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The Charlotte News

Thursday, January 11, 2024 | Volume 66 Number 14



Photo by Lee Krohn

Snow can melt the frozen heart.

Spiking the hike



Photo by Jim Hyde

The new year is a good opportunity to check out the Charlotte Senior Center. There’s lots of different things to do or learn. One offering is winter spke hikes every other Wednesday through February, starting Jan. 17. From left, Susan Hyde, Laura Cahners-Ford, Susan Cantor and Eliza Hammer explore outside with all but their four-legged companion well-bundled and spiked. See more page 15.

Let us hear from you — town manager or town administrator?

John Quinney
Publisher

On Town Meeting Day, March 4, this article will be placed before the voters:

“Shall the town submit to the General Assembly of the State of Vermont a proposal to adopt a municipal charter containing the following: Section 3: Town Manager/ Road Commissioner. The Town shall have a Town Manager form of governance per Title 24, Chapter 37, with the Town Manager’s duties per 24 V.S.A § 1236, except for the duties of the Road Commissioner, which shall continue to be performed by an elected Road Commissioner.”

As reported in this newspaper, the town manager issue has been discussed at several selectboard meetings, and, no doubt, by many Charlotters chatting with friends, colleagues and neighbors. It is a vitally important issue for the town, but we know little about whether this community is in favor or against, undecided or looking for more information.

To learn more about voter sentiment, we have created a short survey (on next page and online at <http://tinyurl.com/pdpywake>.)

SEE **TOWN SURVEY** PAGE 2

Charlotte looks to rejuvenate town meeting

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

For three years, being the Charlotte town moderator may have seemed like being the lonely Maytag repairman in television commercials of yore, who complained ad nauseam (Latin for advertising nauseau?) about there not being any washing machines for him to repair.

Town moderator Charlie Russell laughs at the comparison but admits that, with no traditional Town Meeting Day since 2020 because of the threat of COVID, he hasn’t been doing much moderating.

Many town moderators “found themselves ‘unemployed’ for a couple of years while Vermonters voted by Australian ballot to ensure the continuity of Vermont’s democracy through the state of emergency,” said a report the Vermont League of Cities and Towns released as more towns were returning to in-person town meetings.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns’ Ted Brady said they combed through 225 warnings and thousands of articles “to get the pulse of Vermont’s town meeting” last year. Their conclusion: “Town meeting is back.”

Russell looks forward to stepping back into his position’s moderating shoes this year when Charlotte returns to sort of a traditional town meeting. Like the town meetings of yesteryear that Vermont is known for, the town will hold a town meeting with voting by voice vote from the floor, a budget that is approved from the floor, the right for residents to introduce amendments to that budget from the floor — but it will be a town meeting with a nontraditional time.

The town’s in-person meeting day will be at 9 a.m., Saturday, March 2. Selectboard

“Town meeting is back.”

— Vermont League of
Cities and Towns

members hope lots of people will come to participate in this meeting that takes place in the Charlotte Central School multi-purpose room.

Selectboard chair Jim Faulkner said the change to a Saturday, in-person town meeting is being tried in hopes of increasing participation in the voting process and as a way of making town meeting “more of a community get-together.” It is also hoped that more people will be able to attend town meeting on a Saturday if they don’t have to be at work like most would be on a Tuesday.

At town hall from 7 a.m.-7 p.m., March 5, the first Tuesday in March and the day historically designated as Town Meeting Day for most Vermont municipalities, Charlotte will hold voting in the privacy of the voting booth for those issues and elections the town decides by Australian ballot, such as the school budget, the presidential primary and town offices.

Open town positions

Among town offices that will be up for election on the March 5 Australian ballot are:

- Auditor — two positions open — three-year term expiring 2027 and two years of three-year term expiring 2026
- Cemetery commissioner — three positions open — three-year term expiring 2027 (James LaBerge, incumbent), one year

of three-year term expiring 2025 and two years of three-year term expiring 2026

- Champlain Valley School District board — one position open — three-year term expiring 2027 (Meghan Metzler, incumbent)
- Charlotte Library trustee — one position open — five-year term expiring 2029 (Jonathan Silverman, incumbent)
- Delinquent tax collector — one position open — one-year term expiring 2025 (Mary Mead, incumbent)
- Moderator — one position open — one-year term expiring 2025 (a not-so-lonely, Charlie Russell, incumbent)
- Road commissioner — one position open — one-year term expiring 2025 (Hugh Junior Lewis, incumbent)
- Selectboard — two-year & three-year positions open — two-year term expiring 2026 (Louise McCarren, incumbent) and three-year term expiring 2027 (Frank Tenney, incumbent).

McCarren has confirmed that she is running for re-election. Tenney couldn’t be reached for confirmation.

- Town clerk — one position open — three-year term expiring 2027 (Mary Mead, incumbent)
- Town treasurer — one position open — three-year term expiring 2027 (Mary Mead, incumbent)
- Trustee of public funds — two positions open — three-year term expiring 2027 (Maurice Harvey, incumbent) and one year of three-year term expiring 2025.

Candidates need to submit petitions with at least 30 signatures to the clerk’s office by 5 p.m., Monday, Jan. 29.

How to grow town meeting?
The change to a Saturday town meeting

SEE **TOWN MEETING** PAGE 2

Ed Amidon — ‘a fabulous life’

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Ed Amidon died the day after Christmas. Members of his family said it was his time and that he had lived a good life.

That sounds like a world-class understatement.

His widow, selectboard member Louise McCarren, said one of the things that connected them was a love of adventure.

“We just both loved doing the crazy stuff,” McCarren said in a phone call.

She admitted that although she loved doing most of the “crazy stuff” Amidon wanted to do, sometimes her husband, a former state representative from Charlotte, went on adventures that were even too crazy for her.

One of those was trip he took a few years ago to Tristan da Cunha, one of a group of volcanic islands in the South Atlantic considered the most remote inhabited archipelago in the world.

It was a refueling stop between Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Cape Town, South Africa. The only way to get there was by research vessel. A six-day trip.

“It’s halfway between nowhere and nowhere,” McCarren said. “It’s an island with no helicopters. No airports. No nothing.”

So, when her husband, alone on this faraway island he’d always dreamed of traveling to, began to have shortness of breath, she didn’t have any advice for him.

He went to the clinic, since that was all there was. Doctors there thought he might be having a heart attack. They gave him

SEE **ED AMIDON** PAGE 3

TOWN MEETING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was another attempt by Charlotte to try to increase attendance and participation in important town decisions.

Years ago, Town Meeting Day was more of a community get-together in Charlotte. A community meal was served at Charlotte Central School in conjunction with the town meeting and middle school students would watch younger children while their parents participated in town meeting.

In 2000, the school district decided to hold school on Town Meeting Day. Previously, Town Meeting Day had been a school holiday in Charlotte. When the state increased the school year by five days, the school system decided it needed to hold classes on that day. Some liked the idea of students being exposed to Vermont’s democratic process by having town meeting while school was in session.

The Feb. 10, 2000, edition of The Charlotte News mentioned that some felt having school in session might increase attendance at Town Meeting Day because more families would be in town. However, the newspaper noted, it was a drawback for teachers who would be unable to attend, unless they took the day off.

It is difficult to determine how many participated in the very early Vermont town meetings, according to “All Those in Favor: Rediscovering the Secrets of Town Meeting and Community,” but the authors Susan Clark and Frank Bryan wrote that a rough estimate is that 50 percent of freemen, as eligible voters were called then, attended and that in some towns it’s likely that almost all showed up.

Town meeting tradition

In a phone conversation, Clark said that the statewide drop in attendance at town meetings has been slow over the years, but

she thinks there’s been a precipitous drop since towns began to decide more issues by Australian ballot around the 1980s.

She hopes that Vermont will hold on to its tradition of town meeting and voting from the floor and rues the Australian ballot.

“In a Vermont town every citizen is a legislator. In a Vermont town the government truly is by and of the people. Town meetings are not public hearings, opinion polls or what Quayle derisively called ‘grass-roots caucuses.’” Clark and Bryan wrote. “They are legislatures operated by ordinary citizens who don’t leave their lawmaking to someone else.”

Clark values the town meeting because it is one of the world’s very few examples of participatory direct democracy. New England and Switzerland are the only two places in the world that she knows of where citizens make “binding decisions on points of law.”

Recently, there has been “a trend of towns trying different things to make town meeting more accessible, while preserving the unique nature of floor meetings that enable residents to do more than vote yes or no. Moving the meeting to a weekend, to an evening and splitting the meeting into Australian balloting for some items and floor meetings for other items is pretty common,” said Ted Brady of the Vermont League of City and Towns.

In 2015 Charlotte tried to increase the number of residents participating in decisions about the town’s budget by passing a charter that instituted a two-step process where the budget could be modified from the floor and was passed by voice vote in a traditional town meeting. But because only about 150 people usually attend town meeting, the charter instituted a second step into the budget approval process by having the budget that was passed by a town meeting voice vote affirmed by Australian ballot five weeks later. It was hoped that, because more people generally vote by Australian ballot than attend town meetings, the second vote

would mean more people would have a say in the budget decision.

This charter’s change to the budget voting process was enacted with a sunset clause that ended the two-step process after three years, unless it was renewed. The town did not renew it, so this year the town’s budget will be approved from the floor on the Saturday town meeting. There will not be a ratification vote by Australian ballot five weeks later.

Clark appreciated Krasnow’s memories of Charlotte’s town meetings when he was a student. Those meetings of yesteryear involved two of her most valued recommendations for increasing attendance at town meeting. Food is a high No. 2 on her list of suggestions, but most important is offering childcare.

“No. 1 is childcare. You have to offer childcare,” Clark said. “People might say, ‘Why is the town paying for child care?’ It’s because we’re trying to lower every barrier that we can in order to increase participation in democracy.”

Faulkner said, in order to ensure that town meeting is as much of a community event as it can be, the selectboard is hoping organizations and committees like Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue, the conservation commission, the Boy and Girl Scouts will have tables and presentations as in the past.

In Charlotte, as in most of Vermont, town meeting is back this year. According to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns survey, in 2019, before town meeting was shut down almost everywhere, 185 of the 239 municipalities who responded said that floor voting was at least partly responsible for how their budgets were decided.

Last year, floor voting played a part in the budget decisions of 182 responding Vermont municipalities.

Henry David Thoreau would approve. As the essayist once wrote: “Town meeting is the true Congress, the most respectable one ever assembled in the United States.”



Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

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The editor makes final decisions on 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.

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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.
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- Be accountable and transparent.

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Postmaster/Send address changes to:

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

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TOWN SURVEY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Here are the main features of each system of government. Much of this information came from Lee Krohn’s July 18, 2023, report, “Town of Charlotte: The matter of a town administrator or town manager.”

Town administrator (current model):

- The selectboard retains almost all decision-making authority which often leads to lengthy meetings and extended discussions around minor issues.
- The town administrator’s responsibilities are not defined in Vermont law and the selectboard has flexibility in deciding which responsibilities to delegate to the town administrator.
- Because they are involved in so many matters, the Charlotte selectboard feels that they are in touch with voter sentiment.
- However, strategic, public policy issues that will affect the future of Charlotte may not get the attention they need because the selectboard’s time and energy are focused on short-term, tactical decisions.
- By attending selectboard meetings, town residents are able to discuss issues that concern them with the selectboard.

Town manager (proposed model):

- The town manager carries out the policies of the selectboard and provides

recommendations to the selectboard on the formation of policy.

