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# The Charlotte News

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## Moving on

John Quinney  
Publisher and Board Chair

After two and a half interesting and rewarding years as publisher and board chair of The Charlotte News, I will be stepping down at the conclusion of our January board meeting. I will stay on as a board member at least through next year. The search for the organization’s next publisher is underway, led by board member Julia Russell.



Serving as publisher and board chair of The Charlotte News has been an honor and I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish over the past two and a half years. I’m reminded of that every two weeks when the newspaper arrives in our mailbox and every time I log on to our website. It feels good to know that I’ve played a part in keeping Charlotters in touch with the life of the town by way of our nonprofit community newspaper.

I am looking forward to having more time available to enjoy retirement — spending time with our four grandkids, tending to the two acres that Colleen and I have called home since 1994, taking on some writing projects and traveling.

Over the years, friends and colleagues

SEE PUBLISHER PAGE 2

## What is a ‘community newspaper?’

Claudia Marshall  
Board of Directors

As we consider our year-end giving, it’s not unusual to reflect on the things we value most. If “community” is among those things on your list, I urge you to donate today to your nonprofit newspaper, The Charlotte News, on our secure website at [charlottenewsvt.org](http://charlottenewsvt.org).



Serving this community is a vital part of our mission and has been for more than 65 years.

So, what does that look like?

First, this free newspaper informs the people of Charlotte 25 times a year in print — and daily online. Did I mention that it’s free? No subscription needed and no online paywall. It is public service journalism that seeks to inform and to build understanding among neighbors.

We do this in ways large and small. We brought back our popular photo contest this year with the theme of “What Charlotte Means to Me.” It was illuminating.

We also got a great response to our recent, full-scale Charlotte readers survey. Among other things we asked: What are the issues that matter most to you and how are we doing covering them? While

SEE NEWSPAPER PAGE 2



Photo by Melissa O'Brien

Philo Ridge Farm is switching to being a nonprofit organization dedicated to researching regenerative farming practices.

## Philo Ridge switches to agricultural research

Contributed

Change is coming to Philo Ridge Farm, and like much change, it comes with some difficult decisions.

The 400-acre farm that was established by Diana McCargo and Peter Swift in 2012 as an organic regenerative farm after they bought the Foote family farm that had existed on the property since 1878 is transitioning to a nonprofit organization.

“After a transformative and deeply rewarding decade, we now want to ensure that Philo Ridge Farm will be a multigenerational community asset,” McCargo and Swift said in a letter to the community.

In the letter the couple talked about how hard the transition will be because “valued employees” had to be let go.

Philo Ridge Farm is transitioning to a nonprofit engaged in research “to support more farmers in the transition to regenerative agriculture by providing both concrete evidence of its positive impact and knowledge for effectively implementing regenerative practices,” the farm said in a release.

Because of the changes, the market and the dining service will be shutting down on Saturday, Dec. 9, but until then the farm and its ancillary agricultural enterprises will continue as before with the farm still serving lunch, brunch and dinner. The farm

plans to host its annual Winter Holiday Market on Dec. 9.

“Philo Ridge Farm will pause all public-facing food service operations, including the market and dining facilities, as the team prepares for this next phase of the farm’s evolution and works through the process of designing and developing the nonprofit,” the release said. “Guided by a founding commitment to keeping working lands working, Philo Ridge will remain a working farm, growing crops, raising animals, grazing the land and exploring new ways to contribute to agricultural research and education.”

## Town giving wastewater permitting back to state

Brett Yates  
Contributor

The Charlotte Selectboard continued its recent efforts to shrink the municipal budget by voting to eliminate local oversight on wastewater and water supply permitting on Monday, Nov. 27.

Since 2007, Charlotte has opted into a state program that allows towns to issue such permits themselves, instead of relying on the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. Towns must adjudicate property owners’ applications according to the same technical standards that the state uses, but according to Aaron Brown, Charlotte’s zoning administrator and wastewater control officer, local processing “offers a quicker turnaround time” by a margin of about a month.

Permit fees received by the town, however, make up for only about half the price of the service. Charlotte doesn’t employ a licensed wastewater designer, which means it has to hire a consultant to review proposed projects. This year, by Brown’s calculation, the town has lost more than \$16,000 as a result of its enrollment in what the state calls “municipal delegation.”

Vermont’s 255 other municipalities, it seems, have decided that the cost outweighs the benefit. Colchester and Charlotte were the program’s lone participants until earlier this year, when Colchester initiated the months-long process to withdraw, as Charlotte has now done.

Selectboard member Louise McCarren voted against the motion put forward by her colleague, Kelly Devine.

“My reason is we are going to be under

so much development pressure,” McCarren said, “and I think, to the extent we can, we need as a town to maintain control over the important things, and this is a critical one.”

In Brown’s telling, the town had opted into the program initially because it had “wanted to play a role in ensuring the prevention of wastewater in the lake.” He noted accounts by septic designers of “inconsistent interpretation of wastewater rules” by staffers at the department of environmental conservation’s regional offices.

Brown praised Charlotte’s consultant, Eli Erwin, who himself “used to be a permitting officer for the state.”

“If you’re looking to cut from the planning and zoning department, this is kind of the one major chunk that you could take out without affecting staffing,” Brown acknowledged.

After the vote, the board moved on to discuss an ongoing initiative to save taxpayer money by considering changes to municipal workers’ health benefits and annual cost-of-living adjustments.

Earlier this month, a local volunteer committee tasked with studying employee compensation on the town’s behalf advised against making any immediate cuts. But Devine, who chaired the working group, urged the selectboard to ask a professional consultant for a second opinion.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns referred Charlotte to Hickok & Boardman HR Intelligence, which drafted a sample agreement for health insurance advisory services. The firm would charge \$500 annually, plus \$15 per town employee per month.

Outgoing town administrator Dean Bloch also submitted a memo outlining two possible restructurings of employee health benefits. Under one scenario, the town would continue to pay 100 percent of insurance premiums for its employees, but it would cover only 50 percent for their family members.

The second scenario focused on health reimbursement arrangements, also known as HRAs, which currently refund 90 percent of municipal employees’ out-of-pocket medical expenses. Bloch suggested that, in the future, the town could limit its share to 80 percent.

Two town employees testified that they felt “blindsided” by the proposals. Matthew Citarella, a member of the Municipal Employee Compensation Working Group, disputed accusations of employer largesse, pointing to data showing that an average Vermont town of comparable size spends more on its workers, as a share of its total budget, than Charlotte does.

Sensing the possibility of a protracted debate, the board determined that the conversation should continue at a special meeting dedicated to the topic on Thursday, Nov. 30.

With municipal workers facing potential austerity measures, employees of Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue Services, a nonprofit contracted by the town, may soon begin pushing in the opposite direction.

“They’re trying to join a union,” selectboard chair Jim Faulkner relayed. “They have a petition already in process. The hearing is, I think, the 5th or 7th of December.”

“We don’t know what effects that has on the town,” Faulkner added.



NEWSPAPER

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an overwhelming majority of folks who responded had positive things to say about the paper (and our recently improved website) we learned a lot about what’s on the minds of our readers. In other words, this is a community newspaper that actually cares about the community and how to best serve Charlotte.

When we marked our 65th birthday this summer, we did so by supporting several town events, including the town party, Music at the Beach and the Grange on the Green. Giving back is baked into our mission.

Perhaps you can pitch in to keep this tradition alive and thriving? We need your support, because with printing costs climbing, it currently costs us roughly \$6,000 to produce each “free” issue.

Every donation we receive before the end of the year is being matched, thanks to a challenge grant from NewsMatch, so your dollars go even further. For instance, a \$100 donation is now worth \$200.

Even better, consider becoming a sustainer with your monthly gift. Thanks to NewsMatch, all monthly gifts are matched 12 times! So, when you give, say, \$10 a month, we receive \$120. We love the math!

Please support the community newspaper that supports this town.

Mail your check to The Charlotte News, PO Box 251, Charlotte VT 05445, or go to our website charlottenewsvt.org and make your monthly or one-time gift, right now. It’s quick and easy.

Thank you so much! Every donation makes a difference at The Charlotte News.

Restaurant raising



Photo by John Quinney

Things are proceeding at an encouraging pace with the renovation of the old farmhouse at the intersection of Hinesburg Road and Spear Street into a restaurant. The building was lifted to rebuild the foundation and has been lowered back into place. Jonathan Maguire, whose project this is, said the development review board has “been absolutely wonderful to work with” and his project falls squarely in the “win column.” He doesn’t have a commitment from a restaurant to lease the building, but he’s hopeful of working out an agreement with the Farmhouse Group, which includes Guild Tavern in South Burlington and El Cortijo, Pascolo and Farmhouse Tap & Grill in Burlington. He noted that it would be a perfect fit because “the Farmhouse Group doesn’t have a farmhouse restaurant.”

Letter to the Editor

The corruption of freedom

To the Editor:

The best way for the powerful to protect themselves against the powerless is to convince the powerless that the rules which perpetuate their power are, in fact, immutable rules of God, economics or, ideally, both. This distortion of reality requires significant distortion of language, and no concept has been more distorted by the conservatives/libertarians than “freedom.”

Conservatives have long included freedom and liberty in the names they give their groups, i.e. “the Freedom Caucus.” They never explain that, to them, “freedom” means freedom from government involvement in their affairs. Conversely, reliance on government for anything is a form of slavery.

If “freedom” means only that the government leaves you alone, then you are, somehow, “free” when you sit moaning in an infested tenement shared with six other people, too sick to do anything but wait for death. If the government steps in to save you, you are on the road to slavery.

This definition of freedom ignores the realities of life and, as Thomas Frank not-

ed, “helps conservatives pass off a patently pro-business political agenda as a noble bid for human freedom ... a doctrine that owes its visibility to the obvious charms it holds for the wealthy and the powerful.”

As long as the people with the economic power are “free” to wield that power as they wish, ordinary people will have the “liberty” to struggle for food, shelter, health care and a life worth living. Reducing taxes to zero will not in any way free those who have no income, or are sick and have no health care. In fact, reducing the size of government makes it easy for corporations richer and more powerful than most nations to tyrannize you. There just might be a reason that the dangers of concentrated corporate power have been observed by people like Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, and far too many others to name.

If we accept this corruption of “freedom,” we need to amend the Pledge of Allegiance to “I pledge allegiance to the certificate of incorporation.”

Lee Russ  
Bennington

PUBLISHER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

have thanked me for my work at The Charlotte News. It feels good to receive that recognition, of course, but I want to make the point — again — that producing The Charlotte News is, and always has been, a community endeavor.

I am happy to have been a member of this town’s robust community of volunteers, the dozens of Charlotters who serve as volunteers on town boards, commissions and committees — and at Charlotte Central School, at our churches, at fire and rescue, the senior center and the library, to name a few.

