

*Your nonprofit community news source since 1958*

# The Charlotte News

Thursday, September 21, 2023 | Volume 66 Number 7



Photo by Susan Hyde

Joan Mollica enjoyed the great weather for the August Women's Kayak Trip to South Slang Little Otter Creek.



# The Charlotte News

September 21, 2023

Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

Vol. 66, No.07

## Charlotte hires new town administrator

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Late in its meeting on September 11, the selectboard went into an executive session to discuss one of its most important decisions of recent months.

When the board returned to public discussion, it voted unanimously to extend an offer to Nathaniel Bareham to be the next town administrator.

Bareham has accepted the job, which comes with a salary of \$80,000 a year plus benefits.

The hiring of Bareham is the end of a 10-month process that began in November last year when town administrator Dean Bloch announced he was going to retire at the end of October this year.

In July, the selectboard formed a five-person search committee that winnowed through the applicants. Twelve candidates was trimmed to three candidates and ultimately the job was offered to Bareham.

"I think we're really lucky. We got a younger fellow coming in here who's enthusiastic, intelligent and has got really good public relations skills," chair Jim Faulkner said.

Faulkner said the town is also lucky because Bloch has agreed to stay around to help Bareham learn the ins and outs of being Charlotte's town administrator. Bloch may even stay beyond his announced final day of Oct. 31.

It is a challenge because Bloch has "a wealth of knowledge that you pick up over 20 years. It's a little tricky to pass it on," Faulkner said.

In addition to the board's pleasure in Bareham's positive character traits, several of the board members mentioned they were pleased that he has a law degree.

Bareham comes to Charlotte from western New York where he's been working at the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as a water safety coordinator.

Faulkner was impressed that Bareham had driven more than five hours twice for interviews with those involved in the hiring process.

Board member Frank Tenney said he was optimistic about the selection of Bareham. One thing that fuels his optimism is that the new town administrator is young.

"I'm always fearful sometimes when you hire somebody with too much experience, being set in their ways and not working as well with the other employees or the selectboard or any other boards," Tenney said. "Sometimes it's better off to have somebody that can be kind of trained for the style that Charlotte has."

Over the years Bloch's job description has expanded, so it's a pretty big job, even for someone with experience. Although Bareham may not have been working as a town administrator, he's been working in situations that are similar, so it won't be completely unfamiliar job duties for him, Tenney said.

Selectboard members said that Bareham is aware that the town is going to have a vote on Town Meeting Day about switching to a town manager form of government, and he is content with working as either a town administrator or a town manager.

Board member Louise McCarren echoed the comments of other members: "I'm really pleased. He's got a lot of knowledge and energy. And he really wants to do this. So, this is fantastic."

## Pre-K capacity increasing in Charlotte

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Childcare is a serious concern in Charlotte as it is in most other places.

After the service at Charlotte Congregational Church on Sunday, members and guests gathered to celebrate some steps that have been taken to deal with this major need here.

The church has greatly expanded its playground and renovated a room to add more spots for infants, toddlers and pre-K students in town.

On a beautiful day as children romped on the new and improved playground, Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen and Kelly Bouteiller, executive director of the Charlotte Children's Center, described for those gathered how the project to add space at the church originated last fall from a conversation in which Bouteiller revealed there were about 179 children on a waiting list for the children's center.

The children's center wastewater system is maxed out and more children can't be added to its programming there.

The conversation "really brought to light how much need there is in the community for high quality care," Bouteiller said. "We sort of had this last-ditch opportunity to apply for a grant through Let's Grow Kids just before that organization sunsetted this year."

So, they asked. And they received.

With a lot of collaboration and generosity from members of the church, a room in the church's basement where a lot of stuff had been stored has been renovated.

"Because of the generosity of the church, it really grew into quite a large project. We now have a beautiful room that has plumbing and new climate control. It will be a really lovely space to take care of children," she said.

The church and the children's center hope to welcome six more infants into the expanded facility the first week of October.



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Ben Cullen contemplates the expanded playground while adults celebrate the collaboration between the Charlotte Congregational Church and the Charlotte Childcare Center to grow pre-kindergarten space for younger children in town.

The remaining hurdle is getting the final licensing, but all signs point to that being cleared with ease.

Six more infants may seem like a small step for childcare, but nonetheless it is a giant leap in Charlotte, to paraphrase Neil Armstrong.

"This is one step to do what we can," Goldenbogen said. "Carving out six infant spaces is a huge job."

The ratio of children to adults is much smaller the younger children are. One childcare worker is required per four infants.

And the need for more infant and pre-school childcare is urgent across the state and nation, Bouteiller said.

The expansion has worked because of good communication and the healthy relationship between the church and the Charlotte Children's Center, Goldenbogen said. The project raised about \$75,000 from

a variety of sources. Besides Let's Grow Kids, a "very generous" donation from SCHIP (Shelburne Charlotte Hinesburg Interfaith Projects) and donations from Dorothy and Norman Pellett, Tina Helzer, church events, the children's center and others made the expansion possible.

The funding was "cobbled together from a lot of different people who understood the vision and just wanted to be part of it," Goldenbogen said. "And you're all standing here today."

After the presentation, Bouteiller said there are more children on their waiting list now than when they began working on the expansion in the fall.

The Charlotte Children's Center has 38 children at its facility on Ferry Road across from the Charlotte Library and hopes to have room for at least 14 at the church.

## Bending the silver spoon

*Jeff Hollender's privileged life in service to the planet*

Steve Goldstein  
Contributor

On a Saturday morning In late October 2010, Jeffrey Hollender answered the phone in his Charlotte home. The caller was the lawyer for Seventh Generation, the Vermont-based company Hollender started 22 years before and for which he served as CEO. You've been fired, the lawyer informed him. We will collect your belongings and ship them to your home. You cannot enter the Burlington office.

The shock hit Hollender before he'd put down the receiver.

Imagine Bill Gates being shown the door at Microsoft, or Jeff Bezos no longer in his Prime. Hollender and a friend created Seventh Generation in 1988 as an environmentally-conscious domestic products company. The name derived from a Native American philosophy that any decision must be taken with consideration of the impact "on the next seven generations." The company creed was do no harm to Mother Nature.

Perhaps this seems matter-of-fact now, but in its time, it was borderline radical. Hollender made earth-friendly products cool and turned "sustainability" into a household word. Best of all, at least to shareholders, he'd spun green into gold; the company had

reached \$150 million in annual revenues.

It wasn't enough. As self-styled "Chief Inspired Protagonist," Hollender gave his board of directors agita. For one, he was a board member of Greenpeace, the agents provocateur of environmental activists. Hollender believed this advocacy was in perfect harmony with his company's mission; the board thought him tone deaf. In 2007, a Greenpeace protest at the U.S. State Department resulted in more than 50 arrests, among them Hollender. He admitted the board had said more than once that it was "inappropriate" for a CEO to get arrested.

The firing knocked Hollender for a loop, friends said, but as he learned as a beginning surfer, you fall off, you get back on the board. New Yorker by birth, Vermonter by choice, Hollender is resiliency itself — self-made, self-taught, self-assured — and the knockout punch turned into a glancing blow.

"The episode was just very painful," said Marc Vahanian, a lifelong friend. "But he hung in there and has found a way to not only reinvent himself, but continue to recommit with that same curiosity."

Seventh Generation's history is the main part of a new book Hollender is writing. The remainder is "a bit of a memoir," he said, possibly the closest he'll get to an autobiography.

"He's always had this curiosity about making the world a better place and doing things differently," Vahanian said, "and not following the beaten path."

Hollender's path was gilded — if



Photo by Steve Goldstein

Jeff Hollender caught a wave and made eco-friendly products cool.

he chose to follow it. Raised in a luxe apartment on Manhattan's Park Avenue to an actress mother and an advertising executive father, Hollender often compares his life to the "Mad Men" TV show. There was a beach house in the Hamptons of Long Island, where he learned to surf. Yet the material riches hardly filled the emotional void; his parents were often apart and absent, leading to "a not particularly happy home life," as Hollender put it. His parents divorced when Jeff turned 18.

Restless and rootless, Hollender



JEFF HOLLENDER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hopscoched through cameo appearances at four different high schools before graduating from the James Baldwin School in Manhattan, which exists to “provide a haven for students who have previously experienced school as unresponsive to their needs as individuals.”

The charms of higher education also eluded the young Hollender. He packed it in at Hampshire College after three semesters, leaving father Alfred “devastated,” Hollender recalled.

“You’re gonna go for a job interview and they’re gonna ask you where you went to college,” the elder Hollender warned. “And you’re gonna be so embarrassed that you have to say you dropped out.”

Hollender coolly replied. “I never plan on going on a job interview. Because I don’t plan on working for anybody else.”

Hollender pretty much made good on that pledge. He began his entrepreneurial journey by developing the educational Skills Exchange program in Toronto, which failed because Hollender neglected to get a Canadian work permit. The educational space appealed to Hollender, who then created a non-traditional online school called Network for Learning. He sold that company in 1985 to Warner Communications for \$2 million. Two years later, Hollender partnered with Vermonter Alan Newman to buy a mail order catalogue that sold eco-friendly products. In 1988, the mail order business became Seventh Generation.

The new company, based in Burlington, quickly became the archetype for a wave of green companies and the sustainability movement. Hollender had no college degree but a small fortune in his bank account. He was 34 years old.

Yoram Samets, a friend and early investor in Seventh Generation, said Hollender has bested his entrepreneur peers at having an impact “beyond the bottom line.” He’s made mistakes “but we all become better human beings through mistakes.”

Hollender has been redefining the CEO role and expanding corporate responsibility his whole career. There’s the old joke about the rich kid who is born on third base and thinks he’s hit a triple. Hollender is the opposite. He’s taken that silver spoon and bent it to his will.

“Jeff always had a hunger and determination,” Vahanian told me. His friend also showed that a life in business didn’t mean that business was his life. To mark his 50th birthday, Hollender took a gaggle of friends to Barbados. One day he drove to the other side of the island from their hotel to check out a popular surf break called the Soup Bowl. It was challenging, Hollender said, and only three other riders were out besides him. One of them was Kelly Slater, perhaps the best professional surfer of all time. When they hit the beach, Hollender introduced himself and asked Slater to sign his T-shirt. “I still have it,” he laughed.

Hollender and his wife Sheila have three grown children. With his oldest, Meika, he started Sustain Natural, which sold eco-conscious condoms for women and other sexual wellness products. The company was not a huge success and later was sold.

Hollender makes a point of being present for his kids.

“I didn’t experience the kinds of things that I tried to give my kids, like, unconditional love,” he explained. “My dad’s love was always very conditioned upon how well I was performing.”

Meika, who now works at a startup that sells organic baby formula, described her father as “always very available emotionally [and] non-judgmental. He was very easy to talk to, and supportive of us making our own decisions.” When crises erupted at their joint venture, “My dad was a rock.”

Samets, who knows the family well and lives nearby, said Hollender treated his kids “in total opposition to the way he was brought up ... if you were in a meeting with Jeff and one of his children called, that meeting stopped so he could talk to them.”

In 2016, after Unilever had bought Seventh Generation, the new owners invited Hollender to rejoin the board of directors.

Hollender has maintained a significant profile in corporate responsibility, social equity and climate and population issues. He co-founded the American Sustainable Business Council, a coalition of business leaders promoting responsible business practices, and serves on the board of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility.

Much of his time is spent teaching at New York University’s Stern Business School in its Business & Society program. The focus: Instructing students on how to build socially responsible businesses. The indifferent, unfulfilled student has become “an incredibly effective teacher,” said program director Batia Weisenfeld, who cited Hollender’s “willingness to meet with students and offer coaching and support outside the classroom.”

Hollender took time out from his endeavors to speak to The Charlotte News at his home. Here are some excerpts from two conversations. They have been edited for clarity and brevity.

TCN: Did your father ever recognize your success?

JH: Yes, when we sold the audio publishing company to Warner’s. He had invested in that audio publishing company and he got a nice big check. And that was the turning point in my relationship with him. He all of a sudden had to respect the fact that, gee, this guy has been more successful than I was at his age and he didn’t go to college.

TCN: Other than your Greenpeace activism, why did you get fired?

JH: We had hired a new CEO to run the business on a day-to-day basis, specifically so I could do more speaking and writing than I was doing and not be as tied up with the day-to-day operations. I concluded after about six months that we hired the wrong person, and I was encouraging the board to let him go and find someone else. They didn’t see eye-to-eye with me on that. And they were much more comfortable with the new person who was a much more traditional business guy than I was. The second issue was a disagreement over employee ownership. I was trying to get employee ownership up to 30 percent. The board felt that we had already given too much stock to the employees and wanted to cut back their level of ownership.

TCN: Those sound like pretty fundamental differences.

JH: I mistakenly thought of the company as my company. And it wasn’t. It was controlled and owned by the board and the shareholders, and I didn’t have a majority interest. So, I was an employee, like every other employee. Luckily, I had a good employment contract. It was one of the most painful experiences of my life.

