

# The Charlotte News

November 14, 2024 *Your nonprofit community news source since 1958* Vol. 67, No. 11

## Make a gift of gratitude

Bill Regan and John Quinney  
Board of Directors

We approach the holiday season with much to be thankful for.

Above all, we're deeply grateful to you, our readers, who keep this newspaper healthy with your donations and your contributions as writers, photographers, proofreaders and more.

With this in mind, we have two requests.

First, our year-end campaign launches today with the goal of raising \$40,000 over the next six weeks. This represents a quarter of our annual budget and is key to ending the year on a stable financial footing.

For the fifth year in a row, we've been awarded a NewsMatch grant so, for a limited time only, all gifts up to \$1,000 are doubled, and you can feel twice as good about your donation.

Second, with each donation, we

**DONATION** continued on page 3

## Charlotte results from General Election Day voting

There were 2,850 ballots, or 82 percent of the registered voters in Charlotte, returned in the 2024 General Election Day voting in the town. Here is how they voted:

### For U.S. President and Vice President

#### Vote for not more than one

Kamala D. Harris & Tim Walz — Democratic — 2,207 — 79%  
Donald J. Trump & JD Vance — Republican — 502 — 18%  
Robert F. Kennedy Jr. & Nicole Shanahan — We the People — 60 — 2%

Chase Oliver & Mike Ter Maat — Libertarian — 11

Claudia de la Cruz & Karina Garcia — Socialism and Liberation — 8

Cornel West & Melina Abdullah — Peace and Justice — 6

Rachele Fruit & Dennis Richter — Socialist Workers — 0

### For U.S. Senator

#### Vote for not more than one

**VOTE RESULTS** continued on page 4

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

A large crowd and a half-moon showed up for the state Division 1 title game in St. Johnsbury on Saturday night.

It may have been just a semicircular-lunar display on this beautiful night for football, but it was full-tilt lunacy when the final buzzer sounded.

Players, spectators and coaches erupted in a frenzied celebration as Champlain Valley won its second state title in three years, beating No. 2 Rutland 41-14. It was the Redhawks' third participation in the state title game in four years.

Quite an achievement for a program that's just been in existence for about 20 years.

Assistant coach Sam Fontaine has been part of the team since 2012 when he graduated from CVU. During that time he has seen teams that didn't win a game. There were times when he thought Champlain Valley would never win a state title, but the Redhawks proved him wrong in 2022.

"Now, I stand here, and it's happened again," Fontaine said, surrounded by the joyous turmoil of players celebrating, reluctant to leave the field, imprinting memories they will treasure for the rest of their lives.

The heart of the team was built on players working together from early morning until late at night, day in and day out, Fontaine said.

"This group was together no matter what. They were going to succeed no matter what, and they proved it tonight," he said. "A lot of the teams in the future will look back and say, 'I want to be like that.'"

Katrina Frere, mother of senior wide receiver Dylan Frere, said she had expected from the beginning of the season that the Redhawks "could go all the way."

But this team didn't just go all the way, it went unbeaten in an unrivaled display of dominance.

"If one of them has an off game, someone else steps up. They support each other on and off the field," Frere said. "Last year, when they lost to Burr & Burton, they started throwing the ball the next week because they didn't want to lose again."

### No. 1 Champlain Valley 41, No. 2 Rutland 14

Against Rutland, Champlain Valley followed its modus operandi for all but one of its 2024 games by getting on the scoreboard first.



Photo by Calvin Morse

Quarterback Orion Yates runs the ball in for Champlain Valley's final score of the 2024 season.

Just over four minutes after the opening kickoff, which Rutland received and was stymied after four downs, senior running Nolan Walpole caught a 5-yard pass from sophomore Orion Yates and took the ball 29 yards to put his team up 7-0.

The game started, as many games this year started, with CVU serving up a steady diet of Walpole running the ball until opponents make adjustments to stop the rushing attack, leaving the defense open for CVU's passing game to be effective.

On its ensuing possession, Rutland made three first downs and looked to be threatening until it fumbled the ball, which CVU's Sean Kennedy recovered on the 45-yard line.

After a pass for 15 yards to Jacob Armstrong and three rushing plays by Walpole, the Redhawks found themselves on Rutland's 19-yard line where another pass to Armstrong led to CVU's second score with 3:07 left in the first quarter.

At the 1:44 mark, Rutland's Noah Bruttomesso tossed a 7-yard strike to Ethan Wideawake to make it 14-7.

However, just 20 seconds into the second quarter, Walpole answered with a 19-yard scoring reception to make the score 21-7.

With 4:45 left before



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Coach Rahn Fleming and sophomore quarterback Orion Yates are all smiles after completing an unbeaten season for a state title with the final score on the scoreboard behind them.

intermission, junior Dylan Terricciano made a dramatic tackle on the 5-yard line to prevent Rutland from reaching pay dirt — or in the case of St. Johnsbury Academy's beautiful Fairbanks Field — pay turf. After a time-consuming drive of almost seven minutes, Rutland had to turn over the ball on downs.

Just over five minutes into the second half, sophomore Alex Jovell kicked a 47-yard field goal to push the Redhawks' lead to 24-7.

A little over three minutes later,

Jovell added another to make it 27-7.

Less than a minute into the final quarter, Bruttomesso scored himself from 4-yards out, but that was all of the scoring for Rutland in this title game.

Frere scored on a 25-yard pass, and Yates called his own number from the 3-yard line for the game's final 41-14 margin.

**CVU FOOTBALL** continued on page 2

**Read about the history of CVU football on page 5**

CVU FOOTBALL  
Continued from page 1

If Walpole’s running was the main course that CVU served, Rutland’s menu feature a lot of wildcat plays, but the Redhawks were rarely fooled.

“We knew that they liked the wildcat. What did surprise us a little bit was when they ran the wildcat reverse,” Fleming said. “You know, they put a little extra wrinkle on it.”

This means that often the ball was being hiked directly to senior running back Jayden Graham, but on many of these trick plays he was lateraling or handing the ball off to someone else.

But, CVU rarely took the bait and, the majority of times, its defenders shut the trickery down.

Fleming was effusive in his praise for senior Zane Martenis, playing in place of fellow senior linebacker Lucas Almena-Lee, who tore his ACL late in the previous playoff game against Middlebury.

The coaching staff was confident in Martenis’ ability to step into whatever role he was needed for.

“We’ve always known we’d be safe if we put him in,” Fleming said. “We knew he knew his assignments. Tonight, he rose above all expectation.”

Fleming also praised the performance of running back Nolan Walpole, whose name the coach is fond of abbreviating as “No Wall,” apparently because the senior running back doesn’t recognize any defensive wall. Throughout the year, Walpole has habitually run through defensive lines where there is no seam, but he has also run to the outside, displaying a deceptive speed when he finds himself in the open field.

Although his coaching staff called a brilliant game, Fleming said, he didn’t think it was strategy or tactics that won the football game for CVU.

Patiently consenting to one more interview after all the well-wishers, the players and other media had gone, Fleming said, “What the kids had was that shared spirit, the unity that comes with it, and the determination to do well, not just for themselves, but for one another.”



Photo by Calvin Morse

George Taylor celebrates as his teammate and Charlotte neighbor Dylan Frere scores in the state championship on Nov 9.

Before heading into the dark, as the field lights were turned off, the last of the trash was emptied by workers and the 2024 season was put to bed, he added: “I think we saw that happen all season long, and particularly tonight.”

CVU 21, Middlebury 7

Middlebury Union came to Hinesburg to face Champlain Valley Union in the second round of the state Division 1 football playoffs on Saturday, Nov. 2.

Maybe it was a Halloween lag because, although this game came two days after Oct. 31, it was by far the scariest contest the Redhawks have faced this year. CVU, which had scored early and often in its previous games this season, didn’t get on the scoreboard until midway through the second quarter in this contest.

Finally, at the 7:57 mark in the second quarter, Yates lofted a long pass to Frere, who had gotten past the Tigers’ secondary and scampered home for a 7-0 lead.

The scares didn’t stop there. However, in the end, CVU prevailed 21-7, a close-shave win in a season when the Redhawks had won by big margins and shut-down defense. The win over Middlebury put CVU in the Division 1 state title game.

Just 13 seconds into the second half against Middlebury, things got really

hair-raising when, like the haunted house performer who springs out of a closet with an axe, a Yates pass was blocked at the line, springing straight up in the air.

The spectators gave a gasp at this shocking development and, when the ball came down, an audible moan, as the Tigers’ Tucker Morter grabbed it, racing 35-yards to make the score 7-7.

The score stayed stuck at 7-all, through the rest of the third quarter and most of the fourth. With just over four minutes left in the game, Frere took a Yates pass on a 69-yard rumble and his second touchdown of the night.

A minute later, senior George Taylor put a cherry on the win, with a 69-yard scoring reception of his own.

After the game Yates talked about how Taylor had called his own number on CVU’s final score, convincing the quarterback that his defender was playing him too tight.

“I look over at George. He’s like, ‘Do it.’ And I’m like, ‘Oh, that doesn’t look good.’ He’s like, ‘Yes, do it.’ I’m like, ‘All right, fine,’” Yates recounted enthusiastically after the game. “He called his shot.”

Taylor’s score made it 21-7, a lead which stood up for the game’s final three and half minutes.

The game was a “wake-up call and a gut check” coach Rahn Fleming said. He told his players, “Now, we know what we are all the way to our core. We’re scrappers. We know what it is to win by a whole bunch. Now, we know what it is to be in a dog fight. We can win dog fights.”

The game reminded Fleming of the Burr and Burton game last year when the Bulldogs knocked the Redhawks out of the semifinals 34-27.

That game had turned on the Bulldogs capitalizing on the Redhawks’ greatest strength, which was their aggressive defense. CVU must have learned its lesson because, against the Tigers, it was the Redhawks who capitalized on Middlebury’s aggressive defense by finding open receivers whose defenders were playing too close, playing to stop the run.

“They were attacking aggressively, very aggressively, all game long on defense. A couple of times they attacked, and we found open field behind them, and Orion had just enough time and just enough presence of mind,” Fleming said. “There’s an epic feeling to it when your greatest strength becomes your greatest weakness.”

The Redhawks were able to win this gut-check game because they played together, he said.

State champs



Photo by Jorden Blucher

The Champlain Valley School District Buccaneers defeated the Castleton Vipers to win the state Division 1 title in the Northern Vermont Youth Football League on Saturday, Nov. 2, at Colchester High. The seventh and eighth grade team included at least six players from Charlotte — Lincoln Zappala, Luke Blucher, Finn Wilson, Jackson Barone, Felix Ewins and Nicholas Cowles.



Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

Editorial independence

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

Code of Ethics

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

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

Disclaimer

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

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

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

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

Editorial Staff

**Editor:** Scooter MacMillan ([scooter@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:scooter@thecharlottenews.org))  
**Production Manager:** Anna Cyr ([anna@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:anna@thecharlottenews.org))  
**Proofreaders:** Mike & Janet Yantachka, Katherine Arthaud

Business Staff

**Ad manager:** Susie Therrien ([ads@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:ads@thecharlottenews.org))  
**Bookkeeper:** Susan Jones ([billing@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:billing@thecharlottenews.org))

Board Members

**Board Chair:** Bill Regan ([bill@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:bill@thecharlottenews.org))  
**Treasurer:** Margery McCracken ([treasurer@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:treasurer@thecharlottenews.org))  
**Secretary:** Meredith Moses  
**Board members:** Peter Joslin, John Quinney, Dave Speidel, Andrew Zehner, Vince Crockenberg (emeritus), John Hammer (emeritus)  
**Technical advisor:** Melissa Mendelsohn, Orchard Road Computers  
**Website:** [charlottenewsvt.org](http://charlottenewsvt.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, [charlottenewsvt.org](http://charlottenewsvt.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!



# Speed limit reduction proves contentious

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Another Tuesday election and another Monday night selectboard meeting in the Charlotte Library.

The Nov. 4 meeting was moved to the library because town hall was set up for the next day’s general election.

The library was cozy and packed for the first part of the meeting with people who had come to address the board’s vote to reduce the speed limit on Ferry Road west of Greenbush. Some wanted the board to rescind the decision and others came to support it.

The issue was one of the first discussions out of the meeting’s starting gate, and the commenters on both sides of the issue were impassioned.

In August, the selectboard passed a motion reducing the speed to 25 mph on Ferry Road west from Greenbush Road for almost half a mile to the train tracks and from the train tracks to the Lake Road intersection to 40 mph.

Road commissioner Junior Lewis said he found out about the change in speed limits when town administrator Nate Bareham called to ask him to get new speed limit signs.

Lewis was surprised by how much it had been lowered. He said that, at a meeting before the speed limit was lowered, the selectboard talked about lowering the speed to 35 on the hill going down to the train tracks. He supported this reduction, he said, because that is what was recommended in a plan the town got from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission.

Lewis didn’t monitor the Aug. 12 meeting when the change was made, so he was surprised by the number of phone calls he got complaining about the change and because, when the town lowers speed limits, it usually lowers them in 5 mph increments.

Jack Pilla, who lives on Ferry Road where the speed limit was changed to 25, said he was happily surprised by the board’s decision to reduce the speed more than he expected. But he fully supports it.

Board member Natalie Krammer had kicked off the discussion by saying she



was happy that the speed limit discussion was back on the agenda because it wasn’t properly warned.

However, member Lewis Mudge called for a point of order, saying it had been warned correctly. He said he had proposed the reduction to 25 mph, and the board didn’t vote on it at that meeting. Two weeks later at another meeting it was voted on and approved 4-1.

Town administrator Nick Bareham said the speed limit vote had been posted in the usual places such as The Citizen, the senior center, the post office and the corner store in East Charlotte.

“I agree with Lewis (Mudge) that we had talked about it two weeks before the vote on Aug. 12,” Pilla said.

People had until Sept. 25 to come up with a petition opposing the change, but that didn’t happen, Pilla said. “So, what is your legal basis for even changing this?”

At the Aug. 12 meeting, Frank Tenney was the only selectboard member voting against the speed limit change. Krammer not only voted for the speed limit reduction at that meeting, she seconded Mudge’s motion for the change.

