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Merging Charlotte, Hinesburg middle schools contemplated

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Informal conversations about the possibility of merging the Charlotte Central and the Hinesburg Community middle schools have been going on for years.

At its Tuesday, May 20, meeting the Champlain Valley School District board began a process to make those conversations more formal.

Superintendent Adam Bunting said they didn't want the discussions to continue without wider community awareness about these conversations.

"There's a lot of things to talk about. A lot of feelings I imagine that people would have," Bunting said. "Our question essentially was: Is this something the board would want to direct us to look more into?"

The consensus of the board appeared to be affirmative, that the members would like for the administration to look more deeply into this.

At its June meeting, the board is expected to formalize the formation of a study committee directing the administration to look into the idea. The committee members will be from the district's administration, not from the school board, chair Meghan Metzler said.

Metzler said the committee would be charged with researching, considering and recommending opportunities for sharing resources between the two schools, specifically the middle schools.

Bunting said the possibility of the two schools sharing resources had been discussed since before he became superintendent.

Board member Keith Roberts said this topic was being discussed in 2009, at a very preliminary level, when he was elected to the Hinesburg school board before school consolidation.

"We were thwarted at every

opportunity because it was a different school district," Roberts said.

Being able to combine resources was supposed to be one of the advantages of consolidating the schools, he said.

"It's one of the reasons that I personally supported consolidation," Roberts said. "I'm delighted that this is being contemplated, to have a formal study committee."

He said it is important for everyone to understand that the discussion and the forming of a committee would be the beginning of a journey, but there is no commitment at this time.

And it is not something the board will rush into. Roberts said, "We're going to bring the communities along. It's about equity among our students."

Bunting said it began as a conversation about saving money, but as the conversation continued it has become about increasing opportunities for students. For example, the playing fields and facilities at Charlotte are outstanding, but less than adequate at Hinesburg.

"We can't even have a baseball field at Hinesburg because of the wetlands that are there and the risk of flooding," Bunting said.

After years of informal conversations, Bunting said, "We would rather err on the side of full transparency."

Gary Marckres, chief operation officer from the district's central office, confirmed that the school system would save approximately \$500,000 by combining the middle schools.

With a school district budget of around \$100 million, Metzler said she didn't think this amount of savings was a sufficient reason to go ahead with the proposal, but the reason to go forward is if it "will improve student engagement at all levels."

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Jazzy festivities



Photo by Tyler Cohen

The Charlotte Central School jazz band regales festival goers at the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival. For more Charlotte Central School news, see page 10.

CVU adds banners to embarrassment of title riches in school gym

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Champlain Valley Union High is faced with a problem other schools would probably like to have: Where to hang all the championship banners?

It's a growing problem at CVU where the gym is running out of space for all the banners from state championships won over the years. And the school's scholars bowl team isn't making the problem any easier.

CVU's scholars bowl team won its second state title this year in as many years. It was its fourth over the last 24 years (2007, 2022,

2024 and 2025).

The Redhawks took their state title to Atlanta over the Memorial Day weekend where they competed on the national stage against schools from all over the country and acquitted themselves in impressive fashion, coming in 65th out of 336 teams.

Early in this year's competition, CVU went up against New Trier High from Illinois, a school that has been touted as one of the best public schools in the United States by at least two national publications over the decades.

The Redhawks vanquished that team and others from Virginia, Tennessee, California,

Ohio and Alabama, which included some of the nation's best at competing on the gridiron of erudition.

On the way to the second playoff round at the nationals, the Redhawks scholar bowlers compiled a .667 winning percentage, the best ever recorded by a Vermont school at the biggest of scholars bowl tournaments, surpassing the state record CVU set in 2011 with a .625 winning percentage.

Behind the success of Champlain Valley's scholars bowl teams over the past two decades is coach John Bennett.

Rahn Fleming, who coached the Redhawks to the state title in 2022 and

an undefeated season this year, that could be the best high school football season in Vermont history by taking the state title while outscoring opponents by 400 points, has said that Bennett's scholars bowl team wins over the years may be more than that of any other coach in CVU history. That's quite an achievement at a school where state title banners sprout like dandelions in May.

Bennett downplays that speculation, noting that over the years his scholars bowl teams have had more opportunities to rack up wins than coaches in other sports. For example, the scholars bowl team this year played in 54

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SCHOLARS BOWL

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games, while most years football teams play around 11 games, but he does admit that his winning percentage is “pretty good.”

After 24 years Bennett is retiring after this year. During his tenure his teams have had a “pretty good” record of 858 wins, 222 losses and two ties for an almost 80-percent winning average.

Team member Leah Rauch said she thinks one of the reasons Bennett has excelled as a coach is the way he motivates his players through positive reinforcement.

Early at the nationals, Rauch said she was doubting herself and dwelling on questions she got wrong, but Bennett told her, “It doesn’t matter if you got it wrong. Just move on to the next one and try to do the best you can.”

At least four times during the weekend, Bennett remind her what a good person she is.

It helps that Bennett has “such a strong personality, and also because he brings people cookies quite a lot,” she said.

Besides having a team whose members excel in different areas of knowledge that complement each other, one of the Redhawks’ big strengths is they all have little random things they remember from childhood, Rauch said.

With Bennett retiring, assistant coach Kiran MacCormick is the heir apparent to that position, but it won’t be known for sure until coaching positions for next year are announced. He is certainly a strong candidate; besides being with the team since 2021 and part of two state titles, MacCormick was on Jeopardy! two years ago.

He enjoyed the experience of being on Jeopardy! Although it didn’t change his life, it’s “kind of neat” having people he doesn’t know recognize him from the show.

“I guess it was sort of my 15 minutes of fame,” MacCormick said.

MacCormick said he thinks the key to the Redhawks’ success is that the players were really committed and “put in the work.” He also is impressed with the team’s broad knowledge base across the board.

“We have no glaring weaknesses,” MacCormick said. “It wasn’t just like raw talent; we definitely have strengths in science, math, history and specifically world



Photos by John Bennett

From left, Jacob Graham, Charles Redmond, Wylie Ricklefs and Leah Rauch are prepared to play a match. Although there are six players on a team, only four play in each match during a tournament.



From left, Zoe Mui, Wylie Ricklefs, Charles Redmond and Jacob Graham are prepared to play another match in Atlanta at the scholars bowl national tournament.

history.”

In addition, the team is strong in the so-called “trash categories” like pop culture and sports.

One of the team’s aces is Charles Redmond, who MacCormick said is probably the best in Vermont at knowing about very obscure things from world history.

The team prepares by reading questions from previous tournaments or questions that question companies create. They also practice their “buzzing in.” Unlike in Jeopardy! where contestants can’t ring in until the question has been completely read, in scholars bowl contestants can ring in as soon as the question reading begins.

This has often played into Champlain Valley’s hand, as the team has proven adept

at letting overly eager teams buzz in too early and get questions wrong, then taking advantage of their option to answer the same question and get it right.

The team had time during their weekend in Atlanta to do some sightseeing, like touring the Georgia Aquarium and the World of Coca Cola. Rauch felt the ubiquitous soft drink attraction was a bit Atlanta-centric, but she did have fondness for the opportunity to experience a fast-food chain that isn’t in Vermont: “We were there for three nights, and I had six Dairy Queen Blizzards.”

Let’s mark that down to practicing for next year’s scholars bowl season. Who knows? Maybe a question about the only state in the U.S. without a Dairy Queen might show up in a pop-culture category.

SCHOOLS

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She encouraged members to talk to parents of young children at the Hinesburg and Charlotte schools to hear their reactions to the proposal, and Metzler also urged them to get the perspectives of students who have graduated from those schools and are now at Champlain Valley Union High.

Teachers, school board ratify employment agreement

Also at the meeting, the Champlain Valley Education Association and the school board announced the ratification of an agreement between the two bodies to succeed the current agreement for the district’s teachers. The agreement will take

“There’s a lot of things to talk about. A lot of feelings I imagine that people would have.”

— Superintendent Adam Bunting

effect on July 1.

“I’m proud of the respectful and collaborative negotiations between the two parties,” Bunting said. “While neither team got everything they wanted, the agreement represents what’s best for our students and educators — and our community as a whole.”

Effective for three years — from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2028 — the agreement includes an increase to the life

insurance benefit; more robust health and safety language; expansion of the board certification benefit; and subcommittees to review workday, caseload, and professional development funds. Salary increases total 15 percent new dollars over the three-year agreement, which the Champlain Valley Education Association and school board deem competitive and responsible, according to a release from the school district.



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Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus but no Charlotte, Va.

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Answer: Charlotte, Virginia.

Question: What is not the town and state where Jim Carpenter of Charlotte, Vermont, lives?

Another correct question for this imaginary Jeopardy! response might be: What mistake did the seemingly flawless and unflappable Ken Jennings make when Carpenter appeared on the quiz show at the end of May?

Of course, the thing that Carpenter had worried about before going on the quiz show was making sure that Jennings would pronounce the name of our fair town correctly. Carpenter had carefully filled out the way we say “Charlotte” on a form where he supplied information and an anecdote for the interview segment that comes during the Jeopardy round.

And on Friday, May 23, everything went smoothly. So smoothly in fact that Carpenter won his first appearance on the show with a convincing come-from-behind win, sealed when he was the only contestant to answer correctly on the Final Jeopardy question with “What is the Julian calendar?” to the prompt: “Eponymously named and in use for more than 1,600 years, it was based in part on concepts from the Greek mathematician Sosigenes.”

Carpenter described the contest just as viewers saw it on TV as “a really, really competitive game.”

“I got off to kind of a slow start, but then, there were a couple of particular categories that I sort of got going with,” Carpenter said.

One of those categories was a music category, which had to be a pleasant surprise for the retired music professor.

“That one turned out to be right up my alley. In contrast to the category right next to it, which was a pop culture one, about which I had absolutely no clue,” he said. “I think what really helped was just getting a little more of the feel for the buzzer, which is one of the hardest things about the show, because you can know all the answers you want, but if you aren’t quick enough to get in ahead of somebody, then you don’t get a chance at it.”

During the Double Jeopardy round, Carpenter really began to get into the rhythm of the game, and began to close the gap with the front runner, like a trivial pursuit Sovereignty pulling ahead of Journalism in the homestretch of a minutiae Triple Crown.

Things dramatically improved for him when three-time winner Brendan Liaw of British Columbia missed his first Daily Double.

“I think he started to get just a little bit rattled at that point, so it sort of left an opening,” Carpenter said.

Although the music category turned out to be a productive hunting ground for him, Carpenter said that with the categories you often don’t know just from the label what kind of questions ... er ... answers you will find there. That category was labeled “country, music.”

With the comma in the category label, Carpenter wasn’t sure whether or not he was wandering into a minefield of questions about country music, which would have been about as difficult as a current pop culture category for him.

He said he felt strong in a variety of knowledge areas from lots of reading in lots of different subjects “over a lifetime of just being curious about stuff.”

Carpenter said with little time to prepare before the taping, he didn’t cram or practice with a buzzer like many contestants do. He decided to rely on his extensive reading, lots of lived experience and “a fair amount of

basically little bits and pieces of bizarre and mostly useless information hanging around in my brain.”

His strategy was to relax, rely on what he knew and stay away from categories he was uncomfortable with.

The show was taped in March, so it meant two months of struggling to keep his appearance secret. The show’s producers are insistent that contestants not reveal any spoiler alerts about whether they have won or not.

“I think it might have been a little tougher for my wife, actually, who was wanting to brag on me,” Carpenter said.

He was told in February that he was going to be competing on the show in March, and they were not supposed to mention that he was going to be on the show to anyone

that wasn’t immediate family. About 10 days before his game’s air date, they got an email saying it was now OK to let people know that he would be on TV competing, but they weren’t supposed to say anything about how he did or about any of the categories.

His Friday win netted Carpenter \$25,601 and advanced him to the next game on the following Monday.

If you watched the show on the following Monday, Jennings remained unflappable because the flappable part was edited out. Carpenter corrected him, the technicians stopped taping and the conversation started



Courtesy photo

Jim Carpenter of Charlotte on the set of Jeopardy!..

Handicap parking spot coming to town beach

Brett Yates
Contributor

On June 9, the Charlotte Selectboard approved the creation of a handicap parking space and an adjacent loading zone on the west side of Lake Road, just north of the Holmes Creek Covered Bridge. The work will take place within the next few weeks, alongside an already planned repaving of a portion of the road.

The new parking spot, which will replace a gravel shoulder, constitutes what recreation commission co-chair Maura O’dea-Wygmans called “phase one” of an effort to make the town beach ADA-accessible. In theory, it will eventually provide access to a ramp that will accommodate wheelchair users, as well as beachgoers carrying kayaks and other small watercraft.

Officials haven’t yet settled on a design for the ramp. O’dea-Wygmans presented a \$33,000 proposal from Ferrisburgh’s Dock

Doctors in which a permanent 10-by-10-foot concrete block, sunk partially into the beach, would anchor a pair of removable aluminum gangways, but she didn’t sound especially enthusiastic about it.

“It’s not going to look great,” O’dea-Wygmans acknowledged. She noted a desire within the recreation committee to investigate the possibility of a year-round installation, which would avoid the \$2,300 annual cost of putting in and taking out the gangways.

In the meantime, the town’s improvement-and-repair fund will pay for the new parking space, a \$4,012 expense that will draw from a \$10,000 earmark for the maintenance of the town beach stairs.

Those “do need repair because the bottom step is eroded due to high water levels,” O’dea-Wygmans said, “but I don’t think there’s any plan currently to repair those stairs.”

Tree planting and removal applications

Charlotters must seek the town’s permission before planting or removing trees from municipally owned land, which includes the privately leased areas of Thompson’s Point. Tree warden Clifton Mix and deputy tree warden Mary Cheney want to make that process a bit clearer.