- The position of town manager is referenced in statute (Title 24, Chapter 37. “Town, City and Village Managers”).
- Town managers have greater responsibility and authority to supervise employees and departments, manage budgets and finances and handle other duties as required.
- Town managers make decisions based on town policies or rules that are in place.
- There could be less citizen access to the selectboard, and some may feel less well informed about community concerns; yet residents are still able to attend selectboard meetings and bring issues that concern them before the selectboard.
- For Charlotte, in addition to the town administrator-town manager question, a charter change is required to ensure that the present arrangement with an elected road commissioner remains in place.

Many Vermont municipalities, including Shelburne and Hinesburg, have chosen to operate under the town manager model; many others, including Cambridge and Johnson, employ town administrators. There are no obvious patterns at play here, and town population isn’t a factor in each town’s system of government.

It’s important to see this issue in a broader context. Krohn wrote, “Transitions are good times to reexamine systems, whether in the public or private sectors, to consider how we conduct our business, and whether we’re doing it as well as we can. It’s not criticism of persons or processes; rather, it’s just the opportunity to take a step back to look at the big picture, separate from the constant press of day-to-day issues.”

Importantly, under either model, clear communication among all parties is key to good governance.

Want to learn more and ask questions?

The selectboard has scheduled two public hearings on the town manager issue. The first is on Tuesday, Jan. 30, the second on Monday, Feb. 5. Both meetings will be held at town hall and start at 6:30 p.m.

Please tell us what you think Charlotte should do.

Your answer will help inform the public debate on this important issue. We will share the results of this survey in a future edition of the newspaper.

Complete the survey online at <http://tinyurl.com/pdpywake> or cut out the survey below and mail it to us at P.O. Box 251, Charlotte VT 05445. Many thanks.

☐ **Charlotte should keep the town administrator model.**

☐ **Charlotte should move to a town manager model.**

☐ **Undecided/need more information.**

Please tell us why you made your choice:

(John Quinney is publisher of The Charlotte News and chair of the board of directors. The opinions expressed here are his own and not necessarily those of the newspaper nor the board. Neither the newspaper or the board have taken a position on the town manager-town administrator question.)

Correction

In an opinion piece about the town-manager-versus-town-administrator issue in the Dec. 14 edition of the newspaper, a logo of the Charlotte Selectboard ran. The logo was just an attempt to label the topic of the story, not the selectboard’s opinion on the issue. In retrospect, we regret any confusion caused by the logo running in conjunction with this commentary.

American Red Cross facing emergency blood shortage

Dan Dowling
Contributor

The American Red Cross is experiencing an emergency blood shortage as the nation faces the lowest number of people giving blood in 20 years. The Red Cross blood supply has fallen to critically low levels across the country, and blood and platelet donors are urged to make a donation appointment to help alleviate the shortage and help ensure lifesaving medical procedures are not put on hold.

Over the last 20 years, the number of people donating blood to the Red Cross has fallen by about 40 percent. When fewer people donate blood, even small disruptions to blood donations — such as the nearly 7,000-unit shortfall in blood donations the Red Cross experienced between Christmas and New Year’s Day alone — can have a huge impact on the availability of blood products and dramatic consequences for those in need of emergency blood transfusion.

Blood products are currently going to hospitals faster than blood donations are coming in, and in recent weeks, the Red Cross has had to limit distributions of type O blood products — among the most transfused blood types — to hospitals.

“Small changes in blood donor turnout can have a huge impact on the availability of blood products and dramatic consequences for those in need of an emergency blood transfusion,” said Dr. Eric Gehrie, executive physician director for the Red Cross. “More challenges may lie ahead as the potential for severe winter weather and seasonal illness may compound the dire blood supply situation. Donors of all types, especially those with type O blood and those giving platelets, are urged to give now.”

To make an appointment, download the Red Cross blood donor app, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

The Red Cross and the National Football League (NFL) are partnering this January, during National Blood Donor Month, to urge individuals to give blood or platelets and help tackle the emergency blood shortage. Those who come to give blood, platelets or plasma in January will automatically be entered for a chance to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas. For details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities in the vicinity this month include:

- Burlington
Jan. 16, 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Greater Burlington YMCA, 298 College St.
Jan. 16, noon-5 p.m., Hula Lakeside, 50 Lakeside Ave.
- Colchester
Jan. 18, 11:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Vermont Public, 365 Troy Ave.
Jan. 30, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Our Lady of Grace Church, 784 Main St
- Essex
Jan. 29, 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m., Essex Alliance Church, 37 Old Stage Road
- Essex Junction
Jan. 20, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., The Essex Resort & Spa - The Mansion, 70 Essex Way
- Shelburne
Jan. 23, noon-5 p.m., St. Catherine of Siena, 72 Church St.
- Vergennes
Jan. 23, noon-4:30 p.m., Cross Life Church, 1759 US Rte. 7
- Winooski
Jan. 19, noon-5 p.m., Winooski Senior Ctr., 123 Barlow St.

ED AMIDON FROM PAGE 1

something to take.

Ed Amidon began to feel better, so he stayed on for a bit longer, then caught the six-day research vessel back to Cape Town.

When he got to the United States, the doctor told him, “You don’t have a heart problem; you threw a clot in your lung.”

McClarren said the weirdest trip she didn’t go on was a trip Ed took with their adult son William Amidon to Abbottabad, Pakistan. That is the town where Osama Bin Laden was caught.

William Amidon has wonderful memories of a three-week expedition they took on the Coppermine River in the Northwest Territories, a 300-mile paddling trip that ended in the Artic Ocean.

“That was exciting for me when I was 13,” he said. “It was neat that they shared this passion.”

His father was a paddler in the early days of the sport, in the 1970s, when pretty much the only canoes for whitewater were aluminum. They paddled in blue jeans and didn’t have flotation for their boats.

In those conditions, Ed Amidon had early descents of some infamous rivers and was one of the first members of the fledgling Northern Vermont Canoe Cruisers, which is now known as the Vermont Paddlers Club.

McClarren and her husband were both



Courtesy photo
Ed Amidon and granddaughter Marley Amidon having a ball.

lawyers and both lived in Charlotte but didn’t know each other. More than four decades ago, they ended up sitting next to each other at the Chittenden County Courthouse and began talking.

One thing and another and it’s been a lifetime of adventures.

“You know, we did 30-35 major wilderness rivers,” McCarren said. “He lived a pretty fabulous life.”

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Letter to the Editor

Economic justice is civil liberties issue

To the Editor:

The Fair Share for Vermont campaign (fairsharevt.org) is calling for Vermont’s wealthiest residents to pay their fair share in taxes so we can build a better state for all of us.

As part of this campaign, the ACLU of Vermont and our partners are urging state legislators to ensure that those who can most afford it — the wealthiest 2 percent of Vermont residents — pay more in taxes to better support and address the needs of our communities.

There are many reasons why we are proud to support this campaign, but they boil down to this: as an organization that works to remedy deeply entrenched sources of inequality and to advance the rights and liberties of all people, economic justice is central to our vision for a more just and equitable state and a healthy, vibrant democracy.

Today, because of extreme and growing wealth inequality, more and more of our neighbors are denied access to opportunity and to basic necessities. As a result, many are prevented from exercising their civil rights and civil liberties to the fullest extent, participating in our democracy and experiencing true freedom and equality in our society.

As we have long recognized, wealth inequality also reinforces the many forms of systemic racism that we are working to dismantle each and every day.

When our state invests in people in the here and now, it makes the state more sustainable and affordable for everyone in both the short- and long-term. When we prioritize real solutions like affordable housing, healthcare and

education — all things that impact our civil liberties, directly and indirectly, every day — the benefits to our state, and to Vermont workers and families, are transformative.

State legislators have started to make investments for healthier, more resilient communities — in housing, childcare, harm reduction strategies and climate solutions. We applaud those efforts. At the same time, we know we must do far more to create a state budget that better addresses the needs of everyone who calls Vermont home.

With more revenue from the state’s wealthiest residents, we can build a Vermont with affordable housing; where no child goes hungry; where everyone gets the healthcare they need; and where our environment and infrastructure can sustain a vibrant economy and a strong democracy.

That’s why we look forward to working with legislators to advance this proposal in the coming year. We recognize there are other paths forward to raise revenue from those who can most afford it, and we hope policymakers will explore all available options to prioritize Vermont workers, families and communities.

When they do that, it’s important for our state legislators to know that they will have the support of the ACLU of Vermont, our members and our partners in the Fair Share for Vermont campaign.

They will also have the backing of the vast majority of their constituents. Voters overwhelmingly support proposals like Fair Share for Vermont, and those voters will be looking to their representatives for solutions this election year.

James Lyall
Montpelier
(Lyall is executive director of the ACLU of Vermont.)

Charlotte steps up with donations to The Charlotte News

Claudia Marshall
Board of Directors
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Publisher and Board Chair

As a nonprofit, independent newspaper, we pass the hat twice a year and ask for your voluntary contributions to keep The Charlotte News alive and thriving. It costs roughly \$150,000 a year to keep the paper and website coming your way and we literally can’t do it without you.

Well, guess what? The readers of The Charlotte News have come through yet again, exceeding our winter fundraising goal and

ensuring the future of the paper and website — at least until the next fund drive rolls around, of course.

It’s a crazy business model, asking folks to pay for a public service they can get for free. But it works, somehow, and it makes us more answerable to you, our readers. It also means that you have some skin in the game. And it’s immensely rewarding to know that you care enough about the paper — and the community — to take a few minutes and a few bucks to invest in nonprofit, local journalism.

We are so grateful.
Plus, we have big plans for growth and

improvement in the year to come. Keep reading the paper and you’ll see.
Perhaps it goes without saying that it’s not too late for you to do your part on our website, charlottenewsvt.org. It only takes a couple of minutes and you decide how much to donate.
And it’s worth noting that the more contributions we receive now, the less fundraising we will have to do in the future.
We want to share our gratitude for the 350 people who made 530 gifts to The Charlotte News in 2023. Thanks to these gifts, we qualified for a \$17,000 NewsMatch grant and a \$10,000 challenge from friends of The

Charlotte News.
Below we’ve listed everyone who made donations to The Charlotte News last year. In some instances, we’ve been able to include the spouses and partners that are such an important part of our donor community. In other cases, that information wasn’t provided, so we apologize for the oversight. If we’ve made any errors, please let us know with an email to john@thecharlottenews.org to make sure we are able to give credit where credit is due.
Thank you to the 2023 donors to The Charlotte News:

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Thanks for volunteers at newspaper’s future, present, past

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Although technically this newspaper is produced by one full-time and one part-time employee, each edition actually represents the efforts of so many more people.

During the past year, more than 70 people have given their blood, sweat, tears ... well, at least their sweat ... crafting words, capturing photos, pouring over pages proofreading and traveling the roads to deliver The Charlotte News.

These volunteers who contribute so much to the newspaper may not realize that they are not only contributing to each edition, they are also contributing to the legacy of The Charlotte News, and to some degree, of the town. Newspapers are often deemed the first draft of history. They are doing important work that we are so thankful for.

And these volunteers continue a proud tradition that enshrines the newspaper’s importance to the town since 1958. Since its inaugural edition on July 18, 1958, The Charlotte News has been the town’s newspaper of the people, by the people, for the people.

Although the newspaper was started by a group of high school students, in that first newspaper they announced their intention that it was going to be more than a student newspaper, it was going to be a continuing

and vital part of the community.
“We hope The Charlotte News will lay the foundation for a permanent newspaper in the town. The purposes of this paper are to inform all the townspeople of coming business and social functions; to report local news and to describe, through feature stories, unique and interesting places and personalities in our town about which little is known to many of us,” the newspaper said in its very first issue on its front page in the first paragraph.