TCN: Do you consider yourself a capitalist?

JH: I am a believer in capitalism, although not the way in which we practice capitalism today. In the 1930s and 40s, capitalism was much more broadly beneficial to the public than what we have today, where a small number of people end up with most of the value that’s created. And that’s, you know, that’s not good for the economy. Our current economy would be better off if wealth was much more evenly divided than it is today.

Because rich people don’t spend most of the money they have. That’s why they’re rich.

Q. As an educator yourself now, do you have any insights into your resistance to schooling?

JH: It just wasn’t as fulfilling as I had hoped it would be. I always thought this idea that you would work like crazy to write a paper that one person would read and grade to be sort of pointless. If you want to work hard on something then more people should read it. Otherwise, what’s the point in writing it?

TCN: What’s your approach to teaching at Stern?

JH: I’m teaching them sort of standard things from a different perspective that I learned about leadership. Things that are less often taught in business school about how to build corporate culture. And it’s an unusual class at the business school because it is directly in opposition to the notion of shareholder economics. I reject the notion that business should be in business to make money solely for its shareholders. We need stakeholder economics rather than shareholder economics, so that business is in business to benefit a broader group of people and especially the employees.

TCN: Are students receptive to your ideas?

JH: The single thing that makes me the most optimistic is a change in attitude and outlook amongst the students that I teach and the development of a commitment to do more than just make as much money as they can possibly make. And to use their career in their business as a way of addressing social and economic problems.

TCN: As an entrepreneur, how well does Vermont support startups?

JH: As a state, we have not created the support for entrepreneurs that we could. And that’s changing. Look at what’s happening at Hula. They have brought a tremendous amount of capital to support startups and they have been a magnet to attract talent to the state. I mean, if you look statistically at the value that has been created by entrepreneurs in Vermont, it’s extraordinary for the size of the state that we have. But that’s really a very recent development over the past five years.

TCN: Have we reached a turning point on the public’s understanding of climate change?

JH: Greenpeace spent years trying to figure out how to motivate people to care about climate change. And what they realized was, something has to happen like the rain this summer, in people’s own environment, that they can’t explain for other reasons for people to start caring. So, you know, they were very successful with hunters and fishermen. When all of a sudden, the fish that you’re so used to catching were no longer in the stream that you were catching them in, because the temperature had changed and they couldn’t survive in that temperature anymore. So, when you have that personal visceral experience with climate change, I think that begins to be a motivator. But sadly, for everything that I know, I don’t believe that we’re anywhere close to doing what we need to do on climate change. We’re going to see much, much worse.



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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Individuals associated with The Charlotte News may engage in public discussion on issues in Charlotte, including at selectboard and other Town meetings, and on Front Porch Forum. They may also work or volunteer for organizations in Charlotte, including private businesses, the Town government, and nonprofits. When engaging in public discussions, they are expressing personal or organizational views and not necessarily the views of The Charlotte News, its staff, board of directors, or volunteers. Individuals who write opinion pieces for the paper will have their role at The Charlotte News identified, and the piece will be clearly labeled as their personal commentary.

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Consistent with our mission, The Charlotte News publishes letters to the editor, opinion pieces and obituaries submitted by our readers. All such materials are subject to review and approval by the editor in accordance with the standards and requirements listed on our website at charlottenewsvt.org/about.

Send submissions, questions, photos, etcetera to [scooter@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:scooter@thecharlottenews.org)

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**Oct. 19**  
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The Charlotte News Reader Survey

John Quinney  
Publisher & President

By way of thanking you for helping out, we're offering a chance to win one of five prizes:

Got a few minutes for your local newspaper?  
We publish The Charlotte News for you, our readers.  
We know only a little about what you appreciate about the paper – and what you don't. We want to learn much more. So, we hope you'll complete the survey printed below or available online at [forms.gle/cwyNT32ePEqY8Akr9](https://forms.gle/cwyNT32ePEqY8Akr9).  
Completing the survey will take only a few minutes of your time.

Mail your completed survey to us in the envelope included in this newspaper.

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Please select one answer to each of the following questions.

1. How do you read The Charlotte News?

- a. Always in print
- b. Always online
- c. Some of both

2. If The Charlotte News were available only online, how often would you read it?

- a. Always
- b. Frequently
- c. Sometimes
- d. Never

3. The Charlotte News currently provides a mix of stories and reporting on town and state government, local businesses, farming, schools, sports, town history, nature, recreation and profiles of Charlotters. The paper also provides offerings from town organizations like the library, senior center, recreation department and fire and rescue services. What do you think about the current mix?

- a. Seems about right
- b. Too many of [please specify]

- c. Too few of [please specify]

4. If you would like to read stories on topics that The Charlotte News does not currently cover, please tell us about these.

5. What is your favorite part of the paper – the one section or kind of story you usually turn to when you read the paper?

6. What is your least favorite part of the paper – the section or kind of story you usually skip?

7. Recently, The Charlotte News has taken several steps to avoid conflicts of interests by employees, the board of directors and volunteers. How do you think the paper is doing on these issues?

- a. Much better
- b. About the same
- c. Slightly worse
- d. Much worse
- e. Don't know
- f. Please tell us why you selected your answer:

8. The Charlotte News has taken several steps in the past couple of years to improve the quality of our reporting and the layout and design of the newspaper and website. How do you think we are doing on these issues?

- a. Much better
- b. Slightly better
- c. About the same
- d. Slightly worse
- e. Much worse
- f. Please tell us why you selected your answer:

9. At present, The Charlotte News is free, thanks to advertising revenue, generous donations from Charlotters and small grants. In the future, if The Charlotte News had no choice but to ask readers to pay, how would you respond?

- a. Willing to pay for the same service I receive today - the newspaper in my mailbox, the weekly email update, and website access
- b. Willing to pay only for the newspaper delivered to my mailbox
- c. Willing to pay only for the weekly email update and website access
- d. Unwilling to pay for The Charlotte News

10. If you would be willing to pay for The Charlotte News to keep it in business, how much would be a reasonable amount each month?

- a. \$1-\$5
- b. \$6-10
- c. \$11-15
- d. \$16-20
- e. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Unwilling to pay for The Charlotte News

11. Currently, The Charlotte News counts on donations and volunteers. Are you willing to donate and/or volunteer to help keep our nonprofit paper alive and thriving?

- a. Willing to donate or I already donate
- b. Willing to volunteer or I already volunteer
- c. Willing to donate and volunteer or I already do both
- d. Unwilling to donate or volunteer

12. Assuming the newspaper, weekly email updates, and website access remain free, and you are willing to support The Charlotte News with an annual donation, how much would you consider to be reasonable for the community news service you receive?

- a. \$1-50
- b. \$51-100
- c. \$101-250
- d. \$251-1,000
- e. Unwilling to donate

13. Please tell us a little about yourself.

Age:

- a. Under 20 years
- b. 20-40 years
- c. 41-60 years
- d. 60-80 years
- e. Over 80 years

How many years have you lived in Charlotte?

- a. Fewer than 10 years
- b. 10-20 years
- c. 20-30 years
- d. More than 30 years

Residency:

- a. Permanent resident
- b. Seasonal resident
- c. Vacationer
- d. Not resident in Charlotte

14. We would welcome any additional thoughts you may have on The Charlotte News.

[write in your suggestions]

15. If you want to be entered into a drawing for one of our prizes, please provide your name and contact information. We will not share or publish this information under any circumstances – except, and only with your permission – to announce the winners in a future edition of the newspaper.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks so much for completing this survey.



# Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Congratulations! The Charlotte News helped Age Well provide 170 Meals on Wheels. We appreciate this support.

Because of the readers’ generosity, our clients can rely on the daily nutritious meal, volunteer visit and daily safety check. Age Well is grateful to everyone who donated to support Meals on Wheels in Charlotte. Last year, Age Well served 187 Charlotte residents.

This support comes at a time when Age Well is facing unprecedented numbers of aging Vermonters needing meal deliveries and the support that accompanies Meals on Wheels. Thank you for helping us to continue to reach thousands in need, avoid waitlists and continue to deliver a vital lifeline to those most at risk.

Meals on Wheels can serve one person for an entire year for about the same cost as one day in a hospital or 10 days in a nursing home. Meals on Wheels not only helps our aging neighbors thrive, but also relies on collaboration from our community partners, volunteers and businesses to meet the ever-growing need, ensuring that no older Vermonter is left behind.

To learn more about how Age Well supports older Vermonters, we invite you to visit [agewellvt.org](http://agewellvt.org) or call the helpline at 800-642-5119.

Tracey Shamberger  
Hinesburg

*(Tracey Shamberger is the director of business development and communications at Age Well.)*

## Charlotte needs town government to take town planning seriously

To the Editor:

Zoning regulations are an important part of town planning. They are indispensable to Charlotte’s ongoing efforts to balance growth and development with the preservation of its natural beauty, agricultural heritage, and unique sense of community. Each zoning



Photo by Karen Pike

Volunteer Sarah Diaz from the Switchback Brewery volunteer team delivers a meal to a Chittenden County client.

district comes with specific bylaws in order to protect the character of the area and its natural resources. But what happens if residents aren’t happy when they are not allowed to do as they please?

A case in point is a controversial camp replacement application on Thompson’s Point this year.

The applicants proposed to replace their old camp with a new structure more than twice its original size and in a new footprint. The location was problematic, consisting of a steep hill covered with old growth trees. All land on Thompson’s Point is owned by the town and leased to the camp holders.

Without consideration of the ecological damage this construction would cause, the applicants had elaborate plans drawn up, managed to get approval to cut a large number of trees and obtained a state permit for shoreland protection. However, their application was denied by the development

review board due to non-compliance with several Charlotte land-use regulations.

Undeterred, they hired a lawyer and appealed to the Environmental Division of the Vermont Supreme Court. Although both the development review board and the Charlotte Conservation Commission had requested from the selectboard to be included in the deliberations and had been told that they would be, they were ignored entirely.

Instead, the applicants’ lawyer and the town attorney hashed out a deal that would give full approval for the reconstruction of the camp. Neither the development review board nor the conservation commission were ever notified before this so-called stipulated judgment order was presented to the selectboard, who in executive session decided to accept it as is. The entire process had been kept completely obscured from interested parties.

After repeated protests by the conservation commission and development review board, the selectboard opted to have another hearing on the issue for a possible reconsideration. A lengthy and contentious meeting ensued. A development review board member took issue with the way the selectboard had conducted the appeals process by not allowing development review board representation. Members of the conservation commission argued their well-researched concerns regarding development on the steep and fragile hillside known as limestone bluff cedar pine forest, which would likely become destabilized from the excessive tree removal and violate a number of land-use regulations, in full support of the development review board’s application denial.

In the end, the selectboard voted 3-2 to not reconsider its decision to accept the stipulated judgment order, which will now allow the applicants to go ahead with their camp reconstruction without any changes if the environmental court approves it.

Unfortunately, the selectboard’s decision to overrule indisputable land-use regulations sets a bad precedent. We don’t yet know what ramifications that decision will have for our

town in the future and that should concern us all. Charlotters need a town government that takes town planning seriously and values and supports the contributions of its volunteer boards.

Claudia Mucklow  
Charlotte

*(Claudia Mucklow is a member of the Charlotte Conservation Commission.)*

## Trapping threatens ecosystem health and biodiversity

To the Editor:

Trappers use a lot of excuses to justify their recreational hobby, but the reality is that trapping not only presents serious animal welfare concerns, it is also a threat to ecosystem health and biodiversity.

The science is clear: predator species like bobcats, fisher and coyote provide immeasurable benefits to ecosystem health, yet trappers are allowed to trap unlimited numbers of animals during the season. One year, just one trapper killed ten fisher, likely decimating the local population. Just last year, one trapper killed five bobcats and another trapper killed 44 coyotes (that we know of). Unlike other states, including New Hampshire, that don’t allow the killing of bobcats at all, Vermont has no bag limits on the number of animals a trapper may kill. This presents a threat to local populations, as well as ecosystem health. And it’s not just wild animals that are in danger. Last year alone, twelve domestic dogs were “reported” trapped. Unlike recent pro-trapping commentaries, this is not merely anecdotal information.

A seasoned furbearer biologist at the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department has admitted in department emails obtained through a public records request that trapping is not needed in Vermont to manage for populations or to reduce spread of disease ([tinyurl.com/3f89tp8j](https://tinyurl.com/3f89tp8j)). Trapping is a recreational hobby enjoyed by about 800 licensed trappers. Back in the day, trappers pilfered the pelts of our cherished bobcats, otters and other iconic species and sold them to Russia and China.

The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation — that Vermont Fish & Wildlife purportedly adheres to — clearly states that there should be no market in commerce in wildlife, yet their policies allow for it. It’s one of the many contradictions held by Fish and Wildlife.