I see interesting opportunities ahead for the next publisher.

By blending the results from our readers survey with the goals in our strategic plan and adding some entrepreneurial flair, the publisher will lead the way in making The Charlotte News an even more valuable

source of news and information. In some ways, it feels as though we’re just getting started — even though the paper’s been around for 65 years!

In looking to the future — forgive me for stating the obvious — your financial support is essential for the newspaper to remain in good health. To make your tax-deductible gift, go to charlottenewsvt.org or send your check to P.O. Box 251, Charlotte VT 05445. Thank you.

We’ve all read stories about “news deserts” and the terrible ways in which communities are affected by the loss of local news. We don’t live in a news desert; we are served and nourished by a strong local, nonprofit community newspaper. I’m immensely thankful for our good fortune, and for your support, both for me personally, and for The Charlotte News.

If you’re interested in learning more about the publisher’s role and responsibilities, please contact Julia Russell at julia05russell@gmail.com or 802-324-3380. She would love to talk with you.



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.

Disclaimer

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.

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

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# Around Town

### Congratulations

With full hearts, Jack and Olivia Barton are overjoyed to announce the arrival of their baby girl, **Charlotte Rose Barton**.

Charlotte entered the world on Nov. 17, 2023, at 2 a.m. at the University of Vermont Medical Center in Burlington. She weighed 8 pounds, 2 ounces and was 21 inches long. She is a bundle of perfection and is already so loved!

Welcome to the world, little one!



and Barry (Annapolis, Md.), Henry and Carrie (Vashon, Wash.) and Susan and Jamie (Boulder, Colo.), and six wonderful grandchildren. He was preceded by his brother Henry and his wife Lyn.

A celebration of Dave’s life will be held on Jan. 20 at the Charlotte Congregational Church. In lieu of flowers, contributions in his memory may be made to the Berlin Historical Society or the Charlotte Congregational Church.

**Ashley Lynne Pilla** left this world unexpectedly on Oct. 25, 2023, in Queens, N.Y. She was born on July 21st, 1987, in Burlington, Vermont. She was an energetic child with a love for drawing and painting and the outdoors; she was extremely talented in competitive sports, including skiing and soccer. After living out her early years in Shelburne and Charlotte, she moved to New York City to pursue her dreams and make her mark on the world.



Ashley was a gifted artist and her creativity thrived in Astoria and Brooklyn, where she lived. She developed a deep passion for entrepreneurship and restoring antique furniture and was even featured on an episode of Flea Market Flip. She also worked as a bartender for many years, forging long-lasting relationships and creating unforgettable memories.

While pursuing her degree in interior design, she flexed her seemingly natural ability to envision an inviting yet innovative space. Everyone who knew Ashley described her as a spitfire with a big heart. She had a passion for helping animals in need, having rescued three cats and caring for them devotedly.

Ashley was ambitious, passionate and fiercely determined. She will always be loved and missed by many, and her legacy will not soon be forgotten. She is survived by her mother, Kathleen, and stepfather, Doug Grant; her father, Jack Pilla, and stepmother, Kristin Lundy; her sister, Kaitlyn Pilla; her brother, Nick Pilla; and her paternal grandmother, Dorothy Pilla.

Those who would like to honor her memory with a contribution may do so at Free Arts NYC (<https://tinyurl.com/33xvnvwx>) and Meow Parlour ([meowparlour.com/donate](https://meowparlour.com/donate)).

### Condolences

**David Porter Perrin** of Charlotte (1933-2023) passed away peacefully on Nov. 9.

He was born in the Montpelier hospital, raised in Berlin on the family farm and graduated from Montpelier High School. At the University of Vermont, he met his future wife, Marilyn Bolton.

After graduating in agricultural engineering, Dave began his 42-year career at General Electric as an expert on heat transfer and barrel design. After being drafted and two years in the Army,



he returned to General Electric and completed a mechanical engineering degree at the University of Vermont by taking night classes while working full time.

Dave married Lyn on July 18, 1959, and they celebrated 58 years together prior to her death, including their first home in Burlington, moving to Charlotte to raise their three children, and much-loved worldwide travel on retirement.

A seventh generation Vermonter, Dave was known for being an avid bridge “life master,” maple sugaring, hiking the Long Trail, woodworking, expert knowledge on Vermont coin silver (including writing a book on the subject), obtaining 251 club membership by canoeing all of Vermont’s 251 towns, cities and gores, his enthusiasm for family and Vermont history, storytelling with wry humor, and especially his caring, constant support and generosity for his family.

Dave is survived by his sister Sally and three children and their spouses: Cynthia

## Handling Handel



Courtesy photo

On Sunday, Dec. 3, the Charlotte Congregational will perform Handel’s “Messiah” as a classic sing-along. The performance will be led by four soloists, Helen Lyons, Nessa Rabin, Cameron Brownell, and Erik Kroncke, and a small chamber ensemble of Vermont Symphony Orchestra musicians.

“As a member of this community, I often get to perform for local audiences, but rarely get to make music with them,” said Jane Kittredge, associate pastor and a violinist with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

Handel composed the “Messiah,”

an English-language oratorio, in 1741, and it was first performed in Dublin on Easter in 1742. The “Messiah” is now a classic of the Christmas season, and it has been a beloved musical tradition at Charlotte Congregational Church since 2010.

The family-friendly event lasts roughly 75 minutes, from 4-5:15 p.m., and is open to all. Childcare and scores will be available, and donations are encouraged (suggested donations are \$5 for children, \$20 for adults, and \$50 maximum for families). For more information, visit [charlotteucc.org](https://charlotteucc.org) or email [janekitt@gmail.com](mailto:janekitt@gmail.com).

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Vermont

Temporary center for juvenile rehab opening in Middlesex

Will Thorn  
Community News Service

The 2020 closing of Woodside Juvenile Rehabilitation Center in Essex left a vacuum in care for Vermont’s most troubled children requiring full-time oversight.

State officials have described the lack of beds for juveniles involved in the justice system as a crisis, yet the state has made little progress toward finding a viable location in three years.

Now, the Vermont Department for Children and Families is perhaps two months away from setting up temporary quarters in Middlesex in a state complex most recently used for inpatient mental health. The Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence, along U.S. Route 2 just west of Interstate 89’s Exit 9, filled a temporary role as residential housing for psychiatric treatment after Tropical Storm Irene flooded the Waterbury psychiatric hospital in 2011. The patients there moved to permanent quarters in Essex in spring 2023.

Starting as soon as late January, after the state cleans up and reconfigures the building, the Middlesex residence will house up to four children for 14-day stints, unless special circumstances require them to stay longer, said Aryka Radke, deputy commissioner of the family services division of the Department for Children and Families. The site will serve as a short-term crisis stabilization center, which Radke described as a place for youths who may be suffering from a mental health crisis.

“It’s time for them to be removed from wherever they were experiencing crisis, give them the time, space and place to

de-escalate and give our clinicians an opportunity to assess their needs,” she said.

The state Department of Children and Families shuttered Woodside amid allegations of abuse of children there. This year, the families of seven former Woodside patients won a \$4.5 million settlement from the state in their lawsuit alleging that staff and supervisors there engaged in mistreatment and harmful practices. A recent in-depth article in Burlington newspaper Seven Days detailed the harrowing experience of one girl in custody at Woodside and renewed attention on the need for appropriate handling — including proper residential confinement — of kids in dire emotional and behavioral circumstances. Vermont’s past efforts to care for these children overshadow plans for the temporary site in Middlesex, as well as permanent options under consideration.

“They’re not planning on building anything that looks like Woodside,” said state Rep. Theresa Wood, a Waterbury Democrat representing the Washington-Chittenden district and chair of the House Committee on Human Services. Instead, the state plans to focus on smaller, more individualized group services, which Wood said is “definitely the better way to go.”

The state chose this location because of the infrastructure already on the property, Wood said. “The state was looking for where they could stand up a facility as quickly as possible, and so they looked at places where there was already existing infrastructure,” she said.

Middlesex also sits geographically close to the center of the state. The building can be “fit up” with relative ease, and the location on state-owned land avoids the chance of running into zoning issues, Radke said.



Photo by Lisa Scagliotti  
The Middlesex Therapeutic Community Residence building sits along U.S. Route 2 in Middlesex adjacent to the former Vermont State Police barracks.

Renovations now underway include reinforcing walls, installing a new floor and adding shatterproof glass in the windows. New outside fencing will aim to prevent children from running away. The Middlesex center will also get a fresh coat of paint, Radke said.

The Department for Children and Families has long planned to open a permanent crisis treatment facility for boys in a former bed-and-breakfast west of Interstate 91 in Newbury, but the town has sued the state to stop that project, arguing that the use of that location for that intended purpose isn’t “appropriate,” Radke said. The suit is pending.

Middlesex residents have raised no such opposition, she said. Department for Children and Families representatives went door-to-door in that town to communicate with business owners and residents who live close to the former psychiatric treatment center and heard no “negative input or any type of concerns,” Radke said. No concerns came up in July and August at two town selectboard meetings, either, when the proposed use of the location was discussed, Radke added.

“Our interaction with the state has been totally them being courteous and trying to act like good neighbors of the town,” said Peter Hood, chair of the Middlesex Selectboard. “Truthfully, over the years there have been absolutely minimal problems or concerns for the operation of

that facility and its previous use and more recently in the current use.”

Woodside had a 30-bed capacity, but only a few children were staying there by the time it closed, according to news reports. Department for Children and Families has custody of just under 1,000 kids today, and most don’t need full-time oversight in a secure facility, Radke said. The agency expects the four beds planned for Middlesex — for boys or girls — will be enough to take pressure off community-based settings, including unlocked facilities where youths engage and interact with the community, and the foster care system, which struggles with youth who need the highest levels of care, Radke said.

“I was very surprised at that low number because that’s a fairly good-sized facility and it would seem to me that it could handle more than that,” Hood said.

Department for Children and Families is looking to hire an outside vendor to staff the Middlesex site, which will need about 15 employees, Radke said. The state issued a request for proposals to operate both the temporary and eventual permanent detention centers — in hopes that a longer-term contract would entice more bids — but none came in, she said. Now, Department for Children and Families plans to reach out to vendors directly to get feedback and possibly re-issue the request



Food

Delicata squash: A seasonal favorite from local farms

Dorothy Grover-Read  
Contributor

The farm stands and farmers markets are loaded with winter squash of just about every shape, size and color right now. One might find a giant blue hubbard squash that could feed an army, or maybe a small sweet dumpling squash, just right for tonight’s supper for one.

