of farms and lakes, mountains and streams, hopes and dreams; neighbors at play together in this cathedral of beauty; a town, my town, that I simply call ‘home.’”

So far, we’ve received 17 entries — including two from Charlotte kids — and we’d love to see more. In addition to three prizes open to all entrants, we have added special prizes for those under 18 years old:

First prize: Four tickets to the ECHO Leahy Center (two adults, two kids).

Second prize: A $50 gift certificate from Cookie Love.

Third Prize: A $50 gift certificate from Stone’s Throw Pizza.

Full photo contest details are available on our website: charlottenewsvt.org, but here are the essentials: Photos are due by Friday, June 30. They should be submitted by email to Anna Cyr, our production manager, anna@thecharlottenews.org.

Photos should be high resolution, 300 dpi. One entry per person, please. Your entry must include your name, age (if you’re under 18), address, phone number and email address (so we can notify you) and a brief description of how your photo expresses what Charlotte means to you.

Many thanks to those supplying our prizes: Lee Krohn, Frances Foster and Glen Findholt, Head over Fields Farm, The ECHO Leahy Center, Cookie Love and Stone’s Throw Pizza.

Very Actively Purchasing

Antique, Vintage & Modern Jewelry • Platinum
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Integrating compassion, expertise & service

• Advanced surgical and Medical Care
• Exotics and Companion Animals
• Evening Hours Available

RAISE YOUR HAND

If you need more internet speed

It’s time to get your hands on much faster Internet! Don’t settle for yesterday’s Internet speed when you have a home full of today’s devices. Upgrade now to the incredible speed you need for maximum enjoyment when multiple people are streaming, downloading, gaming and more.

Green Mountain Access
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Call 888.321.0815 to start enjoying more.

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various steps to complete amended land-use regulations and town plan. The most important aspect of this process is significant outreach to the town at large. Once collected, visual architectural models of what future village development might look like will be provided for feedback. These visual models are critical, and perhaps one of the reasons articles 6 and 7 of the amended land-use regulations failed a few years back.

Kyna Wegman, member of the planning commission, said, “I think whatever the unified planning work program grant gives us in the way of paying for consultants, the debate will remain theoretical and, I suspect, pretty acrimonious, if recent history is any indication, without a clear visual representation of what they mean when they say, ‘development in the villages.’ It’s not a general messaging problem; it is just unspecified.” Wegman continued, “Not being able to visualize exactly what was being proposed left a gaping hole where people’s most extreme imaginings could take hold.” I agree. Many of those opposed to those articles said they didn’t want a “Kwiinska Ridge” in Charlotte. This is an example of a worst-case scenario. Often when presented with potential change one hears: “What is the problem we are trying to solve?” The answer: The steady drumbeat of development in the rural district and lack thereof in the east and west villages. Regarding development in the villages, planning commissioner Robert Bloch said, “The point is that even though our town plan contains this neat articulation of a vision and rationale for village development, which was approved by a majority of, I would guess, the usual 30 percent of voters who actually vote in these local elections, we are far from consensus on whether more intense village development should be undertaken, or how it should be undertaken.” Considering this major two-three year effort, I asked Charlie Pughe, chair of the Charlotte Planning Commission, how important is it for the selectboard to be involved and supportive of this project as well as other committees and boards? He said: “I see this effort as an ultimate reshaping of the Town Plan, making it more definitive and providing positive steps to achieve what have been aspirational goals before, yet seemed to remain out of reach. I think it is critical for the selectboard, as well as all of the other town boards and commissions, to participate. Everyone, trails, recreation, conservation — will all have interests that need to be addressed as part of the process. Beyond that, as broad of a cross section of the town as we can get, needs to participate. This effort has the potential to change how our village centers live and function, and we need to make sure we are moving in the right direction for Charlotte.” Wegman, who with Robert Bloch, has been spearheading the Community Heart and Soul outreach said: “In any case, at the two Community Heart & Soul chili events we held, two values came up over and over again in conversation: people said we need more affordable housing in Charlotte, workforce housing; and folks spoke over and over about the natural beauty; around us and wanting to care for it. I think if we persist in treating these two values like they are in absolute conflict with each other, it’s going to be hard to move forward with anything, when in fact I think there is a way to build a bit more housing, in a measured way, where our town plan is honored and our collective values are leading the vision.” I agree with Wegman’s assessment, lack of housing and protecting the natural beauty (areas of high public value as identified in the town plan) must be considered as interdependent. Therefore, compromise is necessary on all sides.

The last deliverables of the unified planning work program for Charlotte are a preliminary engineering report; a draft engineering services agreement; and final design of a wastewater system in the west village. This part extends into March 2024 per Newton’s proposed master plan. That is, if there is a public will to attempt this. As stated in the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s assessment of Charlotte’s land-use regulations, lack of municipal wastewater and water in the village districts is a significant obstacle to development.

“I have talked to and listened to people in town about concentrating development in the villages. Even those who voice support do it in a half-hearted way, with a sense of resignation in their voice, a feeling of inevitability, and maybe the idea that ‘I just hope we can do it reasonably well.’” Bloch said. “People who actually live in the village express a level of concern or fear that the wonderful place they discovered will change.” What are the next steps? A consultant will be hired in July-August and the project kicks off this September. October 2023 through February 2024 is the meat of the project called “village visions.” This is where outreach throughout the community will take place. This is where you come in.

Change is imminent, looming at our door. We need to understand the true will of the community to plan 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.)
Canadian smoke indicates need for climate action

Mike Yantachka
Contributor

Anyone who has been outdoors during the past week is well aware of the wildfires burning in Quebec and Nova Scotia. The smoky haze that inundates Vermont is nothing compared to the thick smog that settled on New York City and other eastern states south of the Champlain Valley.

