

Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

The Charlotte News

Thursday, July 27, 2023 | Volume 66 Number 03



Paddling on land

Photo by Steven Wisbaum

Chris Aurer (left) and Sherry Osborn are part of more than 30 people who regularly gather at the Charlotte Town Beach courts to play pickleball. Many of them hope that when the tennis courts are renovated at least one of those courts will be converted to two-four pickleball courts. See Letters to the Editor on page 2 for more about their enthusiasm for the growing sport.

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Vol. 66, No.03

65 years of The Charlotte News — Time to give back

Claudia Marshall
Chair, Fundraising Committee

Make no bones about it: I am here to ask for your financial support for community journalism.

You could think of it as a voluntary subscription fee. Many folks here in Charlotte are happy to pay for the paper (and website). Someone needs to pay to print this “free,” nonprofit newspaper and it might as well be ... us! Why? Stay with me for a moment, OK?

First off, you may be wondering, “What is a community newspaper?” How is it different? How is it better than say conventional news outlets or social media? Well, it’s not better. But it’s vital in creating a cohesive, connected community. It is literally a newspaper (and website) for the people and by the people. Many of the stories you read in The Charlotte News are written by the people of Charlotte, the experts, as it were, like the folks at the library, the Grange and the senior center.

This is also an independent paper, not a part of a conglomerate or consortium. So, we answer to the reader, who, as it happens, provides half of our funding. In a way, our owners are our readers. And that’s a model that works. Maybe you didn’t know that The Charlotte News is powered by people like you?

According to the Institute for Nonprofit News, newspapers like The Charlotte News are more important than ever because they “give a voice to the people and protect our right to know what’s going on in our communities, our country and our world.”

So how does that work?

The newspaper provides a place for deliberative, thoughtful and civil discourse.

Free for all?

The spring dustup over our town budget may seem like a distant memory to some; it’s probably a painful one for at least a few. Everybody seemed to have something to say. We saw assertions and counter assertions. There was bad behavior and there were malcontents. There was great conviction and heated debate. Most folks stayed out of it but followed along, of course, particularly on social media. As with many such things, there were plenty of opinions and very little clarity.

Now this is not a knock on social media. For example, Front Porch Forum plays an important role in so many things — from finding and selling stuff to hearing how some of our neighbors think. It gives people a platform. That said, social media is not journalism. Journalism is defined as “the activity of gathering, assessing, creating, and presenting news and information.” There is little or no fact-checking on social media. It’s a kind of free-for-all, and, in a way, that’s what makes it fun.

Nonprofit news helps us better understand our neighbors. And when we understand each other, all kinds of things become possible.

Ain’t nothing like the real thing, baby!

However, at The Charlotte News, cooler heads prevail. Facts are presented, various views are aired and civility is the norm. That type of healthy dialog is essential in connecting us as a community. Nonprofit news helps us better understand our

Town beach tunes



Photo by John Quinney

Skylark, featuring musicians from the Vermont Symphony Orchestra — Jane Kittredge and Laura Markowitz, violin; Ana Ruesink, viola; and John Dunlop, cello, perform at the town beach for the Wednesday, July 19, installment of the Music at the Beach series. There is one more Music at the Beach performance 6 p.m. this Wednesday, Aug. 2.

Town manager switch hits major snag

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Another meeting about the issue of Charlotte changing to a town manager form of government and still no decision.

A town vote on whether residents want to make the switch to a town manager appeared inevitable before a special meeting of the selectboard on Tuesday, July 18.

With a group spearheaded by former selectboard chair Lane Morrison having a petition with enough signatures to require a town vote on changing from a town administrator to a town manager, it had seemed the only question was whether the selectboard would call for a vote or if the petition would require it.

But then a wrench got thrown into the proceedings. (More on this later.)

The primary reason for the special meeting had been to hear the results of research Lee Krohn had done about the pluses and minuses of a town manager versus a town administrator.

Krohn, a Charlotte resident who has recently retired as Shelburne town manager, presented the results of his survey of how well the two different types of municipal government have worked in different Vermont towns. The town hired Krohn as a consultant to do this study.

His summary of his research included much of the same positives and negatives shared at selectboard meetings since late March, when Morrison and others who supported a change to town manger first came to a selectboard meeting about their petition. For example, Krohn repeated the refrain that some responsibilities might be more effectively handled by a manager, allowing the selectboard “to focus on the bigger picture.”

On the other hand, he said, “If we went to a town manager form of government, would we start to lose the small town feel that is cherished here? Would the selectboard start



to lose touch with the electorate or would the residents start to feel like they’re losing touch with the selectboard?”

As expected, he found that larger cities and towns have managers.

But looking at two dozen random towns around the state with roughly comparable population size to Charlotte, Krohn said, “There’s no clear pattern of whether towns under a certain size or over a certain size inherently or automatically have an administrator or a manager.”

He did not find an inherent reason why the towns similar in size to Charlotte chose either a town manager or a town administrator, but most small towns had managers.

“Those are purely local decisions,” he said.

Vermont operates under what is known as Dillon’s Rule which means that towns only have those powers specifically delegated to them by state law.

Vermont statute does define the responsibilities of a town manager, he said, and it’s a couple of pages long.

“It also defines responsibilities of the selectboard which interestingly is only a couple of paragraphs,” Krohn said. But, there’s no state statute defining the responsibilities granted to town administrators.

“A statute lays out: Here are the things the town manager is tasked to do,” he said. “The town administrator is a rolling target depending on how the selectboard decides.”

According to state statute, a town manager has clear authority to manage town personnel, but each town’s selectboard decides how much authority a town administrator has in personnel management.

However, the town manager does not have direct managerial oversight over other elected officials, such as the town clerk or the town treasurer in Charlotte.

Bristol has a strong town administrator who has been delegated a lot of authority and that seems to be working there.

Before switching to a town manager, Hinesburg tried to have a strong town administrator, delegating a lot of authority over personnel “but when there was a conflict of some sort, it turned out the personnel would do an end run around the administrator and come to a selectboard member.”

Krohn’s conclusion is that, whatever form of municipal government a town has, the most important factor in effective town functioning is trust between town officials.

Now here’s the wrench that was promised earlier: “It’s very clear, and we confirmed this with the town attorney, that if you change to a town manager, the town manager effectively becomes the road commissioner,” Krohn said.

The road commissioner is an elected position in Charlotte. This isn’t true in all towns. In Hinesburg roads are overseen by a town highway department managed by a highway foreman who is hired by the town and not elected. The town has bought and owns all the highway department trucks.

The notion of relegating road commissioner Junior Lewis to some sort of assistant road oversight role was clearly unimaginable to everyone at the selectboard meeting. Besides being road commissioner, Lewis is also a private contractor, who owns his trucks.

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neighbors. And when we understand each other, all kinds of things become possible. In fact, the strategic plan of The Charlotte News includes this goal: “Make Charlotte an even more attractive place to live, better governed and a stronger community.” It’s a tall order. Can you help us get there?

Even though small news outlets are folding right and left, this newspaper (and website) have been fortunate in receiving strong support from readers like you. And you probably understand that The Charlotte News costs quite a bit of money to produce (about \$6k per issue) even though every household in town gets it for free. Isn’t it time to pitch in?

Giving back

Here at the Charlotte News, we are marking our 65th year. Our celebration focuses on giving back. We are supporting numerous events that bring us together as a community — from the Town Beach Party to Music at the Beach and Grange on the Green. We are also partnering with Age Well so that when you make your donation, we will provide one meal to a Charlotter facing food insecurity. So, your donation does double duty.

Won’t you celebrate our birthday, too? If it makes sense for your budget, put \$10 or \$20 a month on your credit card, just as you’d do to support public radio, for instance. It’s easy: simply scan this QR code or go to the “Give Now” page at charlottenewsvt.org. If you prefer to write a

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Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

- Publishing rigorous, in-depth reporting on town affairs.
- Providing a home for stories from our neighbors and friends.
- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

Editorial independence

The editor makes final decisions on the 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.

Code of Ethics

The Charlotte News has adopted the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics as the touchstone to guide newsroom practices. The Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics is built on four principles:

- Seek truth and report it.
- Minimize harm.
- Act independently.
- Be accountable and transparent.

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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 standards and requirements listed on our website at charlottenewsvt.org/about.

Send submissions, questions, photos, etcetera to scooter@thecharlottenews.org

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The Charlotte News, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte, VT 05445 Telephone: 802-425-4949 Circulation: 2,100

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TOWN MANAGER

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Krohn said the town could pass a charter that superseded this portion of state statutes and retain the road commissioner in Charlotte.

After a charter is approved by town voters, it must be approved by the state legislature. That could take a year.

This statute was a surprise to Morrison — if not everyone else at the meeting.

Before the meeting, Morrison had said his

group would wait to submit its petition until the middle of August to give the selectboard time to come to a decision. According to state statute, a town vote on switching to a town manager is required 30 days after a petition is submitted.

With current town administrator Dean Bloch leaving at the end of October, the group wanted to have residents vote on the switch to a town manager before then, so Morrison was foreseeing a town vote in September — whether it was called by the selectboard or by his petition.

After the selectboard meeting on

Wednesday, Morrison said that Lewis is the most popular elected official in town. He doesn’t think Lewis would want to work for someone else.

If the town voted to switch to a town manager, Lewis would not be the road commissioner until a charter keeping a road commissioner in Charlotte was approved by the legislature, Morrison said.

The selectboard decided to have another discussion on Aug. 14 about whether it will call for a town vote on switching to a town manager.

Petitioners to continue push for town manager vote

The group of people, who have led the effort of collecting signatures for a petition to require a town vote on switching to a town manager, met this past Friday, July 21, to discuss how they would proceed.

Following the revelation at the selectboard meeting the previous Tuesday of the town attorney’s opinion that state statute requires, if the town switches to a town manager, for the town manager to become the de facto road commissioner, they gathered to reassess their effort and decide if they would continue with their petition.

Charlotte Representative Chea Waters Evans came to the meeting with some startling revelations from her conversations with the legislative attorney. Evans said the opinion of Tucker Anderson, the legislative counsel to the General Assembly, is Charlotte does not have to eradicate the road manager if it switches to a town manager. And it would not require a charter to supersede state statute.

Even if it is ultimately decided that the town would need both a vote for a town manager and a charter, Evans said it would not take a year to get a charter passed, as has been asserted at town selectboard meetings.

Evans said a charter could be approved by January or February. The process would probably be expedited because Evans sits on the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs, which would oversee the charter process.

Her committee’s duties include considering “matters relating to the structure, organization and oversight of state, local, county and regional government,” according to Vermont General Assembly website (legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2024/14).

The only things that might hold up the charter approval are, Evans said, if the governor didn’t sign it or if there’s some further unforeseen implication that might affect other towns’ charters concerning their road commissioners.

After discussion, the group decided it was not going to give up on the push for a vote on a town manager.

