

The Charlotte News

June 26, 2025

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Vol. 68, No. 01

Conservation Commission donation – if

Brett Yates
Contributor

The Charlotte Conservation Commission wants to carry out a comprehensive update of the town's "significant wildlife habitat map," but it doesn't have the money to do it. A generous resident says he'll help, but only if the selectboard chips in, too — and that isn't certain.

Yet putting off the task may not be an option. According to conservation commission chair Claudia Mucklow, the creation of a town plan demands an accurate habitat map.

In Vermont, municipalities rewrite their town plans every eight years in accordance with requirements set by the state. Charlotte most recently adopted one in 2019. It last updated its habitat map in 2008.

"You have to know where you want to concentrate your development and which areas are important to carve out for wildlife," Mucklow told the selectboard on Monday.

The first part of the update would cost an estimated \$10,000, which would pay for a biologist's services. Mucklow recounted applying to the state for a municipal planning grant during each of the past three years. Each time the conservation commission received a denial. The hope of landing that grant simultaneously led the selectboard to reject its appeals for municipal funding.

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CHARLOTTE CENTRAL SCHOOL GRADUATION



Hayward Herlihy is congratulated by teachers after receiving his diploma. Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Grads advise next year's not to 'stress'

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

About this time every year, a few hundred people gather in the Charlotte Central School to see magic.

On the evening of June 19, they gathered in the gym once more, and once again, the magic happened as 51 young people were transformed from the middle school class of 2025 into the high school class of 2029.

They came to this celebration of transformation, or graduation, dressed in a wide variety of styles, from super casual to high-fashion formal, wearing everything from shorts and sneakers to evening dresses and heels. Some came dressed as princesses;

some came dressed as dudes; one even came in a cowboy hat. After all, it was the last roundup of this year's crop of Charlotte Central School graduates.

When they filed into the gym, some of the graduates-to-be ambled at a measured and stately gate, some galloped like thoroughbreds. However they entered, they had all made it to the finish line, and their smiles and tears reflected many memories of their individual journeys to this point.

Principal Tim O'Leary said that most of the graduates had been enrolled at the school long enough to remember the second grade Fun Run before the global pandemic. During their time at the school, they have "grown into leaders, role models

GRADUATION continued on page 2

Signs of the times

Steve Goldstein
Contributor

"We no longer have the luxury of sitting back and doing nothing."
— Peter Fenn

Anyone traveling on Mt. Philo Road between Charlotte and Shelburne over the past four months has likely spotted a pair of signs mounted on the sides of two red barns.

"Silence is Compliance," says one in foot-high letters. The other requires more eyeball-brain connection. "J6=TREASON Wake Up." Above it, an American flag is painted upside down – traditionally flown by sailors in trouble and now deployed to signal political distress.

The medium is the message, as the saying goes, and a well-placed sign is a powerful method of delivery: You cannot unsee it.

Earlier this year, as they watched the current Trump Administration — in their view — run roughshod over the rule of law and treat the strictures of the U.S. Constitution as merely optional, homeowners Peter and Carrie Fenn sought an outlet for their outrage. With the help of an artist friend, the signs made their debut in March.

"Putting a sign up in Charlotte, given its liberal base in a state like Vermont, is not particularly brave or bold," said Peter Fenn, 63, as he stood in his kitchen last week. "I was moved to do something after listening to a Republican senator

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Charlotte turns out for one of biggest protests in U.S. history

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

It's predicted that 4-6 million people showed up at 2,100 sites across the United States on Saturday, June 14, to protest against actions the Trump administration has taken that have been deemed unconstitutional.

The protests took place in all 50 states, in large cities and small towns. In Charlotte, about 50 people gathered in the early morning to hike up Mount Philo, carrying signs, most of which referenced opposition to what they believe is an unlawful usurpation of power. Hence the moniker "No Kings" was used for this day of protests.

The previous biggest day of protests, the "Hands Off" protests on April 5 were dwarfed by this day's protests.

If the estimates for the numbers No King protesters are correct, it would mean that 1.2 to 1.8 percent of the U.S. population was out protesting, according to the Guardian.

Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech at the 1963 March on Washington was at that time one of the largest protests in U.S. history with half a million people in attendance.

VTDigger estimated 42,000 protested at No Kings rallies, which would make it one of the biggest protests in state history with more than 6 percent of the populace expressing their anger with the president's actions.

More than 530 people showed up in Shelburne, and once again Charlotte was heavily represented in the crowd that lined



PROTESTS continued on page 3 Almost 50 people marched up Mount Philo to protest.

Photo by Scooter MacMillan

CVU graduates encouraged to try everything

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Although smiles and laughter were in abundance at Champlain Valley High School’s graduation on Friday, June 13, there was also a heaping helping of solemnity on this occasion.

Besides the obvious gravity of this gathering signifying a major milestone on 334 graduates’ journeys from adolescence to adulthood, there was also the significance of how important getting an education is.

In her role of welcoming those gathered to witness and help mark the moment, Sofia Hordenko brought home that message by sharing the story of her time at CVU and how she came to be at the school.

Her school in Ukraine was destroyed by a missile. Although Hordenko was excited to be one of 49 students selected to represent her country as part of a cultural exchange in 2022, she was apprehensive as well.

Accepting the opportunity meant leaving her family thousands of miles away and making sacrifices that would completely change her life, but it was important to tell her home country’s story.

“I’m certain so many of you are experiencing a spectrum of emotions now: happiness, nervousness and excitement,” Hordenko said. “That is exactly how I felt when I made my first step into CVU back in 2022.”

A year before she had found a quote that helped guide her: “Everything you want is on the other side of fear.”

She credited the quote with bringing her to where she was on this afternoon on the campus of the University of Vermont, standing on a stage in a packed Patrick Gym, “delivering a graduation speech for an American high school in front of over 1,000 people.”

Hordenko repeated her message one last time in hopes that everyone would get it: “Everything you want is still on the other side of fear.”

Wade Nichols prefaced some funny stories from his senior year by saying, “You might be wondering, ‘Why is this guy giving a graduation speech?’ Well, to be honest, I’ve been wondering the same thing.”

For many of the students, the school year had been made up of little funny and



Photo by Al Frey

The Champlain Valley High class of 2025 had 334 graduates at the University of Vermont’s Patrick Gym on the afternoon of June 13.

lovable moments. Nichols advised his fellow graduates, “Life, like senior year, is way better when you don’t take yourself too seriously.”

Graduation will be a change for Mira Novak who felt during her high school career that the summer break is overrated. During summers, the first day of school was like a holiday she started celebrating weeks before school began again.

“For me, summer is defined by my eagerness to go back to school,” Novak said.

A good part of what has made her time at Champlain Valley so enjoyable is the care she has seen exhibited by teachers. She will carry what she has learned about caring at the school with her.

“The care I see makes me care more. This care we give so freely and strongly was taught to us at CVU as much as we were taught about algebra or the proper use of semicolons,” Novak said. “It was less expressed in words than it was in actions.”

Thomas Mathon and Hannah Stein announced that the traditional gifts from the graduating class this year were \$2,000 for the school’s alternative educational programs, so all students receive a high-quality, meaningful education while “feeling comfortable, included and connected with CVU,” and \$9,000 as seed money for a scholarship to

fund travel experiences for students from families with financial needs who might not have those opportunities to gain insights into other cultures.

Jacob Tischler was the invited speaker for the graduation. Tischler, a CVU grad, is an accomplished actor whose performances have earned positive reviews in publications including Seven Days, The Washington Post and Broadway World.

Tischler said, when he graduated, he juggled but that he wouldn’t juggle at this graduation.

He introduced himself as a clown, emphasizing that this wasn’t a euphemism for his being a funny guy, but that he is a face-paint-and-red-nose-wearing, actual clown. He credited several summers performing with Circus Smirkus for his success as a performer. Nonetheless, when his current gig ends, Tischler faces four months of unemployment before his next gig.

During that time, he said, “I will do everything I can to broaden my horizons. I will learn how to code. I will write a video game. I will get better at piano. Maybe I can finally learn how to juggle.”

He encouraged the graduates to try everything.

Then, he concluded by juggling.

chaos and thanked teachers for helping them become better thinkers.

They had started at the school with backpacks too big for their backs, said student speaker Laren Caldwell. Now, they were graduating and “were a little taller and a little smarter.”

Over their years at Charlotte Central, many students who were not friendly in the beginning are now close friends, Caldwell said.

Beth Slater, assistant principal and director of student services, said that her opportunity at the podium was a chance at redemption because of a past graduation where she was overcome by tears. However, when she began to thank the class for their “profound impact on her as a person and as a mom,” she was reduced to tears this year, too. It took several moments before she could recover so she could read the graduates’ names for the last time at this school.

GRADUATION Continued from page 1

and contributors to the culture of this school.”

“It is no small thing to grow up in one place, and it is no small thing to leave,” he said.

In the graduates’ exit reviews, they had been honest about sharing what mattered and what could be better, O’Leary said. Besides remembering sports, the graduates remembered teachers who had supported them when everything was falling apart.

“Their comments were smart and sincere and offered suggestions about how the school could be better,” O’Leary said. “I want to acknowledge that because it takes courage to speak up, and more importantly, to do so with kindness.”

He said their advice to next year’s students was “they shouldn’t stress too much.”

After unsuccessfully trying to get his dad to write his speech, student speaker Sam Rauch said, he decided to think about his time at the school to figure out what to say. He started at Charlotte Central School in third grade, which was when the global pandemic hit and students spent much of the year at home learning remotely.

“That year, it was so hard to stay on our screens all day,” Rauch said. “Now, it’s hard to stay off them.”

The challenges of 2020, like remote learning and having to wear masks all day, did have positive advantages. “They helped us adapt in difficult situations and learn to persevere,” Rauch said.

Going to a much bigger school like Champlain Valley Union High next year will be a change, “but we know change and CCS has given us the tools to go on,” he said.

Student speaker Kellie Keach thanked her classmates for laughter during unbelievable



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To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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- Providing a home for stories from our neighbors and friends.
- Reporting on how other towns have addressed challenges similar to our own.

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

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- Minimize harm.
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Editorial Staff

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

Business Staff

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

Board Members

Board Chair: Andrew Zehner (andrew@thecharlottenews.org)
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Postmaster/Send address changes to:

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

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SIGNS

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speak after confirming one of Trump’s more odious nominees.”

He said he did not hear from many people against the nominee and, in his mind, silence meant consent. “That and the news that the convicted felons that ransacked the Capitol were to be pardoned moved me to put up the signs. Even though they seemed to be an insignificant action, it made me feel better to do something.”

Peter, a local builder and contractor, and Carrie, 60, a former owner of the Old Brick Store who now works for SunCommon, said they were particularly dismayed to learn that some of those convicted of felonies in the insurrectionist riot on Jan. 6, 2021, were getting a “J6” tattoo to flaunt their personal roles in that event.

“History is being rewritten with lies replacing truth and treasonous acts reframed as patriotism. Time will tell but I believe that January 6 will prove to be a turning point in our nation,” Peter said. “It was a moment when both the right and the left generally were shocked — but somehow many on the right have lost their way, at least publicly.”

Keeping silent and hoping that a worst-case scenario is inconceivable is a pipedream that has been overtaken by events, the couple explained.

“We should all agree that current events are threatening the very foundation of our nation,” Peter asserted. “We can argue over

policy but should not allow the destruction of the very framework that allows us to argue safely in the first place. We no longer have the luxury of sitting back and doing nothing. I have a constant terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach that we are at risk of losing so much, leaving our children and grandchildren in a much darker place.”

As the Fenns conjured how best to deliver their message, Carrie suggested a three-word slogan — Silence is Compliance — that would serve as a call to action. Once the signs were up and their advocacy bared for the world to see (and judge), the couple sensibly hunkered down and avoided social gatherings.

They departed Charlotte for a month-long vacation, leaving a grown daughter to house- and sign-sit. Carrie admitted to a case of nerves. Yet what followed was not a mob carrying pitchforks and torches converging on their home but random acts of responsiveness. One person left a loaf of bread at the front door; another delivered an envelope with \$5. Raised middle fingers and shouted imprecations from passing cars were very few and far between.

“Heartening” was Peter’s assessment of the reaction thus far.

“Many people are stopping to take photos and beep their horns,” he said. “Occasionally, someone voices disapproval in a loud and frank manner, which is fine. I count them as a vote for dictatorship, but we asked them to speak up. The sign may not change anything, but if it makes one passerby feel better then that alone is worth something.”

When The Charlotte News requested an interview with the Fenns, Peter politely demurred. Twenty-four hours later, he had a change of heart. He explained that his decision not to speak was troubling him.

“I think the issue hiding behind my belief that the message in the sign should speak for itself is the fear of putting oneself in an uncomfortable position. I think now more than ever we have to be willing to be uncomfortable. A small price to pay when others are actually paying with their lives.”

Fenn said he would prefer to be working on his building projects and not



Photo by Steve Goldstein

Peter and Carrie Fenn felt the situation with the current administration is so desperate that they had their feelings painted on their barns.

discussing signs on barns. But he has stepped into those shoes and they fit. “The damage being done to our democracy and our planet grows every day; we no longer have the luxury of doing nothing — one must act.”