Good bargains abound, and most are not only nutritionally dense but also great winter keepers. You can store a butternut squash in a cool place for months; it has a thick protective skin. But the varieties with thinner skins, such as delicata, should be used in a week or two. The positive side is every bit of the fruits are edible, from the seeds to the skins, and they cook quickly, making them an easy option for a weeknight supper.

Maple roasted delicata squash

With hardly any hands-on time, this quick side can be made any weeknight, but it’s lovely enough for company or the holiday table. It can even serve as a stand-alone meal with a little side salad. Delicious and satisfying with just enough maple flavor for interest. But keep a watch on it at the end, because the maple will burn quickly.

Cut up the squash into rings but don’t bother to remove the seeds. You might like the texture, and they add a lot of nutrition. If you don’t care for the seeds, just use a paring knife to scrape them out, but give them a try; you might be surprised. The skins are always edible and a great source of fiber. Smoked paprika here enhances the smokiness of the maple syrup. Of course, always use real Vermont maple syrup.



Ingredients

- 1 large delicata squash
  - 1 tablespoon dark amber Vermont maple syrup
  - 1 tablespoon fruity olive oil
  - Smoked paprika
- Preheat the oven to 450 degrees and place a rimmed baking sheet on the middle rack.
- Mix together the syrup and oil and set aside. Cut the squash into 3/4-inch sections. You don’t have to remove the seeds; many people like them. But if you wish, use a small paring knife or melon baller to scrape them out.
- Remove the heated sheet from the oven and brush liberally with olive oil. Place the squash rings in a single layer, season with salt and pepper, and pop in the oven for seven or eight minutes. They will start to soften.
- Remove from the oven, turn, and brush with the maple mixture, sprinkle with salt, pepper and the paprika.
- Return to the oven for another five minutes, or until fully cooked and browned.

Wild rice and apple-stuffed delicata squash

When I was growing up, we grew only one or two varieties of squash, and when my mother did anything other than boiling

the flesh, she stuffed them with a traditional bread stuffing, which was both filling and heavy. This recipe is much lighter and lower in carbohydrates than Mom’s original, and the apple adds a bit of sweet and tart.

To make this vegan, simply substitute a plant-based Parmesan. You can also substitute any cooked whole grain for the wild rice.

**Ingredients**

- 2 delicata squash, halved, seeded
- 1/2 yellow onion
- 1 large tart apple, diced
- 1 large juicy lemon
- 1 cup wild rice, cooked
- 1/4 cup fresh or panko bread crumbs
- 1/4 cup Parmesan, grated
- Extra virgin olive oil

Preheat your oven to 400 F.

Cut the squash in half lengthwise and remove the seeds. The seeds are edible, so if you like, clean them off and roast them along with the squash.

Place the squash halves on a baking sheet, season with salt and pepper, and pop in the oven for about 10 minutes, just to precook and soften.

In the meantime, sauté the onion in a little olive oil until there is a bit of browning on the edges, then add the apple. Cook for just a minute or so to gently start softening the apple.

In a large bowl, combine the onion-apple mixture, the wild rice, zest and juice of the lemon. Add salt and pepper to taste, and divide between the four squash halves.

Return to the oven and bake for 10 minutes, then top with the Parmesan and breadcrumbs. Drizzle with olive oil, and return to the oven and roast until the squash is tender, about five to eight more minutes, depending on size and oven temperature.

These are delicious served with a simply dressed side salad.

JUVENILE REHAB

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

for bids, she said.

The state agency is talking to local providers that have provided care to youths in Department for Children and Families custody and might agree to run the Middlesex center, Radke said. The “least optimal option,” as she put it, would leave Department for Children and Families to staff the temporary site.

Department for Children and Families also plans to use an outside vendor to oversee both the Middlesex and eventual permanent locations, to avoid the conflict of interest with a state agency that both runs the operation and regulates itself, Radke said.

Another proposed change for the new centers: Department for Children and Families officials want to move away from detention-based models in favor of “holistic, trauma-informed and developmentally appropriate programs” for the children in their care, even as those kids need to “make amends” for the crimes they commit, Radke said.

“At the same time,” she said, “we provide supports and services for them to rehabilitate themselves and move past this problem and go ahead and go out and be productive members of the community.”

*(Will Thorn reported this story on assignment from The Waterbury Roundabout (waterburyroundabout.org). The Community News Service (vtcommunitynews.org) is a program in which University of Vermont students work with professional editors to provide content for local news outlets at no cost.)*



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Hi! Neighbor

Head Over Fields persevering after challenging summer

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

Katie Rose Leonard’s third year at the helm of Head Over Fields farm wasn’t easy. “It was my most challenging growing season of the 10 years that I’ve been growing,” she said, “and as a young farm we’re still learning our land.”

Nevertheless, Leonard is happy with how the season panned out and looking forward to next year.

Leonard said Head Over Fields has been growing quickly and this year they planted on new fields, some of which had very heavy soils. “We weren’t able to get into our fields with a tractor for most of July and early August,” she said. “Some things didn’t get planted and others died in the field.”

On the other hand, this was the first year that Leonard used high tunnels. As a result, she had what she described as an amazing crop of tomatoes, which is the farm’s most important crop. After tomatoes, the farm is known for their bagged cut salad greens including baby kale, arugula, mixed greens and a spiced mix consisting of mustard and Asian greens. The farm’s high tunnels are currently filled with winter greens.

There was never any question that Head Over Fields would be a certified organic farm. Leonard believes it’s important her customers know that the farm holds itself accountable for soil-based, sustainable agriculture including cover crops and that they prioritize soil health and organic matter. The farm focuses on vegetables and dabbles in herbs and flowers.

More than half of Head Over Fields’ income comes from their farmstand, followed by the Shelburne Farmers’ Market and their community-supported agriculture



Photo by Winter Caplanson, New England Food and Farm  
Having a farmstand was always part of Katie Rose Leonard’s business plan.

or CSA with some additional money coming from wholesale sales to restaurants.

The farmstand has always been the key to Leonard’s business plan. “I really wanted this space to serve as a one-stop shop for people to get what they need to make a meal at home,” she said.

Leonard has a background in retail and direct-to-consumer sales which helped her set up the farmstand. She doesn’t grow potatoes or sweet potatoes so she purchases them locally and will also buy produce if she needs to supplement what she grows. This year, for instance, she needed to purchase kale from another farm. In addition, the farmstand sells fruit, mostly

from Lincoln, meat, mostly from Charlotte, and fish caught in Alaska — but by a Vermont angler.

Head Over Fields also sells honey from hives on their land, yogurt, local ice cream, cheeses, non-alcoholic beverages, dried pasta, pasta sauces, jams and preserves. Leonard carries some international products like oil, vinegar and mustard so customers have all they need to make a meal. They don’t carry a lot of snacks, but Leonard is hoping to add some grab-and-go meals.

“This section of Route 7 is underserved,” Leonard said, “so I knew I wanted to turn the barn into a market.”

In 2022, Leonard had one full-time and

one part-time employee but this year she grew to four full-time employees and one part-timer. She has retained most of those employees throughout the growing season although several have shifted to part time. A few will stay with Leonard through Thanksgiving when she wraps up the season.

“We had a wonderful year,” she said, “and I’m so thankful for this amazing team.”

Leonard also praised her husband who, despite having a full-time job, is heavily involved in the farm, including keeping the books and managing the payroll. “I wouldn’t be in business without him,” Leonard said.

Leonard strongly believes in the importance of prioritizing local food and keeping farmers on the land. “Food producers in this country are aging,” she said. “As a young person who has been invested in this for years, I still feel like we’re just getting started, and it makes me happy to be part of this.”

Despite the weather challenges of 2023, Leonard has found many positive things to focus on. The decision to put drainage around the shop, for instance, certainly paid off.

“Seeing those improvements be tested to their limits and have them work is another reminder that we’re doing the right thing in the face of climate change and building a more resilient farm,” she said.

Leonard isn’t done for the year since she will have a presence at the Shelburne Winter Farmers’ Market and will have some pop-up events at the farm.

“There was beauty in the wins,” she said. “That’s the place you need to be after every farming season.”

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**Ho, Ho, Ho Holiday Stroll**  
**Saturday, Dec. 2**  
Santa Claus makes his rounds up, down and all around Main Street, Vergennes! Breakfast, story time, pictures and caroling in City Park, he'll be there! Full schedule of events: VergennesDowntown.org

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**Wednesdays, Dec. 6 & 13**  
Can't fit in all into the day? Make it a night out in Vergennes as the shops keep their lights on until 8:00pm. Special activities, holiday cheer, make your list, check it twice and head straight to Vergennes!

**Broadway Direct**  
**Friday, Dec. 8**  
In its 18th year, Vergennes Opera House is pleased to present this ever-popular show featuring singers and actors directly from the Broadway stage! Tickets: VergennesOperaHouse.org

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In its 18th year, Vergennes Opera House is pleased to present this ever-popular show featuring singers and actors directly from the Broadway stage! Tickets: VergennesOperaHouse.org

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AT WINTER LIGHTS

FOOD - DRINK - MERRIMENT

**Shelburne Museum**  
**Thursday, December 7 from 5:30 - 9:30 PM**  
Must be 21 or older.

For tickets visit:  
**shelburnemuseum.org/winterlights**

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# Food Shelf News

## So much thanks to give for this generous community

Maj Eisinger  
Contributor

We have much to be thankful for. This community is sustained by the generosity of its members.

Twenty-three families received Thanksgiving baskets, which were the fruit of combined donations of time, money and food.

We thank the Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary members Carrie Fenn, Dan York and Chris Davis for fundraising and their generous donation of a turkey for each basket, Louise McCarren for fresh fruit, Pete Demick for raw honey, and Holly Rochefort and all the Charlotte bakers who supplied scrumptious baked goods.

Special thanks are due to the amazing Charlotte Central School teachers, staff and students who communicated needs, shopped and delivered food items to make these bountiful baskets, as well as to the Champlain Valley Union High student volunteers who packed baskets before delivering them to waiting families. This was a beautiful team effort.

We are grateful for monetary gifts from Meredith and Peter Moses, Elizabeth Basset and John Pane, Evan and Catherine Metropoulos, the Charlotte Congregational Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Katherine Arthaud, Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom, Ruth Uphold, Ronda Moore DVM, Margaret Berlin, Suzanne Lourie, Steven Wisbaum, the Hannaford Fight Hunger Bag program, Rice Lumber, Cedar Beach Trust, Katherine Lampton, Kathryn and Robert Mesarro, Lynn and Greg Cluff, Michelle and Tom Tiller Family Foundation, the Michelle and Tom Tiller Family Foundation and the Cedar Beach Association.