They may have to return to the process of gathering signatures for a modified petition calling for a vote on both a switch to town manager and a charter retaining the elected road commissioner. Or they may not have to gather more signatures, if it is ultimately determined a charter is not required.

More to come as the situation develops.

Letters to the Editor

Flood relief for businesses

To the Editor:

As you are aware, the recent weather has caused significant damage to the Central Vermont area. In light of this, the Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce has organized a Flooded Business Relief Fund, aimed at providing financial aid and support to businesses who have suffered losses and need assistance with their recovery efforts. This fund is not only available to our valued members but also to all businesses located in the Central Vermont region, specifically Washington County and Eastern Orange

County. We believe that by extending the support of the Flooded Business Relief Fund to a wider community, we can collectively contribute towards rebuilding Central Vermont.

To ensure transparency and ease of access, the Flooded Business Relief Fund is accessible through our website, CentralVT.com. We invite community members, businesses, and organizations alike to donate. Even the smallest contribution can have a profound impact on helping affected businesses get back on their feet. Remember, these aren’t just businesses; they are our friends, our neighbors, and in some cases, our

family. Please note any contributions made through the website will have a credit card processing fee deducted from the donated amount. If you’d prefer to contribute via check and avoid the processing fee, checks can be mailed to Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce, P.O. Box 336, Barre, VT 05641.

As we move forward, let’s continue to support local businesses and organizations. We are immensely grateful for any assistance you can provide, whether through a donation or by spreading the word about the Flooded Business Relief Fund. Every contribution, big or small, will go a long way towards helping businesses in Central Vermont recover and thrive once again.

Naturally we’re aware the storm impacted the entire state, but the impact on Central Vermont was exceptional. Given that most resources currently are being allocated to address humanitarian concerns (and rightly so), we wanted to look past the immediate crisis and help local businesses rebuild as well. We also understand that there are a number of scams circulating already, so I would be happy to discuss and address anyone’s concerns about this fund.

More information can be found at centralvt.com. Kevin Eschelbach President of Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce

Pickleball nurtures spirit of Charlotte community

To the Editor:

I cannot express enough how grateful I am for the town’s pickleball courts, and the

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positive impact they’ve had on my daily life. These courts provide me with a fun and engaging way to stay active. The atmosphere is always filled with laughter, encouragement and camaraderie, which truly nurtures the spirit of community here in Charlotte.

I would like to see the Charlotte Recreation Commission and the selectboard approve the proposed contract modification to establish four permanent pickle ball courts, and have pledged financial support to help pay for this work.

Charlotte Addison
Charlotte

Pickleball players welcomed this novice to the sport

To the Editor:

I’m writing to express support for the needs of the enthusiastic, growing, pickleball community in Charlotte. I started playing pickleball through the rec department last year, where my introduction as a novice was welcoming and instructional. I now play daily, when able, with an enthusiastic group that numbers 50-70 people overall. Most of the group lives in Charlotte, though we have a few from neighboring towns.

When the weather is good, we often have five courts going at a time with four people per court, while other players wait to circulate in. Even when the weather has been wintry or wet, we find ways to play between raindrops or among snowdrifts. The point is: It’s a fun and healthy game accessible to many in the community at little cost, without barrier as to age or ability, and is played in Charlotte with humor and the opportunity for positive social interaction.

I hope the recreation commission and the selectboard will support the modification of the current resurfacing and repainting contract to allow configuration of four permanent pickleball courts within the current tennis court area. Both sports may be accommodated with thoughtful planning, and this change will help accommodate our community’s robust interest in pickleball. I have pledged financial support to help pay for this contract modification, as have many in the pickleball community.

Susan Hong
Charlotte

Pickleball helped navigate COVID and loss of a parent

To the Editor,

I am writing in support of the proposed modified contract to repair and resurface the courts at the town beach.

Please note that I write as an individual and not as a member of board of directors for The Charlotte News.

I learned to play pickleball in the fall of 2019 from Greg Smith through Charlotte Recreation Department programming. The welcoming culture and relaxed social nature of pickleball certainly helped carry me through the pandemic, retirement and the death of a parent. I am happier and healthier as a result of pickleball and greatly value the access to play in my own town.

There is an already robust and growing community of pickleball players of all ages and abilities. I encourage the recreation commission and the selectboard to consider the many Charlotters who are actively playing pickleball and approve the contract modification to install four permanent pickleball courts. There will still be adequate court space for tennis players, and pickleball

players have pledged to cover any additional costs.

There is sometimes some eye-rolling at the mention of pickleball as the game has received so much buzz, but just as I love to see children climbing all over our beach playground, it is great to see so many people exercising and enjoying one another at our beach courts.

Meredith Moses
Charlotte

Pickleball is athletic and generates camaraderie

To the Editor:

I am in full support of converting the westernmost tennis court at the town beach into two to four permanent pickleball courts.

I have been playing pickle ball here for about two and half years. I started playing after my second knee replacement surgery and decided to try pickleball instead of going back to tennis right away (which I have played for over 45 years) because it seemed a gentler way to re-enter playing a court sport.

Pickleball can be slightly addicting because it is such a fun sport. It’s not only the athletic aspect of pickleball, but also the camaraderie it generates and the joy of playing the sport outdoors, year-round.

I have played four to six days a week regularly and have only seen tennis players needing one of the three courts during any of the times I’ve played there.

Depending on how much of the extra cost is paid by the town, I’ve pledged to contribute financially because it is such a worthwhile project for the town to provide this opportunity to our community.

Pati Naritomi
Charlotte

Pickleball helps with mental and physical health and laughter

To the Editor:

Pickleball helps us with mental and physical health. Laughter is said to be the healthiest thing we can do and here in Charlotte we laugh.

The level of play does not matter. The exercise you get is totally yours and to whatever level you are comfortable with.

We play almost every day, therefore we get outdoors and laugh almost every day. Think about it: What else does this for us? Pickleball has become the greatest new game, especially for seniors.

Dave Raymond
Charlotte

Support for modifying existing contract for court repair

To the Editor:

My wife and I are very fortunate to be part of the pickleball community here in Charlotte. Though we have lived here for many years, playing at the beach courts and being part of this community group has done more than anything else to help us feel we have solid roots in our town.

We play at least three to four times a week and have done so for the last three years. We have played in all seasons and devote our

Wind damage



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Two piles of broken roof trusses lie on the ground next to Charlotte’s new town garage. The trusses were blown down when heavy winds came up around 4 p.m. Friday. Men were working at the time. It was amazing that no one was injured or killed, said John Masterson of Masterson Excavation. Town administrator Dean Bloch said the damage won’t add anything to the town’s cost. That will be borne by the contractor or its insurance. Bloch said the destruction may add two weeks to the completion date.

time and efforts, along with many others, to preparing and maintaining the courts.

We hope the recreation commission and selectboard will approve the modification of the existing court repair contract to support this activity by such a large number of Charlotte residents. As needed, we have also agreed to help pay the additional cost.

Richard Howson
Charlotte

Good problem: So many pickleball players, not enough courts

To the Editor,

It is a good problem to have: There are so many people participating in an active outdoor year-round sport that there’s a need to modify the existing tennis court resurfacing

contract to add four permanent pickleball courts. Pickleball has quickly become so popular, because:

- It appeals to all ages and abilities.
- It is open and inclusive with more experienced players teaching newbies, with people bringing visiting guests to play and with our collaborative round robins.
- It creates opportunities for townspeople to meet one another when otherwise that may not happen. Perfect during a pandemic, during retirement, during summer.
- It is a year-round outdoor sport, as demonstrated by the polar picklers, an open group of hardy and humorous souls who play in the winter.

SEE **LETTERS** PAGE 4

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August 10

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Corrections

A story on BETA Technologies in the July 13 edition had several inaccuracies.

After vertical takeoff by the eVTOL aircraft does deplete the batteries much more than horizontal takeoff but there is more than 15 minutes of flight time afterward.

The electric engines the company is developing do weigh much less than conventional engines but 150 pounds is not an accurate figure.

It takes under an hour to recharge the batteries.

United Parcel Service (UPS) has ordered 10 vertical takeoff and landing airplanes.

The company developed its first aircraft with eight people in 10 months.

The company has a dozen sites from Montreal to New York to Washington. It is building charging infrastructure from Vermont to Georgia to Arkansas.

A story on work at Charlotte Community School should have said the funding for the work was approved by voters in 2022.

LETTERS

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The Charlotte beach courts have attracted many who have now found new friendships, connections and town spirit. A look at the participation rates is also instructive — I play for an hour and a half about three to six times a week throughout the year. And every time I play there are between eight and 22 players. Never have I seen three courts filled with tennis players, and almost every day, there’s a large enough group playing pickleball that we need to set up portable nets. However,

it is also our practice to relinquish a tennis court in the rare event that players with long racquets show up.

I, among many, pledge to chip in to help cover the extra cost of this modification. I encourage the Charlotte Recreation Commission and Selectboard to approve a modification to the contract and create four permanent courts on one of the tennis courts.

And then, I encourage you all to come out and play.

MaryAnne Gatos
Charlotte



Courtesy photo

Stuart Robinson earned the rank of Eagle Scout and was named to the president’s list at Champlain College.

Pickleball great for families, welcomes all ages and abiities

To the Editor,

Over the past two years I have come to love the game of pickleball. I have had the privilege of being part of an amazing group of people who show up at the Charlotte Town Beach day after day throughout the entire year to enjoy this growing sport. Every day, 4-50 people play pickleball on tennis courts, which are rarely used for the sport they were originally designed to play.

I have not used the Charlotte Town Beach courts as much over the past few months because of its current state, but instead have been playing at other courts including Szymanski Park in South Burlington, Pearl Street in Essex and Rossignol Park in Essex. Most of our surrounding towns have invested in these permanent courts designed specifically for pickleball. Not only are

they much more conducive to playing the sport, but they also are bringing community, families and friends together to be active.

On many Sunday evenings, my family — husband, 14-year-old son and 16-year-old daughter — head down to the Charlotte Town Beach for a fierce family competition of pickleball. Often on these nights, we are joined by other families playing pickleball with their own families and friends. Pickleball is a great sport that welcomes all ages and abilities.

We hope the recreation commission and selectboard will approve the installation of permanent pickleball courts for all families to enjoy. We would be happy to contribute in any way that we can to make this project happen. We believe strongly that we need to continue to add and invest in our parks and our community.

Lynn Pitcavage
Charlotte

Around Town

Congratulations

Quinn Mlynarick and Stuart Robinson of Charlotte were named to the Champlain College president’s list for achieving a grade point average of 4.0 or higher this spring.

Robinson was also recently honored at the Vermont State House for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Harrison Falk, Heloise Guyette and Brennan Murdock of Charlotte were named to the Champlain College dean’s list for achieving a grade point average of 3.5 or higher this spring.

Cole Rehkugler of Charlotte graduated from Rochester Institute of Technology with a degree in mechanical engineering technology.

The following students from Charlotte earned bachelor’s degrees from the University of Vermont this spring:

- Anne Bedell graduated with a bachelor’s in secondary education: social science.

