

## Spear Street to close again, just three days

Brett Yates  
Contributor

Only a month after the long-awaited reopening of Spear Street, it will become impassable again for three days next week.

From May 5 to May 7, a pair of contractors will finish the thoroughfare's months-long reconstruction by repaving the stretch between Lime Kiln Road and Carpenter Road, which last summer's heavy rains washed away at Mud Hollow Brook. Since April 6, drivers have traveled over dirt.

The Federal Highway Administration's window for reimbursement for the emergency repair has closed. Charlotte will foot the bill for the \$37,000 paving job, plus another \$4,000 to \$6,000 for cleanup at the work site, using its highway budget, according to town administrator Nate Bareham.

"The good news is we did receive that check for well over \$900,000, reimbursing us for the vast majority of the work," selectboard chair Lee Krohn said.

### Rec commission grows

On April 28, the selectboard approved a resolution that added an extra seat to the town's trails committee, which previously had nine members. Six residents had submitted applications for five open spots.

"Surplus is good because it's a lot of physical labor from time to time, and some of us have some injuries, and none of us are super young," committee member Elisa Fante said. "So, the more people want to shovel gravel, the better."

Frank Tenney dissented in a 4-1 vote, citing a preference for "a steady size."

Each spring, the selectboard makes appointments to the town's 10 volunteer bodies. Two newcomers, Josh Bagnato and Thomas Hengelsberg, joined the recreation committee.

### Old Lantern Inn well agreement

Negotiations over the shared private use of a town-owned well represented a final hurdle for the anticipated sale of commercial property, according to Lisa Gaujac, co-owner of the Old Lantern Inn & Barn. The selectboard signed the agreement on Monday.

Abutting commercial and residential landowners on Greenbush Road have long relied on the same well, which came under municipal ownership in 2000, for their supply of water. More recently, Gaujac and her husband subdivided their property, with the intention of selling its barn, a wedding venue, to a group of investors led by the operator of the Burlington-based food truck Farmers & Foragers. The Gaujacs will continue to operate their adjacent bed-and-breakfast.

The subdivision required the drafting of a new four-way agreement. The Gaujacs will cover the full cost of the well's operations for the first year, after which the three private landowners will divide its expenses in proportion to their water use, remitting payments to the town.

**SPEAR ST.** continued on page 3

## Trip to Montpelier highlighting town's energy conservation work

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Charlotte's town garage continues to be an example to the rest of the state of energy efficiency, and on April 17 Deidre Holmes, chair of the Charlotte Energy Committee, went to Montpelier to tout how the new building exemplifies what communities can do to save both energy and money.

Holmes' testimony was as part of the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network lobby day.

The group from Charlotte spoke with the energy committees from both the House and Senate. They were also invited to a meeting with Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski, as well as the Climate Solutions Caucus.

"It was a full day," Holmes said.

The town garage is still drawing notice for both its solar panels and geothermal energy and how it was funded. At an October meeting, state and municipal officials and representatives from the Vermont Bond Bank celebrated the news that funding for the solar panels was a pilot project for financing these kinds of projects.

Among energy efficiencies of Charlotte's garage drawing notice is that less than 25 percent of the energy solar panels are used by the garage. More than 75 percent of energy generated by the panels is used by other town buildings. Twenty percent of the electric power produced goes to town hall, 25 percent to the library, 20 percent to the senior center and 35 percent to the Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue building.

Wolfger Schneider of the Charlotte Energy Committee said that between Earth Day in 2024 and in 2025 the rooftop solar panels on the garage



Photo by Johanna Miller  
Deidre Holmes testifies as part of Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network Lobby Day at the Statehouse.

**"If you've got the roof space for solar panels, and you have a need for electricity, nowadays it pays to put solar panels on there."**

— Wolfger Schneider

had generated 123,000 kWh (kilowatt-hours) of electricity. This is actually 93 percent of the estimated power the panels would produce during that period. It was less this year because the solar panels were covered with snow during February.

Still, Schneider figures the 123,000 kWh produced would be enough electricity for him to drive his Leaf electric vehicle for 492,000 miles in a year "or almost 20 times around the Earth, something impossible at 500 miles a day, even if there were a perfect road around the equator."

**ENERGY** continued on page 3

## Three changes to The Charlotte News board of directors

Bill Regan  
Contributor

The Charlotte News Board of Directors voted on April 17 to elevate Andrew Zehner to the chair position. Although Zehner joined the board only last year, his longtime connections to this area, starting as a student at Middlebury College in the 1980s and work as an attorney and instructor for the University of Vermont, position him well to lead the organization.

He has been an enthusiastic organizer and leader in his communities over the years, including serving as president of his kids' youth soccer league and

a board member for science and technology-focused nonprofits. During the warmer months, Zehner often can be found riding his bike on Charlotte roads with friends. He is a veteran of the Kelly Brush Foundation annual ride, cycling 100 miles from Middlebury to Charlotte and back to raise money for adaptive sports.

The board of directors also welcomed Damaris Herlihy. She has made her career in college textbook publishing and has been deeply engaged in Charlotte civic life, including as co-head of the Charlotte Central School's Parent



Andrew Zehner



Bill Regan



Damaris Herlihy

Teacher Organization and as an effective advocate for safer streets in town.

She loves The Charlotte News and values the importance of independent, community-based media, especially during this era of political polarization and struggling news outlets across the country. Herlihy brings great energy and

organizational skills to the board. Her work creating digital content for learners will serve the paper well as a member of the board's digital committee.

These wonderful changes come as Bill Regan resigned from the board. He and his spouse, Nina, have made the difficult but ultimately happy decision to move from Charlotte to the Seattle area to join their children and grandchildren there. They never expected to leave Vermont and will deeply miss the friends, community, work, play and natural spaces they

have enjoyed in Charlotte and across the state.

Regan joined the board in January 2022, headed the effort to develop the paper's current strategic plan, chaired the business development committee and became board chair in July 2024. He feels that the paper, and the town in general, are in a stronger position than when he arrived, reflecting the hard work, dedication and generosity of the many residents who have stepped up to serve a cause larger than themselves and to prepare an already-special paper and community for the inevitable changes and challenges that await.

# CVU heads to national scholars' bowl contest

## Redhawks take second state title in a row to win trip to Atlanta

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

A Champlain Valley Union High team that doesn't get as much recognition as other school teams will be celebrating the Memorial Day weekend in Atlanta vying for a national championship.

CVU won the state high school academic championship at the end of March in the Vermont-National Education Association Scholars' Bowl, defeating South Burlington 420-265. This was the Redhawks' second straight state championship.

The Redhawks have been to the national championship five times in the last six years. Coach John Bennett said his teams have made it to the national playoffs in four of those years. With hundreds of teams from around the United States, making it to the cut that winnows the field down to 96 teams is remarkable.

There are so many teams competing because some schools bring more than one team. "Some places bring three or four teams, especially ones that are local to the area. There's actually a lot of good teams in the Atlanta area," said coach John Bennett. So, he expects to see a lot of competition from the Peach State and elsewhere.

It is "pretty awesome to be the team that comes from Vermont," he said.

Last year, Bennett was more confident that his team would take the state title. That team went undefeated (47-0), and in those wins, never really had a close game.

This year was a rebuilding year with three of the four starters on the A team graduating. After his team beat a team from



Photo by Kevin Commo

From left, the Champlain Valley Union state championship scholars' bowl team includes assistant coach Kiran MacCormick, Grace Warrington, Zoe Mui, Charles Redmond, Jacob Graham (kneeling), Leah Rauch, Wylie Ricklefs and coach John Bennett.

Hanover, N.H., that plays in the Vermont league, he started to think that maybe a state title repeat was in their future.

The team from Hanover has beaten CVU three times before, but this time the Redhawks beat them twice.

"Once that happened, I realized, you know, we can win this," Bennett said. "They sort of hit their stride in January. They were playing great from that point on."

One of the hallmarks of CVU's team has been its speed in answering questions. The team uses a "pyramid style" to practice. This starts with a question or clue that is very vague or difficult. Each succeeding question is progressively less vague or easier, with the last clue very specific.

The Redhawks have become skilled at answering the questions quickly.

The other strategy for winning at scholars' bowl competition is trying to capitalize on your opponents' mistakes and answering when the other teams get a penalty for the wrong answer.

"We've been pretty good at that, too," Bennett said. "The final round is just one question after the other, rapid fire, and we're pretty good at that, too."

CVU's scholars' bowl team has taken advantage of the school's daily C3 block of time during the school day. The three Cs stand for connect, clubs and communities. The block of time in the middle of the day is about 30 minutes when students gather to access opportunities that exist to enrich the learning experience outside the classroom.

The coach said practices are designed to be as close as possible to what the actual games are like, so that the various quiz formats aren't new to them.

Bennett is a fan of CVU's C3 program which it started four years ago. "I don't think it's a coincidence that we won three championships in the four years of C3."

For all of the team, except for one senior,

this will be their first time going to the nationals, so Bennett expects it to be a very exciting experience for them, while it will be his last time. After 30 years of teaching, he is retiring at the end of this school year.

It's been quite a ride. In 1984, Bennett was on a team in his senior year at Rice that won the inaugural state competition and went to the nationals in Dallas.

He taught at Mount Anthony Union for six years where he started a team, before moving to CVU in 2001 and becoming its scholars' bowl coach.

In 2007, his Redhawks won the first of the school's four scholars' bowl state titles.

Leah Rauch was on the JV team last year, and she is excited to spend the Memorial Day weekend with her family in Atlanta for the competition this year.

"My whole family is all up in a tizzy about it," she said.

Winning the state title was also very exciting. Rauch was proud of several of her answers. For example, she knew that toxoplasmosis is a disease or infection cats can carry and that babies can catch.

In the three-letter animals section of the state competition, she knew that the answer to a Nepalese bison was yak.

The competition is very much like the TV game show Jeopardy!, so it probably helps that she comes from a family of Jeopardy! fans.

Over 30 National Academic Quiz Tournaments players or employees have participated on Jeopardy! Seventeen of them qualified for the show's Ultimate Tournament of Champions, including show host Ken Jennings.

It also probably helps that assistant coach Kiran MacCormick appeared on Jeopardy!

Other members of CVU's team that competed in the state title competition are Jacob Graham, Zoe Mui, Charles Redmond, Wylie Ricklefs and Grace Warrington.



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To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

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## Report from the Legislature

# Legislators have tough choices about education all around

Chea Waters Evans  
Representative



Another week, another change to the education bill.

When I last wrote about this, we had passed the education bill, H.474, out of the House and it went over to the Senate, where they have, as expected, made a bunch of changes.

One specific and big and interesting difference is the Senate's proposed membership of the subcommittee that will draw up the school board voting districts and maps. This subcommittee will function under the currently existing Committee on the Future of Public Education; the House proposal suggested that experts from various interested groups make up the subcommittee and the Senate proposal makes it all legislators.

I'm not loyal to the House proposal simply because I'm a member of the House — I'm loyal to it because I think involving community members, principals, superintendents and experts in the map-creating process is essential. There are superintendents and principals who are probably going to put themselves out of a job by redrawing the maps in an equitable way, and yet they are supportive and understanding of this process.

I'm concerned about legislators being the only people in charge of this process. (With all due respect, of course.) These districts, however many there end up being, will have elected school boards, which means they will inevitably be political. The education reform legislation is already political; there are legislators who are fully supporting or not supporting aspects of H.474 because they represent districts that benefit from public money for private schools. I totally get it. They can't vote against what their communities want, even if it were theoretically for the better good of Vermont's children, because they will lose their jobs when it's time for reelection.

It's fine if this is the reality of the situation, but I think having people who are unbiased politically and not compelled to operate through the lens of their own personal success is a better choice for Vermonters. If the Senate proposal for composition of this committee is in the final draft, I don't know if I can support it. I'm not confident that this committee, no matter how knowledgeable and experienced in matters of education legislation, will still have the expertise and clear-eyed view of school district-creation that we really need.

The General Assembly usually adjourns in mid-May, but this year we're going to go until the end of the month. The education

bill is the main reason; another is the budget, which is the last bill we pass out of the House at the end of the session, and which is being currently constructed as a glorious home on the top of a pile of quicksand.

We don't know what's going to happen to a lot of our federal funding. This is funding we rely on to support people with disabilities, feeding people through Meals on Wheels or SNAP, education funding for students with specials needs and all kinds of other programs. If we need to make up for sudden future holes in our budget, we're going to have to make some difficult choices as legislators and as Vermonters.

Like, look at the education funding example. Students testified in the Senate last week that they hadn't been consulted on any of this, and they don't want school consolidation. Well, as adults, we asked for it. We voted down our Champlain Valley School District budget last year because of property taxes, so we had to make cuts. As a state, people were dissatisfied with their taxes and demanded a change to education funding. And now we're doing it, and with that action, comes consequences. We might end up in a district with 20,000 other students. We might end up with a lot fewer teachers and much bigger class sizes, but again, this is what we asked for.

It's concerning to look at our state funding as an extension of this point of view. What are we going to do if we lose a lot of federal money? Who is going to lose their funding? Which groups of people are going to suffer the least with less money? I don't even know how to begin to make those decisions, but I know it's entirely possible that I'm going to have to.

And when I make those "I" statements, please know it's more like a "we." I'm making these decisions based on what you all tell me and based on what I think you all would want me to do. It helps if you let me know. I can be reached at [cevans@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:cevans@leg.state.vt.us) or 917-887-8231.

## Lawmakers consider expanding unpaid time off for trauma or loss

Charlotte Oliver  
Community News Service

Early last month, legislators sat around their committee table and shared stories of loss. Rep. Mary Howard, D-Rutland, said she would wipe tears from her eyes on her morning drive to work after the death of her husband.

Other lawmakers joined in — and no one was off topic.

They were discussing a bill, H. 461, which could widen the circumstances under which employees can take unpaid time off. It would also expand the definition of family under state time-off laws, changing language to include more non-traditional family structures.

The bill would guarantee employees in Vermont can take two weeks of unpaid time off from work after the death of a family member. It also introduces what's often called safe leave, or 12 weeks of unpaid time off from work if they or a family member are experiencing domestic or sexual violence. In both cases, the bill applies only to employers with 10 or more workers.

The changes would let people enduring domestic or sexual violence to "attend to their most urgent needs," said Anne Ward, executive director for Mosaic Vermont, which supports survivors of sexual violence in Washington County.

Ward explained that taking safe leave could make someone more likely to file a protective order or seek medical services.

"A bill like this gives you the opportunity to reach out for help, contact an advocate, let somebody know that this is happening," she

said, an opportunity that often comes only in the workday.

The bill was assigned to a Senate committee on March 26 after clearing the House.

Ward said the bill would also allow parents or guardians to take off work to help their child in cases of sexual abuse. It would cause more harm if a child's caregiver was put out of a job while trying to support them or trying to get help themselves, she said, especially since many people she works with live paycheck to paycheck.

They're going to use "the minimal amount of time necessary," she said.

Legislators in the House Committee on General and Housing seemed to agree on the near-equal importance of taking leave after the death of a family member. The bill would let Vermonters take two weeks of unpaid leave from work within a year of the death of a family member.

The issue is personal to Rep. Emilie Krasnow, D-South Burlington, the bill's lead sponsor. It's one of the reasons she ran for office, said the representative who grew up in Charlotte.