Another excuse used by trappers is that trapping is needed to manage so-called “nuisance” animals, but we often forget why wildlife becomes a problem in the first place. Whether it’s unsecured garbage, pet food, chickens allowed to free range or other factors, it is important that humans take a look inward to see how we are contributing to the problem.

That said, current trapping legislation, bills H.191 and S.111, would still allow for the trapping of animals causing damage to property, as well as dangers to public health and safety. This commonsense piece of legislation would combat the senseless killing



# After detours Thompson’s Point project approved

Meryl Hartmann  
Community News Service

It was the same questions in the same case at the Charlotte Selectboard meeting on Monday, Sept. 11 — and, in the end, the same result for the land dispute between officials and Barb Russ and Dean Williams. Selectboard members agreed Aug. 28 to a deal with Russ and Williams to let the pair tear down a 1940 Thompson Point camp and replace it with a larger structure that violates land-use regulations. Russ and Williams lease the property from the town and, after being denied by the town development review board, went to state environmental court. The Aug. 28 deal would settle that case.

But the selectboard needed input from the development review board and conservation commission, so the item was back on the agenda. In the end the selectboard stuck with the settlement, after a heated meeting that nearly saw officials reverse themselves and sparked criticism from the two town agencies.

Here’s how the meeting played out.

The selectboard needed to determine if there was any reason to rescind its previous decision to approve the project proposal, which would see the camp replaced with a two-story building more than twice its size.

Development review board chair Charles Russell said there was one. He claimed there is a process issue, as the “previous decision was made with incomplete information” due to a lack of input from the Charlotte community.

That is why it was “paramount,” he said, for the selectboard to “gain and maintain the trust of residents through clear communication and openness” by rescinding its previous decision to allow for a clearer process to follow.

Maggie Citarella with the conservation commission agreed the town should reverse its decision to let groups like hers to more properly give their feedback on the case. “The selectboard’s decision on this really matters and has serious implications for the

town,” she said, mainly concerning “how development review and town planning are conducted in Charlotte moving forward.”

Ruth Uphold, a town resident who attended the meeting over Zoom, expressed concern about the lack of information released to the community about the decision and questioned what basis the selectboard relied on to make its decision during executive session. “We have a right to know the criteria for the reversal of the development review board,” Uphold said, on what she called a “precedent-setting decision.”

On the opposite end were claims that there was nothing new in the case and that the decision should be left as is.

Russ and William’s lawyer, Jeremiah Ouimette, said at the meeting that the development review board and the conservation commission “have already had their role in this matter.” The reason the state approved the project, Ouimette said, is that it is “a good project for the environment.”

That was at odds with what conservation commission member Claudia Mucklow said during last month’s meeting. The proposal violates land-use regulations and involves cutting down 16 trees in a rare forest ecosystem, she said.

To Ouimette’s comments, other parties in the case, such as neighbor Carol Conard, stepped up to the microphone to share their disagreements with the attorney. Conard restated her discontent with the project and how it affects the properties next door.

However, another attendee over video backed the leaseholders. “Thank goodness for the Russes and the Williamses for fighting this classic overreach by the development review board,” said a participant who identified himself only as Eli. He agreed that this is a precedent-setting case for Charlotte — but for a different reason. “If we keep saying no” to these projects and developments, he said, “we’re going to become known for that” as a town.

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

## LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

of otters, bobcats, beavers and other wildlife merely for recreation and allow trapping under certain conditions.

Massachusetts and Colorado have similar laws that have been a huge success for wildlife, the public and our pets. No more leghold and body-crushing kill traps set on public lands haphazardly injuring, maiming and killing both targeted and non-targeting species like dogs, red-tailed hawks, owls and endangered species. This legislation would target trapping to address only those animals that are causing problems for humans.

Vermont needs beavers, foxes and other animals labeled “furbearer” species for the ecosystem services they provide. We are in the throes of climate change and science informs us that beavers help reduce flooding, among many other benefits they offer to humans. Tick-borne illnesses are on the rise and according to the Cary Institute, red foxes are the main predator of mice that transmit Lyme to ticks.

The tradition of domination over wildlife, who are merely viewed as lifeless “resources” for the “harvesting,” is no longer viable or acceptable to many. No animal should have to chew through their mangled paw to free themselves from a leghold trap to satisfy someone’s recreational hobby. When we know better, we must do better.

Brenna Galdenzi  
Stowe  
*(Brenna Galdenzi is president of Protect Our Wildlife.)*

**Charlotte residents deserve truthfulness from elected officials**

To the Editor:

A disturbing thing happened at the selectboard meeting last Monday. There was public discussion about the recent decision by the board to approve the application from a couple on Thompson’s Point to tear down the existing camp, move the footprint and build a structure twice the size of the original plus

cut down 16 trees some 100 years old.

When the property owners appealed the development review board’s original denial to the environmental court, they also asked their lawyer to seek a settlement with the town. The selectboard authorized the town’s attorney to negotiate an agreement with the home owner’s lawyer. Previously in May, the selectboard promised a member of the development review board and the Charlotte Conservation Commission that they could be present and could participate.

What happened was that the two lawyers met in private, and the town lawyer agreed the project could be approved as presented and granted them their application despite the fact that the conservation committee recommended against it and our development review board voted to deny the same project application.

The town’s lawyer refused to explain his rationale for the proposed settlement beyond a reference to the high cost to litigate. When the selectboard met to act on this recommendation they went into executive session to hide their deliberations from the public. So, we still don’t know why they made this precedent-creating decision overturning the work of the development review board and the conservation commission.

At Monday’s meeting the selectboard had the opportunity to reopen their decision to accept the settlement, thereby keeping their promise to the public and provide the development review board a chance to have input into the process. Instead, they voted to break their promise. The town’s lawyer, rather than advise the board to keep their promise, advised them to do the opposite. This represents a lack of integrity by the majority of the selectboard (Kelly Devine and Lewis Mudge excluded) and the town attorney, David Rughe.

The citizens of Charlotte deserve better. We deserve truthfulness from our elected officials and their counsel.

Ruth E. Uphold  
Charlotte

## School work



Photo by Janet Yantachka

Jenny Cole works on the siding of the Quinlan Schoolhouse next to the library. She has done a lot of restoration work on the building this past summer.

# Clemmons Family Farm releases videos for African-American curriculum

Contributed

The Clemmons Family Farm is releasing Joy in Motion!, a free tutorial video series for teachers.

The videos feature Vermont grade school teachers and Clemmons Family Farm teaching artists explaining how they use Joy in Motion! in the classroom.

Joy in Motion! is part of the nonprofit farm’s Windows to a Multicultural World, an arts-integrated African-American history and culture curriculum for kindergarten-twelfth grades.

The program includes online downloadable handouts for teachers and students, live and pre-recorded teaching artist engagements and field trips to the historic Clemmons farm in Charlotte.

A series of 10-20 minute tutorial videos

gives teachers lesson plans with tips on how to incorporate the curriculum in their classrooms.

“Clemmons Family Farm has produced a tremendous resource for teachers,” said Clemmons Family Farm board member Steven Berbeco.

“Windows to a Multicultural World fits into the important work that our grade schools are doing every day, prompting students to learn important and meaningful lessons about multiculturalism.”

Vermont grade school teachers Nari Penson, Sarah Kitchen and Carly Bennett

star in the videos and speak about their experiences working with the curriculum.

The videos also feature Clemmons Family Farm teaching artists Kya Jackson (visual artist), KeruBo Webster (singer-songwriter), Izzy Grae (theater and movement artist) and Alex Aya Sapphire (spoken word and hip hop artist).

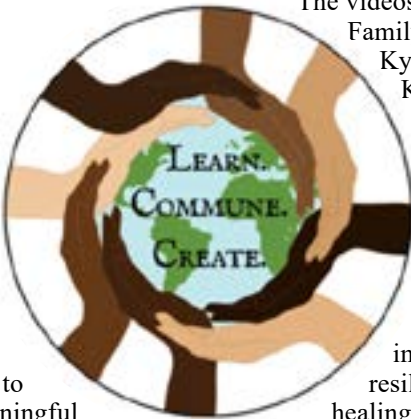
This curriculum teaches students important skills for resilience, resistance and healing, especially the ability to find and experience joy in the ups and downs of life, said arts learning director Kia’Rae Hanron.

The development of the Joy in Motion! tutorial video series is a collaboration between Clemmons Family Farm and Vermont Public made possible in part through grants from the Bay and Paul Foundation and the Jane B. Cook Trust.

“Vermont Public is so pleased to support the making of these videos,” said Scott Finn, president and CEO of Vermont Public.

“Clemmons Family Farm has accomplished an outstanding quality of video production and educational content that will help educators in Vermont and beyond introduce their students to a wider world.”

The tutorial videos are available for viewing on the Clemmons Family Farm website at [tinyurl.com/yc38b4r3](https://tinyurl.com/yc38b4r3).



## Community Roundup

### Rokeby Museum seeking new members for board of trustees

Rokeby Museum has openings for new members of its board of trustees starting in January 2024.

Trustees serve a three-year term for the 90-acre National Historic Landmark and Underground Railroad site in Ferrisburgh.

The Rokeby Museum is committed to social justice, diversity, inclusion and historic preservation and interpretation of the Robinson family’s homestead in a historical context. Submit letters of interest by Oct. 9 to executive director Lindsay Houpt-Varner at [director@rokeby.org](mailto:director@rokeby.org). For more information about the museum visit [rokeby.org](https://rokeby.org).

### Final \$1.9 million in COVID relief distributed to creative sector

The Vermont Arts Council announced \$1,931,000 in awards to 85 creative sector organizations and businesses in its final round of funding through the Creative Futures Grant program, marking the end of

this unprecedented investment in Vermont’s creative sector. The program has distributed more than \$8.8 million to 233 organizations and businesses across the state since December 2022.

Three of those 85 recipients were from Charlotte — Clemmons Family Farm and Vermontfare, Inc, each received \$45,000 and Woody Keppel SP received \$5,000.

Supported by funds from Vermont’s share of the American Rescue Plan Act, the program aims to provide relief to one of the state’s economic sectors hit hardest by COVID. Funding of up to \$200,000 was available to Vermont-based creative economy nonprofits and for-profit entities, including sole proprietors, demonstrating economic harm caused by or exacerbated by the pandemic.

Distributions were made in three rounds, which began in January 2023. Applications that were not funded in one round could be reconsidered in subsequent rounds.

Applications were evaluated by external

review panels for severity of pandemic harm, community and cultural impact, and economic impact.

Of the 85 recipients, 38 were nonprofits and 47 were for-profits. Recipients were from across Vermont and represented all seven segments of the creative economy: performing arts; visual arts and crafts; culture and heritage; design; film and media; literary arts and publishing; and specialty foods. The highest category was performing arts with 37 recipients.

“This historic investment enables business and nonprofits in Vermont’s important creative sector to find their footing once again and plan for the future,” said Vermont Arts Council executive director Susan Evans McClure.

**It’s fall which means it’s SCHIP application season**

The autumn deadline for SCHIP (Shelburne Charlotte Hinesburg Interfaith Projects) grant applications is Sunday,

Oct. 15. Many non-profits have used their awarded funds to improve the lives of our neighbors and strengthen our communities.

Grants range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars. In addition to our standard grant process for grants up to \$3,000, the organization is adding a major grant category for up to \$15,000 to fund the necessary seed money to be used for future self-sustaining projects.

Applicant requirements:

- Be a 501c(3) or submit the application through such an organization.
- Projects must serve residents of Shelburne, Charlotte or Hinesburg.
- Funds may not be applied to annual operating budgets or permanent staffing.
- Major grants also require a detailed business plan.

For specific requirements and to obtain an application, go to [schipstreasure.org/apply-for-a-grant](https://schipstreasure.org/apply-for-a-grant).

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\*Subject to availability and eligibility



# Around Town

## Condolences

**Karen Kohler**, 68, of Shelburne died peacefully at the University of Vermont Medical Center on Sept. 15, 2023, after a year-long battle with cancer.

The funeral mass will be held at St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church, 72 Church St., Shelburne on Thursday, Sept. 21, from noon-1 p.m. After the interment ceremonies at the Shelburne Cemetery, the family ask that you join them for a small, informal reception in the church hall.

Karen was born on March 9,1955, in Boston to the late Raymond and Lillian Haskell.

She graduated from Vestal High School in Vestal, N.Y. in 1973. She earned a degree as a medical office assistant from Broome Community College in Binghamton, N.Y. After several years working in that field, she went back to Broome Community College to earn her degree as a registered nurse in 1979. She worked in that profession across various disciplines for over 43 years in New York and Vermont until officially retiring from University of Vermont Medical Center rehab unit in November 2021.

Anyone who met Karen over the years was attracted to her contagious smile, fun nature and her enthusiastic party-planner spirit for family and friends. She loved working in her home gardens, enjoyed cooking and baking, was always willing to help and support her family and friends, and loved playing with and going on fun adventures with her grandchildren.