The wildfires burning across Canada today, as well as those that have devastated the western United States in recent years, are driven by climate change that is melting ice caps and altering the jet stream. These effects, in turn, dry out major land areas, making them susceptible to drought and wildfires, and increase water content in the atmosphere, driving more extreme storms that flood coastal areas susceptible to higher rainfall.

On the first Saturday in June, I had the opportunity to attend the Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network conference at Middlebury College along with my Charlotte Energy Committee colleague, Deirdre Holmes.

The keynote speaker was Bill McKibben, author, climate activist and founder of 350.org and Third Act. In his talk, he said that we continue to face an existential crisis with a changing climate that is already on the cup of reaching a point of no return. The impacts are being felt around the world as well as here at home: 33 million people displaced by unprecedented flooding in Pakistan; a 20-percent decrease in the great Antarctic circumpolar current which affects marine ecosystems worldwide; and a prediction that we will exceed a 1.5 degree-Celsius increase in the next 15 years.

Smoke from Canadian forest fires appears better this week than last when it made for monochromatic sunsets like this at the town beach. Smokey air led to warnings in the Northeast to limit time outside. Vermont was spared the really bad air quality levels of larger cities to the south like New York, which last week averaged an air quality index of 413, which is hazardous. For the same Vermont time averaged 102. This week began with all of Vermont monitoring stations reporting less than 50 or good on the air quality index.

The melting of the polar ice caps at both ends of the earth are reducing the reflectivity of the sun’s rays as well as increasing sea levels; while the melting of permafrost in the arctic releases tons of the highly potent greenhouse gas methane, further increasing global warming.

But McKibben also noted some positive developments over the past decade. Scientists and engineers have done a great job providing us with tools to combat climate change, including cleaner methods of energy production, better methods of natural resource management and carbon, and increased understanding of climate science.

As a result, the cost of renewable energy has dropped lower than fossil-fuel prices. Wind is now the cheapest way to generate electricity, and solar is close behind. The costs of combustion, moreover, far outweigh the benefits in terms of climate change, adverse health effects, and its influence on geopolitics. He compared renewable energy versus fossil fuels as “getting energy from heaven instead of during it.”

He is encouraged for the climate by the youth movement. Our young people understand the need to change our habits. NIMBYism has to change; we have to look beyond our own backyards. We can no longer ignore the effects of fossil fuel production and consumption on others while we refuse to take responsibility for our own actions.

It is challenging the rest of us to do our job to combat climate change, too, because “once the arctic is melted there is no plan to freeze it again.” The Vermont Energy & Climate Action Network conference provided an opportunity to learn more about the assistance that towns, organizations and institutions can expect as a result of the major federal legislation that passed, including the bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act.

Bonnie Waninger of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns gave an overview of the programs and gave us links to the information at the website vtct.org/renewables/funding-assistance-program-AARP. Vermont League of Cities and Towns can provide consulting to Vermont municipalities for the various programs including renewable energy grants and low-income loans; a USDA Loan forgiveness program, and charging and fueling infrastructure grants.

Jan Myers of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity gave us a rundown of the Residential Energy Efficiency tax credit that helps homeowners with weatherization and energy reduction and the Residential Clean Energy tax credits (30 percent) for renewable energy installations. She also referenced low-interest loans for clean energy provided through Vermont Energy Investment Corporation.

Following the presentations were breakout sessions for exchanging ideas among attendees and experts.

As Charlotte moves forward with implementing the Town Plan, there are many opportunities to keep climate change mitigation in mind. The Charlotte Energy Committee is sponsoring the Solarize Charlotte initiative to encourage adoption of residential solar. (See CharlotteEnergy.org for details.) The new Solarize garage includes geothermal heating and solar-ready roofing. A 5-MW solar facility on Lake Road will help Vermont’s solar program reach its 10 percent renewable electricity goal and support transitioning our transportation and heating demands to cleaner electricity.

We can all take advantage of the assistance from Efficiency Vermont to button up our homes. And, finally, Sustainable Charlotte is currently taking orders for energy-conserving window inserts for the coming winter. (windowwrighters.org).

(Mike Yantachka is a former state representative and a current member of the Charlotte Energy Committee.)

Food shelf News

With benefits reduced, donations provide safety net

Maj Enzinger
Contributor

This spring, we have been privileged to view the phoebe pair that has built a nest under our eaves. They are dedicated to the care and feeding of three nestlings, whose progress we mark from afar. Their appetites appear insatiable and we rejoice in their progress we mark from afar. Their appetites appear insatiable and we rejoice in their growth. With the world population diminishing by 30 percent, we are happy to support the progress of this phoebe family.

Here in Charlotte, we are grateful for the great help from our neighbors to continue support the food shelf, especially since the number of families requiring assistance has increased. Since the declaration of the end of the COVID emergency, summer funding for children who lack access to lunch provided during the school term has vanished. We thus deeply appreciate the support of William and Barbara Benedict and Lois McClure, in honor of their Cedar Beach friends Carol Clark and Harriet Sherman. Clark and Sherman were teachers who inspired students’ need of support in the summertime.

As SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits have been reduced, and meat is in short supply in our recent Food Bank deliveries, donations provide an important safety net. We appreciate donations received from the Charlotte Congregational Church, as well as Sunni Ferrante and Sharon Mount. We are grateful for Backyard Bread’s fundraiser, which donated all profits to the Charlotte Food Shelf. In addition, we thank Stewkley’s Bread for its continuing supply of rolls and those anonymous neighbors who have provided fresh eggs to families we serve.

We remind gardeners to consider planting an extra row to harvest for the food shelf; please call Nancy Bleich (802-598-0410) for produce or nonperishable food donations. For many years the Congregational Church has generously provided space to us in its basement. We are still actively searching for a new home, hoping to find a first-floor space of about 600 square feet with room for parking and receipt of large food orders. Please contact Peggy Sharpe, food shelf secretary, at kmnj@comcast.net with any leads.