PROTESTS

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both sides of Route 7. Just prior to the start of the Shelburne protests, there were pockets of from two to more than 20 protesters all along Route 7 from Burlington to Shelburne.

Some of the state’s biggest protests were in Burlington (16,500); White River Junction and nearby Lebanon, N.H. (5,000); and Brattleboro (3,000).

Around 30 people showed up for a pro-Trump rally in Montpelier.

Among the group that had hiked up Mount Philo was Suzanne Lourie who said she had come out because she feels like we have to stand up for democracy.

“We’ve lost our moral compass,” she said.

Kelsey Pasteris of Hinesburg had organized the protest hike up Mount Philo. She was hoping to make it back down from the top in time cheer for the Relay for Democracy, a group that was driving Route 7 with the U.S. flag from Pownal on the southern Vermont border with Massachusetts all the way to where the highway crosses into Canada at Highgate.

Pasteris doesn’t think having so many protests in so many places is a problem. On the contrary, she thinks it works because it makes the protests accessible for everybody. You don’t have to drive to Washington or even Montpelier to participate.

“If anyone feels the need to shoot down to D.C., go for it,” Pasteris said.

In Shelburne, Andrew Everett, one of that town’s selectboard members, wasn’t having any problems with the protest being so dispersed. He had in-laws in two Montana towns, his parents in Cape Cod, Mass., his sister in Seward, Alaska, and a big group of

his Shelburne immediate family at different protests and sending each other pictures of their signs.

“We’re trying to set an example for the kids,” Everett said.

Things that had gotten him to the point of protesting include the deportation of people without due process, ignoring the rights of justices and judges, violating the separation of powers. “All these sort of dictatorial type things, and now, having a military parade,

seems very autocratic.”

“I think the saddest part to me is that I think there’s a relatively small number of Republicans in national office who could do something, and this whole thing would be fine, if they just stood up for all the things that, theoretically, the Republican Party has stood for over the years,” Everett said. “You know: strong international defense, support of your allies. Let’s get back to arguing about marginal tax rates.”



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

When the Relay for Democracy, a group driving Route 7 with the U.S. flag from the southern Vermont border with Massachusetts to the Canadian border, came through Shelburne, both sides of the road were crowded with protesters.

The Charlotte News

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SELECTBOARD

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The same thing happened during budgeting season this year. Nevertheless, in February, the commission sent out requests for proposals to consulting firms. Two responded in May with offers to redo the habitat map.

“You need a professional,” Mucklow said. “This requires a lot of knowledge and also fieldwork.”

Fiscal year 2026 starts on July 1. Selectboard member Natalie Kanner wondered whether Charlotte would close out fiscal year 2025 with unspent funds that officials could reallocate toward the map.

But her colleague Frank Tenney argued that the selectboard didn’t have the authority to use such a surplus — if it existed — for any purpose beyond lowering the tax rate. Otherwise, by his understanding, they’d have to save it for fiscal year 2027.

If the selectboard doesn’t figure out a way to finance at least a portion of the habitat map’s update, the town may miss out on a significant charitable donation. Conservation commissioner Pete Demick stood up suddenly during Monday’s meeting and declared that he’d pay \$5,000 out of pocket if the town covered the remainder.

“I’d like to incentivize you to do it,” Demick said. “Find five grand, and I’ll write you a check.”

Private users will pay sewer system’s administrative costs

Private users of the west village wastewater system must pay a quarterly “administrative and infrastructure fee.” The seemingly minor

question of whether the town should charge itself the same fee for its own facilities’ use of the system became, in the words of selectboard chair Lee Krohn, “an interesting philosophical question” for elected officials, ending in a rare split vote.

The town built the wastewater system to serve its municipal buildings. More recently, it has attracted additional hookups, which have made the management of the system more complex. The town has determined that, each quarter, its customers should collectively contribute \$1,250, split evenly, for the costs of inspections and billing.

But does a municipal building count as a customer? If so, the fee for each private user would decrease; each would pay a smaller share of the \$1,250. Kanner supported that reduction, characterizing Charlotte’s high sewer fees as a symbol of hostility toward new development in the west village

“This is one small thing that we can offer to just show that we want to see some things happening here,” she said. “I think that’s a fairly significant statement to make with a fairly small financial contribution.”

The town owns the wastewater system and approves new users on a discretionary basis. Selectboard member Lewis Mudge worried that treating the municipality as one of the system’s customers would jeopardize its authority as the system’s owner.

“It would put us in effect as an equal partner,” he said.

JD Herlihy voted in favor of Kanner’s motion to include town buildings among the payers of the “administrative and infrastructure fee.” But with Mudge voting against it alongside Frank Tenney and Lee

Krohn, the motion failed.

Energy committee moving forward with decarbonization

In May, the selectboard authorized the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action Committee to enter what it called “phase two” of a planning process aimed at eliminating the use of fossil fuels in town buildings by installing heat pumps and building solar arrays of various types to power them.

Since then, the committee has drafted a dozen requests for proposals, each of which corresponds to one component of the plan. On Monday, the committee asked the selectboard for permission to circulate these requests for proposals among vendors.

Unfortunately, due to an electronic error of some sort, none of the selectboard members had received the digital files until shortly before the meeting. They hesitated to approve a set of documents that they hadn’t had time to examine. Worse, the meeting’s agenda had warned only a discussion of the matter, not a possible vote.

After some hemming and hawing, the selectboard approved the RFPs anyway.

“It doesn’t bind us to anything,” Krohn said.

Krohn emphasized that point amid expressions of uncertainty among his colleagues regarding the hasty timeline of the energy committee’s proposed project, which must break ground before the end of the year to avoid unfavorable changes to the rules and rates for solar net metering in Vermont.

Meanwhile, the project’s financial viability appears to lie in the hands of the U.S. Senate as it considers President Trump’s “One Big

Beautiful Bill,” which will likely cancel many of the federal incentives for clean energy. Just how soon those subsidies would disappear upon the bill’s passage remains unclear, according to energy committee member Jim Hodson.

Town planner selected

After an executive session, the selectboard approved an offer of employment for Lindsay Kahn, who, if she accepts, will fill the long-vacant town planner position. Charlotte’s last town planner, Larry Lewack, retired at the end of 2024.

Town administrator Nate Bareham told The Charlotte News that Kahn has worked at the Federal Highway Administration and has more than a decade of experience, mostly as a transportation planner.

New wastewater system operator at Thompson’s Point

The selectboard also moved to terminate the town’s contract with SJW Docks, which operates and maintains the Thompson’s Point Wastewater Disposal System. Simon Operating Systems will step in.

The town attorney hasn’t yet finalized the letter of cancellation or the new agreement. “Unfortunately, I really can’t comment on that right now,” Bareham said.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Jim Foster, a camp owner at Thompson’s Point, spoke in support of SJW Docks, pointing to “31 years of faithful professional service to the town and the leaseholders both. It’d be a shame if one particular incident with one particular camp owner upset that relationship.”

Around Town

Congratulations

James Anair and **Lizzy Jones** of Charlotte graduated from Vermont State University as part of the class of 2025.

James Anair and **Samuel Zinner** of Charlotte were named to the dean’s list at Vermont State University for the spring semester.

Angela Fortin of Charlotte was named to the dean’s list for the spring semester and received her bachelor’s in health science studies from Quinnipiac University.

Lani Souvanhna Keomanyvanh and **Charles William Sprigg** of Charlotte earned associate degrees at the Community College of Vermont’s commencement.

Stella Martenis of Charlotte was named to the student honors list at the Community College of Vermont for the spring semester.

Mercedes Murphy of Charlotte was named to the dean’s list for the spring semester at Middle Tennessee State University.

Nicholas Reynolds of Charlotte was named to the dean’s list at the Community

College of Vermont for the spring semester.

Zachary Santos of Charlotte was named to the dean’s list for the spring semester at Fairfield University.

Jasmin Townsend-Ng of Charlotte has been named to the University of New England’s dean’s list for the spring semester.

Advancements

The University of Vermont’s Center for Community News hosted its annual Vermont Journalism Conference on Friday, June 13, in partnership with the Vermont Community Foundation, at which both organizations announced their support for the creation of the **Vermont Journalism Coalition**.

The nonprofit association is the first to represent all entities producing journalism in the state, regardless of size, medium or business model. With the support of a part-time staff member, it plans to advocate for the rights of journalists, provide business and legal support to members, and raise awareness of the industry’s critical mission. More than 20 Vermont news organizations,

including The Charlotte News, have signed on so far.

“Journalism has rarely faced as many threats as it does today — legal, financial, technological and otherwise,” said Paul Heintz, a senior adviser to the Center for Community News who is working to establish the coalition. “News organizations in the state must work together to ensure that we continue to serve Vermonters, as we always have.”

At Friday’s conference, UVM’s Center for Community News and the Vermont Community Foundation’s Press Forward Vermont initiative announced an initial round of funding to support the Vermont Journalism Coalition for two years, making membership free to news outlets.

“Promoting a robust news ecosystem in Vermont is central to our mission at the Center for Community News,” said executive director Richard Watts. “We are proud to support the establishment of this coalition, which will build on the news collaboration and innovation we’ve been growing at UVM for several years.”

Friday’s conference at UVM’s Alumni House featured panels and breakout sessions designed to educate Vermont journalists and brainstorm new solutions. A panel on the legal challenges facing the industry featured retired Vermont Supreme Court Justice John Dooley, ACLU Vermont legal director Lia Ernst and Gravel & Shea First Amendment attorney Matthew Byrne.

Five policymakers — hailing from all three political parties — were honored as “champions of Vermont journalism” for their

work advocating for the industry and its principles. Recipients of the award were Lt. Gov. John Rodgers, Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas, Sen. Andrew Perchlik, Rep. Barbara Rachelson and Rep. Chea Waters Evans of Charlotte.

Junapr, a Charlotte-based strategic communications and event agency, has been named the newest U.S. partner of the Worldcom Public Relations Group, the world’s leading partnership of independent PR firms, according to a press release.

“We’re proud to represent Vermont within this extraordinary global network,” said Nicole Junas Ravlin, CEO and founder of Junapr. “This partnership strengthens our ability to offer our clients international reach, deep-sector insights and world-class expertise.”

Founded in 2019, Junapr supports clients across North America and Europe in sectors such as food and beverage, higher education, tourism, B2B services and nonprofits.

Bjorn Mogensen, Worldcom’s Recruitment Chair and Partner at Paues Åberg Communications in Stockholm, Sweden, said, “Junapr is a standout, bringing both strategic acumen and creative excellence. Their team is highly respected in their region and beyond, and we’re thrilled to bring their voice and expertise into the Worldcom fold.”

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Report from the Legislature

Questions, concerns and worries about H.454 abound

Chea Waters Evans
Representative

I’ve said it before: I used to be really fun at parties, and lately I just stand in the corner talking about taxes. Now I’m even less fun because all I talk about is the education bill. A week ago, my middle child graduated from CVU, and as the parties and lacrosse game and ceremonies and all of that wonderful stuff happened, people kept asking me: “How are you going to vote on H.454? How did you vote on H.454?”

Usually, no one cares how I vote. Maybe because I usually tell you all ahead of time, or because I vote as a Democrat because I am one and you elected me as such, or because nothing seems quite as high-stakes as the future of public education in Vermont. For whatever reason, this one has been on people’s minds and I’ve gotten more constituent feedback on this than any other bill that’s crossed my path so far.

I voted no on H.454, and even though the vote to send the bill to the governor is a largely symbolic vote that always passes,



I voted no on that, too, just to make it a really emphatic no.

There was some pressure to vote yes; pressure that I understand from a politics point of view, but I don’t really love politics in that sense, and I certainly don’t feel like I owe anything to anyone except the voters of Chittenden-5. And I heard overwhelmingly from people that they really, really, really wanted me to vote no. This was heard, and understood, and supported, by the leaders in the House and in my party, and I felt good about that.

What I don’t feel good about is the Senate. Two of our Senators, Kesha Ram Hinsdale and Ginny Lyons, voted yes on the bill. I want to know why. Did I weirdly get emails urging me to vote no and they got all the ones asking them to vote yes? Their constituents are much greater in number than mine, and I know that most people in our school district House contingent voted no. I’m curious as to why they decided that passing this bill was more important than their constituents’ wishes. It’s not unheard of to vote against your district’s desires, but I haven’t heard a compelling reason yet. Maybe ask them!

I also don’t feel good, still, about that committee of conference. Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth plonked two people on there who are well-known private school advocates, and who support

our public money going to private schools without those schools having to meet the same educational quality standards. (That would be Senators Seth Bongartz and Scott Beck, the former who has been on the board of Burr & Burton Academy for many years and the latter who is a teacher at St. Johnsbury Academy, both of whom most definitely should have recused themselves from the committee of conference. But I digress.) I don’t know why Senator Baruth put them on the committee, which meant that a third of the committee of conference left to hammer out the details of our public education system and how we fund it was made up of fellas who definitely want to keep private schools alive and kicking with our cash. I fear this is going to be the first in a series of actions that undermine public education and end up sending us into a charter-school choice situation, which would be a disaster.