She was dedicated to helping countless patients through their healing process and was devoted to her medical colleagues. As a result, she made many life-long friends along the way.

In 1979, she married John Kohler at St. Vincent De Paul Blessed Sacrament Church in Vestal, N.Y. They were married for 44 years where they lived in Endwell, N.Y., until moving to Shelburne in 1993. She is survived by her husband John of Shelburne; daughter Melissa Kohler of Waterbury; son Ben Kohler of Auburndale, Mass. (daughter-in-law Helen, grandson Alex and granddaughter Ellie); and son Jonathan of Essex Junction (daughter-in-law Kassie, grandson Grant and granddaughter Avery), and her blocky headed English yellow Lab Jake.

She is also survived by: sister Deb Seaman (and husband Mike Seaman of New Tazewell, Tenn.); sister Cindy Simone (and husband Dennis of Monroe, N.Y.); sister Lisa Distin (and husband Mike of Binghamton, N.Y.);



Karen Kohler

sister-in-heart and lifetime friend Joyce Oziemina (and husband Tom of Apalachin, N.Y.); cousins Josephine DeSalvatore and Lori Ingliss (in the Boston area); niece Jessica White (and husband Lt. Col. Mac White of Hampstead, N.C.); her late nephew David Seaman (Kentucky); and her aunt Linda Pantridge (Gulfport, Fla.).

A message from her sisters: Dear Sister, we thank you so much for the many years of friendship, celebration, and adventures that you shared with us — the personal gifts you left on our beds, the wonderful meals, the hikes, the shopping and your homemade jams and breads. You showed us your love in so many ways. You always had such a calming influence on the situations and people you encountered in life. Knowing you was its own blessing. God and his angels have now received you into heaven with the knowledge that you lived a life of love, compassion and forgiveness. We will all miss you dearly.

Karen was a longtime supporter of the Vermont Marine Corps League’s Toys for Kids program that collected and distributed new toys to needy children during the Christmas season.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a tax-deductible donation in her name to: Toys for Kids of Vermont, P.O. Box 4092, Burlington, Vt. 05406 or go directly to the Toys for Kids website at toysforkidsvt.com, hit the donate tab and donate via PayPal.

Arrangements are in care of the Ready Funeral and Cremation services. To send online condolences please visit readyfuneral.com.

# Many things unbroken after Repair Café



Courtesy photo

Catherine Bock brought her sewing skills to a previous Repair Café.

Ruah Swennerfelt  
Contributor

According to Bob Dylan in his song of the same name “Everything Is Broken.”

One thing that is not broken in Charlotte is seasonal Repair Cafes. In good shape and fully functional, the autumn Repair Café returns 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 30, at the Charlotte Congregational Church Vestry.

The Repair Café is open to anyone in any town. Register at [tinyurl.com/5k7kfxjv](https://tinyurl.com/5k7kfxjv) so that Sustainable Charlotte can plan for your needs.

The Repair Cafe’ is a four-hour community party of folks with the skills to repair broken stuff. Just bring your broken things to the Repair Cafe’ and watch and learn as they do their magic.

The goals of the Repair Café include:

- Promoting and teaching the lost art of repair to all ages

- Keeping perfectly good stuff out of the landfill

- Building our town’s sense of community by working together to meet each other’s needs.

Among things that have been fixed in the past are:

- Lamps, replacing switches and cords,

tightening wobbly bases

- Repairing jewelry (no soldering), replace watch batteries, fix watch bands,

- Replacing eyeglass screws

- Repairing camping and fishing gear

- Repairing furniture, cuckoo clocks, dolls, favorite toys (wooden, metal or plastic)

- Troubleshooting or repairing small appliances, electronics, radios, fans, heaters, humidifiers and dehumidifiers

- Sharpening garden tools, replace wooden handles, repair electric trimmers, knives, scissors and axes

- Mending clothing by hand or sewing machine; repair holey knits, replacing zippers, adjusting sewing machines

- Fixing old tube stereos

- Tuning and repairing minor bike problems and truing bike wheels.

- In the past the Repair Café has even featured a 3D printer for making replacement parts out of plastic, a squad of electronic repair folks to tackle more sophisticated electrical and computer issues, and fixers that can make re-usable shopping bags, denim skirts or shorts out of your old jeans, skirts or other clothes.

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# Report from the Legislature

## Open meeting laws: Fun for everyone

Chea Waters Evans  
State Representative

I have a habit of loudly and dramatically announcing that certain aspects of government function are “the cornerstone of democracy.” (I put the fun in government function!)

The fact is, the reason our government works, when it works, is that there are statutory measures in place that keep the balance, not only between branches of government, but also between the government and the people it serves. One of my favorite elements — one might say it’s the cornerstone of democracy — are Vermont’s open meeting laws.

Open meeting laws exist to maintain government transparency and make as much information possible accessible to as many people as possible. When you read newspaper or Front Porch Forum warnings about upcoming meetings, you’re benefiting from these laws. The town is required to conduct meetings out in the open, post minutes from meetings, and allow the public to attend; in Montpelier, we livestream all meetings and post them on YouTube in perpetuity. There are also written records of these meetings.

If you want to read all about it, this link [tinyurl.com/t2b93pps](https://tinyurl.com/t2b93pps) to the Vermont Secretary of State’s website explains these laws in detail.

Public access to decision making means

that government officials can be held accountable for their words and actions as they go about their daily business. Tune into CSPAN or a Vermont House session and you might fall asleep, or you might learn about your elected officials and how they operate on your behalf. In my case, you will also see me fidgeting in my chair. It’s been a lifelong struggle to sit still.

If you can observe and participate in meetings, your voice is heard, and your opinions have to be considered. Just as your vote speaks for you (Is voting the cornerstone of democracy? Yes!) your presence in and observation of public meetings and government functions is speaking quietly, saying, “This matters to me, and therefore, people who are working on my behalf, this should matter to you, too.”

Sometimes there are exceptions. When the selectboard goes into executive session, which means the proceedings are exempt from public view and participation, and there are no public minutes available, it’s because there’s information being shared that’s not appropriate for everyone to know. This could be a personnel issue or a legal matter for the town or state that’s protected by statute.

There’s a special committee that convened this summer to investigate and hear testimony regarding some sheriffs who possibly behaved inappropriately while on the job. At first, when I heard that much of the testimony would be taken in executive session, I was troubled because I thought

the proceedings should be as open and fair as possible. But given the personal nature of some of the accusations and the fact that victims of alleged misconduct would be testifying, I realized that sometimes, protecting the people who are involved should take precedence over our right to know things.

I recently signed a letter ([tinyurl.com/tarcnj9](https://tinyurl.com/tarcnj9)) along with 15 other legislators asking the Vermont State Board of Education to make their meetings compliant with the state’s open meeting laws. The board of education also heard from the state’s Office of Racial Equity, the Vermont Education Equity Alliance and the Vermont Superintendents Association expressing the same concerns as our letter. Though their meetings were available to the public, it was only by phone, and any visual materials being shared during the meeting were inaccessible to participants who were listening in. No system is perfect, and there’s always room for improvement, but as a result of these letters, the board of education is discussing meeting accessibility at their next meeting, which will be available for all to join via Teams (which is like Zoom).

It’s encouraging to me that organizations are responsive when these matters are brought to their attention; you can take the woman out of journalism but you can’t take the journalist out of the woman. I’ve always thought, the more transparency the better, and the more people want to keep things



behind closed doors, the more we should be asking why.

Last session, we extended COVID-prompted open meeting law changes like Zoom access and remote participation just for another year. As the coming legislative session approaches, I hope to revisit these laws once again, see if we can make some of them permanent and see how we can help towns and cities comply with these laws without causing more problems or creating unrealistic expectations from municipalities.

I’m sure you’re all going to go do a deep dive into open meeting law now and read all about it; if you want to discuss, I’m always available at [cevans@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:cevans@leg.state.vt.us) or 917-887-8231. I appreciate all the emails and phone calls and texts, and welcome your input and opinions.

### Surf’s up



Charlotte was beyond the hurricane’s edge on Saturday, but the meteorological disturbances did produce wind and waves at Charlotte Town Beach.  
Photo by Lee Krohn

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## Gardening

# Save pumpkins from fungal disease powdery mildew

Ann Hazelrigg  
University of Vermont Extension

Gardeners may notice a white coating on the leaves of their cucurbit plants, phlox, roses and lilacs. This is a common fungal disease called powdery mildew that appears this time of year on several different hosts.

The whitish gray “powder” seen on both sides of leaves, stems and flowers are the spores of the fungal pathogen. These spores are lightweight and are carried on air currents to other susceptible crops throughout the growing season.

Although powdery mildew looks like it is spreading from crop to crop, the pathogen is very host-specific, so the powdery mildew pathogens attacking vine crops (*Podosphaera xanthii* and *Erysiphe cichoracearum*) are different genera and/or species than the rose powdery mildew pathogen (*Podosphaera pannosa* var. *rosae*).

The reason that it looks like the disease is spreading from crop to crop is because the powdery mildew group of pathogens all like the same conditions: warm weather with high humidity. Unlike many other fungal pathogens, powdery mildew pathogens do not require free moisture to grow.

The good news is that the disease is rarely fatal to the plant, although it can reduce

vigor. In dense plantings of vine crops, powdery mildew can spread rapidly and can result in loss of leaves and reduced yields.

Although the pathogen does not attack the fruit, commercial pumpkin growers often use fungicides to control the disease because it can weaken the handles on carving pumpkins, necessary for every good Halloween pumpkin. If weather conditions change to cooler temperatures with low humidity, the pathogen will not spread rapidly.

There are several good practices you can follow to help avoid the disease in the future. Start by choosing powdery mildew-resistant cultivars. Several cultivars of pumpkins, phlox, roses and lilacs are available that are resistant to powdery mildew.

Be sure to plant in sunny areas and use good plant spacing in the garden and landscape to provide lots of air circulation among plants. Woody ornamentals, such as lilacs, also can be pruned to allow for good air flow through the plant. A final resort is the use of a fungicide to manage the disease.

Fortunately, good organic options for gardeners exist, including the use of horticultural oils such as neem oil and potassium bicarbonate-based fungicides. These fungicides would need to be applied at the first appearance of the disease and



Photo by Kenny Seebold

Pumpkins are highly susceptible to powdery mildew, so to help prevent this fungal disease, gardeners should plant them in full sun with adequate space to allow for good air circulation, or, alternatively, choose powdery mildew-resistant varieties for planting.

would need to be reapplied according to label directions. The products will not “cure” the

disease that is already on the plant but will protect new growing tissues from the disease.

# Add elegance to shade garden with Solomon’s seal

Nadie VanZandt  
University of Vermont Extension

If you want to add a touch of architectural interest to your shade garden, look no further than the graceful silhouette of Solomon’s seal.

Solomon’s seal is a hardy herbaceous perennial for shade that spreads through rhizomes to form clumps of tall arching stems covered with attractive green foliage. Its name refers to the circular scars left by its stems on the rhizomes after die-back. According to folklore, the biblical King Solomon placed his seal upon this plant when he recognized its great medicinal value.

In spring, it bears discrete tubular white flowers that dangle elegantly below the leaves, accentuating the curve of its tall stems. From spring to summer, Solomon’s seal imparts an attractive backdrop to the shade garden with its foliage fading to a gentle yellow in autumn.

Solomon’s seal is the common name for approximately 60 identified species of the genus *Polygonatum*, a member of the lily family (*Liliaceae*), including *Polygonatum biflorum*, a species native to eastern and central North America. In Latin, *Polygonatum* means “many knees,” referring to the plant’s fleshy, jointed rhizomes.

A New England native, *Polygonatum biflorum*, grows 3-5 feet in height and spreads 1-2 feet wide. It’s also known as

smooth Solomon’s seal, King Solomon’s seal and great Solomon’s seal.

The woodland is its natural habitat. For this reason, it thrives in shade or part-shade, favoring dappled morning light over afternoon sun. Although it prefers a moist well-drained soil rich in organic matter, it is not fussy. It also does well in challenging, dry-shade spots near tree roots.

In addition, its sturdy stems do not require staking. Fallen leaves provide an ideal mulch and compost material for the plant.

This rhizomatous perennial is a low-maintenance, slow-growing plant that can live for decades without requiring much care. Planted in the right location, Solomon’s seal will form colonies to grace your landscape with its distinctive profile.

This perennial prefers to grow in consistent, but not overly wet, moisture. Yet, once established, it tolerates drought. It also is disease-resistant and unappealing to deer, both attractive characteristics.

After flowering in summer, the plant develops small bluish-black berries. These berries are very much appreciated by birds though slightly toxic to humans. Young shoots and rhizomes are edible when cooked and served like asparagus and potato, respectively. Historically, the Native Americans and colonists ate its starchy roots.

Solomon’s seal is easily propagated by division when the plant is dormant in spring or fall. Starting with a well-established clump, use a clean, sharp knife to cut a

rhizome into several sections, making sure that each section has a bud.