Rosemary Zezulinski, who lives on Ferry Road west of Lake Road beyond where both speed limits were reduced, said she hadn’t spoken out against the reduction when it was previously discussed because she didn’t think the selectboard would reduce the speed more than the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission’s recommendation of reducing the speed to 35 mph.

“Setting speed limits too low merely punishes the motorists who otherwise would obey the law,” Zezulinski said. “I ask the board to reevaluate the studies and guidelines

regarding traffic protocol and make a decision based on the evidence.”

Rachel Daley, who also lives in the vicinity of the 25 mph speed limit reduction, said it seemed like the message from the opposition to the change was to raise it “to accommodate people who want to break the law.”

She travels this section of road a dozen times a day by car, bike or foot, she said, and it seems absurd to cater to people who want to speed up and down the hill.

Damaris Herlihy, who lives at the top of the hill, said the studies that opponents to the change cited did not take into account pedestrians.

Several opponents said they had been passed by cars since the speed was reduced, and they thought this was dangerous. Some said their vehicles won’t make it up the hill at 25 mph, particularly in snowy conditions.

Board member Kelly Devine said, although she had voted for the reduction to 25 mph, she hadn’t fully supported that decision. Nonetheless, she and the rest of the selectboard did vote to reduce the speed to 25 mph. And there was an appeal period.

“It’s feeling a little bit like we’re in a tough position here for the town,” Devine said. “We didn’t hear from anybody during that appeal period.”

She said she wanted more time to consider the speed limit decision because, if the board voted to rescind the decision, it will then hear from a lot of people who support the 25 mph speed limit.

After hearing a lot of comments on both sides of the issue, chair Jim Faulkner said, he thought the selectboard was facing a quandry: “When you talk about safety, which way do you go? Is 35 safer than 25? That’s what I’m hearing.”

Faulkner said he believes the selectboard needs to consider the opinions it had heard and do some more research. And there were other items on the night’s agenda the selectboard needed to work on.

The discussion ended with the board not taking any action and moving on to other matters.

Shortly after the change in topic, attendance at the selectboard meeting had shrunk noticeably.

## DONATION

Continued from page 1

invite you to recognize a friend, neighbor or colleague who makes a difference in your life or in the Charlotte community.

Perhaps it’s a Charlotte Central School teacher, a volunteer at the library or fire and rescue, a member of town government, a town employee or a teacher at the senior center? Someone whose contributions mostly go unnoticed?

When you make your “Gift of Gratitude” to The Charlotte News, provide the name of the honored person and a few words about why you’re grateful to them. You can use the envelope inserted in this issue of the newspaper or the form available when you make a gift on our secure website [charlottenewsvt.org](http://charlottenewsvt.org). Our deadline for recognition is Nov. 30. Thank you.

We will publish the names of everyone so honored in the Dec. 12 edition of the newspaper as a celebration of our community. After all, it’s the people of Charlotte that make this such a remarkable place.

We know that you value The Charlotte News and website as a reliable source for information and insight. In addition to news, the highs and lows of our daily lives unfold in its pages, from births to graduations, milestones and final farewells. Each time you open your copy of The Charlotte News, you learn something new about our town, the people who live here and the key decisions that impact the community.

The pages of The Charlotte News reflect the vibrancy of our community. The newspaper keeps us informed and connected. But none of this just “happens.”

Keeping The Charlotte News strong, resilient, useful and available to all is part of a 66-year tradition. Maintaining the newspaper’s quality and keeping it sustainable is possible only because of gifts from more than 350 generous supporters each year.

Your gift really matters, perhaps more than you might imagine — gifts from our readers make up more than half of our lean, \$150,000 annual budget.

Our request comes with best wishes for a happy holiday season, in the company of family and friends, giving thanks for all Charlotte offers.

*(Bill Regan is chair of the newspaper’s board of directors. John Quinney is a board member and chair of the fundraising committee.)*

## Letters to the Editor

**Sanders wrong about Democrats abandoning working class**

To the Editor:

I’m a big fan of Bernie Sanders and that will never change, but I found myself disagreeing with him on a recent social media post in which he states: “It should come as no great surprise that a Democratic Party which has abandoned working class people would find that the working class has abandoned them. While the Democratic Party leadership defends the status quo, the American people are angry and want change. And they’re right.”

I have to say that I am not so much disappointed in the Democratic Party as I am with the electorate. How could they believe that Donald Trump would offer them more than Kamala Harris in helping them with their everyday struggles? He offered no real tangible plans for implementing changes to

help the common people. He just fed on their discontent and gave them scapegoats for their troubles. And how could the Christian community put their faith in someone who has demonstrated that he has no morals and cares for no one but himself?

I am disappointed in the people for being shallow, gullible and short-sighted. I understand that the Democrats must now figure out how to regain some ground we have lost, but let’s not blame Harris for the failure of the people to make the choice for unity and hope. It wasn’t hard to see that she really cares about people and that Trump does not. Did the Trump supporters happen to notice that there is now a \$2,000 cap on prescription drug cost per year for seniors on Medicare? That was something Biden and Harris put in place. I’ll bet if you asked most seniors who voted for Trump about that, they would have no knowledge of it — or they wouldn’t care because they are members of

the 1 percent.

I think Harris put out an honest message in this election that showed a genuine intent to do all she could to help the common citizen no matter which party they were aligned with. Unlike some politicians, she didn’t simply execute political maneuvers designed solely to get elected (like Trump and Vance). Unfortunately, too many people chose to blame Harris for their present troubles, even though they should know that she is not running the country.

And even if she was, they should understand that all of what is happening in the present is not simply due to the policies and actions of the current administration. Do they really believe that the president is directly responsible for the high price of eggs and that they can fix such things instantly as Trump has promised to do? If so, that is our

LETTERS continued on page 4



**NEXT PUBLICATION DATES**

**NOV. 28**  
**\*EARLY\***  
**\*DEADLINES\***  
**Copy Deadline:**  
Nov. 21  
**Ad Deadline:**  
Nov. 21

**DEC. 12**  
**LAST PAPER FOR 2024**  
**Copy Deadline:**  
Dec. 6  
**Ad Deadline:**  
Dec. 6

**FIRST PAPER IN 2025**  
**JANUARY 9**

**TO ADVERTISE CONTACT:**  
[ads@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:ads@thecharlottenews.org)

**SEND YOUR CHARLOTTE NEWS TO:**  
[news@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:news@thecharlottenews.org)

VOTE RESULTS

Continued from page 1

Bernie Sanders — Independent — 2,064 — 75%  
Gerald Malloy — Republican — 612 — 22%  
Steve Berry — Independent — 35 — 1%  
Matt Hill — Libertarian — 26  
Justin Schoville — Peace and Justice — 14  
Mark Stewart Greenstein — Epic — 3

For Representative to Congress  
Vote for not more than one

Becca Balint — Democratic — 2,031 — 76%  
Mark Coester — Rep/Lbrt — 524 — 20%  
Adam Ortiz — Independent — 89 — 3%  
Jill “Jessy” Diamonstone — Peace and Justice — 16

For Governor  
Vote for not more than one

Phil Scott — Republican — 2,040 — 74%  
Esther Charlestin — Dem/Prog — 681 — 25%  
Kevin Hoyt — Independent — 22  
June Goodband — Peace and Justice — 15  
Eli “Poa” Mutino — Independent — 8

For Lieutenant Governor  
Vote for not more than one

David Zuckerman — Prog/Dem — 1,480 —

56%  
John S. Rodgers — Republican — 1,117 — 42%  
Ian Diamondstone — Peace and Justice — 52 — 2%

For State Treasurer  
Vote for not more than one

Mike Pieciak — Democratic — 1,923 — 73%  
Joshua Bechhoefer — Republican — 702 — 27%

For Secretary of State  
Vote for not more than one

Sarah Copeland Hanzas — Democratic — 1,850 — 73%  
H. Brooke Paige — Republican — 701 — 27%

For Auditor of Accounts  
Vote for not more than one

Doug Hoffer — Dem/Prog — 1,835 — 72%  
H. Brooke Paige — Republican — 705 — 28%

For Attorney General  
Vote for not more than one

Charity R. Clark — Democratic — 1,876 — 72%

Ture Nelson — Republican — 673 — 26%  
Kevin Gustafson — Peace and Justice — 60 — 2%

For State Senator  
Vote for not more than three  
Thomas Chittenden — Democratic — 1,697 — 26%  
Virginia “Ginny” Lyons — Democratic — 1,465 — 23%

Kesha Ram Hinsdale — Democratic — 1,346 — 21%  
Bruce Roy — Republican — 1,027 — 16%  
Rohan St Marthe — Republican — 500 — 8%

Taylor Craven — Independent — 457 — 7%

For State Representative  
Vote for not more than one  
Chea Waters Evans — Democratic — 1,963

For High Bailiff  
Vote for not more than one  
Johnny Trutor — Democratic — 1,831

For Justice of the Peace  
Vote for not more than twelve  
Michael Krasnow — Democratic — 1,572 — 8%

Mike Yantachka — Democratic — 1,495 — 8%  
Chea Waters Evans — Democratic — 1,311 — 7%  
Greg Cluff — Democratic —1,299 — 7%  
Lorna Jimerson — Democratic — 1,099 — 6%  
Jill Abilock — Democratic — 1,081 — 6%  
Seth Zimmerman — Democratic — 1,072 — 5%  
Peggy Sharpe — Democratic — 1,066 — 5%  
Elizabeth Langfeldt — Democratic — 1,058 — 5%  
Heather Roberts — Democratic — 962 — 5%  
Carrie Spear — Republican — 957 — 5%  
Robin Reid — Independent — 931 — 5%  
Maurice Harvey — Republican — 722 — 4%  
Patrice Machavern — Republican — 686 — 3%  
Zachary Trono — Republican — 681 — 3%  
Michelin Carroll — Republican — 558 — 3%  
Dorothy Hill — Republican — 554 — 3%  
Wesley Carroll — Republican —533 — 3%  
Michael Dunbar — Republican — 506 — 3%  
Tanna Kelton — Independent — 497 — 3%  
Troy Krahl — Republican — 422 — 2%

To Advertise in

The Charlotte News

Contact [ads@TheCharlotteNews.org](mailto:ads@TheCharlotteNews.org)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Continued from page 4

real problem.

I get that Sanders is simply wanting to be pragmatic and do whatever it takes to find ways to get working-class American people to opt for the party that is truly more interested in helping them, but I don’t think it’s fair or productive to dump on Harris for failing to win this election. It’s the people who have failed us — indeed, failed themselves. It’s clear that political maneuvering and manipulation of the public perception of reality is what was needed to win this election.

Though my faith in humanity is truly shaken by this outcome, I still can’t let go of the hope that people will learn from this mistake as they see what Trump actually delivers to them.

Democrats do need to find a way to make those who are hurting in this country understand that they are generally better equipped and more concerned about bettering their plight than Trump and the Republican Party is. But I think that we need to resist succumbing to negativity and blame. Kamala’s message of unity, hope and faith in our country’s potential is the right one. It’s clear that too many of our citizens are still in the anger-fear stage of dealing with what’s happening in their lives to be able to hear and believe this message.

I agree that we must find a way to move this portion of our electorate out of this stage and into a more rational space, but let’s do that with hard work, determination and joy, as Harris has suggested. We must continue to fight, but we can’t fight anger and negativity with anger and negativity. I doubt this is what Sanders is suggesting, but after hearing him say that the Democratic Party has abandoned the working people, I found myself feeling both sad and exasperated. If working people felt they would be abandoned by Kamala Harris after hearing her speeches in this election, then they just weren’t listening.

Shari Bell  
Charlotte

**Selectboard: Restore speed limit to 40 mph on Greenbush Road**

To the Editor:

At some point the selectboard changed the speed limit on Ferry Road from Greenbush west to the railroad tracks to 40 mph. In a recent meeting, they reduced it to 25 mph. At last Monday’s meeting they agreed to hear comments from interested citizens.

Our respected elected road commissioner said 35 mph would be safer than 25. He pointed out that snow removal trucks would likely lose traction in the winter at the lower speed and start slipping backward into the traffic following them. The same could happen to the school buses. The only traffic survey we have, conducted by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission from May 7-14, recommended 35 mph.

Lewis Mudge wants 25 mph. Frank Tenny, as a school bus driver, said 25 puts our children at great risk going both up and down the hill especially during winter months. Jim Faulkner said the selectboard needs time to think it over. Kelly Devine said they could complete this contemplation by the end of the calendar year, well into winter.

The law 23 V.S.A. 1007 says, “The legislative body of a municipality may establish, on the basis of an engineering and traffic investigation, a speed limit on all or a part of any city, town.” It has been pointed out that setting a speed limit 10 mph lower than engineering recommendations has been found to increase injury and fatal crashes. To be in compliance the selectboard must restore the 40 mph limit until a formal traffic study is completed that recommends a different speed limit.

I urge the selectboard to comply with the state statute, follow the road commissioner’s recommendations and protect the safety of Charlotte citizens including children riding the school bus.

Ruth Uphold  
Charlotte

# A history of two decades of Champlain Valley football

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

The football field was covered in water, and the rain was coming down in buckets. The field had been planted with grass plugs, and the plugs had not really knit together completely to form a consistent layer of grass turf. But the Champlain Valley Union High football community was anxious to play on its new field.

High school football official Phil Zalinger has memories of that first, and only, game at CVU in 2005.

The field was mostly mud, and when the players ran, their cleats would grab the grass nubs and kick them up. Zalinger said, “It was a bloody, awful mess.”

The rain was pouring down, and mud was everywhere, he said, and neither players nor officials could detour to avoid puddles as they ran up and down the field. Everywhere was a puddle.

CVU football was a new sport at the high school in Hinesburg. When the school decided to start a football team, it was required to begin as a club sport.

Today’s football coach Rahn Fleming was involved from the beginning, but he wasn’t coaching at the high school. He was coaching middle schoolers. A high school had to have a feeder program to develop young players before it could field a varsity team.

Although CVU varsity football started in 2005, club football started in 2003, and Fleming was coaching his sons, who were in middle school.

Nick Michaud gives a lot of the credit to himself and his older brother Justin for the starting of CVU football.

“We lived in Williston, and we begged and begged and begged our dad to start the program at CVU,” Nick Michaud said.

