

The Charlotte News

May 2, 2024

Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

Vol. 66, No. 22

Opportunities abound for your vision for town's future

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Since January, Charlotte residents have been asked in a variety of forums and different ways how they would like Charlotte's two villages to develop.

After holding at least 12 meetings, hearing from between 75-120 people and receiving 300 responses to online surveys, the Village Master Planning Project has moved into a design phase, trying to incorporate that feedback into tangible visions of how Charlotte might evolve.

Town planner Larry Lewack and planning commission chair Charlie Pughe are anxiously waiting to see proposals from the consultants the town has hired.

Lewack said participants are eager to see actual renderings of what Charlotte's village centers might look like. Up until now, all they have seen is images from other towns "of village-scale development in a rural setting."

"We're going to take our time, do it right and make sure that we reflect the broad diversity of views that we heard during the six months of the outreach process where there seemed to be not only common themes, but also areas of disagreement," Lewack said.

They want to include the disagreement because it's important to be honest about every opinion expressed without being selective, he said. "We want to paint a full picture of everything we've heard."

Dubois & King, a village planning firm that has worked for Charlotte in the past, is working as consultants in this process.

The next step is presenting a "conceptual plan," Lewack said, which should be a written report and images that summarize the feedback they have gotten so far.

Lewack and Pughe still want to

SEE **CHARLOTTE** PAGE 3

Meteorological whiplash



Photo by Lee Krohn

This was the scene on a late afternoon bike ride on Lake Road on Tuesday, wild wind with a blue-sky backdrop for white-cloud patterns foretelling a front moving in, bringing a big temperature drop with rain and a smattering of snow the next day.

After coyote attacks, neighbors warn against letting dogs out unattended

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Several dogs have recently been attacked around Thompson's Point Road. Coyotes are thought to be the culprits.

At least two dogs were seriously injured and one died.

The dogs' owners say they don't support the killing of coyotes, but warn other dog owners to keep their dogs inside unless you are with them.

Katherine Arthaud, whose 2 1/2-year-old miniature Australian shepherd Xander was attacked on an early April morning and seriously injured, said she has heard of three dog attacks in a 1 1/2 mile radius of her Lake Road home.

On the morning of April 5, she let her three dogs out at 7 a.m. when it was already light outside. When she called a little bit later, only two of her dogs came right away. Then Xander walked in covered in blood.

He had serious puncture wounds in several places, including his throat. Arthaud immediately



Xander

drove Xander to a vet in Williston, who said his injuries were more serious than they were equipped to treat. The vet immediately sent Arthaud to Tufts University's Foster Hospital for Small Animals near Boston.

It was a tense drive and Xander spent several nights in the hospital, but he's back at home. Arthaud is in the process of getting a fence built.

"People should really be aware. It doesn't matter what time of day it is," Arthaud said.

Liz and Jim Foster had only been back from Florida in their home on Black Willow Lane on Thompson's Point for a few days. She had not yet heard about other dogs being attacked, so they followed their rule of thumb of

not letting their dogs out, unless it is broad daylight. That rule didn't factor in, she said, on a recent morning when they let Poppy, their Chihuahua-dachshund rescue mix, out after daylight.

While Poppy was out, Jim Foster had a premonition that something might not be right, so

SEE **COYOTE** PAGE 2

The future of fertilizer? Pee, says this Brattleboro institute

Kate Kampner
Community News Service

When Peter Stickney walks along his cow paddocks in the morning, he notes the scattered patches of greener grass across the pasture. He knows what this means: It's where his cows have peed.

So, when the Rich Earth Institute, a Brattleboro organization focused on turning human urine into fertilizer, approached him to be a farm partner, Stickney said it was a no-brainer.

Stickney manages the Elm Lea Farm at The Putney School, a boarding high school in the Windham County town of the same name. For the past few years, alongside six other farms in Vermont and the Northeast, Stickney has been receiving treated urine from Rich Earth Institute to spray across the farmland at Elm Lea.

The institute, its partners and others in the sustainability industry see the practice — dubbed "peecycling" in national headlines — as a cheap, easy and less-destructive method for fertilizing plants than synthetic fertilizer and as a way for people to rethink their views on whether human waste should really go to waste.

"We're doing something that is somewhat disruptive and asking for people to look at things differently, change behaviors a little bit, sometimes around where they pee and why," said Jed Blume, the institute's development director.

For Stickney, it looks like this: Rich Earth workers haul a tank of treated urine to the farm on a big truck before filling a smaller tank that Stickney can tow across the farm with a tractor.

"I could very quickly see how much darker green the grass was," he said. "Dark green grass is happy grass — it means it has lots of

SEE **FERTILIZER** PAGE 5



FREE! | May 2
802-488-6912
howardcenter.org

THE MARNA AND STEPHEN WISE TULIN
**SPRING COMMUNITY
EDUCATION SERIES**



**HOWARD
CENTER**
Help is here.

COYOTE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

she went to get Poppy. Unfortunately, Poppy had already been killed. In the morning light, Liz could see the attacker run off. Although she thinks it was a coyote, it might have a good bit of wolf DNA because it looked to be about 70 pounds.

About 10 years ago, the Fosters had a Jack Russell terrier named Jasmine who was in the jaws of a coyote when they went to call her in. Their much larger 80-pound bouvier, who they didn't even realize was outside, came running and slammed into the body of the coyote. The coyote dropped Jasmine. Their big dog chased the coyote off, and Jasmine turned out OK.

For a good while after that, the Fosters had a policy of always having larger and smaller dogs, but since they've been spending more time in Florida have found themselves with small dogs for ease of travel.

"We're in coyote country. We're in their yards, so to speak. People just have to be

aware," Liz Foster said. "Put your dog on a leash."

Although she is very upset to have lost Poppy, she appreciates having a home where wild things are. She doesn't think killing coyotes will help the situation.

"The coyotes are always going to have the last word," Foster said. "So, I'm going to be a lot more savvy, or as savvy as I can be."

In 2019, coyote expert Chris Schadler gave a talk at the Shelburne Town Hall where she said killing coyotes actually leads to more coyotes. A stable pack of coyotes is just one breeding pair with usually just four coyotes. The majority of females don't ever breed.

Schadler said that killing coyotes destabilizes the pack and female pups start to breed more and earlier.

"Don't hunt them, and you'll have fewer. If you hunt them, you'll have more," Schadler said.

Megan Mann said her at least 35-pound cockapoo was attacked at the end of January around 7 p.m. on Thompson's Point. She thinks the coyotes live in woods east of Point Bay Marina. There are trails there Mann thinks might be from coyotes.

Her husband heard a yip. When he found their dog Taco, he had about 50 puncture wounds. Taco is healed now, but that came after some expensive vet bills.

Mann warns people not to let their dogs out alone, even if you think they are big enough. She thinks it was several coyotes who attacked Taco, so size might not matter.

"Do I like coyotes? Definitely no. But it is their territory," Mann said. However, she wouldn't grieve if this pack of coyotes was gone.

The veterinarians told the Manns Taco only had a 10-percent chance of surviving on his first night there. The vets were worried that his neck was broken, and he had over 50 puncture wounds.

For a couple of weeks before the attack, in the evening, she said Taco "would be really jazzed to go out." Now, not so much. She wonders if the coyotes were luring him out, although she's been told that's probably not so.

"I would strongly recommend getting pet insurance if you do let your pets out," Mann said. "I kind of wish I did."

Letters to the Editor

Ways to help prevent bird-window collisions

To the Editor:

In March, this paper published several articles on birdwatching events and local enthusiasm for our feathered friends who make the journey, sometimes across continents, to get to New England. While birding is a wonderful activity that brings people together, birds are suffering from a drastic population decline owing to the destruction of their habitats and changes in the climate. It can feel overwhelming to try to combat these underlying issues yourself; however, one way you can make an immediate difference is by helping to prevent birds from colliding with the windows in your homes and businesses.

It is estimated that every year a billion birds are killed by collisions with windows in the United States alone. Put another way, every second 32 unique melodies are silenced by window collisions. From red-winged blackbirds to the American woodcock, even a seemingly minor collision can have lifelong impacts on fragile bodies. Thankfully, such collisions can be prevented, and spring migration, which lasts through May, is the perfect time to help our avian companions.

There are two inexpensive and simple actions you can take. The first is simply turning off unnecessary lights at night from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. to prevent birds from being led to your building during peak nighttime migrations. The second is marking your windows with patterns, ideally in 2-inch increments, to make it easier for birds to spot glass. This can be accomplished by drawing on windows with everyday materials such as a bar of soap, tempera paint or stickers if you are feeling fancy. I urge you to browse the many online resources published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<https://tinyurl.com/4d2exknv>) and bird conservation organizations (<https://tinyurl.com/ysubv9xj>) to find the best method for you.

Kai Etheridge
Hanover, N.H.

A not-so-excellent adventure not tragic thanks to Charlotte rescue

To the Editor:

On a recent Saturday, I joined family and friends to open our camp on the lake.

A friend, Kit, came along with his little schnauzer dog, Lucky. By noon, we were finished. Everyone had gone but Kit, Lucky and me, when Kit realized that Lucky was nowhere in sight and not responding to his calls. Then he heard thrashing and splashing and saw that the dog had jumped or fallen into the lake. Kit sped down the wooden steps to a deck 6 feet above the water. The ladder leading to the water was not in place at this time of year but Kit flipped off his shoes, jumped into the frigid water, grabbed the dog and swam toward the shore.

Hearing Kit's cries for help, I hastened down to the deck and recognized a desperate situation. There was no way to dry land. Kit had hoisted Lucky to a niche in the rocks and climbed partly out of the water gripping cracks in the wall of granite. There he was trapped at the base of the rocky cliff, soaked and cold, unable to climb the cliff or to move along it. I knew that there was no flotation device nearby, no boats were on the lake. Kit was numb, cold and frightened. He wouldn't be able to hold his grip much longer.

Anxiously, I called 911. An ambulance soon appeared at the camp above; the EMTs who came down to the deck realized the gravity of Kit's situation. They called for help immediately; when the red Charlotte Fire and Rescue boat appeared in the distance, they directed it to us by radio. The boat nosed up to the rocky cliff, Kit and dog plunged into the water and were hauled onto the boat. At an access point, the rescue boat met an ambulance from Shelburne Rescue. Kit was taken to the ER at UVM and treated for mild hypothermia. Lucky went for triage to the Comfort Hill Kennel in Vergennes. The treatments succeeded, and by evening man and dog were reunited.

Reviewing this incident, I counted 11 people directly involved in the rescue effort. It is to their timely response, courteous and expert, and to the teams backing them up that Kit, Lucky and I owe thanks beyond measure. Money for first responders is hard to swallow when you read a budget line, but when the service is needed, life will be at risk. This letter expresses a small part of our gratitude. Richard Pillard
Charlotte

P.S. Some readers may fault a man attempting a water rescue in this cold season.

I say wait until you've owned a dog for many years.

S.258 is a very bad bill, please oppose it

To the Editor:

Vermont Senate Bill S.258, recently passed, would remove the authority for rulemaking from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board and transfer it to the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife. This moves rulemaking authority from a democratic forum to technocrats. Worse yet, the Agency of Natural Resources, being part of the administration, is subject to powerful influence by whomever the sitting governor may be at the time — either personal or partisan influence. Currently, the board is independent of whomever the sitting governor is.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board was created when the Vermont Legislature, after some disastrous decisions concerning the deer herd, decided it did not have the expertise, experience or firsthand knowledge for setting hunting and fishing rules and regulations. Thus, they created a separate citizen-populated board to handle the task. This was a very important step for bringing decision making closer to rule by citizens, the essence of democratic government. The board has done an outstanding job with what they were tasked to do.

Years ago, the Water Resources Board underwent this same proposed transformation, to the detriment of Vermonters in the decisions that have been made since then. Recently, there was a demonstration of the role of the governor in proposed rules on wake boats against the wishes of almost all feedback from Vermonters.

All of this has come about due to the political pressure from animal rights groups whose goals, for the most part, would be to end all hunting and trapping — notwithstanding their claims to the contrary. Those goals are what keeps those organizations alive. Their strategy is to do anything that would weaken the influence of hunters and trappers on rulemaking. This would be like putting right-to-lifers on the board of Planned Parenthood.

Please oppose it.
Ray Gonda
South Burlington



Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

Editorial independence

The editor makes final decisions on the stories that are published in The Charlotte News. While we are funded by advertising revenue and donor contributions, our news judgments are made in accordance with our mission and are independent of all sources of financial support.

Code of Ethics

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

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

Disclaimer

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

Editorial Staff

Editor: Scooter MacMillan

(scooter@thecharlottenews.org)

Production Manager: Anna Cyr

(anna@thecharlottenews.org)

Proofreaders: Mike & Janet Yantachka,

Katherine Arthaud

Business Staff

Ad manager: Susie Therrien

(ads@thecharlottenews.org)

Bookkeeper: Susan Jones

(billing@thecharlottenews.org)

Board Members

Board Chair: Julia Russell

(julia@thecharlottenews.org)

Treasurer: Margery McCracken

(treasurer@thecharlottenews.org)

Secretary: Meredith Moses

Board members: Claudia Marshall, Peter Joslin,

Bill Regan, John Quinney, Dave Speidel, Vince

Crockenberg (emeritus), John Hammer (emeritus)

Technical advisor: Melissa Mendelsohn, Orchard

Road Computers

Website: charlottenews.vt.org

Subscription Information

The Charlotte News is delivered at no cost to all Charlotte residences. Subscriptions are available for first-class delivery at \$60 per calendar year.

Want a subscription? Subscribe on our website, charlottenews.vt.org

Postmaster/Send address changes to:

The Charlotte News, P.O. Box 251,

Charlotte, VT 05445 Telephone: 802-425-4949

Circulation: 2,100

Copyright © 2024 TCN, Inc., dba The Charlotte News.

Member of the New England Newspaper and Press

Association, LION Publishers, Institute for Nonprofit

News and the Vermont Press Association.

**Support local
nonprofit
reporting.
Donate Today!**



CHARLOTTE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hear from any resident who hasn't been heard, or feels they haven't been heard. They want the eventual results of all the surveys and sessions to include the views of what the greatest number of Charlotte residents want the town to be.

Although this conceptual plan should be presented in a few weeks, it will not be the end of the process, nor the end of efforts to get more feedback from as many residents as possible.

When Charlie Pughe speaks about this village planning process, he often uses the first person plural, talking about what "we" want, but he is not referring to himself in the plural nor talking about what he and his family, friends nor the planning commission want. He is using the pronoun to discuss what the town of Charlotte, as a whole, wants the future of the town, and particularly the east and west villages, to be.