We also thank Megan Kennedy from Frog Song Farm for her gift of chopped vegetables, Louise McCarren for generous quantities of fresh beef, Sustainable Charlotte for its gift of cash and canned goods garnered at the Repair Café, the Charlotte Congregational Sunday School kids who grew potatoes in the church garden, and the Congregational Church artisans who crafted the beautiful baby hats.

Produce obtained through the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters grant has also helped to augment delivery of fresh produce to food shelf families, while also supporting our state’s agricultural economy. This grant was awarded to the food shelf based on Peggy’s Sharp application to the Vermont Food Bank. The grant allowed the food shelf to purchase produce from local farmers, including berries from Adam’s Berry Farm and Pelkey’s Berry Farm, meat from Fat Cow Farm, and maple syrup from Pat Leclaire. The food shelf is thankful to the Vermont Food Bank and the state of Vermont for their



Photo by Cindy Tyler

Above: Hats knit by Charlotte Congregational Church parishioners for the food shelf.

Photo by Peggy Sharpe

Left: From left, CVU students Tabitha Bastress, Dylan Frere, Chloe Avery and Mia Merola helped Peggy and Jim Sharpe prepare Thanksgiving boxes.

commitment to innovative programs, and greatly appreciates the support, flexibility and generosity of the local producers that collaborated with us to make it so successful.

John Lavigne’s rich legacy lives on with donations to the food shelf given in his honor. We thank Sandra McLeod, Margaret Lavigne, Peg and Bill Harvey, Cheryl and Michael Morris, Virginia Hafsahl, Jennifer and Daniel Cole, Patricia Shine and Lori Werdenschlag, Sheila and Daniel Aube and Susan and Hans Ohanian for their generosity in remembrance of John.

As we look ahead to December, we note opportunities exist for supporting children served by the food shelf. Gift cards are always welcomed and can be sent to the address listed below. Children also get kind support from the Flying Pig Bookstore through their Snowflake Book Program. This allows Charlotters to select an age-appropriate book for any of the 19 children under the age of 18 years served by the food shelf. For those the food shelf has also identified some December needs which include: pineapple, baked beans, scalloped potatoes, brown sugar, apple juice or cider, nuts, candy and cake or brownie mix.

Important dates to remember:

**Sunday, Dec. 10:** Last day for Giving Tree Kid’s Wish Shoppers from the Charlotte Congregational Church and Our Lady of Mt Carmel to drop off your Kid’s gift. The families of the 19 children receiving a Wish Gift are grateful for your help to make a child’s wish possible.

**Monday, Dec. 11:** Last day for Charlotters to purchase a book for donation through the Snowflake Book Program at the Flying Pig Bookstore.

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, 4-6 p.m.:** Regular distribution

**Friday, Dec. 15:** Volunteers pick up food baskets from Charlotte Central School and deliver them to Food Shelf

**Saturday, Dec. 16:** Holiday basket distribution

**Wednesday, Dec. 27, 4-6 p.m.:** Regular distribution

As winter again visits us, please note that the food shelf has utility and other assistance available to residents of Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh. If you or someone you know is facing unexpected hardship, help is available. Simply call 802-425-3252 or fill out a request form. Request forms are available during food shelf open hours or on our website at [charlotteucc.org/copy-of-charlotte-food-shelf-1](http://charlotteucc.org/copy-of-charlotte-food-shelf-1).

Our address is 403 Church Hill Road, behind the Charlotte Congregational Church. For emergency food or if you cannot come to the food shelf due to COVID symptoms, call 802- 425- 3252.

Monetary donations are appreciated, tax deductible and can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc., P.O Box 83, Charlotte VT 05445. An easy, new way to donate is through the Paypal button on the website address listed above.

All the food shelf volunteers wish you a joyous holiday season.

### Stone Block Art Gallery

10 Green Street, Vergennes

### Holiday Estate Sale

Special Hours: Wednesday Dec 6th and 13th for  
“Magic on Main” 4pm-8pm

Regular Sale Hours : Thursday + Friday + Saturday  
December 7th, 8th 9th. 8am-5pm.

Partial contents of estates from Charlotte, Burlington, Stowe, Middlebury and more. Including but not limited to AUDIO EQUIPMENT 1976 Yamaha Electric Grand Piano, Clavinova, other keyboards, teac tape decks, microphones, LPs, CDs, etc, lots of LOCAL ART Phyllis Demong, Sabra Field, Arthur Healy, Georgia Balch, Beth Donahue, etc, PRINTS Baskin, Robert Sargent, David Bumbeck, Woody Jackson, Asian, etc, Antique CLOCKS Long Case, Mantle, etc, ANTIQUE FURNITURE Corner China Cabinet, Cupboards, Restoration Hardware Mission, Pier Mirror, Armoires, Beds, Tables, Lamps, etc, ANTIQUE CHAIRS Rocking, Dining, Upholstered, Ralph Lauren, etc, MISC ANTIQUES Stoneware, Toy Tractors, China inc. Canton, Cradles, Woodenware, Copper and Brass, Quilts, Frames, Mirrors, Baskets, Costume Jewelry, etc Hundreds of Small Items and MUCH MUCH MORE

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ecobean





## Stronger Together

# Transformative agricultural work happening in NEK

Linda Hamilton  
Charlotte Grange

You may not be aware of the innovative and transformative agricultural work happening in Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. But if you understand the importance of supporting local agriculture and food systems, you’ll want to cheer on the Center for an Agricultural Economy.

The organization is based in Hardwick, but its programs and services reach across most of Vermont.

Established in 2004 as a nonprofit organization, Center for an Agricultural Economy has more than 30 dedicated staff. Its visionary founders saw the need and potential in this rural, poverty-prone, agriculture-dependent area for an equitable food and agricultural economy that creates empowered, interdependent communities that are socially and economically thriving, and contribute to a vital ecological future.

Visionary, yes; but also very savvy about being practical. Through fostering connections, partnerships, support infrastructure and outreach programs, the Center for an Agricultural Economy is a living laboratory for a working, interdependent rural food system. Tapping into a range of funding sources, they are able to go far beyond what individual producers, processors, distributors or consumers on their own can in terms of taking risks, initiating change and forming partnerships. And they make sure those producers, processors, distributors and consumers (their stakeholders) have voice and agency within the evolving new food system.

What does that look like?

First, there are some physical facilities in Hardwick:

- Farm Connex is the base of operations for working with farmers and producers who make and sell local food, and with institutions, stores, markets and partners who distribute, sell, and use those products. This warehouse is essential for consolidation and sorting of products which are then distributed to partners throughout much of Vermont and into New Hampshire, via Farm Connex’ extensive delivery service routes.

- Vermont Food Venture Center is a specialized facility where the Center for an Agricultural Economy provides space, equipment and advice for local clients to develop and produce their value-added products.

- Atkins Field is 15 open and wooded acres stewarded by the Center for an Agricultural Economy, offering versatile public space with not only an historic 350-foot granite shed, but community gardens, beehives, community orchard, covered pavilion for community gatherings and events, including regular farmers’ markets, a bicycle pump track and a network of walking trails.

These facilities undergird a wide range of simple but impactful Center for an Agricultural Economy programs. Some of them you may have heard of and supported. They include:

- Just Cut, which for the last 8 years has connected farmers who grow vegetables with institutions that buy, cook and serve those vegetables. Center for an Agricultural Economy purchases, inspects, washes, prepares and delivers Vermont-grown produce to institutional kitchens both large and small. By partnering with local farmers, food buyers across New England, and a regional delivery network, Center for an Agricultural Economy helps ensure the viability of working landscapes and increases access to high-quality produce to a range of markets. Last year, despite the challenges of COVID, Just Cut processed almost 155,000 pounds of produce purchased from 19 farms in the region, and sold it to 20 nearby

institutions.

- Vermont Food Venture Center has been helping food businesses grow since 2012, and is a hub for food processing and innovation. Food businesses can rent product storage space and the Center’s commercial kitchens to test or scale up their business before investing in costly equipment and a dedicated production space. Center for an Agricultural Economy also offers business planning, technical assistance, and food safety training.

- Farm Connex Cross Docking and Delivery Service has proven so helpful to distribution that next year it will move to expanded facilities with more warehouse space and multiple loading docks. Working with Deep Root Organic Co-op last year, almost 40,000 lbs. of vegetables were moved from farms to the Center for an Agricultural Economy warehouse, where other distributors picked them up to go to large accounts across the state. This arrangement, known as “cross docking”, allows farms and other Center for an Agricultural Economy partners to share infrastructure, making the most of Center for an Agricultural Economy’s space and distribution routes, which saves miles, fuel and time. Center for an Agricultural Economy works with other Food Hubs in Vermont, as well, picking up from them on behalf of other distributors, providing a crucial link in the system. Farm Connex provides small farms and food businesses with reliable freight service, as well as help to scale up and grow production and access to more local markets.

- Vermont Farm Fund is a nonprofit revolving loan fund for local farmers and food producers. Established in 2011 in collaboration with Pete’s Greens, the farm fund is now valued at over \$1 million. By August 2023 (after more than \$255,000 in flood relief and recovery assistance this summer) total loans had exceeded \$3 million. Literally a revolving fund, as the recipients pay back their low- or no-interest loans, funds are replenished for the next cycle of borrowers. A new producer loan category has been added in response to increasing demand from farmers who need capital to start up new enterprises.

- Farm and food business advising and technical assistance is available to help farmers and food businesses operators assess and manage their complicated systems by offering a friendly outside perspective and access to a variety assistance programs available in the state.

- Community programs designed and led together with Center for an Agricultural Economy partners and neighbors, feature ingredients known to nourish vibrant communities: collaboration, listening, creativity, learning, solidarity and love.

The \$3 million annual budget for all this life- and livelihood-enhancing work is supported primarily through grants (approximately 34 percent), contributions (approximately 26 percent) and delivery and rental fees (approximately 30 percent).

Now that you’ve learned about the Center for an Agricultural Economy, you may find you like what they’re doing and how they’re doing it, and can see that it’s good for not only the Northeast Kingdom but the rest of us, too. It is a beautiful example of how we are stronger together through collaboration and teamwork.

If you support their vision of a place-based agricultural economy which builds a healthy, regenerative food system by promoting local foods and the people who produce them in a whole-system approach, let them know. They welcome both donations and comments at [hardwickagriculture.org/support](http://hardwickagriculture.org/support). And think about how we might creatively apply what they are learning to Charlotte’s agricultural economy.



On Books

Books on boats, Magic 8 Balls, Sneetches and strings

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

Years ago, when my daughter was about 8 years old, a small group of friends and I gathered one winter afternoon at Village Wine and Coffee in Shelburne, where (some of you might remember this) there was — situated on the counter near where you ordered your coffee or tea or hot chocolate or scone — a Magic 8 Ball. You know the kind. With the little plexiglass window beyond which floats a series of answers written on a little white die suspended in a purplish-bluish-colored fluid: “NOT NOW” ... ”YES” ... ”NO” ... ”REPLY HAZY, TRY AGAIN” ... ”MAYBE,” and so on.