"I was a caretaker for my mother for many years before she passed away" two years ago, said Krasnow. The lawmaker's father died when she was a child, and she remembers her mother taking a leave from work because of it.

The goal is for employees to take leave without risking or losing their jobs, Krasnow said. People dealing with loss "should be able to have the right to come back to work and

**UNPAID TIME OFF** continued on page 5

## ENERGY

Continued from page 1

Schneider said he has solar panels on his home and he is producing more electricity than he can use. There are other costs associated with solar panels, like the cost of installing them, and the panels themselves are expensive, although they are steadily getting cheaper.

Still, he said, you can expect to break even in five to 10 years.

He installed his panels in 2011. For seven years he didn't have any electricity costs. He didn't have to start paying for electricity until he got his Leaf. Still that only comes to about \$30 a month, a good bit less than gas would cost.

"If you've got the roof space for solar

panels, and you have a need for electricity, nowadays it pays to put solar panels on there," he said.

But orientation is important. The town garage roof is not oriented optimally. It runs east to west, and it would work better if it ran north-south, and there is a mountain to the east that sort of shades the panels in the morning.

"But it still produces probably 60 to 70 percent of what it could if it were located optimally," Schneider said.

Holmes said the theme of the energy lobby day was thanking legislators for passing the Global Warming Solutions Act ([vnrc.org/global-warming-solutions-act](http://vnrc.org/global-warming-solutions-act)) and connecting to ensure that what is happening in Montpelier is consistent with what is happening at the local level and vice versa.

## SPEAR ST.

Continued from page 1

After a lengthy negotiation, the parties still haven't necessarily ironed out all the details. The selectboard's approval permitted subsequent "non-material amendments" to the language of the document, moving it forward to avoid delaying the upcoming property transfer.

"It's been a long two years," Gaujac said. "We close on May 15. We can't close without the water agreement."

## Zoning administrator wanted

Charlotte's zoning administrator, Aaron Brown, has submitted a letter of resignation, effective June 20.

"Sorry to see Aaron go," selectboard member JD Herlihy said. "He was a great zoning administrator while he was here."

Alongside selectboard members Frank Tenney and Lee Krohn and town administrator Nate Bareham, one member of the development review board and one member of the planning commission will sit on the hiring panel tasked with replacing Brown.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Speaking up: From cult recovery to political clarity

To the Editor:

It happens every year. On a fine spring morning walk, I find myself surprised, even shocked, to see where the sun rises. This, despite the fact that my daily walks offer ample consistency to track this detail, year after year, along the same familiar trails.

Blame it on my lack of attention. Blame it on my poor memory, my inability to recall the sun's annual pilgrimage. Blame it on Vermont's cloudy days. This solar surprise often occurs after a few, or many, overcast mornings when I've lost track of where along the horizon it should appear. Something about the swing to the north-northeast always boggles me.

I'm often unsure what coat to wear for my morning escapades, as spring temperatures fluctuate wildly.

I gasped when I saw the pond iced over, again. Just the day before, most of the ice had melted.

It was a familiar gasp. I had just done it the evening before, reading the news.

Standing in my shin-length down coat, gazing at the re-frozen pond, I take a long, slow, deep inhale. I linger for several minutes, digesting my gasps and wondering about a gentler way to be.

None of these experiences are truly surprising.

I remind myself of the steady, precise

and predictable path the sun traces every year.

I remind myself of our son's birthday 25 years ago in late April, when my husband and I paddled our canoe through a thin layer of ice on a bright, blue-sky day, just hours before his birth.

I remind myself of the consistent, tried-and-true tactics wielded by every narcissistic, cultic, coercive leader alive: moving goalposts, bait-and-switch strategies and loaded language — three tactics I recognized in that news story about tariffs the night before.

I remind myself that I've been subjected to those same tactics of control. I recognize the patterns. I was trapped by them in the past, but I don't want them messing with my life today.

So, what's the surprise, when there is no surprise?

Granted, the sudden switch to a totalitarian-led government after 250 years of (imperfect) democracy is not easy to get used to. But here we are.

As I stood looking out across the newly re-frozen pond, I realized how activated my nervous system has become, how my gasps of surprise are expressions of existential anxiety and anger. It was humbling and clarifying to realize that I've been letting world news push me into low-grade survival mode.

But that's not how I want to live. I've been there, done that. For nearly 11 post-

cult years, I've been recovering from the pressure-pot of indoctrination, supporting my body, mind and psyche to heal.

Today, I will do my damndest not to let a cultic president's predictable bullying tactics get the better of me. Because I know better now. It's devastating to watch world leaders kowtow to his false power. (May they learn from Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney how best to respond to a narcissistic bully.)

And may I learn from what I've learned before:

- Pause before consuming national news. Know it may sound shocking, but know that it's predictable.
- Prioritize daily practices of self-care.
- Focus my energy where it matters most and where I can maintain the most agency.
- Befriend my nervous system.
- Be attentive to the joy and beauty all around me.
- Actively cultivate relationships that support my well-being.
- And write — for me, and for you. If you've made it this far, I thank you.

However noisy things get in the coming years, we won't alter the path of the sun. I aim to pay better attention to its steady arc, take delight in it and keep my emotional reactions in check. We have a few more solar cycles to strengthen our capacity to weather what's ahead. Dress wisely.

Gerette Buglion  
Hyde Park

*(Gerette Buglion of Hyde Park is an author and educator whose work centers on liberation from coercive control and supporting survivors of cultic abuse. She draws on both lived experience and years of advocacy and education to do this work.)*

## I love Vermont for its mountains and commitment to child care

To the Editor:

As an athlete and advocate for the outdoors, I was attracted to Vermont's incredible mountains, its stewardship of natural resources, its quirky downtowns with local bookstores and cafes, and rural landscapes with farmstands and fresh zucchini ... lots and lots of zucchini. But the primary reason for choosing to settle my family in the Green Mountain State was because of its values, including its commitment to progress on child care.

Vermont is full of hardy folk who take action for the benefit of their community. Because of the hard work of over 40,000 Vermonters, our state has become a national leader on child care. Act 76 — the 2023 law that provides desperately needed, long-term funding for accessible and affordable child care — has emerged as one of the most transformative actions on child care at the state level.

Access to affordable child care is something that concerns all Vermonters, even those who do not have children. My son is already a junior in college, and neither of us would be where we are today without having had access to affordable, quality child care.

I taught in day and boarding schools for 18 years, working within 24/7 schedules. I often had to be at school very early and tended to students in the dorm until fairly late at night, all while attending graduate

school and teaching privately on the weekends. Access to quality child care and a trusted professional educator who cared for and loved my son allowed me to focus on taking care of my family and my career.

Miss Barbara, who ran a child care program in her home, had a background in early childhood education and used several different curricula to teach the children in her program. My son loved going to Miss Barbara's; he enjoyed playing and learning with the other children, the guided walks outside, and her delicious homemade food. Meanwhile, with her care and teachings, his language and communication improved vastly, as did his social skills and physical development.

Early childhood educators are professionals with specialized knowledge and training. The only way to bolster a diverse, well-prepared, and well-supported early-childhood-educator workforce is with professional compensation and respect for the essential work they do to help care for and educate our children.

And there are many Vermont families with young children who would and could benefit from more robust child-care options. Access to affordable and professional child care empowers parents to participate in the economy. It allows them to be fully present in their workplaces. And, when we are less worried and anxious about where our children will be during the day, we have more time to dream, to create businesses that contribute to the economy and livelihood of our state. Our children experience the benefits of having parents and caregivers who have the time and freedom to work.

When we invest in common-sense solutions that support families and our economy, we keep people and businesses in our Green Mountain State. Public investment in child care does just that.

The 2025 legislative session has big implications for child care. As lawmakers in Montpelier make critical state funding decisions, they need to hear from us that child care is an absolute priority for Vermonters. Our state representatives and senators have an opportunity to build on a solution that's working. Doing so would increase access and lower costs for child care while supporting our workforce and preparing our youngest children for school.

I love our state. I love that my job lets me experience so much of it and share it with others. Neither my son nor I would be where we are today without the luck we had in accessing quality early education. So, let's build a Vermont where it's not just about luck but, instead, about our values and creating a community where we can all thrive, and that all starts with access to quality, affordable child care. Join me in taking action with Vermont's Child Care Campaign: [letsgrowkidsactionnetwork.org/action-center](https://letsgrowkidsactionnetwork.org/action-center).

Mirna Valerio  
Winooski

*(Mirna Valerio is a Vermont-based professional athlete, advocate and educator.)*

## Editorial

# Echoes of past usurpations resound in current policies

The history of the current president is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his assent to laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his governors to pass laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of representation in the legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable and distant from the depository of their public records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved representative houses repeatedly for opposing with manly firmness

his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the legislative powers, incapable of annihilation, have returned to the people at large for their exercise; the state remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without and convulsions within.

He has endeavored to prevent the population of these states; for that purpose obstructing the laws for naturalization of foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither and raising the conditions of new appropriations of lands.

He has obstructed the administration of justice by refusing his assent to laws for establishing judiciary powers.

He has made judges dependent on his will alone for the tenure of their offices and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of new offices and sent hither swarms of officers to harass our people and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, standing armies without the consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the military

independent of and superior to the civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our Constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws, giving his assent to their acts of pretended legislation:

- For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us,
  - For protecting them, by a mock trial, from punishment for any murders which they should commit on the inhabitants of these states,
  - For cutting off our trade with all parts of the world,
  - For imposing taxes on us without our consent,
  - For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of trial by jury,
  - For transporting us beyond seas to be tried for pretended offences,
  - For abolishing the free system of English laws in a neighboring province, establishing therein an arbitrary government and enlarging its boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these colonies,
  - For taking away our charters, abolishing our most valuable laws and altering fundamentally the forms of our governments,
  - For suspending our own legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
- He has abdicated government here by

declaring us out of his protection and waging war against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages and totally unworthy the head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow citizens taken captive on the high seas to bear arms against their country to become the executioners of their friends and brethren or to fall themselves by their hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us.

In every stage of these oppressions, we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms. Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A president, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

*(This excerpt of a historical document that you may recognize as a portion of the Declaration of Independence has been edited to conform to current spelling and grammar rules; a passage offensive to Indigenous people has been deleted; and the word "king" has been replaced with "president.")*

## Beaver benefits



Photo by Sharon Mount

On Saturday, April 19, a large crowd came to the library to hear Bob Hyams, owner of Riverscape Ecology, talk about the good beavers do. Afterward, some went on a walk to Geprags Community Park in Hinesburg where Peter Demick pointed out evidence of the creatures' handiwork.

## UNPAID TIME OFF

Continued from page 3

take that time," Krasnow said.

In house committee meetings throughout the second week of March, lawmakers considered the potential strain on small businesses.

A business would have to have at least 10 employees to be affected by the bill. Lawmakers seemed to concede that those businesses are large enough to bear the burden of employee leave. Multiple legislators suggested that employees don't do their best work when dealing with trauma or loss.

In March meetings, House lawmakers also seemed to agree on expanding the legal definition of family, regarding leave from work, to include a much broader array of relationships.

The bill would let employees take leave

from work for a partner who isn't a spouse, or for a child who isn't biologically or legally theirs, as long as they have parent-like responsibilities. The expansions are especially meant to protect LGBTQ+ people, who are more likely to accept less common family arrangements.

Everyone should have the same time-off benefits "regardless of who they are and who they love and who their family is," said Krasnow.

Johanna de Graffenreid, the public policy manager for Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, told lawmakers the bill would level the playing field. She pointed out that neighboring states like Maine and New York define family more broadly under the law.

"We would be catching up," de Graffenreid said.

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

## PROPERTY TRANSFERS Jan. - March 2025

### January

**Jan. 16** Stetson Living Trust to Douglas G. & Arlene C. Van Gosel, 2580 Greenbush Rd. 6.1 acres with dwelling \$1,786,000

**Jan. 24** Brovar Development Co. Inc. to Shawn Paul & Ari Jo Dumont 1142 Prindle Road. 40+/- acres with dwelling \$978,325

**Jan. 30** Karen Martinsen Fleming Trustee of Karen Martinsen Fleming Living Trust to Geoffrey S. Brown & Mark J. Martins 210 Fields Farms Road. .70 acres \$1,100,000

### February

**Feb. 14** David & Diane Nichols to Green Mtn. Hay LLC 3218 Spear Street 45.79 acres \$1,142,000 with farm buildings and dwelling.

**Feb. 19** William J. & Louise A. Gregorek to Brian Johnson & Jessica Menard Lot #2 351 Swamp St. 8.5 acres \$550,000 with dwelling

### March

**March 6** Moira E. Dwyer to Jared E. & Amalia Langlinais 1354 Roscoe Road. 7.5 +/- acres with dwelling \$252,594.63

**March 6** Jared & Amalia Langlinais to Anne & Roger Lambert and James Davis & Emma Lambert 1354 Roscoe Road. 7.5 acres \$844,950.00 with dwelling

**March 12** Todd C & Lisa P. LaChapelle to Erick & Faith Gong Treas. Gong Family Trust 5 Elcy Lane 2.18 acres \$885,000 with dwelling

**March 12** Ahmad & Letitia Tayeby to Paul & Laura Slermetta 47 Vineyard View 1.52 acres \$1,549,000 with dwelling

**March 18** Charles Thomas III & Daniel Tempest to Timothy S. Abraham & Kate Q. Piniewski 487 Guinea Road. 5.01 acres \$750,000 with dwelling

**March 28** FR- IV Properties LLC to Rodney Lowe & Sarah Russell, Michael T. & Margaret C 730 North Shore Road. seasonal cottage \$575,638.05

**March 28** FR-IV Properties LLC to Rodney Lowe & Sarah Russell, Michael T. & Margaret C. Russell, 736 North Shore Road. seasonal cottage \$251,366.95

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



## Commentary

# Proposal 5 isn't reproductive-care cure-all

Abigail Sweet  
Contributor

In November of 2022, Vermonters overwhelmingly voted in favor of Proposal 5, the Reproductive Liberty Amendment, which enshrined abortion rights into the state's constitution, making history as the first U.S. state to recognize reproductive autonomy as a fundamental right for all.

Despite the popularity of the amendment, barriers to accessing reproductive care are still a reality for many Vermonters, over two years later.

"Right now, one of our biggest barriers to accessibility in the state is the funding deficit that Planned Parenthood is experiencing," explains Jessica Barquist, vice president of public affairs for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England.

The approximately \$8.6 million deficit is driven by COVID-19, inflation, insufficient reimbursement rates and an increased demand for Planned Parenthood of Northern New England's free and discounted care, said the organization's CEO, Nicole Clegg at a press conference earlier this year.

Working to create financial stability for Vermonters is a top priority for Planned Parenthood, Barquist said, since the organization is credited with serving nearly 16,000 patients per year, 54 percent of which are low income and have trouble accessing care.

The beginning of the Trump administration poses further threats to programs that serve low-income Vermonters. Despite the slew of executive orders that could potentially impact care, Barquist said that the important thing is that there is no impact to services.

For those who need extra reassurance, Barquist said that part of the intent of these executive orders is to scare folks into stop providing care and for people to stop getting the care they need. "The biggest thing that we are doing is reassuring folks that we are not going to stop providing care, that we're here for everyone who needs it and that they can keep coming in and getting exactly what they need."

Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is working to create financial stability through increased Medicaid wreaths, financial investments by the state and the creation of what's called the Safe Harbor Fund, a collaboration with the state treasurer's office to help folks with collateral costs related to reproductive or gender-affirming care.

State treasurer, Mike Pieciak, said that the Safe Harbor Fund has the potential to help Vermonters cover costs related to child care, travel and lodging, eliminating many of the barriers which prevent Vermonters from accessing reproductive care in the first place.

Barriers to accessibility is no news to those living in rural areas. In 2017, 64 percent of Vermont counties were without any abortion clinics, and 38 percent of Vermonters lived in those counties.

Telehealth offers some relief to patients living farthest from one of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England's seven clinics across the state, with over 25 percent of the 16,000 patients seen last year utilizing the online service.

A soon-to-be-proposed bill is seeking to "expand the ability of telehealth, and allow for asynchronous care for abortion services," said Barquist, further combating rural barriers to reproductive care.

Additionally, the bill hopes to update shield protections for providers, "including removing the provider name from prescription bottles related to abortion and gender-affirming care," Barquist noted.

These updated shield laws come at a time of unrest regarding the safety of abortion providers, with New York's Dr. Margaret Carpenter facing felony charges for allegedly prescribing abortion pills to a pregnant minor in Louisiana (<https://tinyurl.com/mr286nd7>). This case is the first of its kind.

Although politicians and organizations such as Planned Parenthood of Northern New England are working to make reproductive care more accessible in Vermont, the constitutional protection does not give Vermonters a reason to disengage with the conversation.

When asked how her role at Planned Parenthood has changed since the enshrinement of reproductive rights in Vermont's constitution, Barquist explained that "day-to-day things aren't that much different."

Unfortunately, this isn't good news.

"One of our biggest hurdles is trying to make sure that folks understand that just because it's enshrined in our Constitution, doesn't mean that we're 100 percent safe in Vermont. Federal directives, executive orders or acts of Congress could still take away these rights," Barquist said.

She urges "average Vermonters" to stay engaged and understanding of these issues. So, how exactly do Vermonters stay engaged?

"The biggest thing for folks to do," said Barquist, "is work with their healthcare provider to ensure that they have the care that they need."

She also urges Vermonters to get involved again on social media, stating that "it was a huge organizing effort to get to Prop. 5, and that has definitely fallen off since it was passed."

Following groups such as the Vermont Action Fund, Vermont Access and the ACLU of Vermont on social media and donating to their campaigns helps low-income Vermonters access abortion services, which can range anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000 (<https://tinyurl.com/3jay6xuk>), depending on the type of abortion and how far along one is into their pregnancy.

Signing up for email lists is essential as well. "We are going to send out action alerts whenever something is coming up that we need to fight against, and we need more folks in the fight with us," Barquist said.

Recent news regarding reproductive care in the state, such as the permanent closure of the St. Johnsbury Planned Parenthood in June, and the proposed closing of Lamoille County's Copley Hospital Birthing Center, further threatens access to care for many across the state. Being alerted to changes in reproductive access in Vermont, such as proactive protocols in place at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England (<https://tinyurl.com/23ded4vy>), will keep Vermonters informed and ready to fight.

A February 18 email from that organization said that reproductive care is essential for Vermonters, "and it is essential that we do everything we can to protect access to it." In regards to threats from the Trump administration, Barquist encourages Vermonters to find the balance between being aware and not being afraid, in order to fight back in the moments when it's most needed.

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# Commentary

## Where have the once vibrant Vermont towns gone?

Bill Schubart  
Contributor

What are the cohesive elements in Vermont's 247 towns and cities? What sustains their human connection, commerce and community?

Though born in New York City, I grew up in Morrisville from the age of 3. It was a small bustling town. On weekends, the daytime streets were filled with shoppers and timely gossip. Our two movie theaters flourished as they projected the latest Hollywood oater, romance or comedy. We had three locally owned pharmacies, each with an ice cream fountain and a choice of counter stools or booths. We had three dry goods stores — Gillen's, Morrill's "Wrong End Store," and Ben Franklin. I will spare you a list of all the small local shops which carried everything anyone rich or poor might need or want.

My brother and I visited my sister in Morrisville yesterday for our quarterly "sibling lunch." Morrisville's downtown is a different landscape today, almost no people and hardly a trace of its former retail commerce.

On a recent trek to Quebec for a cheese hunt, my wife and I drove up through the Kingdom ... even gloomier — boarded-up storefronts, one gas station and convenience store selling fossil fuel, liquor, tobacco, THC vapes, candy, soda, lottery tickets, ultra-processed food and online sports gambling offers. Don't look for a cabbage or an acorn squash.

This dismal trek through what I remembered as vibrant small towns had me thinking about what makes for a connected and healthy community.

My first thought was that it's the gathering places such as churches, libraries, schools, cafes and soda fountains, town parks and social clubs like the 4H and the Grange. Morrisville ladies had the "Uplift Club," the name of which was a source of bawdy speculation among us kids.

In our four white churches, people came together to pray, sing, eat and talk with one another about, among other things, who needed sympathy or material support. Religious fervor ranged from Bible-thumping theism to open doors for all seeking spiritual growth or solace, but in all cases, people came together to help one another.

I left the Catholic Church in which I was raised when I was 18, but have since had a "second coming" and occasionally accompany my wife to the wonderful United Church of Hinesburg that welcomes all comers, offers time for reflection, avoids judgment of others and even acknowledges human religious doubts. The only two requisites are a desire to connect and to find ways to help others. Several townsfolk come simply to sing together. The spiritual

power of music is evident. On Palm Sunday a guest cellist joined the church keyboardist in a performance of Arvo Part's Spiegel im Spiegel, which left the attendees transfixed.

Some of my other strongest memories are of events: band concerts, parades and fall and spring dances at our volunteer fire department.

When Morrisville's annual 4th of July parade wound its way through town, we saw the full breadth of our community. Seeing 4H young people leading the animals they'd raised and cared for from birth always drew a standing ovation from those sitting on front porches and lining the parade route in lawn chairs.

I'll never forget the 10-year-old girl with her right arm outstretched, her hand holding the nose-ring of an 1800-pound ox she'd raised from birth as she beamed with pride.

The other major element that drew us together were our schools — our small kindergartens and nursery schools, the old wood-framed primary school in the center of town, the middle school up the hill, and next to it, Peoples Academy, the high school.

Having local schools brought us together. Parents living within a mile of the school whose children didn't ride on buses often walked with their kids to school. Parents were welcomed to visit and observe and often helped out in the classroom or joined the PTA. Sports events drew us all together to cheer on our children as they vied on the playing fields or in winter on the hardwood gym floor. Bleachers filled with extended families cheered on their young.

As Vermont, like other states, feels the accelerating pressures of so-called progress, we must work to protect the families and communities that nurture our very humanity.

The "social determinants of health" are the conditions grounded in the places where we are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that nurture our well-being, mental and spiritual.

It's vital that our state and community leaders stay focused on these critical elements of social and economic well-being but, frankly, we're not doing very well.

Per capita homelessness in Vermont is among the worst in the nation with 53 out of every 10,000.

One in nine Vermonters experience hunger and one in seven Vermont children do.

Vermont has the most expensive healthcare insurance in the United States with a silver plan costing \$1157 a month.

Vermont has some of the highest rates of substance use in the country, including higher drinking rates, higher cannabis-use rates and among the highest heroin-use rates for people aged 18-25. Approximately 13.73 percent of Vermont residents reported past-month use of illicit drugs; the national average was 8.82 percent.

Eighteen percent of Vermont households live in poverty including one in eight

children — and one in four Black children.

Vermonters spent \$140 million placing some seven million bets in online sports betting last year and a significant number of Vermont gamblers struggle with gambling addiction.

By way of good news, Vermont has the seventh highest high school graduation rate in the country. The flip side of this is that only 31 percent of Vermont graduates are proficient in reading skills.

What has happened? We love to brag about how "progressive" we are as a state and natter on about the Vermont "quality of life." But there has always been a cognitive dissonance between the colorful farms and pastures

depicted for newcomers and tourists in Vermont Life magazine and how deeply it belied the struggles of actually working a small Vermont hill farm.

Life here can be good indeed for those of us who can afford it, but for many Vermonters, life is hard. Even as countless Vermonters work and volunteer their time

### Social Determinants of Health



Social Determinants of Health  
Healthy People 2030

and resources to support their neighbors, we can and must do better as a state to ensure the common good. How can we rebuild our once vibrant communities? Where are our leaders? We must all start by facing the realities of life today, which means telling the truth.

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# Sugaring is a labor of love for Pat and Aline LeClaire

Phyl Newbeck  
Contributor

Pat LeClaire may not have maple syrup coursing through his veins, but he's been sugaring for so long that it might as well be the case.

Pat was 7 or 8 years old when he first started collecting sap and boiling it at his family's home in Charlotte. In high school he returned to the craft with some friends, hanging close to 1,000 buckets in woods off Greenbush Road, but his career as a lineman for Green Mountain Power interrupted his sugaring.

Eleven years ago, Pat retired, and the lure of Vermont's liquid gold called him back. He and his wife Aline hung roughly 65 buckets near their house and along Lime Kiln Road and ran pipes to the rest of their sugar woods. They enjoy having neighborhood kids empty the buckets into a tailgate tank as they drive down the road, an enjoyment that is definitely reciprocated.

Maple Open House Weekend is a time when Vermont sugar makers open their doors to visitors, but the LeClaire's sugarhouse is always open to the public and Aline said Pat enjoys explaining the sugaring process as much as he enjoys the product. Sometimes a friend brings homemade donuts for visitors to dunk in the hot syrup.

"I've had days when I was discouraged," Pat said, "but sugaring just helps you pick yourself up."

A nearby Airbnb houses tourists from around the world and the hosts direct those visitors to the sugarhouse. Pat recalls a German tourist who wanted to know when he injected the dye into the sap and was embarrassed when Pat explained that the color change is the result of caramelization. Pat quickly assured the man that there are no stupid questions and that it was great that he wanted to learn something new.

The couple readily admits that their sugarhouse is short on bells and whistles.

"We don't have music or do breakfasts," Aline said. "We're an old-fashioned Vermont sugarhouse."

She said visitors often use the word quaint to describe their operation. One couple from Washington State, who had been to a larger sugarhouse before visiting the LeClaires where they were thrilled to have the sugaring process explained to them.

"We're not packed with people," she said, "so there is time for us to really interact with visitors."

Pat and Aline have been married for 36 years. Born in Winooski, Aline was working as a wholesale florist when Pat's ex-wife, a floral shop owner who interacted with her professionally, decided



Photo by Matt Jennings

Pat and Aline LeClaire enjoy the view from inside and outside their sugarhouse.

to introduce the two, claiming that since they were the most boing people she knew, maybe they would get along. They've been together ever since.

This year, the LeClaires made 253 gallons of syrup which they consider a good year. Their best year, that total was a little over 500 gallons. Although sugaring with buckets is picturesque, the LeClaires are moving away from that time-honored tradition.

"At 70 I'm getting too old for buckets," Pat said.

"There were some trying times this season," Pat recalls. He noted that when the frost left the woods, the sap began to run hard, but the roots were sucking up sand. He said this year featured a lot of sap but not a lot of sugar. Because of that, some days it took close to 100 gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup. Normally that number is between 34 and 40. Pat said they only made 6 gallons of light fancy

syrup with the rest being dark, robust. For a day or two, the syrup had a slight taste of butterscotch.

The LeClaires are looking to make some changes to their sugarhouse. The addition of a steam pan has improved the process, but they are thinking about investing in reverse osmosis machinery. This year, they burned more than 7 cords of wood; interestingly the year they made 500 gallons, they needed less than 6 cords.

Pat enjoys being in the woods and while he savors the end product of his labor, he also relishes contact with visitors who come to the sugarhouse. Even in the middle of summer, he's more than willing to take the time to talk about his equipment and explain how to make Vermont's signature product.

"This is a labor of love," Pat said. "As long as we make enough to cover our expenses, we're happy."



## Government

# Demand for EV chargers remains high at mountain resorts

Owen Evans  
Community News Service

As the ski season comes to a close, something that continues to be on the minds of mountain resort operators is electric vehicle charging.

Since 2021, the number of electric vehicles registered in Vermont has more than doubled. The same can be said for Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey — where the highest number of out-of-state skiers in Vermont come from.

Many of Vermont's ski resorts already offer EV charging in their parking lots, including Killington Mountain Resort, which offers 47 chargers for guests, a total which leads the industry in the U.S.

But many resorts either have limited charging options or lack chargers entirely, detracting from the guest experience.

"I have power anxiety if the resort doesn't have chargers," said Joanna Whitcomb, a New Hampshire resident and frequent Vermont skier. "They're well maintained but generally in use. More chargers are needed."

Beyond charger availability, other issues have been felt.

"General courtesy from users, including staying at a charger when not necessarily needed, and not properly recharging the cord and plug" are some of the challenges at Sugarbush Resort, said Margo Wade, director of planning.

That can prove a problem in the winter,

she said, when loose cords can get caught by plow trucks and send a charger out of service for weeks.

"If the plug is not properly rehung and gets wet from snow or rain, it can short out the unit, which requires resort staff to dry and reset the unit," Wade added.

Molly Mahar, president of the Vermont Ski Areas Association, believes EV charging is something resorts will have to invest in if they haven't already — and that they need to continue to invest in what they already have.

"Ski area guests are early adopters of technology like EVs, and ski areas have seen more EV traffic and growing demand for charging infrastructure in recent years. It's important that ski areas provide charging infrastructure to accommodate how their guests travel and encourage use of clean transportation," Mahar said. "Transportation is a major source of Vermont's carbon emissions, and we want to support guests' use of EVs to travel to Vermont and to the ski areas."

Sugarbush, which currently offers 24 chargers divided among the Mt. Ellen and Lincoln Peak parking lots and the Claybrook Hotel garage, is looking to add to its existing infrastructure.

"We hope to expand our EV charger program at the resort in the future," said Wade. "Current limits to expansion include cost to upgrade-upsize electric service at specific locations and cost to purchase and install electric vehicle supply equipment."

Mahar said upgrades require investment from the state, too. "They have done a decent job with charging infrastructure. Another project was about to get underway to add more charging infrastructure using federal dollars, but this is now on hold due to cuts in federal spending," she said.

In February, the Trump administration paused access to more than \$16 million in federal funding sent to Vermont's Agency of Transportation through the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program.

Andrew Wright, environmental policy manager for the agency, said one station already operating in Bradford will continue receiving funds.

But in February, the agency suspended "four executed contracts and five awards" for additional charging installations, Wright said. The agency had directed funding to 11 charging station projects on the whole; the two contracted locations that were not suspended, in Randolph and Wilmington, will be paid for by state funds.

The sidelined contracts and awards — as well as future ones — depend on moves at the federal level, Wright said.

The ski industry is a significant part of Vermont's economy. In 2023, the federal Bureau of Economic Analysis found outdoor recreation created \$2.1 billion in value added for Vermont, accounting for 4.8 percent of Vermont's gross domestic product. The highest economic contributor to Vermont's outdoor sector was snow activities, including



Courtesy photo

The Trump administration paused access to more than \$16 million being sent to Vermont, but EV charging remains popular at resorts.

skiing and snowboarding, which contributed \$220 million to Vermont's GDP, up from \$170 million in 2022.