People are saying now that we have the bill out of the chambers, the governor is going to sign it, so we better just move forward and focus on the future. I will begrudgingly agree with this. We do need to move forward, but I want to move forward making sure that we’re holding all the institutions that educate Vermont kids to the same standard, and that we’re not letting special interests infiltrate the

future school boards in our new future school districts. I want to move forward understanding exactly how this bill is going to make our property taxes lower, or at least prevent them from rising astronomically, as they have been. I want to move forward with a clear vision for what this is going to do to make the lives and education of Vermont kids better.

There were a lot of rumors about confusion amongst the reps while we were voting, and some news articles about the procedure. It was fine. Things unfolded as they usually would, with the exception that no one stood up right away to debate or give a speech, which meant that the vote happened before the speeches rather than after. Which was expected, because that bill sure didn’t pass on party lines for the Democratic Party — there were more Republicans than Democrats who voted for it.

I guess this is good in the sense that it certainly was bipartisan, which is nice, and no one really loved it, which I guess means that there was compromise. I just hope the thing we compromise isn’t the quality of our kids’ education.

Let me know what your thoughts are — 917-887-8231 or cevans@leg.state.vt.us.

Letter to the Editor

Protecting SNAP protects farmers

To the Editor:

As the director of the Burlington Farmers Market I am deeply concerned about what’s happening in Congress right now and the potential to gut Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, two of the most essential programs that help people put food on the table and get the healthcare they need.

At our farmers market, I see every week how these programs support both the dignity and health of our neighbors and the stability of our local economy.

Programs like 3SquaresVT (Vermont’s SNAP program) and Crop Cash (Vermont’s SNAP incentive) allow customers to stretch their food dollars and buy fresh, local produce. Over the last two summers, more than \$80,000 of food benefits were spent at the market. When families can afford to shop here, farmers earn income.

SNAP isn’t just a nutrition program, it’s an economic engine that creates wins for all and creates inclusive community spaces.

If Congress moves forward with its planned SNAP cuts, the consequences will be severe. Our vendors will feel the hit in their bottom lines. People in our community, including seniors, families with children and people with disabilities, will lose access to nutritious food and essential healthcare.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, some state food benefits were lost, and we

saw how that negatively impacted our customers and vendors. Farms saw up to 40 percent decreases in their revenue, and market staff were left strategizing with customers to figure out how to stretch their dollars. The impact of deeper cuts to food benefits, like those in the current budget proposal, could be even more devastating.

Health and food security are deeply connected. When people have access to good food and stable healthcare, they are better able to work, care for their families and contribute to their communities. Farmers markets like ours become places of connection and resilience, but only when the policies that support low-income families remain strong.

Congress must reject proposals that would weaken SNAP and Medicaid. Instead, they should prioritize investments that strengthen our food systems, support rural economies and ensure all Americans, of all incomes, can meet their basic needs with dignity.

While Vermont’s Senators are strong supporters of SNAP, our neighbors in other states need support urging their Senators to vote “no” on this bill, on cuts to SNAP and Medicaid. I urge you to call your friends in other states and make sure they are raising their voices.

Our community, our farmers and our health depend on it.

Georgie Rubens
Burlington

Groundbreaking held for Perry Center for Native American Art

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

After seven years of planning for the construction of the Perry Center for Native American Art, the Shelburne Museum was ready to go. The museum held a ceremonial groundbreaking on Friday, June 20, with the actual construction set to begin after the following weekend.

Getting to the actual physical beginning of the project may have taken longer than originally thought. However, all those speaking before the conventional shoveling concurred: the project required a lot of education.

Thomas Denenberg, director and CEO of Shelburne Museum, said planning for the Perry Center began with about a year of “cultural competency work” followed by a couple of years of listening at “talking circles” with Indigenous leaders. By that time, the pandemic had begun, which brought more listening, planning, putting together the architecture team and raising money.

Seven years ago, Terry Perry met with Denenberg to say that her husband Tony Perry had passed away and that they thought the Shelburne Museum should be the steward of their collection of Native American art. When he heard this, Denenberg said he felt like the equilibrium had changed in the room.

“I said, ‘That’s an awfully big idea. That’s a big project.’ Little did I know how big an

idea this would be,” Denenberg recounted to those gathered on the museum grounds.

Denenberg and others began with cultural competency workshops. “We began a kind of process of close listening to Indigenous cultures,” he said.

Denenberg told the board of trustees that the museum couldn’t just stick a Native American collection in a Colonial Revival gallery or a rehabilitated barn. It would need a new building, the 40th on the museum’s grounds, and one that would be different than the museum’s 39 other buildings.

Raising the \$14 million for the 11,200-square-foot structure also took a good bit of time. Raising that much money in a small state like Vermont “is not something you do lightly,” as compared to larger states. “It’s just kind of the pace of how one raises capital,” he said.

Sen. Peter Welch said he had been asking himself where the museum had gotten the ambition to build something this grand.

“Who thinks that it’s exactly the right time, with COVID, to pursue a project of this magnitude?” Welch said.

Welch said he thought it was a Vermont trait to do hard things in hard times. As an example, he used Justin Morrill. During the middle of the Civil War, Vermont’s representative to the U.S. House of Representatives pushed for the creation of colleges in every state via the Morrill Act of 1862.



Image by Annum Architects

An artist rendering of an aerial view of the gathering circle outside the Perry Center for Native American Art at Shelburne Museum.

“It was his idea that education was so important that we were going to start land-grant colleges in the middle of the Civil War,” Welch said. “In this incredible state of Vermont, that’s been the way we roll.”

The museum staff’s efforts to reeducate and readjust how they thought about housing pieces from Indigenous cultures have been an example to other museums. In March, a number of those involved with working on the Perry Center went to a conference for museum professionals in St. Louis. After Denenberg spoke at the conference, he was approached by a landscape architect for the National Park Service, who said, “I want to tell you, Tom, I think down the road in the future, we are going to speak about museum projects before the Perry Center and projects after the Perry Center.”

One thing that has changed Denenberg’s thinking is realizing “the degree to which so many cultures have that animist worldview about this material, that these are living ancestors, not museum objects.”

Another thing that has changed his thinking is grasping the emphasis on balance in nature.

“If you’re going to remove some of the dirt for the basement of this building, you use it somewhere. So, you balance cut and fill in

that regard,” Denenberg said.

He said even though the pandemic was horrific “it gave us the opportunity to slow down and talk about this project. So, you know, balance. Balance kind of showed up as a theme throughout the whole conversation.”

Initially, Denenberg had sort of “dug in his heels” about his desire to have the Perry Center built on museum property next to Route 7. He wanted it located in a prominent location where the estimated 20,000 cars that are passing every day would see it.

But every talking circle concluded with Denenberg being told that it was paramount that the building have an east-facing door.

Finally, he realized that “to put it on the road would be to make it a storefront, basically.”

Chief Brenda Gagne of the St. Francis-Sokoki Band of Missisquoi Abenaki put the conversation about the project taking seven years in perspective. She said the museum is situated in her people’s traditional homeland.

“This is where our ancestors are. So today, we are thinking of them. We’re thinking of the next generations,” Gagne said. “We do everything for the next seven generations. So, seven years? We do seven generations.”



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

From left: Vermont Secretary of Commerce and Community Development Lindsay Kurrle; Chief Brenda Gagne of the St. Francis-Sokoki Band of Missisquoi Abenaki; Steven Gerrard, principal with Annum Architects; Sen. Peter Welch; Heidi Dreymer; Peter Graham, president of the Shelburne Museum Board of Trustees; Christine Stiller, Shelburne Museum Board of Trustees; Teressa Perry and Thomas Denenberg, director and CEO of Shelburne Museum.

After two years of flooding, town still confident in roads

Sam Stout
Community News Service

Floods racked Charlotte less than a year ago, destroying roads and trapping residents inside homes. Now, with roads repaired and much of the flood damage undone, officials urge caution in the event of storms this summer.

“Being prepared ahead of time is way better than having to call for backup support when we might already be stretched pretty thin,” said Chris Davis, the town’s emergency manager.

If any damage is incurred to the town’s culverts before the new fiscal year, Charlotte will be able to cover the costs out of pocket, road commissioner Junior Lewis said.

Culverts are tunnels under roads that deal with runoff water. Rainwater runs down hills and flows through them, preventing pockets of standing water from forming.

During the most recent flooding last summer, a culvert blew out on Spear Street, causing catastrophic damage and setting the town back approximately \$35,000, said town manager Nate Bareham.

Culverts below private drives and in residential areas are often a couple feet in diameter at most and no more than 20 feet in length. The one on Spear Street measured 10 feet in diameter and 60 feet in length. When it collapsed, the road gave way and left behind a chasm of churning water. The thoroughfare remained closed for almost a year.

The collapse highlighted a larger issue: Many culverts are easy to clog from flotsam and debris. When that happens, blowouts like the one on Spear Street can

occur. Even on a smaller scale, floods can have severe implications. People can get trapped in their homes.

People should be prepared to stay inside for at least 48 hours with canned goods and water, Davis said, unless they need help from first responders.

In the wake of the flooding last year, many culverts have been rebuilt, often with debris catchers, which could help make last year’s disastrous results less likely. Spear Street was upgraded to a dual-culvert system in a project funded by the Federal Highway Administration’s Emergency Relief Program.

The culvert at the Greenbush Road underpass was covered up in the flooding last year, but Lewis and his road crew used an excavator to clear it out. When the one under State Park Road flooded, Lewis said the state gave him permission to clean it out. On East Thompson’s Point Road, Lewis replaced a culvert totally clogged by scraps of debris.

All of those sites are no longer of concern, Lewis said.

Davis was particularly troubled by the behavior of some residents shortly after the initial flooding last year. As roads gained inches of standing water, residents continued to drive, he said. In one case, a large hoop house had been swept out from a nearby farm, bringing down power lines before obstructing the road, with commuters continuing to drive through it.

In his mind, that needlessly endangered people. Davis’ advice for these types of situations: If you can, stay put.

(Via Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for The Charlotte News.)



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Heavy rain on May 17 brought the water out of the culvert and over Greenbush Road just north of the railroad trestle, but it had gone down by the time this photo was taken.



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Champion Trees

Time to update Hamilton Roster of Charlotte's Champion Trees

Vince Crockenberg
Contributor

The Rutter Family Tree Fund maintains and updates the Hamilton Roster of Champion Trees, named in honor of former Charlotte tree warden, Larry Hamilton. The roster was last updated in June 2022.

The current roster (below) lists the biggest known trees of each species in Charlotte, whether on private or public property. For purposes of the roster, champion status is determined by the tree's girth, in inches, 4 1/2 feet from the ground.

If you believe you have identified a tree that is larger than the current champion of that species or that places a new tree species on the list, measure the tree at that height. Then send your measurement, along with a photo if possible, to Vince Crockenberg at vincecrockenberg@gmavt.net with the words "Champion Tree" in the subject line. Someone from

the Rutter Fund will then contact you and set up a time to confirm the tree's species and girth.

In addition, many of the listed champion trees may well have grown substantially in girth since they were last measured. If you think that might be the case with a champion on your property, let us know and we'll come out and remeasure it.

Finally, we're trying to provide GPS coordinates for each of our champion trees so we can place them on a town map more accurately. We're missing those addresses for many of the champs. If you have a champion on your property and could provide us with the GPS coordinates, in either decimal degrees or degrees/minutes/seconds, we'll add those coordinates to the Hamilton Roster.

You'll note that most of Charlotte's champion trees reside on private property. If you want to visit any of them, please contact the landowners for permission.

(Vince Crockenberg is a member of the board of the Rutter Family Tree Fund.)

Charlotte's champion white ash on the southwest corner of Thompson's Point and Lake roads. The tree is protected from emerald ash borer infestation, and certain death, by regular insecticide injections donated by Greg Ranallo's Teacher's Tree Service of Charlotte. While emerald ash borer has not yet been detected in Charlotte, it typically takes three to five years before an infected tree shows symptoms, and infections have been confirmed in Shelburne and South Burlington.