The device, I discovered recently, has its origin in 1946 with an idea generated by a man named Alfred Carter, son of a clairvoyant, fortune-telling mother living in Cincinnati who claimed she could commune with ghosts.

Anyway, a bunch of us were there at the coffee shop with our kids, and at one point I glanced over and spotted one of my daughter’s friends, a precocious, energetic child named Marley, clutching the Magic 8 Ball in her hands, a gaggle of her 8-year-old friends, one of whom was my daughter, huddled eagerly around her.

“Harmless,” I must have thought to myself at the time, turning back to my friends, my latte and our conversation. Then I heard Marley say, in a rather loud and not undramatic voice, “Tell me when I’m going to die!” Involuntarily, my friend Maria’s teenage daughter, Alessi, and I leapt to our feet and lunged for the shiny black sphere in Marley’s clutches, thus successfully disrupting the little congregation and ending the dreadful inquiry on the spot.

Alessi and I have reminisced about this many times in the years since. To my knowledge, everyone who was present is still alive.

This memory came back to me recently as I read “The Measure” by Nikki Erlick, which takes on this idea of what-if-we-knew-when-we-were-going-to-die in a work of fiction. Though perhaps not one of the great literary achievements of our decade, this book is interesting and compelling, but I don’t want to tell you too much about it, because part of the fun of reading it was the surprise of it, the not-knowing-what-is-going-to-happen-next-ness of it. Let’s just say, what if one morning you woke up and went to let your dogs out the front door and there on the stoop was a little wooden box, inside which was a length of string — and it turns out not only your neighbors down the street found identical boxes on their stoops, but everyone on the whole planet over the age of 22 experienced the same thing? Even homeless people. Even people living out in the desert in tents. Everyone. And turns out the length of the string in those boxes has everything to do with the question little Marley so

boldly, unwittingly and recklessly asked that winter day at the coffee shop.

“The Measure” spotlights the stories of a small handful of characters whose lives interconnect over time. What they do with their boxes. What they do with their strings. What they do with their dreams and their relationships. And what they do with their knowledge (or ability to know) of their own mortality.

Reading this novel took me back to a story I read a long time ago, back when I was younger even than coffee-shop Marley, “The Sneetches” by Dr. Seuss (published in 1961) about a community of creatures that look a bit like yellow birds, but are far more interesting and inventive than that, of course, because Dr. Seuss is a genius.

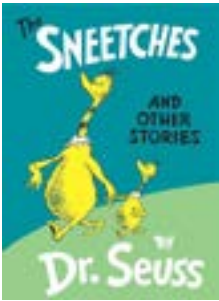
Some of the Sneetches have a green star on their bellies, some do not, and at the start of the story, the Sneetches who have a green star lord it over those who don’t. Such is life, for a time, in the Sneetch world, until a wise

guy named Sylvester McMonkey McBean shows up in town with his Star-On machine, which, for only three dollars, can give any Sneetch lacking a green star on their belly just what they need to improve their status in the Sneetch community: a green star. To make a not-so-very-long story short, the tale is brilliant and all about the silliness and arbitrariness of prejudice and discrimination. According to Seuss himself, it is a satire of discrimination between races and cultures, inspired by his opposition to antisemitism.

But in the case of the world described in “The Measure,” it is not race or religion or financial standing or green stars on one’s abdomen that generates prejudice and discrimination, it is the length of the piece of string you happened to find outside your door.

I really enjoyed the book, which looks at some of the micro (personal) and macro (social, political) implications of the string situation, and deftly brings it all home in the end. Uplifting and enjoyable. Thought-provoking. I do recommend it.

Another book I read recently and found riveting is Suzanne Heywood’s “Wavewalker: A Memoir of Breaking Free.” I don’t know about you, but I vaguely remember, back when I was in high school, news reports of a family that was sailing the world. I didn’t know much about it at the time and didn’t take time to follow the story beyond its most basic headlines, but my memory is that, caught up in the difficulties, intricacies and



complexities of being a teenager in the 70s, the idea of escaping with one’s family and avoiding the world beyond the ocean sounded rather appealing.

Well, think again, Earlier Self, because it wasn’t all sunshine and roses.

Heywood begins, “This book tells the story of my childhood, during which I spent a decade sailing around the world. It takes place on a boat, which sometimes followed the route of Captain Cook’s epic third voyage, but it is more about the excitement, frustration and heartbreak of growing up in extraordinary circumstances than it is about that famous captain or his search for the North-West Passage.

I spent a long time getting ready to tell this tale.”

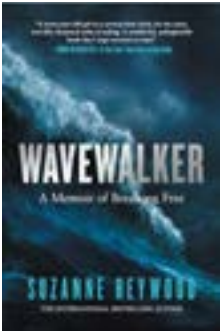
Peppered with excerpts from the journals of Captain James Cook, a British explorer, naval officer and cartographer (1728-1779), who made three famous voyages in the Pacific

Ocean, where he achieved the first recorded European contact with the east coast of Australia and the Hawaiian Islands, as well as the first recorded circumnavigation of New Zealand and the occasional quote from William Shakespeare, this book begins in Warwick, England, in 1975, when the author was 6 years old. It speaks of the familiar rhythm of waking up, having a brother, eating cereal, going to school, eating dinner, her parents’ casual kitchen conversations.

“I was used to the rhythm,” Heywood writes, “I liked it and thought it would never change. Then one morning over breakfast, my father announced that we were going to sail around the world.”

The starkly honest, compelling account that follows this paternal declaration takes the reader, basically, all over the place. England, Brazil, Ilha Grande, Tristan da Cunha, South Africa, Ile Amsterdam in the Indian Ocean, Australia, the Coral Sea, the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Ile-des-Pins, Fiji, Tonga. I now feel as though I have visited all those places and spent days, weeks, months, years with young Heywood sailing in fair weather and foul (and in some cases, we’re talking seriously foul), constantly referring to the little maps at the beginnings of some of the chapters, tracing with my finger the broken lines detailing the route of the 30-ton, 70-foot-long wooden-hulled Wavewalker, as it makes its way from port to port. The plan was to sail for three years. The reality was more like 10, for Suzanne, at least, who finally managed to extricate herself from a life at sea and get herself engaged in one she both longed and worked hard for — a life of dry land, good friends, consistency, education and freedom.

So, basically, if you haven’t yet caught my



drift, the trip was kind of a nightmare. For Suzanne, at least, it was. Sure, there were good times: riding on the bow with the wind in her hair, spotting whales and dolphins, meeting new people from time to time, the occasional short-lived stints with exotic pets like Kelly the parrot.

But this is also a tale of childhood lost, of ridiculously hard work — trimming sails, “rubbing down the hatches and gunwales with sandpaper, our hands becoming dry and coarse themselves,” of cooking, cleaning and preparing meals in a frequently storm-tossed mini kitchen, of on-and-off education requiring the haphazard receiving and sending of schoolwork at various island ports of call, and generally, of great physical and emotional struggle.

Writes Laurie Hertzel in a review in the Los Angeles Times (Oct. 19, 2023), “‘Wavewalker’ is not a shocking story of physical and psychological abuse, like Tara Westover’s ‘Educated’; nor is it brilliantly written, like Mary Karr’s ‘The Liar’s Club.’ It is a solid, compelling story about what it is like to be raised by parents who are almost certainly narcissists and who ignore their children’s most basic needs for education, love and approval.”

I mean, you’ve got to hand it to the parents for their courage and sense of adventure, but many times as I read this memoir, I found myself asking, “What is wrong with these people?”

The father comes off a bit like Captain Ahab of “Moby Dick” in his megalomaniacal dream of following Captain James Cook’s path around the world, and the mother’s personality and motives are truly odd and mysterious. She is often seasick or migrainous, and hidden away in a bunkroom, alternately demanding and negligent, mourning the loss of her beautiful wardrobe back on land. Yet, when the question arises, “Should we end the voyage or sail on?” she consistently votes for the latter.

I am glad for Suzanne Heywood for having the extraordinary discipline, focus, grit and drive to finally transport herself to a life more aligned with her own dreams, and glad for us readers that we can hold in our hands and read this honest, exciting, perplexing and (I keep using this word, but I mean it) compelling account of what it was like for this child, this teenager, this young woman to spend the eternity of her early years on a boat at sea. Highly recommend. (And, by the way, it would probably make a great Christmas gift for the readers on your list, as my sense is that few have heard about it.)

Onward we go, into the holidays. Batten down the hatches and anchors aweigh. Try and keep your sea legs as the season’s wake amps up, and may you find good books to keep you steady, intrigued and entertained, until we meet again. (Oh, and by the way, if you find a small box on your stoop one morning, you might want to think twice about opening it.)



Outdoors

Three years and boat launch steward program is big success

Portia Butrym and Kate Kelly  
Contributors

Sept. 24 marked the end of Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch steward program at Bristol and Monkton ponds.

The two ponds see many visitors throughout the summer months, from anglers to recreational boaters to wildlife enthusiasts, making them ideal locations to educate the public about aquatic invasive species. As of 2023, there are three known aquatic invasive species in Bristol Pond: European frogbit (*Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*), Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), and brittle naiad (*Najas minor*) (discovered by the boat launch stewards in 2021 at Bristol Pond). There are two known aquatic invasive species in Monkton Pond: Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*).

The presence of these aquatic invasive species in these popular ponds means that they could function as points of introduction for the spread of aquatic invasive species in the Lewis Creek watershed and throughout the state. The goal of Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch steward program is to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species by inspecting watercraft for aquatic invasive species and other biological materials, identifying and removing suspicious specimens, collecting data and

educating the public about aquatic invasive species spread prevention.

Though the exceptional amount of rain during the summer of 2023 may have prevented a few people from visiting Bristol and Monkton ponds, many were still undeterred. Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch stewards interacted with a total of 230 watercraft at Bristol Pond and 79 watercraft at Monkton Pond.

The vast majority of visitors were already familiar with aquatic invasive species, likely due to the longevity of the Lewis Creek Association boat steward program and repeated instances of boat stewards across the state educating the public about aquatic invasive species concerns. However, boat stewards intercepted 35 watercraft with aquatic invasive species on them before and after entering Bristol and Monkton ponds. If the aquatic invasive species were not removed by the boat stewards, these watercraft could have introduced aquatic invasive species to new waterbodies throughout the state and further.