The Charlotte Food Shelf remains committed to providing dignified access to healthy food as well as assistance to those in need. We remind the community that if you or someone you know in Charlotte or North Ferrisburgh is facing utility shut-off or an unexpected hardship, help is available. All requests and grants are kept private and are available by simply calling 802-425-3232 or by filling out a request form. Both forms are available during food shelf open hours or on our website at tctar.com/foodshelf.

The food shelf is open for food distribution from 4-6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Our address is 403 Church Hill Road, in back of the Congregational Church in Charlotte. Masking is encouraged. For emergency food, please call John at 802-425-3130. If you cannot come to the food shelf due to COVID symptoms or risk of transmission about the food shelf, please call 802-425-3232. Monetary donations are appreciated, tax deductible and can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc., P.O. Box 83, Charlotte VT 05445.
Charlotte Central School

Congratulations Graduates

Caleb Albertson  Julian Anderson  Marin Bergeson  Ava Bergquist

Will Boyce  Parker Chappelle  Emma Cote  Serena Davi  Jack Dore  Amelie Faruweather

Chloe Ford  Astraea Garcia-Derbes  Cal Gardner  Eloise Glasscoe  Meredith Colek  Chapin Grubbs

Lucia Hackerman  Ryder Jones  Martin Kahn  Willow Kehr  Johnathon Kogut  Judah Kohn

Hudson LeBlanc  Nouvelle MacPherson  Eva Mazur  Trexon McEnaney  Charlie Moore  Danae Moustakas

Sam Nostrand  JP Novak  Javin Paquette  Sam Pitcavage  LilyMae Siedleksi  Avery Siket

Oliver Smith  Sarah Stein  Aiden Voljevac  Maggie Wilson  Bryant Vodakel
Eagle Scout project at the Grange encourages reading for fun

Susan Ohanian
Charlotte Grange

Growing up in a small town in northern California, I have deep-rooted memories of the Grange. My family were not farmers, but then, as now, the Grange welcomed everyone who wanted to participate in the community. Dad worked on building projects; Mom organized vegetable and fruit-canning marathons and knitting projects. At meetings, families ate, shared stories and had a great time. I remember learning to square dance.

I didn’t need my master’s in English with an emphasis on Samuel Johnson and his 1755 dictionary, considered one of the most influential dictionaries in the history of the English language, to applaud the Charlotte Grange’s long-standing program, Words for Thirds, giving an age-appropriate dictionary to every third grader.

When a program evaluator from the New York State Department of Reading came to see why student reading scores had soared, she kept asking to see “the program,” and finally I held up Shel Silverstein’s “Where the Sidewalk Ends,” and said, “This is a book everybody reads.” She left, bewildered.

My experience with third graders called a halt after 55 minutes. To build on Words for Thirds, I talked with my friend and Charlotte Grange member Cindi Robinson about putting up a Little Free Library for kids here in town. She was enthusiastic, and we thought the Grange Hall on Spear Street in East Charlotte Village would be an ideal location.

As part of his Eagle Scout project, Robinson’s son Stuart built this Little Free Library, carefully designed to reflect the historic Grange Hall architecture. It was installed in spring 2022, joining the network of more than 115,000 Little Free Libraries worldwide, including those in every U.S. state, to be a catalyst for building community, inspiring readers and expanding book access for all.

Our Little Free Library is supported not only by the Grange but also the Charlotte Library, the Friends of the Charlotte Senior Center and the Flying Pig Bookstore (which, you’ll remember, did get its start in Charlotte and is still a vital part of our community). We are fortunate indeed to have our library, and encourage the children in your care to go to the Grange Hall and take a look — and bring home a book to read for the fun of it.

The Little Free Library is accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Cindi Robinson monitors it regularly and replenishes it from our stockpile as needed. Of course, as in all Little Free Libraries, the idea is to take one and when possible, give one back; but thanks to our special sponsors, children who visit will find new and enticing books they can call their own and keep. Just think about it: A brand-new book to take home. And read. (Susan Ohanian is a member of Charlotte Grange. For more information on our programs, see charlottegrange.org.)

Stronger Together

School learnin’

Photos by Tai Dinnan

Left: Dan Cole from the Charlotte Historical Society paints a picture of the history of education in Charlotte, and the role one-room schoolhouses, such as the Grange building, played on June 11.

Below: Community members filled the Charlotte Grange Hall to learn about one-room schoolhouses, tour the Grange Hall and enjoy pie and conversation with other attendees.

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Below: Community members filled the Charlotte Grange Hall to learn about one-room schoolhouses, tour the Grange Hall and enjoy pie and conversation with other attendees.
Sampling wisdom from buffet of graduation speeches

Margo Bartsch
College Education Coach

This year’s graduating classes of high school and college students have persevered through many challenges, including the global pandemic. With all their obstacles, they persisted. Their personal resilience can inspire others for the better.

Dressed in caps and gowns, the class of 2023 listened to commencement addresses sharing the message to push forward for positive change. The speeches have a double meaning: reflect on the past as a springboard into the future.

In early May, civil rights attorney Ben Crump spoke at North Carolina Central University reminding graduates: “Lift as you climb and never forget where you came from.” Crump is uniquely suited to deliver this message. He is an attorney representing the civil rights and wrongful death lawsuits on behalf of George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, the Flint Water Crisis and others. His message reminds graduates of the responsibility to share their learning with others: “Education is of no value if we keep it amongst the educated. You gotta take this education back to your hood. Back to your homeboys, back to your homegirls. Back to your cousins. You gotta take it, and you gotta share it with them.”

Continuing this theme of inspiring others, “Abbott Elementary” actress Sheryl Lee Ralph delivered the Rutgers University commencement address. She is an Emmy award winner and Rutgers graduate, who was recognized with an honorary doctorate. Ralph gave an emotional address: “Our country and the world took a trip and difficult turn. Kobe died, George Floyd was killed and then the world and everything changed when COVID-19 … shut down the world.”