Pughe feels like the process of getting feedback is going OK so far, but he knows there are still people who have not been heard from. He hopes they will speak up.

"We definitely are continuing to try to engage with wider groups in the town," he said. "The big ambition is to try to get people to come in, participate and let us know what they want and how they see things evolving for the future."

There are some people who have participated, but some others have just participated on social media. Pughe and the others working on the project hope to find ways to get those people to actually meet with them face-to-face and with the consultants.

One of the big questions Charlotte must answer is how much infrastructure it wants. Some people would like to see things like town sewer, water and sidewalks developed. Others not so much.

"That's what we're going to try to figure out, where does everybody come down on that," Pughe said.

It's an essential question for the town to figure out because if land-use regulations are rewritten to encourage some sort of building in town, it first must be determined if the populace supports the building of the infrastructure that construction requires.

"People in general support having some more affordable housing," Pughe said. "People want to keep Charlotte generally rural and not have development out in the rural areas."

The tricky question is how do you build affordable housing without more infrastructure.

"We're going to have to figure out water and sewer because those seem to be the two biggest hurdles in the villages, to figure out what to do to get denser housing," he said.

It's important to realize that in Charlotte "affordable housing" may not mean what that term usually means.

"I say 'more affordable,'" Pughe said. The housing that might develop in Charlotte "may be more affordable as someone's first home, but it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to be quote unquote affordable."

The Village Master Planning Project is funded by a \$13,400 grant from the state to pay for a rewrite of the town's land-



Courtesy photo

One of eight "table groups" at a March 16 design workshop at the Charlotte Congregational Church draw on a tissue paper overlay of the West Charlotte Village map, noting areas that might be appropriate for different kinds of development or parks.

use regulations and \$72,000 allocated by the Chittenden Regional Planning Commission for a two-year project for bylaw rewrites for master plans for the east and west villages.

This is a fortunate time for Charlotte to have more than \$85,000 available, Pughe said, "so we're trying to take advantage and leverage it as best we can."

The goal of the funds the town received is to do this work with an eye towards updating the land-use regulations with a vote at town meeting in 2025, but, he said, the town may table that if there is something such as engineering work that needs to be done.

"There might be parts and pieces of this planning effort that we can roll out quickly, and other parts that may take a longer period of time to come to fruition," Pughe said.

One thing he thinks they might want to look at is changes to a land-use regulation that says an owner can only have one use on their property. Because mixed use

is banned, you can't have a commercial space with apartments above, which might be a good way to increase housing density in the villages.

That is how traditionally all villages were built in small towns in Vermont. People had a retail space on the first floor and an apartment above.

To do this in Charlotte you would need a conditional-use permit. Conditional-use permits are not conducive to promoting stable real estate values, Pughe said, because if you sell your property the conditional-use permit does not stay with the property. The new owner has to reapply for a conditional-use permit, even if the type of business they want to have is the same as the previous owner's.

And Charlotte has lots of conditional-use permits. More than most other Vermont towns, he said.

According to the town's timeline, the planning commission should be working on amendments to the land-use regulations in the summer and fall, expecting to have any amendments finalized in December. Discussions about proposed amendments will take place at planning commission meetings where everyone is encouraged to share their opinions.

Even after this, there will be a public review of proposed changes during the winter. In other words, lots of opportunities to share your vision of Charlotte's future.



Community Day

May 11



Admission is **free** all day. Join us!

Celebrate the exciting new season! Experience inspiring new exhibitions and visit the beloved galleries, buildings, and gardens that make Shelburne Museum a place like no other.

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Free admission, live music, art making activities, garden and gallery tours, and more.

Send us your photos!

Charlotte events, people or places.
We want to publish your photos.
Email them to:
news@TheCharlotteNews.org

The Charlotte News

Don't wait to contact 'Permit Whisperers' about projects

Larry Lewack
Charlotte Town Planner

If you've been thinking about building an addition, garden shed or adding an accessory apartment to your Charlotte home, you're not alone. As the weather warms, many residents are dreaming of freshening up their living space, adding storage capacity or other construction. Some may even be planning to build a new home, add to their acreage or subdivide their land into building lots.

But which of these projects need a permit? Many do, some don't and some projects may not even be allowed. How to know the difference? And, where do you start?

'Permit Whisperers' ready to help

Charlotte's professional planning and zoning staff team, aka "the Permit Whisperers," stand ready to help. We can answer your questions about what projects need permits, how Charlotte's land-use regulations guide what you can build and where, and assist you in the process of getting the permit(s) you may need.

An introduction to the players:

- Aaron Brown recently returned to the role of zoning administrator in Charlotte, following a stint in that same role here in 2018-19. He brings over five years of experience in planning and zoning roles for several Vermont towns, including New Haven and White River Junction. His roles include handling zoning permit applications for most simple building projects, writing those permits, zoning enforcement and staffing projects that come before the development review board.

- Larry Lewack is the town planner. He has over 15 years' experience in land-use planning and previously worked for the town of Bolton as a town planner and zoning administrator. He staffs the Charlotte Planning Commission and researches and drafts updates to the town's land-use regulations and to the town plan. He is also the staff lead on long-term planning, such as the current East and West Villages project, and consults with his colleagues on regulatory issues in projects going through review by the development review board.

- Rebecca Kaplan is the planning and zoning assistant. She also works with applicants and staffs the development review board for conditional-use and variance reviews. A licensed architect, she has a background in project development.

Development review board role

In 2022, the town consolidated all projects that require board approval into review by just the newly created development review board. For each project, development review board members hold a required public hearing following strict rules for public participation, with full transparency. Their decisions are legally binding and can be appealed only through Vermont Superior Court.

The development review board's

volunteer members include chair Charles Russell, Gerald Bouchard, JD Herlihy, Alexa Lewis and Brandon Tieso. The board meets twice a month, on the second and fourth Wednesdays. Its meetings are all hybrid (available via Zoom, as well as in person at town hall).

Back to your project ideas: If you're new in town, or new to the permit process, here's a comforting fact: 80-90 percent of projects can be approved with a simple zoning permit, usually granted within two weeks of submitting a complete application with a plan drawing and required application fee. (And as noted earlier, some projects don't need a permit at all.)

But, please don't make assumptions and start building without first securing the permits you may need. Projects built without needed permits are subject to enforcement action, including potential fines of up to \$200 a day. Our "Do I Need a Permit? Zoning FAQs" handout provides a user-friendly overview of the town's permitting process. It's available on the town website at <https://tinyurl.com/3sza5wpd>.

Projects requiring board approval

If your project involves one or more of the following elements, it will need development review board approval, with additional fees and an extended time frame, which can take two-six months from the date you submit a complete application:

- Subdivision of land for new building lots, or to modify a previously approved subdivision and/or building lot
- Site plans for development of commercial properties, and shoreline modifications
- Any building project (including demolitions) or tree removals on Thompson's Point
- Adjusting lot lines between parcels, for land swaps and sales
- A change in use (e.g., from a single-family home to a bed & breakfast inn or to another commercial use)
- Allowing a variance from lot line standards for setbacks, height limits, etc.
- Appeal of a zoning permit or the denial of a zoning permit.

Application forms and fees for these projects vary, depending on the specifics of your project. The permit fee schedule and a link to all permit forms is in the FAQs document at <https://tinyurl.com/3sza5wpd>.

Navigating the permit process

We realize it can be challenging to understand and navigate Charlotte's complex land-use regulations. That's why your planning and zoning staff provides free, upfront assistance in the form of a preliminary consultation. If you have project ideas but don't know where to start, call us to schedule an appointment to discuss your plans.

You will leave that meeting with feedback about the feasibility of your project, what additional info may be needed to complete your application, an approximate timeframe and guidance

on your next steps. Contact zoning administrator Aaron Brown at 802-425-3533 ext. 207 or via email.

If you're not building anything this year but have concerns about a land-use project that's been proposed in town, many details are available on the town website. At <https://tinyurl.com/2xkd3ezp> there are links to projects currently under review by the development review board.

All of the projects listed there have had, or will have, public hearings publicized in advance. Adjoining property owners receive written notification ahead of each hearing, and have the right to speak and be heard. Another page lists all recent development review board permit decisions.

Planning for the future

Outside of the permitting process, the town planner also works with members of the town's volunteer planning commission to rationalize, streamline and improve the Charlotte land-use regulations. The commission also leads the process of drafting updates to Charlotte's voter-adopted 2018 Town Plan, a policy

document that provides a larger context and direction to patterns of land use. This plan is due for an update in 2026; that process begins next year.

The planning commission is currently working on several updates to the land-use regulations. Drafts of these updates will be presented for discussion at public hearings this summer, further refined following those hearings, then forwarded to the town selectboard for adoption.

Another round of updates will be tackled this fall, arising from the current East and West Villages project currently underway, to be followed by selectboard review (and possibly a town-wide vote in March 2025). More details on planning work in progress can be found on the town website.

What to do next

If you want to get something built this year, it's best to get started early. Your planning and zoning staff can be reached at town hall Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., or by appointment. Please call us at 802-425-3533 ext. 2. We're ready to answer your questions and assist you in getting the permits you need.

Solar synchronicity



Photo by Suzy Hodgson

On Monday, April 22, chair Jim Faulkner is all smiles as he announces at the selectboard meeting that the solar panels on the roof of the town garage have been turned on that day. The coincidence of the solar energy coming on Earth Day was combined with the serendipity of three Charlotte Energy Committee members being in attendance for reappointment. For more about the energy committee, see charlotteenergy.org.

FERTILIZER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nutrients. It's very simple from my end, and it's very soon that the results are visible, tangible."

Federal funders are on board. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program has given the group close to \$325,000 since 2013 to explore urine's role in fertilizer practices. "This is innovative research, and it could lead to something that could really help farmers in a sustainable way," said Candice Huber, who oversees the program's grants for projects in the Northeast pairing researchers and farmers.

The Rich Earth Institute is going on its 12th year now, and the process of collecting urine and getting it to farms has evolved over time, Blume said.

The institute says it collects urine from 230 donors, who use one of two methods provided by Rich Earth. Some donors pee into a funnel screwed to a jug, cap the container and bring it to a drop-off spot. Others own a specialized toilet with a trap installed in the bowl that connects to a separate plumbing line. Urine in the trap gets diverted to a tank that institute workers pump out once or twice a year.

Next, the raw urine is transported from the collection site to a treatment center either on or off a farm. Through storage or pasteurization, at certain temperatures, the urine is treated to use as fertilizer. "The Rich Earth Institute has developed a computer-controlled pasteurizer with a high-efficiency heat exchanger to sanitize urine quickly and energy-efficiently," the site says.

Finally, the urine is put on a tractor and put on crop fields.

"There's been an interest both economically and environmentally in finding more sustainable, equitable, environmentally friendly ways of producing fertilizer, and since our bodies are all little fertilizer factories, folks are starting to connect the dots," Blume said. "There's multiple incentives for practicing nutrient recycling both economically and environmentally."

Synthetic fertilizer is typically made of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and often produced through two processes, the Haber Bosch method and traditional mining. Treated urine, which contains all three of those nutrients, is a low-cost and sustainable fertilizer source, according to Rich Earth.

One of the biggest concerns people have about urine fertilizer is pharmaceuticals, said Blume, but after doing a six-year research



Photo courtesy Rich Earth Institute

A farmer uses a tractor to pull a tank of urine fertilizer over a field. Photo courtesy Rich Earth Institute

study with the University of Michigan and the University at Buffalo, the institute found "the pharmaceuticals don't really accumulate in crop tissue at significant levels," said Blume.

Blume said the practice is becoming more socially acceptable, too. "The global fertilizer industry has seen a lot of volatility with regards to pricing and sourcing," he said. "Once you explain what the nutrients are, they seem to be really interested in a sustainable form (and) being able to access those nutrients affordably."

Along with its farm partner program, the institute wants to offer people help through programs like "Urine My Garden," which teaches gardeners to safely turn their pee into nutrients for their plants at home. And the institute is putting together a manual for farmers to do the same at scale. "We've developed a culture of practice around urine recycling," said education director Julia Cavicchi.

Part of their pitch, to organizations such as the Lake Champlain Basin Program, involves almost philosophical benefits.

"We can actually start to think about how can we as humans come to heal the Earth with what our bodies produce in a way that is generous to the land," Cavicchi said. "It's a hopeful space to be working with in terms of using our bodies to heal."

Kimmerly Nace had a similar mindset when she and Abraham Noe-Hays created Rich Earth in 2012. Nace remembers how her neighbors would show up to her home in those early days, containers of urine in hand.

"It's a very hopeful project," said Nace, who no longer works at the institute. "People begin to feel that something that comes out of their body that's normally been used as a waste can actually have value in agriculture."

"Farmers have been really receptive partially because farmers don't have any ick factor around urine — it's not different than any other animal manure for farmers," said Nace.

Nace is now the executive director of Brightwater Tools, a spinoff company that makes the technology Rich Earth uses to separate the urine from wastewater. Currently, she is working at a national level to shift the wastewater industry more toward nutrient recovery.

"We really did intend from the very beginning to be disruptive. To really shake it up and say, wait, what are we doing here?" Nace said, comparing urine reuse to windmills and electric cars.

Most of the grants Rich Earth has received from the USDA program are called partnership grants. The awards are capped at \$30,000 and go to projects where researchers team up with a farmer to test hypotheses. Researchers set up their projects "so that they understand the needs of the farmer and how their work can really work on a farm."

Rich Earth has had seven partnership grants since 2013, several at close to the max funding amount.

"They had a lot of projects from us, and they've all been involving human fertilizer and testing it on crops and assessing the

feasibility and bio-acidification," Huber said. "Every year there's discussion about the safety factors, the ability of using urine, as far as people who would be interested in eating products that are grown with that."

Huber said the federal program has full confidence in the institute's work: "They are very good with their research in the way that they put it all together, and it's really very thorough. All the regulations are being followed through the state. Safety-wise we trust that process."

Thor Retzlaff is the co-founder and chief marketing officer of Wasted*, a Burlington company that rents and sells water-saving porta-potties and toilets with eco-friendly features like bamboo toilet paper.

Retzlaff believes in the mission behind the Rich Earth, which his firm works with.

More than a third of the company's toilets divert urine from other waste. The company collects and sends it to Rich Earth for fertilizer. "We've been working with the Rich Earth Institute and Brightwater tools since the conception of our company," Retzlaff said. "They very much inspired us to go and start this thing."

Retzlaff, Brophy Tyree and Taylor Zehren began the company after attending a virtual summit hosted by Rich Earth Urine in August 2020. Over the course of three days, Retzlaff said, "they essentially brought together the world's minds to talk about how valuable piss is."