Place the sections horizontally in the soil, buds up, 18 inches apart and 1 inch deep. Water generously, taking care to keep the area cool while the new plants grow.

This graceful plant is a great choice for a woodland garden and pairs well with many other perennials throughout the growing season. Companion plants include hosta, hellebore, narcissus, tiarella, epimedium,

brunnera, aquilegia and ferns, among others. They are also stunning at the base of trees and shrubs.

With such attractive features, Solomon’s seal is a must-have for your shade or woodland garden. What’s more, you can jazz up your cut-flower bouquets with its beautiful arching stems.

*(Nadie VanZandt is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from Panton.)*



Photo by ZenAga/Pixabay

In spring, Solomon’s seal has tubular white flowers that dangle from the undersides of its attractive green foliage, adding a touch of elegance to the plant.



Gardening

Planting and care of trees

Deborah J. Benoit  
University of Vermont Extension

Trees provide us with many gifts: shade, wind breaks, erosion control, beautiful foliage, an invitation to birds and other wildlife and, in the case of fruit or nut trees, something tasty to harvest.

Like other perennial plants, when selecting a tree, first consider the location. The amount of sunlight the tree will receive, soil type, soil pH, water availability and retention are all important factors that will affect your tree’s healthy growth.

Don’t forget to consider the mature size of the tree, including its anticipated height as well as how wide its branches and roots will spread. Awareness of these factors can minimize the need for drastic pruning or the eventual removal of the tree because it’s grown too close to a structure or overhead wires.

For help in choosing the right tree, see the Vermont Community and Urban Forestry Program’s tree selection tool at [go.uvm.edu/tree-selection](http://go.uvm.edu/tree-selection).

The best time to plant a tree is while it’s dormant and the ground is workable in early spring or late fall. If you order trees to be shipped to you, they’re usually sent at an appropriate time for planting. Bare-root trees will include instructions for rehydrating the roots before planting.

You can purchase your tree at a local nursery (usually with roots and soil in a container of some type) or by mail order

(often shipped dormant and bare-root). Either way, plan to plant as soon as possible after its arrival.

If you purchase locally, the tree will likely be in a large pot or with its roots bundled in burlap. While timing for planting trees growing in a container is more flexible, avoid excessively hot and dry conditions or other extremes that will further stress the young tree.

When you’re ready to plant, dig a hole about three times wider than the root ball. Dig as deep as the height of the root ball, plus deep enough to allow the top of the root flare to be above the soil once planted. The root flare is where the trunk widens out at the base of the tree.

Remove the container or any burlap, wire or other material used to contain the roots. If roots have grown to encircle the container, gently free them or trim so future growth will be outward from the tree. Carefully move the tree into the hole, spreading the roots. Be sure it’s positioned to stand straight up.

Refill the hole with the original soil, breaking up any clumps. Tamp in place. Water to help the soil settle and collapse any air pockets. Add more soil as needed. Finally, water well. Any branches that have been damaged can be pruned.

Installing an expandable trunk wrap at the time of planting, or any time before the onset of winter, can help deter nibbles by hungry wildlife that can injure or girdle the young tree. If in a windy area or if you’ve planted a bare-root tree with a



Photo by Alfo Medeiros/Pexels

After planting, cover the soil around the tree with a layer of mulch a few inches thick to help retain moisture and prevent growth of weeds. Pull the mulch a few inches away from the trunk to avoid creating a “mulch volcano,” which can lead to disease, rot and other problems.

small root system, staking the tree may be necessary for the first year.

Finally, cover the soil with a layer of mulch a few inches thick to help retain moisture and prevent growth of weeds. Be sure to keep mulch a couple of inches away from the trunk. Above all, don’t pile mulch around the tree into a “mulch volcano,” which can lead to disease, rot and other problems.

Keep your tree evenly watered. Avoid

allowing the soil to dry out, especially during excessive summer heat. In general, plan on watering deeply at least once a week during the growing season.

For more detailed information on planting and caring for trees, see [vtcommunityforestry.org/tree-care](http://vtcommunityforestry.org/tree-care).

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

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# Summer’s end



Photos by Lee Krohn





# Education

## The school year is off to an enthusiastic start

Naomi Strada  
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

The 2023-24 school year is only 12 days old, but many exciting activities are already happening at Charlotte Central School.

The Charlotte Central School library opened to staff and students for the first time after the summer construction. Books were out on shelves for eager readers to browse and check-out.

The sixth grade took a science walk on Pease Mountain with the support of some family volunteers. This hike was an opportunity for students to have hands-on learning about trees.

Kindergarten students were practicing “three-step directions” as they created shape art by coloring, cutting and pasting. These shapes quickly became the outlines for rockets, pumpkins, unicorns and birds. It was inspiring hearing these young learners identifying shapes they see in their world.

Eighth grade students presented their “Dream Schools” to classmates.

### International Dot Day

International Dot Day is a global celebration of creativity, courage and collaboration based on the book “The Dot” by Peter H. Reynolds. It’s the story of a caring teacher who dares a doubting student to trust in her own abilities by being brave enough to “make her mark.” What begins with a small dot on a piece of paper becomes a breakthrough in confidence and courage, igniting a journey of self-discovery and sharing, which has gone on to inspire children and adults around the globe.

Dot Day started as a kindergarten-fourth grade theme, but spread to all of Charlotte Central School with students collecting

dots of many colors from teachers around the building in acknowledgement of their creativity and confidence.

### Student teachers

Charlotte Central School welcomed 13 University of Vermont student teachers who will be working in first through sixth grade classrooms. These future educators are completing a practicum course designed to provide them with opportunities to observe mentor teachers and to apply the knowledge, skill and strategies they are learning in their courses. They will be at Charlotte Central School on Tuesdays and Thursdays noon-3 p.m.

### LEGO League

Charlotte Central School is looking for fourth-eighth graders to participate in the school’s FIRST LEGO League Challenge. FIRST LEGO League introduces science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to children through fun, hands-on learning. FIRST LEGO League participants gain real-world problem-solving experiences through a guided, global robotics program.

### Access CVU

The fall and winter catalog of classes is open for registration. This semester offers 191 diverse classes featuring 79 instructors. Access accepts professional development funds and Champlain Valley School District wellness reimbursements that meet guidelines.

### Diversity, equity and inclusion town halls

There will be a new format for the CVSD diversity, equity and inclusion town halls this school year. The first town hall meeting will

be virtual on Wednesday, Sept. 20, 6:30 p.m. with information about the diversity, equity and inclusion work that is underway in the district. Zoom information for this meeting is at [tinyurl.com/pb5nndeb](https://tinyurl.com/pb5nndeb).

Future diversity, equity and inclusion town

halls will take place in November, January, March and May in-person. In October, December, February and April the Champlain Valley School District virtual town halls will focus on the strategic plan, growth and belonging.

## School horse rocks



Photos by Adam Bunting

The beginning of the school year was celebrated with the fantastic and fantastical Playing Fields at Champlain Valley Union High on Sept. 7 with performances sponsored by the Flynn Theater. The afternoon of the event it looked like the weather would intrude once again, as it has so many times in the past half year. The rain was coming down and the wind was blowing down limbs, but shortly before start time things cleared up and went off as planned. As she walked through the crowd, Bonnie Birdsall, the school district’s director of digital learning and communication, said she kept hearing people say it was magical, “which is great because that’s not a word you hear very often.”

## Scenic run



Photos by Lee Krohn

The Charlotte Covered Bridge 5K/10K and Half Marathon took place on Saturday morning, Sept. 9. Participants ran from the Shelburne Beach and back by way of Charlotte Town Beach. Organizers say it is one of the racers’ favorites with great views of the Vermont countryside and no huge hills.



Sports

10S NE 1? Or pickleball?



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

From left, Shawn Timson and Nick Bugnacki of Advantage Tennis from St Johnsburry lay down fiberglass mesh to seal cracks in the tennis and pickleball courts at the town beach on Thursday, Sept. 14.



Photo by Shawn Timson

By Saturday, Timson was able to take this drone photo showing the patched and painted courts and the beautiful location of the town beach and courts.

Champlain Valley gets back on winning track



Photo by Al Frey

Anderson McEnaney evades Seawolves tacklers. The junior scored on both offense and defense in Champlain Valley's 49-0 victory.

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

After a season opening loss, the Champlain Valley Redhawks jumped back onto a two-game win streak with victories over Bellows Free Academy and South Burlington-Burlington-Winooski.

The difference may be due to preparation on the part of his players, said coach Rahn Fleming.

He said the coaches watched film with the players and asked the players to also watch film on their own. As a result the Redhawks were aware of the opponents' tendencies and able to respond quickly.

"So, when they saw what they saw on the ball field, it was like déjà vu. They recognized it quickly and accurately," Fleming said.

On defense that meant his players were able to make tackles as soon as the ball was in a receiver's hands. Against the South Burlington-Burlington-Winooski Seahawks this meant in many cases they were able to make interceptions or at least knock the ball away.

Champlain Valley 29, BFA-St. Albans 7

On Saturday, Sept. 9, the Redhawks traveled to St. Albans for a game against the Bobwhites that was expected to be a smash-mouth contest and didn't disappoint in that regard.

CVU's defense was able to shutdown St. Albans for all of the second half and most of the first. The Bobwhites' lone score came with 10 seconds left before halftime.

The scoring began with a 1-yard run by senior Jacob Bose shortly after the opening kickoff.

In the second quarter, junior Nolan Walpole put the Redhawks up 14-0 on a 12-yard run.

Late in the second quarter, the Bobwhites were threatening to score. On the sideline Fleming told junior Chase Leonard: "Make this play your moment. We know they're throwing. We know where they're throwing."

Leonard made it his moment, snagging the ball at the 10-yard line and just managing to get a foot down before going out of bounds.

On the next play, CVU capitalized on the turnover when junior Dylan Frere caught a pass from senior Ollie Cheer, avoided two would-be tacklers and raced 90 yards to put CVU up 20-0 with just over three minutes left before halftime.

The lone blemish on the Redhawks' stifling defensive performance came just 10 seconds before intermission when Bobwhite quarterback Seneca Durocher ran it in from a yard out. Durocher finished 11 for 24 in passing attempts for 164 yards and had nine carries for 73 yards.

CVU knew that Durocher was the Bobwhites' workhorse, and if they couldn't contain him, things wouldn't go well for the Redhawks, said Fleming. But his team was able to contain Durocher.

"That comes back to solid play in the middle by Josh Quad, Connor Simons and Sean Kennedy and phenomenal outside linebacker support by Dylan Terricciano, Daniel Tuiqere and ninth grader Orion Yates," Fleming said.

Cheer ended up connecting on six of 13 passing attempts with one touchdown. Walpole had 10 carries for 51 yards and two touchdowns.

CVU 49, Burlington/South Burlington 0

Less than eight minutes into CVU's first home game of the season and the Redhawks had used explosive offense and stifling defense to go up 14-0 against the Seawolves.

On its opening possession, the Seawolves fumbled on the 16-yard line and three plays later Cheer scored on a 2-yard run.

The Seawolves turned the ball over on downs on its second possession and again the Redhawks took three plays for Cheer to toss a 34-yard touchdown pass to Calvin Steele.

And the rout was on, as the Redhawks went on to five more touchdowns to the Seawolves' none.

However, the coach was quick to tamp down overconfidence. "We have plenty to work on. Let's be clear about that," Fleming said. He doesn't think the score means that CVU is seven unanswered touchdowns better than the Seawolves.

"Laurels are flimsy things. If you try to rest on them, you're going to fall over and probably embarrass yourself," he said, adding that he had sent home an email to players and their parents pointing out that "this week is the most important game we play this season. That is going to be our theme every single week throughout the season."

It's been such a constant refrain of his that now his players are repeating it back to him.

Anderson McEnaney had the unique achievement of getting touchdowns on both offense and defense, scoring on a 10-yard run and returning an interception for a touchdown for the final score.

Fleming praised Cheer's ability to spread his passing around. Against the Seawolves he was almost flawless through the air, connecting on nine of 10 passes for 198 yards. All of Cheer's touchdown passes went to different players.

"When you're able to give that much opportunity to that many different guys, the game becomes fun again," Fleming said.

CVU hosts St. Johnsburry this Saturday, Sept. 23, at 1 p.m.





Outdodors

Signs abound nature is transforming into autumn

Elizabeth Bassett  
Contributor

Snapping turtles are emerging from eggs laid in June. With a temporary egg tooth, hatchlings cut an exit from their leathery homes of several months.

In all the years our neighborhood snapper has laid eggs in our gravel driveway or by the side of the road, we have yet to see a juvenile emerge. Instead, we usually find spent egg casings in late summer, the aftermath of a raccoon or another critter’s meal. But we always look and always hope.