Thank you to these generous volunteers of today. We hope you will continue to give your efforts, your time and maybe even your sweat to The Charlotte News for years to come, becoming part of the long, proud tradition keeping community journalism alive and homegrown in Charlotte:

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John Quinney
Publisher and Board Chair

Our advertisers are key members of the community that helps keep The Charlotte News in good health as we enter our 66th year in business.

We encourage you, our readers, to support the businesses and organizations listed below — many local — who support The Charlotte News with their advertising dollars. Please tell them you saw their ads in The Charlotte News.

If you advertised in the newspaper in 2023, thank you very much for your support.

If you would like information on advertising opportunities in the newspaper and online, please contact Susie Therrien, our advertising manager, at ads@thecharlotte-news.org.

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YMCA Camp Abnaki.

DEAR VERMONT,

It’s time to come together for a conversation. In my three years at the Flynn, I’ve heard about many of the magical memories you and your children have made here since the organization was founded in 1983: the student matinees, the concerts, the summer camps, and the chance to see artists of all kinds take our stages. We have long been a joyful and fundamental part of Vermont’s culture. I’ve also heard concerns and questions about programming choices, diversity, safety in Burlington, costs, parking, staffing changes, the jazz festival, and how people across the state can have meaningful opportunities to participate in our work. Now, after a pandemic which fundamentally altered our organizational makeup, I would like to invite you to join me in a discussion about our future. And when I say you, I really do mean you, who is taking an interest and the time to read this.

The arts in Vermont are at risk. There are growing barriers to access for all communities and our costs are rising while our revenues are not. Our need for deep and sincere empathy for each other and ourselves is urgent, and generating empathy is the fundamental role of the arts. The Flynn must become more than just an historic venue in Downtown Burlington in order to take on these issues. But how? How can the state’s largest arts organization bridge geographic distances, economic disparity, demographic changes, and other social and civic challenges so that every Vermonter has opportunities to connect to their humanity through the arts? **On January 27, 28, and 29, I would like to invite you to attend an Open Space meeting with me to begin to answer the question: What actions can the Flynn take now to have the greatest impact?**

I’ve chosen an Open Space model because it has been used all over the world as a compelling way of turning energy into action. If you are unfamiliar with this process, it is an interactive and inclusive way of structuring a gathering that allows you, the participant, to set the agenda. Three days might seem like a long meeting, but we want to create enough space to get every issue and question on the table. All ideas receive as full a discussion as you choose to give them. We will work together to understand all of the critical questions facing the Flynn’s future so that we can set priorities for our actions over the next five years. What do you think we should be focusing on now? None of this can happen without an open, honest conversation that includes listening, curiosity, and kindness from each and every one of us.

I look forward to seeing you there,


JAY WAHL
Flynn Executive Director

Seven on the 7th



Photo by Lee Krohn

Although Charlotte wasn’t the top snow-getter in Chittenden County this Sunday, Jan. 7, it was near the top. Milton topped the chart with 7.8 inches. Hinesburg and Shelburne were a few slots down with each landing 7.5 inches in the winter’s first respectable snow. The National Weather Service didn’t report the snow total for Charlotte, but it was at least a decent 7 inches, and here’s the proof.

JOIN US FOR A CONVERSATION AT THE FLYNN

JAN. 27, 9 AM – 5:30 PM
JAN. 28, 9 AM – 5:30 PM
JAN. 29, 3 PM – 7:30 PM
FREE

Breakfast, lunch, drinks, and snacks provided.

We know they are long days, but we want to give both the Flynn and all your ideas the time and focus they deserve.

All you need to bring is a passion for the Flynn and an open mind.

ASL Interpreter provided.

GO TO FLYNNVT.ORG TO RSVP AND FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Town

Stone’s Throw Pizza plans to reopen in Charlotte

Brett Yates
Contributor

After closing in September due to staffing challenges, Stone’s Throw Pizza will reopen on Ferry Road in Charlotte. The tentative date is Tuesday, Jan. 30.

The self-described “gourmet pizzeria” will have the same name but a new owner. A local entrepreneur, Leyland Papa, reached a licensing agreement with the trio that founded the chain, which has locations in Fairfax, Richmond and Waterbury, with another coming soon in Jericho.

“I reached out to the owners and said, ‘Hey, what can we do to keep this place open?’” Papa said.

According to Papa, Vermont’s labor shortage affected all four restaurants last year, but the Charlotte location sits more than a stone’s throw — so to speak — from the others, which caused problems for the owners when they needed to fill in for workers. Because Papa lives in Charlotte, however, he can show up as needed. Having “a better finger on the pulse of the community,” he believes, may also help him in hiring locals.

“As far as people buying pizza, the cost of the pizza, the quality of the pizza, I would hope everything is exactly the same,” Papa said.

Papa bought another small business last year, which he operates himself: Trashaway, a waste collector serving Charlotte, Shelburne and Hinesburg. But in an interview with The Charlotte News, he described a background primarily in the wine industry, with managerial experience in retail and dining in Manhattan.

“I pretty quickly realized that I have a good palate,” he said. “I enjoy going through the motions with people of exploring their palate, being able to kind of guide them places.”

A native of Chelsea, Vt., Papa wanted to open a wine store of his own in New York City but “ran into a lot of walls there.” While caring for his ailing mother in Caledonia County, he began to consider business



Courtesy photo

ownership in the Green Mountain State.

“I was like, ‘You know, I really love Vermont, and I don’t know why I haven’t been looking here for opportunities,’” he recollected.

Papa found out about Stone’s Throw through Trashaway.

“I’m going around picking up people’s trash in Charlotte, and I see all the Stone’s Throw boxes. I mean, clients will have five, six, seven boxes a week,” he said.

Papa has already leased the property. Last year, by his

account, a mandatory “wastewater update” contributed to the restaurant’s closure, but now the building is ready to go.

“Where I’m going to be creative or put my mark on the business is going to be in, hopefully, the beverage program,” Papa said.

On Jan. 8, the Charlotte Selectboard approved his application for a liquor license.

“I hope it opens as soon as possible,” selectboard member Lewis Mudge added.

Fire & rescue makes case for new ambulance

Brett Yates
Contributor

On Town Meeting Day, Charlotte voters will likely decide whether to approve the purchase of a new ambulance for the Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service. President John Snow has asked the selectboard to place an article on the March ballot for a \$365,000 bond measure, separate from the nonprofit’s annual budgetary request.

“It’s time, as we have said over the course of the last year or so, to replace our 2014 ambulance,” Snow said, citing an internal policy that, by his account, matches national and local standards. “Each ambulance has a useful life of 10 years.”

Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service maintains two working ambulances, which ensures continuous service amid occasional mechanical problems.

“We run the first ambulance for the first five years in what’s called the front

line. It’s the first out in most cases,” Snow explained. “We run the older ambulance on the second line. It’s the backup.”

The fire & rescue service already put out a request for proposals, receiving two responses from ambulance vendors. With less success, it also explored what Snow called a “re-chassis” option — that is, “to take that square medical module in the back and put it on a new truck chassis,” instead of purchasing an all-new ambulance.

“There was only one provider who would consider it,” Snow said. “They could not give us a firm price until they actually went to do the work, which would be two years from now. And so, the potential savings are nothing more than potential.”

Instead, Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service intends to reduce the cost of a new vehicle by reusing “subsystems within the existing ambulance,” such as its “power lift” mechanism. With any luck, the final bill will come to less than the approved amount.

“It’s a not-to-exceed number,” Snow clarified. “When we actually get the firm bids and prices, we bring them over, we re-present to the board, everybody acknowledges that it’s within the limits, and we cut the checks.”

By its own count, Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue Service responded to “just over 600” 911 calls last year. According to its website, the service charged an average of \$1,198.89 per transport as of 2022.

The rest of its revenue comes from local taxpayers. On Jan. 8, Snow presented a preliminary budget of \$1,254,087 for fiscal year 2025, which would require a municipal allocation of \$1,011,587 – an increase of \$45,781 over the prior year.





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Town Manager: Pro & Con

Yes to town manager switch

Manager: Path to future

Alexa Lewis
Contributor

The town of Charlotte has been asked by its citizens to consider a change to a town manager form of government. It will be on the ballot in the next town meeting.

What does the change mean? Charlotte depends on the volunteerism of its townspeople and elected officials to keep the town running and provide services. We love this, but need to acknowledge that these volunteers may not have the time, or the expertise needed in today’s busy and complex world. A town manager is a trained, experienced professional that can bring specialized skill sets including:

- leadership
- financial strength
- human resource management
- knowledge of legal issues affecting town government
- communication skills
- administrative experience.

Hiring the right manager will take time and a deliberative search for an experienced, competent professional. We might not get it right the first time, but of the approximately 50 Vermont towns that have made the switch, most would agree it’s worth it.

An elected official in Norwich made this comment when asked about their change: “One of the most important roles the manager fills is to help the selectboard make better decisions — that is, to make it a better representative body.”

He added, “The manager in that sense acts as an adviser and researcher. He calls other towns and talks to other managers, not only in Vermont but around the country, and asks them how this problem or that has been resolved. Because, you know, there’s nothing that any town does that hasn’t been done by many other towns. You’ve just got to find out how they did it. So, you want someone who can do the research, offer the advice, who

knows the statutes and can keep the board out of trouble.”

If the change to a town manager structure is done correctly, then the selectboard looks akin to a board of directors in the corporate world. They take on policy issues and long-term planning. The town manager has been likened to a CEO or COO, responsible for day-to-day operations and the execution of the board’s policies. The manager keeps abreast of current issues and advises the board. Elected officials would round out the “C-suite” in corporate parlance and, when the structure is working cooperatively, it produces a positive outcome for the staff and the town. The residents benefit and they feel heard.

The town needs help with its budgeting process. Charlotte does not yet have a capital budget or plan. It does not have any “rainy day reserves” to protect us from unforeseen emergencies or to smooth variations in year-to-year budget changes. If you have the time to watch a selectboard meeting with a town manager structure, I recommend you look at Hinesburg or Shelburne’s December meeting as they finalize their budgets — Hinesburg at <http://tinyurl.com/y3ptbxh2> and Shelburne at <http://tinyurl.com/mr26u87s>.

Their town managers have a seat at the table and present an overview of the budget with key changes, the reasons behind them and the impact of budget-related articles on the tax rates. The budget process was efficient and forward-looking. We need that.

Our town has more on its plate; the fate of Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue is still pending; and we need to make progress on the goals laid out in the town plan. A town manager will position us well to do this. Let’s make the change to a more effective and efficient form of governance. The path to the future starts with a “Yes” vote on March 5.

No to town manager switch

Administrator system seems to work for selectboard

Dennis Delaney
Contributor

Peter Joslin is a hard-working Charlotter, a model for us all. In the last edition of The Charlotte News, however, he got careless with his facts. He likes to talk about how great everything will be in town once we are run by a town manager. Management labors are now done by our town administrator. They get the white flag from our elected, five-person selectboard.

Joslin is also one of the partisans in town who think the elected board works too hard. Let’s have a hired manager, well paid, who will take over in large part for the public service of the elected selectboard. Let them go off and think.

To get to hiring a town manager, we are assured by Joslin, the selectboard held several public hearings to vet the town’s thoughts on a hired manager. Well, maybe those hearings were public but there is another word I’d use — lonely. I was at many of those hearings and very, very few of the town’s 3,339 voters, the decisionmakers in the March election, showed up.