He and the other co-founders wanted to take what they learned about urine diversion and combine it with a catchy business model. "From there what we did was identify Vermont as the state that allowed us to turn pee into fertilizer, so it was an obvious choice to move our business to Vermont," he said.

Wasted* toilets are easy to identify by their bright orange color.

Retzlaff said urine-based fertilizer will catch on as evidence of its benefits grows. "There's been a lot of data aggregating in the past 15 years that essentially says, 'Hey, this is not only more sustainable than synthetic fertilizer but it's more productive, it's producing greater results. It's a localized way of retaining the nutrients in any given ecosystem.'"

Or as Stickney, the farmer in Putney, put it: "It's just the simplest thing in the world to do."

(The Community News Service is a program in which University of Vermont students work with professional editors to provide content for local news outlets at no cost.)



Farm-Crafted Compost™

"Compost and topsoil for gardening connoisseurs"

Convenient Low-Cost Delivery

Also Available:

Topsoil Plus – Raised Bed Mix: A weed-free blend of compost, silt, peat moss, high-carbon wood ash and broad spectrum rock dust.

Topsoil Plus – Lawn/Flower Mix: A weed-free blend of compost and silt for thriving flower beds and lawns.

Champlain Valley Compost Co.

Serving NW Vermont gardeners since 1996

802-363-3930 | champlainvalleycompost.com

Community Roundup

Girl Scouts has lots of needs, opportunities for adult volunteers

Looking for a way to have a positive influence on the next generation? Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains may have just the opportunity you are looking for.



GIRL SCOUTS

Whether you would like to lead or help a Girl Scout troop, want to spend a summer outdoors with campers, or just have a skill you'd like to share on a short-term basis, your help is welcomed.

"There's just something about Girl Scouts that's very appealing," said Michelle Mainz, a troop leader in Raymond, NH, who is better known as M&M when working at Camp Kettleford. "I like the fact that we're teaching them right behavior, we're teaching them to be brave, we're teaching them to try stuff even when they're a little bit afraid."

Volunteering for Girl Scouts is also a great way for adults to connect with other adults, fostering friendship and community.

"I think my strongest community connections and friendships are almost all based in Girl Scouts," said Jennie Clarke, a Girl Scout volunteer in Essex. She emphasizes that it's not just troop leaders

that are needed. Anyone with a special skill like sewing, engineering or outdoor knowledge can share that with Girl Scouts.

"We had one woman who was an engineer," she said, "and she had all these bridge-building materials, so the girls could practice building a bridge and figure out what design and what materials work best."

You can learn more about paid summer camp opportunities and volunteering for Girl Scouts by visiting www.girlscoutsgwm.org, emailing customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org, or calling 888-474-9686.

SCHIP announces spring grant awards to 13 nonprofits

SCHIP (Shelburne, Charlotte, Hinesburg Interfaith Project) has announced its spring 2024 grant awards. Grants in the amount of \$35,020 were awarded to 13

nonprofits in our towns that met the criteria of serving the people of our communities in a variety of ways. The recipients for this cycle included: Boy Scout Troop 6110, Charlotte Senior Center, Hinesburg Nursery School, New Village Farm, Pierson Library,



Shelburne Nursery School, Shelburne Parks and Recreation, St. Catherine of Siena Church, Vermont Cancer Support Network, Vermont Parks Forever, Hinesburg Community Resource Center, Charlotte Food Shelf and Shelburne Food Shelf.

The award to New Village Farm was in the newly established major grants category. Grants funded in this category can range up to \$15,000 and are designed to fund the necessary seed money to be used for future self-sustaining projects.

These awards are made possible as a result of SCHIP's mission to raise funds through the sale of donated, gently used clothing, household items, accessories, art and collectibles at SCHIP's Upscale Resale Shop in the distinctive yellow building on Route 7, next to the Shelburne town offices. Since the first grants given in April 2005, more than \$902,600 has been distributed.

For more information on grant recipients or the organization, visit TheSCHIP.org or call the shop for volunteer or donation inquiries at 985-3595.

Introductory rides for novice road cyclists

Are you tired of riding alone on the same bike paths and roads but worried you don't have the skills for a group ride? The Green Mountain Bicycle Club will be offering introductory group rides on select Saturdays in May and June.

Experienced riders will explain the rules of the road and teach novice cyclists how to ride safely in a group.



The rides start at 10 a.m. at the Wheeler lot at Veterans Memorial Park in South Burlington and will travel 12-20 miles. Nobody will be left behind.

There will be at least two ride leaders who will teach group dynamics including signaling and passing, as well as learning to respect (and be respected by) cars. The pace will be determined by the ability of new riders.

Cyclists must wear helmets and have bikes in good working condition. Those under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

Cyclists are asked to sign up in advance at <https://tinyurl.com/yc3cmjrr>. Cyclists are also asked to sign our waiver form at <https://tinyurl.com/39cdeuxz>.

Call the ride leaders listed below for more information:

- May 4 – John Bertelsen – 802-864-0101
- May 18 – Dawn Fragola – 802-238-8752
- June 8 – Dawn Fragola – 802-238-8752
- June 22 – Holly Creeks – 802-233-9013.

To learn more about the Green Mountain Bicycle Club, visit thegmbc.com.

VERGENNES
ON MAIN + GREEN
THURSDAY, MAY 9
Shops OPEN till 8:00pm

Gifts for Moms, Grads & More,
perhaps a little somethin' for YOU
in the Little City with the BIG heart!

SHOP - SIP - DINE
follow us on social media: @VergennesPartnership

Shelburne Museum first stop for train art exhibit

Kristen Levesque
Shelburne Museum

Shelburne Museum presents All Aboard: The Railroad in American Art, 1840-1955, an exhibition exploring depictions of trains in American visual culture during the rapid industrialization and expansion of the 19th and 20th centuries. The exhibition will be on view June 22-Oct. 20 at Shelburne Museum.

“We are delighted that Shelburne Museum is the first stop for All Aboard, and that works from Shelburne’s permanent collection are included and will travel on to our partner museums along the way — the Dixon and the Joslyn. The exhibition is a wonderful collaboration among museums,” said Thomas Denenberg, director and CEO of Shelburne Museum.

All Aboard considers the multifaceted role of the railroad as an engine of connection and modernity, but also a vehicle for displacement, abuse of labor and environmental devastation. From the emergence of the railroad as a technological marvel in the mid-19th century to its pivotal role as a driver of industry and urbanization at the turn of the century, the exhibition traces the evolution of American painting from the Hudson River School to abstraction.

Comprising 40 paintings sourced from public and private collections nationwide, All Aboard is organized into four thematic sections. The exhibition demonstrates the influence of the railroad on the history of American art, from its emergence as a technological marvel, cutting through the landscape in the mid-19th century, to its position as a driver of industry and urbanization at the turn of the century and its eventual adoption by artists who sought to exploit its modernist potential. Additionally, the exhibition delves into the depiction of rail workers and passengers, providing insight into the diverse social interactions facilitated by train travel.

All Aboard explores how the railroad fundamentally changed the fabric of American life, moving people and products between growing metropolitan centers along the East Coast of the United States as well as westward toward the Pacific Ocean. This technology advanced rapidly, shifting the way people experienced distance and time and leading to an increasingly interconnected population in both cities and rural communities. Alongside this industrial progress, the railroad was a recurring motif in all the major movements of American art in the 19th and 20th centuries, ushering in modernity and inspiring modern art.

Notable among the featured artists in the exhibition is Vermont’s own Charles Heyde (1822–1892), one of many 19th-century painters who sought to make sense of the conflict between the promise of the railroad and the potential for change, even loss. This moment in American visual culture is on full display in Heyde’s Steam Train in North Williston, Vermont, circa 1856, where a small train augurs change, symbolized by its path through a field of cleared trees. Within years of the arrival of the Vermont Central Railroad in 1850, North Williston would boast grist mills, a poultry warehouse, cheese factory,



Photo by Andy Duback

Charles Louis Heyde, Steam Train in North Williston, Vermont, ca. 1856. Oil on canvas.

creameries and New England’s first cold storage plant, enabling the exportation of meat and other perishables throughout the Northeast.

All Aboard features renowned artists including Thomas Cole, Ernest Lawson, Jacob Lawrence, Edward Hopper and Georgia O’Keeffe.

Organized by Dixon Gallery and

Gardens, in Memphis, Tenn., The Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, Neb., and Shelburne Museum, this captivating exhibition commences its tour at Shelburne Museum before traveling to the Dixon and the Joslyn.

NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

MAY 16

Copy Deadline: May 10

Ad Deadline: May 10

MAY 30

Copy Deadline: May 24

Ad Deadline: May 24

TO ADVERTISE CONTACT:
ads@thecharlottenews.org

SEND YOUR CHARLOTTE NEWS TO:
news@thecharlottenews.org

Charlotte Property Transfers Jan., Feb. & March

January

Jan. 8 2877 Spear Street LLC to Heilenbach Family Rev. Trust, 2877 Spear Street with dwelling 13.46 acres \$925,000

Jan. 10 John & Anna Marie Quade to Estate of Jeffrey Payne, 6328 Ethan Allen Highway with dwelling 5.53 acres \$675,000

Jan. 22 Nedde Charlotte LLC to 823 Ferry Rd. LL, 823 Ferry Rd. 8.88 acres with bldgs. 33.33% \$666,666.66

Jan. 22 T. Williams Charlotte LLC to 823 Ferry Rd. LLC 8.88 acres with buildings. 33.33% \$666,666.66

Jan. 24 Curtis J. & Lynn M Alpeter to Gerard Williams 267 Garen Rd. \$3,225,000 42.15 acres with dwellings

February

Feb. 20 Diane V Franken to Melanie L Goodman 45 Hills Point Rd. .47 acres with dwelling 1/2 interest \$475,000

Feb. 22 Kritopher & Julia Sprague to Ursula Corrie 9 Common Way .09 acres \$86,000 Open Land

March

March 1 David G. Schermerhorn Rev. Trust to Philo Ridge LLC 383 Hinesburg Rd. with dwelling 62.23 acres \$1,220,000

March 6 Peter Osler & Jane Earnshaw to Jonathan Shaffer & Sarah Stockdale 14 Common Way with dwelling .14 acres \$599,000

March 18 PBM Acquisitions LLC to TS-Grove PT Marinas PBM LLC, 1401 Thompson’s Point Rd. with marina 27.10 acres \$10,000,000

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



Owl be watching you



Photo by Lee Krohn

The nocturnal owl loves the nightlife, but, as the photo demonstrates, they generally enjoy it alone. The species is mostly solitary, but a group of owls is called a parliament. It must be difficult for them to get a quorum.

Searching for a tree warden

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

If you have a background in working with trees and arborist's ardor, the Charlotte Selectboard wants to talk to you.

After all three tree wardens resigned in the wake of controversy over the planting of trees along State Park Road, the town now has no tree warden and board members are anxious to fill the position.

There are no required qualifications for a tree warden in state statutes, but the duties of the position are outlined, according to the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

Former tree warden Mark Dillenbeck recommended the town look for someone who's got a professional background as an arborist, forester, landscaper or at least "an enthusiastic amateur with a track record of doing work with trees."

Dillenbeck also hopes the eventual tree warden will be interested in maintaining the Hamilton Champion Tree Roster (<https://tinyurl.com/yeyvuvzs>), a list of the town's largest trees by species.

The selectboard will be promoting its search for a volunteer tree warden on social media and possibly in print in hopes of interviewing candidates in four weeks.

Board member Frank Tenney said there are duties for a tree warden in Charlotte that are more extensive than the duties outlined in state statutes. For example, tree removal on Thompson's Point needs a tree warden's approval in Charlotte.

The need to fill the position is pressing because there are some requests for removing trees on Thompson's Point that are overhanging camps and might be dead.

Of less urgency is continuing to work on the Shade Tree Preservation Plan.

Of semi-urgency, Dillebeck said, is the eagerness of the trail committee and some landowners with property next to town trails who want some trees planted along trails for screening their property.

The board asked town administrator Nate Bareham to check whether the requests for tree removals on Thompson's Point were serious enough that they couldn't wait until the end of May when the board hopes to have a tree warden in place.

Bareham said he was working on an application for people who would like to use money from the Rutter Tree Fund for



Photo by Nancy Wood

Volunteers plant trees at the new town garage on Saturday, April 13. Because of controversy about trees being planted along State Park Road, no planting happened there.

planting on their property

Chair Jim Faulkner gave a shoutout to the Rutter Tree Fund for providing trees that were planted at the town garage and for supplying tree-watering buckets that had showed up that day, the Monday of the selectboard meeting, just as the trees were ready for watering.

Eight more arborvitaes or evergreen trees are required by the plan for the town garage that was approved by the development review board. Faulkner said it was important to get those planted soon because it would be best to have them in before grass is planted.

Road commissioner Junior Lewis said he had money in his budget that's actually allocated for killing trees or brush, but he didn't see any problem for redirecting it to buying trees to grow.

"I don't think anybody in town would be against it, seeing it's a town building. We do have a plan and that should be completed," Lewis said. He is willing to take the blame if anyone objects.

Lewis is ready to complete the landscaping plan and pull up the erosion netting that was put down in the fall.



SWIMSUITS ON SALE! 20% OFF!



54 FALLS ROAD | MON-FRI 10-5, SAT-SUN 10-4 | 802-985-3221

Sports

Early signs good for CVU to repeat as state champs

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Although the baseball preseason was challenging with the team stuck inside much of the time because of the weather, it hasn't slowed the Champlain Valley Union High team down so far. The season has started just as last year's Division I champs would like.

Champlain Valley is unbeaten in early regular season play, after putting up a 4-0 record with wins over Mt. Abraham, Rice, Burr & Burton and Middlebury to begin its 2024 title quest.

Needless to say, the Redhawks are ranked first in the state.

"We have a great mix of returners and newcomers," said assistant coach Sam Fontaine. "It's been awesome to see the competitiveness at different positions on the field and in the lineup."

CVU 10, Mt. Abraham 3

John Deyo put CVU on the winning path right away at Mt. Abraham on April 23. In his first at bat of the regular season, Deyo singled. He followed that up with a double in the fourth and another single in the sixth.

The sixth inning was gravy time for the Redhawks, as the team put up six runs in that frame for a 9-2 lead.

Although Mt. Abrahams added a third run in the bottom of sixth to make the score 9-3, it was way too little, way too late.

Stephen Rickert took the win on the mound, pitching into the sixth and striking out nine, while only giving up two hits. Elise Berger finished the sixth and closed it out in the seventh. Although she gave up two hits and walked one, Berger didn't give up any runs.

Russ Willoughby went 2-for-4 at the plate for the Redhawks, getting three RBIs.