“Since we’ve been in this position, it seemed like we were quickly inundated with a lot of requests for tree cutting,” Mix said. “And once we got into it, after several meetings with different people, we determined that there really was no system that was in place.”

According to Cheney, the criteria for tree removal is more complex than most people realize.

“What we found is that people would call us and say, ‘We want to take this tree down. Just tell us yes,’” Cheney recounted.

over. You didn’t see that because the little errors are corrected.

By the way, if you are ever in a trivia contest where you are asked for a state that doesn’t have a Charlotte, Virginia would be one correct answer. The state marketed as being for lovers has a Charlotte County and a Charlottesvillie, but there’s no Charlotte, Virginia — no matter how you pronounce it.

On the Monday of his competition, Carpenter did very well and had \$25,000 at the end, which most of the time is enough to win, but on this night, Judith Friedman had done even better and had an impressive \$32,001.

Carpenter took home \$3,000 for finishing second on Monday night, giving him a total of \$28,601 for his two games. He doesn’t know what he will do with his winnings, but his wife Lucy Thayer will have a say in that decision.

Thayer and Carpenter have lived in Charlotte since 2019, having moved to a home on Hills Point Road they inherited from his parents after retiring from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

A week’s worth of shows are taped in a day, so after his “Monday” match was filmed he had the opportunity to sit in the audience and watch the taping of the rest of the week’s shows, but he’d been on the set since 7:15 a.m. and had spent the whole day there the day before.

“I decided, ‘No, I’ll change my clothes and just do some exploring and enjoy being out in the California sunlight before heading back to Vermont,’” he said.

There was a nice park with lots of walking trails in Culver City, Calif., where the show is produced. And it was a nice way to spend some time reflecting on his appearance on a show he has been watching since the Art Fleming days when Jeopardy! was on in the morning and you could only watch it when you were sick and staying home from school.



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Around Town

Congratulations

Jadin Brown and **Lily Richardson** of Charlotte have been named to the Champlain College trustees' list for the spring semester for achieving a 4.0 grade point average for two or more consecutive semesters.

Brennan Murdock of Charlotte was named to the Champlain College president's list for achieving a grade point average of 4.0 or higher in the spring semester.

Stuart Robinson of Charlotte was named to the Champlain College dean's list for the spring semester for having a grade point average of 3.5 or higher during the semester.

Lake Segel of Charlotte, a sophomore finance major at Grove City College, has been named to the school's dean's list with distinction for the spring semester.

Condolences

Lena G. Allen, 96, of Englewood, Fla., formerly of Stowe and Charlotte, Vermont, passed away on March 3, 2025. Born to Ruth and Charles Gale, in Stowe, VT, her passion for skiing started by her great niece and then with her grandfather's and her dad's ingenuity of strapping wood to her feet. Her skiing carried her to the world of travels.

Her skiing abilities took her from racing down Nosedive at Stowe to Kitzbuh, Austria. After meeting her husband Monroe on the slopes, skiing became a family activity, then led her to coaching ski racing at Champlain Valley Union High School. Skiing lead her family to places like Colorado and Whistler, B.C.

Lena (Lee) was also an avid tennis player. She coached and taught many folks in Charlotte and in Englewood. She was an active member of the Charlotte Congressional Church and a town lister. Lee also sang with the Champlain Echos chorus of Burlington, VT. Singing along

with her husband from Green Mountain Chorus. She always carried a tune; often you could hear her whistling before you saw her. Lena joins her predeceased husband Monroe; brothers, Frank, Don and Albert; and her niece Jennifer. She leaves her three children, Dana, Gary and Tamara Allen and extended family; Dana's daughter Jocelyn and Chris Parron; granddaughter Kelsey and Mike Plourde; great granddaughter Kinsley and Tamara's daughter, Elaina Krusiewski, to carry on her legacy.

Lena was a graduate of Green Mountain College and the University of Vermont. She was an avid reader and adventure traveler from her early years of skiing, to sailing on Mallets Bay to the inland waterway and Antigua. She traveled to Italy and joined her sister for an art tour in Russia. She even taught herself Russian prior to her adventure. She never stopped learning. Lena was one of Philos Phiest group, who never stopped exercising, whether it be cross-country skiing, tennis or hiking Mt. Philo.

Our grateful appreciation goes to Village on the Isles in Venice, NavaMaze and Tidewell Hospice for their thoughtful warmth and care.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to a non-profit of your choice.

Please celebrate each day as she always did, and if something comes your way you don't like just say, "I'll think about that tomorrow." It's one of her favorite lines from Scarlett O'Hara.

Antoinette "Toni" (Brouillette) Clements, 97, a longtime resident of Charlotte, passed away peacefully in the early morning hours on Wednesday May



Lena Allen

14, 2025, at Green Mountain Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Toni married Ernest "Clark" Clements on May 27, 1950, who predeceased her in 2011. To read the full obituary, please visit vtfuneralhomes.com.



Toni Clements

Advancements

Wake Robin has hired **Kim Anderson** as director of marketing and longtime director of marketing **MaryBeth Dudley** is moving to director of community advancement.

Anderson spent nearly 15 years with the Community Health Centers of Burlington, where she was director of development and communications. Other previous roles include director of development at the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Vermont.

"It's an honor to contribute to a place that sets the standard for compassionate care, lifelong learning and vibrant living," Anderson said.

"Moving into this new position is an exciting step, but it's also bittersweet to say goodbye to my team," Dudley said. "Here's to new beginnings."



Kim Anderson



MaryBeth Dudley

As a nonprofit working demonstration farm dedicated to promoting organic regenerative agriculture, **Philo Ridge Farm** returns to its market and dining roles

this summer. It has announced the return of **Marc St. Jacques** as director of food and beverage and executive chef.

"Marc brings exceptional culinary talent and a genuine appreciation for Vermont's agricultural community," said Diana McCargo, co-founder of Philo Ridge Farm, who has partnered with Chef St. Jacques on the farm's culinary vision. "His approach to seasonal, ingredient-driven cooking perfectly aligns with our commitment to showcasing the farm's organic produce and grass-fed meats in a way that highlights the season."

The market will reopen Wednesday, June 18, and be open Wednesday-Sunday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. with farm-grown products, including organic produce and grass-fed meats; picnic lunches; freshly baked pastries, savory goods and coffee; and local artisanal goods, select groceries and farm fibers.

Dinner at Philo Ridge Farm will reopen on Friday, July 4, in the Farm Commons Barn or the dining room, with reservations available starting Monday, June 16, via the Philo Ridge Farm website (philoridgefarm.org). Dinner service will be offered Wednesday-Saturday, 5:30-9 p.m., and is reservation only.

New on-farm dining will include the Summer Barn, an open-air space serving drinks and food that will be an extension of the dining room, but with no reservations required. Additionally, "Sundays on the Ridge" will begin Sunday, July 20, 11:00 a.m.-8 p.m., and continue throughout the summer, offering a relaxed, family-friendly outdoor experience with grilled specialties, garden tours and activities for children.

For more information about opening dates and hours, menus and reservations, see philoridgefarm.org.

SELECTBOARD

Continued from page 3

"And they were kind of surprised that Cliff would want to go and look at it. And then, once he got there to look at it, they were very surprised that he would say, 'No, there's no need to take this tree down.'"

Cheney came up with the idea of creating a formal application for residents.

Now, they must select one of eight valid reasons for removing or pruning a public tree on a fillable PDF.

The selectboard approved the introduction of the form, but it triggered a debate about whether the rules should apply to trees on private land within the town's right-of-way. According to selectboard member Frank Tenney, they shouldn't, except in cases where the town

planted the trees itself.

By Tenney's account, a municipality gains jurisdiction over privately planted trees in its right-of-way only with the adoption of an official "Shade Tree Preservation Plan," which Charlotte doesn't have. He referred to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and Charlotte's previous tree warden as the sources for his information.

Cheney disputed Tenney's interpretation of the relevant laws, citing her own conversations with attorneys. The debate stands unresolved, but the town will play it safe for now. The selectboard moved to amend Cheney's proposed form, which had sought to address "any tree or shrub within the town right-of-way (ROW) or on town property," limiting its scope at least temporarily to the latter.

"We will work to clarify," selectboard chair Lee Krohn said.

New conservation commissioner

Eli Lesser-Goldsmith will join the Charlotte Conservation Commission for a two-year term, following an appointment

by the selectboard on Monday. The Charlotte resident is also the owner and CEO of Healthy Living, which operates grocery stores in South Burlington and Williston.

In his interview, Lesser-Goldsmith described a desire to see Charlotte become "a much more open and welcoming place for many more people that want to make it their home. I think there's a lot of potential for really thoughtful and respectable growth and development in Vermont."

Selectboard member Natalie Kanner wondered if Lesser-Goldsmith's pro-development stance would represent "an opposing viewpoint" among local conservationists. Fellow board member JD Herlihy suggested that the commission would benefit from "a diversity of thought."

"There's a lot of things with Eli that I agree with. There's a lot of things that I've disagreed with," board member Lewis Mudge said. "But when we have open slots on boards, if people want to step up and volunteer and spend their time helping the town, I think we owe them."



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Q&A with Charlotte Land Trust president Kate Lampton

Jessie Price
Contributor

For 10 days in the beginning of July, red signs will mark conserved land around town. These signs are a reminder that many of Charlotte’s farms, forests and best views are undeveloped thanks to conservation. But what does conservation really mean? To help explain some of the basics and how conservation affects Charlotte, Kate Lampton, president of the Charlotte Land Trust, answers a few questions.

You’ve volunteered for the Charlotte Land Trust for over 20 years. Why is conservation and this organization important to you?

The scenic beauty of Charlotte remains as wonderful as when I first moved here 50 years ago and conservation has been a key reason for that. But the impact of conservation goes much deeper than that. Conservation of our forests, waterways and wildlife habitats helps preserve the ecological health and diversity of this landscape. Conserved farmland has fueled a vibrant, varied farm economy in Charlotte. Five of the farms in the view from my house are conserved. They are part of the patchwork of fields and forests that make up the iconic Vermont landscape.

How much land in Charlotte is conserved, and what is the long-term goal for conservation in town?

Approximately 5,200 acres in Charlotte are conserved. That’s about 20 percent of the total land in town. In the long term we aim to conserve the best of our agricultural soils. We want to protect our waterways by buffering them with conserved land. And we want to protect high-quality forest blocks which provide habitat for wildlife and help slow climate change.

What type of land is appropriate for conservation?

We don’t conserve just any land. Land trusts, including the Charlotte Land Trust, acknowledge that housing and commercial



Photos by Steve Schubart

An aerial view of Williams Woods Natural Area and conserved farmland with Lake Champlain in the distance.

development are part of a well-functioning town. We always consider the location of a property and how it relates to the goals and objectives of the Charlotte Town Plan. An essential part of the conservation process is to assess a property using a wide array of ecological and agricultural data. Connectivity — creating larger blocks of protected forest or farm land — is also a key factor.

What does it mean for land to be conserved? How does it work in layman’s terms?

When we conserve a property the land trust acquires an easement with certain rights in that property. A conservation deed states the goals of our easement and the permitted and restricted uses of a property. Those uses are tailored to the individual properties and the features that are to be protected. Conservation easements run with the land, so they continue with whoever owns the land in the future.

Why doesn’t conserved land always have public trails?

For some of our conserved land, such as the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge, Raven Ridge and Williams Woods, public access is an important feature. However, the majority of conserved land in Charlotte is privately owned and not publicly accessible. In addition to respecting the landowners’ wishes for their property, often what made the property worth conserving also makes it unsuited for public access. For example, wildlife habitat, endangered plant species and wetlands are sensitive and could be negatively impacted by public access.

Once land is conserved, what does Charlotte Land Trust do next? How do you make sure it stays undeveloped?

We inspect conserved properties every year to ensure that the terms of the easement are being upheld. This process, known as stewardship, is important as properties change hands. While original owners are familiar with the easement terms, subsequent owners may not be, so we provide education along with our annual inspections.

How is the Charlotte Land Trust funded?

The Charlotte Land Trust is a 100-percent volunteer, non-profit organization and the generosity of our donors is the main source

of the funds we use to conserve land. We are also fortunate to have the Charlotte Conservation Fund which funds conservation projects and helps us successfully apply for other sources of grant funding. Charlotte Land Trust frequently partners with the Vermont Land Trust and other larger land trusts on projects in Charlotte, and the conservation fund is an essential part of those projects as well.

How can I find out what Charlotte land is conserved?

A map showing conserved land and land covered by an open space agreement, a tool to protect land as part of certain subdivision approvals, is available on the Charlotte Land Trust website at charlottelandtrust.org.

Imagine Charlotte in 50 years. What would you like to see?

If I think forward to the landscape my grandchildren will see, I think there will have, of course, been growth, but Charlotte’s landscape will look more like today than we would have ever predicted when I first moved here 50 years ago. Conservation has been a huge factor in the landscape of today and in what we’ll see in 50 years.

(Jessie Price is a member of the board of directors of the Charlotte Land Trust.)

Rain relief



Photo by Elizabeth Hunt

Memorial Day on Converse Bay was sunny, a nice change during this precipitation-happy start to summer.