- Daniel Bernier graduated with a bachelor’s in biological science.
- Annabelle Creech graduated cum laude with a bachelor’s in art history.
- Enzo Delia graduated with a bachelor’s in economics and political science.
- Mary Feeney graduated with a bachelor’s in business administration.
- Colvin Hathaway graduated with a bachelor’s in theatre.
- Seamus Higgins graduated cum laude with a bachelor’s in chemistry.
- Kipper Marshall graduated with a bachelor’s in psychological science.
- Alexa Pughe graduated with a bachelor’s in sociology.
- Matthew Small graduated with a bachelor’s in environmental studies.
- Samuel Weese graduated with a bachelor’s in art education.
- Thomas Wright graduated with a bachelor’s in mechanical engineering.

Report from the Legislature

Off the wall but great suggestion in the State House

Chea Waters Evans
State Representative

It’s so fun when field trips come to the State House. This spring, one group was visiting my committee room and I asked, “If you could make a law, what would it be?”

One little cutie, who should be president someday, said, “I would make a law that puppies are allowed everywhere.”

Yes. I’ll co-sponsor.

But it wouldn’t go very far. It would, as we say, sit on the wall. In my committee room, we don’t hang things on the wall, so we have two rolling bulletin boards, but other committee rooms have bulletin boards actually on the wall. Each bill gets its own little index card, and as it comes into the room, we stick it on the wall with a thumbtack. As it progresses through the legislative process, the bill moves to different sections of the wall.

How does a bill get on the wall in the first place? It’s sponsored by a legislator, or group of legislators, and then written with the help



of legislative counsel, who are the lawyers who work in the State House. Then the sponsor introduces it to the committee that has jurisdiction over that matter.

The puppy bill would definitely sit on the wall and be stuck there for the biennium. Some people don’t want puppies in a restaurant kitchen; some people don’t want puppies in the operating room while they’re getting their appendix removed. (I can’t imagine why, but fine.) If I wanted to, I could reintroduce the puppy bill every term, but I doubt it would ever get traction, unless a puppy became the governor.

The bills that don’t sit on the wall move forward because they have support from someone or someone who agrees that it’s a priority — the leadership of a political party; the committee chair or vice chair; or the speaker of the House; or the Senate president pro tempore; or the governor; or someone who has the ear of those people, like a lobbyist or political action group.

Since it was my first year and I wanted to listen and learn before I jumped into anything, I didn’t introduce any bills this past session. You can see which bills I co-sponsored, though, on my page on the General Assembly web site: legislature.vermont.gov/people/single/2024/37367.

Some of the bills I co-sponsored made it all the way to the end, like Act 14, which is also known as the “shield law,” which protects healthcare providers from litigation from other states if they practice reproductive or gender-affirming healthcare on patients who are from states that ban that healthcare. I’m proud to be a part of this one.

Some of the bills made it almost all the way, like H.281, which later was merged with S.39, which is a bill to raise legislative pay. It passed in both chambers, was vetoed by the governor, and since I’m not a reporter anymore, I can do some mild rumor-peddling — I heard that the bill was one vote away from having enough support to override the veto, and that one Democrat held out in the Senate. (See, it’s not all partisan!)

I know this is an unpopular bill, and if you think it’s self-serving to give ourselves a raise, hear me out: If you believe that legislators don’t deserve a pay raise because they’re all rich people who can afford to be there, then that’s exactly why this bill is a good idea. It makes the job possible for more Vermonters, not just ones with money, or who are retired, or who have a spouse or partner who can support them financially and with health insurance. It opens the door a little wider for a more socio-economically

diverse group of people who are more representative of our population.

I doubt it will move forward next session because it’s not cute for people to give themselves a pay raise in a campaign year, and because perhaps some people don’t want to invite competition to the table before an election, but I still support it and would wholeheartedly vote for it again.

And finally, some of the bills I co-sponsored went absolutely nowhere, like H.168, which would establish a state-wide database of military veterans, reduce motor vehicle fees for veterans, and exempt military pensions from state income tax. It’s still sitting on the wall where it was parked at the beginning of the session, but I’d love to see that one move forward, too. There are only seven states that make veterans pay income tax on their retirement pay, and we’re one of them.

If you have an idea for a bill, you can let me know, and we can work together to see if we can make it happen. That’s part of my job. You can contact me at cevens@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231. I probably won’t be able to push forward the puppy thing, but a gal can dream.

An update on property taxes

John Quinney
Publisher and President

Do you want to know what your property tax bill will be this year?

Short answer: Multiply the value of your home (as shown in the document “Official Notice of Change of Appraisal” that all property owners received in late May), by \$1.2911 and divide the result by 100. We have this information thanks to town clerk Mary Mead’s recent post on Front Porch Forum.

In May, The Charlotte News published information on next year’s estimated property taxes. Since then, the town-wide reappraisal process has been completed. The homestead and non-homestead education tax rates have been finalized, and according to Mead, the municipal tax rate will be finalized in early August, once all appeals arising from the reappraisal process have been considered and resolved.

Three numbers go into the calculation of our property taxes:

- The appraised value of our homes

- The municipal tax rate
- The homestead education tax rate.

For fiscal year ’24 (the year that started on July 1, 2023) the homestead education tax rate is \$1.0911. Mead estimates that the fiscal year ’24 municipal tax rate will be between \$0.18 and \$0.20. Taking the higher number for the municipal tax rate and adding the homestead education tax rate gets us to the total tax rate of \$1.2911.

Let’s do the math: If your home is appraised at \$500,000, your property taxes will be about \$6,450. For a \$750,000 home, about \$9,680 and for a \$1 million home, about \$12,900.

Keep in mind that about 85 percent of property tax revenue is used to meet our share of the Champlain Valley School District budget; only 15 percent goes toward the town budget.

If you have any questions about property taxes, please contact Mead (mary@townofcharlotte.com) or Emily Tupper, assistant town clerk (etupper@townofcharlotte.com).

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Vermont Flooding

How will the ‘Flood of 2023’ rank in Vermont history?

The storm was no match for Vermont’s “Great Flood of 1927,” a 36-hour deluge would have damaged up to \$4 billion in property today. But the latest rainfall could be a sign of things to come.

Kevin O’Connor

This story first appeared in VTDigger.

The good news: Last week’s statewide storm was no match for Vermont’s “Great Flood of 1927,” a 36-hour downpour that economists estimate would have damaged up to \$4 billion in property today.

And the bad: Although officials are still tallying the impact of the most recent deluge, the collective cost could rival 2011’s Tropical Storm Irene — and be a sign of things to come, according to a just-released national study.

“Make no mistake, the devastation and flooding we’re experiencing across Vermont is historic and catastrophic,” Gov. Phil Scott said last week of water that resulted in one confirmed fatality as well as road and business closures from Albany, Barton and Craftsbury in the Northeast Kingdom to Wardsboro, Weathersfield and Weston in southern Vermont.

VTDigger is drawing on all available resources to cover the catastrophic flooding. If you can help support these reporting efforts, please consider donating now.

Many Vermonters may judge the present destruction against that of past natural disasters. The Flood of 1927 remains the worst, having killed 84 people, while Irene claimed seven lives, state records show. But experts fear the toll of future storms could be worse.

A newly published study by national researchers at the nonpartisan, nonprofit First Street Foundation has found the number of Vermont properties at flood risk is three times as many as what the Federal Emergency Management Agency considers the figure to be for 1-in-100-year events.

In the state capital of Montpelier and surrounding Washington County, for example, formerly once-a-century floods are now considered to be 1-in-62-year events, the foundation is set to report on its website Risk Factor. The study also raises the region’s total of high-risk properties from 1,400 as categorized federally to more than 4,700.

“In environmental engineering, there is a concept called stationarity, which assumes that today is going to be like yesterday, and tomorrow is going to be like yesterday,” Dr. Ed Kearns, the foundation’s chief data officer, said in a statement. “This concept used to work, but with a changing environment it’s a poor assumption and no longer does.”

1927: ‘The greatest catastrophe’

Then again, yesterday shattered precedent, too. The year 1927 is remembered for such advances as the first talking motion picture, first Model A automobile and first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic — all while Vermont maintained fewer than 100 miles of asphalt roads, with the rest being dirt or gravel under local control.

“The rational Vermonter has been of the opinion that hard roads would ruin the state,” a Chicago Tribune reporter wrote in 1928 of the reluctance to pave the way for outsiders to roll in.

That spelled mud when up to 15 inches of rain fell for 36 hours Nov. 2-4, 1927, the late historians Deborah Pickman Clifford and Nicholas Clifford detail in their 2007 book “The Troubled Roar of the Waters: Vermont in Flood and Recovery, 1927-1931.”

The storm, deemed “the greatest catastrophe in Vermont’s history” by then-Gov. John Weeks, destroyed 1,258 bridges and countless more miles of road and rails, state records show. That slowed or stopped delivery of food and other household essentials and forced farmers to churn whatever milk they couldn’t ship or store into butter, as only 30 percent had electricity before the storm, let alone refrigeration.

“When the flooding comes, no one can stop that, but there’s work we can do to be ready for the next thing,”

— Neale Lunderville, the state’s former Irene recovery officer

Three Massachusetts travelers, trying to drive to Burlington, stopped in Montpelier to ask directions, period newspapers recounted. The man they met told them it would take two weeks.

“Do you live here?” one of the tourists was quoted in the press.

“I guess I do — I am the governor,” Weeks reportedly replied, spurring the travelers to abandon their car and walk 40 miles from the capital to the state’s largest city.

They weren’t alone. Historians recall how an Army captain had to ride a horse from Colchester’s Fort Ethan Allen over Smugglers Notch to offer the military’s help to Montpelier, while a Central Vermont Railway brakeman walked, waded and swam 50 miles to Essex Junction to report train troubles in Bethel.

Few complained. When then-U.S. Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover surveyed Vermont on behalf of then-President Calvin Coolidge, Hoover’s car had to stop in Waterbury because of muddy roads.

“We have nothing left,” one local was said to have told Hoover, “but plenty of courage.”

Long before the creation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a special session of the 1927 Legislature approved what was then an \$8.5 million bond issue to not only repair but also improve roads.

“There was no point in simply restoring roads that would once again be vulnerable to catastrophe, that even before the flood had already been inadequate, and whose maintenance costs would be greater than if they were rebuilt in a more durable form,” the Cliffords wrote in their book.

Vermont would spend what was then \$12 million on highways (including a then-unprecedented \$2.6 million federal grant), the first two of four years of rebuilding, state records show. The governor, using the disaster to overturn a tradition of one-term officeholders, ran for reelection in 1928 and persuaded the Legislature to approve another 125 miles of “hard road.”

The state’s current highway system was born.

2011: ‘Irene was just the appetizer’

Vermont faced its second biggest test on Aug. 28, 2011, when Tropical Storm Irene crumbled more than 500 miles of highway, closing such north-south arteries as Route 100 — the state’s longest — and east-west corridors including Route 9 linking Bennington and Brattleboro, and Route 4 connecting Rutland and White River Junction.