Photo by Vince Crockenberg

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Native to Charlotte		
Species	Circumference	Location, (GPS in degrees, minutes, seconds)
apple	101*	Cosinuke/Kelton, Sanctuary Ln. (44/20/39 N, 73/14/34 W)
ash, black	49	Donegan, Carpenter Rd. (44/20/12 N, 73/9/56 W)
ash, green	165	Krasnow, off One Mile Rd.
ash, white	172	McGarghan, Lake Rd. Ext. (44/16/55 N, 73/16/9 W)
aspen, big-tooth	63	Keyes, Upper Old Town Trail
aspen, trembling	49	Keyes, Upper Old Town Trail
basswood	164	Thorp Cove Rd.
beech	130	McGinnis, Mt. Philo Rd.
birch, black	76	Butnor, Guinea Rd.
birch, river	15	Charlotte Town Green
birch, white	63	Donovan/O'Donnell, Lake Rd.
box elder	122	Shapiro/Morrison, Whalley Rd. (44/19/3N, 73/16/59W)
butternut	134	Woodruff, Garen Rd.
cedar, red	58	Town land, Thompson's Point Rd.
cedar, white	153	Barber Hill Cemetery (44/18/5 N, 73/15/18 W)
cherry, black	107	Cheney, Lewis Creek Rd. (44/16/11 N, 73/10/38 W)
cottonwood	174	Philo Ridge Farm
elm, American (white)	128	Donegan, Carpenter Rd. (44/20/32 N, 73/9/54 W))
elm, slippery (red)	106	Krasnow, off One Mile Rd.
gum, black	15	Charlotte Town Green
hackberry	19	Charlotte Town Green
hemlock	110	Muggenthaler, near Williams Woods
hickory, bitternut	141	Keyes, Upper Old Town Trail
hickory, shagbark	109	Cheney, Lewis Creek Rd. (44/16/28 N, 73/10/37 W)
hop hornbeam	61	North Shore Rd., near Whiskey Bay
locust, honey	142	Preston, One Mile Rd.
maple, black	87	Lake Rd. (44/16/42 N, 73/16/15 W)
maple, red	131	McCabe Brook, Lime Kiln Rd.
maple, silver	181	Akselrod, 1355 Church Hill Rd. (44/19/29 N, 73/14/12 W)
maple, sugar	211	Purdom, Fox Run Rd. (44/19/28 N, 73/14/48 W)
oak, bur	183	Donaldson, Garen Rd.
oak, pin	42	Charlotte Central School (44/19/3 N, 73/13/20 W)
oak, red	157	Handy, Dickens on Guinea Rd. (44/20/149 N, 73/11/38 W)
oak, scarlet	137	Moraska, Spear Street
oak, swamp white	166	Beal, Thompson's Point Rd. (44/16/44 N, 73/16/38 W)
oak, white	179	Keenan, North Pasture Ln.
pine, red	61	Thompson's Point Rd., SW of Association Way
pine, white	160	Cheney, Lewis Creek Rd. (44/16/18 N, 73/10/32 W)
sycamore	60	Walker/Boynton, Lake Rd. (planted in 2000)
serviceberry	20	UVM Natural Area, Pease Mountain
tamarack	64	Hinsdale, west of Spear St.

Non-native but Widely Planted or Escaped		
birch, weeping silver	65	Miserow, Lime Kiln Rd. (44/20/53 N, 73/13/31 W)
horse chestnut	134	Horsford, Greenbush Rd. (44/19/20 N, 73/15/1 W)
locust, black	158	Horsford, Greenbush Rd. (44/19/20 N, 73/15/22 W)
maple, Norway	95	Crockenberg, Thompson's Pt. Rd. (44/16/42 N, 73/16/54 W)
poplar, white (European)	93	Garvey, Baldwin Rd.
walnut, black	137	Horsford, Converse Bay Rd.
willow, weeping	254	Mt. Philo Rd., near Shelburne line

Charlotte Central School sends off the class of 2025

Naomi Strada
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

On Friday, June 13, Charlotte Central School principal Tim O’Leary and assistant principal Beth Slater sent this letter to the families of the school:

It’s hard to imagine a better sendoff to the school year than the last 24 hours at Charlotte Central School!

Last night, our eighth-grade graduation brought joy, pride and even a few happy tears as we celebrated the class of 2025. The ceremony was full of heartfelt speeches and community spirit — truly a night to remember.

Then today, students in grades K–7 filled our fields, courts and playgrounds for a full-on field day celebration. From basketball to tug-of-war, soccer, swings, volleyball and a few cold-water bucket dumps, students spent the morning in

motion, in laughter and in community. Our cafeteria staff packed up lunches for every student who requested one, and classes picnicked together before our 11:45 a.m. dismissal. The grand finale? About 300 students and faculty dancing the macarena together before heading home for summer, followed by a staff sendoff out front with colorful streamers and water toys in hand.

This has also been a year of transition for both of us, as we stepped into new roles and began our work together as a leadership team. We are so grateful for the support, patience and partnership of this incredible community as we found our footing. The months ahead hold exciting opportunities, and we’re genuinely looking forward to deepening our collaboration, learning and growing together as individuals, as a team and with all of you. Thank you for being part of what makes



Courtesy photo

Charlotte Central School celebrates the last day of the 2024-25 school year with a field day, minus the class that graduated the night before.

this school so special.
Have a safe, restful, and joyful summer.
We can’t wait to see you in the fall!

With gratitude,
Tim O’Leary & Beth Slater
Charlotte Central School leadership team

After 35 years, Pierson looks forward to fall in her new camper

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

As a new life begins with a teardrop camper and a mental catalogue of places Sarah Pierson and her husband would like to visit, there is still an inner scrapbook filled with memories of 35 years of teaching at Charlotte Central School.

Prominent in her remembrances of those years are the school’s traditions, many now defunct, like the eighth-grade field trips for several days to Quebec City, the Halloween parades, the Carnation Ceremonies and the way middle-school students used to start the school year with three days of camping in cabins near Joe’s Pond.

School usually started on Thursday, and after three days in the woods, actual school started on Monday for the middle-school students and their teachers. “We would have three days of just games and food and getting to know the students,” Pierson said.

But one memory that stands out is how long-time principal Monica Smith would decide whether there would be school on mornings after a big snow.

When Pierson started teaching, long before school consolidation, individual principals decided whether to close their schools

because of snow. Smith started as Charlotte Central School principal the same year that Pierson started her teaching career there.

Smith would joke that she decided if there would be school by throwing her puppy outside. If the dog slid on the sidewalk, it was a snow day.

Pierson said, “I was just really lucky. I started with a great group of veteran teachers, and they just taught me about teaching.”

She liked her early years of teaching when she would often have the same students for several years, but she gravitated to the middle-school grades.

“They’re a handful,” Pierson admitted, “but they’re fun.”

For around 25 years, Pierson was only a French teacher, but 10 years ago she added Spanish.

When she started on her quest to add another language to her teaching repertoire, Pierson didn’t know any Spanish. She read lots of books in Spanish, watched lots of Spanish TV shows and traveled to Mexico and Spain.

Originally from Connecticut, she went to the University of Vermont. Besides the school, she was attracted by the lake and the mountains, and that it was far enough from home, but not too far. At UVM she met her

future husband, who has also recently retired.

They aren’t planning any long trips now, like camping in Mexico or Canada to practice her language skills. For the time, she’s looking forward “kicking back” and enjoying the treasures of the Green Mountain State.

“Vermont is beautiful,” Pierson said. “I can’t wait to really enjoy the fall without having to go back to work.”



Photo by Scooter MacMillan
Sara Pierson appreciates the veteran teachers who mentored her when she started in the profession 35 years ago.

Town-wide scavenger hunt comes to Charlotte in July

Frances Foster
Contributor

The Charlotte Land Trust is hosting a scavenger hunt for children and families during the month of July. The scavenger hunt highlights many of the conserved farms and scenic areas in Charlotte.

Here’s the idea: You and your gang get together and try out activities designated in the hunt. Each activity involves conserved land in some way. For example, can you make an all-Charlotte burger consisting entirely of local ingredients such as beef, tomato, lettuce, onion and maybe a bun made from local wheat?

When you have completed five or more of the activities, email the land trust with what you did. You will be entered into a drawing to win a prize. The two winners will score a

Charlotte Land Trust ball cap, a box of berries and flowers from Adam’s Berry Farm and a \$10 gift card to the Old Brick Store.

Copies of the scavenger hunt instructions with the list of activities will be available at the Charlotte Town Party on June 28, or you can stop by the library, senior center, Spear’s Corner Store or the Old Brick Store to pick up a copy.

While you are out enjoying the hunt be sure to check out the red “This Land is Conserved” signs highlighting conserved land in town. The signs will be up from around June 28 to July 10. The Charlotte Land Trust puts up these signs annually to draw attention to the wealth of farmland, natural areas, scenic vistas and wildlife habitat we are so blessed to have in our community.

Questions? Email charlottelandtrust@gmail.com.

Sports

Inside the plan to build a destination for women’s soccer

Busy Anderson
Community News Service

A year’s worth of anticipation hailed down on Vermont Green’s Sophie Reale as she blew past two defenders and harvested the first goal of the women’s exhibition matches last week.

Five thousand fans brought Virtue Field to capacity and spilled onto the nearby hillside for the games against semipro teams Flower City Union and A.S. Blainville. World Cup winner Sam Mewis returned as head coach this year, but young fans were no farther from the field’s railings as she took the pitch.

“Playing for the national team, playing in the NWSL, the fans have this hungriness for more: for more access, for more autographs, for pictures,” said Mewis, who moved to Colchester after retiring from the U.S. team. “It is honestly really familiar from playing at the level that I played at before.”

A hum about Vermont Green’s expansion into the women’s game underscored the two sellouts and two wins: 4-0 over Flower City, 2-1 over Blainville. This year, nurturing a lush landscape for soccer in Vermont is top of mind.

Players convened June 9 for the first of three practices before their Flower City matchup, many learning each other’s names for the first time. In their two games, Green would entertain and improve, Mewis said that day.

“Every time you get the ball is an opportunity to express yourself,” coach Brad Cole added during drills.

Last season, Vermont Green announced a permanent women’s squad is a matter of when, not if. Exhibition games will continue until a full season is secured, with Mewis and University of Vermont women’s soccer head coach Kristi Huizenga guiding the launch.

Olivia Borgen, Sophia Lowenberg and Violet Rademacher claimed a goal each for the Green in Wednesday’s second half, conceding none. The 4-0 outcome was much more comfortable than the Green’s 5-4, penalty kick win over FC Laval in 2024. The difference was in the roster, and particularly the personnel on the sidelines, said goalkeeping coach Erin Murphy.

“It’s not just, we took the male coaches and

had them go female,” she said. “I think Sam has really embraced her role a lot this year.”

Joining Mewis was former Portland Thorns player Mo Fitzgerald, with Murphy stepping up as a coach after her own career with the University of Vermont and the Green.

“You also have to develop coaches, more women coaches, more referees. You need more administrators. You have to have talent in the front office,” sports journalist Meg Linehan said on “The Women’s Game,” a podcast run by Mewis.

At the top of both matches, the Green and their opponents walked out with girls from Nordic SC, Monarchs SC and the Mad River Valley Soccer Association. All-female referees supervised the field and ball girls fueled the fast pace. During Saturday’s contest, Democratic U.S. Rep. Becca Balint announced that the Vermont Community Foundation would send \$10,000 to the Burlington School District to buy cleats and other gear.

The National Women’s Soccer League has seen a 163 percent increase in attendance since its 2013 start and will add the nearby Boston Legacy to its ranks in 2026. The Massachusetts club’s swan logo was scattered in the Virtue Field stands at the Green’s exhibition matches less than a week after the crest was unveiled.

Joining the surge is the professional women’s United Soccer League Super League, home to eight clubs founded in August 2024. Tampa Bay won the inaugural championship in front of a sold-out crowd (<https://tinyurl.com/mr2djkp9>) Saturday night, and seven new teams are set to debut next season.

“I’ve played soccer in the mid-’70s in Venezuela where it was a very hot sport, and just to see the degree of athleticism that these women have, how far the sport has come in terms of how soccer is played with women, is amazing,” said fan Alicia Daniel from Burlington.

The Green has a solid foundation on which to rest ambitions for a second team. Vermont led the nation in youth sports participation (<https://tinyurl.com/bdfasp87>) in the most recent measure by the federally funded and directed National Survey of Children’s Health: 69 percent of kids ages



Photos by Busy Anderson

Players watch a ball in the air on June 11 during the match between the Green and Flower City in Burlington.

6-17 played on a sports team or took lessons in 2022, well above the national average of 54 percent.

Vermont families have 46 competitive clubs and 51 recreational programs to choose from under the Vermont Soccer Association, the state’s arm of U.S. Youth Soccer. When Andrew Minnis joined the state organization as executive director last December, he looked to collaborate with the Green’s founders right away.

“A big push of mine since I came in has been really trying to bridge the gap of southern Vermont,” Minnis said.

Clubs under the association are more abundant in and around Chittenden County, with less access to youth soccer south of Montpelier, he said.

The association’s partnership with U.S. Youth Soccer’s Europe branch, announced last month, holds promise for an exchange of knowledge overseas that could help coaches add teams to Vermont’s inventory, Minnis said.

At the moment, when teens surpass the challenge of local clubs, their paths upward become more sparse. Players can be selected for Vermont’s Olympic Development Program with the chance to represent their state, region or country but have few options outside those rosters.

In high school, the Green’s Liv White commuted three hours from her hometown of Pittsford to play with New England Mutiny, a Massachusetts club, she said on “The Women’s Game.” When coaching local clubs, White’s teammate Lauren DeGroot sees that routes to elite teams lead kids out of Vermont.

“These girls are super talented, and we’re

able to see that from such a young age, and it’s unfortunate that you see those girls and you feel like you’re doing them a disservice cause there aren’t those opportunities,” she said. “You think, ‘Can we send them down to Massachusetts, Jersey, so they can get that? Cause they aren’t getting it here.’”

Female footballers of the Green’s caliber are still looking elsewhere for off-season training.

“I have to drive an hour and 15 minutes to Quebec to play soccer over the summer,” said Sydney Remington, a UVM player, of her training without the Green.