Both brothers were football players. Their father Jay Michaud coached fifth and sixth grade football for the Buccanneers in the Northern Vermont Youth Football League. He was an alum of Rice and suggested they could go to school there.

Nick and Justin didn’t want that. They wanted to go to CVU with their friends and play football there.

Eventually, Jay Michaud relented. He became the first head coach at Champlain Valley Union.

Nick Michaud has memories of the first game on CVU’s home turf — or home mud.

“I recall that game fondly,” Nick Michaud said, without a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

That first game on CVU’s home field was played on spirit weekend for the school.

“We played in a in a monsoon, more or less,” Michaud said. “I’ll never forget looking down at my feet, and the water was over my cleats.”

When the team sat down on the field to do stretches, they were all immediately soaked.

Nick Michaud said he was a fullback on a ground-and-pound, run-first football team and his first thought was: “This could be a great game.”

“We won 7-6. I can tell you all about that game. Adam Bart, the quarterback, threw a 21-yard touchdown pass to Nick Hamill, and that was the only score for us,” he said.

Mount Mansfield was CVU’s opponent for its inaugural home game. The Cougars also only scored one touchdown, but failed in a 2-point conversion attempt.

Nick Michaud said that win propelled CVU into the playoffs in their first year as a varsity team, playing in the now-defunct Division 4.

After the game, all of the CVU players took a chunk of mud from the field in a Styrofoam plate.

“I still have that mud, and it’s crusted, obviously, with some cobwebs on it,” Michaud said.

He also has fond memories of playing for CVU as a club team, particularly the last year. In 2004, CVU went 10-0, undefeated in the United States.

For those two years of 2003-4 as a club team, Champlain Valley was playing eight-man and 11-man football, depending on how many their opponents were playing.

“We were just trying to play games with anybody that was willing,” Nick Michaud said. When the team started in 2003, four of their players had played youth football. The rest of the team was “green.”

For the team’s final game in 2004, they traveled to Canada to play Owensville, Quebec, where they played by Canadian rules, which meant 12-man teams. CVU suffered its only loss in that final game of the season.

Since 2005, it’s been strictly 11-man football for CVU’s varsity football program.

Much of Fleming’s memories of CVU’s experience as a club team are of walking from the school to the fields, which were still basically the Ballards’ backyard on the west side of Route 116.

“We carried portable goal posts in a canvas bag,” Fleming said.

In 2009, Champlain Valley had another memorable game in the rain. Playing against Colchester at Essex in its first game in the Division 2 state finals, the rain was coming down so hard that Fleming still calls the game the “Essex Monsoon.”

Jim Provost, who was coach at CVU for seven years after coaching at Rice for 20, said it was a significant game for Champlain Valley, in its second year as a Division 2 team, in helping the school transition from a totally soccer-centric school to a school where football was also a viable option.

“We were leading at the half,” Provost said.

But with the rain torrential, Colchester started the second half with its kicker slipping on the soaked field, unintentionally booting an on-side kick that bounced off one of Provost’s players.

Colchester recovered, scored two plays later, and CVU lost 22-14.

In its 20th year of playing varsity football, Champlain Valley Union School has just finished an unparalleled season of



Courtesy photo

Coach Jim Provost talks to JP Benoit in 2010. Benoit is now head coach of CVU’s junior varsity football and varsity hockey teams. His grandmother had died two days earlier, and Provost wanted him to know his team was there for him. Benoit finished that game with 17 carries for 136 yards, a punt return, a rushing and a receiving touchdown in a 21-3 win over Mt. Mansfield.

gridiron success, not only going undefeated, but winning in dominating fashion. The Redhawks outscored its opponents in 11 games this year by a total of 393 points to 56. And none of the games were played in the rain.

**The Charlotte News**

**JOIN OUR  
EMAIL LIST  
AND GET  
THE LATEST  
TOWN NEWS  
WHEN IT  
HAPPENS!**

**SIGN UP ON  
OUR WEBSITE**

[www.CharlotteNewsVT.org](http://www.CharlotteNewsVT.org)

# Charlotte voting this year a friendly experience



Photo by Julia Streger

From left, poll workers Elaine Sharrow, Don Goodwin and Matthew Coll were part of the neighborly atmosphere at the Charlotte Town Hall on Election Day.

Kate Kampner and Julia Streger  
Community News Service

As people filed in and out of town hall to and from casting their ballots Tuesday, most seemed to come away from the experience reflecting on the friendly atmosphere.

“It’s really a nice, relaxed, laid-back approach,” said Don Goodwin, a five-year resident and an Election Day poll worker. “I mean, look, it’s a small town.”

He said the turnout that day had been high, the usual for Charlotte.

“It pretty much runs along the same lines of Chittenden County, northwest Vermont,” he said. “It’s pretty blue.”

Goodwin added there’s not a lot of anxiety about races in the state, but there is anxiety about the outcome nationally.

“It’s an older community, and there’s a lot of people, like myself, who are dependent upon Medicare,” he said. “People don’t really like the things being said on the other side about that.”

The upside: People here seem more willing to have conversations across political divides, Goodwin said. “A lot of the country has a problem with that, unfortunately.”

Teresa Pete, 76, cast her vote Tuesday — as usual. “I have never missed a vote in my entire life,” the Charlotte resident said.

Pete opted to vote in person because she was worried her ballot might get lost or delayed in the mail otherwise. She was worried, too, “that there might be some cheating.”

“If I’m here in person, then I know it counts,” said Pete, who voted for Vice

President Kamala Harris in the presidential race. “I’m cautiously optimistic that the young people, and particularly women, will pull us out of this morass of hatred.”

Karen Frost, a longtime voter and resident since 1985, decided to vote by mail rather than in-person this year.

On Election Day, you could find her at town hall, collecting resident opinions on whether the selectboard should be able to make land-use regulation decisions without a townwide vote.

“It’s a recent change, and I wanted to find out what the citizens of Charlotte thought about it,” Frost said.

Frost said she enjoys seeing residents face to face and having conversations with them.

“I always find it interesting to hear different people’s opinions and points of view,” she said. “It seems to be pretty one-sided on this one.”

Heather Roberts, who was running for justice of the peace, was out on Election Day with her husband Mikey and son Jesse to cast their votes.

The family moved to Charlotte in 2021, seeking a better quality of life and school system.

“We love Charlotte and are happy to be residents,” Heather said. “I’ve been wanting to get more involved in the community, so I decided to put my hat in the ring.”

She said, “Hopefully I’ve earned enough votes to serve my community.”

Jesse, who was voting for the first time, was especially excited to see his mom on the ballot.

*(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.)*



**Reach your  
customers by  
advertising with us!**

**Find out what  
we can do for you.**

**Contact [ads@TheCharlotteNews.org](mailto:ads@TheCharlotteNews.org)**

# Schools as polling places in sharp decline across Vermont

Tova Brickley  
Community News Service

Watching adults vote can educate children, but fewer Vermont students may be getting the opportunity to see democracy in action this November.

Since 2016, the number of Vermont schools serving as polling places has decreased by more than half. That's according to a comparison of polling places by Community News Service based on data from the Vermont Secretary of State's office.

This Election Day, 41 schools will serve as polling places, down from 102 schools eight years ago.

It's not entirely clear what's behind the trend. Sue Ceglowski, executive director of the Vermont School Boards Association, said neither her group nor the Vermont Superintendents Association had any data on the topic.

With many Vermonters now voting by mail, it's possible to hold elections in smaller buildings, like town offices.

"There have been a number of new municipal offices that have been built," said Diane Judd, president of the Vermont Municipal Clerks' and Treasurers' Association. "They may have been built to accommodate voting purposes."

Another reason may be school safety. That's what caused a struggle over where to vote within one Vermont community this fall.

In the past, students at Brookside Primary School in Waterbury attended class while general election voting took place in the gym.

Now, because of school shootings across the country, Brookside Primary's entire school district is closing on Election Day, as well as the day before.

"Prior to 1999, we had fire drills. That was it," said Michael Leichter, superintendent of Harwood Unified Union School District.

He said the 1999 Columbine massacre

kicked off a new era of school shootings and increased focus on safety.

"Schools are a very different place because of the unrest we're seeing across our country," he said.

Historically, Brookside has been used as the polling place in Waterbury for Town Meeting Day, primaries and general elections. Schools in Vermont are already closed on Town Meeting Day, so those gatherings have never posed an issue for student safety.

But over the last several years, school officials have increased school security. At Brookside Primary, the front doors were locked during the school day and visitors had to ring a buzzer to get inside.

On Election Day in 2022, voting happened while school was in session. Parents and others raised concerns. They worried about the increase in tensions around elections, combined with increased gun violence in schools.

In the run-up to this election, Leichter met with Waterbury town clerk Karen Petrovic, as well as the school board chair, to talk through addressing parents' fears. They discussed several options, including closing off part of the school or moving the polling place altogether.

Petrovic argued for keeping elections at Brookside Primary because it's the only place in town big enough. And she prevailed.

"With almost 4,500 voters on my checklist, I have very limited resources as far as where I can hold an election," Petrovic said. "I always have to prepare for 4,500 people showing up."

Petrovic was a student at Brookside Primary in the 1980s when it was still Waterbury Elementary. She remembers sitting in the gym to watch people vote. It left a strong impression on her.

She understands the need to close schools. She's just sad about it.

"The downside of this all is it doesn't



Photo by Lisa Scagliotti/Waterbury Roundabout

Voters cast their ballots at Brookside Primary School in Waterbury on Election Day.

provide grade school students the opportunity to see how civil democracy works," she said.

"They don't see it set up. They don't see it torn down. They don't see it in youth," Petrovic said.

That's increasingly true across Vermont. Only 16 percent of polling places are in schools this year, down from 39 percent eight years ago, according to state records. Many

of those remaining schools are closed for Election Day — like Brookside Primary.

"But there's other ways we can communicate that message nowadays," Petrovic said. "We've got to take care of the students' safety first."

*(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for the Waterbury Roundabout.)*

## Whiskey access



Photo by Bill Fraser-Harris

Road commissioner Junior Lewis and his crew have restored the Whiskey Bay Recreation access and parking area to a status that is reported to be "better than original." A poop station is available, and please keep dogs leashed if others are present.

SHOP LOCAL  
SHOP VERGENNES!  
for a  
**Grand**  
Thanksgiving  
Weekend  
\$1000<sup>+</sup>  
in prizes!

Nov. 29 + 30

Black Friday | Small Business Saturday  
all rolled into one  
**GRAND GIVEAWAY**  
Look for the blue boxes throughout the  
downtown and register at each location.  
- **Winners at every participating business** -  
Over **30** prizes in all, **10** winners will each take  
home \$100 in local currency, Vergennes Green!

Sponsors:  


# Around Town

## Condolences

### Birgit Wrede Nielsen Deeds

Birgit Wrede Nielsen Deeds left us peacefully, at her home, on Thursday, Oct. 24, 2024. Her spirit and love of life will always be with us and inspire us, even as we miss her tremendously.

Birgit was born in Copenhagen, Denmark, on July 19, 1936, to Gerda and Tage Nielsen. The young family, including Birgit's sisters Hanne and Bodil, moved to the United States in 1939. They settled in New Canaan, Connecticut. Birgit rode horses and sailed in the summers in Denmark once the war had ended.

She attended St. Anne's School in Charlottesville, Virginia, and then Wells College in Aurora, New York, where she met Cornell student David B. Findlay Jr., also from New Canaan. They married and began raising a family in New Canaan. Birgit finished earning her college degree at

NYU, commuting into New York City when she was pregnant with Hal, their first child. In New Canaan, while raising four children, Birgit had good friends, an active social life, volunteered in local schools, bringing art history to less advantaged students and made her kids eat liver once a week.

In 1971, she met E. Andrew Deeds on the beaches of Small Point, Maine, fell in love and moved to Charlotte, Vermont, in January, 1972. With a combined 10 children at times, the family downhill skied, cross-country skied, ice boated, traveled, played tennis (Andy's favorite) and rough-housed. Birgit joined the team at Andy's businesses, Air North and Northern Airways, as the human resources officer when the nest emptied.

Birgit and Andy lived an adventurous life which always included friends of all ages, as well as children's friends. They began sailing on Lake Champlain and then took their Palmer Johnson 43, Birgo, to Maine, the Caribbean and Scandinavia where it stayed for many years and saw many ports.

They loved to play tennis and ski which took them from the slopes of Sugarbush to Snowbird, Aspen, Sun Valley, Austria and heli-skiing at CMH in Canada. They also loved taking canoe trips in the Adirondacks and Marshall Lake, Ontario, exposing a variety of kids to indigenous friends, strenuous paddling, portaging through muskeg, bears, hungry mosquitoes, black flies and laughter around the campfire at the end of a long day. In the summer of 1976, they paddled away from Marshall Lake with four teenagers, including Hal, on an epic canoe adventure all the way to James Bay.

They flew in Andy's Grumman Widgeon across the country to Alaska and explored the backcountry there. They landed a Beechcraft King Air in the Atlantic when a fuel leak forced them down. A Russian trawler picked them up from their inflatable raft, and they were ultimately brought back to the U.S. by the coast guard.

In 1976, Birgit and Andy visited Pine Cay, a small island in the Turk's and Caicos Islands and soon built a house and spent time there, with friends and family, for many years. In the earlier years, food had to be brought from Florida in coolers, loading up the Widgeon to capacity, and electricity (via generator) was shut off at 10 p.m. every night.

In 1987, Birgit began restoring the formal Gardens at Shelburne Farms, an endeavor that she devoted much time to for the rest of her years. When there, she enchanted numerous visitors and gardening aficionados.

Birgit was known for her undaunted love of life and her generosity. While she and Andy had many adventures, she loved life on their farm in Charlotte the most with her dogs, Fjord horses and mini donkeys. Family Christmases and summer gatherings were joyful, and grandchildren were fortunate to share time with their grandparents often.

It is hard to encapsulate a life so full on one page. Everyone she leaves behind will be sure to have all kinds of memories.