She applauded the graduates, “But you stayed the course, you never gave up, you kept doing. We need people who have been through something and still have so much to give and share — that’s you.”

On a global front, Oksana Markarova, Ukrainian Ambassador to the United States, spoke to the Boston College graduates. She reminded them that common purpose knows no boundaries.

“Freedom is not a given. Opportunities are not a given. Democracy is not a given,” Markarova said. “We all have many battles to fight in, many obstacles to overcome, many challenges to see through. Where will we get the strength? It’s our responsibility to take action for what we love.”

Markarova encouraged the graduates, “Choose to do that, and in that moment, you will become truly extraordinary.”

Markarova was recognized with an honorary doctor of law degree for her “courageous and unwavering devotion” to her country and the Ukrainian people.

The theme of making a difference continued at George Washington University. The commencement speech was given by Bryan Stevenson, the author of the memoir, “Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption,” the basis of the movie, “Just Mercy.”

Stevenson’s speech emphasized hope and addressed injustice. He is an attorney and founding director of the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit providing legal representation for people wrongly convicted or denied a fair trial.

“Hopelessness is the enemy of justice,” Stevenson said. “Injustice prevails where hopelessness persists.”

“I believe we have to create a generation of people like you, who are not just engineers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, teachers, business leaders but are people who are also committed to doing things that increase the justice quotient in our world.”

This priority on standing up for bigger ideals continued with Tom Hanks speaking at Harvard University: “We could all use a superhero right now.”

Hanks’s main message was safeguarding truth: “If you live in the United States, the responsibility is yours. Ours. The effort is optional, but the truth is sacred, unalterable, chiseled into the stone of the foundation of our republic.”

Collectively, these graduation speeches are a time capsule of the events the graduates have lived through, including a tumultuous pandemic and intense social change. Their common history made them aware that they are not bystanders; they can encourage others to not take anything for granted.

Making a positive impact is an ongoing challenge against many obstacles. The speeches remind us that small steps taken toward a bigger purpose can inspire others.

Commencement represents new beginnings for a better tomorrow that can influence our collective future.

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

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**Helicopter parenting**

June 6 was Charlotte Central School’s Bring Your Dad to School Day. One student celebrated the day by having her father come to school in his usual work vehicle, a Blackhawk helicopter, which took off from the athletic fields behind Charlotte Central School.

The Blackhawk was big enough for a whole class to have a seat.

**Jazzed up**

Andy Smith directs the Charlotte Central School jazz band on Wednesday afternoon. The jazz band performed on the opening day of the Discover Jazz Festival on Church Street in Burlington. It was the jazz band’s final performance of the year.
Environment

From Sustainable Charlotte

In an effort to share resources and people to guide Charlotte residents in taking better care of their land, Sustainable Charlotte has scheduled a walk in the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge with Mark Labarr on Wednesday, June 28, at 5 p.m.

Labarr, a conservation biologist with Audubon Vermont, will discuss work the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge has done to combat invasives and restore habitat health.

“We have bought into the idea that lawns sprinkled with beautiful exotic plants originating from foreign lands are aesthetically pleasing. They actually don’t do much to support the native species that we love to encounter or support the natural cycles we depend upon,” said Cathy Hunter of Sustainable Charlotte. “Fortunately, there are resources and people to guide us in taking better care of our land.”

The Charlotte Conservation Commission is co-hosting the event, and chair Maggie Cittarella will be on hand to answer questions. Mark Dillenbeck, town tree warden, will also be available to share information and his personal experience dealing with invasives. This is a free event. Bring good walking shoes and bug protection. For more information, call Hunter at 802-355-0439. Additional resources:

- To find native plants for our area — nwf.org/Garden-for-wildlife/about/native-plants
- To learn more about rewilding — rewilding.org
- Pollinator Pathways — pollinator-pathway.org/
- Books by Douglas Tallamy available at the Charlotte Library — “Natures Best Hope” and “Bringing Nature Home.”

Mark Labarr, a conservation biologist with the Audubon Society of Vermont, speaks to a group of neighbors on Lewis Creek Road about dealing with plant invasives and making their land more wildlife friendly.

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Sacred Hunter

Sometimes a master guide teaches more than fishing

Bradley Carleton
Contributor

The summer, thus far, has been mercurial at best. We started out with our beloved lake pushing 99 feet above sea level. (FYI: I’m a total nerd when it comes to tracking our lake levels due to recent history of swamps getting so low that we can’t even get a canoe into our duck blind in October.)

With a couple days of 100-degree heat index points in May, I thought that our aqueous jewel might look more like Bonneville Flats by August. Foraging season happened in the blink of an eye. Fiddleheads and ramps popped in early May and wild asparagus were stalked out before the end of the month.

The rivers were running very warm. Our regular spot on the Winooski ran at an absurd 70 degrees even before the Fish & Wildlife Department had finished stocking the rainbows, browns and brookies. Fly hatches were so minuscule that only the most knowledgeable guides were able to read what was happening when someone spotted a rise. That’s why, even though I have 54 years of experience flyfishing, I recognize when I need to spend time with a truly professional, full-time, off-the-charts Master Guide.

Recently I invited a new friend along for a day on the North Branch of the Lamoille with my revered flyfishing wizard, Mark Wilde, of Uncle Jammer’s Guide Service. I wanted my new friend, Steve Shaw, to experience what it was like to learn from an incredibly gracious and gifted fisherman.

Mark took us to one of those postcard-picture scenes with a deep pool under a wooden bridge and, rather than compete for some rising brown trout at the upper edge of a riffle, I chose to watch. The oxygen was clearly a lifesaver for these fish, as was the water temperature — a perfect 58 degrees.