CVU 8, Rice 4

Champlain Valley was on the road again on Thursday, April 25, for its second tilt of the season, traveling to the Green Knights' home for a brutally cold contest. It was baseball played in football weather, but the Redhawks stayed hot.

Rice got on the board first in the bottom of the second when the Green Knights pulled off a double steal, ending up with runners on second and third.

Rice's Sebastian Parent singled to right to score Coleton Merchant from third. Although Landon Merchant followed by hitting a grounder into a double play, JD Raleigh was able to score, putting his team up 2-0.

CVU tied it up in the top of the third, and then broke the game open in the top of the fifth with four runs to take a lead the Redhawks never relinquished.

Calvin Steele hit a line-drive single to center to score Russell Willoughby. Later in the fifth, Aaron LaRose hit a double to right field that scored Riley McDade and Rickert.

LaRose was the winning pitcher, giving up four hits and four runs, but striking out seven.

CVU 5, Burr & Burton 1

On Saturday, Champlain Valley celebrated its first home game of the season with a 5-1 win over the Burr & Burton Bulldogs in much more baseballish weather.

Rickert was once again on the mound,

pitching a complete game, striking out 12 batters, while giving up four hits, one run and a lone walk.

The Redhawks got on the board in the fourth, scoring four in a contest that had been scoreless until that point.

Steele got things rolling with a single and then stole second, scoring on a single by Willoughby.

Willoughby scored on a wild pitch and Declan Cummings scored on a single by Travis Stroh.

CVU 10, Middlebury 2

CVU was back on the road on Monday, traveling to Middlebury for a game that was moved up from Tuesday because of the weather forecast.

The Redhawks jumped out to a 3-0 lead, right off the bat, so to speak, with two outs in the first inning.

Stroh hit a sacrifice fly to score Willoughby, a balk scored Steele and Cummings scored on a Tiger error.

The Redhawks scored five runs on two hits in the fifth to go up 8-1 and the rout was on.

Freshman Andrew Nunqata took the win with four innings on the mound, giving up two hits and a run.

Berger came on for three innings of relief work, giving up five hits and two runs while striking out five.

CVU follows the Middlebury game with what head coach Nicky Elderton called a gauntlet of away games.

The Redhawks will be at Mt. Mansfield at 4:30 p.m. this Thursday (May 2), at Essex at 2 p.m. Saturday (May 4) and at South Burlington 4 p.m. next Tuesday (May 7). If you are going to a game, it's a good idea to check the website at <https://tinyurl.com/24vs65dc> this time of year, with schedules changing at a moment's notice.

Elderton does not consider this a rebuilding year for CVU. Even though the Redhawks lost a good number of seniors to graduation, they had a lot of returning players.

"We're a very veteran team. There's a lot of great leaders," Elderton said. "It's a much different team than last year, but we're just finding our identity."

He has three underclassmen who are getting a good bit of playing time, and he is excited to see the impact they could have.

"We're CVU. We're a very deep team year in year out," Elderton said.



Photo by Al Frey

The Redhawks' Aaron LaRose drops his bat as he begins to run on Saturday at home against Burr & Burton.



Photo by Al Frey

The Redhawks' Stephen Rickert pitched a complete game, striking out 12, in a 5-1 win over Burr & Burton.

SCORES = MERIT \$
over \$3.9 Million in Merit Awards ...
biggest scholarships in 20 years!

Carnegie Mellon Univ.
College of Charleston
Connecticut College
George Washington Univ. (two!)
Northeastern Univ.
Northwestern Univ.
Skidmore College

U.S. Naval Academy
Univ. Colorado-Boulder
Univ. Florida-Gainesville
Univ. Miami
Univ. Michigan
Univ. South Carolina
Univ. Vermont (many!)

Check out the complete list of colleges and scholarships at CollegeEssayCoach.com

Founded by Margo Bartsch, celebrating 20 years of success



College Essay CoachSM

www.CollegeEssayCoach.com
mbartsch@CollegeEssayCoach.com • (802) 985-3770

Education

CCS prepares for next year with school budget passed

Naomi Strada
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

The passing of the Champlain Valley School District budget has allowed Charlotte Central School to start thinking forward to the 2024-25 school year. Plans were able to begin for student classroom placement for next year. When students returned from vacation on Monday, they were able to look ahead to an exciting last six weeks of school.

As the school year winds down, these are some upcoming notable dates:

Mon, May 20, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (change in date) — Spring Concert, fifth-eighth grade band and chorus, multi-purpose room

Thursday, May 23, 7 p.m. — Charlotte Central School Jazz Band will perform at CVSD Jazz Festival at the CVU Auditorium

Wednesday, June 5, 12:20-1 p.m. — Charlotte Central School Jazz Band will perform at the Discover Jazz Fest on Church Street

Thursday, June 6, 5:30-6:35 p.m. — Charlotte Central School Band and Chorus will perform the National Anthem at Lake Monsters Game at Centennial Field.

New student registration

Registration for new first-eighth grade students next year at Charlotte Central School

for is open. Follow this link: cvsdvt.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=720.

Please note that the following information is required upon registration:

- Proof of residency
- Immunization record from your child's doctor by all CVSD schools prior to enrollment (VT Department of Health requirement)
- Birth certificate (a copy is acceptable).

If you do not have all of the above information, please do not register your children until you do.

If you have any questions, contact Naomi Strada, Charlotte Central School assistant to the principals and registrar at nstrada@cvsdvt.org or 802-425-6600.

Free summer meals for youths

Charlotte Central School has an amazing opportunity to help families in our district bridge the food gap during the summer by providing seven-day meal boxes for free for any child 18 or under. The boxes will include everything needed to make seven breakfast meals and lunch meals for one child. They will be simple, delicious and nutritious.

The school can offer this service thanks to some recent changes in USDA regulations for summer food service programs. Contact cvsdvt.org or call 802-383-1234 for more

information about this exciting opportunity.

More families eligible for child care financial assistance

The state of Vermont helps cover child-care costs. Starting on April 7, more families will qualify for tuition assistance based on family size and income. For example, a family of four making \$124,800 a year can get help paying for the program. To apply, contact dcf.vermont.gov/contacts/partners/cccsa.

Summer camp information

This list of summer camps is provided as a convenience to Charlotte families. Charlotte Central School does not endorse any particular camp but provides the list as informational only:

- Junior Redhawks running camp (<https://tinyurl.com/yuy9fk38>) — For more information, contact Champlain Valley Union High cross-country coach Dave Baird at dbaird@cvsdvt.org or 802-578-8040.

- CVU athletics (athletics.cvuhs.org) — Families should start paying attention to the school athletics website regarding summer sports camp info, captains' practices (not mandatory) and info for fall sports especially (tryouts usually start on Aug. 15). Any questions can be directed to the appropriate coach listed on our website or the athletic

director.

- CVU girls lacrosse summer camp, June 18-20, Tuesday-Thursday, 12:30-3:30 p.m. — Registration is open at <https://tinyurl.com/2s3jhxhk>. This is for players entering fifth-ninth grades at CVU's A Field, Cost: \$125. This is a fundraiser for the girls lax program. CVU coaches as well as current and graduated lacrosse players will lead the camp. Questions: tpierson@cvsdvt.org.

- CVU Summer Camp (cvsummercamp.cvuhs.org/) — CVU summer camp registration is live. Questions: camp director Joey O'Brien at cvsummercamp@cvsdvt.org.

- Horse & theater camp (<https://tinyurl.com/48t66kd6>) — Sentinel Farms, Starksboro. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., weeks of June 24, July 8 and July 29. Ages 6-17.

- Smugglers' Notch Vermonter Camp Program (<https://tinyurl.com/2zusjx28>) — Ages 7-15. Contact smuggs.com/vtcamp.

- Summer Symphony Camp (vyo.org) — Vermont Youth Orchestra summer camp with Berta Frank.

- Vt. Jazz Camp — vtjazzcamp.com with Andy Smith and Tony Pietricola.

The food shelf provides assistance in addition to food

Maj Eisinger
Contributor

Many may not know that the Charlotte Food Shelf's "real name" is the Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance. The assistance portion of our work includes limited utility, rent, medical, dental, school supplies and other emergency assistance available to residents of Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh.

If you or someone you know is facing unexpected hardship, help may be available. Simply call 802-425-3252 or fill out a request form to apply. Request forms are available during food shelf open hours or on our website at charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

In addition, the shoe-in program helps to finance athletic shoes needed for gym floors in the grade and high school buildings.

Students or their parents should contact their school counsellor, who can liaison with the food shelf for these requests.

The food shelf continues its ongoing effort to combat hunger. The number of families the food shelf is assisting has risen, reflecting the fact that one third of Vermonters struggle with food insecurity. We have added two distribution days per month. Food is provided at 403 Church Hill Road, behind the Charlotte Congregational Church, 4-6 p.m., on the second and fourth Wednesday, and 9-11 a.m., on the second and fourth Saturday of each month.

For emergency food, or if you cannot come to the food shelf due to illness, call 802-425-3252.

As we transition into spring, the food shelf is hopeful for sun, good crops and that "those who grow, plant a row" for food shelf families. Donations from community

gardeners, such as spinach, lettuce or green beans, play a vital role in ensuring a supply of nutritious, fresh food, and the food shelf is grateful for these.

This wonderful community continues its generous support. Delicious Stewart's Bread has been delivered monthly for years and has been very much enjoyed by all our families. We thank Stewart's Bakery and their employees. The Repair Café put on by Sustainable Charlotte was a huge success and we thank all those who participated, including Kathleen Bushey, John Hammer, Lynn and Greg Cluff, Dean Leary and Donna Frazier-Leary, Judith Tuttle, Zechariah Gardner and Jaina Clough, as well as anonymous donors.

Donations in memory of Louise McCarren from M. Kraus and Brooke Taylor Mossman were gratefully received. We appreciate Amy Henry, Meg Berlin, Jocelyn Schermerhorn, Deborah Cook for their monetary donations;

John Siedlecki for his monthly donations of King Arthur flour; and the anonymous community members who have dropped off canned goods and other nonperishables to fill the Little Free Pantry. We are honored to accept donations from Ann and Alan Charron and Kate and Bill Schubart in memory of Louise McCarren and Ed Amidon.

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 at charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

The following donations of unexpired food and paper products are always very helpful: creamy peanut butter, snack bars, coffee, condiments, crackers, canned soups, spaghetti sauce, breakfast cereals, toilet paper and paper towels.

CONNECT
with us

WAITSFIELD
TELECOM
CHAMPLAIN VALLEY
www.wcvt.com • 802-496-3391

- Fiber Internet Speeds up to 1 Gig
- Whole Home Wi-Fi
- Streaming TV Service
- Local Support

*Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Call for details.

CHARLOTTE EARTH DAY

After a month of Earth Daying, Charlotte celebrated a day of Earth Day last Saturday, April 27, at the Charlotte Library.

The lunar cycle worth of activities encouraging people to embrace their home planet came to a close with the wish that it could be Earth Day every day of the year.

About 80 people came to participate in the denouement of positive climate festivities.

Photos by Scooter MacMillan



Susan Blood hands Peter Demick a seedling from the oldest living sycamore in Connecticut, which he will plant on his property. Both are members of the Charlotte Conservation Commission.



Library director Margaret Woodrum and Wolfer Schneider of the Charlotte Energy Committee cut up cleaned veggies and ramps for Disco Soup, a Slow Food demonstration of ways food waste reduction can help with the climate crisis.



Above: Chittenden County Forester Ethan Tapper explains that, because 80 percent of Vermont forests are privately owned, we have a collective interest in helping owners make good management decisions.

Below: Alexa Lewis, left, and Sue Smith, former deputy tree wardens check out trees donated out by Branch Out Burlington to be given away.



BUSINESS DIRECTORY

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

Only **\$25 per issue** or **\$20 per issue** when you run six months or more. Contact ads@TheCharlotteNews.org



Investing in better water

- Water Filtration Systems
- Water Delivery
- Water Softners

Call us today!
Culligan Water

802-865-0000
154 Brentwood Drive
Colchester

BEAGLE BUILDERS, LLC

ROOFING, SIDING & EXTERIOR FINISHES



WINDOWS & DOORS
DECKS, PORCHES & SUNROOMS
REMODELING & ADDITIONS

Monkton, VT beaglebuilders@gmavt.net
802-453-4340 CALL US! 802-355-0807



copper leaf
FINANCIAL

Empowering families through financial planning.


Our team includes CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professionals.

802-878-2731 | CopperLeafFinancial.com

Brushhogging by Adam
Taking your brush to brush

Adam Dantzscher
Proprietor

Services:
Brush-Hogging
Chain-Sawing
Driveway Repair
Excavating
Lawn Mowing
Delivery/Haul-away
Roadside Mowing



802-578-8347
adamdantzscher@aol.com

Report from the Legislature

Hours spent working on ghost guns and tax yields bills

Chea Waters Evans
Representative



I'm writing this column as I sit in seat 2 on the House floor — don't worry, I can write and listen at the same time — as we head into our fourth hour of discussing and voting on H.887, which is an act relating to homestead property tax yields, non-homestead rates and policy changes to education finance and taxation. This is also known as the yield bill, which is also known as the bill that is adding some taxes into our daily lives in order to lower our property taxes. There were 10 amendments. That is, believe me, a lot of amendments.

A lot of it isn't ideal. I wish there were a way to pay for things without having to spend our money on them, but that's not how it works. Our property taxes were supposed to go up last year, but we paid to offset them with money from the general fund moved into the education fund. We don't

have that money this year because we had to pay for flood relief and other unexpected costs — so here we are.

The Champlain Valley School district budget passed, which is terrific. We don't need to penalize our students because of whatever disaster is going on in Montpelier. And this disaster is going to be mitigated within the coming years. I'm optimistic this unfortunate moment has led to a realization that we can't keep putting education funding and the education system together with duct tape and butterfly kisses, and that real, serious and long-term change needs to happen.

I also want to point out one more thing before I move on to other bills and issues: I've heard some people grumbling about universal school meals and how much they cost, and it's true that they ate into (sorry, that was an unintentional pun but I'm leaving it because it's funny and what I'm about to say is not) our education fund dollars this year.

I will listen to everyone's concerns but to be honest, I don't want to hear any more complaining about feeding kids. Children shouldn't be hungry. We learned very quickly during the pandemic that there are

kids out there whose only nutritional meal comes from school. There are kids who are hungry all day because there's no breakfast at home and getting school lunch that makes you look different from everyone else is embarrassing, so they skip it, and those kids shouldn't have to bear the hunger or the shame, ever. Not ever. So yes, we're paying for all the kids to eat, but the benefits far outweigh any perceived negative, and it's simply not right for children to be hungry.