Birgit was predeceased by her parents, her two sisters, her former husband and her husband and partner in adventure and life, Andy. She is survived by children Harald (Hal) Beals Findlay (June Tang), Kimberly (Kim) Wrede Findlay, Lee Wrede Findlay Potter (Nick Potter) and Michael Nielsen Findlay (Emily Findlay); grandchildren Marshall, Nick and Cassie Findlay; Duncan, Niels and Amelia Davis; Arthur, Lila and Nina Potter; and William Findlay; great-grandchildren Eva Grace, Ethan and Olivia Findlay; Cordie Wrede Leonard; and Trip Mahoney.

She had many close friends. You know

who you are, and you were so important to her.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, VT. A celebration of Andy and Birgit's lives will be held in the spring.

## Congratulations

Lee Krohn of Charlotte was honored as Planner Emeritus at the Northern New England Planning Conference in Stowe last week.

The chapter's new Planner Emeritus award recognizes professional planners who have dedicated 30 or more years of service to the planning profession.

Krohn began his service as a volunteer member and then chair of the Putney Planning Commission in the 1980s. He then began a nearly 25-year run as planning director for Manchester, where at various times he also served concurrently as zoning administrator, tree warden, service officer, interim town manager and construction manager for that town's Roundabout and Main Street Reconstruction project.

Krohn then worked from 2013-2018 as a senior planner for the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, where he had a particular focus on emergency management planning and response.

More recently, he served as Shelburne town manager from 2018-2023.

## Charlotte Property Transfers August 2024

**August 8** Lila Webb to Claire Bear & Miles Colaprete 151 Prindle Rd. with dwelling 17.26 acres \$890,000

**August 12** Annie Rosenthal to Matthew S & Alexa K Weitzman 2678 Dorset St. with dwelling 1.10 acres \$850,000

**August 20** VT Superior Court & Tracy J. Bruce estate to Lori A. Bruce 161 Ferry Rd. Commercial 1.00 acres \$550,000

**August 27** Sharon Richards Weaver Rev. Trust to Evan C. Maseall & Lucy Weaver 328 Mountains Edge with dwelling 3.91 acres \$640,000

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



## Riparian buffering



Photo by Kate Kelly

Lewis Creek Association board president Andrea Morgante and David Berg of Verterra Nursery demonstrate how to properly plant a tree along Lewis Creek in Hinesburg. Local residents, members of the Hinesburg Conservation Commission and the Lewis Creek Association, and staff from the nursery planted about 175 stems, a mixture of native trees and shrubs, along the creek on the morning of Saturday, Oct. 19. The planting was an effort to develop a riparian buffer along the creek to improve water quality and provide wildlife habitat. More trees and shrubs will be planted later this month. If you are interested in volunteering for tree planting, email [kate@lewisecreek.org](mailto:kate@lewisecreek.org).

## It's Chilly! Time to Bundle up with Quincy Mae!



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



# Education

## Carnation ceremony welcomes kindergartners to school community

Naomi Strada  
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

At Charlotte Central School, activities that promote acceptance and a strong sense of belonging are prioritized, with students at the center of the effort. Traditions play an essential role in fostering this sense of community among students and educators, creating continuity and stability within the school environment.

During the whole-school morning meeting on Friday, Nov. 8, kindergartners were welcomed into the school community with a special carnation ceremony. Eighth graders presented kindergartners with a carnation, symbolizing their bond and a promise of support for the coming year. As role models, learning partners and mentors, these eighth graders will work with the younger students throughout the year, creating lasting memories and learning to be caring citizens in a broader community. Charlotte Central School’s youngest students brought home their carnation to have as a keepsake.

Also on Nov. 8, the sixth graders had the opportunity to visit the Charlotte Senior Center, where they interviewed elders from the community. The goals were to gain insight into others’ perspectives on the joys of growing up and living in Vermont, to reflect on what it was like to be an adolescent in an earlier time and to build meaningful intergenerational connections between the

students and the seniors.

Another cherished school tradition is the annual food drive for the Charlotte Food Shelf. This collaboration provides Charlotte neighbors with food and other items needed to enjoy Thanksgiving meals. Kindergartners-fourth graders focus on gathering items for Thanksgiving boxes, while students in fifth-eighth graders contribute food to help support families through the winter holiday season.

Families who would benefit from additional food over the Thanksgiving break are encouraged to reach out to the Charlotte Food Shelf.

### Holiday market

The PTO is looking for artisans, crafters and local vendors to join the Charlotte Central School Holiday Market on Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. The vendor application can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/5x8jtvxj>.

Anyone with a favorite crafter or vendor can email suggestions to [ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com](mailto:ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com).

New this year is a student section for young artisans that have a craft to share. There are a limited number of complimentary student spots available, first come,first served. Students may register via the holiday market link with the description of the craft for PTO board approval.

There will also be a silent auction in conjunction with the Holiday Market.



Donations from local businesses are welcome. Please contact the PTO via the email above if interested in donating an item to the silent auction.

The Holiday Market will have two gyms filled with exhibitors, a children’s do-it-yourself craft area, as well as several on-site food options. All exhibitor registration fees from the holiday market will go directly to the Charlotte Central School PTO to support a variety of student enrichment programs, including but not limited to STEM, theater, athletics, as well as the community Angel Fund. All support is appreciated.

### Fire safety

Members from Charlotte Fire and Rescue shared the roles played by the organization in keeping the community safe. The

presentation was a hit in kindergarten through fourth-grade classrooms. These workshops allowed kids to see what a firefighter looks like when fully dressed in gear and gave them time to ask questions about procedures for staying safe at home. Some of the questions that came up included:

- Where is a good meeting spot outside of the house if smoke detectors are going off?
- How to call 911 if there isn’t a house phone.
- How to escape a second-floor room if there is danger in the stairway.

Parents are encouraged to sit and talk through their children’s questions. Every home has its own unique circumstances and tools to stay safe. A reminder was given to change the batteries in smoke detectors.

# Coming together as a community to support local food shelf

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

No matter how you may feel about the state of the union these days, one thing we Charlotters have in common is that we have always come together as a community to support our local food shelf. And in this time of thanksgiving, we are thankful to know that we can continue to count on you all in the days to come.

Currently, the Charlotte Food Shelf capital board is busy launching a campaign to raise funds in support of its mission to provide food and other assistance to those who need it. As part of the campaign, volunteers will be reaching out to the community with printed materials and electronically, so keep your eyes peeled.

Just so you know, the number of people seeking assistance has increased and prices have risen. Last year, the food shelf spent almost \$67,000, and this number is only expected to rise moving forward. Thank you so much for your help, and please keep it coming.

Remember, the food shelf is run 100 percent by volunteers. There are no paid employees and minimal administrative and overhead expenses. It is a nonprofit striving to provide nutritious food to residents of Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh, supported by the Charlotte Congregational Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church and

the Charlotte community.

Currently, there are over 40 volunteers who handle such duties as food procurement, purchasing, distribution, emergency requests, publicity, thank-you notes, accounting, collaboration with Charlotte Central School, special holiday programs, backpack and school supplies program, winter clothing, the Charlotte Central School Shoe-In program, our assistance program and more.

Basically, the food shelf is one relatively small entity doing a big job trying to make the world a better place. With lots of help from the community, it has been doing that for over 30 years, and with your continued support, it will continue to do that in the months and years to come.

One big piece of news: The clothing drive is over. Food shelf volunteers are so grateful to the Grange for its generous help with this important endeavor. The Grange collected an abundance of winter wear for food shelf children, and the food shelf assistance program supplemented with boots, jackets and snowpants that were still needed. All in all, volunteers are happy to report that the kids will be warmly outfitted for the winter months ahead. It was a giant cooperative effort that succeeded thanks to the Grange and all who contributed or helped in any way.

Local farmers' donations were also greatly appreciated this year. The food shelf was fortunate to receive a bounty of squash and potatoes from a generous neighbor at our



Picture by Peggy Sharpe

From left, Alicia Cooper and Katie Shearer stand ready to distribute winter clothes collected for food shelf families.

last distribution in October. It was a most welcome and pleasant surprise at the very end of our growing season. The food shelf would also like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the following who donated: Waitsfield Telecom, Richard and Theresa Pete, Kathleen Nolan, Jocelyn Schermerhorn and Lisa Crispin. We also received a lovely donation from Sustainable Charlotte.

As part of our Thanksgiving distribution, community members traditionally donate home-baked goods for us to include in our giving. Holly Rochefort is coordinating this effort again this year. (Thank you, Holly.) Specifics about donating baked goods will be posted on Front Porch Forum.

Reminder: There be a regular distribution Saturday, Nov. 16, 9-11 a.m. Thanksgiving holiday pickup is Saturday, Nov. 23.

The following donations of non-perishables are always helpful: snack foods, condiments, sugar, dish detergent and shampoo. Please bring donated items 3-4 p.m. on Wednesday distribution dates or call to arrange a drop-off time.

Food is provided at 403 Church Hill Road, in the basement of the Charlotte

Congregational Church on the second and fourth Wednesday (4-6 p.m.) and second and fourth Saturday (9-11 a.m.) of each month. For all other inquiries, call 802-425-2402.

Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance also provides limited utility, rent, medical, dental, school supply and other emergency assistance to residents of Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh. If you or someone you know is facing unexpected hardship, help is available. Call 802-425-2402 or fill out a request form. Request forms are available during food shelf open hours or on our website [charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf](http://charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf).

With the coming of colder months, monetary donations are much appreciated to help families with heat and other utility bills. Tax-deductible donations can be addressed to: Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc. P.O. Box 83, Charlotte Vt. 05445. An easy way to donate is through the PayPal button on the website address listed above, or via the QR code here.



### Child Find Notice

Champlain Valley School District (including the towns of Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George, and Williston, Vermont) is required by federal law to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities. The process of locating, identifying and evaluating children with disabilities is known as child find.

Champlain Valley School District schools conduct Kindergarten screening each spring; parents may also call to make an appointment to discuss their concerns at any time. As the school district of residence, CVSD has the responsibility to identify and provide services to any child with special needs who may require special education and related services in order to access and benefit from public education.

If you have, or know of any CVSD resident who has a child with a disability under the age of 21 or a child who attends a private school located in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George, or Williston, Vermont, we would like to hear from you. Sometimes parents are unaware that special education services are available to their children.

Please contact the School Principal (Charlotte Central School – 802-425-2771, Hinesburg Community School – 802-482-2106, Shelburne Community School – 802-985-3331, Williston Central/Allen Brook Schools – 802-878-2762) or the Director of Student Support Services, Anna Couperthwait at 802-985-1903.

# Hi! Neighbor

## Martina Bex wants to change the way we learn language

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

Martina Bex never intended to be a business owner, but a job teaching Spanish in Alaska put her on the path to entrepreneurship. In 2010, she founded the Comprehensive Classroom to help language teachers find a better way to reach their students.

Bex grew up near Syracuse, N.Y. She received her bachelor's degree in Spanish and adolescent education at Nazareth University, followed by a master's in Spanish language, literature and culture at Syracuse University. Her husband served in the Air Force, which is how the couple ended up in Alaska, where they spent 10 years.

Bex observed a colleague using what was then considered an alternative teaching methodology. The more she learned about it, the more intrigued she became and she began to adopt it, as well. Several teachers using the method were writing blogs about their experience and Bex did the same.

"With time, as the internet grew and social media took off, more people were finding out about this methodology and my blog became the go-to place," she said.

"You don't learn language like science or social studies," Bex explained. "You can study grammar or vocabulary but that's not language. We teach so that your brain is exposed, understands, processes and builds

its own linguistic system."

Bex said that while early adopters of what she refers to as "language acquisition" rather than "language learning" were risk takers, those who were newer to the methodology wanted assistance, which she began providing on a marketplace called Teachers Pay Teachers. As demand increased, she saw the need to provide training, so she began to formalize that, as well as creating curricula. She said the Comprehensive Classroom is the number one independently published curriculum in the country.

Bex said that the way language is traditionally taught is not based on science or on how our brains learn language.

"When you first learn to speak as a child," she said, "you're not getting grammar rules or memorizing vocabulary. You absorb it and it builds the linguistic in your head."

She believes that emphasizing grammar and vocabulary leads to students who are convinced they can't learn languages. "Every learner can be a language learner," she said.

Bex speaks Spanish and English fluently and has what she refers to as "emerging French proficiency."

The Comprehensive Classroom has a full Spanish curriculum and partial curricula for French, German and Latin. Between 150,000 and 200,000 teachers use their resources around the world and in every state in the union. It provides training for people at all levels and curricula for middle and high

schools.

The Somos Curriculum is the company's flagship product for novice and intermediate Spanish learners. Another product is Vamos, which is designed specifically for middle school and employs two full-time trainers.

The most recent addition is Garbanzo, a web application which was launched in 2019. Bex describes it as an online library of interactive texts including thousands of stories in both Spanish and English.

Bex and her husband moved to Vermont in 2017. With five children, their initial goal was to find a rental big enough for the family, but after a few months, they bought a lot and built their Charlotte home.

Bex's grandmother is from Charlotte and the Holmes Bridge is named after that branch of the family.

"We love working on our little homestead," Bex said. "I love having the space and being able to homeschool my kids."

In all, Bex's business has six full-time employees and works with 40 different contractors including lesson writers, voice artists, website developers and trainers. Ninety percent are either current or former language teachers.

Bex said students taught with the Comprehensive Classroom approach outperform those who have been taught with a grammar-based approach. She believes the more important measurement is the



Courtesy photo

Martina and Matthew with Ellis, Millie, Warner, Elsie and Leland Bex at Shelburne Lights.

one showing that students are staying in language classes longer. "Before, students would get low grades and have limited belief in themselves," she said, "so having them stay with language learning longer is the best success."

# Health

## Singing helps folks reclaim memories at Winooski’s senior center

Holly Sullivan  
Community News Service

The crowd sipped water, prepping their vocal cords as they watched the lyrics to “Silly Love Songs” by Wings, and a photo of its singer Paul McCartney, glow on the projector ahead of them.

As the piano track rang out, Karen McFeeters encouraged the over a dozen people gathered in the Winooski Senior Center that early October day to “boogie in your seats” as she danced around the room. The group swayed, held hands and belted lyrics they recognized.

Mike, a McCartney fan who requested the song, tapped his foot to the beat in the front row, singing every word.

That was the scene Oct. 4 at a session of “Singing for People With Memory Loss and Their Caregivers,” an event series created by McFeeters and Sheila Reid that just celebrated its one-year anniversary. The series is sponsored by Age Well, a nonprofit organization for senior citizens in northwestern Vermont.