Across Vermont, there are over 490 charging stations with almost 1,300 total charging ports. A detailed map of every charger in the state can be found on the U.S. Department of Energy's website at <https://tinyurl.com/3td63c6a>.

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

# Vermont attorney general, Charlotte rep hold town meeting

Mike Yantachka  
Contributor

On Tuesday evening this week Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark spoke at the Charlotte town office at the invitation of Charlotte's state representative, Chea Waters Evans. Those in attendance included about 40 Charlotters in the room and another 18 on Zoom.

Clark spoke about her office's efforts to counteract what she called a deluge of unlawful and egregious executive orders of

the Trump administration. Her message was that Trump is in the process of consolidating power, and that he does not respect laws or the Constitution.

Vermont has joined 23 other attorneys general in filing lawsuits against executive orders, starting with Trump's attempt to overturn the 14th Amendment guaranteeing birthright citizenship. These lawsuits are working their way through the federal court system. Federal judges, both Democrat and Republican appointees, have been ruling against Trump at every step in the process so

far. "Every time we've won, he's complied - eventually", she said. She has two members of her staff working on the lawsuits at this time.

Regarding diversity, equity and inclusion or DEI policies, she has issued guidance on the Attorney General Office website that argues that DEI is completely constitutional, and that Trump's policies on DEI are not (<https://tinyurl.com/3nps9f5t>). Clark has faith in our judicial system, noting that Chief Justice John Roberts stated that Supreme Court rulings "will be followed."

Clark said that she relishes the opportunity to get out and talk to Vermonters. The feedback her office has gotten is incredibly uplifting and motivating, and the notes and

emails have filled up two bulleting boards on display in the front office. On a question regarding what citizens can do, she said, "Keep up the action: demonstrations, letters and op-eds to newspapers are all forms of speech, and politicians pay attention."

Representative Evans also spoke about the work of the legislature at this unstable time. The legislative process seems slow, she said, because it takes a lot of talk and deliberation. In the meantime, Trump is acting with speed outside the legislative process. She thinks the state's legislative response to his edicts will be formed over the summer when a lot of preparation takes place for the next session in January.



Photo by Mke Yantachka

Around 40 people showed up at the Charlotte Town Hall on April 29 to hear Attorney General Charity Clark and Rep. Chea Waters Evans speak.

## Education

# Educators push back on early childhood ed licensing plan

Noah Diedrich  
Community News Service

A recent bill in the Vermont Senate would offer a pathway for early childhood educators who operate outside of public education to become a recognized profession in the same way as nurses or hair stylists.

The bill, S.119, was inspired by a January report from the Office of Professional Regulation that recommended creating a process of licensure for early childhood educators through its office.

Sen. Allison Clarkson, D-Windsor, one of two lead sponsors on the bill, said licensure can provide consistency and professionalization, as well as increased wages.

“We have undervalued, in a really substantial way, the (age) 0- to 7-education,” she said. “This will make more consistent their education and training, so that people have a much better notion of what the education they’ve had and what they’ve been exposed to.”

The bill is modeled after the career ladder for nurses, which Clarkson and fellow sponsor Sen. Rebecca White, D-Windsor, said is one of the most successful in the state.

The new plan calls for three steps in the ladder: ECE 1, ECE 2 and ECE 3. Each step is an increasing professional license that coincides with mounting experience, either through college credit or work hours.

In the current state of play, childcare is regulated on a by-facility basis, meaning each individual facility receives a license. The bill would end that practice, requiring individual educators to be licensed rather than their facilities.

Another aspect of S.119 is the increased accountability it looks to provide, Clarkson said. If passed into law, the bill would create a board comprised of people in the profession that will review and process complaints, holding educators accountable for any unethical actions.

Currently, if an early educator commits any sort of wrongdoing, they can leave the workplace without repercussion and go to another job, leaving the facility to carry the blame.

“Licensure really sets the bar for professional expectation,” Clarkson said.

Missing the recent crossover deadline won’t stop Clarkson and White’s work — they plan to attach the content of S.119 to H.472, a bill that recently passed out of the House aiming to adjust licensing fees for various professions.

The early education bill met some resistance in the Senate Committee on Government Operations two weeks ago from public education professionals across the state.

Don Tinney, president of the Vermont National Education Association, said in a March 27 committee meeting that it would



Photo by Catherine Morrissey

Paints and brushes ready to be used at Winooski School District.

be duplicative to create a separate licensing process through the Office of Professional Regulation when one already exists in the Agency of Education.

“We do not believe a redundant system would serve either our pre-K-12 system or the early childhood education system,” he said.

Andrew Prowten, assistant director of education quality at the Vermont Agency of Education, had two main concerns for S.119. In the bill’s current state, the first level of the career ladder authorizes the holder to work in a public setting, which he said goes against existing federal regulation.

Prowten also said the bill is ambiguous when Act 166 comes into play. The 2014 law provides access to publicly funded pre-kindergarten education and sets prequalification standards for educators and facilities.

The assistant director said S.119 does not make clear how the two licenses would be distinguished and that it would take an amendment to Act 166 to do so.

Sen. Brian Collamore, R-Rutland, who heads up the Senate government operations committee, said the bill has his strong support.

“I’m hoping that we can somehow find, and I use this term all the time, a sweet spot that would include provisions that are in the bill but would also satisfy AOE’s concerns,” he said.

The committee chair believes that

a streamlined system could help those interested in the profession avoid what he sees as unnecessary education and, therefore, unnecessary debt.

“If I just graduated from, in my case, Rutland High School, and I’m now 18 years of age, I’ve got to spend four years at the next level up incurring debt to get a bachelor’s degree just in order to work in a preschool or a pre-K school,” he said in the committee meeting.

The bill has been met with broad support from early childhood educators themselves. Stephanie Carvey, co-executive director of the Rutland County Parent Child Center, said in March 26 testimony that she strongly supports creating a licensing process as the bill charts out.

“Vermont has already laid the foundational supports to help our workforce make the transition to licensure,” Carvey said. “If these supports had been in place earlier, we would have seen stronger retention through past challenges. Licensure won’t harm the workforce. It will help it.”

Carvey said the clarity of licensure is critical for employers as well, who would be able to better gauge an applicants’ experience with the proposed system.

“Ultimately, it all comes back to doing what’s best for our children,” she said. “Licensure is the remaining piece of the system puzzle.”

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



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# CVU notches first win of baseball regular season

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

There is some good news and some bad news about the beginning of the Champlain Valley Union High baseball team. The bad news is the Redhawks had to play four regular season games before notching their first win of the 2025 season.

The Redhawks got their first “W” on Tuesday evening with a dominating 11-1 victory over Middlebury. That game was finished too close to print time for a detailed story in this edition of the newspaper. That will come later.

The good news is that the team only has two losses because their Friday matchup against Burr & Burton was declared a 3-3 tie when it got too dark to continue in the ninth inning.

## Mount Abraham 8, CVU 7

For most of the first four innings of its first regular season baseball game on April 15, it looked like Champlain Valley’s spring campaign was starting just as the Redhawks wanted, with the team jumping out to a 7-0 lead over visiting Mount Abraham. But, in the fifth inning the Eagles found their offense while CVU’s scoring stalled.

Visiting Mount Abrahams scored four runs in the top of the fifth, adding two more in the sixth.

In the seventh inning, the Eagles capitalized on Abe Ready’s double, two CVU errors and a passed ball to score twice more, pulling ahead for good to take an 8-7 win.

The Redhawks lost even though they led in hitting with 11 to the Eagles’ seven hits.

John Deyo led at the plate for CVU in the losing effort, hitting 3-for-5 with two doubles. Ryan Wood also contributed at the plate, going 2-for-4 with a double and an RBI, as did Riley McDade, going 2-for-4 with a double and two RBIs.

## Rice 8, CVU 5

At home on Friday, April 24, in their second regular season game, the Redhawks quickly found themselves behind. In the first inning, the visiting Green Knights’ second batter, Coleton Merchant, knocked a line drive single to right field scoring Oliver Quong.

Merchant scored himself on a bases-loaded walk to put Rice up 2-0.

A couple of pitching errors scored two more runs for Rice in the second inning to make it 4-0 in favor of the visitors.



Photo by Al Frey

Ryan Wood prepares to tag out a runner in a scrimmage at Rice on April 10 that CVU won 10-7, but that won’t count toward its regular season total.

The Green Knights added another run in the fourth inning when Landon Merchant hit a single between first and second to score Merchant.

The Redhawks got on the scoreboard in the bottom half of the fourth when Noah Musgraves’ deep hit bounced off the tip of Sebastian Parent’s glove in deep left field and over the fence for a homerun that scored McDade to make it 5-2.

Things were looking up for CVU in the bottom of the fifth inning when Riley O’Brien hit a solo homer to make it 5-3.

Unfortunately, the baseball hobgoblins appeared to be in sync with the weather, that had turned gloomy by the top of the sixth inning, when Rice added three runs on two hits and an error to improve its lead to 8-3.

The Redhawks added a run in the bottom of the sixth inning on a Tommy Barnes single that scored Musgraves and another in the seventh when Quinn Vincent hit a line drive that scored Ryan Wood, making the score 8-5. But with two outs, the Rice lead proved too much for CVU to surmount.

After the game coach Nicky Elderton told his team that in this game and the previous game with Mount Abraham, they had played four solid innings and three innings with too many mistakes.

“You’ve got to play a full seven to win any baseball game,” he said.

If there’s one thing he could boil it down to, the coach said he would like to see his players rein in the “freebies” like errors, walks or hit batters.

“If we limit those, we’re very good,” Elderton said. “We have a lot of inexperience this year compared to last year. We’ve got the talent. We’ve just got to put it all together and figure out what that looks like.”

## CVU 3, Burr & Burton 3

Champlain Valley traveled to Burr & Burton Academy on Friday for a matchup that had originally been scheduled for Saturday, but was moved forward a day because of predicted, and realized, weekend rains.

In the top of the first inning, Vincent hit a sacrifice grounder that scored McDade.

In the bottom of the second, Burr & Burton tied it up at 1-all on a line drive to center field.

A CVU error in the bottom of the third inning put the Bulldogs up 3-1, but the Redhawks followed in the top of the fourth with a run off a Burr & Burton error to pull within one run at 3-2.

The Redhawks tied the game up at 3-all when a Deyo line drive single scored Daniel Tuiqere. The game stood 3-3 through the next four innings until it was called because of darkness.

“Both teams were hoping to play because it was such a good game,” Elderton said. “But, it was getting dusk, and the umpires felt like it was a smart decision to call the game.”

Elderton felt that his team had grown in the 24 hours between the Thursday game with Rice, when he didn’t feel like his team was consistently battling, and Friday’s game at Burr & Burton when “we kind of put everything together. We competed. We battled. There was some adversity throughout the game where we were put in pressure situations, and we came through.”

He was very impressed with how sophomore Vincent performed in his first varsity game on the mound. “He pitched amazingly and really battled all game. He gave us seven awesome innings,” Elderton said.

He liked how his team was hitting. The Redhawks hit some hard balls that were caught.

“Burr & Burton Academy is a good team. They made all the plays defensively and kind of robbed us of a couple of hits, but that’s baseball,” he said. “We’re going to figure this out as the season progresses. This week will be a big test because we’re starting to play kind of the top teams in Division 1 with Mount Mansfield, Essex and South Burlington three out of our next four games. That will be a true test of where we stand.”

# News from Charlotte Central School Students

## Charlotte Central School changes since pandemic

Louise Brines

Charlotte Central School student

From the perspective of parents, it may not seem that Charlotte Central School changed since the pandemic, but from the perspective of students and teachers it really has changed, both good and bad.

Michelle Filardi, a first-grade teacher, said, “Offhand, I can only think of a few things — No. 1, hand sanitizer is available all over the school; No. 2, masks are available, and it doesn’t seem strange to see someone wearing one; No. 3, Google meetings or hangouts are now done much more often as an option for meeting.”

Third-grade teacher Sophie Hatch said, “During the pandemic we had two groups of students, Group A on Mondays and Tuesdays, and Group B on Thursdays and Fridays. Wednesdays were remotely at home and we didn’t get through all of the usual curriculum. Social distancing influenced how many students were allowed in our classroom and arrangement of desks or furniture. Post-pandemic we spent the first two years making sure third graders were caught up with some second-grade learning targets, classroom spaces were used to their maximum potential and many teachers retired early because of the unknown health risks linked to COVID, so there was an increase in hiring teachers, especially younger, new teachers.”

“Parent involvement and access to school changed drastically during the pandemic, so it has taken a lot of work to build our community back and regain parent involvement,” said Katie Fraser, a fourth-grade teacher. “Over the last few years our budget has been chipped at, and this has had a huge impact on additional staff to support students and less EA time for students. Over the years our world language program and music program has drastically reduced. Expressive arts classes are so important; I wish we could have more of them. Social-emotional learning has been emphasized and students show they need more explicit instruction in this area. There is more instructional focus on math and literacy to support student learning and any gaps from the pandemic.”

Now that’s some good information. This is just one side though. Let’s see what students have to say about this.

“I think that our school just is more blank. There’s not enough color; it’s just gray,” said fifth grader Lucinda Smith, who was a kindergarten student when the pandemic hit.

An adult in the school said the change in color was not a result of COVID but was due to construction.

## Tips for being recycling expert and keeping planet green

Jocie Jacobs

Charlotte Central School student

What’s green and smells like red paint? Green paint!

However, we must be serious about helping the planet stay green. I have been thinking about recycling and helping our planet. Here’s a few tips to make you a recycling expert:

- When in doubt, throw it out; you can throw out trash and you can recycle.
- Donate items that are still in good condition to charity or charity shops.
- To recycle effectively and help the environment, put your waste in recycling bins and make sure your recyclables make it into the bin. Make sure items are clean and empty, and learn about our local recycling programs’ specific guidelines.
- Be aware of items that are not recyclable, such as contaminated food containers, certain types of plastic bags and some types of electronics.
- Avoid putting non-recyclables in your recycling bin, as this can contaminate the entire bin and prevent it from getting processed.
- Tell others about these tips.

Those are our tips for recycling. I hope you use them and keep them in mind. And remember, if you see someone littering, remind them what can happen when they do that and remind yourself too.

## Instructions on how to produce sweet, sweet maple sap

Amelia Akselrod & Lucinda Smith  
Charlotte Central School students

Maple syrup is a sweet, thick syrup that tastes great on pancakes or whatever your heart desires. Vermonters make lots of maple syrup because there are lots of sugar maple trees in Vermont. Sugar maple trees are maple trees that produce a sweet sap; this sap is clear and sticky.

To get sap from a tree you have to tap the tree. You can tap many types of trees such as sugar maple trees, black maple trees, red maple trees, silver maple trees, birch trees and boxelder trees. Even though you can tap all these trees, it doesn’t mean they all taste good; some trees like sugar maple and birch make good syrup but others don’t.

If you want to tap a tree, follow these simple directions: First, find a healthy sugar maple tree, then drill a hole in the tree. Take a spile and put it in the hole, then hang a bucket from the spile and wait for the sap to start flowing.