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Commentary

Anti-Netanyahu = antisemitism is a false equivalency

Bill Schubart
Contributor


I usually write about Vermont, but even here we're complicit in the horror being perpetrated on Gaza unless we speak out. In several conversations recently, I've expressed my horror both at Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that killed some 1,200 and involved the raping and abduction of peaceful Jewish citizens, but also the disproportionate military and anti-civilian response from Israel's right-wing political leaders that has led to the death of over 50,000 Palestinian men, women and children, although experts believe the actual number may be much higher. Neither is forgivable. While expressing this opinion with friends, I was twice accused of "antisemitism." The Schubarts and related families were German Jews largely from the province of Swabia. The earliest arrivals came in the late 19th century looking for economic opportunity. Successive generations came to escape the pogroms of the World War I era. When World War II broke out, my paternal grandparents rejected the mother tongue and refused to speak German. Anxious to differentiate themselves from the shtetl Jews on the Lower East Side,


they lived largely on the Upper East Side among a coterie of assimilationist Jewish families, many of whom were portrayed in the popular 1967 book "Our Crowd." Most were non-observant Jews, preferring instead to attend the Ethical Culture Society. My father died in World War II on Dec. 3, 1944, in Leyte Gulf in the Philippines four months before I was born and just nine months before the U.S. dropped the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending the war. Since my mother's family was of Dutch and English descent, I was not considered by my family to be Jewish. When my mother married Emile René Couture in 1947, I was baptized a Catholic and was raised as such. The first time I heard the word "Jew" as a youngster was hearing old Vermonters say, "Did you ...?" At 18, I rejected organized religion altogether, becoming agnostic after reading Dostoevsky's "The Grand Inquisitor." My roommate in boarding school was Jewish, as were two of my closest friends. I was taught to judge people not by their spiritual beliefs but rather by how they behaved. "Hate the behavior, not the person." In both conversations, I asked permission of the person with whom I was talking to express my horror at the behavior of right-wing Israeli politicians

without being labelled an "antisemite." Being critical of the minority ruling party of Israel is political not personal — hardly "antisemitism." They are a false equivalency. I was told categorically, in both cases, that they are one and the same — hating the behavior of right-wing Israeli politicians is hating Jews. Conversation ended. As I've written elsewhere, I understand the good promulgated by many religious communities, but I also understand first hand the camouflaged capacity for judgment, hatred and punishment in too many organized religions. Inspired by divine beings throughout history who have lived among us, religions themselves are the creations of fallible humans. The founding values of our own country are being undermined by white "Christian" nationalists who contravene every tenet of Christianity and echo the racist philosophy of eugenics, the "great replacement theory." A version of "the Golden Rule" is found in every religion — "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The genocide in Gaza is not being perpetrated by Jews or Israelis per se but by the Netanyahu regime. According to the Times of Israel, an Israel Democracy Institute poll finds 72.5% of all Israelis believe Netanyahu should accept responsibility for the horrors of October 7th and resign; 48% believe he should resign immediately; only 10% believe he should neither take responsibility nor resign. 83.5% of those on the left and 69% of those in the center support Netanyahu's immediate resignation, as opposed to only 25.5% on the right. It goes without saying that Netanyahu's military aggression is motivated by his legal liability in the Israeli cabinet and legal system. Netanyahu has counted on antisemitism charges to garner support around the world for his anti-Palestinian and genocidal policies that both protect his personal interests and potentiate an entire takeover of Gaza. President Trump, with his personal history of antisemitism and racism, has been his direct collaborator as, until recently, have many other countries afraid of being called "antisemitic." (Trump has even gone so far as to suggest that when Netanyahu drives Palestinians from their homeland, it would make a lovely resort that Trump enterprises could build.) So far only relatively minor international

players have dared challenge this ploy. The leadership of South Africa, a country whose own deeply racist history was healed under the late Desmond Tutu, has called for a trial by the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Organization of Islamic Countries, a 57-member bloc which includes Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and Morocco, voiced their support for the case on Dec. 30, as have Malaysia, Turkey, Jordan, Bolivia, The Maldives, Namibia, Pakistan, Colombia, Brazil and the 22-member Arab League. Besides countries, many advocacy groups and civil society groups worldwide have also joined South Africa's call for justice. Only now are major players in the European Union and Canada beginning to allude to Netanyahu's "genocide" and call for trial by the International Court. The former (2006-09) prime minister of Israel, Ehud Olmert, just released this statement: "Never since its establishment has the state of Israel waged such a war. ... The criminal gang headed by Benjamin Netanyahu has set a precedent without equal in Israel's history in this area, too." I've come to believe we're all complicit if we sit by and watch lives ending daily in Gaza — 54,000 to date and some 123,000 wounded. Sitting in the safety of our living rooms we watch lethargic, skeletal children wave empty pans and beg for food and water. Opposing the mass starvation of civilians is not antisemitism, it's simple human empathy and, in fact, upholds the intrinsic values of Judaism. As long as we buy into a false equivalency, we become complicit in the destruction of the largely peace-loving people of the Palestinian territories. Yes, Hamas triggered this. But how many courageous Gazan civilians have spoken out against Hamas' leadership? A recent Palestinian Center for Policy and Research poll showed Gazan support for Hamas dropping from 52 percent to 43 percent in May. We must understand that opposition to the Netanyahu government's horrific destruction of Gaza's people, schools, hospitals, infrastructure and economic life is not "antisemitism;" it's humanity writ large. We must also call out President Trump's efforts to weaponize "antisemitism" as a self-serving political ploy by the scared, insecure little man in the big white house.

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Commentary

Burlington progressives should oppose mayor’s privatizing

Brett Yates
Contributor

When Elon Musk’s so-called Department of Government Efficiency sought to take a meat cleaver to federal agencies, Burlingtonians — like many other Americans — protested. On the local level, using a different rhetoric, a Progressive administration has undertaken a surprisingly similar project, and so far, relatively few Queen City residents seem to have noticed.

A proposed elimination of the city’s in-house recycling collection program, if it happens, may change that. On May 19, the Burlington City Council authorized the Department of Public Works to solicit price quotes for private hauling services.

The potential shift takes place amid a broader municipal downsizing. On May 9, Mayor Emma Mulvaney-Stanak laid off 18 city workers in an effort to narrow an \$8-million gap between anticipated revenues and expenses for fiscal year 2026.

The administration initially framed its plan to contract out for recycling collection as another money-saving measure, albeit one that would, by the Department of Public Works’ April estimate, add perhaps as little as \$50,000 to the city’s general fund. But it now exists fully outside of the mayor’s current cost-trimming process.

That’s because, with privatization as yet uncertain, budget season has already begun. The Department of Public Works expects the

council to fund the municipal program for another year and then, in July or August, to vote on whether to transfer those same dollars to a private company instead, as part of a three-to-five-year contract.

In its voluntariness, the drive to privatize recycling offers a unique window into the politics of a mayor whose neoliberal instincts elsewhere have enjoyed an appearance of choicelessness, owing to the disappearance of the pandemic-era federal funding that sustained City Hall under her predecessor. In reality, Burlington’s crisis is not merely fiscal — it is a crisis of political identity.

Lately, a statewide outrage against rising property tax bills has tested Burlington’s commitment to the generous public sphere for which the small city earned a national reputation. Voters rejected the last Town Meeting Day request for a general fund rate increase in 2022.

Since then, ostensibly left-wing politicians have acceded to the conservative tax revolt, attributing their reluctance to challenge homeowners’ stinginess to what they describe as the unfair, regressive structure of the property tax and becoming champions of an “affordability” that excludes renters.

The resulting slide toward austerity has, by now, taken on an ideological character. While lamenting individual firings, Mulvaney-Stanak has routinely characterized her broad strategy of cutbacks as a “right-sizing” of city government.

Now, she may liquidate a 36-year-old

public service for no clear reason beyond her own department head’s disinterest in identifying an internal solution to a labor shortage that has recently hobbled the program — better and easier, in the view of Director of Public Works Chapin Spencer, to hand the headache of hiring over to the experts at Casella Waste or Gauthier Trucking.

News of the dire state of municipal recycling arrived at the city council this spring in the form of such a proposal, representing the administration’s first thought, not its last resort. Exhausted workers, sick of pulling double-duty, have signed on, pleading for relief. In the absence of a ready-to-go alternative, a spiritless AFSCME local has, on their behalf, tacitly accepted the erosion of its bargaining unit.

A new, nonunion workforce will presumably suffer many of the same indignities that the Department of Public Works’ workers do now, enduring impossibly long hours and on-the-job injuries. But privatization will make these problems invisible. They’ll become someone else’s issue to deal with, not the mayor’s.

Can the public sector take on challenges, solve problems, do things? These questions have important stakes. At every level of government, officials offer their responses.

The Vermont Progressive Party has traditionally said yes. Given its social-democratic orientation, it couldn’t say

otherwise. “We believe the economy should be democratically owned and controlled in order to serve the needs of the many, not to make profits for the few,” its official platform states.

Yet its supporters appear hesitant to condemn Mulvaney-Stanak’s intention to deliver a public service to unaccountable, profit-making entities. On debateable procedural grounds, the Progressive State Committee tabled a resolution that would have called on the mayor “to prioritize maintaining the city’s utilities under public ownership” on May 17, signaling a reluctance to confront the party’s most prominent elected official.

Mulvaney-Stanak, who campaigned for mayor primarily on a promise of “community safety” (as opposed to her opponent’s “public safety”), may view herself as a pragmatic problem-solver, not as an agent in the big-picture, historical struggle for economic justice imagined by her party’s platform.

Yet one doesn’t have to think in historical terms to become part of history; unless it changes course, Mulvaney-Stanak’s administration will do so, in its minor way, on the side of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and Elon Musk.

Just as the Vermont Progressive Party still has a chance to reclaim its soul, so too do Burlingtonians have a chance to reclaim the soul of their city.

Sunset silhouettes



Photo by Louisa Schibli
Finally, a sunny day led to a beautiful sunset at the Charlotte Town Beach.

Legislature Report

Thoughtful lawmaking should take time — and it is

Chea Waters Evans
Representative

Well, this is taking longer than expected. I'm used to adjourning to great fanfare — midnight speeches from the governor, celebratory whiskey in a plastic cup, hugs and smiles, etc. This year, however, two weeks past our initial expected adjournment date, after days and hours of waiting around the State House playing Uno and waiting for an education bill to surface, we just kind of wandered out of the building and went to bed. Months of delay by the governor kicked things off early in the session, then the House voted out a bill that was slightly destroyed by the Senate, and then there was a week of committee of conference meetings that yielded nothing. Now we're hanging out again, although this time at home, waiting and hoping that something will work out before next week. Here's a quick summary of how the process works: A bill, in this case H.454, comes out of a chamber. The H indicates that it came out of the House of Representatives. When we vote it out of our chamber, it goes to the Senate, they tinker with it how they will, and then it



comes back to the House and if we like it, we approve it with their amendments, and if we don't, then we ask for it to go to a committee of conference. The committee is made up of three members from each chamber of mixed party affiliation. Those six people sit in a room together (you can watch it on YouTube, if you want) and try to figure out compromises and to come up with a bill that both chambers and all parties will support. The bill that comes out of the conference committee can be debated, but it can't be changed or amended, which is why they really need to work it out carefully before it goes back to both chambers for a final vote. As I've mentioned in this column, I hated the version of the education bill that came out of the Senate, so I was relieved that the committee was working from the House version of the bill as a starting point. It seems like there will be a mixture of legislators, community members and experts from the education field on the district-drawing committee, which is great. It also seems like the folks who enjoy public money supporting private schools are digging in a little hard, which isn't that great. Other issues that affect our school district, or potential future district, less are things like school closures. There are some communities with really tiny schools, and the thought of closing those is horrible for them, but unfortunately, it's probably necessary given

the high cost of maintaining facilities, some of them aging and in desperate need of upkeep, and the significant expenses related to administrative staffing and expenses. We're lucky we won't go through that — although I can see a day within the next decade that we end up merging into a central middle school in our region that then feeds into our high school — but we will face some hardships in the next five years or so as far as major budget cuts. Champlain Valley School District is large, and wealthy compared to many others across the state. We have wonderful schools and dedicated, hard-working educators, staff and administration that are meeting increasingly unmanageable circumstances, and who just navigated a crushing pandemic and the academic, social and emotional aftermath that our kids suffered and are still suffering. We pay a lot for this. Everyone's property taxes went up, we voted down our school budget last year, we cut a lot of money and positions from our schools over the last two years, and we'll probably have to do it again and maybe even again after that. For us, the consequence of equitable education for all Vermont kids at a lower cost is probably going to be losing stuff for our students. And our taxes won't be going down right away; they might even go up a little. I'm really sorry about that. I know people think we're just throwing cash at everything and anything, and that

our kids are learning basket weaving and six dialects of Chinese, but the reality is that healthcare costs are a major unpredictable driver of rising budgets, and there's no chance that the federal government is going to do anything about that over the next few years. We're also losing federal funding for all kinds of programs at a moment's notice, which means we have no way of knowing what's to come in three months, let alone two years. So, there's the doom and gloom. I wish there were something prettier to report, but there isn't. If you're looking for a silver lining, though, it's that this is taking longer than expected. It seems like maybe that would be a negative, but I think it's really good. We're not pushing through something just so we can say we did it, and we're not compromising just to be able to point a finger at someone else later and be like, Oh, hey, look how that guy messed up! Thoughtful lawmaking should take time, especially when it comes to Vermont kids. I honestly hope that they take as much time as they need. I'll happily go back to Montpelier over and over again if that means this is getting done right. Please let me know if you have thoughts or feelings or ideas about the situation with Vermont education. We're back in Montpelier on June 16 and 17 to try again; the committee of conference is meeting for the rest of this week. I can be reached at cevens@leg.state.vt.us or 917-887-8231.

Letter to the Editor

Balint should apologize for offensive remark about immigrants

To the Editor:

Rep. Becca Balint's May 28 town hall in Newport included a highly offensive remark: "If we don't have avenues for people to come here legally, we're not going to have anybody around to wipe our a**es."

This crude metaphor perpetuates a bigoted stereotype that immigrants are only valued for low-wage, undesirable jobs like personal care. Such rhetoric is disturbing and dehumanizes immigrants, ignoring their vital contributions to Vermont's economy in a wide range of important roles. It's an egregious viewpoint that demands condemnation.