Joslin would also have us believe that our selectboard is ready to drop from overwork, that it “has a great deal on its plate” and “is mired in the weeds.” Well, if it’s true that our board members are at death’s door from overwork, why did

all five board members respond to the hearings with a resounding and unanimous “no” to hiring a town manager? Joslin doesn’t tell us.

To arrive at a decision on a town manager for Charlotte, we Charlotters need several discussions, open and honest and accurate on this question. Without that, we fail.

NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

JANUARY 25

Copy Deadline: Jan. 19
Ad Deadline: Jan 19

FEBRUARY 8

Copy Deadline: Feb. 2
Ad Deadline: Feb. 2

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Calendar of Events

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

Holiday model trains
Through Saturday, Jan. 13, 1-3:30 p.m.
The last days of the Henry Sheldon Museum’s exhibit, Holiday Trains: 30 Years Rolling Down the Tracks, are 1-3:30 p.m., Thursday-Saturday. The Middlebury museum’s model train layout stands three levels high, with two tracks running Lionel O gauge trains and the upper track running HO trains. For more information visit henrysheldonmuseum.org or call 802-388-2117.

Miciah Bay Gault talk, reading
Thursday, Jan. 11, 8 p.m.
Writer Miciah Bay Gault will give a featured reading at Vermont Studio Center in the Red Mill Building on Thursday, Jan. 11, at 8 p.m. as part of the center’s 2024 Visiting Artists and Writers program. Gault will also give a writing craft talk at Vermont Studio Center on Friday, Jan. 12, at 10 a.m.

Clemmons Farm at ECHO Center
Monday, Jan. 15, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
The Passports Through Time: Exploring Our Civil Rights of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow is a family-friendly program highlighting different periods of civil rights history, beginning with the Reconstruction Era of the 1800s. Visit five time capsules to learn about some of the important civil rights milestones and artists of different eras, get your special MLK Day passport stamped, co-create art and participate in virtual community murals at the ECHO Leahy Center in Burlington.

Martin Luther King celebration
Monday, Jan. 15, 4 p.m.
The racial justice program director of the ACLU of Massachusetts will talk at the college’s annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration and convocation. Lawyer, journalist, academic and advocate Traci Griffith will look at the promises made in the U.S. Constitution and highlight the ways in which society has fallen short on those obligations. Griffith’s talk is free and open to the public in Saint Michael’s student center, third floor (Roy Room) .

January Frosty Funfair luncheon
Tuesday, Jan. 16, 11:30 a.m.
St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are teaming up to offer a Frosty Funfair luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 16, in the St Catherine of Siena Parish Hall 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 a.m. and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is roast pork with sauce, diced cabbage, sliced carrots, home fries, dinner roll, apple cake and milk. There will be entertainment, door prizes and a raffle. For tickets contact Kerry Batres 802-662-5283 or kbatres@agewellvt.org.

‘Alice Street’ film
Wednesday, Jan. 17, 6:30 p.m.
Burlington City Arts’ Architecture + Design Film Series continues with “Alice Street” at Contois Auditorium (or stream same-day), a compelling story of an ambitious mural project in downtown Oakland, located at an intersection where Chinese and Afro-Diasporic communities face the threat of displacement and gentrification.

‘Bobby Blue’ book launch
Saturday, Jan. 20, 6-8 p.m.
Melinda Moulton and Ron De Long will be launching their children’s book “Bobby Blue” at the Main Street Landing Black Box on Saturday, Jan. 20, 6-8 p.m. Free. Moulton and De Long will provide background on why this story is important for children and adults alike. They will be personalizing and signing books after the Q & A. There will be a cash bar. Info: 802-316-6666 or melindamoultonvt@gmail.com.

Storytelling & publishing
Tuesday, Jan. 23, noon
This roundtable on storytelling and publishing will feature Alan Berolzheimer and Andrew Liptak of the Vermont Historical Society, who will talk about the society’s publishing process and tips and tricks for writers interested in producing their own publications. Register at <http://tinyurl.com/bd95v3de>.

Agritourism app training
Tuesday, Jan. 23, 1-2 p.m.
University of Vermont Extension is sponsoring a free webinar and training to introduce a new online business tool and provide guidance on writing business plans for agritourism



Courtesy photo

Melinda Moulton (above) and Ron De Long will be launching their children’s book “Bobby Blue” at the Main Street Landing Black Box on Saturday, Jan. 20, 6-8 p.m.

operators. The webinar at 1-2 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 23, Business Planning for Agritourism Enterprises will cover the key steps for business planning. Participants will learn about AgPlan, a free, easy-to-use business planning app designed to provide customized assistance for different types of businesses, including agritourism. AgPlan (agplan.umn.edu) was developed by the University of Minnesota to create agritourism business plans.

Tommye Blount reading
Wednesday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m.
Visiting Writer Tommye Blount will give a featured reading at the Vermont Studio Center in the Red Mill Building on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 8 p.m., as part of the center’s Visiting Artists and Writers program. Blount will also give a writing craft talk at Vermont Studio Center on Thursday, Jan. 25, at 10 a.m. Free. More info at vermontstudiocenter.org/events-calendar.

‘Nuclear Now’ movie
Thursday, Jan. 25, 7 p.m.
At 7 pm on January 25, the Jericho Energy Task Force will present the movie “Nuclear Now” at the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library. Produced by director Oliver Stone, the movie explores the possibility of meeting the existential challenge of climate change through nuclear power. Stone conducted interviews with people involved in the nuclear industry in the United States, France and Russia. He argues that fear of nuclear energy was sown, in part, by coal and oil interests. Please note that the library is presenting this film to show a variety of viewpoints and does not take a position on the viability of nuclear energy. Light refreshments will be served but this is a waste-free event so please bring your own plates and mugs. Questions: lblamb@hotmail.com.

Does nature make us happier?
Thursday, Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m.
Taylor Ricketts, director of the University of Vermont’s Gund Institute for Environment, will talk on: Does being in nature make us happier? at the Shelburne Town Hall on Thursday, Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. The talk is \$5 for Green Mountain Club members and \$8 for others. Ricketts will talk about what scientists are learning about the relationship between nature and mental health, using everything from social media to wearable technology to trailhead surveys.

Material World discussion
Thursday, Jan. 25, 6-7:30 p.m.
Join the conversation on contemporary sculpture with Material World, a panel discussion led by Burlington City Arts curatorial assistant Jacquie O’Brien featuring Texture & Response artist Karen Cygnarowicz and Vermont-based sculptors Kevin Donegan and Meg McDevitt. Panelists will delve into their experiences working with a wide range of materials and reflect on the dynamic and evolving arena of three-dimensional artwork. Come out to the center’s Lorraine B. Good Room in person or register for the free virtual option at <http://tinyurl.com/yuzrrcdz>.

Family Art Saturday
Saturday, Jan. 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Drop into the Burlington City Arts Center’s fourth floor education studio for an art-making activity inspired by the work of Texture & Response artist Karen Cygnarowicz. Come explore the fascinating textures and bright colors of fiber macro-weaving while you create and decorate your own fun and funky textile wall-hanging.

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Around Town

Condolences

Edwin Henry Amidon Jr., age 89, of Charlotte died peacefully after a short hospital stay on Dec. 26, 2023.



Ed grew up in central New York, graduating from Central Square High School (Oswego County) in 1951. He worked for a year as a junior draftsman at New Process Gear Corp. in Syracuse before entering Williams College, from which he graduated in 1956.

Following college, Ed was admitted to Air Force Officer Candidate School and was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in May 1957. He initially served at a radar station in Montana before being transferred to Washington, D.C., and assigned to the Central Intelligence Agency. Following his active duty, Ed entered the CIA training program and was employed as a case officer for several years.

In the early '60s, Ed attended Harvard Law School, graduating cum laude. He went to work for the Boston firm of Foley, Hoag & Eliot, where he was involved primarily in public utility, securities and banking areas, as well as state and federal regulatory matters.

In late 1968, a call came from Jim Jeffords, a law school acquaintance and newly elected Vermont Attorney General. Ed wasted little time in accepting an offer to become an assistant attorney general in a then-small office. This gave him the opportunity to argue the "Nearby Differential" federal milk price regulation on behalf of the state of Vermont in the U.S. Supreme Court.

After his service in Montpelier, Ed was fortunate in the early 1970s to be hired by the Burlington firm headed by Judge Albert Coffrin, later to become Coffrin, Pierson, Affolter & Amidon, and then Pierson,

Affolter & Amidon after the appointment of Judge Coffrin to the U.S. District Court bench. He quickly acquired a banking and utility practice, and also assisted with the firm's insurance defense practice.

In 1976, Ed was appointed to the Superior Court bench by Gov. Thomas Salmon. This was under the old system where eight general trial jurisdiction judges "rode circuit" to the far corners of the state. Ed was proud of his trial court decisions involving application of the Vermont Constitution, including the constitutional challenge to Act 250, the Sunday closing "Blue Law" and electoral cases. The Act 250 decision was the subject of an article in the Vermont Law School Review.

Ed left the bench in 1983 to return to private practice in Burlington and ultimately joined in a long-time partnership with Robert Roessler, Richard Whittlesey and Marsha Meekins. He was proud to be a "lawyer's lawyer," representing other lawyers in the Professional Conduct Board and providing ethics opinions. As mediation and arbitration came into common use, these became a major part of his practice as well as acting as a hearing officer or advisor for state agencies, municipalities and non-profit organizations. Ed was on the Vermont Bar Association Board of Managers for many years and was president in 1990-91.

He remained in the Air Force Reserve until 1980, assigned primarily to Air Force Intelligence Center, and retiring as a major. In the late '80s, Ed was appointed by Gov. Madeleine Kunin to the Vermont State Assistance Corporation board, serving 12 years including as chair of the governance committee and was a member of the Champlain Valley Union High School board from 1992-96, including serving as vice chair.

Ed represented Charlotte in the Vermont House from 2001-04, where he sat on the Ways & Means Committee. He completed

his public service as a trustee of the University of Vermont from 2003-09, where he was chair of the audit committee and vice chair of the governance committee and as chair of the state Act 60 Town Valuation Board from 2011-15.

Many happy hours were spent paddling one of his fleet of canoes on Lake Champlain and in his favorite sport of "hiking with canoes" between small ponds and lakes in the Adirondaks. Ed was an early and active member of the Northern Vermont Canoe Cruisers, now the Vermont Paddlers Club. Whitewater runs were explored and made in aluminum canoes with no flotation or spray covers, including the Hudson River Gorge prior to the era of water releases and commercial raft trips. Many family paddling trips to Algonquin Park in Ontario and with family and friends into the tundra rivers of northern Canada were prized parts of Ed's life.

In the early years of back-country skiing, he was privileged to have the location of the now well established Bolton-Trout Club Road train marked for him on a topographical map by one of its builders.

Ed was a long-time member of the First Unitarian-Universalist Society of Burlington where he taught Sunday school in the '70s and '80s and later served on the church board of trustees.

He was a very active and greatly loved husband, father and grandfather, survived by Louise McCarren, his wife of over 45 years; his daughter, Martha Ware, and her husband, Andrew Ware, of Chalfont St. Giles, England; his daughter, Jane Amidon, of Beverly, Massachusetts; his son, William Amidon, and his wife, Susan Parsons, of Cornwall, Vermont; and his stepson, Patrick McCarren, of South Burlington, Vermont. Survivors also include his grandchildren Georgia Ware, Mattie Ware, and Eliza Ware, of Chalfont St. Giles, England; Nora Hopkins, of Beverly, Massachusetts; Pippa

Amidon and Marley Amidon, of Cornwall, Vermont; his sister, Marion Amidon, of Gardner, Massachusetts; as well as nieces, nephews, and cousins. He was predeceased by his parents, Edwin Henry Amidon Sr. and Elaine Wilson Amidon, and his sister, Ann David.