Spiles come in all different shapes and sizes, some metal, some wood and some plastic. Whatever you use they all work the same. Once you have sap you can boil it over a fire for a long time, and it boils off into maple syrup.

Fun facts: Did you know that Vermont is the top producer of maple syrup in the United States? In 2024, Vermont made 20 million gallons of maple syrup. Did you know that you can make tea with sap? Try putting a tea bag in hot sap then wait a few minutes for the tea to steep but don’t put honey in because the sap already gives it a sweet flavor.

Now that you know all about maple syrup you can use homemade syrup on pancakes and try adding edible glitter to the syrup to make sparkle syrup.



Courtesy Photo

A competitor makes their way to cast their ‘spell.’

## School lunches: To free or not to free, that is the question.

Lincoln McLaughlin

Charlotte Central School student

I think the proposed change from free lunch to student paid lunch has some pros and some cons, but do the pros outweigh the cons?

The Charlotte Central School lunch program is funded through a mix of state and federal funding. On Town Meeting Day 70 percent of voters supported the school budget, which includes free school lunch.

Pros: The biggest pro for the school community is the low cost for student families. The price helps support a successful school lunch program and a well-fed community. In addition, the free school lunch program keeps kids well fed all year including during breaks and summer. They serve lunches at parks, churches and playgrounds.

Cons: A free lunch program is very expensive for the district. Pressure to keep costs low can lead to lower-quality food high in preservatives. Governor Phil Scott proposed that he would drop the free lunch program because he claims it is regressive. Hunger Free Vermont says it would harm many families, students and farmers.

In conclusion, I would recommend having a hybrid of a paid lunch but at a very low price with a mix of state funding and self-funding. Lunch should still be free during breaks for those who need it. This controls taxes, supports school families and provides enough funding for high-quality food. Furthermore, I think if we had paid lunches it would result in higher-quality food and less waste.

## Charlotte Central School variety show big hit

Louise Brines

Charlotte Central School student

The variety show was a big hit on Thursday, March 27. The acts were the big hit of the night.

There were dances, songs and tricks. Parents, friends and family came to watch this awesome show. Some highlights of the show were piano players, singers, dancers and performances that were awesome, like two people putting on makeup, Julius Caesar speeches and speed Rubick’s cube

solving.

We interviewed Jocie and Lucy who did a dance in the talent show. Our first question was: How did it feel being on the stage?

Jocie said, “We weren’t that nervous because we have danced in front of thousands of people before at the Flynn.”

Our next question was: How did you think your dance went?

Lucy said, “We thought it went well and maybe we could’ve been closer together and in sync more.”

Jocie added, “It was really fun, and fifth grade or younger has never been in the talent show as long as I’ve been at Charlotte Central School, so it was nice to be up there, and it was fun to see the smiling faces on people and the joy of the audience to bring great spirits to the stage.”

The PTO ran the variety show and at intermission they held a bake sale which raised a bunch of money for the school’s funding.

## State spelling bee: A speller’s point of view

Lucy Palmer

Charlotte Central School student

On March 21 at Saint Michael’s College, 81 champions faced off in the 2025 State Spelling Bee.

As a speller myself, I competed for the second time, and here’s how it went. I arrived there at about 2:30 p.m. As usual, the judge went over the rules of the spelling bee. I sat towards the back, and waited nervously for about 20 minutes. For the first round, I was given the word “exaggerate.”

Though I had thoroughly studied the word, and would have for sure known it, I got very nervous. I ended up spelling the word, E-X-A-G-E-R-A-T-E, missing the double G.

My twin sister, Annie Palmer, did go on to the second round, but then got out on the word “tase,” though she spelled it T-A-Z-E, which is an acceptable spelling in most dictionaries. Scripps did not recognize the alternate spelling and she was eliminated. Though I did have a little bad luck this year, it was a great experience, and I hope to go back next year.

# Calendar

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

## Food drive for farmworkers Thursday-Thursday, May 1-15

The Charlotte Grange is gathering non-perishable food items in support of local underserved farmworkers. Bins will be on the front porch of the Grange Hall (2848 Spear St.) during this two-week period, as well as several other places around in the area. The food drive is looking for these specific items: spaghetti (1-pound boxes), dried black beans (1-pound bags), canned black beans (16-ounce cans, preferably Goya brand), dried lentils (1-pound bags), white rice (1-pound bags), Goya yellow rice (7-ounce boxes), Maseca yellow corn flour (4-pound bags), apple or cranberry juice (64-ounce containers) and vegetable oil (48-ounce containers). Also: Goya Adobo All Purpose Seasoning, Goya Sazonador Total Seasoning, and Goya Sazon Culantro y Achiote Seasoning packets. To learn more, email [sallyw@aol.com](mailto:sallyw@aol.com) or visit [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events).

## Green Up Day Saturday, May 3, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Meet at Charlotte Central School's west parking lot to represent Charlotte in the 55th anniversary of the statewide day of cleaning up town roads. Green Up bags are available at the Charlotte Library, town hall, Spear's Corner Store, Old Brick Store or at the event on the day of. Please sign up for a route on the website ([charlottevtgreenuptoday.com](http://charlottevtgreenuptoday.com)) or email [farafieldfarm@gmav.net](mailto:farafieldfarm@gmav.net). Online sign-up closes at 6 p.m. the day before, Friday, May 2, but you can still sign up at the event on Saturday.

## Vermont Book Awards Saturday, May 3, 7 p.m.

The Vermont Book Awards will be celebrated at College Hall on the Greenway Institute Campus in Montpelier. The event will feature a keynote address from author and frequent Vermont Humanities collaborator Bill McKibben. Get tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/y8s2ubhd>.



Courtesy photo

The Hinesburg Community Band and South County Chorus will present a Mother's Day concert Sunday, May 11, 4 p.m. in the Champlain Valley Union High auditorium.

## Poetry at the Grange Thursday, May 8, 1-2:30 p.m.

Poetry at the Grange is planned for every second Thursday, 1-2:30 p.m. at the Grange, 2848 Spear St. in Charlotte. RSVPs are encouraged but not required at [abigailkilley@me.com](mailto:abigailkilley@me.com). Each month a local poet is invited to recite several poems. Participants are also invited to recite their own poetry, read poetry of their choosing or just listen. Prizes are offered to those who can recite their poems from memory. For more information visit [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events).

## Shelburne Museum opening day Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Celebrate the start of the 2025 season with a day dedicated to welcoming the community with free admission, musical performances, gallery talks, nature walks, drop-in art making and more. Plus new exhibitions including "Sound, Art, & Ink: Higher Ground Gig Posters," "Herd: Karen Petersen's Bronze Horses," "Dahlov Ipcar: The Possibilities of Pattern," "Blueprint of a Collection: Cyanotype Photography by David Sokosh" and "Porcelain Love Letters: The Art of Mara Superior."

## Art and Our Living World Saturday, May 10, 1 p.m.

Join Kristan M. Hanson, curator of collections and exhibitions at the Fleming Museum of Art at the University of

Vermont, for the guided tour "Art and Our Living World," highlighting works in our current exhibitions Rooted in Nature and Vermont Female Farmers, as well as selected contemporary works that speak to the relations between people and planet.

## Timber framing talk Sunday, May 11, 2-3:30 p.m.

The Ferrisburgh Historical Society's May speaker at the Ferrisburgh Town Hall is Will Gusakov, a Vermonter who is a timber framer working out of Lincoln, building and repairing timber frame homes and barns. After a devastating fire in the Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, he was called to work on helping restore one of the most iconic buildings on the planet. He and his wife, along with their two young children, moved to France and helped recreate part of the roof structure of the cathedral in Normandy, which was eventually shipped to Paris for installation. Gusakov will discuss his experience using techniques dating to medieval times.

## Mother's Day concert Sunday, May 11, 4 p.m.

The Hinesburg Artist Series will celebrate spring and Mother's Day with a concert in the Champlain Valley Union High auditorium featuring the Hinesburg Community Band and South County Chorus. The Hinesburg Community Band will present "Columbia River Quickstep," "Capriccio," "Declaration, Ballade, & Finale," "Symphonic Dance No. 1 Blessed Hope" and Gershwin's "An American in Paris. The South County Chorus will sing "Over the Rainbow," "How Can I Keep from Singing," "Festival Jubilate," "When Our Voices Rise," "Everybody" and "When You're Smilin'." The concert is free, with donations gratefully accepted. For more info: [hinesburgartistseries.org](http://hinesburgartistseries.org).

## Socrates Café Monday, May 12, 6:30- 8 p.m.

The Champlain Valley School District is holding the fifth Socrates Café, an evening of student-led discussion about a timeless and timely question. This event will focus on: "How does our understanding of time influence how we live?" It will be held at Champlain Valley Union High. After students introduce the goals for the night and expectations to facilitate the discussions, participants will be split into small groups and led to classrooms to discuss the night's question. At the end of the night, everyone will reconvene in the library to reflect

and say goodbye. To attend visit [bit.ly/socrates2025](http://bit.ly/socrates2025).

## Age Well luncheon Tuesday, May 13, 11:30 a.m.

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a luncheon on May 13 for anyone 60 or older in the church's 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 scalloped potatoes with ham and cheddar, carrots, bread, strawberry and blueberry crisp with cream. The deadline to register is May 6 at 802-662-5283 or [mbongiorno@agewellvt.org](mailto:mbongiorno@agewellvt.org).

## Charlotte Walks Friday, May 16, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

The Grange's Charlotte Walks is the third Friday of the month. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at a different Charlotte trailhead for a morning walk. Walks usually last about an hour and are led at a comfortable adult walking pace. Each month's location will be posted on the Grange events calendar: [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events). Questions? Email [kknh.nh@gmail.com](mailto:kknh.nh@gmail.com).

## Capital City Concert Saturday & Sunday, May 17 & 18, 7:30 & 3 p.m.

Capital City Concerts concludes its 25th anniversary season with two different concerts on Saturday, May 17, at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, May 18, at 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier. The concerts will feature performances of George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," as well as large chamber works of JS Bach, Mozart, Liszt and Brahms. The music will be performed by 16 of Capital City Concerts' most beloved performers, including the Borromeo String Quartet. Tickets and info at [capitalcityconcerts.org](http://capitalcityconcerts.org).

## Homeschool Days Monday & Tuesday, May 19 & 27

Shelburne Museum is offering two Homeschool Days on Monday, May 19, and Tuesday, May 27. The experience is intended to provide students in grades K-8 with both guided workshops and self-guided activities across the museum grounds. Students will rotate through a selection of interactive, hands-on workshops throughout the day to enhance students' understanding of social studies, art and science. To register and with questions, please contact school and youth programs educator Sara Wolfson at [education@shelburnemuseum.org](mailto:education@shelburnemuseum.org) or 802-985-0922.

## Practice criterium series Tuesday, May 20, 6 p.m.

The Green Mountain Bicycle Club hosts events for cyclists riding around and around in circles, or criteriums, at Watertown Hill in Colchester. This year, the events are taking place on May 20, June 3 and 17, July 1 and 15, and Aug. 12. These practice criteriums or crits are a way to work on riding in a group at race speed on a road loop closed to traffic. Unlike other races, cyclists ride for a specified period of time and are scored based on how many laps they complete. There are two separate races with the faster riders racing for 45 minutes starting

## CHARLOTTE TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

Visit [charlottevt.org](http://charlottevt.org) for more information



**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, May 1, 7 p.m.

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

**Charlotte Energy Committee Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 13, 7 p.m.

**Development Review Board Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 14, 7 p.m.

**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, May 15, 7 p.m.

**Conservation Commission Meeting**  
Tuesday, May 27, 7 p.m.

**Development Review Board Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 28, 7 p.m.

**Planning Commission Meeting**  
Thursday, May 29, 7 p.m.

# Opinion

## Education reform often brings unintended consequences

Jack Hoffman  
Contributor

Now that the House has passed an education reform plan, it will be easy to get bogged down in the minutiae that differentiate it from Gov. Phil Scott's "Education Transformation Proposal." But before Vermonters get lost in the weeds debating these proposals, they might want to ask themselves if they support the radical change that both plans represent:

- Are they ready to abandon the idea that taxation for public education should be based on residents' ability to pay and that a person's income is the fairest measure of that ability?
- Are they ready to take control of education spending away from local voters and cede it to the Agency of Education?

### Return to property-based taxation

For more than 25 years, the funding system has recognized that taxing people according to ability to pay was the fairest way to share the cost of educating our children. And a homeowner's income, rather than the current selling price of the house, has been viewed as a more accurate measure of a person's ability to pay taxes.

Under the current system, about two-thirds of resident homeowners pay some or all of their school taxes based on their income. There are problems with the current system, despite efforts to go to a simple income-based school tax for all residents. But the biggest flaw is that the wealthiest Vermonters are taxed on their home value, not their income. That means the wealthy pay less of their income to support education than do typical homeowners making \$80,000 or \$90,000 a year. The wealthiest 30 percent of homeowners get about 60 percent of Vermont's adjusted gross income, but don't pay school taxes based on that income.

Instead of addressing this imbalance, both the administration and the House want

to revert to a property-based school tax system, locking in this break for wealthy homeowners.

The administration and House each propose some form of "homestead exemption." The exemptions would be tied to household income and exclude a portion of home value from taxes. But adjusting house values according to the owner's income bracket is not the same as taxing income. The market value of the house, not the homeowner's income, would ultimately determine the tax. Homeowners on fixed incomes would once again be vulnerable to changing real estate prices. And homeowners with the same income but different house values, in districts with the same per-pupil funding, would not pay the same taxes, as they do now.

### Consolidated control of spending

The governor and Legislature complain that Vermont spends too much on education for the results it gets, although some districts are criticized for not spending enough. The feeling is that local voters don't make sound spending decisions—even though they are voting on their own taxes and how to spend the state's—i.e. their own—money.

Recent reforms were supposed to save money and improve student performance: school consolidation, a new special education funding formula, a new weighting system to direct funding to certain students. But when education spending jumped this year—because of COVID, inflation, healthcare, and mistakes in implementing the new weights—it provided Montpelier an opportunity to change the funding system and take away local voters' control.

The Legislature and the governor want further consolidation despite the failure of Act 46, the first consolidation law, to achieve promised results. The governor proposed five mega-districts. While that was too few for the House, 20 might be enough. But large



Image by Wilfried Pohnke from Pixabay

districts, coupled with the new approach to funding, may further alienate voters and discourage democratic participation.

The governor and House each proposed foundation-type funding systems. Essentially, a per-student "foundation amount" would be allocated to all students. The foundation grants may be supplemented for students needing additional funding. But whether it's the governor's model or the Legislature's, we can expect the actual calculation of the foundation amount and ancillary adjustments to be generated at the Agency of Education by a consultant-designed computer program, not unlike the database and program used to generate Vermont's new pupil weighting system a couple of years ago.

A single, base amount of funding that works across the state seems to fly in the face of what we learned about cost increases districts incurred this year. Staffing shortages and demand for mental health services, for example, hit some budgets harder than others. How would a foundation amount allow for

that kind of variability or the preferences of Vermont's diverse communities?