Anyway, we just passed the yield bill until the final vote out of the House tomorrow. I'm sure there will be changes and struggles when it gets to the Senate, but ultimately, I'm hopeful. I appreciate everyone reaching out to me with their questions and their concerns, and I hope this conversation continues over the coming years.

Another bill that's seen a lot of conversation and debate on the House floor is one that came over from the Senate, S.209, which is an act relating to prohibiting unserialized firearms and unserialized firearms frames and receivers. This is also known as the "ghost gun" bill, and it requires people who make their own guns, through a 3D printer or through metalsmithing, or how-

ever else a person would make a firearm, to register that firearm and get a serial number for it.

It wouldn't be a criminal offense to not get it serialized, but there are civil penalties if you don't. It would be a criminal offense, however, to trade or sell that gun without a serial number on it. To get a serial number, one needs to get a background check. And getting a background check means that you won't get a gun if you're not supposed to have one.

Why, you might be asking yourself, as I asked the people who introduced this bill, would a criminal take a ghost gun to a firearms dealer for a serial number or a background check if that person was going to get busted? The answer is, that's not the point. The point is, these guns frequently make their way to other people and then are used in crimes. It's not ideal to have untraceable guns used in crimes. We vote on this Wednesday, April 24, and I'm in full support.

My email is cevas@leg.state.vt.us and my phone is 917-887-8231. Be in touch any time.

Pass S.146 this year to protect Vermont's most pristine lakes

Pat Suozzi
Contributor

Last year the Vermont Senate passed S.146, a bill relating to the permitting of indirect discharges. What does this mean? It will mean more protection for our lakes and ponds.

To protect Vermont's high quality waters, those lakes that exceed the Vermont Water Quality Standards should be reclassified from B2 to A1 watersheds. A1 reclassification would better protect water quality, require earlier state interventions if phosphorus levels rise and enable priority access to funding for restoration.

The Department of Environmental Conservation has so far determined that at least 12 lakes: Caspian, Cole Pond (Jamaica), Coles Pond (Walden), Echo (Charleston), Maidstone, Newark, Raponda, Rescue, Seymour, Shadow, South Pond (Eden) and Havey's are eligible for reclassification. Together these lakes represent over 50,000 acres of watershed that would be protected.

However, all work to protect these very

special lakes and their watersheds has stalled because of an antiquated limitation on the design capacity of septic systems in the watersheds of Class A waters as cited in Vermont Statute 10 V.S.A. § 1259 (d). This statute is now functioning as a barrier to increasing protections for lakes through reclassification. Four of these lakes — Maidstone, Caspian, Echo and Shadow — have submitted petitions to be reclassified but these petitions, while fully reviewed and deemed administratively complete, have been on hold for well over two years due to this limitation.

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds and its member lake associations have been working in conjunction with local communities, watershed groups and the Department of Environmental Conservation staff for many years to institute best management practices to reduce runoff and prevent rising phosphorus levels. Much has been done but there is still more that needs to be done. Phosphorus levels continue to rise in many lakes, including some of our cleanest and most pristine lakes.

It may seem counter-intuitive to say that very clean lakes would be better protected by removing a limitation on the size of septic systems in their watersheds. However, today with newer innovative alternative systems, the focus solely on capacity no longer makes sense. Properly managed, these newer septic systems can dramatically reduce the pollutants in wastewater before it enters the leaching field. Such systems, which can manage larger capacities, are cleaner, more efficient and would provide better protection to the state's waters.

The current statutory limitation means that a community septic that could replace older, possibly failing, individual septic systems could not be installed — even if the total design flow of that community system was lower than the total of the individual systems.

For example, in 2022 seven lakefront homes on Caspian Lake banded together and replaced their individual septic systems with a community system that was sited farther from the lake, uses newer technology, is cleaner and more efficient

and cost the homeowners less than the cost to replace each individual system.

That high cost of replacing an individual septic is also a serious barrier to replacing older systems, thus often leaving those older systems in place. However, lowering the cost by creating community septic would not be possible if these watersheds were reclassified to A1 under the current statute.

To remedy this situation and to better protect the state's freshwater resources, the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds is urging the Vermont House Committee on Environment and Energy to take this bill up and to make the statutory change this year. Our lakes and ponds are depending on it.

(Pat Suozzi, of Hinesburg, is the president of the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds, a statewide coalition of lake and pond associations dedicated to fostering environmental quality standards and preserving Vermont lakes, ponds, watersheds and aquatic ecosystems.)

Calendar

Send us your calendar events two weeks in advance to news@thecharlottenews.org

'Attic of Dreams'

Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Marilyn Webb Neagley will speak about her memoir "Attic of Dreams" at the Pierson Library in Shelburne. Neagley will recall her time at Shelburne Farms when it transitioned from a private estate to a public educational resource. Her work there spanned 20 years, including 1976-88 when she served as president.

Job Fest

Thursday, May 2, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Middlebury Spring Job Fest at Middlebury Parks & Rec on Creek Road. This unconventional job fair should feel a bit more like a farmer's market. Vermont Department of Labor says both jobseekers and employers have preferred outdoor venues and felt as though conversations were easier. The event will be moved into the gym in the event of inclement weather. For more information, call the Department of Labor at 802-388-4921. Registration is required at <https://tinyurl.com/ycjzvsth>. You will be provided additional information and reminder notifications as the event approaches.

Advocacy Day

Wednesday, May 3, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

The Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network, a student organization that works to achieve education without racism through education about racism, is holding Advocacy Day at the Statehouse in Montpelier. Speakers will include Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland-Hanzas; Julia Torti from the United States attorney office; Julio Thompson, Civil Rights unit director from the Attorney General office; executive director of Vermont Racial Justice Alliance, Mark Hughes; and free pizza and Ben and Jerry's ice cream.

Chaos in the Valley

Friday, May 3, 7 p.m.

The Valley Players will host "Chaos in the Valley: Undefeated Champ" on Friday, May 3, at 7 p.m. at the Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. This dungeons & dragons-themed show will feature four improv comedians as table top role players and a Dungeon Master. Admission for the audience is a small donation to the Valley Players Theater. This show is rated PG13 for some language and figurative violence and will last approximately two hours.

Green Up Day

Saturday, May 4, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

The 54th annual Green Up Day in Charlotte with activities beginning at Charlotte Central School at 9 a.m. Green bags can be picked up starting April 27 at the Charlotte Library, Old Brick Store and Spear's Corner Store. You can continue to sign up for a route through May 3 at charlottevtgreenuptday.com.

Get knotweed knowledge

Sunday, May 5 2-4 p.m.

Lewis Creek Association will hold an event at Cota Field in Starksboro 2-4 p.m., May



Author Marilyn Webb Neagley will speak about her memoir "Attic of Dreams" at the Pierson Library in Shelburne on Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m.

5, in collaboration with the Starksboro Conservation Commission, to educate the community about how to identify Japanese knotweed, how to use iNaturalist to map its location in the Lewis Creek watershed and to give a summary of the association's upcoming manual removal demonstration projects in Ferrisburgh and Starksboro. Mike Bald (consultant from Got Weeds?) will be there, as well as herbalist Sophie Cassel, who will speak about how she uses knotweed to make medicine. Light refreshments provided. Fill out this form at <https://tinyurl.com/yhhnr5k> to be added to the Lewis Creek Association's knotweed mailing list, or feel free to just show up on May 5.

'And Then They Came for Me'

Sunday, May 5, 4-6:30 p.m.

Jewish Community of Greater Stowe is presenting "And Then They Came for Me," a multimedia play combining videotaped interviews with Holocaust survivors with live actors recreating scenes from their lives during World War II. The 90-minute presentation will be performed without intermission and will include traditional memorial prayers and a candle-lighting ceremony. The performance is free but registration is required at <https://tinyurl.com/5n6f42am>.

Vermont Historical Society

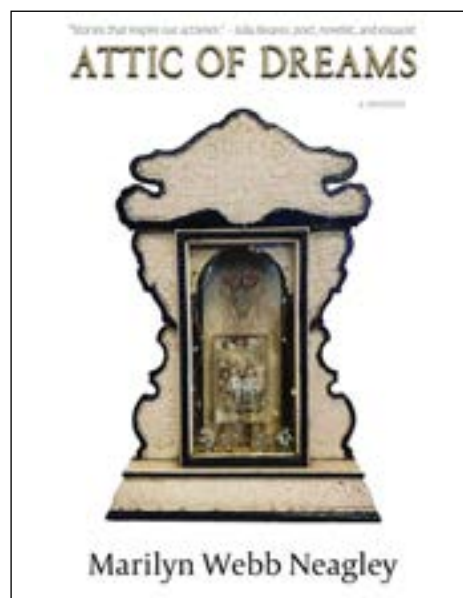
Friday, May 10, 8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

The Vermont Historical Society's League of Local Historical Societies & Museums annual conference will take place at Hotel Coolidge in White River Junction on May 10. Now in its 70th year, the event is the state's largest gathering of local history and museum professionals. This year's theme is "Now & Then." Presenters and attendees will explore some of the bedrocks of doing local history and learn more about how to utilize the upcoming 250th anniversary of the U.S. as a rallying point in our own communities, and learn from the experts in our ever popular practical and hands-on sessions. \$25 for society members and \$40 for non-members. Register at vermonthistory.org/league-meeting.

Rokeby Museum spring cleaning

Saturday, May 11, 9 a.m.-noon

Help Rokeby Museum get the site ready to open on May 25. Join anytime between



9 a.m. to noon. Drinks and snacks will be provided. Email director@rokeby.org to register to help.

Shelburne Museum opening day

Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m.

Shelburne Museum will kick off the 2024 season with its inaugural Community Day on Saturday, May 11, and admission will be free. Highlights include: a seed swap and tour of the exhibition Lorna McMaster: Stewarding a Seed Collection; tours of New England Now: Strange States, an exhibition featuring 12 multidisciplinary artists from the region exploring themes of mythology, environmentalism, beauty, transformation, gender and cultural identity; a tour of the museum's trees and gardens; live music all day; and drop-in art making for all ages with the museum bringing the supplies.

Art in Shelburne

Through May 11

Book Lab, a group of 10 Vermont artists, will show artist books and book related artwork at Village Wine and Coffee in Shelburne through May 11. Charlotte artist Marcia Vogler will have several pieces in the show including a grouping of collaged birds.

Mental illness and recovery workshop

Saturday, May 11, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

National Alliance on Mental Illness Vermont is holding a mental illness and recovery workshop in St. Albans to help with understanding of mental health, exploring recovery paths or finding supportive resources in Vermont. The workshop is free and will cover a wide array of topics, from understanding major mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder to discussing effective treatments and coping strategies. To register or for more information, visit namivt.org/mir, call 802-876-7949 ext. 101, or email program@namivt.org.

Mother's Day concert

Sunday, May 12, 4 p.m.

The Hinesburg Artist Series will celebrate spring and Mother's Day with a concert full of beautiful music on Sunday, May 12, at 4 p.m. in the Champlain Valley Union High auditorium. The concert will feature the Hinesburg Community Band and South County Chorus, both under the direction of Rufus Patrick. The Hinesburg Community

Band will present selections by James Swearingen, Randall Standridge, Robert Longfield and a rousing piece entitled "Dragons Fly on the Winds of Time" by Larry Neeck. The South County Chorus will sing selections by Michael Engelhardt, Howard Helvey and David Waggoner. The concert is free with donations gratefully accepted. For more info: hinesburgartistsseries.org.

Shelburne Grab and Go Meal

Tuesday, May 14, 11 a.m.-noon

Age Well and St. Catherine's of Siena Parish in Shelburne are providing a meal to go for anyone age 60 and older. The meal will be available for pick up in the parking lot at 72 Church Street. A \$5 donation is suggested. The menu is: chicken breast with sweet-and-sour sauce, brown rice pilaf with veggies and cannellini beans, Brussels sprouts, wheat roll, cookie and milk. To order a meal email agewellstcath@gmail.com or call 802-503-1107. Deadline to order is Wednesday, May 8.

Sensory-friendly mornings

Friday, May 17, 8:30 a.m.

Monthly sensory-friendly mornings begin at Shelburne Museum. These are early hours reserved for visitors of all ages with varying social and sensory-processing needs. "Know Before You Go" materials, limited numbers of noise-cancelling headphones, fidget toys and a break room will be available for visitor use. It's free but registration is required at: <https://tinyurl.com/vdrh4vux> or by calling 802-985-0924. Every month, May through October, the community is welcomed into the museum before regular opening hours to view special exhibitions at the Pizzagalli Center for Art and Education in a light-and-sound-adjusted environment. Created in consultation with Inclusive Arts Vermont, this program for children, teens and adults is designed to offer a positive museum-going experience for visitors with varying sensory processing.

Woodlands protection retreat

Friday-Sunday, May 17-19

Maintaining and connecting habitat is important for the movement of wildlife across the landscape. Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife will hold their 2024 cooperator training in Waterbury. This weekend retreat will share information on improving habitat for wildlife, maintaining connected landscapes and improving forest health. The two-and-a-half-day session features presentations by state and local experts in wildlife and forest management and alumni from past sessions. Visit vtcoverts.org to download an application or call 802-877-2777.

Luncheon in Shelburne

Wednesday, May 22, 11:30 a.m.

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a luncheon for anyone 60 or older in the St Catherine of Siena Parish Hall, 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is stuffed chicken breast, mashed potatoes, sliced carrots, dinner roll, pumpkin cookie and milk. You must register by May 16. Email kbatres@agewellvt.org or call 802-662-5283 to make reservations.

Around Town

Condolences

Sarah Olivia Francisco, an incredible wife, loving mother, sister, daughter, friend, teacher and so much more, died unexpectedly and all too soon, Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at her family's home in Williston, VT. She was 49.



Born on Oct. 3, 1974, in West Allis, Wisc., Sarah was raised in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., where she made many of her closest, lifelong friends and fell in love with her high school sweetheart — and later, husband — Steve. They both attended The College of Saint Rose, and following graduation, moved to Vermont to begin their professional careers. After brief stints in Massachusetts and California, they returned to Vermont where they established themselves as fixtures in the community.

Sarah's tireless dedication to the field of speech therapy yielded two degrees, and over the course of the last two decades, allowed her to touch the lives of countless students and families at the schools in which she worked. When she started working at CVU, she became much more than a speech therapist. She befriended students and teachers alike, regardless of their role or whether or not they were one of her own students. It's through that work and her inclination to be everyone's friend that she became so well known and liked in the community. It's also where she selflessly shared the ideals she held

most dear — like perseverance, taking care of anyone and everyone, being kind, encouraging and accepting, and most of all, spreading joy — with so many others. And even though she excelled in her role, her curiosity and unwavering desire to keep learning always shined through; she had recently passed the Praxis exam to become certified as an Art Teacher.