Irene’s statistics, though not as steep as those in 1927, nonetheless were staggering. The 2011 storm dumped up to 11 inches of rain, destroyed nearly \$750 million in property (a figure equal to almost two-thirds of that year’s state general fund budget) and damaged 200 bridges, 450 utility poles, 600 historic buildings, 1,000 culverts, 2,400 road segments, 3,500 homes and businesses, and 20,000 acres of farmland.

In Danby, Irene washed away the old home of the late Nobel Prize-winning writer Pearl Buck just hours after the town christened its new artifact-filled historical society. Rockingham watched the water carry off its nearly 150-year-old Bartonville Covered Bridge — an act captured and replayed on YouTube a half-million times.

Most expensively, Irene gutted the



Courtesy of Norwich University Archives

E. T. Houston Studio produced this postcard of Montpelier flooding at the corner of State and Main streets on Nov. 4, 1927.



File photo by Kevin O’Connor/VTDigger

The Weather Channel’s Jim Cantore, a Vermont native, broadcasts live from Brattleboro on Aug. 30, 2011, after Tropical Storm Irene ravaged the Whetstone Studio for the Arts.

1,500-employee Waterbury State Office Complex — ironically, the home of Vermont Emergency Management. Crews spent \$130 million to restore the campus (with all occupied space now a half-foot above the 500-year flood mark) in the state government’s biggest-ever construction project.

Just as the 1927 flood spurred the state to modernize its infrastructure, Irene sparked more government changes. Many cities and towns bought out property owners in flood zones to avert future problems, while the state built stronger roads and bridges, updated its laws so planning addresses resilience and river corridor protection, and launched a Flood Ready Vermont website to educate the public about its programs.

“When the flooding comes, no one can stop that, but there’s work we can do to be ready for the next thing,” Neale Lunderville, the state’s former Irene recovery officer who’s now head of Vermont Gas Systems, said on the storm’s 10th anniversary in 2021. “Irene was just the appetizer for the main course that’s yet to come if we don’t buckle down and start making changes.”

2023: ‘Historical data no longer capture the threats’

The most recent storm dropped as much as an average two months of rain, with a state high of 9.2 inches in Calais, according to the National Weather Service. But infrastructure improvements after Irene lessened damage to transportation and utility lines.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation, which required four months to repair more than 500 miles of highway ravaged in 2011, already has reopened 90% of the 100 state roads closed by last week’s storm, the agency has reported.

Green Mountain Power, which provides electricity to three-quarters of the state, reported 140,650 total outages during Irene,

compared to 52,500 during this month’s storm.

Even so, the most recent flooding has sparked coast-to-coast headlines. Reporters have quoted scientists who blame saturated ground, mountains that channel water into river valleys — and climate change.

“As temperatures rise, the air can hold more moisture, which can mean more severe rainfall, bringing worse flooding,” The New York Times summed up the situation.

But many current models don’t account for such shifts. The National Weather Service bases its predictions for extreme rainfall more on past observations. Likewise, the new research from the First Street Foundation estimates the number of properties at flood risk is significantly larger than what FEMA says.

This month’s Vermont storm has turned the latter study’s release into national news.

“Historic flooding,” The Washington Post wrote in connecting the research to current events, “was not a product of any tropical system — laying bare how flooding predictions based on historical data no longer capture the threats posed by extreme rainfall as the planet warms and the air carries more moisture.”

The latest storm also has highlighted the need for continued investment in long-term planning.

“I have seen an increase in records being broken, records that have stood for decades or even a century,” FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell told reporters during a visit to Vermont last week. “We really need to start to better understand what it’s going to look like 10 or 20 years from now, so we can use our mitigation dollars to help reduce those impacts and help these systems be more resilient.”

(Disclosure: Neale Lunderville is a board member of the Vermont Journalism Trust, the parent organization of VTDigger.)

Vermont Flooding

Flooding is notice of changes we need to make

Elizabeth Bassett
Contributor

In 1928, President Calvin Coolidge, a Plymouth-native, returned to Vermont to assess recovery after the devastating flood of 1927.

Many are now familiar with at least a portion of his remarks in Bennington: “I love Vermont because of her hills and valleys, her scenery and invigorating climate, but most of all, because of her indomitable people. They are a race of pioneers who have almost beggared themselves to serve others. If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the union and support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished from the generous store held by the people of this brave little state of Vermont.”

Here we are again, digesting the devastation of yet another flood not yet a dozen years after Tropical Storm Irene tore through the state. Damage from all three epic rains wrought havoc in similar, if not identical, places: Waterbury, Montpelier, Barre, Johnson, Ludlow, Plymouth, Bridgewater, Woodstock ... and on and on.

We, more fortunate in Charlotte, can volunteer to help victims and contribute financially. It’s also a five-alarm notice to make changes in our lives to help slow these cruel changes to our climate.

Shelburne Farms can serve as an inspiration even if we can’t apply this knowledge in our own backyards. The farm has a goal of carbon neutrality organization-wide by 2028, an ambitious target but one toward which the non-profit is making progress.

Solar panels dot the landscape, and electric mowers and vehicles are replacing gasoline-powered ones. Mowing is less frequent. Grass is left longer inspired by the “raise the blade” campaign.

While some suggest that giving up meat is a solution, Shelburne Farms has a different view: “We believe that animals play an essential role in sustainable farming systems. They can generate food for people from land unsuitable for crops, like much of the sloping, stony acreage at Shelburne Farms, and they can help build healthy soils that sequester carbon and boost yields of pastures and

cropland.”
Shelburne Farms is pursuing three strategies toward this goal with its cow herd: silvopasture, biochar and feed additives.

Silvopasture (silvo is Latin for forest) is the practice of combining trees, pastures and livestock. Trees shade the cows in hot weather and can sequester carbon both above and below the soil. Manure feeds the trees and silvopasture retains more water than a traditional pasture.

Biochar is a similar to charcoal and is produced from sustainable sources, like invasives (think buckthorn and honeysuckle). As a soil amendment, it contributes texture, absorbs minerals and nutrients, and can help retain water. Made by burning plant material, biochar added to the soil also removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Methane emissions from animals is a well-known problem and cows are significant contributors, mainly through their burps. Most of the gas is formed in the first chamber of the stomach, and so they belch it out. Researchers and farmers across the world, including at Shelburne Farms, are working together to develop animal feed that minimizes methane production.

Lots more information is at shelburnefarms.org.

Life in the milkweed patch

At this time each year I always hope to find monarch caterpillars on our milkweed plants. So far this year, no luck. But I noticed and then read about a phenomenon that amounts to common milkweed being a killing field for small insects.

Kent MacFarland at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies writes that milkweed “are not a carnivorous plant; trapping and death are just an accident. Instead, it has solved the problem of pollination in a unique manner.”

The long (very long) and short of it is that in order for an insect to collect milkweed pollen, it must stick a leg into a tiny slit in the flower. Small insects often do not have the strength to pull their legs out. Escape depends on leaving one or more legs behind.

Mink

When not contemplating the carnage of climate change or lamenting legless insects near our milkweed, I’ve entertained myself

Beach dock underwater



Photos by Lee Krohn

Lake Champlain is over 3 feet higher than normal for July, and the dock at the Charlotte Town Beach is underwater. On Sunday the lake water level reached 98.75 feet, a new high for July 23, according to the U.S.G.S. gauge in Burlington (weather.gov/btv/lakeLevel?year=2023).

watching mink. They frolic on shore and swim with snouts just above the waterline, long tails leaving turbulence in their wake.

What do I know about mink? Other than that they can become fur coats, not a lot. American mink are part of the weasel family along with fisher, American marten, North American river otter, and long and short-tailed weasels, called ermine. Mink are aquatic with partially webbed feet, living beside bodies of water or in wetlands.

Weasels have long thin bodies, enabling them to squeeze into snow or terrestrial tunnels in pursuit of smaller prey.

Aggressive carnivores, mink are agile predators on land or in water, both excellent tree climbers and swimmers. Their diet can include muskrats, rabbits, fish, crayfish, frogs, marsh-nesting birds, as well as smaller rodents and aquatic beetles.

May the balance of summer of 2023 bring more hope than heartache.

List of flood resources

Contributed

Here is a list of links to flood resources and opportunities to help with flood-relief efforts compiled by the office of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Jill Krowinski.

Resources for individuals:

• **Vermont Emergency Management Flood Resources** at vem.vermont.gov/flood.

• **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Flood Recovery Resources** at anr.vermont.gov/flood.

• **3SquaresVT Replacement Benefits** — If you experienced a “household misfortune” such as a flood or power outage lasting over four hours and lost food, you may be eligible for replacement benefits. Report the loss within 10 days of the incident. More information at dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3svt.

• **FEMA Individual Assistance Program Information** — Vermonters can apply for financial help through FEMA for flood recovery. Residents and business owners can call 1-800-621-3362 or visit disasterassistance.gov to apply.

• **For a step-by-step guide on the application process** go to tinyurl.com/yc3jbb5w.

• **Vermont 211** — Report damaged homes and access resources by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting Vermont211.org.

• **Flood FAQs** — Visit the Vermont Emergency Management website for frequently asked questions related to flooding at vem.vermont.gov/flood/faq.

• **Mold Cleanup Guide** — If you choose to clean up mold yourself, ensure your safety by following the CDC’s mold cleanup guide available at tinyurl.com/4uwvzb7f.

• **Guidance for Vermont Flood Recovery, Health and Safety** — Stay informed about health and safety guidelines related to flood recovery by visiting healthvermont.gov.

• **Advice about returning home after a flood** is at fema.gov/fact-sheet/returning-home-after-flood.

Resources for businesses:

• **Vermont Emergency Management Flood Resources** at vem.vermont.gov/flood.

• **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources flood recovery resources** are at anr.vermont.gov/flood.

• **The Small Business Association Vermont district office** encourages small businesses to download a copy of the Vermont Small Business Development Center’s Disaster Recovery Guide for Business at tinyurl.com/y9p9wxj4.

• **FEMA Disaster Assistance** — Apply for FEMA disaster assistance at DisasterAssistance.gov or call 1-800-621-3362.

• **For a step-by-step guide on the application process** go to tinyurl.com/yc3jbb5w.

• **Vermont 211** — Report damaged properties and access resources by dialing 2-1-1 or visiting Vermont211.org.

• **Flood FAQs** — Visit the Vermont Emergency Management website for frequently asked questions related to flooding at vem.vermont.gov/flood/faq.



Courtesy photos

From left, Chea Waters Evans and South Burlington representative Emilie Krasnow, who grew up in Charlotte and still has a lot of family here, work on organizing donations. Initially, the plan had been “to fill a truck or two and it took off,” Evans said.

• **Guidance for Vermont flood recovery, health and safety** — Stay informed about health and safety guidelines related to flood recovery by visiting healthvermont.gov.