Where are all the people protesting this disgusting comment? Where are all her loyal supporters who rallied for individuals like Mohsen Mahdawi but think her demeaning remarks about future immigrants being only needed to wipe "a**es" is OK? Not a peep.

Balint's claim of insufficient legal immigration pathways is outright misleading. The U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act provides avenues like H-1B visas for skilled workers, H-2A/H-2B for temporary labor and employment-based visas (EB-1, EB-2, EB-3). Clearly these pathways exist and have existed. In 2023, over 1 million immigrant visas and millions of non-immigrant visas were processed.

These pathways exist and continue to exist to support critical industries as well as support a positive route to citizenship.

The bureaucracy, which has tangled the immigration policy, needs massive revision, not open borders.

The enormous influx of illegal aliens has completely overwhelmed federal agencies and quite a few state and local ones as well. If this influx hadn't occurred over the last four years, due to liberal and progressive policies, then deportations and all the legal labor involved could instead be focused on correcting the process and bringing in people seeking to embrace the American life and pursue liberty. All in all, Vermont's labor needs highlight the need for immigration reform, not harmful stereotypes.

Balint's continued volatile activism and failure to bring real jobs to Vermont (not money via the Congressional Directed

Spending in March of 2024) is not helping the vast majority of her constituents. Her support and outrage over recent arrests in Vermont takes a lot of her time, and still, no new jobs, no new businesses ... just crickets.

We must reject rhetoric that diminishes immigrants' dignity and advocate for fair, efficient immigration policies that value their diverse contributions. We demand Rep. Balint apologize for her heinous comment, for to give her a "pass" would be even more egregious. We must demand Balint begin her designated job to represent all Vermonters to improve the state's financial and overall outlook. Or we will put someone in office who will have the state's best interests at heart.

Pam Baker
West Halifax



Farmworker food drive success

Photo by Sally Wadhams

Linda Hamilton of the Charlotte Grange reports that the organization's food drive for farm workers in early May was a huge success. They met their target for specific items and amounts with room to spare. Residents of Charlotte and communities beyond donated 3,500 pounds of non-perishable food, worth an estimated \$4,800.

Food Shelf News

Thanks to three volunteers from Champlain Valley Union High

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

The collaboration between the Charlotte Food Shelf and Champlain Valley Union High students began three years ago when food shelf director Peggy Sharpe contacted Amy Wardwell, advisor to CVU students who are committed to community service.

"I was able to attend one of their service meetings," said Sharpe. "This began a wonderful partnership."

"The students bring great energy, enthusiasm and joy and are very committed and reliable," she said. "The ones highlighted in this article have been involved in many different aspects of our work over the last two years. It has been a pleasure to work with them, and we wish them success as they head off to college."

She adds her gratitude, appreciation and thanks to all the students who have worked with and supported the food shelf and looks forward to continuing to have students as part of our team. So, in this issue we want to celebrate three CVU seniors who have given of their time and talent to help at the food shelf.

Charlotter Dylan Frere started working there at the start of his junior year. "My senior year I wanted to increase my involvement," he said, "so I took one of the roles as a shopper, delivering food every two weeks to the food shelf. I kept coming back because of the fulfillment I felt knowing that I was giving back to those in need in my community."

Frere plans to continue to volunteer in the future. "Volunteering is important because of the impact it can have on people's lives," he said. "Something as simple as a package of pork chops can make all the difference, and that means a lot to me."

Next year, Frere is going to Bowdoin College in Maine, where he will play football — and continue to volunteer.

Nora Nelson lives in Ferrisburgh. She transferred to CVU two years ago. "CVU has been great for me," she said. "I am so glad I switched." For Nelson, volunteering has always been a part of who she is. "My parents raised me to give back," she said. She has a good deal of experience volunteering in the past: for the Humane Society, for an organization that hosts free meals for the Vergennes community, as well as coaching K-2 lacrosse at the Charlotte Recreation Department, and more.

She first heard about the Charlotte Food Shelf through the CVU Volunteer Outreach Club. She worked at the holiday distribution in 2023 and really enjoyed it. She said food shelf director Peggy Sharpe said to her, "If you want to keep doing this, here are the days," and Nelson signed up. "It's such a good community of people," she said, "between the volunteers and the people who come. I love it."

Though college applications are a thing of the past, Nelson said she is going to keep working at the food shelf until she leaves.

"It is so beautiful how nice everyone is," she said. "Everyone is so caring and understanding and grateful, both volunteers and the people who come. It's such a positive, uplifting environment. It is so nice there is this option for people."

Next step for Nelson is James Madison University in Virginia, where she will major in communications with a focus in public relations.

Henry Bushey lives in Charlotte and began helping out at the food shelf at a young age through the Charlotte Congregational Church, helping with the Little Free Pantry. This year, as a senior, he became a shopper for the food shelf. He said he loves service "because it's a great way to meet people and make a difference in the wider community that has done so much to shape us as we've grown up."

Bushey is passionate about baseball and has played for 14 years. He is also a sailor and loves racing sailboats of all sizes on Lake Champlain. Next step is the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis Maryland.

"I was drawn to the Naval Academy because it combines my passion for service with a team-central environment and has fantastic academics and athletics," he said.

To these three superstar volunteers we give a standing ovation and wish them all the very best at college and beyond. Their generosity, passion, positive energy and hard work has really helped keep the food shelf strong. We will miss them. Thank you so much, Henry, Dylan and Nora! Best of luck to all of you!

We also want to thank Jocelyn Schermerhorn, Kathleen Nolan, Margaret (Meg) Berlin, Elizabeth Bassett and John Pane, Toni (Antonio) Holmes, Jeffrey and Irene Horbar, Barbara Levy, Hannaford (hunger bags) and the Red Onion for their donation of delicious pastries with thanks to Carol Clay who delivers them to us.

Our schedule:

- Wednesdays 4-6 p.m. and Saturdays 9-11 a.m. (second and fourth of the month, unless otherwise noted)

- Wednesday, June 11 and 25

- Saturday, June 14 and 28.

For applications for grant assistance, forms are available at the food shelf and on the website. Applicants must reside in Charlotte or North Ferrisburgh.

If you would like to donate to the Charlotte Food Shelf, you can use your PayPal account or your credit or debit card. If you prefer to donate via check, you can make checks payable to Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc. and mail to: P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, VT



Courtesy photo

From left, seniors Nora Nelson, Dylan Frere and Henry Bushey have been a big help at the Charlotte Food Shelf and are going to be missed next year when they're away at college.

05445. For more information, call 802-425-2402.

A convenient way to support the food shelf is to sign up for monthly donations through PayPal, which will allow you to spread your donations out over the year.

The Charlotte Food Shelf is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization. Gifts are tax deductible within the guidelines. You can also contribute using the QR code or by going to <https://tinyurl.com/2e8yz2zz>.

Also, for you gardeners out there: When you are planting your vegetable garden this year, think about putting in an extra row or

two for the food shelf.

The food shelf is looking for additional drivers to pick up our Costco order at 9 a.m. on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month. Please email Nancy Bloch for more info: nancyhbloch@gmail.com.

For any other inquiries please email Peggy Sharpe at ckmj@comcast.net.



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Education

End-of-year events proliferate as summer break nears

Naomi Strada
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

On the morning of Friday, June 6, the cherished school’s Carnation Ceremony tradition was held in the multipurpose room. Kindergarten students presented carnations to each eighth grader — a symbol of connection across the school’s 355 students. Many thanks to the teachers who helped bring this moment to life.

Looking Ahead Day — Wednesday, June 11

Each year in the final week of school, the kindergarten-sixth grade students take part in Looking Ahead Day, when they visit their core homeroom classrooms for the next school year. It’s a whole-school event that helps ease transitions and build excitement for what’s next.

Current seventh graders already know their eighth-grade teachers, but on Wednesday they’ll get to meet Owen Duff, the new world language teacher, who will be joining the Omega team following Sarah Pierson’s retirement. They’ll also welcome the current sixth graders to the team.

Meanwhile, eighth graders will gather to celebrate, distribute and sign yearbooks, share breakfast treats and enjoy one of their final moments together as Charlotte Central School students.

Fun Run success

Thanks to the Charlotte Central School Parent Teacher Organization, parent volunteers and fifth-grade teacher Dave Baird for organizing a phenomenal Fun Run. Hundreds of runners took part, and the night overflowed with the joy of potluck dinners, community celebration, fundraising, and of course, the famous basket raffles. Among many highlights: a first grader who logged at least 5 miles (that’s 10 laps), and a third grader who matched that feat.

Sixth-grade guest artist

Dominique Vassie is a biologist and



A large and enthusiastic cast performed ‘Willy Wonka Jr.’ on June 5-7.

Photo by Studio 2N

artist from the United Kingdom working in Japan. Recently a small group of Conor Emerson’s sixth grade students have been obsessed with her books, replicating and learning from her style or using her books as inspiration for their own short stories.

Since Emerson is friends with Vassie, he mentioned the students’ interest and this led to an online link with the artist. She was kind enough to chat with the students about being a professional artist, her techniques and any animal questions they had.

Emerson said it was an incredibly sweet way to spend recess for a small group of dedicated artists, having a chance to meet someone they look up to.

‘Willy Wonka Jr.’ wows crowd

On Wednesday morning, June 4, the eighth-grade cast performed “Willy Wonka Jr.” for the school. It was a sweet treat to watch, and Thursday night’s first public performance was even sweeter. With each step on stage, students brought more confidence, joy and magic to their roles.

Jazz band hits Church Street

On Thursday, June 5, the Charlotte Central School jazz band took to the stage on Church Street as part of the Burlington Discover Jazz Festival. They brought energy and a big sound to the heart of downtown. It was a proud moment to see middle school musicians representing Charlotte Central School.

Sixth-grade trout release

On Friday, June 6, the sixth graders completed a months-long journey by releasing the baby brook trout they’ve been carefully raising since winter. As part of the Trout in the Classroom program, students nurtured the trout from eggs to fingerlings while learning about ecosystems, water quality and the responsibilities of environmental stewardship. Releasing them into a local stream today was a meaningful culmination of hands-on science.



Courtesy Photo

Dominique Vassie (dominiquevassie.com), a biologist and artist from the United Kingdom working in Japan, recently chatted online with Conor Emerson’s sixth-grade students.



Photo by Elizabeth Hunt

Charlotte Central School band teacher Andy Smith conducts the band at its spring concert on May 28.

A home run performance

A group of Charlotte Central School students had the honor of singing the national anthem at the Vermont Lake

Monsters’ home opener at Centennial Field. With poise, pride and beautiful harmony, they kicked off the season in front of a packed crowd.

Sports

CVU baseball team's playoff run ends vs. Mount Anthony

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

The Champlain Valley Union High baseball team slid into the end the month of May, and it wasn't the kind of slide that is celebrated for advancing your team on the bases.

After winning seven of its nine previous games during the month, the Redhawks ended May, and the regular season, with three losses. Two of the three defeats came against teams — Essex and South Burlington — the team had defeated earlier in the season.

CVU entered the playoffs ranked No. 8 in the Vermont Division 1 rankings at home against No. 9 Rice on Wednesday, June 4.

Essex 2, CVU 0

The Redhawks traveled to Essex High on Wednesday, May 28, for a game that featured pitching more than hitting.

The Hornets were able to get on the scoreboard in the bottom of the third when Oliver Lawrence's single brought home Christopher Morgan and again in the fifth when Jacob Laroche's sacrifice line drive to right field scored Kian Eklof to go up 2-0.

Quinn Vincent took the loss for the Redhawks, spending all six innings on the mound, giving up four hits and striking out two.

Jackson Lyman earned the win, pitching a complete game for Essex while giving up three hits to go with six strikeouts.

Riley O'Brien went 2-for-3 at the plate for CVU.

Colchester 4, Champlain Valley 1

When the Redhawk's final game of the regular season at home against Colchester began on Thursday afternoon, May 29, with gray clouds and a wind that smelled like rain, it appeared certain that this contest wouldn't get finished, might not even get started.

With the pregame music blaring Natasha Bedingfield singing "feel the rain on your skin," it seemed like a given that this was a game that would be called.

However, the threatened precipitation never materialized, and CVU was able to play its third game in three days.

The Lakers jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the top of the third inning. Although they added a fourth run in the seventh, that was all the offense the visitors would need.

In the bottom of the fifth, Tommy Barnes hit a sacrifice grounder to first that scored Jake Barrett from third to get a run for the Redhawks, but that was all the offense would get.

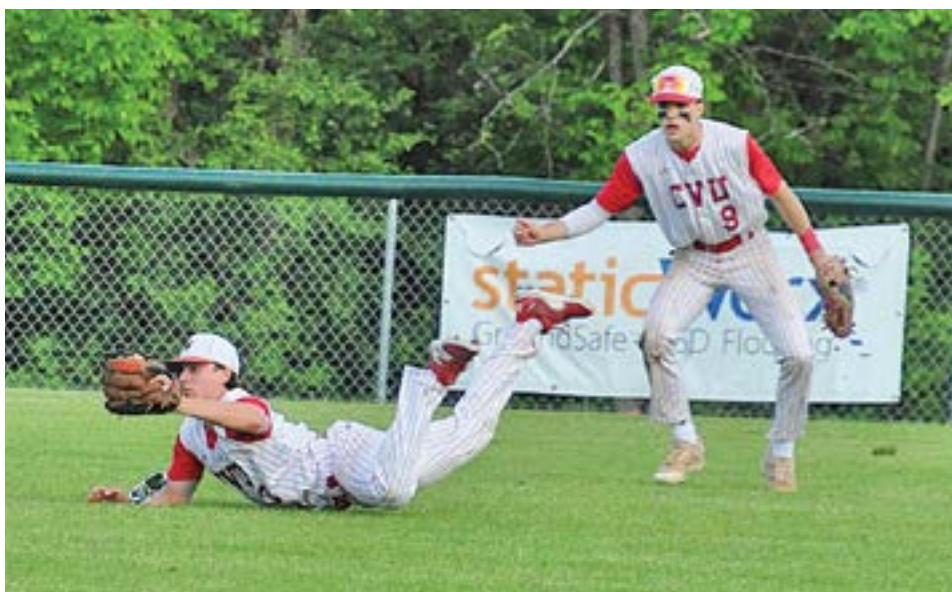
By this time the clouds had turned puffy white and a brilliant blue sky was evident behind a cumulus circus, but the suddenly sunny weather wasn't mirrored by the game on the field for the CVU fans.