Green forward Erin Flurey closed shop that night, poking in a loose ball to slash Blainville’s 1-0 lead and chipping the keeper in a bold signoff for a 2-1 win. The women’s exhibition team concluded year two undefeated.

Best friends Marie Coyne and Veda Pfeifer walked out to centerfield hand in hand with Green and Blainville players before kickoff. The girls are 10 years old and don’t doubt they can compete on Virtue someday. They just need some support.

“Like cheering for you and saying, ‘You got this,’” said Pfeifer.

Convinced the Green is here to stay, fans imagine the club playing at home fields all around Vermont, not just at Virtue, and even a new stadium open to local teams when Green isn’t in town. But a simpler goal played on repeat all week:

“I would like to see a women’s team. Period,” said fan Annette Seidenglanz.

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

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Gardening

Tips for the healthy, productive garden you want

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

Every gardener wants a healthy, productive garden, whether they’re growing vegetables, berries or flowers. While some problems are outside our control, there are a number of things you can do to help keep your garden healthy all summer long.

Start with healthy soil. How do you do that? Have a soil test done. Taking a sample is easy, and the test is inexpensive.

While testing soil before planting is ideal, it can be done at any time. The results can tell you about your soil pH, available phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), micronutrients and more. It will recommend nutrients needed to benefit the plants you’re growing so you don’t waste time and money applying unneeded fertilizer.

A soil test will also recommend amendments that can be added to your soil before or after the growing season. For more information, see go.uvm.edu/soiltest.

The second thing to consider is light. Most edible crops require full sun for at least 6 to 8 hours daily. Low light can result in slower growth and lower yield. If your yard receives insufficient sunlight for the plants you want to grow, consider switching to an elevated bed or containers, which can be set up in the best location for what you are growing.

When purchasing starter plants, it’s easy to underestimate how much space they will eventually need. Plant according to their mature size to allow sufficient room for growth.

Overcrowding in the garden makes plants compete for available water, nutrients, room to grow and light. One plant may block the sun from others. Overcrowding may make plants more susceptible to diseases and other problems and make it difficult to spot them early on.

Be sure to take into account your plants’ need for water. What nature provides may be sufficient for an in-ground garden, but when growing in raised beds or containers, or during dry periods, supplemental watering can make the difference between a healthy garden and a lack of flowers or poor harvest.

When watering, a good, deep soaking is more beneficial to plants than frequent, shallow watering. As an alternative to manual watering, drip irrigation can help conserve



Photos by Deborah J. Benoit

Left: When watering crops such as blueberries, a good, deep soaking is more beneficial to plants than frequent, shallow watering.
Right: When putting tomatoes and other starter plants in the garden, allow enough space between plants to avoid overcrowding, which may lead to competition for available water, nutrients and light and increase susceptibility to diseases and other problems.

water through less evaporation, get water to the roots where it’s needed and help keep the soil’s moisture level more consistent.

Applying a layer of mulch on the surface can help retain moisture in the soil. In addition, mulch can help keep soil and roots cooler during excessive summer heat.

Mulch will also help discourage the growth of weeds and can make those that do appear easier to pull. Weed regularly, before they get large enough to compete with what you’re growing. Never let weeds go to seed.

Create a compost pile to recycle yard waste and kitchen scraps. Did you know that compost is one of the best amendments you can add to your garden soil? Over time, it can improve soil texture and quality and add nutrients to the soil.

Compost can also be used as topdressing to help suppress weeds as an alternative to other types of mulch. For more information on composting, see <https://go.uvm.edu/the-dirt-on-compost>.

This summer, admire your garden up close as you’re routinely weeding, pruning or deadheading. Doing so regularly will provide

the opportunity to observe any problems before they get out of hand.

For those times that you need help identifying or dealing with a problem or just have a question about home gardening, consult the volunteers at the University

of Vermont Extension Master Gardener Helpline. Call 802-656-5421 (Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon) or submit questions online anytime from April to October at go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp.

Gardening

Red clover reflects Vermont’s traditions, rural character

Nadie VanZandt
University of Vermont Extension

Introduced to Vermont by European settlers, red clover has become an essential part of the state’s landscape and identity. Designated as the state flower in 1894, this pinkish-purple bloom symbolizes Vermont’s deep agricultural roots, particularly its dairy farming heritage, and serves as a living tribute to the land’s rural character and economic lifeblood.

Originally from Asia Minor and southeastern Europe, red clover spread to the British Isles from Germany in the 1600s and was later transported to North America by English colonists.

Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) is an herbaceous biennial or short-lived perennial belonging to the legume family. The plant typically grows erect stems with leaves composed of three leaflets, each including light-colored “V” shapes. Its pink to rosy-purple pom pom-like flower heads are dense oval or spherical clusters, each consisting of up to 125 individual pea-shaped flowers.

Adaptable and relatively hardy, red clover thrives in U.S. Department of Agriculture hardiness zones 3 to 9. It prefers full sun and performs best when the temperatures are between 60 and 75 degrees Fahrenheit though it can tolerate both cold and heat. While it

favors well-drained loamy soils, it can also grow in a variety of soil types, including those with poor drainage, provided it receives moderate moisture during its growing season.

Like other members of the legume family (which includes peas and beans), the roots of red clover develop nodules when in contact with beneficial soil bacteria known as rhizobia. They convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form that plants can use through a process called nitrogen fixation. This enriches the soil with nitrogen, an important macronutrient for plant health. Red clover can contribute 75 to 175 pounds of nitrogen per acre, an amount that underscores its value as a soil enhancer.

This nitrogen-fixing ability, combined with its fast growth, flexible planting schedule,

tolerance for a variety of soil types and ability to break up compacted soils, makes red clover an exceptional cover crop. As the plant decomposes, it contributes organic matter

that further improves soil structure and health.

To maximize nitrogen fixation, red clover seeds are often inoculated with *Rhizobium trifolii* bacteria and a sticking agent to encourage nodule formation. Inoculation is important in soils lacking sufficient populations of beneficial

bacteria.

Red clover is typically direct seeded in the spring (April to May) or in the fall, assuming optimal moisture conditions. Fall planting should occur at least six weeks before the first frost to allow the plant enough time to

establish.

Farmers use red clover in a variety of ways: as hay, forage in pastures, as a cover crop or as part of a crop rotation system to improve soil health and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers. In addition to its agricultural benefits, red clover is a magnet for pollinators. Many insects are drawn to its nutritious pollen and nectar with bees and bumblebees serving as its most effective pollinators.

Red clover is also edible to humans. The mildly sweet flowers are the most palatable, often added to salads, soups, jellies and baked goods. The leaves can be eaten in salads or brewed into tea. The seed pods are typically reserved for animal feed.

Historically, red clover has been valued for its medicinal properties. Native Americans used red clover infusions to treat various illnesses and applied it as an ointment for venomous bites. Its healing reputation spans ancient traditions across the globe.

Brought by settlers and embraced by generations of farmers, red clover reflects Vermont’s deep-rooted traditions and pride in its rural character. Its designation as the state flower honors both Vermont’s agricultural history and its enduring connection to the land.

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



Photo by Couleur/Pixabay
Red clover, the state flower of Vermont, is a versatile plant used for everything from cover cropping to culinary dishes.

Gardening

Watermelons are a tasty way to keep hydrated

Deborah J. Benoit
University of Vermont Extension

There are few things as refreshing on a hot summer day as a slice of watermelon (*Citrullus lanatus*). At over 90 percent water, watermelons are a tasty way to keep hydrated with an added bonus of vitamins and minerals.

If you'd like to try your hand at growing your own watermelon, you'll need a location with rich, well-draining soil that receives at least six hours of direct sun daily. A soil test can provide recommendations for fertilizing. You can find more information on obtaining a soil test at go.uvm.edu/soiltest.

Be sure to have sufficient space for the variety you choose. Smaller watermelons could be grown vertically, training the vines to climb a sturdy trellis with support such as slings for the fruit.

Your biggest decision will be choosing which variety to grow. Do you prefer an heirloom or a hybrid variety? Full-size melons or one just big enough for a person or two? There are seeded and seedless varieties. Choices include the familiar, red-fleshed watermelon as well as orange, pink, yellow or white varieties.

Before you make a final decision, check the days to harvest for the variety you're considering. Be sure there are enough days in your growing season for the watermelon to mature and be ready to harvest.

To do so, determine your anticipated last

and first frost dates. The number of days between those dates is the length of your growing season. You can find the average last and first frost dates for your location at garden.org/apps/frost-dates.

Since watermelons require warm temperatures, you may be sowing seeds or transplanting seedlings two weeks after the last frost date. The variety you choose should be ready to harvest within that number of days or you may be disappointed in the fall when a killing frost puts an end to your plants before you've had a chance to harvest.

Prepare the watermelon bed by removing weeds and adding any needed soil amendments. A layer of mulch can help prevent weeds and keep moisture levels in the soil more consistent.

To direct sow watermelon seeds, plant several seeds, each an inch deep, in groups 4 to 5 feet apart. Once seedlings have emerged, choose the strongest, healthiest plant and thin seedlings to one per group. See the seed packet for variety-specific information.

If you started seeds indoors or plan to purchase starter plants, be sure to harden them off before transplanting. Once the soil temperature is above 60 degrees Fahrenheit, you can safely move plants to the garden. For best results, try to disturb the roots as little as possible. See go.uvm.edu/starter-plants for more information on preparing plants for transplanting.

The soil should receive a deep soaking of



Photo by Pun Kaset/Pixabay

Ideal growing conditions for watermelons are nutrient-rich, well-draining soil and a location that receives at least six hours of direct sun daily.

water, 1 to 2 inches a week, either from rain or supplemental watering. When watering, avoid getting the foliage wet as this could lead to disease issues. Overwatering close to harvest could result in the fruit splitting.

There are several ways to determine when a watermelon is ready to harvest. The skin color becomes dull. Tendrils near the watermelon dry out and become brown. The area on the bottom of the watermelon where it touches the soil yellows.

Watermelons are related to cucumbers, pumpkins and squash, so keep an eye out for pests such as cucumber beetles and squash vine borers.

If you would like more information about growing watermelons or have home gardening questions, the University of Vermont Extension master gardener helpline is available to help at go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp.

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

Sun loving



Photo by Helen Toor

A deer poses among lupine in East Charlotte.

Gardening

Developments in strawberry breeding made in Northeast

Vern Grubinger
University of Vermont Extension

There’s nothing like the taste of a fresh-picked strawberry. Sweet, juicy and flavorful, it’s the first fruit to ripen on our local farms, and this year’s crop is a good one.

The buds that produce strawberries were formed last fall. Growers then tucked the plants away under a layer of straw to protect them from winter damage. Flowers that opened this spring turned into berries in about a month.

Strawberries are grown on many diversified vegetable and berry farms. They’re an important crop because they provide early-season income and have a high value per acre. However, the risks are also high. In addition to potential winter injury, early spring frosts, heat waves during harvest and a variety of pests can lead to crop losses.

The 2022 U.S. Department of Agriculture’s census of agriculture counted 125 farms with 168 acres of strawberries in Vermont. A typical yield is about 6,000 pounds an acre, so over a million pounds of Vermont strawberries must be picked, sold and eaten in a relatively short time. Almost all these berries are sold directly to customers or to local stores and distributors.

Nationally, about 1.4 million tons of strawberries are produced each year. The vast majority come from specialized farms in California, with Florida a distant second in production. These berries get shipped to stores and processors.

Most of the strawberries grown in Vermont are called June-bearers, for obvious reasons. There are also some strawberry varieties called ever-bearing, which bloom and fruit all summer long. These are trickier to grow because they require ongoing attention and are more vulnerable to insect attack later in the summer.

Wild strawberries have been eaten since ancient times, but the development of modern varieties was a fairly recent process, involving a lot of plant breeding including the hybridization of different strawberry species.

Hovey was the name of the first American strawberry variety resulting from plant breeding. It was developed by Charles



Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen on local farms in Vermont with June-bearer varieties available to pick in June.

Hovey, a nurseryman in Cambridge, Mass., in 1834.

Wilson was bred in 1851 by James Wilson of Albany, N.Y., who crossed Hovey with other varieties. Wilson was productive, firm and hardy and could be grown in many types of soil. It also had “perfect” flowers, containing both male and female reproductive structures, so could be grown by itself without another variety for pollination.

Wilson changed the strawberry into a major crop that would be grown across the continent. The ease with which it could be grown, and the availability of railroads for transporting the crop, led to “strawberry fever” that dramatically increased production in the 1860s.

Arthur Howard learned to love strawberries as a young man while living with the Perfectionist community in Putney. He later developed Howard 17 at his farm in Belchertown, Mass. That variety dominated strawberry production in the early 1900s. It had tolerance to leaf spot, leaf scorch and virus diseases, and it formed many crowns with early flower bud initiation. For decades it was important for commercial use and breeding.

Before 1920, strawberry breeding was done by growers, but since then most new varieties have been developed by scientists at federal and state experiment stations. One renowned strawberry breeder was George M. Darrow, a Vermonter who was chief horticulturist at the USDA. He improved the disease resistance of strawberries and



Photos by Vern Grubinger/UVM Extension
Several berry operations are open in Vermont in early summer for customers to pick their own strawberries.