Resources for farms/agriculture:
• **Vermont Emergency Management Flood Resources** at vem.vermont.gov/flood.

• **Vermont Agency of Natural Resources flood recovery resources** are at anr.vermont.gov/flood.

• **Flood response & recovery information for Vermont Produce Growers** — Find

valuable information for Vermont produce growers regarding flood response and recovery on the website of the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

• **Farmers disaster tool** — Farmers.gov/protection-recovery/disaster-tool — and should contact their local farm service center.

• **University of Vermont drone assistance for farmers** — The University of Vermont has a drone available to help farmers sur-

Vermont Flooding

Helping lawns recover from rain, after being underwater

Deb Heleba
University of Vermont Extension

Rain-soaked lawns and turf that have been damaged by being underwater for long periods of time, or left covered in silt as flood waters retreat, will need extra TLC in order to recover, according to the University of Vermont Extension community horticulture program.

If your lawn is waterlogged, whether from flooding or heavy rains, the first step is to let it dry out. You may need to make furrows to drain standing water. Or consider using a push-behind or step-on lawn aerator if soils are slow to drain.

If possible, avoid extra foot traffic in wet areas and mowing saturated lawns until they’ve had a chance to dry. You want time for the grass to recover without adding soil compaction to already weakened turf. Turf grasses that have been underwater for four or more days may not recover due to prolonged lack of oxygen and light.

Once soils dry out, set your mower to the highest setting possible and make sure blades are sharp. Aim to cut about a third of the grass height per mowing. This will help the plant direct its energy to recovering rather than sending up new growth.

Bring the lawn height down to an optimal three inches. According to the Lawn-to-Lake initiative (lawntolake.org), maintaining lawns at this height shades out weeds, improves water quality and encourages longer roots for healthier plants and aerated soils.

In addition, you can use an aerator throughout the season to remove small cores of soil and silt. This will allow air

and water to reach the roots. Topdress with compost, which will work its way into the holes to fertilize the soil.

Wet conditions also can spur fungal diseases, moss and algae, in addition to weed infestations in lawns. Fungicides are typically not warranted for home lawns, especially if the steps above are put into place to create healthy turf grasses.

Lawns covered with silt from flooding require some extra steps. If covered with less than an inch of silt, break it up by scratching the surface with a steel-toothed rake or similar tool. You can also use a high-pressure garden hose to wash the silt from small sections of your lawn, or at least thin the depth. If the silt dries and crusts, continue to break it up throughout the season until the grass rebounds.

Lawns covered with more than an inch of silt may need to be reestablished from scratch. First, remove as much silt as possible. Silt deposits exceeding three inches will likely need to be removed by a professional.

To renovate lawns with a layer of silt that is less than three inches, till the area, mixing the silt thoroughly with the top four to six inches of original soil. For best results, before reseeding or replanting the area, get your soil tested at the UVM Extension Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab (go.uvm.edu/soiltest).

If possible, it is best to wait until late summer to reseed cool-season grasses. Before September or around Labor Day is the optimal window for germination and seedling growth. Tips on lawn renovation and establishment are available at go.uvm.edu/lawnrenovation.

Another option that works for small



Photo by Deb Heleba

Floodwaters and prolonged rains have saturated lawns, like the one pictured here, making mowing and maintenance a challenge.

areas is to add strips of sod. Just be sure to remove or till in the dead layer of grass before laying new sod.

Budget permitting, refill and replace the topsoil in eroded areas. You can amend any added backfill with organic matter such as compost, rotted wood chips or old mulch.

As you repair your landscape, this might be an opportunity to rethink your lawn. Consider planting a “bee lawn,” (go.uvm.edu/beelawn). Or rethink your space and instead of a lawn, plant perennials or

shrubs, mulching the plantings to help reduce weeds, conserve soil moisture and prevent erosion.

For questions about lawns, contact the University of Vermont Extension master gardener helpline at go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp, open 24/7/365 for online questions with an option to submit photos. To talk to a trained extension master gardener, call 802-656-5421 on Thursday mornings between 9 a.m. and noon.

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FLOOD RESOURCES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

vey flood damage. Schedule assistance by emailing uas@uvm.edu.

- **No-charge soil testing** — Take advantage of free-soil testing through the University of Vermont. Visit uvm.edu/extension/agriculture-and-environmental-testing-lab for more information.
- **Guidance for flood-damaged crops and hay** — Contact University of Vermont Extension for guidance on managing flood-damaged crops, hay, forage and corn. Reach out to Heather Darby at heather.darby@uvm.edu or call 802-782-6054 or 802-656-7610. Visit uvm.edu/extension/nwcrops for additional information.
- **Farm First** — Access free technical, legal, financial and mental health services for farmers at Farm First. Visit farmfirst.org or call 877-493-6216.

Volunteering or donating resources:

- **Barre City volunteer opportunities** — Find volunteer opportunities related to flood recovery in Barre City by visiting barrecity.org/vol-flood.html.
- **Vermont volunteer registration** — Register as a volunteer through the official

Vermont.gov website at Vermont Volunteer Registration.

- **Montpelier Volunteer Opportunities** — Explore volunteer opportunities in Montpelier by visiting their volunteer form at tinyurl.com/47um9ftm.
- **Waterbury Volunteer Opportunities** — Check for volunteer opportunities in Waterbury to contribute to flood recovery efforts at tinyurl.com/4h36xw6f.
- **The Vermont Community Foundation** has organized the VT Flood Response & Recovery Fund 2023 at tinyurl.com/2b-8p674z to coordinate a philanthropic response.
- **The Vermont Main Street Flood Recovery Fund** at vtrecovery2023.com promises to issue grants to small businesses affected by the disaster. The fund’s board includes state treasurer Mike Pieciak and Sue Minter, executive director of Capstone Community Action in Central Vermont.
- State officials have also encouraged people to give to the **American Red Cross of Northern New England** at tinyurl.com/3sn-vz2et, which is managing emergency shelters and providing other immediate relief, or a local United Way at unitedway.org/local/united-states/vermont.

Food Shelf

There’s lots of help for those impacted by flooding

Maj Eisinger
Contributor

In the wake of severe flooding and seemingly unrelenting rain, Vermonters continue to pull together and support one another. The Vermont Foodbank reports that all its deliveries are back to their normal schedule and reminds the community that flood-relief information, including extra assistance accessing or covering the cost of food, is available on the website vermont.gov/flood.

The Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance, which also serves North Ferrisburgh, is an all-volunteer organization which receives most of its donations during the winter holiday season. In this summer of need, we thank all those whose donations support our mission of neighbors helping neighbors.

We are so grateful for generous donations from the Patrick Foundation made in memory of Robert Fleming and Janet Howe Patrick; the Weezie Foundation; and the Windham Foundation on behalf of Karen D. Bruett, William H. Bruett and Ann Hall in memory of Anne Hancock.

The donations of fresh produce from Frog Song Farm and Head over Fields Farm are appreciated, as are the nonperishables provided by Livi Neilson and Mavis Carr, rising eighth graders who did a car wash fundraiser as part of a wellness service project to benefit the food shelf.

Arlene Marks’ donation of lovely Vermont Teddy Bears have also been a source of delight.

The summer is typically a time of need for some school-age children who normally receive lunches during school while it is in session. The Charlotte Congregational Church has been distributing children’s

lunches to the Charlotte General Store (formerly Spear’s), the Little Free Pantry and the library. The Little Free Pantry is in very active use, led by the Congregational Church and supported by donations from church and community members and the food shelf, which has added a bread basket and a cooler for fresh produce.

The Champlain Valley School District has told the food shelf that there is a cash benefit card coming to families this summer of \$120. All students in our schools are entitled to this card. If you choose not to use this card for your own family, they encourage you to use it to purchase food for donation, as unused benefits will be returned to the federal government.

For families who have previously received a pandemic electronic benefit transfer (often referred to as P-EBT) card or receive 3SquaresVT, the summer benefit will be added to your existing card by early August. If you need a replacement card, please call 800-479-6151, option 7.

Those who have never received a pandemic electronic benefit transfer card for any children in their household will receive a new card by early August which will require activation with instructions to be supplied by a separate letter. The card and the instruction letter will be mailed by the Vermont Department of Children and Families. More information about pandemic electronic benefits is at dcf.vermont.gov/esd/p-ebt.

The Champlain Valley School District has also provided the food shelf with other information about more resources for households facing summertime food insecurity. They note that open summer meal sites are listed at the USDA Meal Finder, or can be found by calling 2-1-1 or



by texting FOOD to 304-304. In addition, the “Stretch Your Budget with Vermont Food Programs” is also a valuable one-page resource.

In August, families served by the food shelf are encouraged to provide current sizes for those children who will be outfitted by the annual fall and winter clothing drive led by Alicia Cooper of the Charlotte Grange. Clothing will be collected in September for distribution in October.

If you can help with donations of produce, please call the food shelf. We thank those that grow for planting an extra row.

Those who wish to volunteer will be warmly welcomed, as many hands make light work. Please contact Peggy Sharpe at ckmj@comcast.net if you are interested in volunteering.

For many years the Congregational Church has generously provided space to the food shelf in their basement. We are searching for a new home, hoping to find a first-floor space of about 600 square feet with room for parking and receiving large food orders. Please contact Peggy Sharpe, Food Shelf Secretary, at ckmj@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 802-425-3252 or by filling out a request form. Request forms are available during food shelf open hours or at tinyurl.com/jrse63ap.

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, behind the Congregational Church in Charlotte. For emergency food, call John at 802-425-3130. If you cannot come to the food shelf due to COVID symptoms or seek further information about the food shelf, please call 802-425-3252. Monetary donations are appreciated, tax deductible and can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc., P.O. Box 83, Charlotte VT 05445.

Education

In spite of Supreme Court decision, colleges still seeking diversity

Margo Bartsch
Contributor

The first of August is a rite of passage for high school seniors: the Common Application to apply to college is open. This year, however, the Common Application will be different to address the Supreme Court’s decision to effectively end affirmative action for undergraduate, graduate, and post-graduate admissions, according to NPR this June.

Although the Common Application will still include listing of races and ethnicities, the colleges will block the “race box,” as reported by EdSource. Does this change how colleges evaluate your application?

“College admissions is a data-driven industry,” writes Jeffrey Selingo, the bestselling author and journalist, in the New York Times this July. “Although colleges will still report their enrollment by race and ethnicity to the U.S. Department of Education, they will be flying blind during the selection process ... to the makeup of underrepresented students.”

The background of an applicant can often be deciphered from data points including zip code, parent education, activities and high school profile. Without race as a criterion, colleges are likely to boost minority application efforts “aimed at low-income communities and precollege programs designed for students who are first in their family to attend college,” explains Selingo.

Many claim that standardized testing puts minority students at a disadvantage. In response, most colleges are continuing



test-optional policies to encourage more applicants from a range of backgrounds.

Test-optional policies for most colleges have shown “improving access to low-income, underrepresented and first-generation students,” said Inside Higher Education last July.