Mark directed Steve where to place his parachute Adams fly mid-riffle. Steve cast several times without a taker. Mark stepped up next to him and asked if he’d like any guidance. Like any truly gracious fly fisherman, Mark does not generally solicit coaching unless asked. Steve accepted the offer.

Mark stepped up to the hole, spontaneously calculating the speed of the main current inside the riffle track and demonstrated a cast I had not seen before. Most accomplished fly fishermen and women know the importance of mending a line to keep the fly floating at the same speed as the current where the fish lie in wait. But this one was new to me. As Mark let the line run from his forward cast through the smooth eyelets of the well-loaded rod, it gained speed that the weight forward line needed to reach across the slower current closer to shore.

Nanoseconds before his fly began to settle, he twitched the perfectly weighted flyrod, making the floating line “wiggle” like crazy. I watched in amazement. What was this? A bizarre version of mending?

Within two seconds a beautiful buttery brown trout slammed that Adams. Steve and I looked on in amazement. I broke the silence and asked the singular stupid question of the day. (I allow myself one stupid question a day when fishing with those who are more accomplished than myself.) I blurted out: “What the heck was that? And why did it work so well?”

Mark explained the dynamics of providing enough slack in the slower current that the “wiggly” section of line absorbed the slower speed, allowing the fly to travel at the exact same speed as a naturally occurring hatch would.

Anyone who claims that flyfishing is “boring” is clearly not paying attention to all the details, which I proclaim are one of the billions of miracles that occur around us — every day, every hour, every minute, down to the millisecond.

If the parachute Adams, size 14, didn’t match the size of the real hatch, if the color of the wings or the thorax didn’t match the natural, if the speed of the fly in the current wasn’t perfectly matched with the surrounding water, if the sun was in front of the feeding fish and cast a shadow of your body on the pool. If, if, if.

If you’ve ever wondered what makes fly fishermen so passionate, consider the details. How did Tiger Woods get to the level of mastery of his game? How did LeBron James get to the top of his game? I would propose to you, my dear reader, that the passion for perfection comes from a deep abiding love that exists in all living souls. A connection to the divine nature of all that surrounds us.

I didn’t catch any fish that day, but instead, perched on a high slab of rock, I watched a master gently guide my friend to a new level of consciousness. Within minutes, Steve was landing and releasing several well-toned browns. I think I saw him whispering the words “thank you” to himself.

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

Ethan Tapper
Chittenden County Forester

While some people call all evergreen trees “pines,” pines are actually a distinct group of closely related trees in the Pinus genus. While Vermont is home to four species of native pines, the two most common are Eastern white pine (Pinus strobus) and red pine (Pinus resinosa). Of these two species, white pine is by far the most common, the most charismatic, the most valuable, the most celebrated. Red pine is a more idiosyncratic tree, the under-appreciated younger sibling of the pine world.

To me, the foliage of white pines looks soft and cloud-like, comprised of thin, delicate needles in clusters (fascicles) of five. While healthy white pines usually have straight, columnar trunks, many have multiple stems as a result of damage from the white pine weevil, a native insect which attacks white pine trees growing in the open.

By comparison, red pines look like bottlebrushes, with a single, arrow-straight trunk topped with a tuft of coarse-looking foliage — relatively thick, bristle needles in fascicles of two. Red pine bark is distinctive: an extremely flaky mosaic of pink, red and grey that looks a bit like broken slate.

Like our white pines, most of Vermont’s red pines are legacies of historic land use. Whereas most white pines trees are “volunteers” growing on abandoned agricultural land, nearly all our red pines are planted stands (plantations).

Along with white pine, non-native Scotch pine and Norway spruce, red pine was widely planted in the early-1900s, with many plantations established by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s and 1940s. More red pine was planted in the mid-1900s, as white pine blight raged across North America and red pine was lauded as a resistant alternative to white pine. As late as the 1960s and 1970s, farmers in Vermont were reportedly incentivized to convert old agricultural land, nearly all our red pines are planted stands (plantations).

In the early-1900s, plantations were considered the height of responsible forestry, a way to grow timber quickly and efficiently, while stabilizing soils and protecting water supplies. Today, for a variety of reasons, healthy red pine plantations are the exception, not the rule, and plantation forestry is largely seen as an antiquated and ineffective method of growing trees and forests in Vermont.

At a time when the future of our forests depends on bolstering resilience and reducing vulnerability, plantations are nearly the opposite of the forests that we need: monocultures which are extremely vulnerable to pests, pathogens, catastrophic natural disturbances and the many effects of climate change and global change. In many cases, the most responsible action with respect to wildlife habitat, biodiversity protection, carbon and climate resilience is to use forest management to transition red pine plantations into diverse, multi-aged forests.

In Vermont, unplanted red pine is somewhat uncommon. It can be found scattered across south-facing slopes and dry sites, often growing with red oak, red maple, red spruce, white pine and beech. Red pine is a component of several uncommon natural communities, such as red pine forest (usually found on thin-soiled ridgtops, like at the top of the Preston Pond Conservation Area’s Libby’s Look Trail and at the Andrews Forest), dry oak forest and pine-oak-heath sandplain forest (such as at Sunny Hollow Natural Area in Colchester).

While red pine provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, my favorite example is the way that it is used by black bears, which rub on red pines, claw and bite them, using them as territorial markers. The next time you see an individual red pine tree in the woods, look for bitemarks and claw marks. In my experience, you will nearly always find them.

Red pine, like most pine species, is fire-adapted — considered an indicator of forests that may have historically burned. Fire creates two conditions which benefit red pine: soil scarification (the removal of the leaf litter, exposing the mineral soil beneath) and large canopy openings (red pine is intolerant of shade). While fire is uncommon on our landscape today, we can create these conditions by managing some forests in the summertime, when dragging trees and the tires of logging equipment can create scarification, and by making some larger (larger than 1 acre) openings. Doing these things will encourage red pine as well as a whole suite of trees, shrubs and plants that are adapted to these same conditions.