Reid, a 24/7 caregiver to a man named Ray, wanted a way for him to be involved in a musical activity.

“(He) has a lot of trouble speaking, but he can sing you Bob Dylan songs,” she said.

Back in 2014, McFeeters founded



Co-founder of the “Singing for People With Memory Loss and Their Caregivers” series Karen McFeeters leads a group in song Oct. 4 in Winooski.

Photo by Annalisa Madonia

Aphasia Choir of Vermont, a choir for folks who’ve survived strokes and traumatic brain injuries. Reid and McFeeters, who worked at a hospital together for many years, decided to create a similar group for people with memory

loss.

“Music is one of the longest-lasting forms of memory because it’s mapped in so many different parts of the brain. So even when there’s deterioration, music can stick,” McFeeters said.

“Many of them will remember this feeling. They remember the experience of enjoyment,” she later said.

McFeeters starts each session by orienting the guests. She welcomes every attendee by name and goes over the date, time and location. The group starts with stretches, vocal warm-ups and scales. For the crowd last week, warming up with “Do Re Mi” from “The Sound of Music” was a big hit.

Once everyone is loosened up, McFeeters usually strums her guitar, a gift a friend made out of a beam from an 1800s Vermont farmhouse. As she plays, the room lights up.

At her first sessions a year ago, she said, attendees would “come in kind of shuffling, or downcast, or quiet and vacant.

And the minute we started singing, they’d be reaching out for their partner’s hand, dancing. A lot of memory, remembering and connection.”

The crew’s setlist always has a theme. On Oct. 4, each song was by a ’60s musical act, such as The Beatles, Sonny and Cher, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson. The crowd oohed and aahed when McFeeters harmonized with them during their rendition of the Fab Four’s “I Wanna Hold Your Hand.”

“Wow, that’s something!” one attendee called out with delight.

As the event wound down, the group sang “Happy Trails” by Roy Rogers. They hugged and clapped as they sang the lyrics to each other: “Until we meet again.”

Before leaving the Winooski Senior Center, guests grabbed free Age Well water bottles, phone wallets and other swag from a folding table.

McFeeters and Reid said the event is struggling to find a permanent location because the spot at the senior center is temporary. They used to sing at O’Brien Community Center before it was sold to Champlain Housing Trust.

“Winooski has been wonderful,” Reid told Community News Service. “That said, the senior center is a multi-use center. So for instance, in the winter, we can’t use it.”

Age Well employees are hoping to find a new spot soon because they know how much the event means to people with memory loss and their caregivers.

“It’s a time that they can do something together, right? So, everybody’s singing,” said Jennifer Harbison, an Age Well employee manning the projector Oct. 4. “It’s not a caregiver taking their person to something. It’s both people participating on equal standing, so that’s really fun. It gives an opportunity to just kind of get out of that giver-taker dynamic.”

*(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.)*



**SEND US YOUR  
SPORTS  
PHOTOS**

[news@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:news@thecharlottenews.org)

**The Charlotte News**

## Environment

# First invasive golden clam confirmed in Lake Champlain

Ryan Mitchell  
Contributor

When a volunteer pulled a suspicious clam from the lakebed in Whitehall, N.Y., as part of a routine monitoring program last month, they immediately reported the find to lake scientists.

Further analysis confirmed the first known occurrence of invasive golden clam (*Corbicula fluminea*) in Lake Champlain. The clam, which is native to the eastern Mediterranean and Asia, can crowd out native species and increase occurrences of cyanobacteria blooms.

The volunteer, working with the Champlain Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Program (CHAMP), made the discovery while conducting a survey at the South Bay boat launch, which is owned and operated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The volunteer reported the find to the Lake Champlain Committee, which operates the monitoring program. Staff from the Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation later confirmed the specimen as golden clam, which has been in the region since 2008 but was previously unknown in Lake Champlain.

The Lake Champlain Rapid Response Task Force met last week to review potential next steps in responding to the discovery. The Lake Champlain Basin Program and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation are assessing the significance of this introduction and conducting further surveys to define the extent of this population.

An established presence of golden clam would bring the number of known nonnative and aquatic invasive species in Lake Champlain to 52. This finding underscores the importance of ongoing efforts to protect the lake's ecosystem and native species through early detection of invasive species.

The golden clam is hermaphroditic, meaning a single individual can reproduce and start a new population in previously uninfested waters. The species is known to reproduce quickly in other water bodies in northeastern North America.

Golden clam was confirmed in the region



Measuring a golden clam.

in 2008 in Hudson Falls, N.Y., near lock C9 of the Champlain Canal. It has since become established in Lake George, N.Y., in 2010 and Lake Bomoseen in 2016. All three waterways drain into the southern portion of Lake Champlain.

The Champlain Aquatic Invasive Species Monitoring Program initiative was developed by New York, Vermont, and additional partners to increase the number of trained people looking for aquatic invasive species along Lake Champlain shorelines.

The Lake Champlain Rapid Response Task Force was established to respond to reports of new aquatic invasive species or the spread of an existing aquatic invasive species to a new body of water in the watershed.

Meg Modley, aquatic invasive species management coordinator for the Lake Champlain Basin Program, said, "Lake Champlain is a large lake, and volunteer monitoring can play a critical role in finding new or suspicious species. The discovery of golden clam reinforces the need for all visitors to Lake Champlain to clean, drain and dry their boats, trailers and equipment to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species."

Kim Jensen, aquatic biologist at the Vermont Department of Environmental



Photos courtesy of Lake Champlain Committee

A New York State Department of Environmental Conservation scientist conducting lake-bed sampling.

Conservation, said, "Reports from volunteers provide an essential tool in spread-prevention efforts."

To learn more about the golden clam and

aquatic invasive species management, visit the Lake Champlain Basin Program Aquatic Invasive Species web page at <https://tinyurl.com/2cfk6xsm>.



Let's Drive Electric, Vermont.



### Get \$ back

State and federal incentives available when you buy or lease an EV



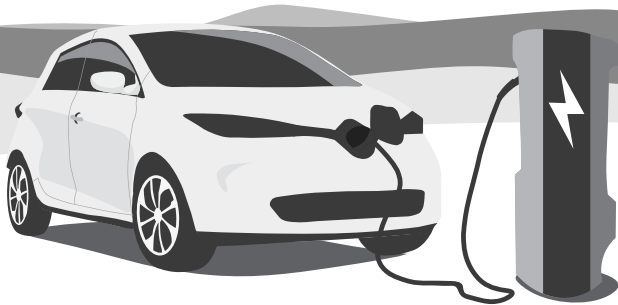
### Save \$ over time

Plugging in is like paying \$1.50 a gallon



### Power up

Plug in at home, or at the 300+ public charging stations in Vermont



DriveElectricVT.com

proudly sponsored by  
Efficiency  
Vermont

Scan the code to learn more about state and federal EV incentives



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

**802-425-2004**

**821 Ferry Rd., Charlotte | [sam@darlingsboatworks.com](mailto:sam@darlingsboatworks.com)**

## Environment

# How Lake Champlain scientists are prepping for future floods

Kate Kampner  
Community News Service

Vermont scientists aren't sure what could happen in the future as far as flooding goes, but as colder temperatures arrive, they're continuing to monitor water quality in Lake Champlain and research ways to protect it in anticipation for winter and summer floods like those in the past two years.

Matthew Vaughan, chief scientist at the Lake Champlain Basin Program, said it's a long-term picture.

Vaughan is in the process of finalizing the organization's assessment of the 2024 flooding, which he said should be available around December.

Overall, the July 2024 flooding was more destructive downstream while the December 2023 flooding resulted in higher flow because it involved snow and rain, Vaughan said.

"Typically what we see is our highest flows are usually in the springtime because of snowmelt, but what we're seeing because of climate change is a decrease in our springtime flows and an increase in wintertime flows as more precipitation falling is rain rather than snow," he said.

"We're seeing an actual detectable shift in our hydrology," he said, "how rain is falling, precipitation is falling and how our rivers are flowing."

But Vaughan said every year is different and it's best to be prepared for both an extreme or a typical year.

Vaughan said that 2021 and 2022 were dry years with few big storms, and the nutrient loading into Lake Champlain those years was relatively low compared to others.

When lakes and rivers are overloaded with nutrients or sediments during heavy water events, they become more susceptible to blue-green algae blooms and other issues.

Vaughan advises preparing as early as possible. "The flooding certainly has been a wake-up call for all of our communities, and it's certainly good to look at your own vulnerability in terms of flooding — what you can do to prepare in terms of preparing your household or property," he said.

On his end, Vaughan and colleagues are continuing research and projects to help build



Photo by Catherine Morrissey

Scientists are researching ways to protect Lake Champlain from increased flooding.

resilience. They're putting funding aside to collect water quality samples during, before and after flooding. "So we can say with more certainty what is and is not in the water in terms of contaminants and in the area we're concerned about," he said.

The program also has studies underway to determine how much floodplain restoration may be necessary to connect or restore river systems to a more natural state, a way to mitigate the havoc of flooding.

Rebecca Diehl is taking part in this research. Alongside collaborating with the Lake Champlain Basin Program, she is a research faculty at the University of Vermont and looks to understand the processes that support properly functioning floodplains.

"We think about the capacity for the natural features of our landscape: pieces next to the rivers that support flood resilience, improve water quality and provide habitat," she said.

Healthy floodplains can slow down floodwaters as they move through a watershed as well as capture and extract sediment and phosphorus that has been

traveling downstream.

The research focuses on what the outcome could look like if those features are restored or conserved. The researchers are trying to quantify, measure, document and map floodplains to support better management of those systems.

"We've got a lot more sediment moving through our river systems during these extreme events and it's significant," said Diehl. "Phosphorus is the largest concern, but it is that piece of the puzzle that needs to be more specifically accounted for."

In her research, Diehl compared a hypothetical small but yearly flood event to the extreme weather events seen in the last two years. The latter, she found, can put down six to seven times more sediment and phosphorus than more commonly occurring floods. "There's questions of what that balance is, if floodplains can keep pace, can they help put a dent in those elevated loads," Diehl said.

She is now working with 20 floodplain sites and continues to monitor the spots she's been looking at since 2019.

"We will get data on any flood that continues to occur in Vermont," she said. "The idea is that we are seeing a shift towards more frequent major events."

Diehl and fellow researchers are "just

trying to understand what all those little drops, what all those floodplains throughout the basin — how they all add up to contribute to that load."

Peter Isles is the project leader for the long-term lake and cyanobacteria monitoring program within the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. The program covers 15 sites on the lake and 21 rivers, all monitored regularly, and people involved have been looking for ways to increase Vermont's resilience to floods in the long term.

"If we get these big pulses of nutrients building up in lake sediments, that is probably going to increase nutrients over a multiple-years to decades timescale," Isles said. "It's going to put a finger on the scale and make it harder to bring down nutrient concentrations in the lake over time."

Things that reduce erosion during normal storm events, such as planting cover crops, also tend to reduce erosion during major storm events, even if they fail in some spots, he said. "It's hard to anticipate and take preventative actions because you never know exactly where it could occur and how extreme interventions would have to be to prevent those extreme impacts."

With future storms, Isles' team wants to be better about getting data out, taking photos and talking to the public via the press or otherwise. They are incorporating more satellite data into monitoring so they can immediately see when and where lakes are turbid following major weather events, he said. The project is working with the Lake Champlain Basin Program to install better sensors around the watershed and the lake to capture higher-quality images and readings in real time.

"I think increasing the use of high-frequency sensors is something I'd like to see," Isles said, along with increasing satellite data. "I think we are in conversation about other types of monitoring that would be particularly useful in the aftermath of these events."

Throughout all of his work, Isles stays optimistic. "I would like to avoid the feeling that we're all staring disaster in the face," he said.

"It's just something we need to be concerned about as these things become more common in the future."

*(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.)*



**Reach your  
customers by  
advertising with us!**

**Find out what  
we can do for you.**

**Contact [ads@TheCharlotteNews.org](mailto:ads@TheCharlotteNews.org)**

# Sacred Hunter

## Memories, dreams and reflections from deer camp

Bradley Carleton  
Contributor

As the calendar flips to November, I ask myself, “How many hunters still cherish the old paper calendars, like the classic Remington Arms ones of yesteryear?”

I know I do. At times it seems like Merle Haggard’s song “Are the Good Times Really Over for Good?” have come true. But when November rolls around and that calendar turns to the page of the big buck hiding behind the blowdown, pillars of moonlight slashing through the snow-laden boughs and the pale-yellow lights of the camp in the background, I’ve got to believe that the good times are still around.

Looking inside a camp window, the inhabitants are sitting around a table playing cards and laughing. One of them has a wry smile on his face as he tries to squeeze his chubby cheeks together in a failing attempt to maintain a poker face. There’s a guy hovering over the stove in the kitchen as if his job is to serve a seven-course meal in a five-star restaurant. Those sitting around the table are expecting nothing more than the traditional “pooh on a shingle.”

One of them is passed out in the lazy boy chair in front of the old Vermont Castings Defiant woodstove. An empty bottle of Glenfiddich sits on the table with a candle stuck in its throat leaning dangerously to one side. A “new” classic country song plays on the old radio on the dusty shelf. Some guy named “George Strait,” who sounds like country legends must have raised him.

The chatter around the table turns to each member’s thoughts on where they think the best chance will be to see their dream buck. Hank is headed up to the saddle again. Dave’s going back to the spot on Cobble Hill, where he claims to have seen a big ten-pointer last year. Tuck’s gonna walk Dead Creek downhill and see if he can intercept one of the “low hunters” chasing a big one up from the fields below. Chris, if he can wake up at all, may sit out on the deck and wait for something to cross the road. Such are the plans of men and fools who want nothing more than to sit alone in the woods as the north winds portend the advent of winter.

Sitting under a lonely pine overlooking a ravine of ash and hardwoods, one finds oneself wandering through the memories of their life. Lost love. Successful ventures. When was the last time I spoke with my brother? Childhood friends with whom we’ve lost touch. And lots of “what ifs.” It’s as if we’re seeking some inner peace by melting into our surroundings and leaving all these existential questions for another time.