The boat stewards also helped remove brittle naiad near the dock at Bristol Pond during the free time between greeting visitors. Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation sent a small team to help the stewards remove brittle naiad on July 8, though further work will be required to eradicate the plant from Bristol



Courtesy photo

Portia Butrym, one of the boat launch stewards for summer 2023, waits for visitors at Bristol Pond on an overcast July morning.

Pond.

For the third summer, Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch steward program was successful in intercepting aquatic invasive species and educating the public on the issues surrounding these species. Most of the visitors to Bristol Pond and Monkton Pond seemed genuinely excited to have the program at the ponds and many people from the community went to the ponds to see Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch stewards in action.

Research has shown that visual inspection and hand removal of aquatic vegetation is extremely effective at preventing aquatic invasive species from spreading to other bodies of water, making Lewis Creek Association’s boat launch steward program integral to maintaining the health of waterbodies within the Lewis Creek watershed. The program could potentially prevent, both directly and indirectly, aquatic invasive species from spreading to other uninfested waterbodies.

Education

Charlotte Central School’s thank you list is long and varied

Naomi Strada  
(Condensed by Tom Scatchard)

Among the many things that Charlotte Central School has to be thankful for is:

- The school being awarded a \$500 grant from the ExxonMobil Education Alliance. The use of the grant is left to school officials but it should focus on math and science.
- The kindergarten-fourth grade classrooms gathering and delivering items for food baskets for the Charlotte Food Shelf before Thanksgiving.
- The very first Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) Night was a success. It was a hands-on evening filled with inquiry, discovery and lots of memories. Several Champlain Valley Union High students volunteered to help out so stations could provide hands-on explorations.
- The school has 17 students matched with mentors from around the community and many more students on a waiting list. Mentors spend about an hour a week hanging out with a student, doing things that both enjoy. Whether it’s baking up some treats, sewing a new fashion trend, throwing a football on the fields, there is room for all Charlotte caring residents to join in this investment in youth. Anyone interested in

learning more can email Kate Rooney at [krooney@cvsdvt.org](mailto:krooney@cvsdvt.org).

• A group of Omega students took time over the weekend before Thanksgiving to make 31 quarts of soup for the Charlotte Food Shelf with donated chicken from The Golden Apple Farm and donated vegetables from Sweet Roots. The school appreciates the students who donated their time and cooking skills and the local farms who donated the food.

Upcoming events

The annual fifth-eighth grade Winter Concert is Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room. The concert will feature the chorus, jazz band and the fifth-eighth grade concert bands.

At 6 p.m. that same evening, the kindergarten-eighth grade art walk will be displayed in the east end of the building.

Both of these events are free and open to the public.

The PTO Holiday Market is Saturday, Dec. 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. There will be two gyms filled with vendors, a children’s do-it-yourself craft area, several on-site food options, as well as a silent auction and raffle.

All vendor registration fees will support a variety of student enrichment programs including STEM (Science, Technology,

Engineering, Math), theater, athletics and the community Emergency Care Fund. Applications for vendor booths are being accepted. Contact [ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com](mailto:ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com) with any questions.

The 2024-25 Champlain Valley School District budget development meetings are in room 160 at CVU and online. Zoom meeting

information will be posted on the budget page of the district website at [cvsdvt.org/budget](http://cvsdvt.org/budget).

The meeting schedule is Dec. 5 — instructional program; Dec. 19 — operations and maintenance; Jan. 9 — summary and tax implications; and Jan. 23 — final approval and warnings.

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

The Charlotte News now accepts gifts of appreciated securities, such as stock. Giving appreciated securities has a double benefit:

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For more information, please contact John Quinney, President, Board of Directors. [john@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:john@thecharlottenews.org). 802-318-7189.

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Farming

At Merrymac Farm Sanctuary, every animal has a story

Meryl Hartman  
Community News Service

Each day at Merrymac Farm Sanctuary, when 8 a.m. rolls around, it's feeding time. And like clockwork there's always a rowdy bunch, ready to eat.

Take a recent morning at the Charlotte sanctuary as proof: Quacking ducks, the baas of sheep and bleats of goats, horses snorting, pigs and turkeys roaming about — another day was beginning for the crew of rescued animals who live new lives in this haven off Lime Kiln Road.

The goal of the sanctuary is to provide lifelong care for farm animals who have been rescued from neglect or abandonment. It aims to educate the public about animal welfare issues and promote compassionate treatment of all animals.

Founder Era MacDonald calls herself a small-town "Kentucky girl in Vermont." She's had animals in her life since her youth and appreciates that in the rescue realm, people work together for a common goal, rather than compete.

In her experience these last few years running Merrymac, she has been "all in" with her team to take care of the animals day and night and to accept calls for those in need of her help. Right now, the sanctuary has 125 residents, MacDonald said.

"Animal intakes are never-ending," she said, describing how she constantly receives calls from those finding animals in need.

What's new for the sanctuary is its status as a nonprofit, formalizing its bevy of volunteers and putting in place a board of directors. It's the latest step in putting Mer-

rymac on the map. Every animal there has a story, and Era remembers every single one. Take Shadow and Queen, two goats rescued from a local property last year. They had been forced to eat rotten food and were suffering from permanent foot issues and viral infections.

Or one of the sanctuary's newest residents, a pig named Tucker, who arrived in September after he outgrew his home in Pennsylvania and his owner decided to find a better place for him. Farm animals from all backgrounds are welcomed at the sanctuary — not just those who've been abused.

Teaching people about the animals they house is another priority for the sanctuary's team. Merrymac hosts an afterschool program on Monday afternoons for kids from Charlotte and Shelburne schools to come and learn.

"People want to get involved in the cause; they just need an outlet," said MacDonald. They do that through donations to fund treatment and care for the animals, volunteering to do chores or helping build new spaces for the residents.

MacDonald said it "makes her heart sing" when people reach out to help, especially those who don't have much to give but believe in the cause.

Recently, sanctuary leadership has been working to build a new indoor space for the animals to keep them more comfortable in the colder months. MacDonald said some pigs are going to be moved into the new heated area due to their lack of fur. Additionally, the team wants to use some of the new space for educational events.

"It's a work in progress," she said. "But



Courtesy photo

Kids gather around horses at Merrymac Farm Sanctuary as part of an afterschool program in Charlotte.

we've had this whole group of volunteer builders helping us."

People such as Merrymac board member Russ Colvin, who is a retired structural engineer, and an additional crew of volunteers have donated hours helping build.

MacDonald said that "it's been amazing how people come on a Sunday and donate their time to help."

She predicts the new space should be finished around mid-December.

But it's getting chillier, and Charlotte has seen snow already. With all the electrical heating that needs to be put into animals'

stalls to keep them warm, Macdonald said, "prepping for winter is a nightmare."

Sanctuary staff are "running on gas fumes right now" since everything is in startup mode, she said. But Macdonald has hope that Merrymac will garner "support from this community to stay alive."

*(Meryl Hartmann reported this story on assignment for The Charlotte News. The Community News Service is a program in which University of Vermont students work with professional editors to provide content for local news outlets at no cost.)*

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# Calendar of Events

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

### Dragonfly art exhibition Through Nov. 30

Landa Townsend’s art inspired by dragonfly habitats, “Dragonfly Habitat at the Edges of Weatherhead Hollow Pond: 2021-2023” is on display at Shelburne’s Pierson Library through Nov. 30. On Thursday, Nov. 30, 6-7 p.m. there’s a free artist talk. Townsend produced this series of woodblock prints to portray dragonfly behaviors and their unique environment.

### Lost ski areas exhibit opening Friday, Dec. 1, 5-8 p.m.

Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum’s newest exhibit, “Searching for Vermont’s Lost Ski Areas,” is a schuss down memory lane for those who learned to ski or ride at one of Vermont’s 175 “lost” areas. The museum’s search for information about Vermont’s “lost” ski areas, those that at one time operated a mechanical tow, has been a more than 20-year endeavor. The exhibit kicks off at the Museum in Stowe with an opening party Dec. 1, 5-8 p.m. All are welcome. The search for more information about Vermont’s lost ski areas is ongoing and the museum welcomes input from those who have memories and photos to share. More information may be found at [vtssm.org](http://vtssm.org). Part I, featuring 70 “lost” areas between the Massachusetts border and Route 4, runs through mid-October 2024. Part II of the exhibit will push further north and open next season.

### Altered Layers reception Friday, Dec. 1, 5-7 p.m.

Furchgott Sourdiffe Gallery in Shelburne presents Altered Layers, its annual winter, group show featuring Elizabeth Nelson, Bonnie Acker, Miriam Adams, Elizabeth Allen, Philip Hagopian, Kate Longmaid, David Maille, Janet McKenzie, Ken Russack, Jessica Scriver, Carolyn Shattuck and Barbara Wagner, running through Jan. 31 at the gallery at 86 Falls Road in Shelburne Village. For more info 802-985-3848, [mail@fsgallery.com](mailto:mail@fsgallery.com) or <https://tinyurl.com/yjyh85b3>.

### BTV Winter Market Fridays, 2-6 p.m. & Saturdays, 12-6 p.m., thru Dec. 23

The BTV Winter Market is a European-style outdoor market featuring a rotating group of 20 local artists, makers, food vendors and cozy firepits in Burlington’s City Hall Park.

### Holiday Trains Saturday, Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Middlebury’s Henry Sheldon Museum presents Holiday Trains: 30 Years Rolling Down the Tracks, a model train layout that stands three levels high, with two tracks running Lionel O gauge trains and the upper track running HO trains. In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the train layout, there will be an exhibition featuring a display tracing the history of the model trains at the Sheldon during the holiday season. This year the trains will be operating 1-3:30 p.m., Wednesday-Saturday. For more information visit [henrysheldonmuseum.org](http://henrysheldonmuseum.org) or call 802-388-2117. On Saturday, Dec. 2, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., the museum is having a free open house with the model trains running, the annual holiday trees and wreaths raffle on view and more.

### Auditions Sunday & Tuesday, Dec. 3 & 5

The Valley Players will hold auditions for “Poet’s Choice” by Mary Pratt on Sunday, Dec. 3, at 4 p.m. and Tuesday, Dec. 5, at 6:30 p.m. at the Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. The play is the 2023 winner of the Valley Players’ Playwright Award and will be directed by Doug Bergstein. To read the script, download an audition form, and get more information, go to [valleyplayers.com](http://valleyplayers.com). Email [valleyplayers@madrivern.com](mailto:valleyplayers@madrivern.com) with

questions.

### Visiting Artists and Writers Program Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7:30-8:30 p.m.

As part of its visiting artists and writers program, the Vermont Studio Center will host Stanya Kahn giving a virtual artist talk via Zoom. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/er94ked3> to receive a link. Kahn is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in film/video with a practice that includes drawing, painting, sculpture/installation, sound and writing. Recent solo exhibitions include shows in Los Angeles, New York, London, Rotterdam and Berlin.