One bright spot for the Redhawks was that they were putting the bat on the ball. The team tallied five hits, but there were a good bit more that were almost hits, foiled by impressive Colchester catches.

Up until this point in the season, all of CVU's losses had been by three points or less, while all of the blowouts the team had been part of had been in the Redhawks' favor.

After the game, coach Nickly Elderton pointed out to his players that in their losses during the regular season they had been beaten by an average of about one and half runs.

"We're pitching unreal. We're playing



Noah Musgrave makes a diving catch against Colchester on Thursday, May 29, as Andrew Nunziata looks on.



Sophomore Andrew Nunziata gave CVU four strong innings in the Redhawks' 19-5 win over Rice in their first playoff game.

awesome defense. When we find the bats, we could make a run," Elderton said, adding, "Baseball is such a mental game; if you put too much pressure on yourself, you're going to fail."

He liked how his team had begun to swing loose in the later innings. He has enjoyed seeing how his primarily young team in this rebuilding year has matured over the season, both as players and people. Just seven of the team's 24 players are seniors.

"I have full faith in this group. We're used to being on the road," Elderton said. "This is where the fun begins."

As he finished speaking to this reporter, the fickle finger of Vermont weather pointed at Hinesburg and rain began.

No. 8 CVU 19-No. 9 Rice 4

The Redhawks' first game of the postseason, a play-in game at home against Rice on Wednesday, June 4, was played in quintessential baseball weather, the best of the season.

CVU and Rice have been familiar foes this season, playing scrimmages before the regular season began and twice during the regular season. The Redhawks and Knights split those two whiteknuckle contests.

This game was an altogether different

affair. Although Elderton told his crew before the game "the hardest game to win the playoffs is the first game," the game didn't turn out the way the coach had predicted.

The Redhawks jumped out to an early lead in the bottom of the first when Vincent hit a grounder that traveled across second base outside the reach of a diving infielder and into center field to bring home Ryan Wood.

A dropped ball on a third strike to Daniel Tuiquere brought home Riley McDade.

The Redhawks added six more runs in their half of the second to go up 8-0. This offensive outburst started on a John Deyo triple deep down the right field line that scored Tommy Barnes.

Wood followed with a single to score Deyo.

When Tuiquere found himself back at the plate for a second time, he unleashed a triple into the corner of the right field fence, a place that proved fruitful for CVU hitting on this day. Tuiquere's hit scored Wood, McDade and Vincent.

Zavier Barnes followed with a double to bring home Tuiquere, and the rout was on with CVU up 8-0 after two innings.

The Redhawks added another run in the third.

When the Knights got three runs in the

top fourth, the Redhawks responded with an offensive barrage, scoring 10 runs in the bottom of the fourth and going up 19-3.

Rice was able to score two runs, but that wasn't enough to block the implementation of the mercy rule. The game was stopped at 19-5 in the fifth.

Sophomore Andrew Nunziata pitched for all four of CVU's four innings in the shortened game to get his first Division 1 win.

"He's pitched really well all season, but he's come up short because we haven't given him run production," Elderton said. "Our goal coming in today was that we were going to give him run production. We certainly did."

"We looked like a whole different team offensively," he said.

No. 1 Mount Anthony 7, No. 8 CVU 1

Environmentalists tell us that nature bats last, but in this rain-drenched baseball season, baseball has been batting up and down the lineup.

On Saturday, June 7, the rain inserted itself into the lineup once again, knocking the scheduled playoff game between CVU and Mount Anthony out of the park in Bennington where the contest between the Division No. 1 and No. 8 teams was planned. Instead, the rain-delayed matchup was moved to Monday afternoon.

Elderton's young squad played Mount Anthony close for four innings in the postponed game with neither team managing to plate a run. In the top of the fourth, CVU loaded the bases with two outs, but couldn't manage to bring home a score.

In the bottom of the fourth with two outs, the Patriots managed to score twice on a triple followed by a double to take a 2-0 lead.

The end of the Redhawks' season was confirmed in the bottom of the fifth, when Mount Anthony exploded for five runs.

In the top of the sixth, a grounder by Tuiquere and a Patriots' error brought home Vincent and finally put CVU on the scoreboard 7-1, but that was all the runs the Redhawks could get on this day.

Vincent took the loss for CVU with four and two-thirds innings on the mound, giving up nine hits and striking out four.

The winning pitcher was Jacoby Dicranian, who pitched six strong innings, giving up six hits and striking out four.

Tuiquere had the Redhawks' lone RBI.

Although his team played great baseball, Elderton said, they couldn't capture the momentum and "baseball is a game about momentum."

"We played great baseball. We had a couple opportunities early where we didn't break through," Elderton said. "We just couldn't get that big hit."

The coach complimented Dicranian's performance on the mound for Mount Anthony and how well he mixed up his pitches.

"They had one really big inning in the fifth that kind of took the wind out of our sails," Elderton said.

He hopes the loss will fuel the fire for the team to set a goal of getting better individually and as a team for next year.

"I want to really shout out the captains, Noah Musgrave, John Dale and Ryan Wood. They just did an amazing job of leading this team," Elderton said. "There's a reason why we're such a close-knit group, and it starts with the leadership."

Photos by Judy Stroh

Education

Suggestions for ways to spend last summer before college

Margo Bartsch
Contributor

With high school graduation behind us, this is the last-hurrah summer to be with friends and family before the leaves begin to turn into fall and you're off to college. This is a unique time in your life to have fun together exploring Vermont, while creating great moments and nostalgic memories.

Get ready to search for the best creemees, fireworks and food trucks to have a chill summer with your friends in our great little state.

In June, creemees are the official start of summer. Creemees became famous in Vermont for their unique spelling and adding buttermilk to make a richer soft serve ice cream, according to Hello Burlington VT, the online blog for exploring Vermont.

Locally, Sweet Roots Farm and Market (the old Charlotte Berry Farm) has blueberry creemees after picking fresh strawberries. Shelburne Country Store has maple, chocolate and a twist of both flavors.

Along the Burlington waterfront, visit Burlington Bay. Behind the City Market is Little Gordo Creemee Stand. Although you may have gone there as a kid, experiencing the creemees with your friends captures the Burlington vibe after shopping on Church Street.

Expand the creemee road trip to Jericho taking Route 15 or the highway. Enjoy award-winning maple creemees at Palmer Lane Maple and add real maple syrup and maple sprinkles. Also, visit the Jericho Center Country Store for creemees, deli sandwiches and a burger grill.

For more creemee adventures, check out these popular local spots: Sweet Scoops in Essex Junction, The Village Scoop in Colchester, Vermont Maple Market in Middlebury and Woodstock Scoops on Central Street.

Venturing further to Stowe, stop by the Red Barn Ice Cream Shop on Maple Road and Stowe Sweets behind the Country Store on Main, which are both famous for maple and black raspberry twist creemees.



Adobe Stock image

In July, fireworks symbolize the height of summer. This Fourth of July will be a long weekend of celebrations.

On July 3, Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront will feature the Independence Day Celebration along Waterfront Park with fireworks over Lake Champlain. The event is from 5 to 11 p.m. with music, food and entertainment. Jesse Ray Smith & The Heartland will headline the music.

On July 4, Shelburne Museum will

feature the Vermont Symphony Orchestra from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. This year's event is the Summer of Love featuring Romeo and Juliet by Tchaikovsky, West Side Story by Leonard Bernstein and the Star Wars Theme by John Williams.

Advance tickets cost \$33, while purchase at the gate is \$40. Tickets are \$5 for those who are 5 to 17 years old. Bring picnic treats and a blanket, sunscreen and bug spray and a flashlight to get back to your car.

The concert series continues in East Burke on July 5 at the Burke Mountain Ski Resort and in Stowe on July 6 at the Trapp Family Concert Meadow.

Finally, the food truck scene keeps the summer vibes into the fall. Start with the South End Get Down block party on Pine Street at the Coal Collective every Friday from 5-9 p.m. There are 60 food vendors, DJ music and local art, fashion and entertainment.

South End Sliders has popular Montreal-style burger sliders (single or double), BBQ pulled pork and Buffalo pulled chicken. Food is served on brioche buns with aioli sauce, pickles and Spanish onions.

Maharaja Spice serves Indian street food. The menu includes two specialties: chicken or veggie biryani cooked in a sealed clay pot; and chicken lollipop Indo-Chinese chicken pieces marinated with herbs, fried and served on a stick.

New in Shelburne, the recently opened Gardener's Supply on Shelburne Road has the Mad Taco food truck open Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. There are seasonal specials and popular tasty tacos, burritos and quesadillas with beef, smoked chicken and pork, and roasted yams.

At the Burlington Harbor Marina, eat at Farmers and Foragers Dockside food truck on Penny Lane. There are picnic tables with views of Lone Rock Point and Lake Champlain. Enjoy "Vermont cheesesteak," Lake Champlain perch tacos and comfort foods.

Create forever moments to cap summer fun after graduation. Explore with friends and share on Instagram and TikTok the laughs and discoveries.

Make the most of your last-hurrah summer. Before you know it, winter will cover Vermont. You'll be back with friends enjoying sugar on snow and reminiscing about sweet summer memories.

(Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.)



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Commentary

Governor and Legislature fumbling education reform

Jack Hoffman
Contributor

If and when the governor and Legislature agree on something they call “transformational educational reform,” it’s unlikely to be what most people expected or wanted. Vermonters won’t see the property tax relief they were hoping for because changes to the funding system will be a few years off. Instead, the first signs of reform will be reorganization of their school districts, which they didn’t ask for. On top of that, democratic decision-making on school budgets will be a thing of the past.

People may be wondering whatever happened to the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, the body created after local voters saw a big jump in school budgets and school taxes last summer. The commission was given 18 months to study Vermont’s education system and get public input on how to improve education for their kids and make it more “efficient and sustainable.”

After the 2024 elections, however, the commission was pushed aside before it could finish its work or hear from

Vermonters. Eleven months before their time was up, Gov. Phil Scott presented his own education reform plan, which took advantage of voters’ frustration to push for his priorities of the past decade: school funding cuts; widespread, top-down consolidation; and the sidelining of local voters in decision-making. Scott also threw in an expansion of vouchers — public money for private schools — and the elimination of income sensitivity by leaning into property taxes.

Despite their early criticism of the governor’s proposal to consolidate Vermont’s 119 school districts into five mega-districts, the Legislature appears ready to give the governor most of what he asked for, especially control of education funding. They are supporting a foundation funding system, which would have the Agency of Education and the Legislature, not local voters, determine how much districts should spend on each student. They want more school consolidation, though not as much as the governor. And like him, they want to return to school taxes for resident homeowners based on the value of their property rather than household income, which is the better

measure of ability to pay. In essence, policymakers seem set on protecting the highest-income taxpayers from paying the same share of their income in school taxes as everyone else.

Because the commission was disempowered, the current reform plans were cobbled together without analyses of the failures of recent attempts to reduce spending and improve student outcomes. We’re still waiting for an Agency of Education report on what was accomplished by Act 46, the last major consolidation effort, which many believe saved no money. Nevertheless, Montpelier is counting on large districts and school closures to shrink the cost of education, even while the cost of health insurance balloons and kids’ mental health needs grow. The current version of the bill would create a task force to design large consolidated school districts by the end of 2025.

Switching to a foundation funding system will take a few years, but we’re already getting a glimpse of future education spending battles. We’re told that the foundation amount provided to all students will be “evidence-based,” the result of careful analyses to determine the cost of an adequate education for all kids. We know the governor will have one number and the Legislature will have another. Both sides say they want to spend less on education going forward. But neither is revealing what their number provides for students or how they’ll rein in costs that are out of schools’ control.

So once foundation is in place, local voters will be left on the sidelines while policymakers negotiate over how much to allocate for education.

Outside of the Statehouse, there has been an outcry against the current education reform efforts from teachers, parents, kids, administrators and community members. Inside the building, there is plenty of doubt from lawmakers who admit that they’re uncomfortable with the process. Two weeks ago, senators acknowledged that they had a half-baked bill based on incomplete or unreal data from the administration that pushed a lot of important decisions down the road. Even



State capital file photo by Mike Yantachka

the chair of the Senate Finance Committee said she had never felt so bad about voting for a bill.

Education reform may still end in a standoff this year. While legislative leadership and the governor agree on a lot of the big changes, many members are appropriately raising the concerns they’re hearing from Vermonters.

So lawmakers should not feel pressure to pass a bill many don’t like. If they do, Vermonters are going to wonder why they’re getting what they didn’t ask for—reorganized school districts and less say in their schools—and not getting what they want and deserve: fairer school taxes, a plan to address the real cost drivers in school budgets and a clear commitment to delivering the resources all Vermont kids need to succeed.

(Jack Hoffman is senior analyst at Public Assets Institute (publicassets.org), a non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Montpelier. He is a resident of Marshfield currently living in France.)



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Weed's in the Garden

Gardening mimics life with both joy and disappointment

Joan Weed
Contributor

I think I must have been about 6 years old when my father gave me a packet of seeds so I could plant my own small patch in our back yard. The seeds were for bachelor buttons. I don't remember if any germinated. But, I believe that is when my interest in putting hands in the soil was encouraged.