A service will be held at the Charlotte Congregational Church, a date to be announced.

Margaret "Patty" Rice Stout died peacefully in her Shelburne, Vermont, home on December 16, 2023.



She was surrounded by loving family and friends. She was 86 years old.

Patty lived an incredible and vibrant life. She enjoyed 65 years of marriage to her devoted husband, Prentice, and enjoyed time with her sons, their families and her many friends. Patty was a gifted musician, a lover of natural history, a voracious reader and a world traveler. Those who knew her were blessed to know a wonderful wife, sister, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend. Patty loved to travel with Prentice. Together, they explored the world and embarked on intriguing voyages to Africa, the Galápagos Islands, Antarctica and most of Europe. She and Prentice instilled their love of travel, music and theater in their sons and grandchildren, bringing them along on international trips and regularly taking them to New York City for concerts and shows on Broadway.

As a musician, she taught piano lessons to many children, accompanied numerous talented musicians, attended countless

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Hi! Neighbor

Van der Kloot rediscovers joy on ice with Nordic skates

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

Nick van der Kloot lost two things when he moved to the United States from the Netherlands in 1982 for a three-month internship at an accounting firm in New York City.

The first was his name. His full name was Nicholaas Tjeerd van Rhede van der Kloot and in the Netherlands he was known as Tjeerd van Rhede. Since Americans had trouble pronouncing Tjeerd, he switched to Nick and when he was being processed, the van Rhede part of his name was dropped off. Figuring he’d only be in the States for three months, van der Kloot didn’t object to the name change. But when he was offered a full-time job, the new moniker became permanent.

The second thing van der Kloot lost in his relocation was the ability to skate outdoors on natural ice. Like most children growing up in the Netherlands, he was a speedskater, having started with wooden skates with strap-on blades and eventually moving up to real speed skates.

“It was a big thing in my family,” he said. “My mother was pretty strict but if the ice was good, she would let us play hooky.”

The family skated outdoors on lakes, rivers and canals. “I don’t think I ever skated indoors until I came to the U.S.,” van der Kloot said.

After roughly two decades off the ice, van der Kloot learned about a man named Jamie



Courtesy photo

Nick van der Kloot in front of the Palisades of New York.

Hess who sold Nordic skates out of a store in Norwich. Nordic skaters use cross-country ski boots with detachable blades which are as long as speed skate blades but slightly wider, making them more suitable for natural ice. Hess had an email list through which he notified people when the ice was good.

In 2004, when van der Kloot was living in Connecticut, he came home around midnight from a concert in New York City to find an email from Hess about an ice outing scheduled for the next morning at 10 a.m. from Converse Bay. He got up at 5 a.m. to drive to Charlotte and was rewarded with fabulous black ice.

“I was whistling the whole way home because I was so happy,” he said, “and that

outing is one of the reasons I wanted to move here.”

Van der Kloot loves being able to skate on Vermont’s lakes, ponds and rivers. “It starts from the movement of skating, itself,” he said. “It’s one of the most beautiful movements; very rhythmic and very simple but it’s amazing how much speed you can get.”

He appreciates that there is always something to learn and once attended a speed skating camp in Salt Lake City to work on his technique.

One way in which skating in Vermont differs from skating in the Netherlands is the lack of popularity here.

“In the Netherlands, there are thousands

of people from janitors to police to the prime minister,” van der Kloot said. “From a social point of view, it’s a lot of fun.”

An outing in Vermont can consist of five to 10 skaters gliding past a few ice anglers.

In the Netherlands, every town has a committee that checks on the ice and lets people know if it’s safe. In Vermont, skaters need to do their own due diligence.

In addition to skating, van der Kloot enjoys skiing in Vermont, the West Coast, Europe and Iceland, eschewing lifts in favor of skinning up the slopes he skis down. He has twice completed Vermont’s six-gap ride which covers 131 miles with almost 12,000 feet of elevation gain. Last year, he rode the Paris-Brest-Paris route, which is 745 miles and must be done in under 90 hours. This summer, he plans to cycle from Vermont to Vancouver with his son, Eddy.

Last year, Van der Kloot took a bad fall on the ice, breaking his wrist and passing out. There were a couple of groups on the ice, and they all jumped into action to help. One skater, Evan Perkins, tied van der Kloot’s arm to his body to prevent further damage and another, Diana Hanks, joined van der Kloot’s daughter, Kristin, and her boyfriend in taking him to the hospital.

“I’m really grateful to everyone who helped,” he said. “It’s a tale of caution, but it showed the camaraderie and team spirit of skaters.”

Van der Kloot recommends that those interested in learning more about Nordic skating check out lakeice.squarespace.com, a website created by the late Bob Dill, which provides information on skating gear, hazards and how to read conditions, and subscribe to groups.google.com/g/vtnordiskating, a listserv co-founded by fellow Dutchman Jan de Vries which provides up-to-the-minute information about skating conditions throughout the state thanks to over 700 members who scout “wild ice.”

CHARLOTTE PROPERTY TRANSFERS: NOVEMBER & DECEMBER 2023

November

Nov. 10 Clemmons Family Farm LLC to Vermont Land Trust, 2158 Greenbush Rd. 119 acres \$1,000,000

Nov.20 Brian L. Therrien to Daniel & Samantha Gauthier 2938 Mt. Philo Rd. 2.5 acres \$484,000 with dwelling

Nov. 20 Richard W Haesler Jr. to Nathan Siegel 2984 Mt. Philo 2.5 acres \$585,000 with dwelling

Nov. 27 Charles R Wood Family Trust & Roberta D. Wood Family Trust to Jonathan Ruggiero TRE Ruggiero Trust, 640 Converse Bay Rd. 2.64 acres \$2,340,000 with dwelling

December

Dec. 1 Anita Royer Living Trust to Morgan Selin, 7925 Spear Street 1.0 acres \$159,950 land only

Dec. 10 David E Kerr to Jeffrey B Davis & Jamie A Alpert 2401 Spear Street 3.77 Acres \$660,000 with dwelling

Dec. 18 Paula Doyle & Thadeus Trus to Kevin A Ford & Delaney K Vartanian 86 So. Olde Carriage Rd.\$1,220,000 15.2 acres with dwelling

Dec. 26 Wheeler Family Living Trust to Supernova 2023 LLC 1669 Mt. Philo Rd.4.5 Acres \$870,000 with dwelling

Dec. 29 Estate of Robert Partnoy to Burlington House Buyers LLC 10.05 Acres 207 Lower Old Town Trail \$500,000 with dwelling

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



AROUND TOWN

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

concerts and spread her love and passion for music of all kinds. During her time in Wakefield, R.I., she helped found the Kingston Chamber Music Festival, now in its 35th year. She was also well known in the Kingston community for her musical events, particularly the beloved holiday caroling she and Prentice hosted for many years.

Patty was born in Asheville, N.C., in 1937. She attended the Tenacre School in Wellesley, Mass., and Miss Porter’s School in Farmington, Conn. She enjoyed most summers at her family’s home at Jockey Hill Farm in Shrewsbury.

Patty married Prentice Stout in 1955 and they raised their family in New York, Connecticut, New Jersey and Rhode Island. Ultimately, the family settled in

Wakefield, where they lived for nearly 50 years. After raising her sons, Patty attended the University of Rhode Island where she graduated in 1982 with a bachelor of arts in music with honors.

In September 2021, Patty moved from Rhode Island to Shelburne where she became a beloved member of the Wake Robin community. For the past two years, Patty enjoyed the many new friends she made at Wake Robin and thrived by participating in various activities available to her. The dynamic cultural scene in Burlington and the proximity to her son Tim and his wife, Nan, made the last two years of Patty’s life comfortable, active and surrounded by love.

Patty is survived by her sons, Christopher K. Stout (Lisa) of Tiverton, R.I., Timothy M. Stout (Nan) of Burlington; her beloved grandchildren, Alison Stout, Emily Stout (Josh Creaser), Eliza Yashari (Jonathan),

and Charlie Stout (Sarah); and two great-grandchildren, Abe and Faye Yashari. She is also survived by her brother David Rice (Dorothy) and sister-in-law Meredith Stout. She was an inspiration to all and will be greatly missed.

Donations in Patty’s honor can be made to the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, the Kingston Chamber Music Festival, the Kingston Congregational Church (R.I.), or to Pierce’s Store via the Preservation Trust of Vermont. A celebration of life for Patty and Prentice will be held at a later date in Kingston.

Congratulations

Curt Alpeter of Charlotte has been named CEO of the Grafton Village Cheese Company.

Alpeter was most recently president of Runamok Maple, based in Fairfax, a nationally-recognized specialty food brand.

Grafton Village Cheese (graftonvillagecheese.com) is part of the nonprofit Windham Foundation of Grafton, whose mission is supporting Vermont’s rural communities.

Alpeter will lead the historic and award-winning handmade cheese business, including operations, retail and wholesale distribution.

“Curt brings a wealth of specialty food knowledge and 33 years of experience building Vermont companies. He is passionate about promoting Vermont’s agrarian economy, land stewardship and specialty cheese making,” says Windham Foundation Board of Trustees Chair, Bill Bruett.

Alpeter has also served as board chair to Audubon Vermont and has been a member of several other non-profit boards including the Charlotte Land Trust and North Country Federal Credit Union.



Report from the Legislature

No time for lollygagging in the Statehouse this year

Chea Waters Evans
Representative

We’re back in the Statehouse, and unlike last year, which started with a lot of ceremonies and traditions, trainings and figuring out where to get a turkey sandwich, we got right down to business. With a veto override under our belts already, a fairly grim State of the State address from the governor, and some bills up for a vote this week, we’re making the most of the time left in the biennium over here in the House of Representatives. (For those who aren’t sure what a biennium is: We serve two years per term in the House and Senate. A two-year period is called a biennium.)

At the end of the 2023 session, Gov. Scott vetoed what’s known as the Bottle Bill, which increases the types of beverage containers that are eligible for a 5-cent deposit, and adds a 15-cent deposit for wine bottles (okay, that’s good to know), which we hope will incentivize people to recycle and redeem these containers.

Opponents to the bill are concerned that it will increase costs for consumers when

they pay for trash and recycling services, thinking it will decrease the amount those services get from recycling deposits. The Senate still has to vote for the override, and it’s not a sure thing. Our senator Thomas Chittenden opposes the bill and has indicated he won’t vote for it. We’ll see in the coming weeks.

Yellow Mustard in Montpelier makes an excellent turkey sandwich, as does the Statehouse cafeteria.

Over the next couple weeks in the House, we’ll see a vote on an overdose prevention-center bill. It will establish two sites where drug use can occur without legal penalties. I know, this seems illogical and dangerous and enabling to some people. But the hard facts are that drug use is steadily increasing in Vermont; the pervasive presence of fentanyl has led to historically high overdose deaths; and we have a responsibility to protect our most vulnerable. This includes people who suffer from addictions. Data also shows that social contact and support often results in drug users pursuing recovery, so for me, increased recovery rates and decreased overdose deaths is a win.