### Father of Cross-Country Skiing Thursday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.

The father of cross-country skiing, John Caldwell, will hold a virtual conversation on Thursday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. Caldwell competed in the 1952 Winter Olympics and later became a cross-country ski coach. He ultimately became the authority on cross-country skiing and wrote a series of books that helped develop a better understanding of the sport in North America. Caldwell was inducted into both the U.S. and Vermont ski and snowboard halls of fame. Vermont native and Nordic skier, Peter Graves will moderate this conversation. Graves served as a coach with the U.S. ski team and head coach at Harvard for six seasons. He is perhaps best known for his long career as a television and stadium announcer having covered 13 Olympic Games. This virtual discussion begins at 7 p.m. Please consider making a suggested donation of \$10 to support the museum. Register at [vtssm.org/new-events](http://vtssm.org/new-events).

### CHARLOTTE

### Charlotte Central School Holiday Market Saturday, December 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

There will be 60+ vendors, kid crafts, a silent auction, and delicious food. Proceeds help support CCS PTO programs like Teacher Grants and an Emergency Fund for school families.

### Out of this world Saturday, Dec. 9, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

A Science Fun Day, Dec. 9, will offer “out of this world” STEM activities for Grade 3-5 students at the University of Vermont 1:30-3:30 p.m. Space is limited to 30 participants. Although sponsored by the university’s 4-H program, membership in 4-H is not required, only an interest in exploring science, technology, engineering and mathematics topics. To register, go to <https://go.uvm.edu/scifunday>. Details about location and parking will be provided upon receipt of registration. Participants will have an opportunity to create, build and test as they engage in a number of fun, hands-on activities including flying helicopters on Mars, investigating alien genetics and building an egg-drop lander to deliver their “egg-stronaut” safely to the ground. For more info contact Lauren Traister at [lauren.traister@uvm.edu](mailto:lauren.traister@uvm.edu) or 802-656-7565.

### Hinesburg Artist Series concert Sunday, Dec. 10, 2 & 4:30 p.m.

The Hinesburg Artist Series will present its annual holiday concert on Sunday, Dec. 10, with performances at 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. at St. Jude Catholic Church in Hinesburg. The concert will feature the South County Chorus and the Hinesburg Artist Series Orchestra under the direction of Rufus C. Patrick. The featured guest artist will be cellist Jiwon Lee. The featured works this year are David Lovrien’s compositions featuring traditional holiday music with minor alterations. The combined chorus and orchestra will also perform Gloria in Excelsis Deo and Masters in This Hall by Mark Hayes as well as Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas from Home Alone 2 and a wonderful Camp Kirkland arrangement of Ding Dong Merrily on High. This tradition dates back over 25 years. It will include a sing-along and maybe the appearance of a special guest. The concert is free, but donations are welcome and the audience

is also encouraged to bring something for the food shelf. More information at [hinesburgartistseries.org](http://hinesburgartistseries.org).

### Menorah lighting Monday, Dec. 11, 5:15 p.m.

Chabad of Vermont is holding the lighting of the menorah at the Shelburne Town Green in the corner of Falls and Shelburne roads on Monday, Dec. 11, 5:15 p.m. Organizers said there will be donuts, latkes and fun for everyone.

### Constructive discourse discourse Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.

The League of Women Voters of Vermont presents Susan Clark speaking on constructive discourse Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier. Clark is a writer and educator focusing on community sustainability and citizen participation, an award-winning radio commentator and former talk-show co-host. She has taught community development at the college level for 10 years. Besides the in-person presentation, the program will also be live-streamed by Onion River Community Access TV ([orcamedia.net](http://orcamedia.net)).

### Visiting Artists and Writers Program Thursday, Dec. 14, 8-9 p.m.

The Vermont Studio Center will host Anthony Goicolea in-person in the Red Mill Building on Thursday, Dec. 14, 8 p.m. Goicolea is an N.Y.-based, multi-disciplinary artist who established himself in the late 1990s with a series of provocative self-portraits. His work ranges from photography, sculpture, and video to multi-layered drawings on mylar, oil on canvas and large-scale installations. His art is held in many public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Guggenheim, the Museum of Modern Art, the Hirshhorn Museum in D.C. and the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh. Free. More info at [vermontstudiocenter.org/events-calendar](http://vermontstudiocenter.org/events-calendar).

### ‘Amahl & the Night Visitors’ Thursday (Salisbury) & Friday (Williston), Dec. 21 & 22, 5:30 & 7:30 p.m.

Barn Opera’s production of ‘Amahl & the Night Visitors’ will have reduced price tickets for all performances and be performed in both Salisbury and Williston to help the production reach more Vermonters. The price of tickets is \$10. Information and tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/2uaape5z>.

**Advent and Christmas at Charlotte Congregational Church**  
403 Church Hill Road, Charlotte, [charlotteucc.org](http://charlotteucc.org), 802-425-3176

**Advent wreath lighting**  
**Sundays, Dec. 3, 10, 17 & 24, 10 a.m.**  
Candles of hope, peace, joy and love lit each Sunday.

**Messiah sing**  
**Sunday, Dec. 3, 4-5:15 p.m.**  
Four soloists and a small chamber ensemble of Vermont Symphony musicians will bring this participatory performance of Handel’s timeless masterpiece to life. Donations encouraged.

**Advent hours of sanctuary**  
**Mondays, Dec. 4, 11 & 18, 5:30-6:30 p.m.**  
Sanctuary open for prayer and meditation.

**Christmas pageant**  
**Sunday, Dec. 10, 10 a.m.**  
Come for a creative and imaginative enactment of the Christmas story.

**Christmas Eve**  
Offering taken at all services will be used to support our partners near and far.  
10 a.m. — Simple morning service with carols and a few surprises  
4 p.m. — Outdoor Family Carol Sing for all in the courtyard around the Christmas tree.  
6 p.m. indoor service of lessons and carols with children’s choir  
7 p.m. — Indoor service of lessons and carols

**First Sunday after Christmas**  
**Sunday, Dec. 31, 10 a.m.**  
Visit website for details. All events will also be livestreamed except the Outdoor Family Carol Sing and the 7 p.m. indoor service of lessons and carols.



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

**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, November 30, 7 - 8:45 p.m.

**Recreation Commission Meeting**  
Monday, December 4, 5 - 7 p.m.

**Charlotte Energy Committee Meeting**  
Monday, December 4, 7 - 9 p.m.

**Trails Committee Monthly Meeting**  
Tuesday, December 5, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

**Selectboard**  
Monday, December 11, 6:30



Library News

Clothe the Mitten Tree in cold-weather accessories

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

The library’s annual Mitten Tree will go up this week and the staff welcomes donations of cold-weather accessories to adorn the tree. These will go to residents in need at the start of the New Year.

The library invites you to a few festive happenings here at the library:

- Saturday, Dec. 2 — Eco-Friendly Gift Wrapping Workshop: 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, Dec. 6 — After-School Gift-Making Workshop
- Dec. 2-16 — Friends Holiday Craft Sale

Details for all of these programs can be found below.

Don’t forget our community survey. We’d appreciate your feedback on this three-minute online survey. If you prefer a paper copy, you can find them around town including the library, town hall, the senior center, Spears Corner Store and the Old Brick Store.

Thank you for your help. Take the survey at <https://bit.ly/3FWUaK0>. Looking for activities to try at home? Check out our Library of Things craft kits or pick up a Take & Make kit at the front desk. December crafts: 3-D stand-up snowman and DIY bird feeder garland.

Children’s programs

Preschool story time  
Tuesdays, Nov. 7, 14 & 28

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

Preschool play time  
Wednesdays, Nov. 29, Dec. 6-20

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.



After-school gift-making workshop  
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2 p.m.

Do you have a special person or pet that is hard to shop for? Come to the After-school gift-making workshop and cross a few gifts for loved ones off of your to-do list. Please register: [youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org). Ages 7 and up.

Programs for adults

Mystery book group  
Monday, Dec. 18, 10 a.m.

In “A Death in Door County,” the next title on the Monday mystery book group’s list, Morgan Carter, owner of the Odds and Ends bookstore in Door County, Wisconsin, has a hobby. When she’s not tending the store, she’s hunting cryptids — creatures whose existence is rumored, but never proven to be real. It’s a hobby that cost her parents their lives, but one she’ll never give up on. So, when a number of bodies turn up on the shores of Lake Michigan with injuries that look like bites from a giant unknown animal, police chief Jon Flanders turns to Morgan for help. Copies available at the circulation desk.

Gift wrap workshop  
Saturday, Dec. 2, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Create some one-of-a kind wrapping paper for special gifts using recycled and



If you’re looking for something to try at home, the library front desk has kits for making a 3-D stand-up snowman and bird feeder garland.

reused materials. For all ages. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Friends holiday craft sale  
Saturday, Dec. 2-16, during library hours

Shop local crafts and support the library. We’ll have some past favorites including Nan’s fabulous woven potholders and colorful collage note cards by Marcia Vogler.

Short story selections  
Wednesday, Dec. 6 & 20, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff via Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/9c398wyy> to share and discuss short stories old and new.

Men’s book discussion  
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7:30 p.m.

The topic of the men’s book discussion group is “The Kingdom of Ice.” On July 8, 1879, Captain George Washington De Long and his team of 32 men set sail from San Francisco on the USS Jeanette. Heading deep into uncharted Arctic waters, they carried the aspirations of a young country burning to be the first nation to reach the North Pole. Copies available at the circulation desk. Join the discussion in person or on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/bde3bktn>.



Courtesy photo

Recurring programs

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.

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 contact information:**  
Margaret Woodruff, director  
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian  
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian  
Phone: 802-425-3864  
Email: [info@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:info@charlottepubliclibrary.org)

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

# ARE YOU OUR NEXT PUBLISHER?

The publisher serves as the organization's executive director and is an unpaid volunteer who works closely with the editor to sustain and grow The Charlotte News in furtherance of its mission.

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## Lighten up

Photo by Lee Krohn

One season ends and another begins. The Shelburne Museum’s traditional warm-weather season ended on Oct. 22. And on Oct. 23, event coordinator Louis Godin and a crew of 30 began three weeks of work on the museum’s winter season Winter Lights display. The museum estimates there are more than 300,000 lights in the display. The museum’s 45-acre campus is aglow with the seasonal lights accompanied by musical selections Thursday-Sunday evenings 5-8 p.m. through Saturday, Jan. 6. Visitors are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance on the museum’s website [www.shelburnemuseum.org/winterlights](http://www.shelburnemuseum.org/winterlights).



## Senior Center News

# Get into the festive holiday spirit at the senior center

Lori York  
Director

The holiday season is upon us and there are plenty of opportunities to get into the festive spirit.