Through the years there have been other mentors. Neighbors, landlords, family and friends all added to my accumulated knowledge and love of horticulture. I even enjoyed my class in botany at the University of Connecticut.

After many years as an amateur gardener, I finally had the opportunity to take the master gardener course at University of Vermont. By then I was skilled from hands-on learning, but this brought the science into play a bit more. Also, it brought me in touch with other gardeners who were as passionate as I was about the subject. The growing culture of Vermont is perfect for people who love gardening.

Gardeners are natural nurturers and they share plants and knowledge and sometimes labor.

I read extensively and ordered plant magazines. I fully subscribed to the organic and sustainability club. In past years when I had more strength and energy, I grew much of my own food and learned to preserve it. I still grow fresh herbs, garlic and potatoes. I sometimes try beans, tomatoes, etc. but appreciate my neighborhood farmsteads for what they offer.

Gardening is about more than labor or study or beautiful beds in the landscape. Lessons are to be learned being so close to the earth. Gardening mimics life. There is joy and there is failure. Disappointment lurks along with hope for the best season ever. A gardener must have creativity, perseverance, intuition, energy, and above



The azaleas bustin' out all over in the garden in May.



Photos by Joan Weed

all, patience. I remember getting a pack of seeds for perennial plants. I now know I won't see a bloom from that packet for years. That's what nurseries are for, and now you see why it seems expensive. Someone has lifted the onus from you of waiting and it pays.

Something like a trillium takes seven years from seed to bloom, if the crick don't rise and all goes well.

Some of you will recognize yourself here. You have in your mind plants you just gotta have or spot something you've never grown before at the nursery. My husband's first question was always: "Where are you going to put it?" That is just so not the point. I will find a hole somewhere. I will find a place where I can watch the progress of my sweet plant. Amazingly, in this haphazard way, I sometimes have chosen the perfect spot

and even added to the design. Who knew? The seasonal succession of bloomers or just returning greenery is exciting. Something returning for year two is especially rewarding. Success maybe?

Sometimes your chosen plant dies or ... ahem ... a helpful garden person trims it to death. But you try again. I admit there are some plants I have bought three or four times till I had success. I'd try new conditions. Here's where the perseverance part comes in. You also have to know when to give up. Like life. My two plants that I gave up on after many tries are blue poppies (*Meconopsis betonicifolia*) and angel's fishing rod (*Diorama pulcherriumum*).

One learns which plants you can count on to return for years (even decades). And still the thrill of the chase goes on even as we age and have no right buying

more plants, especially when we have no idea where we'll plant them. They might become "driveway plants." That's what we call the ones where a hole was never found.

Still, gardening has been good to me and is a harmless obsession. It brings me joy and beauty as well as disappointment and even occasionally food. After planting in this acre for nearly 30 years, it is amazingly "well put together," even with my searching for that last bit of unplanted earth.



Jacob Kline (*Didyma monarda*), or bee balm, with threadleaf maple in the background.

Gardening

Hildene: A Vermont historical landmark worth visiting

Nadie VanZandt
University of Vermont Extension

Perched on a hill in Manchester overlooking the Battenkill Valley lies Hildene, the Lincoln family estate. Originally built by Robert Todd Lincoln, son of President Abraham Lincoln, the property features a stately mansion and expansive gardens. Due to its significant historical importance, this Vermont landmark has drawn the attention of historians, tourists and garden enthusiasts alike.

Built in 1905, the 412-acre property includes a Georgian revival mansion, 14 historic buildings, two working farms, a formal garden and a cutting and kitchen garden.

Following the death of Mary Lincoln Beckwith, the last Lincoln descendant to live at Hildene, the local non-profit organization, Friends of Hildene, raised funds to purchase the estate in 1978. Restoration of the formal gardens began

that same year and is ongoing.

The formal gardens are an American version of a French parterre. A parterre (French for “on the ground”) is a formal garden with colorful flowerbeds enclosed in box-shaped hedges that form the garden’s structure. Sections of hedges are often separated by gravel, brick or cobblestone paths.

Parterres are known for the overall geometric shapes formed by their boxwood hedging, their most striking feature. They are designed to be appreciated from a higher vantage point, which explains their presence near castles and estates.

Hildene’s parterre with its closely cropped hedges of privet was designed by Robert Todd Lincoln’s daughter, Jessie Lincoln Beckwith, as a gift to her mother, Mary Harlan Lincoln. When seen from the mansion’s second floor, the parterre resembles a stained-glass window where the privet hedge represents the lead contours and the flowerbeds the glass panes.

At Hildene, the formal garden has been restored to Beckwith’s original plans. It has been admired for its symmetry, beauty and attention to detail. Sections of the parterre were replanted with the original color scheme from updated hybrids of turn-of-the-century flowers.

Most of the hedges and peonies are original plantings. These peonies have survived for over 100 years, producing thousands of blooms each June. In 2005, a pergola recreated from historical photos was built, and in spring 2020, a full restoration of the original privet hedges dating back to 1908 began.

The kitchen garden, located where the Lincoln family spent time relaxing, supplied the family with fruit and vegetables. Today, it is managed by volunteers and harvested for the benefit of the local food shelter. In addition, the Hildene Flower Ladies, a volunteer group, tends to the cutting garden and gathers fresh flower bouquets for the mansion and its welcome center.

Hildene also boasts a butterfly garden filled with nectar and host plants that bloom in succession throughout the season to attract a variety of butterflies and



Photo by Robynn Beams Conley

Visitors to Hildene, once home to Robert Todd Lincoln, can tour the Georgian revival mansion and its parterre, a formal garden with colorful flowerbeds enclosed in box-shaped hedges designed by Jessie Lincoln Beckwith as a gift for her mother.

other pollinators. This garden is used in education programs for children to explore the habitat, life cycle and migration of monarch butterflies.

Pollinator sanctuaries are not limited to the butterfly garden but are found throughout the property in pollinator meadows, pathways and dandelion lawns.

In the same area, visitors can marvel at the berry cage, a large, framed structure covered in wire netting. Inside, several berry bushes, including blueberries, raspberries and gooseberries, grow shielded from voracious birds and squirrels.

The gardens at Hildene are part of a larger preservation effort. They often host cultural programs, events and garden tours that attract a wide audience. While

preserving the past, Hildene’s gardeners apply many sustainable and organic practices to protect the future of this landmark of rich heritage.

The diverse tree species, colorful flowerbeds and ever-changing seasonal plantings are sure to captivate those interested in gardening and landscape design. Hildene also has more than 12 miles of trails open to the public year-round, making this a perfect destination for warm-weather walkers as well as Nordic sports aficionados.

For more information, visit hildene.org or call 802-367-7968.

(Nadie VanZandt is a University of Vermont Extension master gardener from Panton.)



Photo by Hans/Pixabay

Many of the vibrant peonies, which bloom each June in the formal garden at Hildene, are original, having been planted over a century ago.

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Sacred Hunter

Experiencing how all things die so that others can live

Bradley Carleton
Contributor

As a hunter, fisherman and angler, it is of paramount importance to have a healthy view of life and death. Many people who have watched Disney's "The Lion King" have at least some awareness of the "circle of life" and, for a brief time, understood that all things die so that others can live. This is true of all entities. Taking a life requires a modicum of acceptance that it is "morally acceptable" in our personal definition of that value.

Studying this paradox has brought more questions than any other attempt to understand our place in the universe. It is easy to go down the proverbial rabbit hole on this topic. Rather than spend the next 10 pages of this venerable publication descending into the moral abyss, let us instead take a few examples to investigate the mystery of the paradox.

The most obvious one is the act of hunting. When a hunter takes his prey and causes it to die, what is actually occurring? Is it violence? Or is it nature? In a quote attributed to Big Thunder, a 19th-century Wabanki Algonquin (likely a tribe that inhabited our home state and New York), he states, "When we go hunting, it is not our arrow that kills the moose, however powerful the bow; it is nature that kills him."

We are a part of all nature, whether we take the responsibility of killing our food or choose to let someone else do that for us. It is butchered, aged, separated into cuts, washed, dried, packaged and prepared for consumption. Hunting keeps the participant involved in every aspect and consummates the process by preparing it with the utmost respect and care. Often, hunters will share their animal's flesh with others, but only when the moment that "the green fire in its eyes dies" and the spirit of the animal is passed into the next realm. For me, as a hunter, this is the most difficult process: to sit with the animal, feeling remorse as well as gratitude and sharing that gratitude with the animal.

Now, let's look at an elementally different being; a sentient one, like a wild asparagus. When bought in a store, or even a local farmer's market, do we give that being the same gratitude and respect that we give to an animal?

"Well, it doesn't have a face or eyes, so it's OK." Some might say, "Yeah, but it is not really 'alive.'" Why not? I invite you to research Kirlian photography. In this form of the art, a picture is taken using a special camera capable of capturing life energy. When the top of a leaf is cut off, then a shot of the leaf is taken, there is a clear "aura" of energy where the top of the leaf had been.

So, back to the asparagus. Let's look at both wild and cultivated. The wild asparagus grows mostly in the ditches of dirt roads and procreates naturally by its own root system of male and female plants. When harvesting wild asparagus, what energy is exchanged? Do we feel remorse for taking its life? Do we feel gratitude? Or just authentic joy for having found the plant at all? What was the life of that plant like? Was it blessed to have found the sustainable soil, sunlight or the proper amount of rain? If it had been raised



Photo by Bradley Carleton

Scattering the ashes of a legendary outdoorsman and celebrating the circle of life.

in a garden, what soil had to be disturbed to plant it? What microbes and organisms had to die for it to live? What insects, worms and butterflies had to die if a pesticide or herbicide was used? When we sit down to a meal of vegetables and the asparagus is on the plate, does it deserve any recognition or gratitude for having sacrificed its life for your nourishment? In some homes, people still pray and thank their higher power for this food. But I think our society has gradually slipped away from that practice, unlike Indigenous people who have always been connected to their food, be it plant or animal.

Finally, where does all this fit into our own lives? I'd like to share this true story of this past weekend's memorial service for a legendary outdoorsman, Graydon Barron Stevens. Gray was a gregarious and incredibly kind gentleman who founded Vermont Outdoor Guide's Association, Vermont Outdoor Woman's "Doe Camp" and was on the board of directors of the Lake Champlain International Fishing Derby. When an issue that might negatively impact the outdoor community, be it skiing, hiking, ATV and snow machines, or Vermont Fish and Wildlife regulations, Gray would send out emails to his massive list of concerned parties, and then, more importantly, he would spend many hours at our state capital speaking out and giving testimony to our

legislators about the concern.

Gray worked tirelessly to promote and protect our outdoor community. To see him in person, one could quickly recognize him as the "mountain man" wearing the leather hat and blue bandana, the lines on his face chiseled by laughter and a life lived that way he chose.

Gray passed in December of last year, and the only directions he gave his two sisters and mother regarding any memorial were: "Surprise me." This past Saturday, about 60 of us gathered at Jackson's Lodge in Canaan to celebrate his life.

Jackson's Lodge was the epitome of Gray's understated rustic sense of life. No matter what challenge or crisis stood in front of the man, he would grin and somehow "know" that everything would be OK. It was as if he'd been here before and knew it to be true. It brought great comfort to those around him to feel his calm presence and apparent wisdom.

After a wonderful meal of bear sausage, venison loin, lasagna, macaroni and cheese, and smoked brisket (and yes, even salad!) we all walked down to the beach of Lake Wallace, where the family handed out candles and shots of Gray's favorite whiskey, "Tullamore Dew," to those willing to accept his offering. His ashes were put in an inconspicuous but very defining tin container of another of his favorite beverages and was handed around to all present to give him one last hug. One of his sisters and his mother then got in a rowboat with his personally appropriate version of an urn and rowed out into the lake covered in mist.

On the far shore, the hazy outline of a mountain shone like a distant destination. His family said a few words, and since Gray was also a tremendous lover of music and his guitar, three beautiful souls played soft, comforting melodies that floated out over the surface of the foggy lake.

Suddenly, to everyone's amazement, as the sister and mother placed his ashes in the lake, a most curious yellow and black butterfly swooped around all of us for several minutes. Jaws dropped as it flew to each of us and circled the group over and over again. When the butterfly turned northward, the perfectly stagnant air filled with a cool breeze from the north. The day had been completely windless until then.

I returned home to look up the meaning of a butterfly visitation in my book "Animal Speak" by Ted Andrews. Under the meaning of "butterfly," I found the following: "To Native Americans, the butterfly is a symbol of change, joy and color. ... They remind us not to take things so seriously within our lives. They awaken a sense of lightness and joy. They remind us that life is a dance, and dance, though powerful, is also a great pleasure."

(Bradley Carleton is the founder and director of Sacred Hunter.org, which teaches the public respect and empathy through hunting, fishing and foraging. To read more of Bradley's writing, please visit him online at sacredhunter.substack.com.)



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Environment

Montpelier seventh grader is climate change activist

Rachel Tramontana
Community News Service

In the past few months, you may have seen him standing on the corner of State and Main, holding a sign that says “Drive Less, Walk More.”

The young activist is Abe Rosenberg, a seventh grader at Montpelier’s Main Street Middle School.

The sign campaign is one part of his initiative to bring awareness to climate change, making a mark on his community and on the world.

“I was feeling very overwhelmed by the climate situation we’re in and worried about things I definitely couldn’t control,” Abe said. “I was trying to think of something that I can do.”

Abe began to think about his role in the fight for climate justice after being given a graphic novel about youth climate activism. The book, “Drawn to Change the World,” focuses on 16 youth climate activists.

While reading the book, Abe noticed a common theme.