In his State of the State address, the governor mentioned several times that property taxes “would” increase if this or that happened, and that we “could” see our taxes go up a “possible” 18 percent. While I admire his commitment to that number, I don’t think we should be scaring people with figures that aren’t borne out in reality and that are based on a worst-case scenario. I’ve written about it before so I’ll leave it at that, but I do hear from people a lot about their concerns that they won’t be able to stay in their homes, that they will have to leave Charlotte or Hinesburg or Vermont, and that their families will suffer if our taxes increase by that amount.

These fears are real, and they’re valid, and I assure you, I’ve got my eye on the money. I’m not on a committee that deals with budgets or taxes directly, but almost every bill that comes through this room is going to cost something, and I’m keenly conscious of the need to make sure that we’re not creating an unreasonable demand to pay for everything at the expense of taxpayers’ ability to care for their families.

In my committee, we’re delving into once again fine-tuning cannabis laws this

week. If anyone wants to check in with me about it, we’re hearing from the Cannabis Control Board and some others on Friday, so let me know and if we get even anywhere close to a topic that concerns you, I can ask some questions.

Finally, I’ve had multiple inquiries about my position on the Charlotte town manager or town administrator question. While I’m really leaning into this role of sharing my opinion about everything with everyone, I feel like I can’t share my point of view on that question. Should the town vote to move to a town manager, I will have to present a town charter to my committee, the Senate Government Operations Committee, and it will eventually go to the House and Senate as a whole. I think my responsibility in this case is to stay neutral so I can best represent you all in the legislature if the need arises.

Please be in touch by phone or text at 917-887-8231 any time, or email me at cevans@leg.state.vt.us. If you’re going to be in Montpelier or the Statehouse, please let me know and we can say hi or I can help you get set up with a tour or visit to the chambers.

Food Shelf News

Food shelf able to help 81 neighbors during holidays

Maj Eisinger
Contributor

Collaboration, creativity and generosity are the words that come to mind in describing the successful efforts of the Charlotte community and food shelf volunteers to help those in need during these winter months. In addition to basic sustenance and assistance, the food shelf was able to help make the holidays special for 81 neighbors, including 22 children under 18 years of age, this past month.

Thank you to the many, many people and organizations who contributed to this special, sparkling holiday effort.

Thanks to WowToyz of Vergennes which graciously and generously donates toys year after year. The toys are thoughtfully geared to the specific group of children we have each year, and the toys make an incredible difference.

Thanks to the Flying Pig Bookstore of Shelburne for including the Charlotte Food Shelf in its Snowflake Book Program, which provides each child with an age-appropriate book. This year, each child received two books. It was a special treat. Thank you to all those who participated.

Thanks to the congregants at Charlotte Congregational Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel who participated in the Giving Trees program where individual congregants select and grant the holiday wish for an individual child from our food shelf families. Thank you to Christy Gallese and Kelly Stockwell for coordinating the Giving Trees this year.

Thank you to our own Secret Santa, Evan Metropoulos, for his long-term commitment of providing a special surprise each year for each child.

Thanks to Horsford for the beautiful wreaths provided to each family.

Thank you to members of our community who also contributed to making this a bright holiday for the children. We thank Holly Rochefort and her baking elves for wonderful baked goods and Laura Guion and Kathy Reo for their special gifts. We also thank Thyleen Tenney for the beautifully crafted and warm knitted gifts. Many other lovely contributions came in the form of time, toys and gift cards. These contributors include Chief Toy Elf Laura Iglehart, Susan Iglehart, Jon Davis,



Courtesy photo
Thyleen Tenney donated knitted goods to the food shelf.

Wolfie Davis, Amy Rohrbaugh, Jodi Tritt, Jo-Ellen Petrone, Amy Harrison, Stephanie Wells, Julie Wetzal, Sage Bagnato, Deenie Galipeau, Amanda Herzberger, Carol Chenevert, Janet and her grandson Everett and the Charlotte Central School and Champlain Valley Union High volunteers who organized and distributed holiday boxes.

The ongoing work of the food shelf is funded entirely by donations, and for many provides a lifeline during a time of dwindling SNAP benefits and hefty heating bills.

We are so grateful for monetary donations from Valerie Graham and the Vermont Community Foundation, Sharon Richards and Douglas Weaver and the Richards Weaver Family Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation, Alexandra Lehman, Anne Mahoney (in tribute to Pati Naritomi), Donna and Remo Pizzagalli, the Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary, Leslie and Hugh Jr. Lewis, Champlain Valley Telecom, Rocki-Lee Dewitt, Jennifer and Joseph Dickerman, Elizabeth Poulsen, Danielle Hall-Potvin, Karen and Michael Frost, Beth Anne Systma, Kathleen Nolan, Bill Lockwood, Diane and Peter Rosenfeld, Elizabeth Bassett, Maria Grindle, Kathleen Anne Reo, Janet Landrigan, Susan Hyde, Christy and

John Hagios with proceeds from their “berry patch,” M. Teena and Richard Flood, Gerard Werle, Carleen Tufo, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Beth and Christopher Merritt, Kevin Pumiglia and the Jan Blomstrann Fund of the Vermont Community Foundation.

We thank James and Rozann Wadleigh, Mary Tierney and Elizabeth Kearns for their donations in memory of John Lavigne, and Elizabeth Kearns for her donation in honor of Jan and Ted LeBlanc.

Twelve households representing the Crosswind and Sanctuary Neighborhoods worked together to provide a much-appreciated monetary donation, which honored the memory of William (Bill) Posey. We thank Kathleen Posey, Lenore and Myron Sopher, Eleanor and Mark Capeless, Jan and Larry Sudbay, Karen and David Hurwitt, Carolyn and John Kovac, Heather and John Dwight, Lell and Rey Forehand, Lynne and Scott Jaunich, Loretta and Kirk Walters, Annie Kelton and Tom Cosinuke, and Kara and Jon Landry for their gifts in memory of Bill.

As we welcome this new year, please note that food distribution continues this month on Wednesday, Jan. 24, 4-6 pm. During this COVID surge, masking is appreciated and masks are available.


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, please call 802- 425-3252

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 at charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

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. For those able to donate food products, our current wish list includes juice, popcorn, coffee, tea, crackers, peanut butter and cookies.

The food shelf volunteers wish you joy and health in the new year.



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

Selectboard Meeting
Monday, January 22, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Charlotte Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, January 23, 7 - 9 p.m.

Development Review Board
Wednesday, January 24, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting
Thursday, January 25, 7 - 9 p.m.



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Stronger Together

Slow Food working to undo fast-food excesses

Linda Hamilton and Margaret Woodruff
Stronger Together

When we were growing up, our parents told us to chew our food 10 times (with mouth closed, of course) before swallowing. Until a few years ago, that was what we thought of as slow food. We still take our time chewing, but now understand that phrase as something different and much more exciting.

Slow Food is a global movement working to prevent the disappearance of local foods and food traditions, and to promote more interest in the food we eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us.

The Slow Food organization started in the late 1980s after Italians strongly protested the opening of a McDonald’s fast-food restaurant in the heart of Rome. They saw fast food as a cultural anathema, offending the sensibility of the Italian tradition of taking time and care with sourcing, preparing and appreciating food and, when possible, eating slowly with others and allowing time for conversation.

The ideas of slow food quickly spread, and now millions of people in more than 160 countries are working to promote them. Founder Carlo Petrini explains that the basic belief is that everyone has the right to “good, clean and fair food” with good meaning a high quality product with a flavorful taste; clean meaning the naturalness in the way the product was produced and transported; and fair meaning adequate pricing and treatment for both the consumers and producers.

Why is it important to pay attention to this? The rise of commodity agriculture and the processed food industry with its forceful marketing, pressures consumers to buy highly- processed, fast food. Fast food is touted as more convenient than real food and therefore more desirable in today’s fast-

paced world, despite being less nutritious and often unhealthy for us.

It can be cheaper to make and sell because of the use of uniform ingredients available in large quantities. Fast food also commonly uses cheaper but unhealthy oils like palm oil and lots of salt. These two particularly, along with high-fructose corn syrup, trigger our brains to crave more, even when we know they are unhealthy for us, being significant contributors to heart disease, diabetes, obesity and other serious health problems.

The aggressive marketing of these high-calorie, low-nutrition products and the societal pressure on us to do everything as fast as possible makes it less likely we’ll eat a well-balanced diet that provides what we need to be healthy. We are too easily persuaded that food choices are basically just financial transactions rather than relationships with places and people who make real food for us.

For more information about the health, environmental and cultural benefits of eating real food, see especially books by Michael Pollan’s “In Defense of Food,” which includes his well-known advice not to eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn’t recognize as food; Alice Waters’ “We Are What We Eat;” and Vandana Shiva’s “Who Really Feeds the World?”

The processed food industry makes it hard for smaller-scale alternatives of minimally processed and fresh local foods to compete on price, distribution and year-round availability. Slow Food encourages those of us, who still do have access to fresh and minimally processed food and who have enough flexibility in our food budget, to help keep that part of our economy going. Without us, it won’t survive and neither will the biologically and culturally rich diversity of food it’s based on.

The good news is that many informed



Photo by Daily Sabah

The Slow Food movement not only encourages people to take the time to prepare and eat whole, locally sourced foods, but it also aims to preserve culture and heritage, which are slowly being erased by fast food’s ‘instant gratification’ mindset.

people are becoming intentional consumers and choosing a way of eating that respects seasonality, reduces environmental impact within food production and distribution, encourages better education about the local and regional food system, financially supports diverse local producers, and protects the continuation of our edible biodiversity and food-related cultural heritage. We can help those with limited food budgets to do the same, for example, by supporting programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits at farmers’ markets and community-based and sourced programs to reduce food insecurity.

Slow Food uses the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture to work toward a world in which all people can access and enjoy food that is good for them, good for those who grow it and good for the planet.

Slow Food is active in Vermont. Like other chapters, Slow Food Vermont has contributed to the Ark of Taste initiative, Slow Food’s living catalog of delicious and distinctive

foods facing extinction biologically or as culinary traditions. By identifying and championing these foods, we help keep them in production and on our plates. Vermont’s list includes: boiled cider and cider jelly of New England; wild ramps; Gilfeather turnip; Randall cattle; Green Mountain potato; and Roy’s Calais Flint corn. You can find information about this and the other regional Slow Food programs at slowfoodvermont.org.

Slow Food is right here in Charlotte, too. Charlotte Library has incorporated the principles into its educational programs. The library’s Seed Library program promotes heirloom vegetable varieties, encouraging residents to grow some of their own food, offering seeds and technical support programs for regenerative gardening and seed saving.

Slow Food reminds us that eating is not only necessary and pleasurable, it is also a political act which influences the future availability of real food.

Education

Old year ends and new year begins busy at school

Naomi Strada
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

In the weeks before the holiday vacation, Charlotte Central School was busy. The Parent Teacher Organization-sponsored craft fair brought together members of the school community — neighbors, students, caregivers and artisans. Vendors displayed their wares in both gyms, there was a do-it-yourself craft area for children, a silent auction and hundreds of holiday shoppers.

Erika Norris, an art educator, displayed creations from her students to celebrate their personal journey of exploration and discovery. Art that turned recyclables into “what-ifs,” creations that were from joy, messes and endless possibilities, and many other creative expressions were showcased. Walking through the halls of

Charlotte Central School felt like visiting a museum, where students giggled with pride to show others their masterpieces.

The Multipurpose Room came alive with tunes performed by student musicians. Kids who may not typically feel musical were part of something bigger. Their commitment was met with awe and applause. Who knew Taylor Swift’s medley of tunes played by a middle school band could hook students in kindergarten and above into the possibilities of their music-playing dreams?