Yet as proud as Sarah was of all that she and Steve accomplished in their professional lives, she took the most joy from the incredible family that they created together, and the values and qualities that make Olivia and George who they are. "Hold on! Let me get my 'Proud Mama' T-shirt," she would often say, as each of her kids passed yet another milestone in sports, academics, volunteering or even just being great kids.

When thinking of Sarah, there are few things that people remember more than her kindness, encouragement, acceptance, and most importantly, her limitless joy. Her smile was a beacon of joy and kindness, and she was a vibrant and constant presence in the lives of all of those she knew and loved. She reveled in sharing her quick wit and sense of humor, and never hesitated to help support, care for and encourage everyone she knew. As a virtuoso hostess and entertainer known far and wide for throwing unforgettable parties and holiday celebrations, she set a bar so impossibly high that anyone who ever attended one will certainly think of her every time they plan even the smallest of events.

Sarah was in constant motion, living and thriving in the present, while also planning for a future that included even

more travel adventures with the family, running her fourteenth marathon in November, welcoming the two special people that Olivia and George care about into the family as if they were her own, starting a new chapter with Steve as empty nesters, watching her children transition into and through college, and being quietly excited about the prospect of becoming a grandmother one day.

Sarah is survived by her two children, Olivia and George Francisco, her husband, Steve Francisco, her brother, Nick Neilio, and her father, Bill Neilio. She was predeceased by her mother Margaret "Peg" Neilio. Her passing is truly devastating, and one that feels insuperable at times. If you feel like losing Sarah leaves a tremendous hole in a world that will now be without her energy, joy and love, know that you are not alone. It is okay to feel the weight of this loss, just as it's also okay to realize that Sarah would want us all to be brave. Though she is no longer with us, she lives on in more than just memories. Her love of travel will undoubtedly carry on through the adventures her family and friends will continue undertaking in her honor. Her joyfulness and warmth will be ever-present in everyone she's met, worked with and laughed with, as we all strive to see and touch the world the way she did. And most importantly, her legacy will live on in Olivia and George, who learned enough from her in their 21 and 17 years to last their lifetimes.

A celebration of Sarah's life will be held on Sunday, June 2, 2024, at 11 a.m. at Champlain Valley Union High School, 369 CVU Road, in Hinesburg, VT. All family, friends, students and families are welcome.



Local Church Services

Charlotte Congregational Church, UCC

403 Church Hill Road, 425-3176
Regular Sunday service: 9:30 a.m.

Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church

Spear Street, 425-2637
Sister parish: St. Jude's, Hinesburg

Regular schedule of masses:

Saturday, 4:30 p.m.,
at St. Jude's, Hinesburg
Sunday, 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.,
at Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Sunday, 9:30 a.m.,
at St. Jude's, Hinesburg

Swap out your old water heater. For free.

Efficiency Vermont

efficiencyvermont.com/hpwh
(888) 921-5990

Thanks to federal funding, you can now get up to 100% of costs covered on a new heat pump water heater.*

Water heating is a home's second-highest energy expense. The good news: you can reduce energy costs by about 50% when you swap out old equipment for a qualifying, all-electric heat pump water heater.

If this offer were any better, we'd be putting money right in your hand:

- Low-income Vermonters are eligible for **100% of costs covered (up to \$5,000)**
- Moderate-income Vermonters are eligible for **90% of costs covered (up to \$4,500)**
- Even if you don't qualify, you can still receive a **\$600 rebate** and low-interest financing through Efficiency Vermont's Home Energy Loan. Federal tax credits and additional electric utility incentives can help you save even more.

Act soon – this funding is available for a limited time only!

Learn more at:
efficiencyvermont.com/hpwh
(888) 921-5990

*Incentives are subject to availability and eligibility. Funding is made possible by your electric utility, Efficiency Vermont, and federal funding. Your utility may have additional incentives available.



Learn More

Stronger Together

New members vital to Grange's continuing success

Linda Hamilton
Charlotte Grange

The Charlotte Grange is one of 2,000 community Granges across 41 states, including 18 in Vermont, that are part of



The Town of Charlotte TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

Visit charlottevt.org
for more information

Charlotte Energy Committee
Wednesday, May 1, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission
Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m.

Recreation Commission
Monday, May 6, 5:30 p.m.

Regular Selectboard
Monday, May 6, 6:30 p.m.

Trails Committee Monthly
Tuesday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.

Development Review Board
Wednesday, May 8, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission
Thursday, May 16, 7 p.m.

Regular Selectboard
Monday, May 20, 6:30 p.m.

Development Review Board
Wednesday, May 22, 7 p.m.

Memorial Day Holiday
May 27, Town Hall Closed All Day

the National Grange. Total membership is currently about 80,000 members.

The National Grange was established in 1867 to strengthen rural farming communities. The Grange quickly became influential and was instrumental in establishing landmark federal programs such as the Cooperative Extension Service, the Farm Credit System and Rural Free Delivery of mail. The Grange has continued to advocate effectively for many more issues including universal suffrage, railroad regulations, accessible farm loans, food, nutrition and agriculture support through the federal Farm Bill.

That larger influence is very important, but the Grange's core is a strong local focus. It is a member-led, grassroots organization whose work is to help address local needs and issues, and in the process give members opportunities to learn and grow as citizens and leaders. It remains rooted in agriculture and support of farm families, but is active in a range of rural, suburban and even urban communities. We all eat; we all rely on the people who grow and raise our food.

Promotion of civic engagement and creative arts, educational programs, especially around food, agricultural issues, community resilience, service projects and social interaction are primary ways Charlotte and other local Granges serve their communities. We enjoy working together and like to have fun, which is probably as nourishing as the good food we regularly share.

After Charlotte Grange was established in 1908, it quickly became important locally for mutual support, cooperative activities and social networking. By 1940, there were 200 members or about one in every five residents. In 1958, when the former Lyceum Schoolhouse on Spear Street in East Charlotte Village was for sale, Charlotte Grange purchased that historic building to use as their home base and as a community resource.

Unfortunately, over the next 50 years membership slowly dwindled due both



to members aging out and the rise of many other organizations and activities competing for people's time.

Then from 2010-20 a handful of new members joined with a determination to keep this worthy institution alive through expanded programs and activities. They also recognized the significant historic value of the little Grange Hall and its need for special stewardship. It is still sturdy, despite having been built in 1870 and used as Lyceum Schoolhouse for 80 years prior to becoming the Grange's home 65 years ago.

That infusion of new energetic members has slowly but surely attracted even more fresh energy. We now have 36 members, working through several active committees, organizing programs and events and looking after the building. We have created a partner 501(c)3 organization called Friends of Lyceum Schoolhouse with the goal to fundraise for significant upgrades to the building to make it more accessible and available for a variety of uses.

Our strength is growing. We look forward to increased activity in 2024 now that COVID restrictions have been lifted, and the Grange Hall has a new furnace thanks to generous community donors. Members meet on the third Tuesday

evening of the month, with a business meeting or potluck supper in alternating months. Grange-curious residents of Charlotte and neighboring towns are welcome.

Our website, charlottegrange.org, has background and membership information, an upcoming events calendar and ways to donate either to Grange programs and operating expenses or to Friends of Lyceum School for maintenance and upgrading of the Grange Hall. Through the website you can also sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter which goes to members plus those who support the Grange by helping out with activities.

We just completed another successful spring clothing drive for children of Charlotte Food Shelf families and are preparing for honoring veterans by placing flags on Charlotte graves for Memorial Day.

Our March online auction featuring Charlotte businesses and makers was fun but also, with more than 100 offerings from businesses and individuals and more than 150 winning bidders, raised enough to meet our goal of covering operating expenses for the next two years.

Our Charlotte Walks program has returned with the warmer weather, with monthly outings to explore Charlotte's accessible public trails and the opportunity to chat with other Charlotters along the way.

And, thanks to the generosity of local sponsors, in June and July our popular Grange on the Green series of family-friendly free concerts will return to Town Green, featuring some of the many talented musicians in this area. Dates and performers will be announced soon.

Please join in any of our programs and events. And please consider joining our team by becoming a member so we can offer even more. That's how we'll continue to grow and contribute to the mutual support and resilience of our community.

(Linda Hamilton is a member of Charlotte Grange, whose purpose is to honor our agrarian roots and help build a resilient future for all. Info at charlottegrange.org.)



**Restoration, Preservation, and Construction
of Antique and Classic Boats**

802-425-2004

821 Ferry Rd., Charlotte | sam@darlingsboatworks.com

Outdoors

May 19-26 designated Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week

Ginger Nickerson
University of Vermont Extension

The emerald ash borer is no stranger to Vermont, having first been reported in 2018 in northern Orange County. Since then, it has been confirmed in every county in the state except Essex County.

This invasive wood-boring insect attacks all species of native ash trees within the *Fraxinus* genus. It is predicted to kill almost 99 percent of Vermont's ash trees if they are left untreated.

To draw attention to this pest and the environmental and economic damage it can cause, the week of May 19-26 has been designated as National Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week. For its part, the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry program is helping to increase public awareness by providing resources and encouraging Vermonters to get involved by scouting for the pest, organizing a neighborhood ash tree-tagging event or spreading awareness on social media.

An online Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week toolkit is available at go.uvm.edu/eab-toolkit. It contains posters, videos, sample social media posts and other tools; resources for educators; information on ash tree identification and guidelines for hosting a neighborhood ash tree walk or tree-tagging event.

In addition, Vermont Urban and Community Forestry is asking outdoor recreationists, landowners and other community members to be on the lookout for signs of this pest. Adults, which emerge in late May or early June, are 1/4- to 1/2-inches long and dark green and metallic in color. Affected trees will show signs of thinning canopy, epicormic sprouting, woodpecker flecking and s-shaped tunnels behind the outer bark.

Sightings of the pest and any trees suspected of being infested with emerald ash borer can be documented with photos and reported via the "Report It!" button



Left: S-shaped tunnels behind the outer bark of an ash tree are a telltale sign that emerald ash borers have attacked that tree.



Photo by Joseph O'Brien

Right: Adult emerald ash borers, which emerge in late May or early June, are 1/4- to 1/2-inch long and dark green and metallic in color.

Photo by Debbie Miller

on the Vermont Invasives website at vtinvasives.org.

This website also has a number of resources, including videos and maps showing infested areas, to help homeowners, municipalities and forest landowners and managers identify, understand and control the spread of emerald ash borer. Municipalities can access templates to write ash management plans, tools to calculate the costs of different management scenarios, case studies from other municipalities and sample documents, such as letters to residents and contracts with tree removal companies.

While towns may choose to treat some public ash trees with pesticides, this option can be costly and must be done before the beetle is well established in the tree. Damage from emerald ash borer is not always apparent as once an adult starts laying eggs in an ash tree, it can take

from three to five years for enough larvae to build up under the bark for the tree to show any symptoms.

It may take up to a decade from when emerald ash borer first arrives in an area before ash trees begin dying off on a large scale. Ash trees that are not treated or removed will die, potentially creating a hazard along roads and other public areas. Having a management plan in place will help municipalities better prepare and manage the impacts of emerald ash borer and the loss of ash trees in their

communities.

Vermonters can do their part to slow the spread of emerald ash borer by following the "buy it where you burn it" rule. This means not transporting firewood long distances. Instead, use only certified, treated firewood or buy or gather firewood close to where it will be burned. All Vermont state campgrounds and many privately owned campgrounds have local firewood available for purchase on-site and can recommend additional places to buy wood locally.



This fine casting of professionals loves the outdoors, plants, animals, bugs, and especially you, our customers. We are all striving to grow the finest plants and deliver the finest services. While our customers seek us out from farther and farther away, Charlotte remains the center of our universe. Thank you Charlotte.

Charlie Proutt



ERIC



CHRISTIAN



ADAM



BOB



RACHAEL



JEN



CAITLIN



TINA



CHARLIE



LUKE



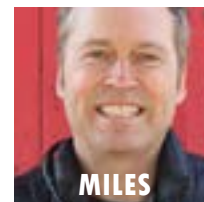
MOISES



ALANNA



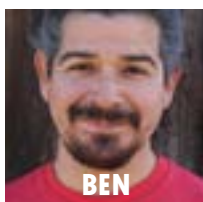
SHEENA



MILES



CHLOE



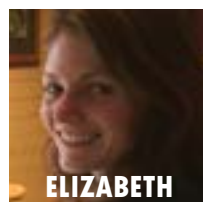
BEN



ZAYLA



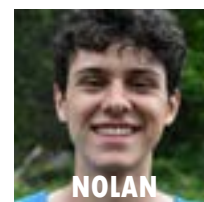
BRYNN



ELIZABETH



ALYSSA



NOLAN



ASA



KELLY



SOPHIE



KRISTIN



RACHEL



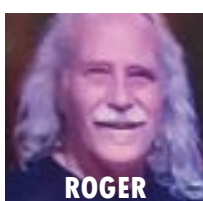
TUCKER



TAVO



TED



ROGER



BEN



MADELINE



ABBY



PAIGE



DANIELLE



KATEY



MARSHALL



IKE



NOOR



LEO



GIANETTA



RYAN



RALPH



SARAH



COTY

WWW.HORSFORDNURSERY.COM FOR OUR COMPLETE CATALOG

Gardening

Chickens big benefit to the garden in a timely way



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Wire cloches can be used to protect small plants from chickens.

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

There's more to consider than fresh eggs when raising chickens at home. For gardeners, that includes keeping both chickens and plants safe and productive.

Chickens love to dig in the dirt and that can be a problem. Take advantage of their natural tendencies by allowing access to the garden when they can do the most good and denying access when they can do the most harm.

Concerned about bugs, ticks and other pests? Chickens devour them. In the spring they'll happily aerate the soil hunting for tasty treats.

They leave behind droppings high in nitrogen and work them into the soil. They'll scratch up or pull out young weeds and incorporate compost to help prepare your garden for the coming growing season.

If you plan to add a new garden bed in a grassy, weedy area, chickens confined in a fenced enclosure or chicken tractor will clear the area completely.

Once you're ready to plant, ban them from the garden. They'll eat newly sown seeds and emerging seedlings. Their scratching in the soil can damage tender roots.

In the blink of an eye, they'll defoliate young plants, dooming your planned crop before it's had a chance to grow. More mature plants may not suffer significant harm from allowing chickens access to the garden, but chickens won't hesitate to peck at an interesting-looking cucumber or vine-ripening tomato.

While protecting crops from chickens' mischief is important, so is protecting chickens from the dangers the garden can present. If you'll be treating the garden with fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides or other chemicals (organic or otherwise), they may be harmful to the chickens, so it's best to keep the birds at a safe distance.