The governor and Legislature are pressing ahead with a new tax and funding system long before the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont has completed its work or even heard from people across the state. They are pressing ahead without fixing the unfairness of the current system that favors wealthy homeowners. And they are pressing ahead even though a foundation formula, while it may reduce funding to schools, doesn't reduce the costs that drove up education spending this year. If the past decade of reforms taught us anything, it's that these big changes don't always live up to their promises and come with unintended, often negative, consequences.

*(Hoffman is senior analyst at Public Assets Institute ([www.publicassets.org](http://www.publicassets.org)), a non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Montpelier. He is a resident of Marshfield currently living in France.)*

## CALENDAR

Continued from page 14

at 6:45 p.m., while those who have lower or no rankings start at 6 p.m. The 6 p.m. race is a great way for novices to try their race legs. The entry fee is \$15 per rider or all the races for \$60. Registration opens at 5:30 p.m. and closes 10 minutes before the start. The races will be cancelled if conditions are unsafe. More information at [andre.sturm@earthlink.net](mailto:andre.sturm@earthlink.net).

### Worn flag collection

#### Saturday-Saturday, May 24-31

Weather and the sun inevitably result in a worn-out flag. If your flag is tattered or soiled and it's time for a new one, the Charlotte Grange can help you make sure your old flag is taken care of properly. On Memorial Day, the Grange will be collecting worn flags from our Charlotte cemeteries and taking them to the Vergennes American Legion to be "retired" in a Flag Day ceremony there. If you have a flag to dispose of, please bring it to the Charlotte Memorial Day event on Monday, May 26, at 9 a.m. at the Grandview Cemetery, 403 Church Hill Road, or drop

off your flag at the Grange May 24-31 in the covered bin in front. To learn more, email [sallyw@aol.com](mailto:sallyw@aol.com) or visit [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events).

### 'La Traviata'

#### Saturday, May 24, 7 p.m.

Opera Vermont is performing Giuseppe Verdi's "La Traviata," one of the most beloved operas, at the Barre Opera House. The production will showcase the talents of internationally renowned Italian soprano Scilla Cristiano, making her American debut in the iconic role of Violetta Valéry. The opera features some of Verdi's most instantly recognizable and emotionally stirring music, including the famous drinking song, the "Brindisi" (Libiamo ne' lieti calici), a joyful toast that sets the stage for the passion and tragedy to come. Tickets at <https://tinyurl.com/yj2n9b4d>.

### Memorial Day gathering

#### Monday, May 26, 9-10 a.m.

On Memorial Day morning gather at Grandview Cemetery, 403 Church Hill Road., Charlotte. After a short ceremony, interested folks will help place flags on the graves of

those who served or died in military service. All are welcome to join the ceremony, to place flags or both. To volunteer email [kknh.nh@gmail.com](mailto:kknh.nh@gmail.com) or visit [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events).

[nh@gmail.com](mailto:nh@gmail.com) or visit [charlottegrange.org/events](http://charlottegrange.org/events).

# Around Town

## Condolences

### Bernice L. Titus

Bernice L. Titus, age 88, of Charlotte passed away peacefully at the Colchester Respite House with her daughter by her side.

She was a homemaker for many years. She also worked for several years at the University of Vermont Medical Center as a patient transporter and before that in the packaging department for Resolution DVD Center. She was a loving mother and worked hard to help provide for her family, along with her husband Robert Titus. She grew up during the depression in the Dakotas with nine siblings.

Bernice was born August 3, 1938, in Eureka, S.D., to Christ and Lydia Leicht. She is survived by her daughter Laurie and husband Peter Curler; grandson Bobby and his wife Genia and great-grandchildren Colbie and Levi; grandson Bradley and wife Kari and great-grandchildren Remi, Reese, Emerson, Wylie, Leland and Capri; daughter-in-law Lorraine Titus, grandson Ryan and his wife Jenn of S.C.; her sister Shirley Pulciani and husband Mike; and several nieces and nephews. Bernice was predeceased by her parents Christ and Lydia Leicht; husband Robert Titus; their infant daughter Diane and son Jeffrey Titus; brothers Edwin, Marvin, Milton,

Delbert and Howard Leicht; along with her sisters Ida, Elise and Ardella.

Bernice enjoyed traveling and took many trips along with her family across the country to see her mother and siblings in South Dakota. She enjoyed reading, loved a good movie or play at the theater and enjoyed watching her great-grandchildren participate in sporting events. In later years, she especially enjoyed many bus trips with her husband Robert. She dearly missed her husband and their many years together, filled with the love of family and shared adventures.

Many thanks to the UVM Hospice team and the folks at McClure Miller Respite House. Though her stay was short, she received the best loving care you could ask for and it was greatly appreciated. A special thanks also to those who visited her at home; they really helped make her days a little brighter.

Memorial Service will be held Saturday, June 7, 2025, at the North Ferrisburgh United Methodist Church at 11 a.m. A gathering will be held at the church after the service.

Donations may be made to McClure Miller Respite House, 3113 Roosevelt Highway, Colchester, VT 05446.

### Stanton Williams

Stanton Williams, 86, of South Burlington, Vermont, passed away peacefully on Saturday, April 12, 2025, surrounded by his family after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Born on May 14, 1938, in Burlington, Vermont, Stan was the son of Helen and Wilson "Bill" Williams. He grew up in Charlotte alongside his sisters, Rebecca (Williams) Mascott, now residing in Florida, and the late Diana Williams. Stan spent his formative years in Charlotte, often playing hockey on the pond off Greenbush Road, swimming at Thompson's Point or working at his family's establishment, the Old Brick Store.

Stan graduated from Burlington High School, where he was class president, and later attended Kimball Union Academy. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Vermont, where he was president of the Sigma Nu fraternity and a member of the ROTC program. After graduation, Stan was commissioned as a First Lieutenant and stationed at Fort Benning in Georgia.

In 1963, Stan married Joanna Lull, with whom he shared many meaningful years. Later, he built a new chapter of life with Joyce Williams, and together, they established Pine Tree Nursery in Chatham, Massachusetts. There, Stan developed his knowledge of horticulture and the landscaping business.

Stan had a lifelong love for the water. He spent countless hours racing sailboats on Malletts Bay with his dear friend Bob Morse, walking along the Cape Cod National Seashore and enjoying sunsets on the beaches of Naples, Florida, often with a cold beverage in hand.

Sports were another of Stan's passions. He was an avid baseball fan, attending Cape Cod Baseball League games and participating in the Red Sox Fantasy Camp. One of his most cherished memories was watching Game 7 of the 2004 ALCS, where the Red Sox completed their historic comeback against the Yankees, with his 7-month-old grandson, Sam, by his side. Stan also had a deep love for hockey, especially University of Vermont hockey. He was a longtime season ticket holder

and served as president of the Friends of UVM Hockey for many years. Some of his fondest memories were attending games and post-game celebrations with his family, where he let his young son stay up much too late.

In 2015, Stan returned to Vermont to be closer to his family. He treasured the moments spent with his son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. Whether it was attending school concerts, sharing a Starbucks drink or simply sitting together on the back porch, Stan loved every moment with his grandchildren. His loyal dog, Dexter, was his constant companion during these years, serving as a wonderful and special friend.

During his time at Gazebo Senior Living in South Burlington, Stan formed a special friendship with fellow resident Sally Vachereau. Their mornings were often spent sharing hot chocolate and coffee, sitting outside and talking for hours, and dancing together at Gazebo events or the Moose Lodge. Stan's love for gardening was evident in the beautiful spaces he cultivated at Gazebo, bringing joy to all who visited.

Stan is survived by his son, Stanton Lull Williams of Shelburne and his wife, Naomi Lei Williams, and their children, Samuel Lull Williams and Lillian Grace Williams; his sister, Rebecca Mascott of Naples, Florida; and his nieces, Kimberly Zieselman of Manchester, Vermont, and Tara Mascott of Boxborough, Massachusetts. He was predeceased by his parents, Wilson and Helen Williams; his sister, Diana Williams; and his first wife, Joanna Lull.

The family extends their heartfelt gratitude to the staff at both Grand Way Commons and Gazebo Senior Living in South Burlington for their compassionate care and support during Stan's battle with Alzheimer's disease.

Though Alzheimer's gradually took many things from Stan, it never touched his love for family, his passion for the outdoors or his uncanny ability to make people smile.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association of Vermont ([alz.org/vermont](http://alz.org/vermont)).



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# Our Local Feast

## Celebrate May with braised spring vegetables, use greens

Dorothy Grover-Read  
Contributor

We've arrived at May. This is the month many say is their favorite as grass greens, daffodils spring up and our trees leaf out. With the promise of the growing season ahead of us, we nurture dreams of fresh produce in abundance for our kitchens.

Farm stands that were closed all winter emerge with their first offerings, meager at first, but much anticipated and appreciated. In no time, we'll make our way to the local weekly farmers markets that keep us content for the months to come.

There's not much yet at this point beyond the last of the winter roots, and spring was a bit stubborn arriving this year. If we garden, we tuck in lettuce and other cold-tolerant vegetable starts, not forgetting the sun-loving pansies; their edible blooms will garnish our plates for many weeks.

We know the seasons have finally turned when we find those first spring-dug parsnips, or new turnips and radishes, with all their glorious greens as well. After a long, cold New England winter, this is finally the colorful light at the end of a gray tunnel.

We feast on snow-white turnips, often the sweet hakurei variety, Easter egg radishes and all those fresh green tops. Unfortunately, we often find them with the tops already lopped off, such a waste. If you do find them whole, don't toss the tops. Both of these vegetables have delicious greens that add many nutrients we crave in this early season, almost a spring tonic in their own right, and they are as versatile as any other.

Sweet and tender when young, turnip greens are an amazing addition to the spring plate and can usually be found without damage from those pesky flea beetles. Radishes too! They are not just for salads, raw or cooked the possibilities are limited only by the imagination. Toss them in a soup, make pesto out of them, steam them or braise them along with the vegetables as we're doing here.

I've added a little lift to this dish with some Meyer lemons, still in season although not grown here of course. If you can't find them, any lemon will do, or other citrus. Blood oranges are great, grapefruit, or in a pinch, a drizzle of cider vinegar to add a bit of the tart.

The white wine adds its own little touch here, but you can substitute a favorite stock. The honey mellows out any possible bitterness from the greens, but maple syrup will serve the purpose as well, and this year's crop was fantastic. With a dish like this, exact amounts are not necessary, so taste as you go and adjust to what you like.

This is quick to put together and cook, and you can serve it with either shrimp or fish that you poached in the same braising liquid once the vegetables are done. Double duty for the



Photos by Dorothy Grover-Read

Spring radishes and sweet turnips are delicious raw or cooked. Here, we gently braise both, along with their tops, to make a seasonal side dish that is ready in no time at all.

liquid, and even more flavor for the seafood.

It's spring after all, we don't have to simmer supper for hours, but in my book, you do have to garnish it with spring blossoms.

### Braised spring turnips and radishes

Let's make this easy. First, zest and juice two lemons into a 2-cup measuring cup and add enough white wine to make 2/3 cup, then water to make a cup. Add a couple of tablespoons local honey or maple syrup and a pinch of salt and pepper, and whisk it well. Set aside.

In a large skillet, melt 2 tablespoons of butter and add an equal amount of olive oil. When ready, add:

- one plump shallot, minced
- three or four garlic cloves, finely minced

Sauté for about a minute and a half, you're looking for softening here, not color, then add:

- bunch of spring turnips, greens and all, halved
- bunch of spring radishes, greens and all, halved

Add the juice and wine mixture, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and cover. Let cook 8 to 10 minutes, until a paring knife inserted into the turnips tells you they are tender. The radishes will be done too.

Place in a serving bowl and sprinkle with chives fresh from the garden, and maybe a few pansies for garnish.

### Make it a full meal with fish or shrimp

This is a delightful light spring supper that hardly takes any time at all. If you are serving this with fish or shrimp, take advantage of the beautiful braising liquid. Remove the vegetables from the pan and cover to keep warm. Place the fish or shrimp in the pan, cover and cook gently until tender, just a couple of minutes if



A quick braise and these tender spring vegetables transform. Keep those tops, and you'll get a day's worth of beneficial greens.



With a food processor, everything gets tossed in to make this pesto: a little garlic, radishes and their greens, some lemon and a drizzle of healthful fruity olive oil.

shrimp, a few more if a white fish.

Serve everything together with the liquid. Hearty appetites will want a little rice on the side.

### Radish top pesto

Use nuts here if you like or let the radishes serve as that textural element. I often do this because there are nut allergies in our family, but it's tasty either way; just take a few minutes to toast the nuts if using.

A food processor is easiest for this, but you can use a mortar and pestle, or finely chop by hand. Combine:

- three or four garlic cloves
- six radishes or 1/3 cup toasted nuts of choice
- greens from the radishes
- handful of parsley or chives
- zest and juice of one lemon

Process until coarse, then drizzle in 1/3 of a cup or so of fruity olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Use as you would any pesto. Smear it on a crostini, drape it over pasta or stir into soups and stews for a lively accent. Add it half and half to mayonnaise for a vibrant sandwich spread.

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## Sacred Hunter

# You don't always get what you want, but what you need

Bradley Carleton  
Contributor

As you read this, I will be thinking of you, dear reader. I will have risen long before the dawn and situated myself against a small tree surrounded by brambles, briars and gorgeous neon yellow forsythias, which will not reveal their heavenly hues until the sun creeps over the mountains to the east. I will be dressed in 3D leafy camouflage, such that even a turkey's keen eyesight cannot distinguish me from my scratchy hollowed-out shrub blind.

As 4 a.m. clicks off on my watch, I listen closely to the sounds of the animal world. I can hear a field mouse pushing its way through last autumn's leaves. He skitters by me to the edge of the field I am facing. An owl hoots "who cooks for you, who cooks for you, who cooks for you alllllll."

I can feel the presence of another being just downhill from me. It sounds like something chewing on the bark of a tree.

Possibly the small birch that has just popped into buds in the last 24 hours. As the light filters almost imperceptibly on the horizon, the colors of the sky merge from a dark purple to a navy blue, then caress the horizon in a shade of sage green.

As I close my eyes and listen, my nose picks up the faint fragrance of damp wood chips from a site upwind where someone has been cutting firewood. The smell mingles with the musky soil and the warm breeze off the lake as she turns over her depths to another spring.

My mind relaxes into all that surrounds me. I am a part of all of this. I belong here, just as the trees and the sky and the grasses.

Deep in reverie, my ears are suddenly pierced by a screaming, deep-throated gobble behind me. Following are three more higher-pitched gobbles. I conclude that I am very near the roost where these birds have been sleeping in the naked canopy above me. Too close above me. I guess that I am only 20-30 yards away from them. How did I manage to get this close without being spotted or heard? "This is gonna be tough."

Although I am using a crossbow (my senior shoulders struggle to pull the load of a compound bow anymore). I will have to rest my bow on my knees and not move a muscle until they fly down.

The village begins to awaken. Everyone in the flock has an opinion on where they should land. Gobblers are now just minutes apart, and each bird echoes the others in

their claim for dominance. According to the turkey hierarchy, the rightful leader is supposed to get first choice of any hen that is ready to be bred.

As the tempo and frequency of the calls reach a crescendo, the sound of heavy wings beating against their chests, the fly-down cackle erupts. The birds are so close I can hear their landing. At least a dozen behind me and to my left. After the flock has touched down, they all go quiet.