For now, it’s more important to ask: “Does this tree I’m leaning against have a heartbeat?” “If a doe walks by under the beech tree stand with its tail up, will a buck be following her?” Thoughts boomerang back to the land before me. “Was that movement behind that distant hemlock?”

I am sitting in one of my favorite spots half a mile downhill from camp. I am immersed in the moment, taking in sensory impressions that soothe and inspire me. There are certain smells floating on the streams of wind that send us messages. Woodsmoke from the house at the bottom of the hill swirls together with the fragrance of beechnut.

Glancing down at the mahogany-brown earth at my feet, I notice spikey light brown triangle-shaped husks. Gathering a handful and cracking them open, I am savoring the seeds of this magnificent mast. Ripe beechnuts. Sweet and just slightly nutty. No wonder the herd from below walks up this trail in the morning after feasting on the grass fields in the valley at night. Looking up into the canopy of branches above, there are hundreds of these brown husks waiting to fall with the next strong wind.

One’s mind can spend an entire day noticing all of nature’s miracles. All it takes is to remain present. For those who say, “I could never have the patience to hunt deer. I get bored too easily,” I would propose that the opposite of boredom is the ability to stay present for everything that is happening around us.

And there is never a period where something isn’t unfolding. Just when we find ourselves in a meditative trance, something new and wonderful shifts our attention. I’ll admit it. Sometimes I do close my eyes. I listen and, yes, sometimes I fall asleep. But there is little more precious in this world than to be awakened by the first gentle snowflake landing on my nose.

The wind shifts a bit and the view changes as a wall of white rips down the mountainside aimed right at my spot. As the snow begins to obscure my view, I see something moving in the distance. A brown object weaving its way through the trees. It is clearly a deer. But is it a buck or doe? Lifting my old Remington 30.06 with the scope, I lower my cheek to the cold walnut stock and center my gaze at the rear optic.

It is fogged. The scope has been lying across my lap and has been warmed by my body heat. Rubbing the lenses, I try again. There it is, walking away. But does it have horns? I can’t tell. Whatever it is, it is headed straight toward the camp in the falling snow. Will any of my guys see it?

Starting back to camp, the snow is accumulating in crunchy, styrofoam-like pellets. By the time I get back, it has turned into a softer, more powdery cushion. Walking through the old green door, I see that everyone has returned and is palavering around the table. The yellow glow of the camp lights shines outside the window and across the road, where darkness has enveloped the woods and covered everyone’s tracks.

From outside, the snow continues to fall. An old buck crosses the rutted logging road, from below the hill where I spent the day. He is walking confidently. He heads up Crow Hill behind the camp, where he knows no one will suspect looking for him.

He’ll lie down on the ridge, and in the morning, he’ll watch the men from the camp wander off in their chosen directions. His eyes will follow them from his warm bed of leaves surrounded by a snowbank made by swirling around the deadfall. Only his regal rack of antlers will poke above the blowdown, as if posing for the picture on the calendar hanging above the mantle in the camp.

*(Bradley Carleton is the founder of [sacredhunter.org](http://sacredhunter.org), a privately owned*



Courtesy photo

When November rolls around and deer season returns, you’ve got to believe that the good times are still around.

*limited liability corporation that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature through hunting, fishing and foraging. For more of his writings, please subscribe at [sacredhunter.substack.com](http://sacredhunter.substack.com).)*

# 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](mailto:ads@TheCharlotteNews.org)

Patalin's Sugarworks  
Maple Syrup



100% Pure Maple Syrup  
Made the Old-Fashioned Way  
Wood Fired - Deep Rich Flavor  
No Reverse Osmosis

---

Pat and Aline Leclaire  
669 Lime Kiln Road  
Charlotte, Vermont 05445  
[leclairaline1@gmail.com](mailto:leclairaline1@gmail.com)  
802-373-6799

BEAGLE BUILDERS, LLC

ROOFING, SIDING & EXTERIOR FINISHES



WINDOWS & DOORS  
DECKS, PORCHES & SUNROOMS  
REMODELING & ADDITIONS

Monkton, VT [beaglebuilders@gmavt.net](mailto: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](http://CopperLeafFinancial.com)

Brushhogging by Adam  
Taking your bush to brush.  
Adam Dantzsch  
Proprietor



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

802-578-8347  
[adamdantzsch@aol.com](mailto:adamdantzsch@aol.com)



Investing in  
better water

- Water Filtration Systems
- Water Delivery
- Water Softners

Call us today!  
**Culligan Water**  
802-865-0000  
154 Brentwood Drive  
Colchester

# Weed, ducks converge in lawsuit pitting state against city

Charlotte Oliver  
Community News Service

Bright bracelets hang on the wire door to Jason Struthers’ duck coop. They’re relics of a time before neighborly relationships on a small cul-de-sac close to Essex High School turned sour.

Since last summer, Struthers has had a license to grow cannabis in his backyard on Taft Street, where he also farms vegetables and raises some 30 ducks. The ducks provide eggs — which he sells along with the cannabis and veggies — and manure to fertilize the strain. He sells the cannabis to about a dozen dispensaries.

Those bracelets on the coop came from two girls next door who used to play with the birds, he said.

But the situation around Struthers, his weed and his ducks has evolved into yelling matches, lawsuits, letters to legislators and a neighborhood on edge. Local officials and neighbors tried in August to shut down the cannabis operation before admitting they had little remedy to fight Struthers’ Tier-1 state license. Local officials later renewed the license.

Then on Sept. 21 the city’s development review board voted to prohibit Struthers from having ducks in a residential area.

The case over his half-acre lot could pit state against local jurisdiction and call into question the implications of recent statewide housing initiatives. Late last month Struthers filed a lawsuit contesting the review board’s decision, claiming only the state can regulate agriculture. He claims in the suit that he’s designated as a farm by the state, and therefore the city can’t regulate his ducks.

Struthers sees his farming as a right — and as a way of life. He suffered a skydiving injury in 2011, he said, that left him disabled, and farming is the only work he can see himself doing.

“It was just an instrumental part of my recovery,” he said. The land he farms is where he grew up, where both his parents died, he said.

His neighbors, and local officials, see it differently. “It’s more him putting up his middle fingers to everybody,” said Jason Hemenway, whose backyard borders Struthers’.

The review board’s September decision came after neighbors Stephen and Sharon Padnos appealed a previous decision allowing his ducks.

In the Sept. 21 review board meeting,



Photos by Charlotte Oliver

Some of Struthers’ ducks mingle in his Essex Junction backyard in fall 2023.

officials ruled that Struthers is not allowed to have ducks on his property because he lives in an R-1 residential area. Board members said they have the right to enforce zoning laws about livestock, while acknowledging the regulation of cannabis was a separate matter.

Struthers says the city is out of its jurisdiction by trying to regulate his ducks. State law says municipalities cannot regulate agricultural practices. Local officials claim they aren’t regulating Struthers’ farming — just where he can have his ducks.

Struthers’ case could set a legal precedent for other ambiguities between the state and local regulations.

For Struthers, regulation of his ducks seems like de-facto regulation of his weed growing. The manure from his ducks, as fertilizer, is crucial to his strain, he said. Duck manure doesn’t need to be fermented or composted, explained Struthers. “It’s really beneficial. It saves a lot of labor.”

Sparing labor makes a big difference for him. When Struthers sustained his spinal cord injury, he said he “was laid up for a couple years and unable to do anything.”

Before the injury he was a skydiving instructor for 20 years, he said, with 5,500 skydives and 130 base jumps. Since then, farming has been a way for Struthers to cope.

“I like the discipline of it,” said Struthers. “When you’ve got a shattered spine, it’s really easy to say, ‘Oh, I don’t feel good. I

don’t want to do my PT right now.’ But when something’s going to die because you don’t do your chores, you have to do it.”

Growing cannabis was a dream of his, he said. When he was growing up he had a blood vessel wrapped around his intestine that made it hard for him to eat, he said, something only smoking weed relieved.

“It was the first time I felt actual hunger in probably four years,” he said. “It was just an amazing event for me.”

Clashes with neighbors have been ongoing. Struthers claims he’s been reported for an unregistered vehicle, been the subject of unreasonable noise complaints and had neighbors send the fire department to his house.

Struthers hasn’t been a saint, neighbors claim. In city council and review board meetings, neighbors have mainly complained about the noise of Struthers’ ducks, the smell of his cannabis and manure and his proximity to Essex High School.

In response, city council president Raj Chawla wrote to state representatives on behalf of the council late last month, urging them to amend state cannabis laws and allow municipalities to zone cannabis growing. The council echoed concerns of Struthers’ neighbors, claiming in the letter that he operates within the 500-foot buffer of a school property — a reference to regulations that only apply to cannabis retailers, not growers.

The letter also singled out Gov. Phil Scott’s June signing of S.100, also known as the HOME Act, a bill aimed at creating more affordable housing by rolling back certain local development restrictions. The HOME Act, among other things, effectively legalizes the development of duplexes anywhere residential development is allowed. It paves the way for increased density where properties are served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure. The act has already drawn criticism that it is a state effort to supersede local zoning.

Problems like those around Struthers’ property could intensify if developers take advantage of the HOME Act’s opportunity for increased housing density, the council wrote in the letter.

Neighbors have more qualms with Struthers than those they’ve mentioned in meetings. Hemenway said Struthers once processed a dead deer on the fence line with the Padnos as an intimidation tactic.

Struthers said he processed it on the fence line because he needed to hang it from his tree, not as a personal slight.

Struthers expressed frustration that neighbors seemed eager to tattle to the city, rather than talking to him first.

Stephen and Sharon Padnos said they’ve tried that. One summer Sharon was gardening alone in the backyard and asked Struthers to turn down his music, she said.

“She was glad the fence was there because she thought that if it wasn’t he seemed so angry that he might’ve come over and hit her,” said Stephen.

Sharon agreed, saying Struthers, “more than yelled.”

Sharon called the police that day, she said, but decided not to file a report. After the couple complained to city councilors, a neighbor down the road heard Struthers again yelling at Sharon when she was alone in the backyard gardening, and so did Stephen who was using power tools in the garage, the couple said.

Struthers admitted he may have raised his voice but said he was not yelling or screaming and was never contacted by the police

“He is not somebody that you can actually have a civil conversation with,” said Hemenway. “Every time we do have a conversation, it turns into a screaming match.”

**DUCKS** continued on page 18

# Gardening

## Growing mushrooms indoors

Deborah J. Benoit  
University of Vermont Extension

Maybe you enjoy using fresh mushrooms in your meal preparations but have opened the refrigerator door and discovered to your disappointment the “mush” part of mushrooms. Or maybe you’d like something different to satisfy your inner gardener over the winter months (or any other time of year, for that matter). Whatever the reason, growing mushrooms indoors is a fun project with tasty results.

Mushroom grow kits can be found online and in the gardening section in many stores. Available varieties include oyster, lion’s mane and shitake, along with familiar varieties such as white button and portabella.

The growing process is simple. The hardest part may be deciding what variety to grow. And while growing mushrooms at home using a kit is easy, failures do happen, so you may want to check to see if your kit comes with a guarantee it will grow before making a decision.

The kit you choose will likely include a block or log that’s been inoculated with mushroom spawn, a moisture-retaining cover or a small misting bottle and instructions. Be sure to review the specific instructions for your kit since these will vary from manufacturer to manufacturer.

Your second step, after reviewing those all-important instructions, is to remove the growing block from its box. But do

not remove its plastic wrapping. Make an “X” on one side of the plastic and moisten the block according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Some kits will require soaking the block in water. Others call for a dish of water to set the block in. Add the moisture-retaining cover, if appropriate, and place in indirect light, such as to the side of a north-facing window.

Next comes the hard part. Waiting. It will take about a week or so for anything to happen. Just continue to follow the instructions provided with your kit for the care of the mushroom block. This may include misting once to several times a day or adjusting the moisture cover to maintain proper humidity.

Just when you think nothing is going to happen, surprise! Mushrooms begin to “pin,” and you’ll see small bumps appear. From that point on, they will grow rapidly over the next couple of weeks.

You can begin harvesting when they reach the desired size by cutting the stem with sharp scissors or a knife. Several stages of growth may be present at the same time. Just be sure to harvest your mushrooms before they pass their prime.

If you find you have more mushrooms than you can use, harvested mushrooms can be stored in a paper bag in the refrigerator for about a week. You also can dry them to preserve your harvest for more an extended period.

To dry mushrooms using a food



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Harvest mushrooms when they reach the desired size by cutting the stem with sharp scissors or a knife.

dehydrator, slice the mushrooms thinly (about 1/4 inch). Place on the dehydrator’s tray, making sure the pieces don’t touch. Process at 110-120 degrees Fahrenheit for 4-8 hours, according to the dehydrator’s instructions, until the mushroom pieces are dry and leathery.

Time will vary depending on the size of the mushroom slices and the dehydrator you’re using. Store dehydrated mushrooms in an airtight container in a cool, dry place

to enjoy them for up to a year. Dried mushrooms can be a tasty addition when cooking. Rehydrate them in whatever liquid you are planning to use in your recipe by letting them soak for about 30 minutes. Or sprinkle in soup or stews to rehydrate during cooking.

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

## DUCKS

Continued from page 17

The relationships haven’t always been hostile. When Struthers’ mom died in 2019, the Padnos wrote him a card with their condolences, said Sharon.

“We don’t like contentious situations,” said Sharon Padnos, saying the couple saw their complaints as a last resort.

“If you don’t complain to the city, the city will do nothing,” said her husband.

Struthers has a different view of their

actions: “I think they’re lying about what I’m doing and trying to get me in trouble,” he said. He claimed the couple once called the police on him two times in three days.

Hemenway said he and other neighbors were unhappy the city would allow a Tier 1 cannabis farm within 500 feet of the public high school. The Padnoses, Hemenway and other neighbors have complained extensively about the smell of both the cannabis and the ducks in city meetings, along with the animals’ sound.

Attempting to appease his neighbors, Struthers said he replaced almost all of his birds with Muscovy ducks, a breed that makes very little noise.

Although part of Struthers’ livelihood is in the hands of the courts, he seemed relaxed and confident things will go his way. “I’m not trying to have a negative impact on the community,” he said.

The three colored bracelets still hang on his coop door after years, making a little jangle every time he opens the door.