Beavers are indeed busy as they try to gain weight in preparation for winter confinement in lodges with a finite amount of stored food. Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge is home to an active population of beavers. Keep your eyes open for pencil-like stumps of trees and shrubs and trails created by dragging food back to winter lodges. A number of new dams are easy to spot from the walking trails.

High temperatures in early September plus huge amounts of phosphorous washed into Lake Champlain by heavy rains this summer have created ideal conditions for cyanobacteria to flourish. In recent reports from dozens of Lake Champlain Committee’s volunteer monitors, nearly 50% of locations on the lake indicated the presence of these potentially toxic microorganisms. Not all cyanobacteria blooms are toxic but those that are can be harmful if swallowed, a risk to young children and pets. According to Lake Champlain Committee’s website, cyanobacteria blooms “threaten water quality, public health, recreation, the economy and quality of life. Monitoring is not the end result of the Lake Champlain Committee’s work, it’s foundational for our nutrient reduction advocacy.”

Migrating loons are rafting, gathering to feed together, rather than to compete with

each other, prior to migration. The juveniles remain after their parents’ departure, gathering strength and plumage before flying to salt water just before fresh water lakes and ponds freeze. I’ve recently paddled near several families of loons, watching the brownish juveniles mimic their parents in diving for dinner.

I write often and with hope about Shelburne Farms and its energy goals. In addition to being a beautiful place to walk and possibly dine or stay, the educational nonprofit has a goal of carbon net zero by 2028. This complex project has many prongs and challenges, not least the measurement of animal emissions and carbon sequestration. The farm’s path includes both long and short-term strategies. If the topic is of interest, I recommend this link: [tinyurl.com/2pnryeas](https://tinyurl.com/2pnryeas).

Looking for more hope as it relates to climate change? Molly Wood hosts the podcast, Everybody in the Pool. A longtime tech and business journalist for The New York Times and National Public Radio’s Marketplace, among other media, Wood explains her goal, “Enough with problem porn. We all know the climate crisis is a big deal. This podcast is entirely about solutions and the people who are building them. Entrepreneurs are inventing miracles; the business world is shifting; individuals are overhauling their lives; and an entirely new economy is being born.”

Episodes in the 20-30 minute range include alternatives to plastics, climate-solutions investing for individuals, divesting of 401K plans from fossil fuel companies, alternatives to airplane fuels and the right to repair so that we can keep and continue to use our stuff.

Wood delves deeply into climate change solutions as a reporter, an investor and an explorer of solutions. She is smart, fun, well informed and a source of hope. What is better than that?

‘Veg’ table



Photo by Tai Dinnan

Charlotte neighbors gathered at the Grange Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 12, to swap veggies and learn about fermenting and preserving their harvest. Jason Elbersen from Sobremesa led the fermentation demonstration. All extra produce was distributed by the Charlotte Food Shelf.

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# Hi! Neighbor

## Teaching the timeless art of etiquette

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

Sometimes it’s hard to live up to the reputation of a famous family member, but Peter Post has been able.

Post is the great-grandson of Emily Post and, following in the footsteps of his mother, he became the fourth generation of Posts to work at the Emily Post Institute. He has recently retired and turned the reins over to the next generation: daughter Lizzie and nephew Daniel Post Senning.

Post’s career had a number of twists and turns before he joined the institute. He has a degree in art history from the University of Pennsylvania and a master’s in fine arts from Pratt University. Post was a teacher and tutor at Pine Ridge School in Williston, an art teacher at Mt. Abraham Union High School, the director of communication and publications at Champlain College and the owner of an advertising agency called Postscript.

Post was still at his ad agency when he began working part-time at the Emily Post Institute. His sister-in-law Peggy had taken over the reins and Peter and his sister Cindy agreed to help her out. When the two women stepped away, Peter began working full-time and eventually became managing director.

One of Post’s goals was to add a business etiquette focus to the institute. He wrote “The Etiquette Advantage in Business” and began teaching business etiquette seminars.

“I did that for 13 years,” he said, “and I was probably gone every other week. It was quite an experience. I got to know the airport pretty well.”

Post’s next book, “Essential Manners for Men,” came out in October 1983. Two months later, it became a national bestseller in the self-help category.

He followed that up with “Essential Manners for Couples.” Emily Post had written a book on wedding etiquette, and Peter and Peggy wanted to update that, so they collaborated on a book about non-traditional weddings. They asked people to send them stories and then interviewed the couples, highlighting the fact that weddings don’t necessarily have to follow the same script.

Post also wrote a fifth book: “Playing Through: A Guide to the Unwritten Rules of Golf.”

Post has lived in Charlotte since 1974 and recently celebrated his 50th wedding anniversary with his wife, Tricia. Since retiring, he has returned to his fine arts roots.

“It’s an activity where you just can’t believe how fast the time flies,” he said.

Post favors large-format paintings and the exploration of shapes. One of his first paintings was of a striped sheet which had been rolled into a ball. He enjoyed following the stripes and converting the three-dimensional figure to two. He also has a series of paintings of the interior of flowers, starting with a yellow dahlia. Three years ago, he branched out into landscapes.

Post is happy to have turned over the reins of the Emily Post Institute to the next generation, the fifth to work at the eponymous business. After 15 years at the helm, he was ready to retire and is thrilled with the work Dan and Lizzie have done. Dan had already been working at the institute for several years and Post felt that both were more than prepared for the job. Two years ago, the two completed the 20th edition of Emily Post’s original etiquette book on the centennial of its publication in 1922.

“It pays homage to the way Emily wrote the original,” Post said, “and it’s been a really good success.”

Post believes the concept of etiquette transcends time. “Etiquette is as valuable today as when Emily wrote her first book,” he said. “It helps people understand how to interact in a way that builds relationships rather than hurting them.”



Courtesy photo  
Peter Post is enjoying painting in his retirement.

“I had the opportunity to help people enjoy their lives more. That’s a pretty good life.”

— Peter Post



Courtesy photo  
Peter Post on the Spanish Steps in Italy this June.

He stressed that the medium of communication does not change the value of etiquette. “It’s based on whatever form of communication you use,” he said, “be it letters, emails or text messages.”

Post said the most important things to think about in communication are to be considerate of the people around you, respectful of the way you interact with them, and honest. “If you have those three, you’ll work well with people,” he said. “The specifics have changed but the underlying principles are the same today as they’ve always been.”

A lot of Post’s work at the Institute has been a labor of love.

“I had the opportunity to help people enjoy their lives more,” he said. “That’s a pretty good life. When people read these books, it helps them and that’s fun. How many people get to do that?”

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### CHARLOTTE PROPERTY TRANSFERS: JULY & AUGUST 2023

- July**
- July 6** Town of Charlotte to Timothy (Gus) Kiley & Claire A. Novola 250 Garen Rd. \$1,000 0 acres no dwelling
- July 6** Timothy(Gus) Kiley & Claire A. Novola, Trustees of the Gus Kiley 2010 Trust to Charlotte Land Trust \$230,000 0 acres no dwelling
- July 18** Casey E. Norton to Adam & Laura Wile 5631 Mount Philo Rd. \$835,000 2.34 acres with dwelling
- July 19** What’s Beginning LLC to Raohaus LLC 290 Ferry Rd \$420,000 0.06 acres with retail
- July 27** Edward J. Booth III to Lost Boathouse LLC Lot 25 Thompson’s Point Rd. \$100,000 16.67% undivided interest 0 acres
- July 31** Jacob & Jessica Card to Wirsig Family Investment Trust 717 Orchard Rd. 5.01 acres \$1,100,000 with dwelling

- August:**
- Aug. 3** Alaina K. Albertson-Murphy & John T. Murphy to Jedidiah & Alexandra Borovik 2959 Greenbush Rd. \$949,000 1.9 acres with dwelling
- Aug. 9** Elizabeth S. Archangeli Trust to Max Wofford 27 Inn Rd, Unit 1 0 acres \$620,000
- Aug. 15** Chrissy McCarty to Chea Waters Evans 2271 Lake Rd. \$525,000 8.68 acres with dwelling
- Aug. 18** 125 Lake LLC to Mary Ellen & Stephen Demick 125 Lake Rd. Lot 2 \$495,000 31.55 acres
- Aug. 21** 125 Lake LLC to Classic Restoration LLC 125 Lake Rd. Lot 3 \$500,000 62.9 acres
- Aug. 28** Molly Raftery to Sarah Laliberte & Stephen Downer 6851 Spear Street \$700,000 1.44 acres with dwelling

*This information was supplied by Jay Strausser of Four Seasons Sothebys International Real Estate.*





On Books

Two books that haven’t been written about here before

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”  
— Leo Tolstoy

It’s raining again and I just ran around my house gathering up all the books I’ve read in the past few months that I have not yet written about in this column. I turned up: seven. There might be more, in a pile somewhere or tucked into a bookshelf or under a bed or couch, possibly even in a car. But already, there are all these wonderful books, and it is so hard to choose.

One stand-out is a novel I read at the beginning of the summer: “The Exhibitionist.” I had never heard of the author before, but I have discovered that she is almost as interesting as her novel, which is saying a lot.

Charlotte Mendelson is a serious and passionate gardener (I learned in an article by Hannah Beckerman; Financial Times, Aug. 5, 2020). “I garden,” the author says, “when I should be doing everything else.”

At her north London home, where she lives with her partner, the writer Joanna Briscoe, and their two children, there is a garden that is “not a garden that normal people have.” No flowers, for one. Instead, wild garlic, dragon’s tongue, chicory, chervil, mizuna (whatever that is) and many other salad leaves and herbs. Flowers? They’re a waste of growing space, she says.

“It’s all about growing stuff I can eat.” Along with countless herbs and exotic salad leaves, there are a bunch of fruit trees, as well as edible flowers and a Hunza apricot seedling she grew from a pit. Mendelson describes her gardening style as “slapdash,” because, as she explains, “It’s not actually



Charlotte Mendelson

about the knowing, it’s about getting muddy and the doing. It’s the only thing that turns off the brain of the woman who thinks too much.”

She says she would write more books if not for her gardening obsession. But in reality she has managed to write a few, between weeding, planting and pollinating with tiny children’s paintbrushes. Her fourth novel “Almost English” was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize. I have not read it. But I will.

I am not sure how I came upon “The Exhibitionist,” but I believe I saw a blurb in The New Yorker. The novel begins “Friday, 9 February, After Lunch.”

“‘Tolstoy is an idiot’” is the first line. And then: “This is how he always begins. Then, when somebody responds, laughing or demurring, Ray will say: ‘All that crap about happy families. It’s the unhappy families who’re alike. Uptight, cold ... ugh.’ He’ll gesture merrily at the havoc: books everywhere, wizened tangerines and cold coffee, heating on full. ‘Poor bloke had never

met us lot. We’re famously happy, aren’t we. Aren’t we? And totally unique. ... And no, before you ask, I haven’t read whatever the book is, ‘Crime and Bloody Punishment.’”

Meet Ray Hanrahan, an artist, and egomaniac, really, who is preparing for a new exhibition of his paintings. His family — three grown children and Lucia, his selfless and long-suffering artist wife — plan to be there to support him. But then, well, stuff happens. Stuff that belies that “famously happy” designation Ray uses to describe his family at the outset of the novel. Ray is impossible, his children are complex and conflicted, and his wife is brewing secrets of her own.

This novel is beautifully written, complex and detailed, at once serious and subtly farcical. Ray is such a king baby. Regarding his wife, who is arguably a better artist than he is (but for God’s sake, don’t tell him that), “He expects her to have been faithful even before they met; to be her first, last, center.” One gets the sense, as the novel progresses, that he expects to be everyone’s center, honestly. Which is quite comical, at times, but sets up a tension that, as one reads on and becomes more familiar with and invested in the surrounding characters, grows increasingly compelling and unsettling.

I loved the descriptions of the rambling, eccentric family residence, its wizened tangerines, half-drunk coffee cups, art, antique furniture, etcetera. The characters and their complex relationships with one another are intricately and beautifully rendered. The writing is superb, the dialogue is excellent. And the plot, which unfolds in a very short timeframe, rather like Virginia Woolf’s “To the Lighthouse,” is surprisingly gripping. I found myself, as the novel’s end grew closer, on the edge of my seat, rooting

for Ray’s wife Lucia, terrified she would not follow her dreams, but instead give it all up and give in to her narcissistic but peculiarly engaging spouse.

This is a very special book. Try it, you will love it. Stay tuned, I will let you know what I think of “Almost English.”

Another noteworthy and unusual novel I read a few months ago is “Commitment” by Mona Simpson. I actually met Mona Simpson years ago when I was interning at a literary journal she was either working or hanging out at, but that was years and years before she was the sensation she has since become. She wouldn’t remember me. I was the one reading the slush pile and emptying the trash.

“Commitment” is Simpson’s seventh novel, and she is the recipient of a Whiting Writers’ Award, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton, and NEA fellowship, a Guggenheim grant, a Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writers’ Award, an American Academy of Arts and Letters Literature Award, and the Mary McCarthy Prize. She is now the publisher of The Paris Review, and — little-known fact — is Steve Jobs’ biological sister, though they didn’t know each other until they were adults.