“It seems like they all went out and were vigilant or protesting,” he said. Feeling inspired, Abe thought to himself, “Hey, why not try that? I haven’t done that.”

Abe’s desire to make a change turned into action when he was in the fifth grade, while listening to a podcast on his way home from camp.

From the podcast, Abe learned about the relationship between climate change and the food industry. He was inspired then and there to become pescatarian and has since become fully vegetarian.

Eating a plant-based diet is one of the most effective ways for an individual to fight climate change, according to a 2017 study in the Environmental Research Letters journal.

“At this time, Abe started to put adult-level thoughts together about this,” said dad Eli Rosenberg, Innovation Lab Instructor at Main Street Middle School. “He couldn’t control a lot of things, but he could control some things about himself. One of those things is food.”

Abe inspired his family to eat less meat too. His dad noted that Abe didn’t inflict his vegetarianism onto his family, but rather provided an impetus for more sustainable habits.

Abe knew that following a plant-based diet was a good starting point, but he began to ask himself, “What is the next step? What can I do more?”

Abe decided that his next step wouldn’t be a single step at all, but rather, a 100-mile run to raise climate awareness.

As a part of this project, Abe set up a sponsorship website to raise donations. He ended up exceeding his goal by running 180 miles and raising about \$3,600 for 350.org, a movement working to end fossil fuels and increase access to renewable energy sources around the world.

“He’s always been really determined. It’s wonderful to have a kid who has such a high degree of focus,” said Eli Rosenberg. “He knows who he is, that’s a real gift. To

know who you are is not that common in 7th grade.”

Abe is also involved in MSMS_Sustain, an extracurricular group closely connected to the mandatory Main Street Middle School sustainability course. The group aims to encourage sustainable habits and educate community members about sustainability.

Students in the group give sustainability presentations to homeroom classes and ensure that every classroom has access to recycling and compost. MSMS_Sustain also manages the school’s lost and found to limit fashion waste.

Outside of school, the group works closely with local community partners by holding food and clothing drives. Astrid Kim works with Abe on the MSMS_Sustain Quarterly Newsletter.

“He’s very driven. He’s very smart. This is something he really cares about, so I feel like he could really go places,” Astrid said.

Abe continues to advocate for increased climate awareness by speaking with people who are in positions to make change in the community.

Abe reached out to the school board, and even spoke about increasing climate education for students and teachers with Michael Berry, director of curriculum and technology for the Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools district.

Abe also met with state representatives and faith leaders at the Vermont Statehouse for a “Day of Action: Rally for the Planet.” The event was sponsored by the Vermont Youth Lobby, a group that encourages youth participation in advocacy and activism.

Abe spoke with Sen. Anne Watson, D/P-Washington, who chairs the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.

“He impressed me as a very thoughtful young man who seemed to care about things deeply,” said Watson.

She noted that Abe spoke about Act 250, Vermont’s land-use and development law.

“His questions were well informed, I look forward to seeing what he works on and accomplishes in the future,” she said.

Abe continued to explore Act 250, going on to write a 2,500-word paper on the topic for Vermont History Day. His paper won two awards, qualifying him for the annual National History Day contest in Washington, D.C.

Despite Abe’s role in his community and his commitment to conquering a challenge that is much bigger than him, he doesn’t let it go to his head.

“Beyond that, Abe is just a funny guy to be around,” said Eli Rosenberg. “There are lots of other things that he’s passionate about too. He keeps it pretty real.”

(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for the Montpelier Bridge.)



Abe Rosenberg holding his sign.

Photo courtesy of Rosenberg family



Abe shows off his T-shirt in the MSMS Sustainability Lab.

Photo by Eli Rosenberg

Send us your photos!

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



The Charlotte News

Community Roundup

Planning Commission Meeting
Thursday, July 10, 7 p.m.

Calendar

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

**Shelburne Museum free summer night
Thursday, June 12, 5-7:30 p.m.**

Visit galleries, listen to live music, enjoy a picnic, stroll through gardens and take in the splendor of a summer's night at the Shelburne Museum for free. The museum will stay open from 5-7:30 p.m.

CHARLOTTE

**Poetry at the Grange
Thursday, June 12, 6:30-8 p.m.**

At the June evening of poetry, the Grange will welcome Stephen Cramer. Cramer teaches writing and literature at the University of Vermont and has published several books of poems including "Shiva's Drum," "Tongue and Groove," "From the Hip" (a book of sonnets.), "A Little Thyme and a Pinch of Rhyme" (a cookbook in haiku and sonnets) and "Bone Music." He has also published in many journals. Participants will afterward be invited to recite their own poetry, read poetry of their choosing or just enjoy and reflect. Poetry related to spring or motherhood is encouraged but not required. Modest prizes are offered to those who recite their poems from memory. RSVPs are encouraged but not required: abigailkilley@me.com.

**Abenaki Heritage Weekend
Saturday & Sunday, June 14, 10 a.m.-
June 15, 4 p.m.**

Join Vermont's Native American community for Abenaki Heritage Weekend and Arts Marketplace on June 14-15 at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and explore Abenaki perspectives on life in the Champlain Valley. The free activities include storytelling, craft demonstrations, drumming and singing. Bring a picnic basket for your lunch. Presented by the Vermont Abenaki Artists Association, this event brings together citizens of the Elnu, Nulhegan, Koasek and Missisquoi Abenaki tribes. More information at <https://tinyurl.com/bdcmb4md>.

**Sheep & Wool Day
Saturday, June 14, noon-3 p.m.**

There will be live music, live sheep, weaving demonstrations and food at the Rokeby Museum on June 14, and it's free.



Photo by Bill Fraser-Harris

The Charlotte Town Party is Saturday, June 28. It starts at 5 p.m. with dining starting at 6 p.m. Bring a dish to share because it is a potluck and be prepared to have fun.

**Lake Monsters Senior Night
Tuesday, June 10, 6:35 p.m.**

It will be the first of four Senior Nights this summer for Lake Monsters' games at Centennial Field on Tuesday, June 10. These game nights celebrate older Vermonters with reserved tickets for just \$6 (half price) for fans age 60 and over, along with a voucher for a free soft drink. The other three Senior Nights will be June 17, July 1 and July 29. Call 802-655-4200 or purchase at the gate on game day. The Lake Monsters' summer schedule is at vermontlakemonsters.com/promotions2025.

**Introduction to fly fishing
Tuesday, June 17, 1-3 p.m.**

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum will hold a hands-on course all about the basics of fly fishing designed for the beginner caster to the more advanced fly fisherperson. Learn about knots, rods, flies and how to cast. Open to all ages, but kids under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. Register in advance for free at lcmm.org/event/introduction-to-fly-fishing.

**Hope for TomorROW
Saturday, June 21, 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.**

A rowathon committed to raising awareness about teen suicide and creating a place for all to come together

in memory, hope and support will be sponsored by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. No prior rowing experience is needed. Join to cheer or row. Free to join at lcmm.org/event/hope-for-tomorrow-2025.

**Historic marker dedication
Saturday, June 21, 1-4 p.m.**

The Henry Sheldon Museum, in collaboration with the state of Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Vermont Humanities and the town of Weybridge, is dedicating a Vermont roadside historic marker honoring Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake, a same-sex couple in early America at the Weybridge Hill Cemetery. Bryant (1777-1851) and Drake (1784-1868) lived together as a self-supporting couple in Weybridge for over 40 years and are buried under one headstone at the cemetery. Charity's nephew, the Romantic poet William Cullen Bryant, described Charity and Sylvia's union as "no less sacred to them than the tie of marriage." After the 1 p.m. dedication at the cemetery, there will be a 2:30 p.m. reception with an exhibition of items from the Charity Bryant and Sylvia Drake Collection at the Henry Sheldon Museum in Middlebury.

CHARLOTTE

**Charlotte Town Beach Party
Saturday, June 28, 5 p.m.**

The town party at the beach will start at 5 p.m. with dinning starting at 6 p.m. It is a potluck so please bring something to share. It's BYOPUB (bring your own plates, utensils and beverages). And come prepared to carry out all the trash you generate. Local products will be served courtesy of Grass Cattle Company, Fat Cow Farm, Misty Knoll chicken, Stony Loam salad, Stones Throw Pizza, Adam's Berry Farm dessert and Backyard Bistro gelato (courtesy of Elizabeth Moore with Ridgeline Real Estate). As in the past, the grilling will be handled by the chefs from Fortin's Lawncare & Snowplowing. Music by The Intentions. No dogs, but free parking after 4 p.m.

**Green Mountain Conservation Camp
Friday-Sunday, July 11-13**

Teens interested in the outdoors and

environmental issues wanting to spend a weekend in the woods learning from industry experts about Vermont's natural resources while taking part in outdoor recreational activities should apply for the Natural Resources Management Academy's camping weekend at Buck Lake in Woodbury. Registration closes June 13 with space for just 30 participants. It's open to anyone entering grades 7 to 11. The all-inclusive fee is \$125, which covers all meals, snacks, workshops, use of canoes and other equipment and two nights' accommodations in rustic cabins. Register at go.uvm.edu/nrma. Learn more at camille.kauffman@uvm.edu or 802-780-0074.

CHARLOTTE

**Music at town beach
Thursday, July 17, 5 p.m.**

Skylark, a quartet made of Vermont Symphony musicians, will be performing a series of outdoor concerts at Charlotte Beach. These picnic, BYO events are sensory experiences not to be missed. Please note: One Thursday performance will be on July 17, then performances will be the following two Wednesdays, July 23 & 30. Picnicking at 5 p.m., music at 6 p.m. The events are free with your beach pass or daily beach parking. Donations to help pay the musicians will be requested.

**Free summer night at
Shelburne Museum
Thursday, Aug. 14, 5-7:30 p.m.**

Visit galleries, listen to live music, enjoy a picnic, stroll through gardens and take in the splendor of a summer's night at the Shelburne Museum for free. The museum will stay open from 5-7:30 p.m.

**Softball tournament
Saturday & Sunday, Aug. 23 & 24**

The seventh annual Harper Rose Briar Men's Softball Tournament will be held at Kampersville in Salisbury. This tournament is held in memory of Harper Rose Briar, who died on Jan. 24, 2019, at 6 months old after being given an overdose of a medication containing diphenhydramine, and to raise awareness about the risks of over-the-counter medications for children. All the proceeds are donated to a local family or nonprofit in need. The registration deadline is July 23. The cost is \$300 per team. To sign up or for more info contact Brenda Colburn at 802-772-5015 or bcolburnmsw@gmail.com.

**Words in the Woods
Saturday, Sept. 20, 11 a.m.**

Vermont Humanities Words in the Woods events allow Vermonters and visitors to enjoy our state's natural beauty while listening to and reading literature in the outdoors at different Vermont State Parks. The fifth of this year's readings will be at Mt. Philo State Park and will feature the Young Writers Project (YWP), an independent nonprofit begun in 2006 in Burlington to inspire, mentor, publish and promote young writers and artists. Vermont Humanities will cover park entries for the program.



Courtesy photo

Champ helped to rally fans at a Senior Night game last summer.

Library News

Library preparing for Friends of Library book sale

Margaret Woodruff
Director

Fourteen people gathered at the Charlotte Library on Saturday, May 31, to explore the art of indigo dyeing. Toby Goldsmith, a weaver and natural dye artisan, shared her expertise and then led the group through the process, which starts with creating the pattern and ends with soaking in the natural indigo blue dye. Along the way, the group learned about the history of this product, the use across the globe, and the techniques traditional and modern, used to create clothing and other goods.

The Charlotte Library will be closed on Tuesday, June 24, for an in-service day, but the following activities will still take place:

- Preschool Story Time, 10 a.m.
- Book Sale drop-off, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Rainbow stamp collage

Our rainy spring inspired our all-hands rainbow collage project. Help create this colorful collage with old postage stamps in recognition of Pride Month.

Juneteenth postcard craft

Juneteenth is celebrated annually on June 19 to commemorate the ending of slavery in the United States. Stop in during the month to enjoy our Juneteenth-related book display and make a Juneteenth postcard to share.

Friends of the Library book sale Sunday, July 13: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Friends of the Library book sale is July 13. In the meantime, the library is collecting books for the sale. Please only bring gently used, recent or classic books and deliver them to the backdoor of the library adjacent to the program room at the specified times.

The library doesn't accept mass-market paperback books (the small ones), textbooks, reference books, older cookbooks or older travel books, but current cookbooks and travel books are accepted along with complete jigsaw puzzles.

Donations are limited to two boxes or bags per person.

Mark your calendar for the drop-off dates:

- Monday, June 23, 4-7 p.m.
- Tuesday, June 24, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 25, 4-7 p.m.
- Saturday, June 28, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 8, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Wednesday, July 9, 4-7 p.m.

If you have questions, email Marie Norwood at marie.norwood@norwoodhome.net.

Programs for kids

Story time with Scott Wilson Tuesday, June 17, 10 a.m.

Scott Wilson is a Vermont-based children's book author and illustrator living in Charlotte. He enjoys placing unexpected characters in humorous situations while bringing to life his unconventional artistry. Find out more at scottwilsonbooks.com. All ages welcome to this event.

Music on the Porch Friday, June 20, 10 a.m.

Toe-tapping music on the library porch with Chris Gribnau and Lisa Henry. All ages encouraged to attend.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science

Wednesday, June 25, 1 p.m.

Discover a world where owls turn pink, and tree trunks can blink in "Color Our World!" In partnership with the Vermont Summer Reading Program, meet three of our animal ambassadors, and learn how nature's palette can startle, impress and even fool the eye. Witness the rainbow of techniques our wildlife uses to hunt, hide, and survive in this program geared towards families and children of all ages. Who knows whoooo we'll encounter? No registration.

Find all the kids' summer programs on the Color Our World Summer Schedule at <https://tinyurl.com/yvd8nrvf>.