“What I do makes me happy,” said Struthers. “I’m in the sun, I’m not depressed, I’m fit, I feel good, and I enjoy life.”

He can enjoy life as much as he wants, neighbors figure. But “he should be following the rules just like everyone else does,” said Stephen Padnos. “And those rules say he just can’t do this thing in this location.”

*(Charlotte Oliver reported this story on a tip from the Essex ReTorter. 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.)*

## Paddling reflections



Photo by Helen Toor

Lewis Creek serves as a mirror on a late fall day of kayaking.

# Gardening

## A brief overview of some indigenous Vermont crops

Andrea Knepper  
University of Vermont Extension

Several crops have been cultivated in Vermont for centuries by Indigenous Abenaki tribes. Of great significance to the Abenaki are the “seven sisters” — corn, beans, squash, sunflower, Jerusalem artichoke, ground cherry and tobacco.

Carbon dating of corn cobs recovered from archaeological sites in Vermont reveals that corn was cultivated as early as 1110 AD. A reliable variety for home gardeners, available today from commercial suppliers, is Roy’s Calais corn.

Calais corn is a flint corn, which means it is best used for cornmeal and making hominy because of its lower sugar content. Its presumed origin lies with the western Abenaki (Sokoki) in Vermont although it was named after Roy Fair who cultivated this variety on his North Calais farm for more than 50 years in the 1900s.

According to regional lore, Jacob’s cattle beans were gifted by the Passamaquoddy community in Maine to the first child born to European settlers in the 1600s. These red and white speckled kidney beans are highly regarded by chefs for use in baked beans and soups and readily available in many local grocery stores.

East Montpelier squash is a native Vermont variety with an exciting history. This winter



Photo by Andrea Knepper

Roy’s Calais corn, Jacob’s cattle beans, ground cherries and sunflowers are four of the “seven sisters,” crops of cultural and ceremonial significance to indigenous Abenaki tribes that can be grown in northern gardens.

squash was on the verge of extinction when seed was found in 2014 in Orange County. Work is still underway to bring it back to its original characteristics as the seed found had been crossed with blue Hubbard squash.

In time, this squash may become more available at local markets. If you are able to find one, it is reportedly a delicious squash with generous yielding plants, high flesh content, edible seeds and many culinary uses.

Sunflower cultivation in our region was

first documented in 1615 by explorer Samuel de Champlain. It is believed that the white-seeded Morrisville sunflower may be the variety he refers to in his report, in which he notes that oil was harvested from the sunflowers. The seeds have a thin coat so can be eaten whole. These seeds would have been valuable as a long-storing food source to the Abenakis and early settlers.

Stands of Jerusalem artichokes, or sunchokes, can be seen along many Vermont

riverbanks. These clusters of tall plants with vibrant yellow flowers resembling small sunflowers bloom in late fall. Researchers believe that the Abenakis planted sunchokes at their campsites. The tubers can be harvested after a hard frost and prepared in many ways, similar to potatoes.

Ground cherries, also known as husk tomatoes, are an interesting fruit with a taste that is best described as weird but tasty. Vaguely citrusy, somewhat sweet yet tart with a surprisingly less sweet aftertaste, ground cherries can be used in both sweet and savory preparations.

The tobacco historically grown by the Abenaki people is used solely for ceremonial purposes and is considered sacred. The cultivation and care of this crop was the responsibility of the men, who grew tobacco in small, fenced-in plots and dried both the flowers and leaves to smoke.

During the growing season, all of these varieties can be viewed in the demonstration garden, maintained using traditional Abenaki methods, at the Vermont Indigenous Heritage Center at the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum ([ethanallenhomestead.org](http://ethanallenhomestead.org)) in Burlington. This also is the home of the Seeds of Renewal project, which protects indigenous seeds and maintains and documents ancestral horticultural and culinary information.

### Invasive problem?



Photo by Joe Messingschlager

Joe Messingschlager has been noticing moths like this flitting around on Mt. Philo the last two Novembers and was finally able to get a photo of one between flits this week. He’s worried that it’s a winter moth, an invasive species that invaded most of the Northeast around 30 years ago. It has caused major defoliation problems in Massachusetts, but he’s not sure if this is one. Any ideas?

# Community Roundup

## Recipients announced for \$1.9M in Vermont Early Childhood Fund grants

Building Bright Futures has announced a new round of grant recipients for the Vermont Early Childhood Fund, totaling \$1.9 million for projects focused on Vermont children and families.

Thanks to these grants, awardees in every region of Vermont will be able to pursue important and innovative projects, including:

- Creating nearly 300 early childhood care and education slots across the state
- Coordinating efforts to deliver early intervention violence prevention, especially focused on meeting the needs of the LGBTQ+ community and those in substance use recovery
- Increasing access to play therapy, special education, early childhood intervention, programs targeted to fathers and wellness programs
- Expanding early childhood education workforce recruitment and training, including opportunities for paid classroom experience and a program targeted to New Americans



- Increasing access to professional development programs, including infant and toddler mental health training, college courses, Reggio Emilia pedagogy and coaching by licensed therapists to address behavioral health challenges
  - Increasing access to free, high-quality winter wear for children from families with low incomes
  - Investing in an outdoor play area that will provide opportunities for all children, including those with physical or neurological differences
  - Developing library programs focused on early childhood literacy and development
  - Supporting early child development and strengthening parent-child relationships through music programs
  - Addressing food insecurity by providing healthy nutrition in early childhood programs.
- The Innovation Grant (\$100,000 to \$200,000) has the goal of creating innovative, replicable solutions to address some of Vermont’s most persistent barriers to serving children and families.

## Pitch Challenge offering scholarships, cash prizes to high school students

Applications are open for the 2025 Vermont Pitch Challenge, a program offered by the University of Vermont that inspires high school students to invent products or ideas that can be successfully applied to the real world.

Now in its second year, the Vermont Pitch Challenge offers winning students full scholarships to the university, along with cash prizes for top runners-up. Students are encouraged to come up with ideas that are financially sustainable, but also have a positive impact on society.

The challenge is open to grade 10-12 students, regardless of where they live.

“The Vermont Pitch Challenge is a response to growing interest among young people in entrepreneurialism,” said Rick Dalton, president of College For Every Student Brilliant Pathways. “Studies show that 60 percent of high school students want to start and run their own businesses.”

Participants can enter as individuals or in teams of up to three, creating business plans aimed at community development



or broader social good. As they develop their ideas, students receive coaching in business skills, including market analysis, business planning, and capital acquisition. Finalists will pitch their concepts to a panel of University of Vermont business

students in a format similar to the popular show Shark Tank.

The 2024 challenge attracted submissions from 27 U.S. states and seven countries.

At the workshop, students shared ideas, including a healthcare nonprofit for small, rural communities; an automated window

squeegee for high-rise buildings; a detection device for date-rape drugs; a shielded, heated umbrella; a nonprofit to discourage bullying; a stethoscope for the hearing-impaired; and sidewalks that would use foot traffic to generate electricity.

For more information about the Vermont Pitch Challenge and to apply, visit <https://tinyurl.com/y6tz98rz>. Pitch applications are open through Feb.15.

# Calendar

Send your events two weeks in advance to [news@thecharlottenews.org](mailto:news@thecharlottenews.org).

**Thread of Blue concert**  
**Thursday, Nov. 14, 7:30 p.m.**

Ohavi Zedek will host a concert to benefit The Lost Mural Project featuring saxophonist Marty Fogel and his quintet, Thread of Blue. The band will play improvisational jazz emanating from Jewish sources including songs by composers including Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin and Kurt Weill. The performance begins at 7:30 pm. Fogel has played with a wide variety of musicians like trumpeter Don Cherry, baritone saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, Lou Reed, David Bowie and John Lee Hooker. Tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/mpvckysp>.

**‘Footloose’ at CVU**  
**Friday-Sunday, Nov. 15-17**

Champlain Valley Union High will present the musical version of “Footloose” for four performances in the school’s theater. Based on the iconic 1984 film, “Footloose” tells the story of Ren McCormack, a teenager who moves to the small town of Bomont, where dancing is banned. Ren teams up with local students to challenge the oppressive rules and bring the joy of dance back to their lives. With songs like “Let’s Hear It for the Boy” and “Holding Out for a Hero,” the musical celebrates freedom, friendship and the transformative power of music. The performances are Friday, Nov. 15, 7 p.m.; Saturday, Nov. 16, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, Nov. 17, 1 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and \$8 for students and faculty.

**Non-Fiction Comics Festival**  
**Saturday & Sunday, Nov. 16-17**

The third annual Nonfiction Comics Festival, a free two-day event at the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, explores the use of comics in nonfiction storytelling. The festival will bring together over 40 cartoonists displaying and selling their work and a suite of discussion panels and workshops. The keynote presenter is award-winning cartoonist Eddie Campbell, best known as the illustrator of From Hell. Festival doors open at 11 a.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. on Sunday. Pre-registration is required for Sunday’s free workshops at [nonfictioncomicsfest.org/sunday](http://nonfictioncomicsfest.org/sunday).

**Shelburne Thanksgiving meal**  
**Wednesday, Nov. 20, 11:30 a.m.**

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a Thanksgiving meal for anyone 60 or older in the St. Catherine of Siena Parish Hall at 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 a.m. and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is roast turkey and gravy, stuffing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, sliced carrot, wheat roll, pumpkin pie with cream and milk. There will be entertainment by Gerry Ortego on guitar. You must register by Wednesday, Nov. 13, at 802-662-5283 or [kbatres@agewellvt.org](mailto:kbatres@agewellvt.org).



Courtesy photo

Charlotte Congregational will hold its annual performance of Handel’s “Messiah” as a classic singalong on Sunday, Dec. 1, 4-5:15 p.m.

**Winter Lights**  
**Thursday, Nov. 21**

Shelburne Museum’s holiday light spectacular, Winter Lights, returns on Nov. 21 and runs through Jan. 5. The museum campus will be aglow in a dazzling visual display of lights accompanied by musical selections. For the first time, Winter Lights is partnering with the town and will be expanded into Shelburne, creating a holiday village vibe and offering a welcoming gateway to the event. New this season is an enhanced circus display with figures inspired by Shelburne’s collection and illuminated under a Big Top of lights. At the steamboat Ticonderoga, sea creatures modeled after weathervanes in the museum’s collection will “float” on the water created by a sea of lights. If purchased online at [shelburnemuseum.org/visit/winter-lights](http://shelburnemuseum.org/visit/winter-lights), tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children ages 3-17. Children under 3 are free. Tickets at the door are \$20 for adults and \$15 for children.

**Middlebury museum train display**  
**Friday, Nov. 29, 11 a.m.**

Middlebury’s Henry Sheldon Museum will hold opening day for Rolling Down the Tracks: Holiday Trains. The elaborate model train layout will be on display through Jan. 4. The trains will be running Wednesdays 2-4:30 p.m., Thursdays 10:30 a.m.–1 p.m.; Fridays 11 a.m.–3 p.m. and Saturdays 11 a.m.–3 p.m. Info at 802-388-2117 or [henrysheldonmuseum.org/events/holidaytrains](http://henrysheldonmuseum.org/events/holidaytrains).

**Annual Messiah Sing**  
**Sunday, Dec. 1, 4-5:15 p.m.**

Charlotte Congregational will host its annual performance of Handel’s “Messiah” as a classic singalong. Anne Decker will conduct four of Vermont’s preeminent vocal soloists (Helen Lyons, Nessa Rabin, Cameron Brownell and Erik Kroncke) along with a professional chamber ensemble, including the Skylark quartet. When attendees arrive to this

family-friendly event, they’ll be offered a score and invited to sit in sections based on their vocal ranges: soprano, alto, tenor or bass. Not all will choose to sing, and some may want to sit with their friends and family, so the section seating is just a suggestion. Also, the balcony will be open. Dotted throughout the performance will be times for the attendees to raise their voices in song. The event will culminate with everyone bursting out for the “Hallelujah Chorus.” Childcare available, and donations encouraged (suggested \$5 for children, \$20 for adults and \$50 for families). For more info, visit [charlotteucc.org](http://charlotteucc.org) or email Jane Kittredge: [janekitt@gmail.com](mailto:janekitt@gmail.com).

**Grange line dancing**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 4, 7-8 p.m.**

Andrea Warren, owner of Good Time Line Dancing, returns to teach a one-hour class, formatted for beginners at the Grange in East Charlotte. The lesson will start with an easy-to-follow, warm-up dance, followed by two absolute-beginner dances taught in small segments building up to doing the whole dance together.

Space is limited, so register to reserve a spot at <https://tinyurl.com/yy384wf7>. Suggested donation is \$5-20. All ages welcome.

**School holiday market**  
**Saturday, Dec. 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.**

The Charlotte Central School Holiday Market is looking for local artisans, crafters and vendors. The market will be held in two gyms bursting with exhibitors, a DIY craft corner for the kiddos and a smorgasbord of tasty treats. Registration fees support a variety of school programs including PTO, STEM, theater, athletics and our Community Emergency Care Fund. Vendor application at <https://tinyurl.com/442xxurh>. Email vendor suggestions to [ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com](mailto:ccsholidaymarket@gmail.com).

**Science Fun Day**  
**Saturday, Dec. 7, 1:30-3:30 p.m.**

Third-fifth grade students are invited to spend an afternoon exploring space-related topics through workshops led by VTeen Science Ambassadors, a group of high school students who love science and have taken a leadership role in creating science programming for younger youth. The free event includes building and launching straw rockets, taking core samples of “moon” rocks and constructing an astronaut lander. Science Fun Day will happen on the University of Vermont. The program is free but registration is required by Dec. 5. Sign up at [go.uvm.edu/funday24](http://go.uvm.edu/funday24). For more information: [margaret.coan@uvm.edu](mailto:margaret.coan@uvm.edu) or 802-656-7634.

**‘Highlight’ New Year’s Eve**  
**Tuesday, Dec. 31**

Burlington City Arts is holding the seventh “Highlight” New Year’s Eve celebration from midday Dec. 31 until past midnight. Tickets for “Highlight” go on sale at noon, Friday, Nov. 1, at <https://tinyurl.com/46v6nw9c> and cost \$15 throughout November, before going up to \$18 in December. Kids 5 and under do not need a ticket. “Highlight” will feature programming with community-powered, multidimensional experiences throughout the downtown and waterfront areas of Burlington.