What happened was: their parents were unmarried when Steve was born in 1955 and they gave him up for adoption. Ten months later they married, and in 1957 had Mona, who later took her stepfather George Simpson’s name. In the 1880s, Steve Jobs tracked down his biological mother and sister and he and Mona became close. She dedicated her first novel (“‘Anywhere But Here’”) to Steve and to their mother, Joanne.

“Commitment” is quite a long book, also



# Calendar of Events

Please send event listings to [calendar@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:calendar@thecharlottenews.org) at least three weeks in advance.

**Free student September Saturdays**  
**Saturdays, Sept. 23 & 30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.**  
Shelburne Museum welcomes college students in September with free Saturday admissions. Free admission with valid student ID.

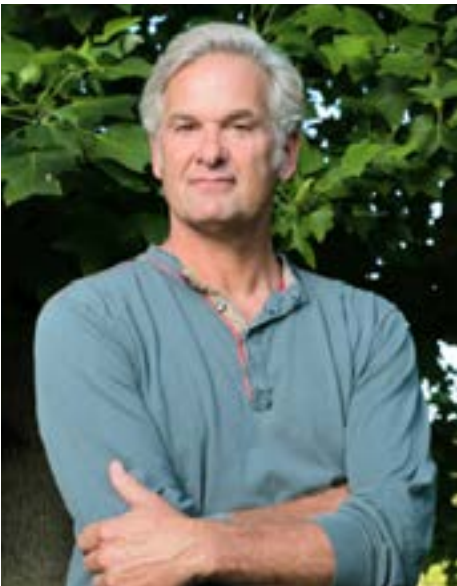
**Family art**  
**Saturday, Sept. 23, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.**  
Get your whole creative crew together for some outdoor art-making at Family Art Saturday in Burlington's City Hall Park. Drop in and create your very own colorful character portraits of yourself or your family reimagined as fantastic creatures.

**Haiku workshop**  
**Saturday, Sept. 23, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.**  
Join a haiku writing workshop at Vermont Zen Center on Thomas Road in Shelburne. The event will begin with a discussion of the components of traditional haiku encountered through reading traditional and modern examples followed by a walk through the Zen Center gardens where participants can take photos and notes to inspire their writing. A period of writing and sharing of work will then ensue. Beginning and experienced writers are both welcome. Register at [vermontzen.org/haiku.html](http://vermontzen.org/haiku.html).

**Sheldon Museum armchair auction**  
**Saturday-Monday, Sept. 23-Oct. 2**  
Support the Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury from the comfort of your armchair. An online auction runs from 8 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 23, through midnight Monday, Oct. 2. This auction provides support for the Sheldon Museum's exhibitions, programming and community outreach. More information at [henrysheldonmuseum.org](http://henrysheldonmuseum.org) or 802-388-2117.

**The Glass Menagerie**  
**Friday, Sept. 29, 7 p.m.**  
The Valley Players open the American theater classic "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams on Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. in Waitsfield. The show will run through Oct. 15 with performances at 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$18 for Friday and Saturday nights and \$14 for Sunday matinees.

**CHARLOTTE**  
**Repair Cafe'**  
**Sept. 30, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**  
Sustainable Charlotte will host the next Repair Cafe', a four-hour community party of talented local folks volunteering their skills to repair your broken stuff. Just bring your broken things to the Repair Cafe' and watch and learn as the handy folks do their magic. In addition to fixing, the Repair Café also aims to promote and teach the lost art of repair to all ages, keep perfectly good stuff out of the landfill and build a sense of community by working together to meet each other's needs. Register at [sustainablecharlottetv.org](http://sustainablecharlottetv.org). Things that have been repaired in the past include lamps, furniture, toys, small appliances, electronics, radios, fans, heaters, humidifiers, jewelry, cuckoo clocks, watches, eyeglass, old tube



Stephen Kiernan Courtesy photo

stereos, garden tools, knives, scissors, axes, fishing rods, camping stoves, clothes, sewing machines, dolls, zippers and bikes. Got something different to fix? The folks from Sustainable Charlotte are up for challenges. There is no charge for our repairer's labor, but if your repair requires new parts you are responsible for buying those parts. Please bring a food or monetary donation to the Charlotte Food Shelf. Also, do you have a repair or creative skill you want to offer? Email [gerlaugh@gmail.com](mailto:gerlaugh@gmail.com).

**CHARLOTTE**  
**Charlotte author reading**  
**Saturday, Sept. 30, 2:45 p.m.**  
Charlotte resident and novelist Stephen P. Kiernan will join a panel concerning book banning (1 p.m.) and read from his work (2:45 p.m.) at the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington on Saturday, Sept. 30. This part of the second Green Mountain Book Festival which runs Sept. 29-Oct. 1, during Banned Books Week. Kiernan will be joined on the panel by fellow authors Kate Messner and Kekla Magoon, and author and cartoonist Alison Bechdel. His most recent novel is "The Glass Chateau." The event is free. More info is at [greenmountainbookfestival.org](http://greenmountainbookfestival.org).

**Heritage, Harvest & Horse Festival**  
**Saturday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.**  
Bring the family to the Heritage, Harvest & Horse Festival at Fort Ticonderoga for a day of autumn fun in the midst of the King's Garden heirloom apple trees and the beautiful Adirondack landscape. Discover the importance of horses and other working animals throughout history during demonstrations. Meet farm animals, stroll through our farmers market featuring local food, beverages and crafts; participate in family fun activities; and tackle the 6-acre corn maze. More info at [tinyurl.com/y7mzn6xp](http://tinyurl.com/y7mzn6xp).

**CHARLOTTE**  
**Charlotte Walks: Pease Mountain**  
**Thursday Oct. 12, 8:30-10 a.m.**  
Join a walk at Pease Mountain at the rear of the bus parking lot of Charlotte Central School. David Ziegelman of the Charlotte Trails Committee will guide our group up Pease Mountain. This walk should take more than an hour. Charlotte Walks happen every second Thursday, meeting at a different trailhead at 8:30 a.m.

Walter, Lina and Donnie. Each has different gifts, challenges and interests, and each takes a very different road through life, yet all are bound by a poignant, heartrending love for their mother, who ends up living, not unhappily, in a California state hospital. Thankfully, Julie, a loyal family friend, sticks around to keep things together for the lot of them as best she can.

The characters in this novel are vividly drawn and lovable, or so they become as their struggles and dreams and affections and tendencies are revealed. At the end, I felt as though I knew them all well. Touching and compelling, I recommend that you put this book on your "To Read" list, along



Heritage, Harvest & Horse Festival at Fort Ticonderoga Saturday, Sept. 30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Courtesy photo



Photo by Bobby Kintz of Photos by Kintz  
Jim (Michael Smith) and Laura (Lindsay Repka) contemplate Laura's collection of glass animals in The Glass Menagerie at the Valley Players Theater, Waitsfield, playing weekends Sept. 29-Oct. 15.

**Talk & tour about marble industry**  
**Saturday, Oct. 14, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**  
The Henry Sheldon Museum is presenting a lecture about the marble industry in western New England, including Middlebury, by historians Glenn Andres and William Hosley at the Ilsley Public Library. Tickets are \$35 for public and \$25 for Sheldon Museum members. Tickets and information at [henrysheldonmuseum.org/events](http://henrysheldonmuseum.org/events) or 802-388-2117.

**Youth Environmental Summit**  
**Friday, Oct. 27, 8:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m.**  
You must register by Oct. 16 for the Youth Environmental Summit, an annual conference for middle and high school students to learn about environmental issues and get involved in local communities. Through hands-on workshops, action-inspiring discussions, networking with environmental professionals and like-minded peers, the mission of the event is to prepare youth for leadership on environmental issues. For sixth grade through seniors, the program is free and at the Barre Civic Center. Register at [tinyurl.com/yeyrvvn4](http://tinyurl.com/yeyrvvn4).

**CHARLOTTE**  
**Parent coaching**  
**Wednesdays, Oct. 11-Nov. 16, 6-8 p.m.**  
Marigold Farm at 151 Prindle Road in Charlotte is hosting a parent coaching group. This class is for parents and caregivers who want to cultivate a relationship with their young ones that feels fun, sustainable and respectful. Participants will learn skills to improve communication and strengthen the family system through straightforward, actionable steps. To learn more or register visit [marigoldfarm.org/upcoming-classesworkshops](http://marigoldfarm.org/upcoming-classesworkshops).



**Town of Charlotte**  
**MEETINGS**  
**Visit [charlottetv.org](http://charlottetv.org) for more information.**

**Planning Commission:**  
**Regular meeting**  
Thursday, Sept. 21, 7 - 9 p.m.

**Selectboard**  
Monday, Sept. 25, 6:30 p.m.

**Development Review Board**  
**Regular meeting**  
Wednesday, Sept. 27, 7-9:30 p.m.

**Recreation Commission Meeting**  
Monday, Oct. 2, 5:30-7 p.m.

**Trails Committee Monthly Meeting**  
Tuesday, Oct. 3, 6:30-8 p.m.

**Planning Commission:**  
**Regular meeting**  
Thursday, Oct. 5, 7-9 p.m.

## ON BOOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

about a family — a loving family — a close family, in many respects — but one torn, distorted and wounded by mental illness.

Diane Aziz wanted so badly for her children to experience the happiness and success that had eluded her in her own life, but after getting her oldest son, Walter, off to Berkeley for college, she falls into a depression that, despite her family's hopes and efforts, only worsens with time.

The novel takes turns focusing on the perspectives of each of Diane's children —

with "Casebook," another Simpson novel I recently read but don't have the time or space to talk about today. (It is really good.)

Just to give you a soupcon of Simpson's gift, one line I loved from this book is toward the end, when Lina flies from New York to California to meet her brother Walter's and his wife Susan's new baby — "the Dauphin," as they call him. Here's the line: "They lifted the baby carefully out of the buggy. The task seemed to require both of them. It was like traveling with a small molten sun."

Okay, well, out of seven books, I spoke about two of them.

Happy reading, and enjoy these beautiful September days, even the rainy ones.



Library News

Access to and opportunities at the library keep growing

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

Getting into the Charlotte Library has gotten even easier.

Thanks to a grant from the American Library Association, automatic door openers were installed last week on the two main doors and the program room door, making the building easier to enter and exit.

Part of the Accessible Small and Rural Communities grant the library received invites community conversation about access so if you’ve got ideas about making the library more accessible, please arrange for a conversation with the library director.

Anyone familiar with the “Arthur” television show on PBS will recall Arthur’s visit to the library with his friends. They break into song, “Having fun isn’t hard when you’ve got a library card.”

It’s been a few years since that show aired but the spirit is the same and the opportunities available with a library card just keep increasing. Check out some of these things you can do at the library:

- Fix your car
- Find your family tree
- Write a resume
- Watch a movie
- Discover dinosaurs
- Befriend birds
- Visit a museum
- Crochet and craft
- And, maybe most importantly, you can borrow books.

Library staff are happy to help you access these resources so stop by and let them know how they can help.

September is also National Literacy Month. National Literacy Month promotes reading to young children to enhance their cognitive skills and encourages the undertaking of the development of their cognitive abilities.

Cognitive development is establishing an individual’s ability to understand the thoughts that run into their mind. Reading and improving the literacy of young children fundamentally provides them with the framework for how our world looks. It can help them develop an understanding of what they see, hear and read.

Looking for a way to get started? Join our children’s librarian for story time on Tuesday mornings. You can also ask at the desk for recommendations to launch your family’s reading adventures.



New automatic door openers make getting into the library even easier.

Courtesy photo

Children’s programs

Preschool story time  
Tuesdays, September, 10 a.m.

Join the Charlotte Library for preschool stories, crafts and activities. No registration required. Age 2 and over.

Preschool play time  
Wednesdays, September, 10 a.m.

Play in the preschool years enables children to explore and make sense of the world around them, as well as to use and develop their imagination and creativity. Exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks or Play-Doh — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library. Stay tuned for details about upcoming fall programs.

Kindergarten-first grade story time  
Tuesdays, Sept. 26, 3 p.m.

Extend the kindergarten and first-grade day with story-time fun at the Charlotte Library. Students can ride the blue school bus from Charlotte Central School. They will be met at the bus stop and escorted across the street to the library. Limited availability. Registration required email youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Coding club  
Wednesdays, through Oct. 18, 2:15-3:30 p.m.

Hack Club, a global organization helping teenagers to code, is hosting a six-week coding club at the Charlotte Library. The club will run 2:15-3:30 p.m. every Wednesday. Snacks will be provided. Any child between the seventh-twelfth grade is welcome, no prior experience is required. If this sounds interesting to you, email nila@hackclub.com and include the name of your child, their grade and whether they’ve had any coding experience.