(Ethan Tapper is the Chittenden County Forester for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. See what he’s been up to, check out his YouTube channel, sign up for his eNews and read articles he’s written at linktr.ee/chittendencountyforester.)
Four books and two plays worthy of consideration

Katherine Artus
Contributor

What beautiful days we have been having. Despite the smoke from the Canadian forest fires, the sky seems blue today, the birds are singing and everything looks very green. Not a day goes by that I don’t feel at least one pleasant twinge of gratitude that I live here in Vermont.

I know this is a “books and reading” column, but I want to take a bit of a different tack for a moment and recommend two plays I just saw on a recent trip to New York City.

The first is “Parade” (Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre). Leo (Hann Platt, also the early lead in “Dear Evan Hanson”) and Lucille (Micaela Diamond) Frank are a Jewish couple— newlyweds beginning their lives together in the state of Georgia. (The play opens with a strong Confederate aura.) Leo is accused of a brutal crime, and things go from bad to worse for him, and for his wife, of who loves and believes in him.

Set between 1913 and 1915 and based on a book by Alfred Uhry (with music and lyrics by Jason Robert Brown), “Parade” tells the story of the actual 1913 rape and murder of 13-year-old factory worker Mary Phagan and the arrest, trial and sentencing of Leo Frank, a Jewish couple— newlyweds beginning their lives together in the state of Georgia. (The play opens with a strong Confederate aura.) Leo is accused of a brutal crime, and things go from bad to worse for him, and for his wife, of who loves and believes in him.

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Calendar by Mary Landon

Do you love the calendar of events? Of course, you do. You are reading this because you must find it useful in keeping up with what is happening in Vermont and Charlotte.

Mary Landon has been producing it for nearly a year and a half. Now, she’s moving on, and we will 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 by Mary Landon.

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

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Father’s Day celebration
Saturday, June 18, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

CHARLOTTE

June 20th in Charlotte
Saturday, June 17, 6-8:30 p.m.
Free admission for visitors to build, exhibit, and enjoy the birds of Burlington. Archival photos are part of the Abenaki perspective on life in the Champlain Valley. Citizens from several nations and tribes will give presentations and hold workshops. Drumming, singing, dancing, crafts, and storytelling are part of the two-day family celebration at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Vergennes. More info at tinyurl.com/j2d5fjm5.

Wednesday, June 21, 1-7 p.m.
Vermont Public invites all British comedy fans to a free show at Snow Farm Vineyard in South Hero. Music starts at 5 p.m.; bring your instruments, including ukuleles and picnics. Food trucks and beverages available. No outside alcohol permitted. See tinyurl.com/3audebxb or call 802-324-5563.

Trapping and hunting discussion
Thursday, June 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife is holding an online public hearing about new proposed regulations for trapping and for hunting coyotes with the aid of dogs. The new proposed rules may be read at tinyurl.com/2p8mb2tp. The link for tonight’s hearing is www.vfwpubliccomment.vermont.gov.

Little Shop of Horrors
Thursday, June 22, 7-9 p.m.
The Vermont City Ship is pleased to welcome all ages to the park to hear The Pour Couns, a guitar and fiddle duo playing roots music from New England as well as Ireland, Scotland and Quebec. Event is one of many free daytime and evening performances in the park. To see the schedule, go to buingtonparkarts.org/events.

Summer of science possibilities
Friday, June 23-25, 8-9 a.m.
For the University of Vermont Extension 4-H department offers many free summer programs for high school students (and some younger) who are interested in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities. Pre-registration is required for these events, register at tinyurl.com/34m4nux8 and scroll to Summer of Science.

Burlington on the beach
Saturday, June 24, 2-3 p.m.
Take a guided tour with the curator of the Shelburne Museum’s special exhibition of Pueblo pottery. Included in admission fee. To read more, see tinyurl.com/52uxna4c.
Augment outdoor experiences with library passes

Margaret Woodruff
Director

It’s national great outdoors month — let’s get outside.

The library offers museum and park passes that provide free or discounted admission to local attractions. See the full list at charlottelibrary.org/about/#passes.

Friends of the Library book sale dropoff
The drop-off dates and times for donating books for the upcoming book sale are: Tuesday, June 20, 11-12 p.m.; Wednesday June 22, 4-7 p.m.; Friday, July 7, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Saturday, July 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; Monday, July 10, 4-7 p.m. and Tuesday, July 11, 21 a.m.-2 p.m.

Children’s programs
Young children’s story time
Tuesdays, 10 a.m.
No registration required.

Preschool free play
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.
Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, play dough — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library. Ages 2-4. No registration required.

Summer reading program begins
Create your own pact with the fun options for pick-up in the children’s area of the library.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science
Wednesday, June 28, 1 p.m.
Faster than a speeding car, able to leap tall fences in a single bound! — look! It’s a hero or heroine of nature. Discover the amazing adaptations animals make to be the heroes of the natural world. Get up close with our live animal ambassadors and other amazing artifacts. You will walk away with the power of the natural world. Get up close with our live animal ambassadors and other amazing artifacts. No registration required. This program will be joined by the author and by members of Hinesburg's Conservation Commission at a wildlife-friendly yard shaped by beaver activity. In the event of rain, we will meet in the community room at Carpenter-Cole, 69 Ballard Road, Hinesburg. Please contact your home library to pick up a copy of the book.

Library contact information:
Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3661
Email: info@charlottelibrary.org

For the latest information about programs, book sale activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter: Charlotte Library Newsletter.

The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m., online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website (charlottelibrary.org) for more information.