During spring frosts, growers apply irrigation to protect strawberry blossoms because as ice forms it gives off heat.

developed dozens of varieties that helped create the fruits that we eat today.

To find a farm where you can pick your own fresh, delicious local strawberries, visit

vermontpickyourown.org.
(Vern Grubinger is the University of Vermont Extension vegetable and berry specialist.)



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Gardening

New rail trail signs ask for help to ID tree-of-heaven

Ginger Nickerson
University of Vermont Extension

Visitors on Vermont’s rail trails this summer will notice new signs asking for their help identifying a fast-growing introduced invasive tree called tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*). This tree is the preferred host of the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*), an invasive sap-feeding insect that poses a serious threat to Vermont’s vineyards and recreation economy.

Tree-of-heaven grows rapidly in disturbed areas such as roadsides, railroad corridors and urban edges. It can be hard to tell apart from native lookalikes, such as sumac and black walnut, but learning to identify it is a key step in early detection of the spotted lanternfly, which has not yet become established in Vermont.

“We’re asking trail users to keep an eye out for tree-of-heaven and report any sightings to vtinvasives.org,” says Ginger Nickerson, forest pest education coordinator for University of Vermont Extension. “If we can find and map these trees, we can better monitor for spotted lanternfly and take quick action to prevent it from spreading into Vermont.”

How you can help:

- Learn how to identify tree-of-heaven using the information on the signs or by



Photo by Lawrence Barringer,
Pennsylvania Department of
Agriculture/bugwood.org

The spotted lanternfly, while not yet established in Vermont, has been found in neighboring states and may soon spread into the state.

visiting vtinvasives.org.

- Report sightings by taking a picture and submitting it using the “ReportIT” link on the website.
- If you have been in an area with spotted lanternfly, check your vehicle before returning to Vermont. What appears to be a patch of mud may be an egg mass. Adults and nymphs also can hitchhike in cracks and crevices on vehicles.

“Together, we can protect Vermont’s landscapes and keep this invasive pest



Photo by Richard Gardner/bugwood.org

Outdoor recreationists are asked to report any sightings of the tree-of-heaven, which is one of the preferred hosts of the spotted lanternfly, an invasive pest.

out,” Nickerson concludes. “Be alert, stay informed and enjoy Vermont’s wonderful rail trails.”

For help in identifying the tree-of-heaven, check out go.uvm.edu/tree-of-heaven.

For more information about the spotted lanternfly and its feeding behavior and management, go to go.uvm.edu/lanternflies.

To request copies of the trail sign, contact ginger.nickerson@uvm.edu.



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Our Local Feast

Consider cooling off with chilled summer soups

Dorothy Grover-Read
Contributor

The sun is at its hottest right now in the north country, and we know it. It is steamy here in Vermont, punctuated with thunderstorms and cloudbursts, rainbows and mud puddles. A typical summer, although perhaps it feels a bit more extreme. The humidity and heat can dampen even the most ardent cook's enthusiasm, so a day without turning on the stove is definitely the way to go.

This is when I look for a cold lunch or dinner. In just a few minutes, you can have a stash of chilled summer soup waiting for you on these hot summer days. No pots or pans, one blender and a canning jar for storage. What could be easier? And even the chilled soups that require cooking can be made ahead, waiting for your appetite in the refrigerator.

Salads or chilled soups fill the bill, and gazpacho is one of our favorites. It's a snack. It's a lunch. Dress it up just a bit, and it's dinner or a starter for a feast with company.

Gazpacho is traditionally a Spanish soup made with stale bread or nuts whirled in a mix of tomatoes, cucumbers, garlic, peppers, onions, oil and vinegar. However, many prefer it without the bread for a cleaner, fresher flavor. I'm included in that group. And I don't use nuts because of food allergies in the family.

This recipe makes exactly enough to fill a 2-quart canning jar for easy storage in the refrigerator. No cooking, a little measuring, and you have instant meals for a few days. All you need to do is feed raw foods into the blender or food processor, chill, and that's it.

Process as you desire, but you want a little texture, not a smoothie. If you want it chunky, process the garlic and onion in the tomato juice first so that they are less apparent in the final product and dispersed more evenly. No one wants to bite into a big chunk of raw garlic.

Use any tomato you have in abundance whether cherry, plum or big meaty beefsteak.

If you don't have enough fresh tomatoes yet, use a can of organic San Marzano whole tomatoes. I often want this once the weather turns really hot but before the local tomatoes start making their appearance, just about now. Soon, all the ingredients will be available locally.

Make it your own. If you love the flavor of peppers the best, increase the amount. Same with the tomatoes or cucumbers. I like it spicy, so I use one or two hot peppers and usually add a bit of cayenne as well. You can omit them if you don't want the heat, remove the seeds, or increase it, or use a hotter pepper. Just taste as you go and make it yours.

I have included approximations here, but this is one of those dishes that really is about technique and not precise measurements. If you have a lot of tomatoes, use more, if you love cucumbers, add more of those. No onions? Use scallions or leeks. What else do

you have on hand? Arugula (yum)? Chard or spinach greens? Watercress?

Look for all organic veggies from your farmers market or farm stand. They will be the freshest and the most delicious. And if you haven't noticed this already, because they are so much fresher, they last longer in your refrigerator so there is less waste.

You don't have to be precise here in your chopping, make it fun. Just a rough cut is fine since it will be all processed, so don't fiddle, just get them small enough to blend but large enough to not be tiring. After all, in this heat, you need to conserve your energy.

To take the flavor one step further, grill all the veggies first, then process. This is how I often do it, tossing on extra veggies while the grill is hot after a cookout. The smoky flavor is amazing.

Since you are not spending time cooking, you can definitely spend a little time fussing with your garnish. Small dice of some of the veggies in the soup are nice; add some herbs and edible flowers for a flourish.

To dress it up if you are making it a full meal, add a bit of crabmeat, toasted tofu or some grilled shrimp for a festive touch.

If you don't mind doing a little cooking, a chilled vichyssoise (potato leek soup) is another big-batch soup that you can enjoy over the course of multiple meals. Traditionally made with potatoes, leeks, butter and heavy cream, I've lightened this substantially to be more healthful.

You'll still use a bit of potato for the flavor, but fennel will share the spotlight. Instead of cream, light coconut milk will give rich deliciousness.

A bonus is that those who can't consume dairy will love both these soups, as can vegans and everyone else.

Of course, it's best to serve cold soup in chilled bowls, so tuck them in the refrigerator or freezer when you set the soup in to chill.

Spicy Summer Gazpacho



Coarsely chop:

- 1 quart chopped tomatoes (or a 28-oz

can tomatoes and their juice, chopped)

- 1 sweet onion, such as Vidalia, chopped
- 1 English cucumber, all parts
- 1 large red bell pepper
- 1 stalk celery
- 1-2 serrano or jalapeño peppers, seeds optional

Put everything in a large bowl and add:

- 1 cup organic tomato or vegetable juice, low sodium
- 1/4 cup parsley or cilantro
- 1/4 cup fruity extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup sherry or cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- freshly ground pepper

Mix it up and process in your food processor or blender until the desired consistency. You may have to do this in batches.

Chill at least four hours. Adjust seasoning after it has set; you might need more salt. Served in chilled bowls or glasses.

Dress up for dinner; this makes a lovely dinner with a little pile of Maine crabmeat nestled on top — our family's favorite — or a succulent grilled shrimp or two. Roasted tofu is quite at home in this soup as well, as is a nice little mound of more cucumbers and tomatoes.

Potato, leek and fennel vichyssoise

My late mother-in-law Pat Read was one of the best chefs I've ever known, and I learned lots from her. She owned two splendid restaurants, The Three Clock Inn in Londonderry and The Buttery in Manchester, a tourist and ski Mecca, and on her menu was an extremely popular traditional Vichyssoise (rhymes with Oz please) — thick, rich, with abundant potato and leek flavor, and a creaminess that was addictive.

It was one of my husband's favorites, and Pat would often send him home with a vat of this soup. Although it was chilled, something one wanted on a humid day, I can't honestly say it was refreshing since it was quite rich beyond belief. Delicious, yes, but one could almost feel the arteries harden on the spot from the heavy cream alone, not to mention the potato carbs and the butter. But eating it was an experience.

I fiddled with her recipe for a long time, swapping out different vegetables from cauliflower to fennel and came up with a version that uses just a potato, no cream and very little butter. It still tastes remarkable like the original, but with much less guilt, and it's more refreshing.

The bonus is that the farmstands and farmers markets have lots of early fennel right now, tops and all, so you can easily make this soup with a quick stock made from all the



Photos by Dorothy Grover-Read

trimmings to add more flavor to the dish.

While Pat's original Vichyssoise was a pure white, mine is a little on the green side since I use both the white and light green of the leeks and the fennel is pale green as well. I think she would forgive this, especially if she tasted it on a steamy late June day.

In a large stock pot, sauté until tender:

- 2 large or 3 medium fennel bulbs, chopped
- 2 large leeks, chopped, whites and some of the light green
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons of unsalted butter or vegan butter

Once the vegetables have started to soften, add:

- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 teaspoons fennel seeds, crushed
- 1 star anise
- 2 bay leaves

Let these all get to know each other until fragrant, just a few minutes, then add:

- 1 large potato, white or yellow, chopped
- water or vegetable stock to cover the potatoes

Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook until everything is tender. Let cool a bit, then put through a food processor or food mill to make a thick purée. Thin this out with:

- 1 can lite coconut milk or evaporated skim milk

Chill for several hours, but overnight is best. Place in a shallow chilled bowl and garnish with chives or fennel fronds, free with the fennel bulbs.

If you like, top with a protein such as seared scallops.

Note: I usually do all my vegetable prep early and toss all the trimmings, including those fennel stems and fronds, into a pot with a little more than a quart of water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and use instead of water. This adds some flavor that would normally be tossed in the compost bucket. However, just water works fine, too.

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On Books

An unabashedly honest look at motherhood

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

I don't know about you all, but I'm at the age when many of my contemporaries are becoming grandparents. I hope to someday join their ranks, but thus far I remain grandchild-less, though I do have two lovely grand-pups of whom I am very proud.

Recently, a friend of mine became a new grandmother, and because I am an Instagram follower of both my friend and her daughter, I am the happy recipient of many photos of the new baby and of various goings-on in her realm. The images are beautiful. The baby is cute as a button, and she always looks clean and happy, healthy and content. Her clothes are lovely and the little bits of her environs that are visible in the photos look chic, fresh, cheerful and spotless. The new parents themselves look as happy, healthy and content as the new baby. Only the little dog looks a tad spooked.

Though I thoroughly enjoy these new baby Insta posts, the photos themselves don't quite reflect my own memories of early motherhood. My babies were cute — don't get me wrong — they were the cutest babies in the whole world, my then-husband and I would frequently exclaim. But as for the rest of it, well, I'm not sure we had it so together.

It might be just as well there was no Instagram during my early parenthood years. Had there been, I'm not sure it would have been pretty.

I still remember walking into the Charlotte Children's Center (alma mater for all three of my kids) with my days-old daughter in my arms, sleep deprived and no doubt wearing some version of rumpled lounge or sleep wear, when one of the young teachers caught sight of me and my little one.

"The new baby! Oh, how cute! What's her name?" she said, to which I replied, "I have no idea."

Or the time my husband and I took the kids down to Boston, and as we were checking into a rather bougie hotel in Harvard Square, my son, around two at the time (and for some reason with a red balloon in hand) threw up extravagantly in the center of the busy lobby. Or when my other son — maybe 3 or 4 — disappeared at the Champlain Valley Fair, only to appear 10 minutes later walking along, chatting happily with a woman we had never met before.

I could go on.

What brought all this up for me? Answer: "A Life's Work," by Rachel Cusk, a brutally honest, often funny, very well-written account of new motherhood. This is no "What To Expect When You are Expecting," no "What to Expect the First Year," but rather, a firsthand, uncensored, detailed, emotional, philosophical, in-the-trenches memoir of the early days of being a mom.

"Writing a memoir of motherhood seems like career suicide," writes Elissa Schappell (The New York Times Book Review). "Although no one told Cusk that, and so she's gone off and written a book



that is funny and smart and refreshingly akin to a war diary — sort of Apocalypse Baby Now ... wholly original and unabashedly true."

Cusk never really imagined herself being a mother. "I regarded it as a threat, a form of disability that marked me out as unequal." But women must and do live with the prospect of childbirth," she writes; "some dread it, some long for it, and some manage it so successfully as to give other people the impression that they never even think about it."

Cusk's strategy? Deny it. And so, she arrived at the fact of motherhood "shocked and unprepared; ignorant of what the consequences of this arrival would be, and with the unfounded but distinct impression that my journey there had been at once so random and so determined by forces greater than myself that I could hardly be said to have had any choice in the matter at all."

What follows is "an attempt to describe something of that arrival, and of the drama of which childbirth is merely the opening scene." "A personal record of a period of transition."