Staff members enjoyed the PTO-sponsored pizza donation from Folino’s, which brought people together to share personal stories and to feel reconnected during this busy time of year.

The student body earned a whole-school Positive Behavior Intervention



The Charlotte News file photo.

and Supports celebration by modeling our Charlotte Central School precepts: Taking care of self, taking care of others and taking care of this place. Around the building students participated in a variety of activities including 3D snowflakes, indoor gaga ball, engineering challenge, big-little reading partners, cooperative games and origami.

The climate, colleagues and cohesion committee planned the Wednesday staff meeting that brought together members of the school: educators, support staff, the cafeteria crew, bus drivers, office staff and the facilities and maintenance team. This feat is something to celebrate at Charlotte Central School since the staff covers shifts from 4 a.m. to midnight. During this gathering, junior counselors from the Part 2 after-school program surprised staff by serving hot chocolate and sweet treats. These brave youngsters circulated around and took orders offering options of candy canes, whipped cream, marshmallows and sprinkles to enhance each mug of cocoa.

Starting the new year

The University of Vermont is offering extension workshops for students in fifth through 12th grades which offer exciting teen science, coding and engineering

programs.

Jan. 13 will be the first teen science cafe of 2024 where participants will learn all about Life in a Drop of Water: A Deep Dive into Aquatic Microbiology and Phytoplankton. In this cafe students will interact with microscopic life in Lake Champlain, mud puddles and the ocean using microscopes; learn about the importance of microscopic aquatic life and why NASA is sending algae to space; and even create living mini-ecosystems in a bottle to take home. Open to youth in seventh-12th grade.

Starting on Feb. 1 students will have the opportunity to learn how to create their own website. In the 4-H World Changers: Learn to Code series, students will learn to design and build a website to take action on something that matters to them. The group will meet virtually each Thursday from Feb. 1-March 7, 7-8 p.m. This is open to fifth-12th grade students.

Feb. 10 will be the next teen science cafe and will focus on agrotek innovation. This café will introduce students to different ways that technology is applied in agricultural settings to create new products or improve the environment. This is a teaser to get students interested in the summer AgroTek Academy at the University of Vermont. Open to seventh-12th graders.

Lastly, on Feb. 17, Discover Engineering is a free annual event for youth in fifth-10th graders who want to learn about engineering, build skills and network with engineering students, faculty and professionals.

More information about each program and registration links can be found at uvm.edu/extension/youth/announcements.

Sacred Hunter

No place like woods to find wonder and mushrooms

Bradley Carlton
Contributor

The mind of a true hunter is one of connection, connection to all the surroundings, even to those unseen by the common senses. To some tribes in Africa, hunters have learned to read the “energy paths” of light similar to auras seen by some people. They follow these bluish-white streams of light to “see” where the animal they are pursuing has traveled. For the rest of us, we learn to read tracks.

On a bright February day, after a snowstorm, I venture up the southwest side of the local mountain. My father-in-law Brian Hoyt and I start out from his house. We notice the small trails where field mice have burrowed under the snow. We come upon a stand of locusts with their deeply indented bark and sage-green moss covering the jagged edges. I ask him if he thinks it is true that moss only grows on the north side of trees. He shrugs and says, “That’s what they say, but I think it’s an old wives’ tale.”

Further up the hill we meander through some pines, when a partridge explodes from under a pine-cone-laden tree. The bird takes to the air in a burst of snow, brown wings thundering together, to fly an escape route that not even a jet fighter could navigate.

“Partridge!” I shout. (Technically they are called a ruffed grouse, but I like to call them by their colloquial moniker just to tick off the gentry.) If you really want to be snobby about it, call them “Bonasa umbellus” which means “good to roast” or “valued as a game bird.” Partridge medicine (what this bird represents in Native American ideology) is community, fertility, mobility and invisibility. There is much to learn from Bonasa umbellus.

As we summit the cliffs, we begin to see a story played out in the snow. It takes some time to reveal itself. First, we see the tracks of a large cat-like being with its belly dragging on the top of the snow. It is crouching and trying to sneak up to the edge of the cliff. Why? We surmise it’s a fisher cat, judging by the claws and conical-shaped footprint. Then the tracks disappear off the edge of the cliff. We look over the 10’ drop to the next plateau and see where he enters the

snow in a deep hole. Is he under the snow even now? Where did he go?

We climb down around the boulders and discover, at the edge of this little flat spot, another hole with paw prints and the outline of primary feathers from a large wing. They are scratched in the snow in a perfectly symmetrical pattern as if beating against the surface in an attempt to take flight. It is then we discover blood where the feet of a turkey had been.

“I’ll bet the rest of the story is below this drop-off,” I tell Brian.

We climb down the slippery rocks to the next flat spot, and sure enough, there are the remains of a turkey splayed between two sharp rocks, with only its head eaten off. Fisher cats are notorious for doing this. The carnage reminds me that nature can be as violent as she is beautiful. The fisher cat will have lived through another harsh winter because he was courageous enough to dive off a cliff, burrow under the snow and still hit his target, coming up to ambush the bird from underneath the wintry forest floor.

Nature has all the drama of an Academy Award-winning movie, but when you have discovered it for yourself and borne witness to the mystery, you are not just a viewer but a participant.

On the walk home, we pass a yellow birch with a chaga mushroom growing out of its side. I cut off a chunk and put it in my jacket pocket. Chaga or Inonotus obliquus is revered by native healers for its medicinal qualities. Laboratory studies have indicated possible future potential in cancer therapy, as an antioxidant, in immunotherapy and as an anti-inflammatory. Whether you choose to believe this or not, it makes a wonderful tea.

Back at the house, we have quite a story to share with everyone. We brew the chaga and sit down in front of the woodstove to replay the story of our winter walk. At the core of the storytelling, I realize that the root of all happiness is wonder. And there is no place to find such wonder as in the winter woods.

(Bradley Carleton is executive director of Sacred Hunter LLC, a platform for his writing that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature.)



Courtesy photo
Fruits of the winter woods harvest — a chaga mushroom and the horns of bucks.

TOWN OF CHARLOTTE NOTICE FOR PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING FOR AN AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ARTICLE TO BE VOTED AT TOWN MEETING

The Selectboard of the Town of Charlotte hereby gives notice that, in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2645(a)(3)(a)(A) & (B), § 2645(a)(6) and 17 V.S.A. § 2641(a), it will holds two public hearings on a petitioned-for proposal to adopt a municipal charter.

The First Public Hearing will be held on Tuesday, January 30th, 2024 to discuss and take questions regarding the charter proposal. The First Public Hearing will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Charlotte Town Hall, Located at 159 Ferry Road in the Town. While the charter proposal is made by the petition, and not by the Selectboard, Town officials will be present during the public hearing to answer questions regarding the proposal.

The Second Public Hearing will be Monday, February 5th, 2024. at 6:30 p.m. at the Charlotte Town Hall, Located at 159 Ferry Road in the Town. Town officials will again be present during the public hearing to answer questions regarding the charter proposal. Note, however, that the Selectboard does not have authority to revise a charter proposal made by petition.

After the two public hearings, the petitioned charter proposal shall be submitted to the voters to be voted on by Australian ballot on March 5, 2024, at Town Hall. A public informational hearing will precede that vote.

Please note: If you have any comments, questions or suggestions regarding the accessibility of this meeting, please contact Nathaniel Bareham, Town Administrator. Additionally, if you are unable to attend the meeting, but wish to make a comment or ask a question regarding the article please email your comment or question at least one hour in advance to Nathaniel Bareham at townadmin@townofcharlotte.com.

This public informational session will be held by online (via Zoom) and in-person. All links and information will also be posted on the Town’s website and calendar at: charlottetvt.org.

The public may participate online or by phone using the information below.

- To join meeting online (via Zoom) please click the link, [here](#).
- To join meeting by phone please call **1-929-205-6099** and dial the **Meeting ID** and **Passcode** below:
 - **Meeting ID:** 849 7333 1806
 - **Passcode:** 392123

For more information on participating in Selectboard meetings via Zoom, please click the link. [Link](#)

A concise summary of the substantntive provisions of the petitioned-for charter proposal follows.:

Section 3. Town Manager/Road Commissioner

The Town shall have a Town Manager form of government per Title 24 Chapter 37, with the duties per 24 V.S.A. § 1236, except for the duties of the Road Commissioner, which shall continue to be an independent and elected position.

An official copy of the charter proposal is on file for public inspection in the Town Clerk’s office. Copies shall be made available to members of the public upon request.

Puppy love



Courtesy photo
Center, Jessica Danyow, executive director of Homeward Bound, visited Serena Kim, left, and Matthew Robinson, the owners of the Swift House Inn in Middlebury, to thank them for their donation of pet fees to the shelter. This partnership kicked off in June 2021 and has since raised \$10,000 for the Humane Society.

Library News

New opportunity for stories and fun for 3- to 5-year-olds

Margaret Woodruff
Director

Join fellow Charlotters at the library 6:30-8 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 18 for informal, small-group discussions to share ideas for the library’s future and role in the community.

Desserts will be provided. An RSVP is requested but not required by Jan. 16 to 802-425-3864 or info@charlottepubliclibrary.org.



New preschool story-time Fridays, 10 a.m.

A new preschool story-time session of both stories and fun is coming at 10 a.m. on Friday mornings.
The session is for 3- to 5-year-olds with a caregiver. No registration is necessary.

Baby time Thursday mornings

A special time for carers and babies to learn, play and meet new friends before the library opens for regular visits. We’ll have age-appropriate toys and books to share on cozy blankets in the children’s area.

All About the Weather Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2:15 p.m.

Ever wonder what it’s like to be a weather forecaster? Join the weather-curious for a presentation by the National Weather Service of Burlington to learn about what these meteorologists do every day to keep you safe. Ages 8 and above. Please register at youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Cooking book club Wednesday, Jan. 24, 5:30 p.m.

Matt Jennings from Red Barn Kitchen and author of “Homegrown: Cooking from My New England Roots” joins us to explore the varieties of American cooking and culture. Select a recipe from the book set that strikes your fancy

(and your tastebuds). Books include: “The Sioux Chef,” “The Immigrant Cookbook,” “Aloha Kitchen,” “Jubilee,” “Homegrown” and “Forgotten Drinks of Colonial America.” Then bring that dish to share with others for an evening of eating and discussion about the geographic and historical range of American cuisine. Books available at the library circulation desk. Please email margaret@charlottepubliclibrary.org if you’re interested in attending.



Children’s programs

Preschool story time Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

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

Preschool play time Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

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

Programs for adults

Stillwater Meditation Saturdays, 9 a.m.

Poetry and meditation are offered freely and in person to the delightful community of Charlotte. You are invited for quiet reflection, contemplation, and gentle meditation instruction. Respect for all beings and faiths is a foundational quality of our time together. Beginning and experienced meditators are welcome.

Mystery book group Monday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m.