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WE HAVE MOVED!
Our office is now located at: 73 Charlotte Road Hinesburg, Vermont
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Land Use Permitting
Real Estate Transactions
Wills & Trusts
Michael T. Russell
(802) 264-4888
peasemountainlaw.com
info@peasemountainlaw.com

Vermont Mushroom meander
Thursday, June 29, 5:30 p.m.
The Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington hosts local mycologist Josh Madden for an observation walk around the museum’s property. Learn identification and the important roles fungi play in a forest habitat. Registration required and includes a signed copy of Madden’s new book on mushrooms. Note: This is not a foraging program. To read more and register, see tinyurl.com/386xk86.

Mystery book group
Monday, June 19, 10 a.m.
In “Viscous” by Anuradha Roy, the Christmas nash is at its peak in a grand Rajakay hotel when Inspector Erlander is called in to investigate a murder. Erlander and his fellow detectives find no shortage of suspects between the hotel staff and the international traveling staying for the holidays. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Library book discussion group
Thursday, June 22, 7:30 p.m.
Have you ever wondered what those bright, squiggly graffiti marks on the sidewalk mean? Considered to be a champion of nature. The Vermont Mushroom meander will provide a unique insight into the world of fungi. No registration required. For more information, see tinyurl.com/3ue62k8.

Paddle the canoe trail
Thursday, June 29, 6:7 p.m.
Teacher, cantoisseur and musician Peter MacFarlane presents his story about paddling the Northern Forest Canoe Trail. Program is at Vergennes' Bixby Library and is free and open to all.

Women in music
Friday, June 30, 6 p.m.
Lincoln Peak Vineyard in New Haven presents a live music series called Women in Music 2023. Concerts are free but require registration. Food and drinks available for purchase. Sarah King opens the series with her thought-provoking Americana music. Bring blankets and the family; no alcohol allowed. To read more and reserve spots, see tinyurl.com/36h7n4k.

April

March
March 20
March 20, 6 p.m.
The Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, sharing their thought-provoking Americana music. Bring blankets and the family; no alcohol allowed. To read more and reserve spots, see tinyurl.com/36h7n4k.

April 10
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Get to know your Medicare options.

Discover UVM Health Advantage

Created with You. Guided by Doctors.

Join us for a FREE Medicare Products Seminar near you. In-person and Online options available.

Learn what UVM Health Advantage plans have to offer—from plans starting at $0 per month to dental, vision and hearing benefits, all in one plan.

Our Medicare Product Seminars are live events hosted by a licensed UVM Health Advantage Plan Guide.

Visit UVMHealth Advantage.com/seminars to learn more and register for an event.

Call 1-833-368-4598 (TTY 711)
October 1–March 31, seven days a week, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.
April 1–September 30, call Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.

In-Person Medicare Products Seminars
Friday, June 16
11:00 a.m.
Wednesday, June 21
12:00 p.m.
MVP Health Care
62 Merchants Row
Williston

Online Medicare Products Seminars
Friday, June 23
11:00 a.m.
Wednesday, June 28
10:00 a.m.

Dates and times are subject to change.

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

ATENCION: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística.
Llame al 1-844-946-8010 (TTY 711).

Note: 如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務，請致電 1-844-946-8010 (TTY 711).
At the center, on the water or trail — a wide variety of activities

Lori York
Director

Summer is rapidly approaching, and with the warmer weather, there is interest in spending time outdoors. Consider joining one of the hiking, kayaking or canoeing trips.

This month don’t forget to stop by the senior center for the afternoon of music performances on June 21 as part of World Music Day. Peter’s Playlist, a collection of oldies music, will also be returning to perform later this month.

There are two new program offerings at the senior center. Under the “Locally Yours” program, produce from Full Moon Farm in Hinesburg will be dropped at the senior center and participants (age 60 and over) will have access to fresh fruit and vegetables at no charge. This program is slated to start in the next couple of weeks, as the details are being finalized. Call 802-425-6345 for more information.

There is also a monthly Alzheimer’s Caregivers Support Group starting at the senior center beginning July 15. The group will meet on the second Thursday of each month from 5-6 p.m.

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages.

Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The “Week Ahead” email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the upcoming week.

Art show
At Water’s Edge
An exhibit of nature photographs by Fran MacDonald includes both expansive vistas and detailed views of landscapes with water, the edges of water or flowing water.

Outdoor Activities
Women’s kayak trips
Second & fourth Friday mornings
These kayak trips are for active women who share a love for exploring the many local lakes, ponds and rivers. To sign up for a trip, please respond by email directly to Susan Hyde at susanloudhyde@gmail.com to be placed on a master list of paddlers. On June 23, the group will go to Wightsville Reservoir. Registration required. Free.

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

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

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

Music
World Music Day & Make Music Charlotte
Wednesday, June 21
1-4 p.m., Charlotte Senior Center
4-6 p.m., Charlotte Library

Vermont Make Music Day is part of World Music Day on June 21. Musicians of all ages from all over the world play music for their communities, celebrating how music crosses borders and brings people together. The Charlotte Senior Center and Charlotte Library will be hosting a full afternoon and evening of live music as part of World Music Day. More info about the overall event at bigheavyworld.com/makemusicvt. Free.

Performances at the senior center: 1-1:45 p.m. Carrie Hertz on piano and Janet Green on cello; 2-3 p.m. Kathryn Blume, spiritual feminist blues-rock; 3-3:30 p.m. Janice Ransotti & Shane Bowley, a mix of Americana covers and originals; and 3:30-4 p.m. Dick Moschauer, bluegrass

Peter’s Playlist
Wednesday, June 28, 1-2 p.m.
Join us as Peter and Helen Rosenblum from Hinesburg return to the senior center with music of the 50s, 60s & 70s. They will sing and strum from their large playlist that includes folk songs, romantic ballads, blues and rock. Free. Registration recommended.

Upcoming programs
Italian: Beginner I
Fridays, June 23, 30, July 7, 21, 28, Aug. 4, 10-11 a.m.
Interested in beginning your study of Italian? Join us to explore the beauty of the Italian language and culture. Cost: $60. Registration required. *There will be no class on July 14.