In his book, “Who Gets In and Why,” Selingo illustrates holistic evaluation criteria beyond whether or not students submit standardized scores. The admissions committee awards points to various elements of the student’s application. This holistic review process considers the opportunities a student has and how they might have excelled within their environment.

While observing Emory University’s admissions process, Selingo details a

rating scale in four areas: strength of the high school curriculum, extracurricular activities, recommendations and intellectual curiosity (evidenced from their leadership and essays). These categories allow for multiple readers to apply consistent scoring parameters when evaluating applications.

Colleges have stated a commitment to diversity on campus. Wesleyan University President Michael S. Roth said, “We can’t control what the Supreme Court does, but we can articulate our shared commitment to continue to give students, regardless of their background, the opportunity to thrive and to excel.”

Wesleyan’s admitted class of 2027 included only 4 percent legacies, compared to around 8 percent for the classes of 2022-26, explained ABCNews this July.

Essay prompts probe a student’s life experiences, beyond data points. Students can share their personal voice and passionate ideas. The essays can be a conversation with the committee to illustrate an applicant’s stories within word counts and character limitations. Colleges look for a range of talents and viewpoints to build their campus community.

For the upcoming 2023-24 undergraduate application season, Dartmouth College is requiring students to write a 250-word essay by choosing one of two prompts:

The first: “There is a Quaker saying: ‘Let your life speak.’ Describe the environment in which you were raised and the impact it has had on the person you are today.”

The other option: “‘Be yourself;’ Oscar Wilde advised. ‘Everyone else is taken.’ Introduce yourself.”

The Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont requires this 400-word essay: The college “recognizes that diversity extends beyond chosen and unchosen identities and encompasses an individual’s entire experiences. Diverse environments can promote growth and provide an opportunity for reflection. Reflect on a time you learned something from someone of a group of people who are unlike yourself and how that challenged your preconceptions and biases. How will this experience influence your behavior in the future?”

As Chief Justice Roberts wrote in the majority opinion, “Nothing in this opinion should be construed as prohibiting universities from considering an applicant’s discussion of how race affected his or her life.”

The application process is not an ideal meritocracy. The college admissions committee sets priorities for what they are looking for. With limited slots and increasing applicants, they can choose from a range of candidates when shaping a class to their objectives.

Although affirmative action has been disallowed, colleges will continue to seek a diverse student body. Now more than ever, a student’s story must be far more compelling than mere data points.

(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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Charlotte Central School appears safe from PCBs

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

The threat to Charlotte Central School students from PCBs appears to have been minimal, and after its third round of testing, almost completely gone.

Initially, the testing found an unacceptable level of the harmful chemicals in the kitchen, so primarily the adult kitchen staff were exposed.

The school responded by moving meal preparation into the lunchroom while the kitchen was worked on. Now, the kitchen is showing no PCB, or polychlorinated biphenyl, contamination.

The PCBs in the kitchen are believed to have been in ballast in a fluorescent light in the pantry, which has been removed.

Ballast moderates the amount of current going into a fluorescent tube. It was common to have flourescent lighting ballasts containing PCBs years ago, said Gary Marckres, the Champlain Valley School District’s chief operation officer.

The most recent testing did find PCBs in the boiler room. It’s believed to be in the compressor oil, Marckres said, but it is below the level requiring action.

It is less concerning than it might have been because the level of PCBs detected there was below the action level, adults seldom are in the boiler room and students are never there. Nonetheless, the school system is working to get rid of any PCBs there.

“We’re going to take a look and make sure that we have that mitigated as well,” Marckres said.

The Champlain Valley School District is part of a class action suit, along with multiple Vermont school districts, against Monsanto. Monsanto was an agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology corporation that was purchased by Bayer in 2018. Until it ceased production of polychlorinated biphenyls in 1977, Monsanto produced 99 percent of the PCBs used in U.S. industry.

If Vermont wins the class action suit, Marckres does not expect the school district will see much money from the case. He said the state has paid for about 80 percent of the mitigation work at Charlotte Central School.

Marckres said he wasn’t sure of the amount the district has spent at the school but that it is significantly less than \$100,000.

Charlotte Central School was the first school tested under the state testing program for PCBs because that’s where it landed in the schedule for school testing. Eventually, all the schools in the district and the state will be tested.

The school had installed a carbon filtration system before all the mitigation work was done. Marckres said this type of system has been documented as being effective against PCBs. With the filtration system running, PCBs didn’t show up, but were found when the testing was done with the carbon filtration system turned off.

Fight against invasive aquatic species requires vigilance



Courtesy photo

A Lewis Creek Association boat launch steward inspects a kayak at Bristol Pond.

Kate Kelly and Portia Butrym
Lewis Creek Association

Lewis Creek Association has maintained an educational boat launch steward program for three summers at Bristol and Monkton Ponds where the stewards have interacted with nearly 1,600 boats and intercepted 367 boats that had aquatic plants on them.

The boat launch stewards greet boaters as they arrive at the ponds and offer to inspect their boats for aquatic invasive species, while also collecting data on where the boat has been and how many aquatic organisms they encountered.

They educate boat owners on how to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive plant species, which includes cleaning, draining and drying your boat and other equipment that has been in the water before moving to a different water body.

Listen up, town beach swimmers: This could even include swimsuits and life jackets, which could carry small microscopic organisms like the fishhook water flea, which was recently found in Lake Champlain.

The fishhook water flea, or Cercopagis pengoi, is an aggressive and predatory animal plankton, which may compete with native species for food and impacts anglers by fouling fishing lines, according to the

New York Invasive Species website. Such invasive species have long threatened the health and populations of native plants in the Lewis Creek and Lake Champlain watersheds. The aquatic invasive plant species form dense mats of vegetation and can impede the activities of recreational boaters, swimmers and anglers, while degrading ecosystems and wildlife habitats.

Management of aquatic invasive plants can be difficult because they are easily spread via seeds, roots, fragments, animals and humans.

As of 2022, there were three known aquatic invasive species in Bristol Pond: European frogbit, Eurasian watermilfoil and brittle naiad, and two aquatic invasive species in Monkton Pond: Eurasian watermilfoil and curly-leaf pondweed. If left unmanaged, the aquatic invasive plant species in these ponds could spread throughout the rest of the watershed and the state.

Next time you are at Bristol Pond or Monkton Pond, say “hi” to the boat launch stewards. They will gladly discuss any topics regarding aquatic invasive species and how you can help prevent their spread. If you’re interested in learning more, reach out to Kate Kelly, program manager for Lewis Creek Association, at lewiscreekorg@gmail.com or 802-488-5203.



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On Books

Summer reading trifecta for hot but beautiful days

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

I'm sitting in my kitchen listening to the gentle snoring of my pug and looking out over a very green field (watered well by recent rains), Mount Philo rising in the distance through a gauze-like veil of what they say is smoke wafted down from Canada. It is hot. But beautiful.

I have been reading a lot lately and have a few books to recommend.

"If those who have do not give, those who haven't must take. (A. Sivanandan)," reads the epigraph of Priya Guns' debut novel "Your Driver Is Waiting." How I found this book, I have no idea, but I'm glad I did.

"If you're going to be a driver," it begins, "you'd better hide at least one weapon in your car. Especially if you're a driver that looks like me. Not because I'm dashing or handsome, but because I am a woman, of course."

Damani, the novel's narrator, is a driver for RideShare. Her father has recently died on the job at a fast-food restaurant — it is his car Damani uses for work — and Damani is left with her mother to care for and support.

They live on what she makes, a small amount the company seems constantly to be chiseling. Ever ready for a fight or any sign of trouble, Damani carries a switchblade in the glove compartment, a tire iron under her seat, pepper spray by her door and a pair of scissors under the mat, "taped down to avoid any sliding." In the back, along with six bottles of water, are (among other useful items) a wide and varied array of cleaning materials, a baseball bat, a can of antiperspirant and another of spray paint, some condoms, tampons, pads and diapers. Because you never know what is going to happen when you are out there driving for fares.

"All the drivers I've ever met say it's crucial to drive prepared," says Damani. "Go



ahead and ask one. If they tell you there's not even one weapon hidden in their car, they're lying. As a driver, you have to protect yourself. Out there in the city, we're on our own."

Meanwhile, all around the city are protests. Thousands of them. "Signs and causes melded into a pastiche of demands." Signs "painted in black, neons, red, and white": "Black Lives for Palestine," "The Fight for Climate Change is the Fight Against Capitalism," "Refugees are People," "Workers' Rights for ALL Workers!" But Damani doesn't have time to protest. She's too busy driving around, waiting for that ping which signifies a ride, which signifies money, which she and her mother need, badly.

Like so many stories, this one morphs eventually into a romance, which begins unexpectedly when Damani gives a ride to someone named Jolene. At first, Jolene seems the ideal girlfriend. She's smart, beautiful and there's an electric chemistry between them. She's well-connected, a frequent attendee of protests, and an avid supporter of good causes. She's a white girl with money. Nothing much not to like. But not long into the relationship, Jolene does something unforgivable that drives the relationship into a deadly spin.

I loved this book, loved the narrator and her savage, edgy way. She's tough and passionate and a little crazy. This book is super well written. Unusual and original. I highly recommend it. Uber will never be the same again.

A book I have been recommending right and left is Alice Winn's "In Memoriam." Maggie O'Farrell, author of "Hamnet" and "The Marriage Portrait" (see below), comments that it's hard to believe that this is a debut novel, "as it's so assured, affecting and moving." I agree.

"In Memoriam" begins at Preshute, an elite English boarding school, with Ellwood (a prefect) sitting on a tile roof of one of the school buildings, fashioning his hands into a gun and shooting at passers-by below, while



Gaunt, half-German and not a fan of soldier games, peruses the "In Memoriam" section of the school newspaper. "He had known seven of the nine boys killed," Winn writes. But The Preshutian assured readers that the two boys recently killed in the war had "died gallant deaths." "Just like every other Preshute student who had been killed so far in the War."

Later we learn more about these deaths and what brought them about, learn more about the violent, morbid and unthinkable realities of war — nothing The Preshutian ever came even close to mentioning in its sanitized, sentimentalized "In Memoriam" column.

Winn follows Ellwood and Gaunt from the innocence, safety and comfort of their English boarding school to the World War I battlefield and eventually back to civilian life. I found that often, while reading this novel, I was reminded of scenes from the classic "All Quiet on the Western Front" by Erich Maria Remarque, a German veteran of World War I. First published in 1928, that novel describes the devastating physical and emotional trauma of war, as well as the detachment and isolation German soldiers experienced when they returned home. Similarly, Winn describes in devastating detail the horrors and indignities of war, which contrast boldly with the wide-eyed enthusiasm and jaunty patriotism of the young men who eagerly dove into active duty with no clue what they were in for.

Breathtaking and gut-wrenching, devastating and poetic, this is a must read. The complicated relationship between Gaunt and Ellwood is beautifully rendered, as are many of the other friendships and relationships in this novel. Though dense and at times difficult, this book is a page-turner. Once begun, it's hard to put down till the bittersweet end. Highly recommend.