Programs for adults

Special Events  
Author book talk  
Sunday, Sept. 24, 4:30 p.m.

Stephen Kiernan will hold an informal discussion and read from his newest book “The Glass Chateau.” Copies available to purchase.

What’s NOAA all about?  
Tuesday, Sept. 26, 5:30 p.m.

Ever wonder what it’s like to be a weather forecaster? Join the weather-curious for a presentation by the National Weather Service of Burlington to learn about what these meteorologists do every day to keep you safe. A family program for kids, parents and anyone interested in weather.

“The Most Costly Journey”  
Wednesday, Sept. 27, 7 p.m.

Much of the work on Vermont dairy farms is done by people from Latin America. Over a thousand migrant laborers milk cows, fix tractors, shovel manure and take care of calves in our state. Julia Grand Doucet from the Open Door Clinic will also discuss “The Most Costly Journey,” providing insight into the lives and experiences of the workers whose labor supports the continued viability of dairy farming in Vermont, as well as an overview of the goals of the El Viaje Más Caro Project and its approach. This discussion will take place at the Charlotte Library.

Recurring programs

Don’t miss these fun events that appear regularly on our calendar.

Book chat  
Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet each week to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, 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. Contact garden stewards Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton at seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org to join the merry work sessions.

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 series  
Thursday, Sept. 21, 7:30 p.m.

The regular book group is back. Join each month to discuss celebrated titles both old and new. Check the library website for title information. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

Mending matters  
Monday, Oct. 2, 5:30 p.m.

Give life to your old clothes. Learn how to hem pants, replace a button and fix a hole in a sock and more. Bring in your old favorite (clean) clothes in need of mending to take part in this hands-on workshop with Colleen Brady. No experience necessary. For all ages from tweens to adults. Let us know you’re coming at susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Artist talk  
Wednesday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m.

Landa Townsend shares the vision and the craft of her exhibit “Dragonfly Habitat at the Edges of Weatherhead Hollow Pond.” The prints highlight the non-toxic and sustainable Japanese woodblock printmaking technique. Made possible by funding from the Vermont Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Cooking book club  
Tuesday, Oct. 17, 5:30 p.m.

Explore the varieties of American cooking and culture. Select a recipe that strikes your fancy and taste buds. Books include “The Sioux Chef,” “The Immigrant Cookbook,” “Aloha Kitchen,” “Jubilee,” “Homegrown” and “Forgotten Drinks of Colonial America.” Then bring that dish to share with others for an evening of eating and discussion about the geographic and historical range of American cuisine. Books are 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 on the first Thursday of the month at 6 p.m. The next meeting takes place on Thursday, Oct. 5, online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

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# Senior Center News

## Things are hopping at the senior center this month

Lori York  
Director

This month’s schedule is full. Local Vermont author Marilyn Webb Neagley will lead an evening discussion around her latest book “Attic of Dreams: A Memoir,” and there will be a presentation about green energy. The senior center will also host a Red Cross blood drive and the monthly Alzheimer’s caregivers support group. New this month will be a Lunch & Learn about reading and understanding the Medicare summary notice and a presentation about transitioning to senior housing. The senior center also provides weekly lunches, daily exercise classes and many opportunities to connect through board and card games and art and language programming. If you haven’t been to the senior center, please stop by and visit. 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](mailto:charlotteseniorcentervt.org). The “Week Ahead” email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the upcoming week.

### Presentations & discussions

#### Author discussion Thursday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m.

Join local non-fiction author Marilyn Webb Neagley for a discussion about her newest book “Attic of Dreams: A Memoir.” Neagley has spent most of her life in Shelburne. Starting her career as an architectural interior designer, Neagley veered toward environmental stewardship and became president of Shelburne Farms. She has been a commentator for Vermont Public Radio and written essays for her local newspaper. She previously wrote “Walking through the Seasons,” which won an award for best Northeastern non-fiction. Registration recommended. Free.

#### Reading your Medicare summary notice Wednesday, Oct. 11, 12:30-2 p.m.

Medicare Summary Notices, or MSNs, are monthly statements from Medicare that detail medical expenses and reimbursements. These are important documents, but they can be difficult to read and even a little bit intimidating to open and really take a look. Vermont Senior Medicare Patrol is trying to make it easier. Join this Lunch & Learn “How to Read Your MSN.” You will learn how to break down the information simply and explore how to be protected from Medicare fraud, errors and abuse. Cost: \$5 for the lunch.

#### Transitioning to a senior living community Thursday, Oct. 12, 1p.m.

Transitioning from a long-time home to a senior living community can be emotionally challenging, particularly when it comes to letting go of belongings. Join Alicia Fleming, founder and owner of Golden Guide Senior Living Advisor, as she discusses homebased person-centered solutions, resources to help remove obstacles and how to manage emotional ties with greater ease. Aligning your unique home-care solutions or transitioning to senior living can open new possibilities for social connections, care and a vibrant community. With proper planning, support and a positive mindset, your journey can be a successful and fulfilling one. Registration recommended. Free. Light refreshments provided.

#### The Greening of Energy: Electric Cars and the Rise of the Lithium-ion Battery Wednesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m.

Join this presentation as Paul Wagenhofer talks about his personal views on the issue of green energy. Paul has spent his 40-year career as a geophysicist in oil and

gas exploration. With the current global warming crisis, it becomes necessary to re-think the use of energy and the need to develop mitigating and practical solutions to the warming situation. Registration recommended. Free.

### Community programs

#### Alzheimer’s caregivers support group Thursday, Oct. 12, 5-6 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer’s? Do you know someone who is? Please join 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: [scartwrightas@gmail.com](mailto:scartwrightas@gmail.com).

#### Red Cross blood drive Thursday, Oct. 5, 1-6 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](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter: CHARLOTTE to schedule an appointment.

#### Free local produce and fruit Thursdays, 10-11 a.m.

The senior center is participating in the Locally Yours community supported agriculture program, and produce from Full Moon Farm in Hinesburg is dropped at the senior center weekly free for participants 60 and over. It’s first-come, first-served with the intention that one or two people won’t take all the produce, instead taking only what they will use. No registration required.

#### Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals Pick up on Thursdays 10-11a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. \$5 suggested meal donation but not required. To register, call 802-425-6345 or email [meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org).

### Art programs

#### Art show reception Thursday, Sept. 28, 1 p.m.

Join the artist reception and enjoy light refreshments, view the 2023 Senior Art Show and meet the talented artists. For the month of September, a wide variety of artwork will be on display from seniors in the community.

#### Glorious fall watercolor class Tuesdays, Sept. 26-Oct. 17, 9 a.m.-noon

This four-week session with Lynn Cummings will explore color mixing and color choices for fall paintings, creating texture, getting more light into paintings and painting fall-themed still lifes and landscapes. Some experience with watercolor is helpful. Supply list will be emailed a week before class begins. Questions? Please email: [lynn.cummings@uvm.edu](mailto:lynn.cummings@uvm.edu). Cost: \$165. Registration and payment required to reserve a space.

#### For those who think they can’t draw Friday, Oct. 13, 1:30-3 p.m.

Fill a fun 90 minutes learning 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. She has offered drawing classes for about 20 years, but at 85 says she has trouble recalling what she ate for breakfast. Cost: By donation. Registration required.

### Outdoor activities

#### Walking and gentle hiking group Thursday, Sept. 28, 9 a.m.

Enjoy the beauty of nature. Come walk at a gentle pace with other seniors. The group meets monthly for a congenial, non-



Photo by Lori York

Paul Wagenhofer spoke at the September men’s breakfast about the greening of energy electric cars. He will return to speak at the senior center on Wednesday, Oct. 18 at 7 p.m.



Courtesy photos

Local author Marilyn Webb Neagley will discuss her new book “Attic of Dreams” at the senior center on Thursday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m.

strenuous walk. Meet in the Charlotte Senior Center parking lot. Please bring sunscreen, bug spray and water. Questions? Call Penny Burman at 916-753-7279. The location is to be determined. Registration required. Free

#### Meals Menus are posted on the website at [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org).

#### Monday lunches Served weekly 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](mailto:lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org) 212 Ferry Road, Charlotte 802-425-6345 [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org)

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org).



# Write Ingredients

## Enjoy your “salad days” at the senior center

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

In medieval times salads were composed of green leaves, sometimes with flowers. Le CouCou in New York City picks up on this theme, adding crab. Their fleurs de courgettes farcies au crabe will set you back \$32. The menu doesn't indicate what accompanies the lobster in salade de homard, but let's hope it's good because it costs \$52.

As the story goes, Caesar salad was invented on July 4, 1924, by Italian immigrant Caesar Cardini. After his restaurant in Tijuana ran out of ingredients, he combined leftover romaine lettuce, olive oil, egg, garlic, Parmesan and Worcestershire sauce, which he tossed at the table.

Soirellina in Boston seems to be one of the few fine dining restaurants with a traditional Caesar salad on the menu — for \$21.

Chama Gaucha in Houston offers a Caesar salad dinner. Their salad includes red onions and strawberries and diners choose a meat to accompany it — for \$52.

In Denver, Chez Maggy doesn't have Caesar salad on the menu, but they offer Tuscan kale salad with peanuts for \$16 or chopped salad with chickpeas, olives, mushrooms and chicories with mustard-sesame dressing for \$15.

The Fog Harbor Fish House in San Francisco will serve you crab and avocado Caesar for \$31. But if you ask for Caesar dressed leaves of romaine, it's yours for \$12.

Anyone who reads the Sunday New York Times Magazine knows that “Judge” John Hodgman is a man of strong opinions. When Jillian from Quebec wrote in, mentioning a disagreement over the fact she puts cauliflower in Caesar salad, Hodgman declared: “The Caesar is a documented, modern salad, invented in the 1920s. Most salads are free-form bowls of whatever junk you have rotting in your crisper, but the Caesar was from its beginning defined as much by its ingredients — romaine, garlic, egg yolk, Worcestershire, Parmesan, croutons — as by its elaborate tableside preparation. This was salad as theater. And while I can't prohibit you from insulting that tradition with cauliflower, take credit for your innovation and call it what it is: Jillian's Quebecois non-Caesar.”

We can only wonder what Hodgman would say about the full-color picture of a Caesar salad topped with batter-fried anchovies in another issue. Or the many other iterations they've offered in more than 2,000 entries for this salad. In the pages of all the news that's fit



to print, various Caesar salads include mussels, avocados, black beans, beets, caviar and lots more.

According “The Escoffier Cook Book,” to make Parisienne potato salad you need to add two-thirds pint of white wine per 2 pounds of potatoes, and then season with oil, vinegar and add some chopped chervil. Julia Child advises 4 tablespoons of white wine or 2 tablespoons of white vermouth.

Wikipedia offers a fascinating read on Russian potato salad. A recipe appearing in 1894 called for half a hazel grouse, 2 potatoes, a small cucumber (or a large cornichon), 3-4 lettuce leaves, 3 large crayfish tails, 1/4 cup cubed aspic, 1 teaspoon of capers, 3-5 olives and Provençal dressing.

I have two German cookbooks in my kitchen and thus two versions of potato salad. The Armenian cookbook sent to me when my college history professor found out I'd married an Armenian has a third version. George Bernard Shaw's “Vegetarian Cooking” recommends adding one cup of mayonnaise to 4 boiled potatoes and 2 celery stalks. Even “The Dreaded Broccoli Cookbook” has a recipe for potato salad. I think I only own two cookbooks without potato salad recipes.

My mother's tasty potato salad was applauded at church and Grange suppers. When I called her for advice about the tastelessness of mine, she advised, “Use only the egg yolks. Dump the tasteless whites.” As a child of a post-Depression household where the dogma was: “We don't waste food,” this culinary advice shocked me to the core.

The 2,210 entries for potato salad in The New York Times are about adding, not eliminating. There, Japanese potato salad needs mashed potatoes, ham, hard-boiled eggs, carrots and corn. Another recipe includes mentaiko, salted sacks of pollock or cod roe — “highly appreciated, difficult to find and thus very expensive.”

Other recipes call for turmeric, chives, pesto, cinnamon, mint, caviar, horseradish, tahini, jalapenos, avocados, cannellini beans, capers, anchovies, okra, purslane leaves, snap peas, sun dried tomatoes, kimchi, pine nuts, cashews, caviar, herring, mussels, octopus, lamb, smoked salmon, duck, ham, bacon, tongue. And more.

There is a January 1938 story about a Connecticut man who won a divorce settlement because his wife fed him so much potato salad that he developed stomach ulcers.

No matter what ingredients are in the Caesar and potato salads at Monday Munch, they will appear in the Charlotte Senior Center tradition of conviviality, getting together for good food and conversation.

### Monday Munch

**Sept. 25, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Chili, Caesar salad, corn bread, apple pie and ice cream.

### Octoberfest Monday Munch

**Oct. 2, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Bratwurst on roll with grainy mustard and sauerkraut, German potato salad, root beer and surprise dessert.

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