This is game time. My diaphragm call is positioned on my soft palate, held in place by the back of my tongue. I take a deep breath and build up pressure in the back of my mouth. "Erp. Erp. Erp." Gently now.

The deep-throated Boss Tom screams at me, "Get over here, you foolish, lovesick hen. I am the King, and I command you to my presence!" I form my mouth into a softer grasp on the call and ever so gently, call "erp. erp," in my most seductive turkey tone.

He screams at me again, demanding that I play the game according to the ancient turkey rules. He expects me to obey those rules, but the goal of this hormone-inspired dialogue is to convince him that I am worth his coming to me.

As we play this mind game, I remember that one of the lessons I've learned is that when the tables are turned against nature's normal patterns, it is best to "shut up and wait." For at least 10 minutes, there is no sound.

I wonder if he walked away from me. Then, out of the corner of my eye, I see movement through the briars to my left. Fire-engine red, blue and white moving through the small openings in the branches. Slowly, the chestnut brown body appears in the grass, just 10 yards from me and moving left to right, right into my shooting zone.

I lower my head to the stock and adjust my eyes to focus through the scope. At this range, scopes are more of a hindrance than a benefit. I scan his body from head to toe.

Red, blue and white head with a short snood and small caruncles under his wattle. The beard is about 6 inches long, protruding from his chest. He is a jake, a juvenile tom that felt he could outrun the Boss to this estrogen-fired hen. I choose not to shoot him.

Two more jakes follow behind the one in front of me, as he struts into the thick grass covered in dew. I will wait for the Boss Tom with his full fan, long beard and spurs that would make any cowboy proud.



Photo by Bradley Carleton

Sometimes a turkey pursuit turns into a ramp quest. It's best to roll with it and harvest what nature yields.

The dew droplets sparkle in the sun. I wait. And wait. After the jakes have waddled out into the verdant field, I hear a deep-throated gobble behind me, headed away from me, down a hill to another field to my west. It is over.

"Should I have taken the shot on the jake?" I ask myself. "No, it's only the first day of the spring season, and I have 30 more mornings to chase the big guy."

I get up from the hollowed-out shrubbery blind and begin the walk back to the car. Something catches my eye as I follow the tree line back to the road. A treasure of

culinary ecstasy, just inside the tree line. Ramps!

Successful hunting doesn't always mean you return with what you were pursuing, but if you're willing to accept what Pachamama offers, you will always return with a full heart.

*(Bradley Carleton is the founder and director of Sacred Hunter.org, a privately owned 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.)*

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The Charlotte News

# Removing dams can be key to effective flood prevention

Hannah Head  
Community News Service

Vermont ecologists support a greener flood-prevention strategy — removing derelict dams.

In light of the recent increase in severe flooding across Vermont, environmental scientists say that restoring rivers to their natural flow can decrease Vermont's flood risk.

But dam removal is expensive, and as flood disasters keep occurring, it becomes increasingly difficult for the state to move forward with large restoration projects. Flooding in summer 2023 caused damage totaling more than \$600 million, according to a state estimate. Another round of flooding in summer 2024 caused fresh damages estimated at more than \$32 million.

Ecologists argue that river restoration work can no longer be put off.

“Ultimately the restoration work is public safety work. We're contributing to public safety, but because it's not as immediate, it gets pushed down the road,” said Karina Dailey, a restoration ecologist for the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Dailey works on river restoration programs throughout Vermont as a means of flood prevention. She manages the council's dam removal program, which focuses on removing dams and concrete

barriers in rivers so that natural stream flow and function can be restored.

Vermont has 1,085 dams around the state, according to an inventory kept by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Of these, 146 are listed as significantly hazardous due to their poor condition, and 75 are listed under the more dangerous category of highly hazardous.

Infrastructure like dams, berms and levees can be effective at controlling river flow and diverting water during heavy rain. Many dams in Vermont were also built to generate power for mills and other small industries. But the structures also restrict river flow, which can lead to increased flooding down the line.

“I remove barriers from rivers,” Dailey said. “When you take out a barrier, you're also lowering the elevation of the river because the river's built up behind that dam where there's been years of accumulated sediment. And by lowering that river elevation, you're also giving the river access to the floodplain.” That floodplain may have historically been a reservoir behind the dam.

In heavy rain conditions, floodplains are critical in preventing downstream flooding. They temporarily store excess water and allow floodwaters to spread out. But people have a history of building on floodplains due to their rich soils and lack of obstructing vegetation.

“When as a society we built our infrastructure in the path of the river, it increased our collective risk for the floods that we're experiencing today,” said Kassia Randzio, co-director of the Vermont River Conservancy.

The Montpelier nonprofit runs big- and small-scale river restoration projects across Vermont. In fall 2024, the organization completed a multi-year floodplain restoration at Whetstone Brook in Brattleboro. Currently, the group is working on feasibility studies in hopes of removing four dams around Montpelier, where the 2023 flooding submerged the downtown and caused millions in damage.

“The opportunity that we have is to look at the land and think about places where we can protect floodplains, protect wetlands, protect headwater, forests,” said Randzio. “If we can allow those places to serve as the sponges that they should be ... all of those things that we can do are opportunities to keep homes and businesses and communities safer downstream.”

Many river restoration projects center around the idea of giving rivers room to move or destroying old infrastructure, such as dams and berms, so that smaller-scale rivers can resume their natural flow.

It's about “recognizing that our natural infrastructure is our best line of defense,” Dailey said. “We really need those systems to function as natural systems to protect

us.”

Still, flooding is a significant risk. “We're always at risk of flooding,” said Marvin Boyd, a meteorologist at the Burlington office of the National Weather Service.

Boyd attributed most of the flood risk to heavy rainfall, as well as to heavy ice or snow melt that can quickly cause rivers to rise. As temperatures warm from climate change, the atmosphere can hold more water, which can fuel more intense rain.

“The intensity of the storms that are coming in and the amount of water that is coming in with these horrific storms is just too much to handle,” said Julie Silverman, the Lake Champlain senior lakekeeper with the nonprofit Conservation Law Foundation.

As lakekeeper, Silverman's role is a blend of environmental education and outreach. She works to monitor and advocate for the health of Lake Champlain and its tributaries.

“How do we support removal of those derelict dams, or unneeded dams, so that we can let the rivers flow?” Silverman asked. “And what we know is that a dam that's not maintained — and a dam in general — is more dangerous to flooding than no dam at all.”

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

## On Books

# Always glad for books that spring up like daffodils

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

Though I know we could be scraping ice from windshields and shoveling walkways again any day now — and I'm not changing out my snow tires till May — spring does seem today to have really sprung. Birdsong, daffodils, green grass, crocuses. Could this really be it?

Have any good books sprung up in your life lately? I've had a few.

"Piglet," a novel by Lottie Hazell, is terrific. Jennifer Weiner, author of "Good in Bed," "In Her Shoes," etc., writes in The New York Times Book Review: "If I owned a bookstore, I'd hand-sell 'Piglet' to everyone. Hazell's prose is as tart and icy as lemon sorbet; her sentences are whipcord taut, drum tight. ... The 'will she or won't she' isn't just about the man and the wedding. It's about whether Piglet ends up embracing a big life, full of richness and variety and good things to eat, or if she lets herself be crammed into that too-small dress."

The novel begins 98 days before Piglet's wedding to her fiancé, Kit. There's a heat wave and Piglet is food shopping, "the supermarket chill ... welcome on her breastbone, her back."

Everything seems to be going great in her life. Things are hunky-dory with the fiancé. They've just moved into a new house, and when we meet them, they're busy preparing for a housewarming supper for six with a menu to die for. Piglet is a fabulous cook who loves to entertain, and Kit seems about as good-natured as they come — nothing not to like here at all. The couple has friends, money, loving family, a great sex life. It's all good.

All good until page 19, when the reader is rather abruptly informed by the following, italicized, on an otherwise blank page: "*He would tell her 13 days before the wedding, and she would feel his words lodge like a shard of bone between her ribs.*"

Now, I don't know about you, but I am the kind of person who, when presented with an obituary, wants to know — no, needs to know how the deceased actually died. I have done a little research and have discovered that I'm not alone in this

somewhat peculiar propensity, but anyway, my point is: When confronted with the italicized statement on page 19, I was like, "Wait, what? What did he tell her? What happened? What did he do?"

Well, dear reader, I regret to inform you: I never found out. I never found out what Kit said or did that changed absolutely everything. But whatever it was, I will tell you that it throws a major monkey wrench into the thus-far smooth, previously humming-right-along machinery of the novel.

Oh, and then, on page 31 there's this: "*There were some things that you could not tell your friends. She knew that truths, once spoken, had the power to strip her of the life she had so carefully built, so smugly shared.*"

What??

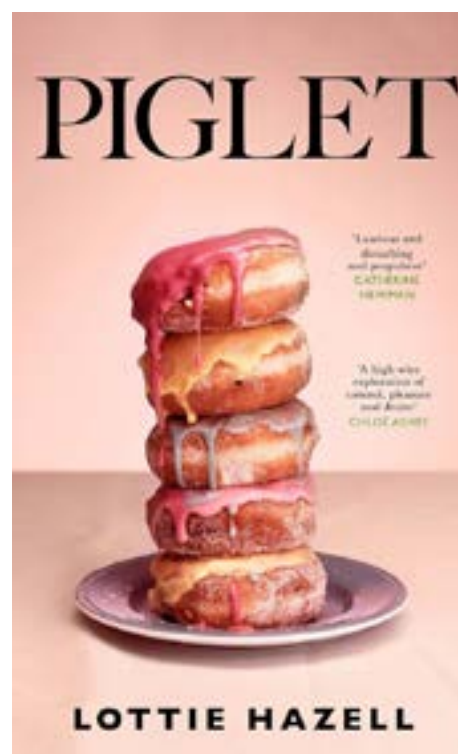
Filled with mouth-watering dishes and a narrator who is perennially, and for the most part unashamedly, ravenous, this is an odd and totally marvelous book. Piglet has an almost Bridget Jones-like loveliness and bounce, with a similar lightness and humor. Yet there is a darkness and an intensity here that you don't find in Bridget Jones.

Lamorna Ash, author of "Dark, Salt, Clear," comments: "It takes audacity and all kinds of courage to produce a novel as ferocious and weird as 'Piglet.' The narrative accelerates like nothing else I've read, opening onto dead-end domestic conformity and then driving us all the way out into the wildernesses, where the possibility for liberation and the fulfillment of desires might be discovered. It made me so hungry."

Writes author Fran Littlewood, "Characters that pop, writing you could eat."

Enticing and drool-inducing as are the dishes and desserts described in "Piglet," I have to say that the emotional tension that builds over the course of the novel is enough to make one lose one's appetite for the season. But truly, this is one of the best books I have devoured in some time. I highly recommend it.

I also recommend Kari Ferrell's 2024 memoir, "You'll Never Believe Me: A Life of Lies, Second Tries, and Things I Should Only Tell My Therapist." I don't



know where I heard about this book — it may have been a blurb in The New Yorker — but it's definitely worth a read, if only for the reason (and there are a good many reasons to read this book) that, at least initially, the narrator is so totally morally bankrupt. To the point where I found myself trying to think of a book in which the narrator is similarly untrustworthy, not in terms of telling readers the truth, but in terms of basic personal morality. The only one I could think of was the 1955 psychological thriller, "The Talented Mr. Ripley," and subsequent books by Patricia Highsmith (which if you haven't yet read, you must, immediately).

"You'll Never Believe Me" is a memoir, though, whereas Ripley is fiction, and Kari Ferrell is basically, for the first two-thirds of the book, an unabashedly not-good person. But she tells it like it is. No sugar-coating the lies, manipulations and the broad extent of the crap she pulls.

Born in Jeollabuk-do, "a province in the southwestern part of South Korea roughly twice the size of Rhode Island," Ferrell's story is that she was adopted by a Mormon family in Utah.

"Most people can pinpoint the town they were born in, if not down to the specific hospital," she writes, "but for me it was simply another unknown on a long list of unknowns. My birth parents were poor and couldn't afford to take care of me and wanted to give me a better life. I got that better life when I was shipped off to America at five months old. The end."

What does she do that makes her so bad? Well, I'll tell you. She steals money from her friends, her family and her lovers, she cashes bad checks, she shoplifts, and she lies, lies, lies, and doesn't seem to care a whit that she is an utterly untrustworthy, ungrateful daughter and friend.

Her take on Mormonism is interesting: "Like with any successful MLM, you have someone you're trying to please, and someone who wants to please you, and the church banks on that hierarchy. It was like a MasterClass in the art of manipulation, and I was a star student with a front-row seat."

But all that being said, Kari is snappy and witty and funny and compelling and a great storyteller, and you can't help but want to know what caper she's going to pull next and where on earth a person like her ends up in the final act. Oh, and the writing is really good. She ends up, no surprise, in jail, and eventually, thank heavens, therapy, and, for the most part, on her feet. Yes, finally, despite the rocky, slippery, chaotic beginning, the caterpillar morphs into something beautiful and decent.

It's an entertaining, interesting book; a window into a unique and unusual life; a journey from chaos to redemption; a where-she-has-been, what-happened-and-what-she's-like-now story that is witty, thought-provoking, entertaining, and (in the end) quite moving. I definitely recommend it.

Other books I have read that I recommend and which I hope to write about in future issues are "The Baker's Secret" by Charlotte author Stephen P. Kiernan, "All the Sinners Bleed" by S.A. Cosby and "Twist" by Colum McCann.

Happy spring, and here's hoping some good reads spring up for you this season!



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# Library News

## Earth Month extending into May with at least three events

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

From surprise snow storms to sunny daffodil days, Earth Month was full of surprises. The month of April was also filled with activity as our community celebrated Earth Month with over 20 programs and more than 200 participants.

We hope that you'll consider taking part in the additional Earth Month activities this May such as the tree ID workshop at the Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge on May 4, the Trees on Pease hike on May 10 (rescheduled from April 26) and the food waste prevention program on May 20.

Other highlights this month include the continuation of the Japanese cultural series on May 6 and 31. We certainly hope you will join us for the showing of "Free for All: The Public Library" on May 7 and the chance for conversation about our library and the spirit of libraries everywhere.

### Programs for kids

#### Monthly baby & toddler time Saturday, May 3, 10 a.m.

Baby Time: Join other young families in an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the young children's area. Ages birth to 12 months.

Toddlers: Join other young families in an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the program room. Ages 12 months to 24 months.

#### 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.

#### Babytime Thursdays, 9:30 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.

#### Introduction to Japanese culture through food Tuesday, May 6, 7 p.m.

Hideko Furuyama taught Japanese language and culture courses at Saint Michael's College and retired several years ago. In her Japanese culture course, she covered the history, religion, cuisine and more. She brings her expertise to the Charlotte Library for an introduction to Japan by way of its culinary heritage. Presented as part of a Japanese cultural series based on a grant from the Japan Foundation.

#### 'Free for All: The Public Library' film Wednesday, May 7, 7 p.m.

"Free for All: The Public Library" tells the story of the quiet revolutionaries who made a simple idea happen. From the pioneering women behind the Free Library Movement to today's librarians who service the public despite working in a contentious age of closures and book bans, meet those who created a civic institution where everything is free and the doors are open to all. Presented in conjunction with the PBS Indie Lens productions.