In addition, be sure to practice good biosecurity by keeping your chickens away from areas where wild birds gather, such as bird feeding stations and duck ponds, to avoid transmission of avian influenza and other diseases.

Food crops such as tomatoes, peppers, potatoes and eggplant are all part of the nightshade family and eating them can be harmful to chickens. Other crops unsafe for chickens to consume include rhubarb, onions and dried beans. At the end of the growing season, after you pull up the plants that aren't chicken-friendly, let the flock loose in the garden to clean up remaining plant material.

If you grow berry bushes or fruit trees, chickens can help clean up fallen fruit and insect pests. Of course, like other birds, chickens love blueberries and similar fruit. Watching a chicken eyeing a ripening berry on an overhead branch and jumping straight up to grab a beakful is sure to bring out a laugh — and thoughts of how to preserve the berry harvest.

Portable fences can discourage chickens, and row covers or bird netting can provide a barrier between chickens and a forbidden feast. Wire cloches can protect small plants.

If you prefer to keep all your plants safe and chickens out of the garden but would still like to use chickens for pest control, consider a double fence spaced about four feet apart around the garden. The flock can patrol the area between the fences and intercept any pest crossing their path on its way to the garden. Bird netting across the top will keep chickens contained and on patrol.

Chicken manure is a great benefit for gardeners who own chickens. Because chicken manure is considered "hot" and can damage plants, coop litter and manure need to be composted before use.

It makes a good addition to your compost pile, or it can be applied to the garden in the fall and allowed to compost over the intervening months until spring. For more information on composting chicken manure, see <https://go.uvm.edu/poo>.

Soil amendment, pest control, fresh eggs and a touch of humor. What more could a gardener ask?

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

Gardening

Sharing your yard with nature

Amy Simone
University of Vermont Extension

Your home landscape can be an amazing opportunity to collaborate with nature. With thoughtful plant choices, you can invite more biodiversity into your yard. Even established landscapes will benefit from plant additions that can increase traffic from your favorite birds or provide forage for bees and other pollinators.

Most home landscapes are a monoculture of grass plants. While turfgrass certainly has its advantages in areas with high foot traffic, its shallow roots and growing habits tend to require more inputs with regards to nutrients, water and time to maintain it.

Consider letting the “weeds” take over your lawn. The key is to choose the plants that you would like to have growing in your lawn versus allowing the truly undesirables to establish themselves.

Interplanting broadleaf plants such as

Dutch white clover (*Trifolium repens*) amongst your turfgrass will fix nitrogen from the air and enrich your soil, as well as attract pollinators to your sunny lawn areas. Creeping thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*) and ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) are other plants that can coexist nicely with turfgrass.

If you would prefer to keep your turfgrass pure, then consider other areas of your lawn that might benefit from groundcovers. They can save you from having to mow a steep bank while also creating a thick green carpet that prevents soil erosion.

Likewise, in the shady areas of your lawn where turfgrass simply will not take root, there are groundcovers that will gladly move in. Some options for plants here include cranesbill geranium (*Geranium maculatum*), spotted deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*), Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex Pensylvanica*) and foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*).

If you have room for trees in your landscape, consult your local nursery to

select the right ones for your property. Trees are hard workers, sequestering carbon in their deep roots and offering habitat to many different animals.

Another idea to welcome more biodiversity into your yard is to increase your planting area by adding perennial beds. Determine how you use your turfgrass and carve out beds that complement your needs for play zones and walking paths.

If you have a tree on its own surrounded by a circle of mulch, shape a planting bed around it. Perhaps the bed can connect two lone trees together.

Use sheet mulching (go.uvm.edu/sheet-mulching) to naturally suppress the grass in the designated areas and build up the beds with organic matter in preparation for planting.

Once ready, plant the beds with perennials and shrubs chosen as much for their beauty as for their biodiversity credentials. Prioritize native and/or pollinator-loving plants that



Photo by Anna Szentgyorgyr/Unsplash
Interplanting Dutch white clover amongst turfgrass in sunny lawn areas will not only enrich the soil but attract bees and other pollinators.

offer a variety of bloom times and flowering longevity so you are feeding pollinators from early spring through late fall.

As the plants mature, the need for bark mulch should be reduced or eliminated. Any bare spots can be filled in with groundcover plants.

Sharing your yard with nature can be as beautiful as it is beneficial to the environment.

(Amy Simone is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from South Burlington.)

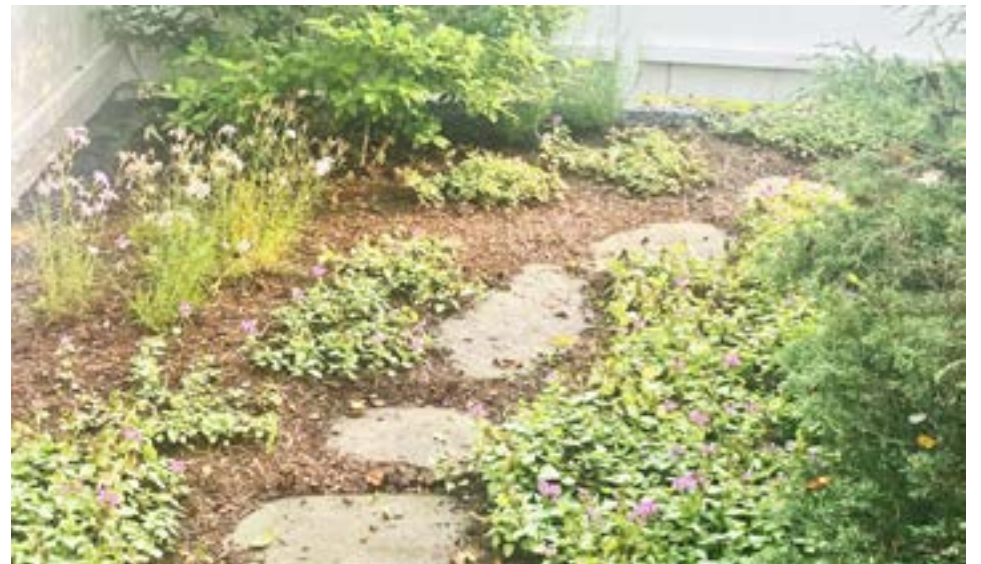


Photo by Amy Simone
Spotted deadnettle (*Lamium maculatum*) can provide good ground cover for a partially shaded walking path.

Into the Woods

Understanding forests means confronting harsh realities

Ethan Tapper
Chittenden County Forester

One of the great joys of being a forester is developing a deep and complex relationship with the vital and beautiful biotic communities that we call “forests.” It’s a double-edged sword: building a more in-depth understanding of forests also forces us to confront some harsh realities. When I walk in the woods, I see forests that are young and simple, invaded and degraded, missing vital pieces and parts; I see both a complex community of living things, and a world of things that are missing. I call these missing things the secret deaths in our forests — all the things that never had a chance to exist.

It’s easiest to visualize these “secret deaths” in a parking lot. Every parking lot (and everything that’s not a forest or a wetland) in Vermont is the site of a cleared forest or a drained wetland. When that forest was cleared, some trees were killed. However, what has transpired since, and what will continue into the indefinite future, is a far greater loss: the trillions of living things of thousands of different species that

will simply never exist because that parking lot will never be a forest, and thus never provide habitat for them, again.

While it’s harder to visualize than when I’m in a parking lot, when I walk in a forest I am also surrounded by secret deaths. Nearly all of Vermont’s forests are young and simple, most having regenerated from agricultural land within the last century. Nearly all are missing critical habitats and characteristics, things like big, old trees, dead wood, a gappy, irregular canopy, and different sizes and ages of trees that have defined them and provided habitats for our biodiversity for millennia. Our forests have lost or functionally lost numerous tree species to non-native pathogens, have been invaded by non-native invasive plants that undermine forests’ diversity and resilience, have lost wildlife species and seen new species introduced.

When I walk in the woods I am overwhelmed by the abundance of life, but also by how much life is missing: the living things that cannot exist because our forests lack the basic attributes that these species have adapted to for thousands of years.

As forest managers, forest stewards and forest-lovers, it is vital that we recognize that caring for forests goes far beyond the trees. Managing a forest responsibly also means caring for animals and plants, fungi and insects, soils and waters — the entirety of the forest ecosystem — and safeguarding all of these things into the indefinite future.

I began my own journey in forestry as someone who just loved trees and forests and wanted to protect them. As I learned more about forest ecology, and the reality of the threats and stressors that our modern-day forests face, I began to see how forest management could help restore ecosystems, help them navigate the incredible challenges of the modern world and help them move into an uncertain future with grace. I began to see how the death of trees could be an important tool for creating habitats for thousands of species and ecological attributes that had been missing from our landscape for centuries. I started to question what “protecting” a forest truly meant.

We do not have to be bystanders, watching our forests navigate a climate crisis and a biodiversity crisis alone. We can take action

to reverse the secret deaths in our forests, but we can’t do that without making some compromises, without doing some things as complex and as bittersweet as cutting trees. If we look at forests with a more expansive view of forest ecology, and an understanding of how the death of a tree can help contribute to the lives of billions or trillions of organisms, now and in the future, we can see that it’s a small price to pay.

Understanding the secret deaths in our forests is sobering but also hopeful. When I walk through the woods, rather than focus on the secret deaths, I think of what Dr. Gabor Mat calls “the compassion of possibility,” trying to see the forest not just for what it is missing, but also for what it could be. If we take action, we can reverse the secret deaths, helping our forests rediscover their true capacity for life.

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

Sacred Hunter

When the hunt turns to stalking the wild leek

Bradley Carleton
Contributor

On my way home from a turkey hunt Wednesday morning, I was pondering “what does successful mean” when it comes to a day in the woods. Does it mean that we come home with what we were pursuing? Or does it mean that, like my favorite saying, “Happiness is not getting what you want but wanting what you get,” it is simply recognizing the gifts that are in front of us?

All life is sacred, not just wild game, and when we take a life to support or nurture our own, it should be done with reverence and some level of gratitude.

I like to joke with vegetarians that the only difference between them and a hunter is that the animals have a chance to get away. How “fair” is it to cut a wild asparagus off at the base or pluck a succulent morel from its

musky earth? Shouldn’t we honor the plants as much as the animals?

In Native American belief systems, there is a deep respect for all things living. One 19th century Cheyenne named Wooden Leg said, “The old Indian teaching was that it is wrong to tear loose from its place on the earth anything that may be growing there. It may be cut off, but it should not be uprooted. The trees and the grass have spirits. Whenever one of such growths may be destroyed by some good Indian, his act is done in sadness and with a prayer for forgiveness because of his necessities.”

Many organized religions still uphold that food should be blessed before we consume it, which, in a sense is recognizing the value and energy of the food.

So, here I am, pondering the meaning and purpose of life as I am walking home “empty-handed” when it occurs to me that I

am surrounded by one of the Great Spirit’s blessings. I am walking through a strange and fragrant patch of “wild leeks” (or ramps, as most colloquialisms refer to it) on the side of a hill surrounded by an oak stand.

There is a small stream of running water from a spring nearby and it nurtures these broad-leaved wild onions. All around me light filters through the newly leafed trees in pillars of warm white sunlight with swirls of morning mist rising from the musky earth. I am transfixed by the beauty. I kneel, feeling like I have found a place in the woods where the Great Spirit is watching over me and saying, “Open your eyes. You are being blessed.”

I dig my fingers into the dark black soil and smell the pungent aroma of last year’s decaying leaves and the sweet smell of over-ripened acorns. My fingers dig in around an unusually large green leaf and follow the auburn stem toward its roots. My fingernails have become the ancient digging tools of my ancestors. Several inches below the cool earth I feel the wet and solid bulb and curl the last joint of my finger underneath it. Uprooting it, I hold it up in the shaft of sunlight that is funneling down upon me and peel back its slimy skin to reveal the powerful-smelling root vegetable.

I slowly walk home with my prize and show it to my wife who loves ramps.

“There must be half an acre of them!” I tell her excitedly. She quickly runs into the house and retrieves her new ergonomic hand tools I gave her as a gift from work, and we head off back to the site.

In a mere 20 minutes we have gathered 4 pounds of the sweet wild onions and have not even come close to impacting the patch.

Back at the house I think to myself: “How can I honor this wonderful gift? What can I do to prepare it so that it will be a centerpiece of enjoyment for all who taste it?” I clean

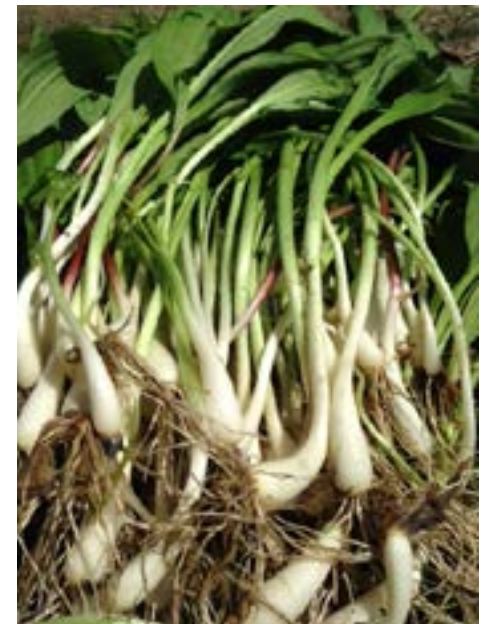


Photo by Bradley Carleton

Hunting success can mean bagging a bunch of ramps or wild leeks.

and sort them with a spray gun from the hose, separating the leaves from the bulbs with scissors.

Tonight, we will dine on roasted leeks basted with olive oil and sea salt, and after, we will pickle the remainder with honey from my next-door neighbor, Bob Giknes, and some local ginger, saving them for special occasions. And the leaves, I grind up in my Cuisinart, add raw garlic, olive oil and roasted pine nuts, blending them into a bright green pesto to be savored over cheese tortellini at a later date.

As we sit down to a meal of roast wild turkey breast (from a previous “successful” hunt), garlic mashed potatoes and roasted ramps, we toast our good fortune and bless the food with a glass of fine chardonnay.

Life is beautiful. All we need to do is open our eyes and look for the blessings.

Lots of ways to dig into gardens during month of May

Margaret Woodruff
Director

From gardening to Green Up Day, from bees to Biodiversity Day, May is the month to dig into gardens.

The Seed Library is stocked with local, heritage seeds for a productive and sustainable start to your vegetable patch. We have a host of books and tools to help with your horticulture adventures.

Don't forget to take a peek at our seed-starting display for a preview of the children's garden coming this summer.