Charlotte Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group
Thursday, July 15, 5-6 p.m.
Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer’s? Do you know someone who is? Please join the first monthly caregiver support group on Thursday, July 15. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family, and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. The group will meet on the second Thursday of each month from 5-6 p.m. For more information or questions contact Susan Cartwright at scartwrightasg@gmail.com

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

Meals
Menus are posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

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

New reason to smile:
One appointment = One new crown
If you need a crown, there’s no need for two or three appointments and a week or two of waiting. Shelburne Dental now has CEREC® digital technology, which measures your mouth’s need with the highest level of precision and efficiency for impeccable and immediate results!

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Shelburne Shopping Park
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Photo by Bill Fraser-Harris
Folks listen to the Vermont Youth Orchestra at the senior center after it was rained-out at the town beach.

Photo by Lori York
Lewis Mudge talks about his work with Human Rights Watch in Africa at the June Men’s Breakfast.

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

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

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Senior Center News
Write Ingredients

Favor mushy strawberries over perfect-looking, less juicy

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

You’ll find strawberry shortcake, a perennial topic of discussion; disagreement; and pleasure at the Charlotte Senior Center on June 19.

In 1931, soon after publication of a New York Times editorial praising strawberry shortcake, an irate letter writer complained of “the pale and insipid illegitimate offspring of a degenerate sponge cake and an inner tube,” further describing this item as “that effete, magenta delicacy — a spongy space-filler, usually demoralized by a deluge of whipped cream.” He added this advice: “If you would enjoy the food of the gods … make a thin pie crust.”

Since the 17th century Puritan minister Roger Williams noted that Indians “bruise strawberries with a mortar to make a strawberry bread,” people have argued over whether strawberries go best with biscuit or sconecake.

Mark Bittman declared that the bakery-counter strawberry shortcake “is children’s food, more akin to Twinkies than to the real thing.” He then offered the recipe for a quick, easy biscuit, advising, “the more butter you use, the more crumbly (and delicious).” Melissa Clark prefers crumbly cookies with her strawberries.

One must suspect there’s probably a good reason that a recipe in the newspaper of record for strawberries atop cornmeal biscuits directs the cook to macerate those berries in a mortar before putting them on those cornbread biscuits.

The New York Times seems intent on variety, offering a recipe for strawberry shortcake with a lemon-pepper sauce, along with the advice that if you have the choice between mushy, homely but juicy berries, pick those over firm, pretty and less-juicy ones. And if you can’t find good strawberries, substitute apricots, peaches, nectarines or plums. Or drop the shortcake plan and make a rhubarb compote.

That mushy versus firm is a key observation. Fruits like pears may be much the same as they were 50 or 100 years ago, but strawberries have been radically transformed by industrial agriculture. Dana Goodyear’s 2017 New Yorker article, “How Driscoll’s Reinvented the Strawberry,” with the subtitle “The berry behemoth turns produce into a beauty contest and won,” explains how this happened.

Using a comparison with a Silicon Valley neighbor, the Driscoll’s president explained the company’s relentless focus on appearance. “We make the inventions, they assemble it, and then we market it, so it’s not that dissimilar from Apple using someone else to do the manufacturing but they’ve made the invention and marketed the end product.”

In 2017, Driscoll’s controlled roughly one-third of the total $6 billion U.S. berry market. Although Driscoll’s is not mentioned in “Palo Alto: A History of California, Capitalism and the World” by Malcolm Harris, the book’s abundance of very clever, greedy megalomaniacs is must-reading for anyone who cares about the history of the products that have changed how we do everything, including how we eat.

For those interested in size, in 1975, a 5,700-pound shortcake serving more than 16,000 people brought Lebanon, Oregon, the title of World’s Largest Shortcake. But records are made to be broken. In 2011, volunteers in Pasadena, Texas, began a six-hour marathon of berry prep of 1,200 pounds of berries—to produce the world’s largest strawberry shortcake, measuring 1,905-square-feet. But in a sad sign of the times nationwide, the strawberry fields in Pasadena, Texas, originally celebrated in the town’s 1974 Strawberry Festival as the “Strawberry Capitol of the South,” were gone by 2011. Since then, all of the berries at the festival have been trucked in from a produce company.

Plant City, Fla., and the University of Maryland have also produced “World’s Largest” strawberry shortcakes. The Guinness World Record website lists the Municipality of La Trinidad in the Philippines as the record holder for a 21,213.40-pound cake that was whipped up in 2004.

Sad to say, Charlotters are too late for the annual strawberry festival in Lebanon, Oregon. Held the first weekend in June, this fete started in 1909 and continues as “a chance to bring our community together and to celebrate with pride all of Lebanon’s beauty and friendliness.”

Newspaper deadlines are difficult for volunteer cooks at the Charlotte Senior Center. As we’re going to press, Monday menus are undecided for June 19 and 26 but come on in: You’re sure to find tasty meals and good conversation, a community coming together to celebrate beauty and friendliness — all year round. But we doubt that you’ll experience what Damon Runyon described: “She has a laugh so hearty it knocks the whipped cream off an order of strawberry shortcake on a table 50 feet away.”

Here are The Beatles with “Strawberry Fields Forever”: youtube.com/ watch?v=HtUH9z_Oey8.

Age Well Meal Pickup
Thursday, June 22, 10-11 a.m.

Italian chicken breast, duck sauce, rice & vegetables, broccoli florets, wheat bread, strawberry shortcake with cream and milk.

Age Well Meal Pickup
Thursday, June 29, 10-11 a.m.

Beef stroganoff with mushroom sauce, rotini noodles, Brussels sprouts, wheat roll, blueberry crisp and milk. Suggested Age Well donation of $5 is not required to receive a meal. Pay what you can, when you can. Registration for the meal is required by the prior Monday.