Weekly summer programs

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.

Baby Time Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

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

Garden Circle Mondays, 8:30-10 a.m., & Wednesdays, 4:30-6 p.m.

Garden stewards Karen Tuininga and Linda Hamilton invite past and interested new members of the library's Garden Circle to join in tending the library gardens. These include the Rain Garden along the east side of the building, the Welcome Garden that wraps around the south end and the raised bed Food and Herb Gardens behind the Quinlan Schoolhouse. Come regularly or as you can. All help welcome. Questions? Email seed@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Stillwater meditation Saturdays, 9 a.m. (no meeting April 26)

Poetry and meditation are offered freely and in person to the Charlotte community. Come for quiet reflection, contemplation and



Left: Toby Goldsmith mixing up indigo dye for participants. Right: Lynne Bond and Brittany Slabaugh reveal their indigo creations.

Photos by Susanna Kahn

gentle meditation instruction. Respect for all beings and faiths is a foundational quality of our time together. Beginning and experienced meditators are welcome.

Kokedama workshop Saturday, June 14, 10-11 a.m.

Try your hand at the Japanese art of growing plants in a moss-covered ball of soil. Make your own to take home. Limited space. Registration required.

Mystery book group Monday, June 16, 10 a.m.

In the "The Alchemist's Daughter" it's 1543 during King Henry VIII's turbulent reign. The daughter of a notorious alchemist finds herself suspected of cold-blooded murder. Join us for coffee and discussion of this medieval mystery. Copies available at the circulation desk and as e-book on Hoopla.

Short story selections Wednesday, June 18, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new. The group meets the third Wednesday of each month. Selections are sent out the Friday before each discussion. Join at <https://tinyurl.com/jbkfs8m9>.

Better Together Book Club Wednesday, June 18, 7 p.m.

The Vignes twin sisters in "The Vanishing Half" will always be identical. But after growing up together in a small, southern Black community and running away at age 16, it's not just the shape of their daily lives that is different as adults; it's everything: their families, their communities, their racial identities. Still, even separated by so many miles and just as many lies, the fates of the twins remain intertwined. What will happen to the next generation, when their own daughters' storylines intersect? Copies available at the circulation desk.

Men's book group Wednesday, June 18, 7:30 p.m.

Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried" is considered one of the finest books about the Vietnam War. Far from a combat story

of pride and glory, it is a compassionate tale of the American soldier, brimming with raw honesty and thoughtful reflection. The book's narrator follows a platoon of infantrymen through the jungles of Vietnam. We see them trudge through the muck of a constant downpour, get hit by sniper fire, pull body parts out of a tree, laugh while they tell their stories to each other and fall silent when faced with making sense of it all — both in the moment and 20 years later. Join in person or on Zoom. Copies available at the circulation desk.

Thursday book group Thursday, June 17, 7:30 p.m.

"The Dictionary of Lost Words" tells the story of how, in 1901, the word 'bondmaid' was discovered missing from the Oxford English Dictionary. This is the story of the girl who stole it. Esme is born into a world of words. Motherless and irrepressibly curious, she spends her childhood in the Scriptorium, a garden shed in Oxford where her father and a team of dedicated lexicographers are collecting words for the very first Oxford English Dictionary. Over time, Esme realizes that some words are considered more important than others, and that words and meanings relating to women's experiences often go unrecorded. Copies available at the circulation desk.

Recurring programs

Book chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

Senior Center News

Photos from around the world featured in June art exhibit

Lori York
Director

The Charlotte Senior Center's art exhibit for June is "On the Trail, A Collection of Photographs by Jeffrey Trubisz."

Over the last 40 years, Trubisz has trekked, scrambled and hiked hundreds of trails up mountains, through forests, into canyons and along beaches. As a photographer, his desire is to immerse himself in the natural world, not just see it, but connect with its deeper spirit or essence.

Programs

Getting to Know AI

Wednesday, June 18, 1-2:30 p.m.

Due to overwhelming interest in our May session, we're offering another opportunity to explore the world of artificial intelligence with Brandon Tieso. This relaxed, hands-on workshop will walk you through real-world uses of AI from planning and writing to staying safe online. Bring your curiosity, your questions and optionally a laptop with a ChatGPT account. Free. Registration is required; space is limited. Call 802-425-6345 to reserve your spot.

Friendship gathering

Thursday, June 19, 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. Free. To help us plan accordingly, please RSVP by calling 802-425-6345.

Red Cross blood drive

Thursday, June 19, 1:30-6:30 p.m.

Please consider donating blood. The Red Cross is experiencing the worst blood shortage in over a decade. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: CHARLOTTE to schedule an appointment.

Memory Café

Saturday, June 21, 11-noon

The Memory Cafe meets monthly on the third Saturday. This free event provides a welcoming and supportive space for individuals living with memory loss, along with their caregivers or loved ones. Enjoy a fun activity, connect with others and find meaningful support. Registration is appreciated but not required. Questions? Email Susan Cartwright at cartwright.susan1@gmail.com for more information.

Shape-note singing

Sunday, June 22, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Traditional a capella, four-part harmony sung for the joy of singing, not as a practice for performance. Search "sacred harp" on YouTube for examples, then come and sing. Introduction to shape notes and scales is recommended and offered 30 minutes before each fourth Sunday singing. The first hour will be sacred harp singing and the second hour will be singing from an alternate shape-note book. Books will be provided. Free. For questions or to schedule your introduction to shape-notes and scales, email Kerry Cullinan at kclynxvt@gmail.com.

Photo discussion group

Sunday, June 22, 2-3:30 p.m.

The photo discussion group will host a 90-minute iPhone workshop with David Beckett. Beckett will offer ideas for taking better photos, editing photos with the editing suite included in every iPhone and more easily finding and managing photos in the phone. This workshop will include a variety of tips and tricks, addressing both aesthetic and technical topics with humor and insight. Space is limited, so email Emily Cross at ecross@ecrossphoto.com if you are planning on attending. While all are welcome, note that the workshop is specific to iPhones.

Death Café

Wednesday, June 25, 2:30-4 p.m.

We gather on the fourth Wednesday of each month to come together in fellowship, celebrating life through open conversations about death and dying. While these discussions can be difficult, sharing our thoughts, questions and stories heart-to-heart helps us build a strong sense of community and fosters a unique joy that enriches our lives. We look forward to walking this journey together and growing our community. Questions? Email ppolly62@gmail.com. Free. Registration is appreciated but not required.

Games

American-style mahjong

Tuesdays, 12:45-3:45 p.m. & Wednesdays, starting June 11, 6 p.m.

Enjoy American mahjong in a welcoming social setting, with opportunities to play twice each week. Beginners and experienced players alike are encouraged to join. Free. A great time to join the fun and get to know other players. Register for your first visit to Tuesday sessions in order to be included in the group texts. Email Suzanne Slesar at suzluna@madriver.com. Jane Krasnow, an experienced player, will be there to teach newcomers and guide play on Wednesdays. Open to all skill levels. Email jane.krasnow@gmail.com.

Shanghai mahjong

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

Join an informal mahjong gathering, open to all levels of experience. Whether you're new to Shanghai style or a seasoned player, you're welcome to join the group for casual play and fun conversation. Questions? Email Nan Mason at anne.mason@uvm.edu. Free.

Backgammon

Tuesdays, 6-8:30 p.m.

Backgammon is a tactical table game with a 5,000-year history. We welcome players at all levels. Free. To register, email at jonathanhart1@gmail.com.

Bridge

Mondays, 12:30-4 p.m.

We play an intermediate level of duplicate bridge using the basic American Contract Bridge League conventions. Names are drawn for partners, and friendly games ensue. Those unfamiliar with duplicate bridge are welcome and paired with an experienced player to help for a few weeks of open dialogue training. We are always looking for new players who have basic bridge knowledge. Free. No registration required.



Photo by Lori York

Charlotte resident and local potter Judy Devitt guides participants through the process of creating their own clay slab vases.



Photo by Susan Grimes

Hank Kaestner leads a monthly birding outing, sharing his extensive knowledge of birds and their native habitats with participants.

Outdoors

Women's kayak trips

Second & fourth Friday mornings

Join a community of active women who enjoy exploring local lakes, ponds and rivers by kayak. Trips are planned based on water and weather conditions and are subject to change. To express interest, email Susan Hyde at susanfosterhyde@gmail.com to be added to the master list of paddlers. Details for each trip will be sent via email the week prior to the outing. Free. Registration required.

Walking & gentle hiking group

Thursday, June 26, 9 a.m.

Enjoy the beauty of nature. Come walk at a gentle pace with other seniors. The group will meet the fourth Thursday of the month for a congenial, non-strenuous walk. Location to be determined based on conditions of the local walks. Meet at 9 a.m. in the foyer of the Charlotte Senior Center. Free. Registration required. Questions? Call Penny Burman at 916-753-7279.

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, 3-3:45 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.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday lunches

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

Write Ingredients

Rhubarb rap, realizations waiting on senior center menu

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

As a passionate baseball fan growing up in a northern California village, although I didn't know anyone who'd ever been to Brooklyn, I chose the Dodgers as my team. Radio was my vehicle. There's no way to describe the thrill of hearing Sandy Koufax strike out 18 players.

Red Barber called the games, and his colorful language included:

- slicker than boiled okra
- tearin' up the pea patch
- a can of corn.

When players got caught up in a heated on-field dispute, Barber called it a rhubarb, and The Oxford English Dictionary notes that this is Brooklynese for a heated verbal run-in, especially between players and umpires." (Baseball Magazine, January; David Shulman).

Even rhubarb's food classification is in dispute, with people arguing whether it's a fruit or a vegetable. Technically, rhubarb is a vegetable, but legally, since 1947, it's been a fruit. Then, the U.S. Customs Court at Buffalo, N.Y., ruled that since rhubarb is usually eaten in desserts, it's a fruit.

Experts tells us the leaves are poisonous, leaving us to wonder why in his gardening book, Thomas Jefferson wrote of cooking them.

But waste not, want not. The website plantcaretoday.com chooses to ignore the fruit-vegetable fray and instead offers "How to Make a Natural Insecticide from Rhubarb Leaves."

However you term it, those rhubarb stalks have a lot going for them in your diet. High in fiber, the stalks are low in calories, fat, sodium and cholesterol. Those stalks are also a source of vitamins A, C and K and minerals potassium and calcium.

"American Food: What We've Cooked, How We've Cooked It, and the Ways We've Eaten in America Through the Centuries" by Evan Jones offers the recipe for rhubarb



Adobe Stock image

Stockli, created by chef Albert Stockli at New York's Four Seasons in the 1960s. This dish contains one pound diced rhubarb, 3/5 cup Madeira, 1/2 cup dry vermouth and seven egg yolks, as well as sugar, lemon and cubed zweiback.

Drink this and you won't care whether rhubarb is a fruit or a vegetable.

Scan The New York Times and Washington Post and you'll find rhubarb is the main ingredient in a wide variety of dishes to start and end the day: Lentil salad with pickled rhubarb, rhubarb stew with lots of mint, barbecued lamb with rhubarb and dandelion stew, fresh tuna (or red snapper or salmon) with tomato rhubarb sauce, fried rhubarb ravioli, rhubarb with duck legs, baked ham, pork loin.

End the meal with chilled rhubarb soup with ice cream.

Get up the next morning and enjoy baked rhubarb French toast.

In a restaurant review, Melissa Clark goes

over the top in her enthusiasm, insisting that the food succeeds both intellectually and sensually, "each sardine reclining on a twin bed of rosy rhubarb, simultaneously syrupy and bracingly acidic."

Last year, a tongue-twisting song about some rhubarb-loving barbarians and a woman named Barbara was a top hit in Germany, with 47 million views on TikTok: [youtube.com/watch?v=ZYkBf0dbs5I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYkBf0dbs5I).

The French are also rhubarb fans. Before the Olympics in 2024, in a lounge next to the finish line of the 100-meter dash at Stade de France rhubarb consommé and smoked eggplant with haddock cream was served — to those willing to pay 8,500 euros.

According to the blurb for "Rhubarb: The Wondrous Drug," this "Asian plant has mysterious cathartic powers. Medicinal rhubarb spurred European trade expeditions and obsessive scientific inquiry from the Renaissance until the twentieth century."

The author "presents the remarkable efforts of the explorers, traders, botanists, gardeners, physicians and pharmacists who tried to adapt rhubarb for convenient use in Europe ... an intriguing tale of how humans and their institutions have been affected by natural realities they do not entirely comprehend. Readers interested in the history of medicine, pharmaceuticals, botany, or horticulture will be fascinated by this once-perplexing plant: highly valued by physicians for its cathartic properties."

I'd pay the \$40 plus shipping, to read about "the geographic and economic importance of rhubarb — which explain how the plant became a major state monopoly for Russia and an important commodity for the East India companies — and a discussion of rhubarb's emergence as an international culinary craze during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries."

What stops me is not knowing when rhubarb will return to the Charlotte Senior Center and what I'd do with all my newly acquired info until then.

For now, I recommend "The Poison Squad: One Chemist's Single-Minded Crusade for Food Safety at the Turn of the Twentieth Century."

Deborah Blum offers a dramatic account of the U.S. Department of Agriculture chief chemist's tireless campaign for food safety. He conducted the nation's first food-toxicity trials involving human subjects. It is astounding to read what was added to food: formaldehyde to milk, all manner of nut shells and sawdust to spices, borax to meat, stewed pumpkin rind dyed red to ketchup, ground chalk to baking powder and so on. He — and the invaluable help he received from volunteer food tasters — makes for knock-your-socks-off reading and gratitude for a government employee doing a great job.

Reminder: Take a child you know to The Little Free Library at The Grange, 2858 Spear Street and watch the joy of a child choosing a book to take home.

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