# Library News

## More than 80 pumpkins carved for jack-o'-lantern display

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

More than 80 folks of all ages brought their creativity and carving skills to another successful pumpkin carving at the Charlotte Library. The library is grateful to Jessica Scriver her contributions to the fifth annual jack-o'-lantern display.

Need some inspiration for Thanksgiving? Check out the library's cookbook section for menu ideas, pie recipes and more.

The Wildcard Wednesday crew will be baking cookie place cards and other edible decorations. Stop by to take a look on Wednesday, Nov. 20.

Check out our best picks for the readers on your gift list. On display at the library in time for your holiday shopping and available at the Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne.

### Programs for kids

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

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

#### Preschool free play 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. Explore the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, playdoh — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library.

#### Wildcard Wednesdays Wednesdays, thru Nov. 20, 2-3:30 p.m.

Who knows what Wednesday will bring? Science sessions? Crafts and games? Sign up and show up on Wednesdays to join in the fun activities for kids fourth grade and up. For registration information, contact the library at [info@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:info@charlottepubliclibrary.org). On Wednesday, Nov. 20, it will be Edible Creativity. Make edible decorations for Thanksgiving tables, including cookie place cards and candy flowers.

#### Babytime Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. & first Saturdays, 10 a.m.

You're invited to an unstructured hour for parents, caregivers and babies to play, explore books and chat 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. We'll have 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.

#### Zachary DeFranco & Chris Gribnau music Saturday, Nov. 16, noon-1 p.m.

Enjoy folk tunes and instrumentation with these two Charlotte musicians. They will be playing a mix of oldtime Irish and Quebecois tunes on fiddle and mandolin. Between songs, they will answer questions and discuss the history of the tunes they are playing.

#### Mystery book group Monday, Nov. 18, 10 a.m.

In "The Murder of Mr. Wickham," a summer house party turns into a whodunit when Mr. Wickham, one of literature's most notorious villains, meets a sudden and suspicious end in this mystery featuring Jane Austen's leading literary characters. As tempers flare and secrets are revealed, it's clear that everyone would be happier if Mr. Wickham got his comeuppance. Yet they're all shocked when Wickham turns up murdered, except, of course, for the killer hidden in their midst. Copies available at the library circulation desk.

#### Better-together book club Wednesday, Nov. 20, 7 p.m.

The better-together book club will be reading "What Alice Forgot" by Lianne Moriarty. Alice Love is 29, crazy about her husband and pregnant with her first child. However, she is surprised when she comes to on the floor of a gym and is whisked off to the hospital where she discovers the honeymoon is over — she's getting divorced, she has three kids and she's actually 39 years old. Copies available at the library circulation desk. Look for the audiobook and e-book on Libby.

### 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, library director 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.

Join in 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 Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1 p.m.

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

**Note:** The library will be closed Thursday & Friday, Nov. 28 & 29 for the Thanksgiving holiday. See you on Saturday, Nov. 30.



Courtesy photo

From left, Chris Gribnau and Zachary Defranco. They will share their folk music tunes at the Charlotte Library on Saturday, Nov. 16.



Photos by Jessica Scriver

It was an enthusiastic group that turned out to the library on Oct. 26. There was a lot of cutting up going on since the occasion was pumpkin carving for the jack-o'-lantern display for the town green.

#### Library contact information:

Margaret Woodruff, director  
Cheryl Sloan, youth services librarian  
Susanna Kahn, tech librarian  
Phone: 802-425-3864  
Email: [info@charlottepubliclibrary.org](mailto:info@charlottepubliclibrary.org)  
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 the first Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., unless otherwise rescheduled following the Opening Meeting Law. Contact the library or visit the library website ([charlottepubliclibrary.org](http://charlottepubliclibrary.org)) for more information.



Nathaniel Akselrod's entry won first place in the People's Choice Award, for which he received a \$50 gift card to the Old Brick Store.

# Senior Center News

## Charlotte Central School students connect with seniors

Lori York  
Director

How do we connect Charlotte residents across the generations and help students learn about Vermont? To help with this, sixth grade students from Charlotte Central School visited the senior center as part of a community-based project to provide the students with deeper connections with Charlotte and Vermont.

As part of this project, the students interviewed community members about their lives in Vermont, what they love about the state and fond memories of their own adolescence.

The senior center also hosted the annual veterans lunch followed by a Quilts of Valor Dedication Ceremony. The vet center was present to provide assistance for veterans and their families regarding available VA benefits.

### Community

#### November art exhibit

Visit the senior center during November to view The Power & Poetry of Water, an exhibit of fine-art photography by Jonathan Hart of water and the results of water in natural settings. Check out his website at jonathanhartphoto.com.

#### AARP smart driver course

**Saturday, Nov. 16, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**

The AARP Smart Driver course is designed especially for older drivers, will help you refresh your driving skills and may even help you save on your auto insurance. AARP members can take the course at a discounted rate. Please plan to bring lunch. Class size is limited. Checks should be made out to AARP. \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for non-members. Registration required at 802-425-6345.

#### Death Café

**Wednesday, Nov. 20, 4-5 p.m.**

The senior center is offering a monthly Death Café. Join this group to come together in human fellowship to celebrate life by voicing concerns, sharing questions, ideas and stories around death and dying. These are not always easy conversations, but when we share, heart to heart, we build community and experience a special joy that enhances our lives. Looking forward to sharing the journey and building community together. More info at ppolly62@ymail.com. Free. Registration required at 802-425-6345.

### Exercise

#### Bone Builders

**Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.,  
Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m. &  
Fridays, 11 a.m.-noon**

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

#### Pilates fitness

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

Join Phyllis Bartling in this pilates class,

geared to folks 55+. This class is challenging and includes upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises while working on core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture. \$10 a class. No registration required.

#### Tai chi

**Thursdays, 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m.**

The Yang international short form is the most popular form of tai chi practice. It consists of slow continuous soft circular movements which are coordinated with breathing. Regular practice helps to improve balance, mind-body connection, mental awareness, flexibility, stability, coordination and overall health. When practiced in the company of others, it is both uplifting and energizing. Taught by a certified instructor who has studied with the founder of the Tai Chi for Arthritis Association. Email questions to belzahammer@hotmail.com. \$10 a class. No registration required. No class on Nov. 21 and 28.

#### Gentle walking group

**Thursday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m.**

Enjoy the beauty of nature. Come walk at a gentle pace with other seniors. The group will meet each month for a congenial non-strenuous walk. Location to be determined based on conditions of the local walks. Meet at 9 a.m. in the foyer at the Charlotte Senior Center. The group will take a break in December and January and resume in February for some winter walks. For questions or to register, call Penny Burman at 916-753-7279.

#### Yoga strength-building practice

**Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon**

Heidi Kvasnak leads an integrative practice that builds strength and stability while maintaining a sense of ease and spaciousness in both body and mind. The group will practice longer-held postures that strengthen muscles, bones and core, as well as breath-led flowing movement, including sun salutations. Prerequisite: Must be able to easily get down to and up from the floor with or without props. \$10/class. No registration required.

### Programs

#### Shanghai mahjong

**Tuesdays, 12:45-3:45 p.m.**

New or experienced in the Shanghai style of mahjong, you are welcome to join this informal get-together. For questions email Nan Mason: anne.mason@uvm.edu. Free. No registration required.

#### Boxwood tabletop tree workshop

**Thursday, Nov. 21, 1-3 p.m.**

Designer Diane Boucher will lead this class in making traditional tabletop boxwood trees to enjoy or give as a festive gift for the holidays. Using fresh English boxwood, you will learn to assemble your own boxwood Christmas tree. Once assembled, you will decorate your tree choosing from a variety of festive decorations being offered. These popular arrangements last up to 12 weeks with regular watering and make a perfect gift. Cost includes all supplies for creating this special tree to take home. Class size is limited. Cost: \$40. Registration required.

#### Italian for total beginners



Photos by Lori York

Students from grade 6 at Charlotte Central School interviewed seniors as way to build stronger connections to Charlotte and Vermont.

**Fridays, Nov. 22, Dec. 6-20 & Dec. 3 & 10,  
10-11 a.m.**

Are you interested in beginning your study of Italian? Join the group to explore the beauty of the Italian language and culture. For questions about whether this class is the correct level, email Nicole Librandi at nicolelibrandi2@gmail.com. Cost: \$60. Registration and payment required by Monday, Nov. 11.

#### Brain games

**Fridays, 2-4 p.m.**

There are many ways adults can stimulate their brains to increase mental health, improve memory skills and contribute to overall well-being. Research finds that positive interaction with others and engagement in stimulating group activities sharpens cognition and increases memory ability. Come play various games, share laughter and enjoy one another's company. Some games are available, but also feel free to bring your own games. Free. No registration required.

#### Shape-note singing

**Sunday, Nov. 24, 12:30-2:30 p.m.**

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing, not as a practice for performance. Search "sacred harp" on YouTube for examples, then come and sing. Introduction to shape notes and scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each fourth Sunday singing. The first hour will be Sacred Harp singing and the second hour will be singing from an alternate Shape-Note book. Books will be provided. For questions or to schedule your introduction to shape-notes and scales, please contact Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com. Free. No registration required.

#### Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

#### Monday lunches

Served weekly. Lunch is served 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., or until the food runs out.



As part of the activities honoring veterans at the Charlotte Senior Center, Charlotte resident Greg Liebert received a Quilt of Valor for his service.

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

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

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at charlotteseniorcentervt.

Senior center soup will not be made with rainwater

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

In “Who’s to Judge?” a 2015 New Yorker article on ranking the world’s best restaurants, we learn that at one of those top-rated restaurants you can get your venison served tartare with maqui berries, along with a soup of Patagonian rainwater served on a bed of moss.

The prospect of eating at such a restaurant brings to mind a worry Elizabeth George expressed in “A Suitable Vengeance”: “Which fork do I use when I eat shrimp?”

At Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center, your soup won’t be made with Patagonian rainwater, and you won’t have any silverware worries.

Pumpkin is on the senior center Nov. 25 menu. Pumpkin is the state squash of Texas, but, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, 95 percent of the U.S. crop intended for processing is grown in Illinois. Nestlé, operating under the brand name Libby’s, produces 85 percent of the processed pumpkin in the United States at their plant in Morton, Illinois.

Founding Father Alexander Hamilton didn’t seem to worry about pumpkin, but he did declare that “no citizen of the United States should refrain from turkey on Thanksgiving Day.” Turkey became such a common main dish at Thanksgiving dinners that the day has long been colloquially termed “Turkey Day.” The New York Times suggests that you can roast it, smoke it, deep-fry it, slow-cook it, render it in a bundt pan, or spatchcock it (open it up, press it flat and brine it).

Of course, The New York Times’ John Hodgman has some advice on post-COVID turkey: “Please stop eating a whole roast turkey and stuffing for breakfast. That time is over.”

In a letter to his daughter, Benjamin Franklin wrote that instead of the bald eagle, which was adopted as the U.S. national bird in 1782, the turkey should be



Adobe stock photo

our national bird. He pointed out that the turkey is a native of North America and is “much more respectable.”

More than 350 years after turkey was eaten at Plymouth Rock in 1621, vacuum-packed roast turkey was one of the ingredients eaten for Thanksgiving on Skylab 4, the 1973 U.S. space mission.

Not everyone is sanguine about this fine-feathered bird. In “Gobble squabble,” Washington Post columnist Jonathan Yardley carped, “Festive turkey? Who dreamed up that oxymoron? A turkey is about as festive as a wet chicken.”

He concludes, “Perhaps we should be grateful that cows are smarter than turkeys. If the Colonists and the Indians had come back from the hunt with a slaughtered heifer, we might have had filet mignon, but this is based on the assumption that the people doing the carving knew what the good parts are. If they didn’t, we might have ended up with a Thanksgiving custom even worse than the one we now endure:

a 12-pound cow’s liver, trussed and basted and stuffed with Brussels sprouts.”

There are alternatives to turkey. Calvin Trillin starts off his essay collection “Third Helpings” (1983) by describing his campaign to change the national Thanksgiving dish from turkey to spaghetti carbonara.

My claim to fame: At an annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English, which is held every year right before Thanksgiving, I ate lunch with Trillin’s wife Alice. A small group of us asked her to choose the restaurant, which is why we enjoyed a pre-Thanksgiving meal in a Chinese restaurant.

Thinking about our recent election, it seems worth mentioning that on Thanksgiving Day 1947 there was no pumpkin at the White House. Pumpkin pie was out because it contained eggs. In a radio address broadcast on Oct. 5, 1947, President Truman asked Americans to join him in observing a weekly schedule

of voluntary food rationing. Meatless Tuesdays and Eggless Thursdays were part of the president’s food conservation drive.

The president’s foreign-aid task force, the Citizens Food Committee, had come up with everyday ways for conserving 100 million bushels of grain for redistribution to a war-ravaged Europe. Reducing consumption of meat and eggs was the most efficient way to achieve this goal.

Right now, it’s kind of mind-boggling to consider a president leading people across the country in voluntary food rationing so that “foreigners” could eat better. Consider a typical dinner order for another president (as reported by two top staff members): two “Big Macs, two Fillet-O-Fish and a chocolate malted.” (“Let Trump Be Trump: The Inside Story of His Rise to the Presidency”)

In the above-mentioned novel, Elizabeth George offers advice worth thinking about: “When you’re lost, you may as well head somewhere.”

**Monday Munch**  
**Nov. 18, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Shepherd’s pie, roasted glazed carrots, garlic bread and brownies.

**Monday Munch, Nov. 25**  
**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

White bean and ground turkey soup, green salad and pumpkin pie.

- Note:
- Lost or not, head on over to Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center on Ferry Road.
  - Take a child you care about over to the Little Free Library for Kids at the Grange, 2858 Spear Street. That child is sure to find a good book there.
  - My recent book, “Trump, Trump, Trump: The Swan Song,” contains info on Joe Biden’s tradition of volunteering at the Philadelphia Foodbank and items sold at trumpstore.com, including \$18 for a 12-ounce bag of coffee and a \$16 bag of jelly beans.

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

PRESORTED STANDARD