"This book," Cusk explains, "is a modest approach to the theme of motherhood, written in the first heat of its subject. It describes a period in which time seemed to go round in circles rather than in any chronological order, and so which I have tried to capture in themes rather than by the forgotten procession of its days."

At one point Cusk ponders whether her book will be of any interest to anyone besides other mothers, then quotes American poet and feminist Adrienne Rich: "The one unifying, incontrovertible experience shared by all women and men is that months-long period we spent unfolding inside a woman's body ... Most of us first know both love and disappointment, power and tenderness, in the person of a woman. We carry the imprint of this experience for life, even into our dying."

Cusk covers a lot of territory in this book, which I have to say I whizzed through, full throttle. At one point she comments about the "profoundly political" issue of "children and who looks after

them," explaining that she was able to find the time to write this memoir because for the first six months of her daughter's life she cared for her at home while her partner continued to work, an experience which "forcefully revealed to me something to which I had never given much thought: the fact that after a child is born the lives of its mother and father diverge, so that where before they were living in a state of some equality, now they exist in a sort of feudal relation to each other."

This becomes an issue of sexual politics: "Even in the most generous household, which I acknowledge my own to be, the gulf between childcarer and worker is profound. ... Bridging this gulf is extremely difficult."

"Looking after children is a low-status occupation," writes Cusk. "Isolating, frequently boring, relentlessly demanding and exhausting ... it erodes your self-esteem and your membership of the adult world."

She says the role of a stay-at-home care giver comes to resemble that of an air traffic controller.

This book is smart, profound and unflinchingly honest. At times I was like, wow, was it really that bad? But this book is really not about the baby at all, though she plays a significant role in the text. It's about the mostly internal experience of being a new mother.

But along with the serious, thoughtful, heart-and-soul-baring torrents, there are

some very funny and relatable moments, such as when little Albertine, no longer infantile, has become mobile — "more complex and dangerous" — and is crawling everywhere, pulling herself up on anything she can find, frequently falling and cracking her little head on the marble floor. "She has changed from rucksack to zoo animal," writes Cusk.

At one point, desperate, Cusk confines her daughter (and thereby herself) into one room. "My daughter zig-zags around it, maddened by confinement. ... She beats on the door with her fists, desperate to escape. The floor is flooded to ankle height with her toys. Unidentifiable matter describes paths, like the trail of a snail, over walls and faces. The room has acquired a skin, a crust of dried milk upon which old food sits like a sort of eczema. The kitchen is pollinated with every substance with which my daughter comes into contact: mess spreads like a force of nature, unstoppable. ... I wash and rinse and scrub but a strong undertow of entropy appears to govern this overheated little space and chaos is forever imminent, encroaching. Time hangs heavy on us and I find that I am waiting, waiting for her days to pass ... In this lonely place I am indeed not free."

Cusk quotes "Madame Bovary," Coleridge and infant sleep expert Dr. Ferber, moving deftly from pathos to humor to savvy, insightful exposition. This book is quite a ride.

In this time when the "pro-life" movement is promoting the rights of the fetus over those of the woman who bears and will most likely be the primary caregiver for it, this book is eye-opening and somewhat revolutionary, in that it tells the down-and-dirty truth (from one woman's perspective) of what it is really like, emotionally and existentially, beyond the pretty-as-a-picture images of mother and child that often fail to tell the real story of the immense amount of work, the sleep and social deprivation, the personal sacrifice, the relationship stress and the seismic personal transformation involved.

Being a mother is a big deal. The connection between a mother and her child is profound. But there is much that is profound also about the experience from the mother's point of view. Highly recommend this smart, deep, honest, extremely well-written book.

Send us your photos!

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



Commentary

Big waves and aquatic invasives: Vermont’s home lake rule

Pat Suozzi
Contributor

Picture this: a motorboat puts onto Lake Champlain. As you watch it move out towards the middle of the lake, you notice something odd happens: its stern is down, and its bow is up. As it moves slowly along, you realize that it is producing very large waves and that rather than a water skier, there is a person on a small board apparently surfing on the boat’s large wake. What you are observing is a wake boat in wake-sports mode.

The mechanism that allows wake boats to create these waves are ballast tanks that are filled with lake water when a boat enters a lake. Once the boater is ready to leave the lake, those ballast tanks are emptied. However, there is a problem. Those ballast tanks, and wake boats usually have multiple tanks, cannot be fully emptied, always leaving some residual water. If that boat filled its tanks in a lake infested with an aquatic invasive species, that boat could potentially carry those invasives to the next lake the boat enters.

The definition of an aquatic invasive species is that it has no natural predators, proliferates quickly, damages ecosystems and provides no nutrition or support for native fish or wildlife. Even very small fragments of an invasive like Eurasian watermilfoil or a few zebra mussel larvae, if carried into a lake in a ballast tank, can spawn a serious infestation.

However, this does not have to happen. Vermont has a rule to prevent this very scenario.

In the spring of 2024, the state approved

new rules to regulate wake boats including the Home Lake provision specifically intended to prevent wake boats from carrying aquatic invasive species from lake to lake. The Home Lake provision requires that all wake boats select one home lake where it will operate. If a wake boat owner wishes to operate in a different lake, they must show proof that the wake boat has been properly decontaminated.

Unfortunately, the Agency of Natural Resources chose not to implement this provision of the rule last year due to lack of time but promised to do so for the 2025 boating season.

Yet here we are in June of 2025, and the agency has once again announced that it will not implement the Home Lake provision despite many of the lake associations on affected lakes repeatedly offering to work with the agency to shoulder much of the burden of implementation.

Why so much concern? After all, as far as we know, wake boats comprise a very small number of boats on the state’s lakes, although they are growing in popularity.

The reason is that an invasive infestation can harm a lake’s ecosystem, damage fisheries, make recreational use unpleasant or impossible, and can cause economic harm to surrounding communities.

We are amazingly fortunate here in Vermont to have so many still pristine and uninfested lakes. Yet the Agency of Natural Resources, the agency specifically charged by law to protect Vermont’s lakes and to stop the spread of aquatic invasives, has again chosen to put the state’s precious water resources

at risk. It takes just one boat carrying an invasive to add another pristine lake to the list of infested water bodies.

With the boating season already well underway, what can be done?

If you love Vermont lakes you can help to stop the spread by making sure that all your aquatic gear — boats, kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and even life jackets and children’s toys — are cleaned, drained and dried whenever they leave a waterbody and before they enter another.

If you go to a lake with greeters, stop and talk with them. The greeters, managed by volunteer lake associations, are trained to inspect and clean aquatic gear and can also provide information about whether a lake is infested with an invasive, and if so, the best ways to avoid spreading it.

Finally, a few special requests to wake boat owners: please consider keeping your boat on just one lake this summer, especially if you have used your boat in wake-sport mode in an infested lake. If that is not possible, please



Photo by Caleb Kenna

drain your ballast tanks as fully as you can and keep your boat out of the water for at least 14 days to allow any invasives to die. Also, keep in mind that wake boats’ enhanced wakes can cause shoreline erosion issues and can be dangerous to other lake users, so please perform all wake sports in the lake’s designated wake-sport zone.

Our lakes are the jewels of Vermont. All of us working together can protect these very special resources.

(Pat Suozzi is the president of the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds.)

Community Roundup

Researchers to share updates at crops and soils field day

The University of Vermont Extension’s annual crops and soils field day on July 24 will showcase innovative research that will advance the future of farming.

The 2025 event, hosted by UVM Extension’s northwest crops and soils program team, will take place at the Borderview Research Farm (487 Line Rd., Alburgh), 10

a.m.-3:30 p.m. It will be held rain or shine.

Registration is free for farmers and \$25 for other guests. Lunch is included.

To register, visit go.uvm.edu/2025annualfieldday or call 802-656-8407. Certified crop adviser, custom applicator and Vermont Agency of Agriculture, food and markets’ water quality training education credits are available.

Registration will begin at 9:30 a.m. with

a guided farm tour, promptly at 10 a.m., of many of the more than 300 research plots. The event also features several speakers and opportunities to talk with UVM researchers for updates on research on soil health and fruit, vegetable and other crops. Workshops include an afternoon session on soil profiles and compaction by Odette Menard, an expert in soil and water conservation from Quebec.

For questions about the field day, contact Susan Brouillette at susan.brouillette@uvm.edu or 802-656-7611. Sponsorship and exhibitor spots are available. If interested, email or call by July 8.

To request a disability-related accommodation to participate, please contact UVM student accessibility services at access@uvm.edu or 802-656-7753 by July 3.

Advice for staying safe during extreme heat

With dangerously high temperatures, the American Red Cross of Northern New England urges everyone to take three critical actions to stay safe:

1. Stay hydrated by drinking a cup of water every hour, even if you don’t feel thirsty. Avoid sugary, caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.
2. Stay cool by spending time in air-conditioned places. If your home is too hot, go to a mall, library or cooling center.
3. Stay connected by checking on others and asking for help if you need it. Make sure pets have access to fresh water and shade.

Learn more at redcross.org/HeatCheck or download the free Red Cross Emergency app for real-time weather alerts in English and Spanish.

“Knowing what to do to protect yourself and loved ones from extreme heat can save lives,” said John Montes, Red Cross regional disaster officer. “We’re asking everyone to check on friends and neighbors, especially older adults, people with chronic conditions, outdoor workers and athletes. You could make all the difference by sending a text, making a call or knocking on their door.”

What you should do

Remind everyone to drink water, even if they don’t feel thirsty. Aim for a cup of water every hour and encourage people to avoid sugary, caffeinated or alcoholic drinks. Babies should be breast-fed or bottle-fed often. Fewer wet diapers or darker urine can be signs of dehydration.

Encourage athletes and outdoor workers to take breaks in the shade. They should drink a cup of water every 20 minutes and take frequent water breaks.

Help those without air conditioning find a safe place to go, like a mall, library or cooling center. They can also take cool showers or baths to help cool off. Remind people to wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothes in light colors.

Never leave a child or pet alone inside a parked car, and make sure pets have access to fresh water and shade.

CHARLOTTE TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

Visit charlottetvt.org for more information

Trails Committee Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, July 1, 6:30 p.m.

Charlotte Energy Committee Meeting
Tuesday, July 8, 7 p.m.

Development Review Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 9, 7 p.m.

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

Regular Selectboard Meeting
Monday, July 14, 7 p.m.

Conservation Commission Meeting
Tuesday, July 22, 7 p.m.

Development Review Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 7 p.m.

Planning Commission Meeting
Thursday, July 24, 7 p.m.

Calendar

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

‘As You Like It’
Thursday-Sunday, June 26-July 13
The Valley Players present Shakespeare’s “As You Like It” at the Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street, Waitsfield, June 26-July 13. Show times are Thursday-Saturday at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 4 pm. Tickets are \$18 for adults & teens, \$14 for seniors and kids 12 and younger and are available in advance at valleyplayers.com.

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.

‘An Otherwise Lovely Residential Area’
Saturday, June 28, 2 & 7 p.m., Sunday, June 29, 2 p.m.
The Furnace presents “An Otherwise Lovely Residential Area” at the Off Center for Dramatic Arts in Burlington. The play follows Sam as they arrive at the town where their father grew up to claim a piece of land they never knew about. Unfortunately, their mere



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

A sign reminds residents that the Charlotte Town Party is Saturday, June 28. It starts at 5 p.m. with dinning starting at 6 p.m. Bring a dish to share because it is a potluck and be prepared to have fun.

existence seems to ruffle some feathers in a village that wants nothing to do with those who are different. The members of the Furnace began training together and exploring nontraditional ways of making theatre in April 2024. This is their first production. Tickets are offered on a sliding scale and can be purchased online at theaterengine.com, by calling 802-535-6438 or at the door.

Reading Frederick Douglass
Saturday, July 5, 1-3 p.m.
Frederick Douglass delivered his speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” on July 5, 1852, in Rochester, N.Y., to a local antislavery women’s group. It began with a sympathetic account of the American Revolution and its great promise for freedom, then in the second half pivoted to detail the gross hypocrisy of American enslavement on the legacy of that

struggle. Each year Rokeby celebrates the importance of Douglass’ speech by inviting the public to participate in reading it on Saturday, July 5, 1-3 p.m. Francois Clemmons, who appeared as “Officer Clemmons” on the PBS television series “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” will be present to begin the ceremony. Admission is free.

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. 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.

Rokeby Museum summer camp
Monday-Friday, July 14-25,
Those 9-13 should consider the Rokeby Museum’s two-week summer camp that combines art, nature and hands-on history. Play fun games as you learn about the Robinson artists and naturalists who once walked these grounds. Take nature walks, practice birdwatching and search for animal tracks as you immerse yourself in the same locations that inspired the Robinsons. Create a nature journal and add to it each day as you explore this serene, historic property. Study the Robinsons’ sketches, scrapbooks and

paintings, then try your hand at each medium. Pay what you can (\$450 suggested per camper); bring your own lunch; snacks are included. No artistic experience required. All supplies are provided. Contact Jonathon Ahl, education programs manager, with questions at jahl@rokeby.org or 802-877-3406.

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.