#### 'Trees on Pease' walk Saturday, May 10, 2 p.m.

Brandon Benedict, county forester for Chittenden County, will lead a family-friendly walk on the Pease Mountain Trail focused on the species of trees found there. This will all be on the lower loop and take about two hours. Meet at the Pease Mountain trailhead near the ice rink at the west end of Charlotte Central School.

#### Cook book club Tuesday, May 13, 5:30 p.m.

Join a celebration of Ina Garten's show "Barefoot Contessa." Browse our collection of Ina Garten cookbooks and select a recipe to make and share. No time to make a dish? No worries! There's

always extra so please come and share your love of food. You can also find copies of her books on Libby and at other local libraries.

#### Thursday book club Thursday, May 15, 7:30 p.m.

The Thursday book club is reading "Rough Sleepers," the story of Jim O'Connell, who graduated from Harvard Medical School and was nearing the end of his residency at Massachusetts General, when the hospital's chief of medicine made a proposal: Would he defer a prestigious fellowship and spend a year helping to create an organization to bring health care to homeless citizens? That year turned into O'Connell's life's calling. Tracy Kidder spent five years following O'Connell and his colleagues as they worked with thousands of homeless patients. O'Connell navigates the city streets at night, offering medical care, socks, soup, empathy, humor and friendship to some of the city's most endangered citizens. Copies available at the circulation desk.

#### Mystery book group Monday, May 19, 10 a.m.

In "The Poacher's Son," game warden Mike Bowditch returns home one evening to find an alarming voice from the past on his answering machine — his father Jack, a hard drinking womanizer who makes his living poaching illegal game. An even more frightening call comes the next morning from the police; they are searching for the man who killed a beloved local cop the night before, and his father is their prime suspect. Jack has escaped from police custody, and only Mike believes that his tormented father might not be guilty. Copies available at the circulation desk.

#### Food waste prevention program Tuesday, May 20, 7 p.m.

Wasting food is expensive. Every year, Americans lose more than \$218 billion on wasted food. Join Anne Bijur from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation for an enlightening conversation about preventing food waste to save money, fight hunger and protect our environment.

#### Better Together book club Wednesday, May 21, 7 p.m.

Join this open group that discusses books related to parenthood, which will be discussing Claire Keegan's multi-award-winning, bestselling novel "Small Things Like These." In 1985 in an Irish town, during the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal and timber merchant, faces his busiest season. As he does the rounds, he feels the past rising up to meet him and encounters the complicit silences of a people controlled by the church. Copies available at the circulation desk. Ebook and audiobook available on Hoopla.

#### Men's book group Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 p.m.

In the four most bloody and courageous days of our nation's history, two armies fought for two dreams. One dreamed of freedom, the other of a way of life. Far



more than rifles and bullets were carried into battle. There were memories. There were promises. There was love. And far more than men fell on those Pennsylvania fields. Shattered futures, forgotten innocence and crippled beauty were also the casualties of war. "The Killer Angels" is unique, sweeping, unforgettable — a dramatic re-creation of the battleground for America's destiny. Join in person or on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/yjrjx8rh>. Copies available at circulation desk.

### Recurring programs

#### Book chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet each week to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, 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.

#### 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 rescheduled following the Opening Meeting Law. The next scheduled board meeting is this Thursday, May 1, at 6 p.m. Contact the library or visit the library website ([charlottepubliclibrary.org](http://charlottepubliclibrary.org)) for more information.

# Senior Center News

## Visit Manitoba, share magic, buy plants and more in May

Lori York  
Director

This month, Charlotte resident Bill Fraser-Harris will share highlights about his recent trip to Manitoba observing polar bears in their natural habitat.

The senior center will also host Magicians without Borders for a magic presentation and performance. And don't forget the annual Senior Center Plant Sale fundraiser on May 24. Bring a friend, enjoy the community spirit and get inspired for spring gardening.

### Senior center plant sale

**Saturday, May 24, 9 a.m.-noon**

The senior center's annual plant sale will be rain or shine. Stop by for well-priced annuals, perennials and miscellaneous garden pots and tools. If you're dividing perennials in your garden, consider potting and labeling a few to donate to the sale. Drop off plants at the center any time between Friday, May 16, and Wednesday, May 21. Extra veggies and annual seedlings are welcome, too. Need help digging? Please call 802-425-6345 and leave your name, address and phone number. We'll call to arrange a time to dig your plants. We'll be digging plants through May 21. Downsizing? Gardening tools and other gardening items are gladly accepted. Questions: Polly Price at [ppolly62@ymail.com](mailto:ppolly62@ymail.com).

### Programs

#### Manitoba talk

**Thursday, May 1, 1 p.m.**

Join Charlotte resident Bill Fraser-Harris for his Polar Bears, First Nations & Tourists — A Juxtaposition, a presentation about his experiences exploring the stunning landscapes, encountering polar bears and learning about the culture of the First Nations. This presentation highlights the contrasts and connections between wildlife, Indigenous communities and tourism, giving an insight into the diverse facets of Manitoba's beauty and heritage. Free. Registration is appreciated but not required.

#### Mahjong

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

Join an informal mahjong gathering, open to all levels of experience. Free. No registration required. If you're interested in Shanghai mahjong, whether you're new to it or a seasoned player, you're welcome to join the group for casual play and fun conversation. Questions? Contact Nan Mason at [anne.mason@uvm.edu](mailto:anne.mason@uvm.edu). If you are interested in American mahjong, a few players are looking to start up some games. Feel free to stop by during this time and get a table going.

#### Kirtan

**Friday, May 9, 5-6:30 p.m.**

Sing to celebrate the return of spring and mothers everywhere. Join Charlie Nardozzi and Heidi Kvasnak for a spring kirtan on May 9. Kirtans are heart-centered practices where participants sing ancient yogic chants or songs that are simple and repetitive with the intention of creating a meditative space and feeling of connection to yourself and others. Everyone is encouraged to join in to sing in unison or in call and response. If you prefer

to listen, you'll still experience the peaceful benefits of coming together in community and taking in this beautiful ancient practice. Chant sheets will be available, and there will be time between the chants for short, quiet meditation and a longer one at the end. Suggested donation \$5-\$15. Registration appreciated but not required. To register, call 802-425-6345.

#### Magic presentation & performance Wednesday, May 14, 2:45-3:45 p.m.

Tom Verner and Janet Fredericks, founders of the international award-winning organization Magicians Without Borders, have travelled to 47 war-torn countries and entertained millions of refugees and orphan children. They have traveled five times to Ukraine since the war. They will speak about their work, and with a few of their young sorcerer apprentices, they will perform some marvelous magic. Come and be delighted. Free. Registration is appreciated but not required. To register, call 802-425-6345.

#### Alzheimer's caregivers support group Wednesday, May 14, 3-4 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer's? Do you know someone who is? Please join us for our monthly Caregivers Support Group on the second Wednesday of each month from 3-4 p.m. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. Please note the earlier time during the winter months. Free. No registration required. For more information email [louisefairbank67@gmail.com](mailto:louisefairbank67@gmail.com).

#### Friendship gathering

**Thursday, May 15, 12:30-1:30 p.m.**

The friendship gathering meets every third Thursday of the month, providing a welcoming space for seniors to make new connections and build lasting friendships. Enjoy light refreshments, engaging conversation and plenty of opportunities to mingle. To help us plan accordingly, please RSVP by calling 802-425-6345. Free. Registration required.

#### Memory café

**Saturday, May 17, 11-noon.**

Join us for the Memory Cafe at the Charlotte Senior Center. This free event offers a supportive and social environment for individuals living with memory loss, along with their caregivers or loved ones. Engage in a fun activity, connect with others and find support. Memory cafes will be held monthly at the senior center on the third Saturday. Free. To register, call 802-425-6345 or contact Susan Cartwright at [cartwright.susan1@gmail.com](mailto:cartwright.susan1@gmail.com) for more information.

#### Art

##### May art exhibit

This month's art exhibit at the senior center is For the Love of Nature. It features art by Ann Sage, inspired by the beauty of the natural world. Her original works are primarily in oil and acrylic. From tranquil landscapes to delicate floral studies and glass still lifes, each piece celebrates the seasons and the wonder found in nature's details. An artist reception will be held Thursday, May 8, 4:30-6:30 p.m.



Photo by Lori York

A full house showed up for Hank Kaestner's presentation at the senior center about his travels to Easter Island.

#### Photo discussion group Sunday, May 4, 2-4 p.m.

Join the monthly photo discussion group, where photographers of all skill levels are welcome to share their work, ideas and experiences. Bring a photo and a story to share with the group. This is a great chance to engage in creative dialogue, get feedback and explore the impact of your images in a supportive and collaborative environment. By donation. No registration required. For questions or more information, contact Emily Cross at [ecross@ecrossphoto.com](mailto:ecross@ecrossphoto.com).

#### Watercolor

##### Warm-weather watercolor

**Tuesdays, May 13, 20 & 27, 9 a.m.-noon**

Join artist Lynn Cummings to explore the vibrant beauty of Vermont during its most picturesque season. Dive into a creative and supportive environment where you'll enhance your watercolor techniques and boost your artistic confidence. In addition to traditional watercolor, you'll experiment with pen, pencil and ink sketches, along with other exciting watercolor methods. Be sure to provide your email address and register by Tuesday, May 6, to receive the supply list in plenty of time. To register, call 802-425-6345. Cost: \$125.

#### Exercise

##### Bone Builders

**Mondays, 9:45-10:45 a.m., Tuesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m., & Wednesdays, 1:30-2:30 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.

#### Qigong and stretching Tuesdays, 3:00-3:45 p.m.

Join Levi Sanders for a qigong and

stretching class for seniors, designed to improve flexibility, balance and relaxation. Through gentle movements, deep breathing and simple stretches, you'll boost energy, reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. This class offers a safe, mindful practice to help you feel more connected to your body and promote a calm, refreshed mind. Free. No registration required.

#### Yoga dance

**Fridays, 12:30-1:30 p.m.**

Let Your Yoga Dance incorporate basic dance-like movements to music, guided by the body's energy system (chakras). It is a safe, compassionate, gentle movement practice, allowing for individual expression and nonjudgemental acceptance. This class is appropriate for all levels of fitness and abilities. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

#### Meals

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

#### Monday lunches

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

#### Senior center info:

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages. Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at [charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://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](mailto:lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org)  
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte  
802-425-6345  
[charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org)

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

# Write Ingredients

## May 5 historically notable for more than just Monday Munch

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

May 5 is quite a day in American history:

- 1857 — A group of noted literary men of the day met at Boston's Parker house. While enjoying a meal and conversation, the men talked about founding a new magazine. A few months later, the mission statement published in the first issue of *The Atlantic* was signed by many of the greats of American letters, including Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. You can read that mission statement here: [theatlantic.com/history](https://theatlantic.com/history).

Take no notice of what the fast food aficionado and current White House resident says about this distinguished publication.

- 1862 — Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the battle of Puebla is now celebrated, mostly in the U.S., as Cinco de Mayo. U.S. News & World Report explains why this holiday is more popular in here than in Mexico (<https://tinyurl.com/5w3ppad>).

- 1891 — Carnegie Hall opened in New York City, with Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky as guest conductor of the New York Music Society Orchestra. This year star pianist Andrés Schiff canceled his scheduled concert because of President Trump's "unbelievable bullying" of the rest of the world (<https://tinyurl.com/yzkr7y6n>).

- 1904 — Boston Braves pitcher Cy Young pitched the first major league perfect game. Now, a National League pitching award given each year bears his name.

- 1921 — Coco Chanel introduced her new perfume on the fifth day of the fifth month, fittingly naming it Chanel No. 5.

- 1925 — John T. Scopes, a teacher in Dayton, Tennessee, was arrested for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution. In the famous "Monkey Trial," Scopes was defended by the ACLU with Clarence Darrow arguing about academic freedom. Trained chimpanzees performed on the courthouse lawn, and press coverage



Adobe Stock photo

was intense. In 1976, the National Park Service designated the courthouse a National Historic Landmark. Think about the current curriculum mandates coming out of the Oval Office, and bring on the chimps.

- 1926 — Sinclair Lewis declined the Pulitzer Prize for his novel "Arrowsmith," still upset that his "Mainstreet" had not been awarded this prize.

- 1942 — The U.S. began rationing sugar. In a chapter titled "Sweet Sacrifice," recipes in "Grandma's Wartime Kitchen: World War II and the Way We Cooked" show how to substitute molasses, maple syrup, honey and corn syrup for granulated sugar.

- 1943 — Postmaster General Frank C. Walker established the Postal Zone System. Write someone a letter. Beautiful stamps are available from the helpful people at 161 Ferry Road. Think of the joy half a dozen letters could bring.

- 1969 — Norman Mailer received the Pulitzer for his "History as a Novel/ The Novel as History," his nonfiction

novel recounting the October 1967 March on the Pentagon. Teaching a required literature course at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, when I asked fledgling engineers to name a favorite book, the only thing they could come up with was Dr. Seuss. My colleagues grumbled when I assigned Mailer's just-released book, but those students cheered when the Pulitzer was announced.

- 1991 — The public works director in Temple, Calif., complained, "People think it's sort of a joke. It's really not." Ants, enjoying their own kind of power lunch, dined on wire insulation, short-circuiting street lights and traffic signals, forcing the city to spend \$22,000 to rewire three traffic lights.

May 5 and May 12 are special days in Charlotte's Monday Munches. Here's what you can enjoy those days at the senior center, 212 Ferry Road:

**May 5**  
**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Veggie fajitas, roasted potatoes, cucumber tomato salad and dessert.

**May 12**  
**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Turkish lentil soup, pita bread and dessert.

The fajita is known as Tex-Mex food, referring to a border style of cooking now popular throughout the country. A variety of condiments might appear with the veggie fajita including guacamole, pico de gallo, queso, salsa, shredded cheese and sour cream. Show up at the Charlotte Senior Center to find out what the volunteer cooks have to offer.

Lentils are a popular food dating back thousands of years. Early Romans ate chestnut and lentil soup. I always seem to have a carton of lentil soup in my freezer. No chestnuts, but right now, cauliflower, carrots, tomatoes, red pepper strips, onions, and garlic sit with the lentils. Lentils are extremely accommodating. According to an Internet site listing 78 recipes, lentils pair well with everything from eggplant, rhubarb, zucchini, pineapple, fish, cheese, watercress, sausage, ham, chilies, potatoes, roasted beets. And lots lots more.

A word about pita. When my college history professor, who let us know he was proud to be an Armenian, heard I'd married an Armenian, he sent me his copy of "Dinner at Omar Khayyam's: A Book of Home Cooking Based on the Food of the Near East." The introduction to lavash (Armenian version of pita) notes that this is a sacred product. Whether you call this flatbread Syrian, Arabic, Lebanese, Armenian or just pita, it's very good, versatile and available at Monday Munch.

Reminder: Charlotte is fortunate to have a library with a great selection from which children can borrow. The Little Free Library for Kids at the Grange invites children to come choose a book they'd like to take home and keep. Thanks to a generous donation, a new supply of enticing books will appear on the shelves over the next few weeks. Invite a child you know to head over to 2858 Spear Street and take a look.

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