In “Mr. Churchill’s Secretary” it’s

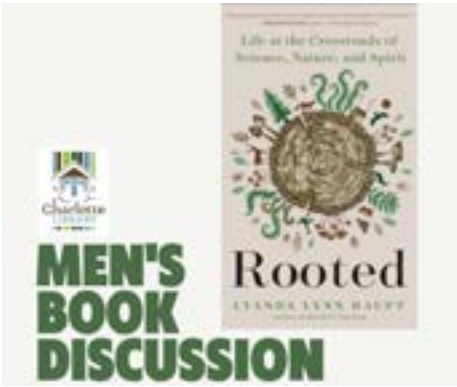
London in 1940. Winston Churchill has just been sworn in; war rages across the Channel; and the threat of a blitz looms larger by the day. But none of this deters Maggie Hope. She graduated at the top of her college class and possesses all the skills of the finest minds in British intelligence, but her gender qualifies her only to be the newest typist at No. 10 Downing Street. Her indefatigable spirit and remarkable gifts for codebreaking, though, rival those of even the highest men in government, and Maggie finds that working for the prime minister affords her a level of clearance she could never have imagined — and opportunities she will not let pass. Copies available at the circulation desk.

Short story selections Wednesday, Dec. 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 group Wednesday, Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m.

In “Rooted: Life at the Crossroads of Science, Nature and Spirit,” cutting-edge science supports a truth that poets, artists, mystics and earth-based cultures across the world have proclaimed about how life on this planet is radically interconnected. Our bodies, thoughts, minds and spirits are affected by the whole of nature, and they affect this whole in return. In this time of crisis, how can we best live upon our imperiled, beloved earth? Copies available at the circulation desk. Join the discussion at <http://tinyurl.com/bde3bktn>.



Thursday book group Thursday, Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m.

“The Only Woman in the Room” tells the story of a woman whose beauty almost certainly saved her from the rising Nazi party and led to marriage with an Austrian arms dealer. Underestimated in everything else, she overheard the Third Reich’s plans while at her husband’s side, understanding more than anyone would guess. She devised a plan to flee in disguise from their castle, and the whirlwind escape landed her in Hollywood. She became Hedy



Lamarr, screen star. But she kept a secret more shocking than her heritage or her marriage: she was a scientist. And she knew a few secrets about the enemy. She had an idea that might help the country fight the Nazis — if anyone would listen to her. Copies available at the circulation desk.

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, 5-6:30 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
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, Feb. 1, at 6 p.m. online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website at charlottepubliclibrary.org for more information.

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Senior Center News

Happy try-something-new-at-senior-center year

Lori York
Director

A new year is the perfect time to try out something new. How about checking out a new exercise class or joining a winter spike hike?

There are also opportunities to participate in a language class or conversation group, board and card games or an art group.

The Monday Munches, Age Well sit-down meals and men’s breakfasts remain popular ways to make new friendships. And the Alzheimer’s Caregiver’s support group is perfect for those caring for someone with Alzheimers.

New this year, the senior center is collaborating with the South Burlington Vet Center to provide veterans assistance.

January Artist Exhibit

Colorful representative and abstract paintings on panels and canvas by Theresa Petrow.

Alzheimer’s caregivers support group Thursday, Jan. 11, 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 5:00-6:00 p.m. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family, and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. For additional information or questions please contact Susan Cartwright: scartwrightasg@gmail.com.

Veterans assistance

Tuesday Jan. 23, 10-2 p.m.

Join Bob Stock, veterans outreach specialist with the South Burlington Vet Center, at the Charlotte Senior Center. Stock will be available to veterans and their families to ensure that they are aware of the benefits available to them.

Exercise activities

Bone Builders

Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. & Fridays, 11 a.m.-noon

RSVP Bone Builders, a program of United Way of Northwest Vermont, is a no-impact, weight-training program designed to prevent and even reverse the negative effects of osteoporosis in older adults. Bone Builders consists of a warm-up, balance exercises, arm and leg exercises and a cool down with stretching. Free. No registration required, however, there is paperwork to complete for the RSVP Bone Builders program.

Pilates fitness

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

This Pilates class with Phyllis Bartling is for folks 55+, is designed to be challenging and safe. It includes upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises. Participants will work core muscles to improve balance, strength, and posture. Cost: \$8/class. No registration required.

Winter Spike Hikes

Wednesdays, Jan. 17 & 31, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

It’s time to get outside and enjoy some winter hikes. Starting on Jan. 17, weather permitting, the group will meet every other week through February. The outings will be approximately two hours with locations to be determined on trails around Charlotte and neighboring towns. Bring your own spikes or snowshoes, depending on the weather, snacks and water. The group is also looking for some trip leaders. To register or indicate your interest in leading a winter hiking trip, contact Susan Hyde at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com. Registration required. Free.

Yoga strength-building practice

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon

Join Heidi Kvasnak with this integrative practice that builds strength and stability while maintaining a sense of ease and spaciousness in both body and mind.

Participants will practice longer-held postures that strengthen muscles, bones and core, as well as breath-led flowing movement, including sun salutations. Prerequisite: Must be able to easily get down to and up from the floor with or without props. \$10 a class. No registration required.

Language programs

French conversation

Mondays, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Parlez-vous français? This is an intermediate group of French speakers who meet weekly for French conversation. As the group grows, there may be opportunities to split according to skill levels. Questions? Contact Roberta Whitmore at robertawhitmore27@gmail.com. Free. Registration not required.

German conversation

Tuesdays, 3-4 p.m.

Möchtest du dein Deutsch üben? Come join this group to meet other German speakers and practice your German. No agenda, just a casual conversation. All experience levels are welcome. Questions? Contact Dan York at dyork@Lodestar2.com. Free. No registration required.

Italian for total beginners

Fridays, Jan.12-Feb.16, 10-11 a.m.

Interested in beginning the study of Italian. Join this six-week class and explore the beauty of the Italian language and culture. For questions about whether this class is the correct level, email Nicole Librandi at nicolelibrandi2@gmail.com. Cost: \$60. Registration required.

Spanish conversation

Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m.

¿Habras español? This group will meet weekly. At each session one member of the group will announce the topic of conversation for the following week. Come join the group for conversation in Spanish. ¿Questions? Contact Bernice Wesseling at bernice.wesseling@uvm.edu. Free. No registration required.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Age Well January meal

Wednesday, Jan. 17, noon

Celebrate the new year with a sit-down meal provided by Age Well. Registration required. Suggested \$5 meal donation.

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.

Age Well grab & go meals

Pick up 10-11 a.m. on Thursdays 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.

Weather cancellation policy

When the local schools are in session, the Charlotte Senior Center follows the Champlain Valley School District (CVSD) 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



Photo by Lori York

Essentrics is a full-body, weight-free workout that meets three mornings a week at the senior center.



Photo by Lori York

Katie Franko practices tai chi, as part of a group that gets together weekly at the senior center to practice the Chinese martial art.

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
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte
802-425-6345
charlotteseniorcentervt.org

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at charlotteseniorcentervt.

Write Ingredients

It's hollandaise holiday at the senior center

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Come to the Charlotte Senior Center on Jan. 15 to hit the sauce. No alcohol involved but the hollandaise sauce is sure to make you smile.

Literally, “from Holland,” in the nineteenth century, this classic French sauce was commonly called “Dutch sauce.”

The noted chef and culinary writer Escoffier classified hollandaise as one of the five “mother” sauces of French cuisine. Wikipedia offers this list of sauces derived from hollandaise:

- Sauce au vin blanc (for fish): hollandaise with a reduction of white wine and fish stock
- Sauce bavaoise: hollandaise with cream, horseradish and thyme
- Sauce crème fleurette: hollandaise with crème fraîche.
- Sauce Dijon, also known as sauce moutarde or sauce Girondine: hollandaise with Dijon mustard.
- Sauce Maltaise: hollandaise with blanched orange zest and the juice of blood orange
- Sauce Mousseline, also known as sauce Chantilly: hollandaise with whipped cream folded in.
- Divine is sauce Mousseline with reduced sherry in the whipped cream. Madame Benoit's recipe uses whipped egg whites instead of whipped cream.
- Sauce noisette is hollandaise made with browned butter.

Billing this sauce as the “aristocrat” of French dressings, the New York Times offers over a thousand entries for hollandaise, with, as expected, numerous variations. They offer hollandaise made with lime juice, cayenne and ginger; hollandaise with hazelnuts; tomato sauce topped with hollandaise; and so on.

An article in early 1945 advised, “Butter supplies being what they are, prepared hollandaise sauce has been hard to find. Recently, however, we arrived at Macy's just in time to see a shipment being arranged on the shelves. Forty-nine cents buys the jar.”

Transposing that cost to 2024 makes that sauce look pricey. At that time many people were squeezing a packet of orange food coloring in a plastic bag of margarine to turn the white mass yellow — so it would at least look like butter.

A sobering item noted that, on April 11, 1912, first-class passengers leaving Queenstown, Ireland, would have found salmon with hollandaise sauce on the Titanic menu.



Writing a movie review, A. O. Scott complained, “‘The Hundred-Foot Journey’ is at its worst when it steps behind the stove. At one point, we are treated to a brief lesson on the five canonical sauces that are the basis of classical French cooking. One of these is hollandaise, which then appears to be prepared with olive oil, which would make it aioli, or perhaps mayonnaise, but not hollandaise. ... This may sound like a small, pedantic quibble, but a movie that continually proclaims its reverence for the discipline of the kitchen and the glories of tradition should pay attention to such details.”

Please note: Because they care a lot about food, volunteer cooks at the Charlotte Senior Center pay a lot of attention to the details.

Yes, podcast character Judge John Hodgman weighed in, declaring in the Sunday Magazine, “Brunch defies time. So long as it is a weekend, wherever avocado toast, daylight and drinking meet, there is brunch. And unless it's on asparagus, even Hollandaise sauce, eaten alone out of the fridge at midnight, is brunch. Hodgman brunch.”

Rather than trying this stunt, you'd do much better to show up at the Charlotte Senior Center for Monday Munch. Their hollandaise will be served over green beans, a vegetable with an interesting history. Remnants of the bean, *Phaeolus vulgaris*, have been found in Peruvian caves dating back to 6000 BC. Native American have eaten them for thousands of years. In the 16th century, these beans were introduced to the rest of the world from North America.

Nathaniel Hawthorne noted that “it was one of the most bewitching sights in the world to observe a hill of beans thrusting aside the soil.” S. J. Perelman disagreed: “I have no truck with lettuce, cabbage, and any dietitian will tell you that a running foot of apple strudel contains four times the vitamins of a bushel of beans.”

Maybe Perelman would have sung a

different tune if he'd had the chance to eat his green vegetable with hollandaise, accompanied by quiche Lorraine and pineapple upside-down cake.

Noted magazine editor and author of many books, Sarah Josepha Hale noted, “Green beans, or string beans as they are usually called, must be done (boiled) till very tender — it takes nearly an hour and a half.” Sarah Josepha Hale, “The Good Housekeeper” (1839).

The taste of the resulting boiled-to-death mush is hard to imagine. Fortunately, the Hale words that we know today are the ones Thomas Edison recited on his newly invented phonograph, “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

Not surprisingly, culinary maven Alice Waters offers very different advice in “Chez Panisse Vegetables,” cautioning how quickly green beans cook.

Right now, green beans don't seem to be on the menu at Waters' famous restaurant, where a meal will set you back \$175 plus service and tax. You might instead offer a beautiful book about the food insights Waters offers to a young person you know: “Alice Waters Cooks Up a Food Revolution” by Diane Stanley and engagingly illustrated by Jessie Hartland is a beautiful, informative book.

Then head over to Monday Munch, where the suggested donation is \$5, the people inviting and the food delicious.

Monday Munch

Jan. 15: 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Viva la France. Quiche Lorraine, haricot vert, hollandaise and pineapple upside-down cake.

Monday Munch

Jan. 22

To be announced. Meanwhile, enjoy this golden oldie: Bing Crosby singing “June in January” at <http://tinyurl.com/2ja8yjyu>.

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