Pick up a packet of free sunflower seeds and support the local community action group Vermont Plants Sunflowers for Ukraine, which inspires the planting of sunflowers throughout the state with the idea that "every seed planted will be a statement of solidarity." More information available at vtsunflowers4ukraine.org.

Children's programs

After school embroidery

Wednesdays, May 1-15, 2:15-3:15 p.m.

From frogs to footballs, from lilies to lightning bolts, make something amazing with a needle and thread. Colleen Brady leads this workshop to learn some stitches, plan a design and create an embroidery project on your clothes, for your wall or as a gift. Materials provided. If you would like to embellish a piece of clothing, please bring a non-stretchy item. Fourth-eighth graders. Registration is required, email susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Preschool story time

Tuesdays & Fridays, 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. We'll be exploring the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, play dough. These are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library.

Babytime

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

Babytime is an unstructured hour at the library for parents, caregivers and babies so they can play and chat during the dark winter months. Explore books and toys and general conversation every Thursday morning in the young children's area. Ages birth to 18 months.

Let's LEGO

Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Drop-in for LEGO free play. There will be loads of LEGO bricks out along with some books and prompts for inspiration. For all ages. Please note children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Programs for adults

Stillwater meditation

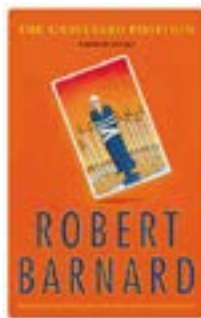
Saturdays, 9 a.m.

Poetry and meditation are offered freely and in person to the Charlotte community. Come 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, May 13, 10 a.m.

From master of mystery Robert Barnard comes "The Graveyard Position," a witty new suspense novel featuring one of the most dysfunctional families ever to grace crime fiction. Copies available at the library circulation desk. (Note date change.)



Working at the border

Tuesday, May 14, 7 p.m.

Charlotte resident Steve Hill spent part of the winter in the Sonoran Desert, volunteering with No Mas Muertes (no more deaths) to provide humanitarian aid and survival supplies to migrants and asylum seekers in the U.S. borderlands. Join to hear about Hill's experience and participate in a conversation on migration and discuss our own stories and viewpoints. Registration not required but appreciated at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2m4n44>.



Better together book club

Wednesday, May 22, 7 p.m.

You're invited to discuss "Flight of the Puffin" with this open group that discusses books related to parenthood. Books will be available at the desk and on Libby.

Registration appreciated, but not required: susanna@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Men's book discussion

Wednesday, May 22, 7:30 p.m.

Are trees social beings? In "The Hidden Life of Trees" forester and author Peter Wohlleben convincingly makes the case that the forest is a social network. He draws on scientific discoveries to describe how trees are like human families: tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling and even warn each other of impending dangers. Copies available at the circulation desk. Join the discussion in person or on Zoom at

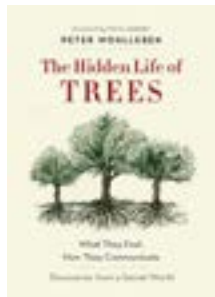


Photo by Susanna Kahn

Members of the Wednesday crochet & knit group gather under the "pompom" tree that was part of the library's Earth Month celebrations.

<https://tinyurl.com/bde3bktn>.

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.

Short story selections

Wednesdays, May 1 & 15, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to discuss short stories old and new on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. Via Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/9c398wyy>.

Library contact information:

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

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for the newsletter at <https://tinyurl.com/n5usd25r>.

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, May 2, 6 p.m. online and in person. Please contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Senior Center News

Senior center welcomes Tracy Brown as new coordinator

Lori York
Director

Senior centers provide a gathering space for meaningful connections as we age. Taking care of physical, emotional and mental health is important for healthy aging and living longer.

An important piece to supporting and serving a community is the staffing. The Charlotte Senior Center is excited to welcome Tracy Brown as the part-time senior center coordinator. She possesses a true passion for service and a deep commitment to community. She will be assisting with the senior center's database, registrations and other administrative tasks. Please stop by and say hello.

While you are saying hello, visit the May art exhibit of Charlotte resident Lee Krohn's photography.

This month there are presentations on preventing elder fraud and advance-care planning and directives. The center is also offering a yoga practice honoring women, a new tai chi for arthritis class and a Saturday morning watercolor workshop for beginners.

Community events & services

Preventing elder fraud Wednesday, May 15, 1 p.m.

Nicolas Kerest, the United States attorney for Vermont, with representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service and Department of State, will speak about the trends in elder fraud, telltale signs of elder fraud and ways to prevent it. Over 10 percent of older Americans experience some type of elder abuse each year. The Department of Justice and the law enforcement community have aggressively pursued justice for elders in a wide variety of fields, from nursing homes that provide grossly substandard care, to guardians and others who abuse their positions of trust, to multinational fraud schemes that target older adults. Registration is recommended. Free.

Embracing quality of life choices Thursday, May 9, 1 p.m.

Explore how making informed decisions about health care preferences can enhance quality of life and how embracing quality of life choices underscores the importance of advance care planning in empowering individuals to live with dignity, autonomy, and peace of mind at "Making Meaningful Choices as We Age with Advance Care Planning and Directives," a presentation by Alicia Fleming, a senior living advisor. Light refreshments provided. Registration is recommended. Free.

In honor of women yoga Friday, May 10, 4-5:15 p.m.

At the start of Mother's Day weekend, this class with Heidi Kvasnak will honor women by offering a safe and quiet space for self-care. It will include breathwork, meditation, mantra, chanting, slow gentle movement, journaling prompts and a guided deep relaxation. Please bring two blankets and a yoga mat. Class limit of 15. Cost: \$10. Registration and payment by Wednesday, May 8.

Annual plant sale Saturday, May 25, 9 a.m.-noon

Stop by the senior center's annual plant sale and stock up on a great selection of annuals and perennials at great prices. Rain or shine. If you're dividing perennials in your garden, pot (and label) a few to donate to the sale. Drop off plants at the center any time between Friday, May 17, and Friday, May 24. Need help digging? Please call 802-425-6345 and leave your name, address and phone number. A team member will call to arrange a time to dig your plants. The group will be digging plants through May 22. Questions? Email ppolly62@ymail.com.

Alzheimer's caregivers support group Wednesday, May 8, 4-5 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer's? Do you know someone who is? Please join the monthly Caregivers Support Group on the second Wednesday of each month from 4-5 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. New date and time option to attend by Zoom or in-person. For additional information or to receive the Zoom meeting link, email Susan Cartwright at cartwright.susan1@gmail.com.

Weekly Age Well Grab & Go meals

Pick up on Thursdays 10-11 a.m. at the Charlotte Senior Center. Registration is required by Monday for the Thursday meal. \$5 suggested meal donation but not required. To register, call 802-425-6345 or email meals@charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Programs

May artist exhibit Photography by Lee Krohn

Lee Krohn is a longtime semi-professional photographer who brings passion and unique, creative perspectives. His photography has been used to showcase various nonprofits including Girls on the Run, Dragon Boat Festival, Run Vermont/Vermont City Marathon, Vermont Police Canine Association and Sail Beyond Cancer. He has illustrated many stories for Vermont Magazine and is a regular featured contributor to local newspapers. As a volunteer firefighter, Krohn also documents the many aspects of Vermont's volunteer fire service in ways that no one else does.

Birding expedition Wednesday, May 15, 9 a.m.

There is a wide range of birding habitats in Chittenden County. Join avid bird watcher Hank Kaestner and learn to identify the various bird species and habitats right here in Vermont. Group size is limited to 20 participants. Free but registration required.

Beginner watercolor workshop Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

If you've always wanted to try watercolor but were too intimidated, Make Some Waves with Ginny Joyner is the class for you. Learn techniques for creating ripples, choppy waves, reflections, foam, droplets and shoreline with watercolor, crayon and masking fluid. Take a coastal vacation through painting. Class limit 10 students. Cost: \$35 plus \$6 supply fee. Registration and payment required by May 8.



Photo by Lori York

Robert Caldwell talks about Vermont's 911 emergency response system at the April men's breakfast. In May, Tom Deneberg, executive director of Shelburne Museum, will be the guest speaker.

Exercise activities

Tai chi for arthritis Thursdays, May 9-30, 9:45-10:45 a.m.

Try out this new class. The benefits of a tai chi practice include reduced pain and stiffness and improved muscle strength and joint flexibility. Through learning the tai chi movements and practicing regularly, many have found significant relief from arthritis symptoms. Eliza is a certified instructor and has studied with Dr. Lam, the founder of the Tai Chi for Arthritis Association. Questions? Email belizahammer@hotmail.com. Cost: \$40 for the 4-week session. Registration and payment by Tuesday, May 7.

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

This PILATES class, for folks 55+, is designed to be challenging and safe. Phyllis Bartling leads the class through upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises with the focus on working core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

Yoga strength-building practice Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon

Join Heidi Kvasnak for an integrative practice that builds strength and stability while maintaining a sense of ease and spaciousness in both body and mind. We 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. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Men's breakfast Friday, May 10, 7 a.m.

On the second Friday of the month, the men gather for breakfast and conversation. Doors open at 7 a.m. Breakfast at 7:30



Photo by Megan Brown

Tracy Brown joins the senior center as part-time coordinator.

The speaker this month is Tom Denenberg, executive director of Shelburne Museum. If you are planning to attend the men's breakfast, email Lane Morrison at l Morrison@gmavt.net before Tuesday, May 7. Suggested donation: \$6. Registration required by Tuesday for the Friday breakfast.

Monday lunches

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

Senior center info:

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages. Programs include weekly lunches, daily exercise classes and many opportunities to connect through board and card games and art and language programming. Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The "Week Ahead" email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the upcoming week.

Write Ingredients

A culinary exploration of this Monday's Munch

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

The senior center menu for this Monday Munch, May 6, is roasted veggie fajitas, cucumber and tomato salad, roasted potatoes, churro cheesecake bars and cranberry seltzer. The munching happens 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

A popular dish in Tex-Mex cuisine, "fajita" means "strip," and originated as a strip of meat, piled with condiments and wrapped in a tortilla. The Austin Chronicle offers an interesting history (austinchronicle.com/food/2005-03-04/261130).

This year's Shreveport contest for the Golden Taco award, billed as "the most coveted taco prize in the world" was April 27. Don't feel bad. There's plenty of time left before the SoCal Taco Fest on Aug. 17 in San Diego. There, besides plenty of tacos, you can see chihuahua races and a chihuahua beauty contest.

Being Southern California, this fest needs a set of rules for attendees, including "no smoking, no moshing and no nudity."

Raised in Northern California, I heard plenty of words about the southern part of the state.

Another item on the Monday Munch menu features something decidedly northeastern: cranberries. Wild cranberries were a staple for Native Americans who used them as health remedies and in foods and drinks.

National Geographic notes that cranberries were used in an energy bar-like food called "pemmican," which served as a vital source of nutrition for fur traders during the winter months.

The venerable Merriam-Webster tells us that "seltzer" is carbonated water and the word is a modification of the German selters wasser or water of Selters, Germany. Try looking up cranberry seltzer on the internet, and it seems impossible to find it without vodka. We can safely assume that the drink served by volunteer cooks at Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center will most definitely not include any alcohol.

In 1912, Marcus L. Urann gave up his law practice, bought a cranberry bog and began to can cranberries. He formed a cooperative for cranberry production, which became Ocean Spray. You can read about this in The Smithsonian at <https://tinyurl.com/3jye78dc>.

Calling the cranberry a super food, the Cranberry Institute offers a database of nearly 900 studies about the benefits of eating cranberries year-round, but cranberry growing season is short. Only about 5 percent of the cranberry crop is sold as fresh fruit. The Ocean Spray "log" became available nationwide in 1941. Now, Americans consume 5,062,500 gallons of jellied cranberry sauce each year.

Hosts at NPR tried a berry developed by the cranberry breeding program at



Fajita and cucumber and tomato salad



Adobe stock photo

the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Researchers there had decided that cranberry growing need not be limited to the Northeast. Since their goal was to develop a berry with a sweeter taste, they named their production "Sweetie." Reception from radio hosts was mixed (<https://tinyurl.com/42rhzzrx>).

One of the oldest cultivated vegetables, the cucumber, brought to Haiti by Christopher Columbus, may have originated in India, where it's been cultivated for 3,000 years.

Look up "tzatziki," and you'll find lots of information about this popular yogurt-cucumber dish, often featured in Southwestern Europe and West Asia, where it can be a dip, sauce, soup or dressing. Online, the Greek Chef voices a strong opinion, declaring, "Tzatziki is Greek, no other country can claim the most famous Greek food in the world (it's a few centuries older than Greek Mousaka)!!!"

He continues, "The Ottoman Empire ruled over Greece from the 16th century until World War I. During this period, it was mandatory to give Turkish names to all Greek foods; hence many Greek dishes still have names of Turkish origin. That's all; the rest is just small talk."

Former New York Times book editor Dwight Garner gets to the basics, describing the refreshing salad he eats almost daily: "thinly sliced cucumber, cherry tomatoes, feta cheese, with a dash of olive oil." You'll find lots of food stories and wonderfully wry comments in his 2023 book, "The Upstairs Delicatessen: On Eating, Reading, Reading

About Eating, and Eating While Reading,"

Garner, of course, isn't writing the cooking section for The Times, and with 11,222 entries on "cucumber," it offers lots of preparation possibilities. As usual, there are some complications. For the first recipe listed, you'll need fresh, firm fish such as bass. Other recipes call for shrimp, lox or shredded barbecued chicken. Cucumbers almost seem like an afterthought in the recipe list of marinated meat, runny eggs, shiitake mushroom, bean sprouts, spinach, carrots and cucumbers over a bed of rice.

Answering a spousal argument over whether the cucumber is a fruit or a vegetable, as usual, Judge John Hodgman provides the saving grace to the New York Times' seemingly endless list of cucumber possibilities. We're told the wife is getting her doctorate in genetics, so, following the encyclopedia definition of fruit as "the fleshy or dry ripened ovary of a flowering plant," she declares, "the cucumber is a fruit."

Hodgman says both parties in this pair have earned a master's in Pointless Argumentation, and he advises, just call them "cukes."

Macka B's "The Original Cucuma," is a Jamaican rap on the health advantages of eating cucumbers at youtube.com/watch?v=Hc65D12fV8Y.

For a fajita reminder, enjoy "Guadalajara" at <https://tinyurl.com/25swu6tp>.

Check the Charlotte Senior Center website at charlotteseniorcentervt.org/lunch/meals for the menu for Monday Munch on May 13.

Bon appétit!

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 05482
PERMIT NO. 9

RESORTED STANDARD