Just before I headed out for vacation last week, a friend of mine gave me a book she'd just read and enjoyed, commenting that it was just the thing for the beach. When I had it in hand, I saw that it was by Maggie O'Farrell, author of "Hamnet." I hadn't known she had written a new book. A fan

of O'Farrell, I was thrilled to throw this one in my suitcase. It didn't take me long to read. Just ask my kids, who were with me on vacation. They will tell you. I seldom put it down.

Based in 16th century Florence, this "glittering, propulsive new novel" (as Oprah Daily calls it) follows the story of Lucrezia, the third daughter of the grand duke. She's not the favorite child (she's a little short of stature, her face is a bit angular and she's a bit too spirited for her mother's taste) but she's a gifted artist, a shrewd, intuitive observer and a bright and independent thinker — qualities that in the 21st century would serve her very well, but that in her day were distinct liabilities. In Italy in the 1500s, women were typically not educated and considered the property of men. For the most part, they were to remain quiet, obedient and unobtrusive ... oh, and while bearing as many sons as possible.

Lucrezia has the malignant misfortune of being forced to marry the fiancé of her sister, Maria, who dies suddenly on the eve of her wedding to the dashing young Italian duke, Alfonso. Doesn't sound so bad? Ha. Just wait. The guy is a psychopath. He comes off as pleasant enough at the outset but read on.

This book is evocative and chilling. At times it almost reads like a horror story, and like "Hamnet," it's extremely readable and deftly executed. I love Maggie O'Farrell's work. She spins a great yarn and has a special ability to open portals for readers to other places, times and ways of being. Though it is painful and not a little infuriating to ponder the burdens and limitations of being born female back in the day, this story is somehow illuminated with resilience and connection. (Wow, it just struck me: if only Lucrezia could meet Damani.) I highly recommend you give this excellent novel a whirl.

I do hope you're enjoying these summer days. Please give these good books a try. Happy reading.



Calendar of Events

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

Grange on the Green: Minced Oats Thursday July 27, 5:30-7 p.m.
Minced Oats will play neo-traditionalist Americana, bluegrass and folk music on the Charlotte Town Green. Sponsored by Point Bay Marina, ReArch Company and Otter Creek Awnings.

Festival of Fools Friday-Sunday, Aug. 4-6
The 16th annual Festival of Fools, Aug. 4-6, happens in Burlington on Church Street. Every year, Festival of Fools brings over 100 free performances stretched across three days of merrymaking with acrobatics, dancers, sketch comedy and unbelievable music. For schedule and more info see vermontfestivaloffools.com.

Charlotte walks Thursday, Aug. 10, 8:30-9:30 a.m.
Join for Thompson's Point and Whiskey Bay walk at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot for Whiskey Bay at 1000 North Shore Road. The parking lot is on the non-lake side of road; drive slowly, it can be tricky to spot. We'll have someone standing visibly by the road to help you find us. Walk will be an about 3-mile loop of dirt roads and trails around Thompson's Point including North Shore Road and Flat Rock Road. Bring your bathing suit and towel for a dip in the lake afterwards. Whiskey Bay has free public access to Lake Champlain in Charlotte.

Growing young gardeners Through Thursday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m.-noon
Every Thursday, young people are invited


to participate in a free gardening program at the Vermont Garden Park on Dorset Street in South Burlington. A program of the Burlington Garden Club, kids and their accompanying adults learn about different subjects related to gardening. It is not required to attend each week. Best for ages 4-10 with a grown-up (or two). Each session is free; snack time and a craft project is included. To read more and see what to bring, see bgcvt.org/events.html and scroll down a bit.

Sensory Friendly Friday Friday, Aug. 18, 8:30-10 a.m.
On the third Friday of every month, through October, Shelburne Museum invites the community into the museum before regular opening hours to view special exhibitions in a light-and-sound-adjusted environment. Created in consultation with Inclusive Arts Vermont, this program for children, teens and adults alike is designed to offer a positive museum-going experience for visitors with varying sensory processing differences at the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education. Free pre-registration is required by contacting 802-985-0924 or events@shelburnemuseum.org.

Vergennes Day Saturday, Aug. 26, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Head to the Vergennes City Park for the 41st annual Vergennes Day on Saturday, Aug. 26. With over 60 vendor booths in city park, there is fun for all ages. Come check out live music on the bandstand, pancake breakfast and bubble pit at the fire station, horse and wagon rides, Little City Road Race, Lions Club chicken barbeque, merchant sales and more.

Tour de Farms Sunday, Sept. 17, 8:30 a.m.
Registration is open for the Tour de Farms, one of Vermont's oldest cycling farm tours, returning to Shoreham for its 15th year of celebrating local food, the revenue raised support Addison County Relocalization Network's new food hub that facilitates the distribution of locally produced foods. The day of tasting products finishes at 4:30 p.m. at the Shoreham Apple Fest. The tour features a 30-mile route, as well as a family-friendly 10-mile route. Riders start at Shoreham Green 42 miles south of Burlington, off Route 22A. The terrain includes rolling

hills with a mix of paved and dirt roads, so a mountain bike or road bike with wide tires is recommended. Register at tinyurl.com/2ytecchz.



Town of Charlotte MEETINGS
Visit charlottetv.org for more information.

Trails Committee Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, Aug. 1, 6:30-8 p.m.

Planning Commission Regular meeting
Thursday, Aug. 3, 7-9 p.m.

Recreation Commission Meeting
Monday, Aug. 7, 5:30-7 p.m.



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.

Shelburne Museum drops architect after sexual misconduct allegations

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Because of allegations of sexual harassment charges against the architect Shelburne Museum had chosen to design its new building to house its collection of Native American art, the museum has severed its relationship with David Adjaye and his firm.

Shelburne Museum announced in May the construction of the Perry Center for Native American Art and that the internationally known architect Adjaye would be designing it.

In mid-July, the museum announced that Adjaye Associates was no longer involved in the project.

The plan originally had been to break ground in the fall of 2024 with a spring 2026 opening. Perry Center may still open in the spring 2026, said Thomas Denenberg, Shelburne Museum director and CEO.

“I don’t think we’re going to lose a lot of time,” he said.

Shelburne Museum was just past the conceptual phase of the design process, so it’s still very early in the project, and the museum has a number of candidates on its shortlist from the original search for an architect.

Denenberg said he didn’t think the museum will need to do another search because he has a large box filled with strong candidates.

The Perry Center for Native American Art will be the 40th building on the Shelburne Museum’s 45-acre campus. Besides housing Native American art already in its collection, the new building will also house a significant collection

from Anthony and Teressa Perry, who lived in Charlotte for years.

“The Perry Center for Native American Art is planned to be a highly sustainable pavilion designed to support the culturally appropriate interpretation and care of Indigenous material culture,” the museum said in a release. “Designed and realized through a rigorous process in partnership with Indigenous voices, the Perry Center will serve as a welcoming space for Tribal members and scholars to study and engage with the collection and will reimagine the museum experience for all visitors including the local community, schoolchildren and tourists.”

Adjaye and his architectural firm were in the middle of a number of projects around the world in various stages of construction. According to The Architect’s Newspaper, Adjaye Associates’ design work on the Princeton University Art Museum will continue, but under another architect with the firm. That work is almost complete.

Clients such as the International Slavery Museum in Liverpool, England, and Rice University’s new student center were re-evaluating their relations with Adjaye Associates. The Africa Institute in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, canceled the firm’s design of its campus.

The allegations include at least one incident of sexual assault and reports of excessive work demands of employees.

Allegations about improper treatment of employees goes back through the history of architecture, Denenberg said, but the abuses engendered by personality-driven professions is not limited to architecture. It’s a problem in professions built upon strong public personas, such as politics.

Community Roundup

Shelburne Age Well August grab-&-go meal

Age Well and St. Catherine’s of Siena Parish in Shelburne are teaming up to provide a meal to go for anyone age 60 and older on Tuesday, Aug. 8. The meal will be available for pick up in the parking lot at St. Catherine’s at 72 Church Street from 11 a.m.-noon.

These nutritious and delicious meals are everyone 60 years or older. A \$5 donation is suggested but not required.

The menu is chicken in gravy, red mashed potatoes, mixed beans, biscuit, pineapple and oranges, and milk

To order a meal, contact Kathleen by Aug. 2 at agewellstcath@gmail.com or 802-503-1107.

Banned book tour with Lt. Governor David Zuckerman

Due to the proliferation of book challenges and bans around the country, this summer and fall, Lt. Governor David Zuckerman is travelling the state, hosting a series of book readings from banned books at local bookstores and libraries.

These events will feature special guests who will join the Lt. Governor to discuss with the audience the importance of free speech, inclusion, democracy and open dialogue. Students, teachers and curious minds should be able to access materials that spark critical thinking, cover difficult topics and appeal to diverse interests without fear of government interference.

In this vicinity, banned book readings will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, Aug. 13, in Waterbury at Bridgeside Books and at 6 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 6, at Phoenix Books in Essex Junction.

\$1.5 million state grant offers help to gain skills for career growth

Thanks to a third year of state funding via H.484, Section 17, an act relating

to enhancing workforce and economic development opportunities, the University of Vermont will be offering up to two free courses to eligible Vermont residents seeking education and skills for professional growth or employment, with new course additions in the healthcare field. From August 2023-June 2024, the Upskill Vermont Scholarship Program will offer free academic learning opportunities in business, education and social work, food and agriculture, healthcare, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) while funds last.

“Students from all of Vermont’s 14 counties participated in courses made accessible by Upskill over the last two years, learning new skills needed to meet the qualifications for desirable jobs,” said Jill Irvine, chief officer of professional and continuing education (PACE). “This year we are particularly excited to add course opportunities for Vermonters that will address the medical staffing shortage through accessible, on-demand certifications in behavior technician specialist, patient care technician, and medical laboratory assistant.”

Eligible Vermonters can choose one course per semester or in the summer which can result in college credit or a non-credit professional certificate. A sampling of non-credit certificates offered include project management practices, digital marketing fundamentals, emotional intelligence and leadership, integrative health and wellness coaching, and cannabis plant and biology professional program. Credit courses include opportunities such as introduction and advanced geographical information systems, computer software certification, post-baccalaureate pre-medical program, and resiliency-based and trauma-informed practices.

Library News

Library is a drop-off location for flood-relief supplies

Margaret Woodruff
Director

The library thanks all the volunteers who helped to make the library book sale a success. For the first time, the sale took place in the library and more than 200 people came to browse and buy. A limited book sale continues in the library program room so take a look next time you're in the library.

Library at farmers market

Stop by to say hello on Saturday, July 29, when we visit the Shelburne Farmers Market. Learn our library story and make your own book journal to take home.

Flood-relief supplies

Together with other local libraries, the Charlotte Library is serving as a satellite drop-off spot for flood-relief supplies. Bring your donations during library hours, and we will pass along to the distribution effort.