Join librarians from Charlotte, Hinesburg and Shelburne for an afternoon filled with book recommendations and light refreshments as a relaxing way to search for the perfect gift. Age Well will offer a sit-down holiday meal followed by the Segel Family Christmas concert.

And to find some calm within the hectic holiday season, focus on self-care by participating in the winter solstice meditation.

Don't forget the gift of life and consider donating blood at this month's Red Cross Blood Drive at the senior center.

Please note that the senior center will be closed on Friday, Dec. 22 at noon and will reopen on Tuesday, Jan. 2. Age Well Grab-&-Go meals will be distributed on Thursday, Dec. 28 even though the senior center is closed.

### Programs

#### December artist exhibit

The Champlain Valley Quilt Guild of Vermont is a non-profit organization that strives to promote an interest in the art of quilting while also providing comfort to those in the community by donating quilts to organizations, such as the Vermont Respite House, The Ronald McDonald House, Vermont Quilts of Valor and UVM Medical Center. Every year the guild has a different quilt theme challenge for its members. This year's quilt challenge is the theme of animals.

#### AARP Smart Driver course

**Thursday, Dec. 7, 10:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**  
The AARP Smart Driver course is designed especially for drivers age 50 and older, to help refresh driving skills and may even help save on auto insurance. AARP members can take the course at a discounted rate. Please plan to bring lunch. Register early as class size is limited to 15. Checks should be made out to AARP. Cost:\$25 or \$20 for AARP members. Register by Monday, Dec. 4.

#### Wrapping up a good read

**Tuesday, Dec. 12, 1 p.m.**  
Enjoy a relaxed afternoon of gift shopping and good cheer as librarians from the Charlotte, Hinesburg and Shelburne libraries come to the senior center to share their favorite reads for the season. Refreshments served. Book copies will be available for purchase thanks to the Flying Pig Bookstore. Free but registration recommended.

#### Age Well holiday meal

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, noon**  
Join into a festive holiday sit-down dinner provided by Age Well. The menu is stuffed chicken breast with apple-cranberry stuffing, gravy, mashed potatoes, carrots, dinner roll and pumpkin bar with white chips and raisins for dessert. Registration and \$5 lunch donation required by Thursday, Dec. 7. You will need to have a completed 24FY Age Well Registration form on file.

#### Segel family Christmas concert

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, 1 p.m.**  
Come and hear the Segel children perform a Christmas piano and violin concert at the Senior Center on Wednesday, Dec. 13, at 1 p.m. Juna (16), Jack (14), Hannah (9) and Ada (6) will be playing a variety of festive arrangements, including a special violin trio. Free but registration recommended.

#### Alzheimer's caregivers support group

**Thursday, Dec. 14, 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 more information contact Susan Cartwright at scartwrightasg@gmail.com.

#### Red Cross Blood Drive

**Thursday, Dec. 21, 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 and enter: CHARLOTTE to schedule an appointment.

#### Winter solstice meditation

**Friday, Dec. 22, 5-6 p.m.**

Join Charlie Nardozzi and Heidi Kvasnak for a candlelight, winter-solstice meditation, which will include gentle seated movement and soft chanting, to prepare your body for a time of quiet, silent meditation, ending in chant. On this auspicious evening you will practice to anchor yourself in the inner stillness and light of your being, so that you may welcome the holidays with grounded awareness. Let's celebrate the transition from the longest night of the year to the lengthening days of light. No experience necessary. Suggested donation of \$5-\$15. Registration suggested,

#### Meals

Menus are posted on the website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

#### Monday lunches

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

#### Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals

Pick up on Thursdays 10-11 a.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.

Note: For Christmas week, there will be an Age Well Grab & Go meal pick-up on Thursday, Dec. 28, 10-11 a.m. No late pick-ups as the senior center is closed this week.

#### Weather cancellation policy

When the local schools are in session, the Charlotte Senior Center follows the Champlain Valley School District for weather-related cancellations. When school is not in session and there is inclement weather, a cancellation determination will be made by 8 a.m. Cancellation notices will be posted on the senior center website and on the outgoing voice message. An email will be sent to those who have signed up to receive the email newsletter.

#### Senior center info

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages. Programs include weekly lunches, daily exercise classes and many opportunities to connect through board and card games and art and language programming.

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

Lori York, director, lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org  
Jenn Lawson, coordinator, jlawson@charlotteseniorcentervt.org  
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte  
802-425-6345  
charlotteseniorcentervt.org.



Photo by Lori York

The Senior Center will partner with Age Well to provide monthly sit-down meals. The Thanksgiving meal was a success and next there will be a Holiday meal offered in December.



Photo by Lori York

The senior center hosted a holiday origami workshop.



Photo by Lori York

The Segel family, from left Hannah, Ada and Juna, will return to perform a Christmas Concert on Dec. 13 at 1 p.m.



# Write Ingredients

## Painting chickens preferable to raising them

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

Chicken chowder, cranberry seltzer and good cheer grace upcoming Monday Munches at the Charlotte Senior Center.

Most plentiful bird in the world? The chicken. The abundance of both chickens and cranberries is noteworthy. Cultural references to the chicken abound — in myth, folklore, religion and literature.

In his beautiful book, “Art of the Chicken: A Master Chef’s Paintings, Stories and Recipes of the Humble Bird,” Jacques Pépin quotes Grandma Moses: “If I didn’t start painting, I would have raised chickens.”

Pépin notes that although over the course of his life he has tended small flocks at his home in Connecticut, he’d rather paint chickens than raise them.

In matters of the kitchen, Pépin observes that “chickens are egalitarian creatures. Bring one home and it can be adapted to any style of cooking, from simple country fare to the heights of haute cuisine.”

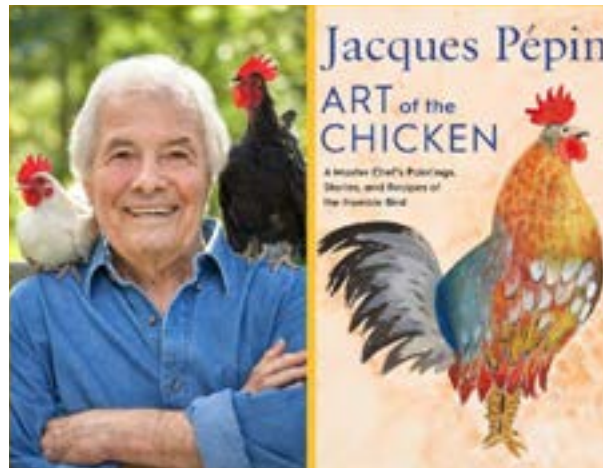
Filled with recipes, stories and paintings, his beautiful book is recommended even for those who have no interest in cooking.

There may be nothing mythological about the cranberry, but Wikipedia provides plenty of interesting history, starting in New England with the Narragansett people of the Algonquin nation. A recipe for cranberry sauce appeared in the Pilgrim cookbook, and in 1667, New Englanders sent 10 barrels of cranberries to King Charles, hoping to mollify him over a disagreement. “The Compleat Cook’s Guide,” published in 1683, makes no mention of cranberry seltzer but does note cranberry juice.

Canned cranberry “logs” were introduced by Ocean Spray in 1941, and now, Americans consume more than 5 million gallons of these “logs” every holiday season. In 2021, 790 million pounds of cranberries were harvested in the U.S., with Wisconsin producing the most, followed by Massachusetts and Oregon.

Cranberries have provoked politics. On Nov. 9, 1959, the secretary of health, education and welfare announced that “some cranberries had been contaminated by a weed killer that had caused cancer in rats.” Not surprisingly, this announcement set off the Great Cranberry Scare, threatening a \$50-million-a-year industry.

Michael Tortorello reported in The New Yorker, Americans had been waiting with more than usual interest to see what the Eisenhowers would eat as Thanksgiving



relish. The news came Friday, courtesy of the Associated press headline: “No Cranberries for President.”

This news was soon followed by a Washington Post front page headline: “Vice president has cranberries in Wisconsin.”

At a political dinner on a campaign swing, Nixon ate four helpings of cranberry sauce, declaring his great confidence in the health/education secretary’s ability to solve the problem.

Not to be outdone, Democratic Senator John F. Kennedy drank two glasses of cranberry juice, joking, “If we both pass away, I feel I shall have performed a great public service by taking the vice president with me.” (See: “Dinner with the President: Food, Politics, and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House,” by Alex Prud’homme, another fun book.)

And don’t forget the cookies. A 1653 recipe for the Austrian Linzer torte pie lays claim to being the oldest written recipe in existence. Later, bakers would take the Linzer torte dough, and instead of making a pie, they fashioned cookies.

Confession: I once found my glob of Linzer torte dough, which I’d refrigerated as directed, impossible to roll out. I despaired, but the family physicist had the solution. Hans wrapped it up well, laid the package down in the driveway and rolled it flat with the car.

The cookies came out just fine.

In his book, “Now that’s a Linzertorte,” 30-year pastry chef at Trapp Family Lodge, Marshall Faye, reports no such difficulties. Recently, The Stowe Reporter offered a portrait, “Stowe son talks Trapp, Linzertorte and foster parenting.”

Unrelated, except in the food category, Ralph Nader once invited me to dinner at his sister’s house. I want to recommend his new book both because he helped me a lot when I self-published “Trump, Trump, Trump: The March of Folly” (more relevant now than

ever before) and because his new book is very positive: “The Rebellious CEO: 12 Leaders Who Did It Right.” Certainly, we need as much positive as we can get right now.

Finally, take note of what a character in James McBride’s “Heaven & Earth Grocery Store” says of Bulgarians: “They can’t pour a glass of water without making a party of it.”

You don’t have to be Bulgarian to come drink a glass of cranberry seltzer at the Charlotte Senior Center and make a party of it. Come on in and bring a friend.

With all the holiday music soon to fill every space imaginable, enjoy these nonsense lyrics to “Chickery Chick” at <https://www.tinyurl.com/3e8sm3aj>, a song released by Sammy Kaye and going to No. 1 in 1945. It seems that just about everybody performed this song. After seeing versions by The Andrews Sisters, Anita O’Day, Dinah Shore, Frank Sinatra, Gene Krupa, Tiny Tim and The Three Stooges, I stopped looking.

Maybe it’s time for “Deck the Halls.” Here’s a version by Nat King Cole <https://tinyurl.com/pr89vn46>.

### Monday Munch

**Dec. 4, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Winter vegetables with gnocchi, spinach-lettuce salad with bleu cheese, grapes, sunflower seeds, Christmas Cookies and cranberry seltzer

### Monday Munch

**Dec. 11, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Cheddar chicken chowder, festive salad and Linzer torte cookies.

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