Supplies needed at this time include dehumidifiers, generators, plastic bins, mold inhibitors, extension cords, toiletries, personal protective equipment, yard tools and wheelbarrows. Check Front Porch Forum for updates. Thank you to Keshia Ram Hinsdale and Chea Evans for coordinating this local opportunity to help fellow Vermonters.

Children's programs

Summer reading program

Create your own packet with the fun options for pick-up in the children's area of the library.

Make It Monday Monday, July 31, 1 p.m.

Monday afternoons are the perfect time for craft projects. Dabble in art, make sun catchers and dinosaur gardens, weave friendship bracelets and create rain sticks. Age 6 and up.

Very Merry Theatre Friday, Aug. 4, noon

Join the Very Merry Theatre's traveling Teen Tour for a production of "Crazy For

You" on the Charlotte Town Green. Please bring low lawn chairs, blankets, water and sunscreen.

Programs for adults

Book chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

Garden Circle Wednesdays, 4:30-6 p.m.

Join the Garden Circle of volunteers who will tend the educational gardens around the library this year. Contact garden stewards Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton at seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org to sign up and join in the merry work sessions this growing season.

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 book discussion group Thursday, July 27, 7:30 p.m.

Join discussion of "Lillian Boxfish Takes a Walk" by Kathleen Rooney via Zoom at tinyurl.com/4ch2xzap. It's the last day of 1984, and 85-year-old Lillian Boxfish is about to take a walk. As she traverses a grittier Manhattan, a city anxious after an attack by a still-at-large subway vigilante, she encounters bartenders, bodega clerks, chauffeurs, security guards, bohemians, criminals, children, parents and parents-to-be. While she strolls, Lillian recalls a long and eventful life that included a brief reign as the highest-paid advertising woman in America. Copies available at the library

circulation desk.

Grange on the Green Thursday, July 27, 5:30-7 p.m.

Minced Oats plays neo-traditionalist Americana, bluegrass and folk music on the town green. Concert sponsor: Point Bay Marina. Hosted by the Charlotte Library and the Charlotte Grange with concert series sponsors: ReArch Company and Otter Creek Awnings. Rain location is the Charlotte Senior Center.

What's going well and what's not Friday, July 28 at 11:30 a.m.

Join fellow gardeners to share the good news and the not-so-good news from your garden so far this year. Any surprises or discoveries? What are the implications for next year? Celebrate the good things and hopefully hear some suggestions for problems. Facilitated by seed library coordinators Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton. Register in advance for Zoom link at tinyurl.com/ycknez2s.

Men's book discussion Wednesday, Aug. 16, 7:30 p.m.

Join the men's book discussion of "Norwegian by Night," Derek Miller's debut that the New York Times said "has the brains of a literary novel and the body of a thriller." Join the discussion in-person or online. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Mystery book group: Monday, Aug. 21, 10 a.m.

Join discussion of "The Nine Tailors" by Dorothy Sayers, a classic whodunit featuring Lord Peter Wimsey. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Better Together book club Wednesday, Aug. 23, 7 p.m.

Better Together is an open book group that discusses books related to parenting, including "Amateur Hour" by Kimberly Herrington, an "emotionally honest, arresting and funny collection of essays about motherhood and adulthood," Copies



Photo by Claudia Marshall

A new exhibit at the library reveals bits of Charlotte history since 1958 through old issues of The Charlotte News.

available at the library circulation desk.

Library contact information:

Margaret Woodruff, director
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian
Phone: 802-425-3864
Email: info@charlottepubliclibrary.org

The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets regularly on the first Thursday of the month. The next meeting takes place on Thursday, Sept. 7, at 6 p.m. online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Write Ingredients

Even for "Barbie" fans, pink pasta is totally gross

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Worst food idea of the week: A Washington Post recipe developer invited

readers to celebrate Barbie by making pink pasta. Whether you like the movie or not, the very pink pasta looks gross.

W. Somerset Maugham once advised: "To eat well in England, you should have breakfast three times a day."

People in our parts say to eat well on Mondays, head over to the Charlotte Senior Center at 11:30 a.m. Even though press time is too early to post the menus, we know they'll be good. Check the Charlotte Senior Center website for August menus at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals.

And fear not, August offers plenty of opportunities for food fests. National food days proliferate. From National Milkshake Day on Aug. 1 to Trail Mix Day on Aug. 31, there are plenty of special days in between honoring chocolate chip cookies, filet mignon, lemon meringue pie, peach pie, waffles, the banana split and chop suey. So far, no pink pasta day.

August doesn't seem to have a Real Corn Dog Day, but former Texas agricultural commissioner and current gadfly author

of the The Hightower Lowdown, Jim Hightower, must have been thinking about August menus when he provided a real corn dog recipe in his monthly newsletter at the end of July.

Hightower writes, "Mesoamericans pioneered the real corn dog. Theirs was straightforward: Charred corn on a corn tortilla with peppers and native spices."

But his has some modern embellishments, including adding pancetta or prosciutto, warning: "This is meant to flavor the dog, not turn it into a corn-flavored hamburger, so a bit of temperance, please."

He also notes that you can skip the bun and use crisp leaves of romaine lettuce, concluding, "If you don't like it, chances are your dog will eat it."

We would note that even though Charlotte's great bread maker at Back Door Bread is off cycling across the country, Monday Munches always follow Fyodor Dostoevsky's dictum: "There is not a thing that is more positive than bread." We can

guarantee that there will be bread and butter on the menu.

Food for kids' thought

Jane Smiley once noted, "Leaving any bookstore is hard, especially on a day in August, when the Street outside burns and glares, and the books inside are cool and crisp to the touch."

On a recent glaring hot day, I entered the Flying Pig with a generous gift card courtesy of the Friends of the Charlotte Senior Center. There, helpful staff guided my selection of books for the Little Free Library for Kids, located outside The Charlotte Grange. Leaving with a bag stuffed with books, I felt inspired to skip down the street. And I only used half that gift card.

Anybody who cares about kids from 8 months to 18 years needs to be sure those kids get over to The Charlotte Grange. New titles include popular graphic novels, a Newbery Medal book about a gorilla living at the shopping mall and more, more, more.

No, there are no Barbie books at the Little Free Library for Kids. But at the Flying Pig the "Blueberries for Sal Cookbook" is on the shelves. With excerpts from this classic favorite about Little Sal and her mother and Little Bear and his mother, this book has recipes for everything from blueberry lemonade to blueberry-oat cookies to blueberry pancakes to blueberry upside-down cake. And lots, lots more.

Finally, here's the Kingston Trio with "Raspberries, Strawberries": tinyurl.com/uajxz42t.

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Senior Center News

Volunteers make wide variety of programs go round

Lori York
Director

Volunteers make a difference. The senior center offers a wide variety of programming through the support of many volunteers.

What some do not realize is that most of the activities at the center are organized and led by volunteers. These include gatherings for games like backgammon, bridge, mahjong, brain games, canasta and samba. All of the trips — kayak, paddling, gentle hikes and birding — are also led by volunteers.

The front desk often has a volunteer greeting participants and answering the phones, truly acting as an ambassador for the senior center. There are bakers who provide goodies for the Red Cross Blood drives and the popular Monday Munch would not be possible without the volunteer cooks and dishwashers.

There are so many opportunities. If you are interested in offering a program or volunteering, please reach out and spend time helping create a vibrant senior center.

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.

Outdoor activities

Try Out A Boat Event Friday, Aug. 4, noon-2 p.m.

New to paddling and want to learn about the different types of kayaks and canoes? This is the perfect opportunity to “try out a boat.” There will be a variety of boats to try, both kayaks and canoes, and these boats are all “loaners” from volunteers and do not belong to the Senior Center. Registration is required and space is limited. Questions? Call Dean Tuininga at 603-703-5092, or email dean.tuininga@gmail.com. With the recent water and weather issues in Vermont, the location or date may change.

Recreational paddling trip Wednesday, Aug. 16, 9:30 a.m.

Join Karen and Dean Tuininga for a paddling trip, Wednesday morning, Aug. 16, on the Indian Brook Reservoir in Essex. The group will meet at 9:30 and plans to spend a couple of hours on the water. Open to everyone 18 and older, but space is limited to 10 boats plus leaders, so be sure to sign up early. Questions? Contact Dean Tuininga at dean.tuininga@gmail.com. Registration required. Free. Details will be sent to registered paddlers the evening before the trip.

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. Details about the trip will be sent out the week prior. For questions, please contact Susan Hyde at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com. Registration is required through the Charlotte Senior Center Database or by calling the Senior Center. Free.

Community programs

Alzheimer’s Caregiver Support Group Thursday, Aug. 10, 5-6 p.m.

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

Community-supported agriculture Thursdays, 10-11 a.m.

The senior center is participating in the Locally Yours community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. Produce from Full Moon Farm in Hinesburg is dropped at the senior center weekly and participants (age 60 and over) have access to fresh fruit and vegetables at no charge. The program is a first-come, first-serve situation, with the intention that one or two people do not take all of the delivered produce, taking only what they will use. No registration required. Free.

Red Cross Blood Drive Thursday, Aug. 3, 2-7 p.m.

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

September senior art show

Now accepting submissions for the Charlotte Senior Center art show. Open to all artists and skill levels, ages 50 and older. Entry deadline is Friday, Aug. 18. Registration forms are available at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. For questions contact Judy Tuttle at jtuttle@gmavt.net or 802-425-2864.

Shape-Note Singing Sunday, Aug. 6, 1-3 p.m.

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing ... not as a practice for performance. Search “sacred harp” on YouTube for examples, then come and sing. Introduction to shape notes and scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each first Sunday singing. Contact Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com to schedule. No registration required. Free

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, call 802-425-6345 or email meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Art classes

Drawing for Those Who Think They Can’t Friday, Aug. 11, 12:30-2 p.m.

Learn that you can draw if you simply look at things differently. Bring yourself and plan to have fun sharing in this supportive, nonjudgmental class experience. Local artist Mickey Davis enjoys bringing out the innate hidden artist in others. By donation. Registration required.

Make and take garden art Monday, Aug. 7, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Make a ceramic and glass art flower for your garden. All supplies will be provided. The studio is at 2257 Fuller Mountain



Photo by Karen Tuininga
From left, Mary Andrews, Janet McSorley and Dean Tuininga paddle on the LaPlatte.



Photo by Lori York
From left, Glen Willette, Kathy Quesnel, Patti Blair, Sean Moran and Kate Racha, a rising junior at Champlain Valley Union High, had a great time working on the July 23 Monday Munch, as the lunch volunteers always do.

Road in North Ferrisburgh. No previous art background is necessary. This flower will need no watering or weeding and can stay outdoors in Vermont winters. Ages 6 and all the way up will have fun — a perfect intergenerational activity with your adult child or grandchild. Cost: \$40. Registration required.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday Lunches

Lunch is served on Mondays 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. or until the food runs

out. Suggested lunch donation \$5. No registration required.

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.



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