‘Kin’
Friday-Sunday, July 18-27
“Kin,” a new musical will play in Main Street Landing’s Blackbox in Burlington in a production by Workaround Theatre Company with a cast featuring many performers from Charlotte and staff and graduates of Champlain Valley High. Tensions rise when a mysterious cult moves into an otherwise quiet mountain town. To redeem his troubled past, the mayor’s son infiltrates the cult’s festival, where he finds himself caught between two families that are more similar than anyone could have thought. Inspired by true events from the 1980s and told through an original 80s-pop-inspired score, “Kin” is about moving on without letting go. For tickets and times: <https://tinyurl.com/44vadbzd>.

Shelburne Museum free summer night
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.



Photo by Wayne Fawbush

A wrestling match takes place between Orlando (Aric Brown) and Charles (Tye Martin) while the court looks on in a scene from ‘As You Like It’ at the Valley Players Theater in Waitsfield, June 26-July 13.

Library News

‘My Favorite Tree in Charlotte’ surpasses expectations

Margaret Woodruff
Director

‘My Favorite Tree’
By Nikki Helzer

The tree with roots that run deep
The tree I look up to when days get hard
The tree that I say goodbye to on the way to school, when we pass the end of our road
The tree that creates a comfortable reading spot when times are silent
This tree is not mine, not yours, but ours
This tree is home.

What a success the “My Favorite Tree in Charlotte” art contest was! It was sponsored by the Charlotte Grange and the Charlotte Library, and we’re still smiling.

Charlotte students were invited to draw or paint their favorite tree and write something about it. Thirty-nine imaginative young artists entered the contest and were all rewarded with certificates, blue ribbons and coupons for ice cream sandwiches. The dedicated, very qualified judges, Julia Parker-Dickerson, Annemie Curlin, and Charlie Proutt, were full of praise for all of the entries. Here are just a few of their many comments:

“I love the rainbow! The foliage looks like hair! I love the idea of the tree looking at you as a favorite dog or friend would.”

“This is a real love letter to a particular tree.”

“Great observation and wonderful poem, all leading to a journey of discovery.”

“This is a lovely picture to hang beside your bed. Bold and cheerful!”

“I love the detailed bird and yellow foliage. And I love that you and your willow have been together a long time.”

We’re proud to announce the grade winners and grand prize winners: Wells Campbell (pre-k), Jack Hourigan (first grade), Simone Fleming (second grade), Mira Braidwood (third grade), Nikki Helzer (fourth grade and grand prize).

Congratulations to all entries for their incredible artwork and for sharing about your favorite tree.

As the grand prize winner Nikki Helzer won a healthy American linden tree generously donated by Branch Out Burlington and planted in the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge by volunteers Alexa Lewis and Jessie Bradley. Nikki’s painting depicted a beloved Charlotte tree near her home, which she and her father Johnny have always admired.

Big thanks to everyone who made the contest possible: Alexa Lewis, who procured the grand prize tree and also donated bluebird houses to each grade winner; the Charlotte General Store, which donated ice cream sandwich coupons to every entry; myself for designing the entry blanks and ice cream coupons; Charlotte Central School second grade teachers Danielle Hall-Potvin and Shannon Spellman, who encouraged their classrooms to enter; and Grange volunteers Don Goodwin, Linda Hamilton, Myra Handy and Abby Killey who helped with the event at the Grange.

Don’t forget that again this summer there will be evenings of music and merriment on the Charlotte Town Green this summer. Bring a picnic and enjoy local music in good company. Thanks to our series sponsors: Point Bay Marina and Shearer Audi-VW-Acura.



Contestants at the awards ceremony and art show at the Grange.

Photos by Sally Wadhams

DIY 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.

Art Stop

Try your hand at a fun new craft each week. We’ll have the supplies and space available to try a new project, from macrame rainbows to garden sachets.

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 keep these guidelines in mind:

- Bring gently used, recent or classic books to the backdoor of the Library adjacent to the program room at the specified times.

- We don’t accept mass paperback books, (the small ones), textbooks, reference books, older cookbooks or older travel books.

- 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 remaining drop-off dates:

- 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.

Town cooling centers

The Charlotte Library and the Charlotte Senior Center are designated cooling centers with air-conditioned facilities where you can cool down during hot weather. Community cooling centers help provide temporary relief and are especially helpful when the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory or excessive heat warning.

During a heat advisory or excessive heat warning, notices will be placed in Front Porch Forum, other social media and the library and senior center websites.

You can find additional information about managing during heat emergencies on our website.

Programs for kids

Very Merry Theatre
‘The Great Circus Train Robbery’
Wednesday, July 2, noon

Project Micro: Investigate the Lake
Monday, July 7, 4:30 p.m.

Music on the Porch with Zachary Wednesdays, July 9-23, 3:30 p.m.

Find all the kids’ summer programs on the Color Our World Summer Schedule at <https://tinyurl.com/yvd8nvrf>.

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 at the Charlotte Library.

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 to 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.

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



Gigi, Nikki, Johnny and Tina Helzer at the dedication of the grand prize tree.

meditators are welcome.

Grange on the Green Thursday, July 10, 5:30-7 p.m.

On Thursday, July 10, music from Patti Casey & Tom MacKenzie featuring folk, blues and bluegrass. The concert sponsor is Lake Champlain Chocolates. The rain location is the Charlotte Senior Center.

July’s special Poetry at the Grange program will be held at Grange on the Green with featured poet Bianca Stone, Vermont’s Poet Laureate, starting at 4:30 p.m. in the Quinlan School House. Following the poetry reading in the schoolhouse, Bianca will perform a poem to open the Grange on the Green concert at 5:30 p.m.

Book chat Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

Meet each week to discuss new books, old books and books we might have missed. Each week, library director Margaret Woodruff selects a theme and highlights related titles from the library collection. No registration necessary.

Crochet & knit night Wednesdays, 5-6:30 p.m.

Join in a casual weekly session of crocheting and chatting, knitting and catching up. Bring your project or start a new one with yarn and needles available at the library, along with plenty of books to instruct and inspire. For teens and adults.

Library contact information:

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

Senior Center News

Thyleen Tenney new assistant director of senior center

Lori York
Director

Lori York and the senior center board welcome Charlotte resident Thyleen Tenney as the new part-time assistant director at the Charlotte Senior Center. Tenney brings a strong background in database management and administrative support to the role and will officially begin on July 1.

This month's programming includes a spiritual workshop on overcoming negative thought patterns, a lively musical performance by Peter and Helen Rosenblum of Hinesburg featuring hits from the '50s, '60s and '70s, a new art exhibit, American-style mahjong and a free pop-up Let Your Yoga Dance class.

July art exhibit

The senior center art exhibit this month includes works by John Peckham and Nikolas Kotovich.

John Peckham's striking bird photography captures avian life in its natural habitat, inspired by a lifelong passion for wildlife and a background in conservation biology.

Nikolas Kotovich's watercolor and acrylic paintings blend natural history illustration with contemporary techniques, reflecting his dual love of art and science.

Programs

Alzheimer's caregivers support group Wednesday, July 9, 3-4 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer's? Do you know someone who is? Please join us for our monthly Caregivers Support Group on the second Wednesday of each month from 3-4 p.m. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. For more information email Louise Fairbank at louisefairbank67@gmail.com.

Awaken Into Reality workshop Wednesdays, July 9-30, 10-11:30 a.m.

Join this transformative four-week workshop with Jim Koehneke, former life coach and now spiritual director, to overcome negative programming. Koehneke will guide you to free yourself from mental anguish to unleash greater joy. Free yourself from the conditioned programming that runs your life (guideouttojoy.com). Questions? Call 802-495-5960. Cost: \$55 for the four-week workshop. Supply fee \$10 paid directly to the instructor. Registration and payment required by Monday, July 7.

Memory Café Saturday, July 19, 11-noon.

The Memory Café meets monthly on the third Saturday at the Charlotte Senior Center. 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. This program is offered in partnership with Age Well and the Charlotte Library. Free. Registration is appreciated, but not required. Questions? Email Susan Cartwright at cartwright.susan1@gmail.com. The Memory Café will take a break for August and will resume in September.

Music from the 50s, 60s & 70s Friday, July 25, 2 p.m.

Join Peter and Helen Roseblum, a popular duo from Hinesburg, as they sing and strum from their large playlist of music that includes folk songs, romantic ballads, blues and rock. To register, call 802-425-6345. Free. Registration appreciated.

Photo discussion group Sunday, July 13, 2-3:30 p.m.

Join a monthly photo discussion group, where photographers of all skill levels are welcome to share their work, ideas and experiences. Bring a photo and a story to share with the group. This is a great chance to engage in creative dialogue, get feedback and explore the impact of your images in a supportive and collaborative environment. For questions or more information, email Emily Cross at ecross@ecrossphoto.com.

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

Parlez-vous français? We are an intermediate group of French speakers who meet weekly for French conversation. As the group grows, there may be opportunities to split according to skill levels. Questions? Email Roberta Whitmore at robertawhitmore27@gmail.com.

German conversation Tuesdays, 3-4 p.m.

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

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



Photo by Jim Hyde

Brandon Tieso (left) and Lane Morrison, chair of the Charlotte Senior Center board, with a new larger television donated by InTrack Investment Management, Tieso's firm, and Magdalena Taylor. This 75-inch screen should work better for presentations and for viewing events like the Super Bowl and the Kentucky Derby.

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.

Exercise

Let Your Yoga Dance pop-up Tuesday July 22, 11 a.m.-noon

Join us for this free pop-up of Let Your Yoga Dance with Heather Preis. This class incorporates basic dance-like movements to music, guided by the body's energy system (chakras). It is a safe, compassionate, gentle movement practice, allowing for individual expression and nonjudgemental acceptance. This class is appropriate for all levels of fitness and abilities. Everyone can "let their yoga dance." Free. No registration required.

Tai Chi-Yang Style Short Form Thursdays, 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

Join Eliza Hammer for a Tai Chi class featuring the Yang International Short Form, the most popular style of Tai Chi practice. This form involves slow, continuous, soft circular movements coordinated with breathing. Regular practice helps improve balance, mental clarity, flexibility, stability, coordination and overall health. Practicing in a group setting is both uplifting and energizing. Eliza, a certified instructor, has studied with the founder of the Tai Chi for Arthritis Association. Please note that this class is not for beginners. If you have questions about whether this class is appropriate for your skill level, you are welcome to observe a class or reach out to belizahammer@hotmail.com. Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

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



Courtesy photo

Thyleen Tenney of Charlotte is the new assistant director at the Charlotte Senior Center.

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.

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.

Senior center info:

The senior center offers programs for adults 50 and older from Charlotte and surrounding communities. Priority is given to seniors, but programs are open to adults of all ages. Interested in receiving a weekly reminder about what is happening? Sign up for the email newsletters at charlotteseniorcentervt.org. The "Week Ahead" email is sent out on Friday mornings with activities, lunch menus and special programs for the upcoming week.

Write Ingredients

Sloppy Joes come with many origin stories and names

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

Monday Munch offers a food with fascinating lore. Theories about the origins and content of the sloppy Joe sandwich abound. Wikipedia has a description, complete with Erroll Flynn, Ernest Hemingway, Adam Sandler on SNL and more.

In the 1995 movie “It Takes Two,” the character eating a sloppy Joe for the first time calls it a “big, gooey, messy burger.” Others call it a Spanish hamburger, hamburg à la creole, toasted deviled hamburger and lots more.

In Quebec, you can find pain à la viande and pain fourré gumbo — stewed ground-beef sandwiches served on hot dog buns. In Brazil, a buraco quente sandwich is ground beef in a pão francês bread roll.

Some say this sandwich originated in Cuba, but Marilyn Brown, director of the consumer test kitchen at H.J. Heinz in Pittsburgh, says their research suggests that the sloppy Joe’s origins lie with the “loose meat sandwiches” sold in Sioux City, Iowa, in the 1930s, the creation of a cook named Joe.

By the 1960s, this hamburger mixture was available in cans, but this sloppy Joe by Libby’s TV ad ([youtube.com/watch?v=CgNB9EVisZ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CgNB9EVisZ8)) fails to make it look appetizing.

Nonetheless, you’ll find Sloppy Joe in a can at Shelburne Market, Hannaford, and Shaw’s, with Shaw’s offering half a dozen varieties, paired with Wonder Bread hamburger rolls.

Leave it to New Jersey to be different. The South Orange, New Jersey sloppy Joe refers to a no-cook double-decker sandwich combining two meats, Swiss cheese, coleslaw and Russian dressing on rye bread.

Here’s access to The New York Times’ “An Ode to Sloppy Joe, a Delicious Mess” (<https://tinyurl.com/33hue9sd>).

In “Sloppy Joseph,” an episode of the murder-mystery, comedy-drama television series “Poker Face,” Charlie Cale, a woman with the ability to detect if people are lying, finds herself in the kitchen of a private school cafeteria doling out sloppy Joes to students before she solves the mystery of



Adobe Stock image

a dead gerbil. Here’s a detailed review: <https://tinyurl.com/yy78ccfk>.

Any mention of school cafeteria reminds me of my first teaching job in a Brooklyn high school trying to integrate. A cop in full uniform was posted in our cafeteria as angry parents marched and yelled outside. For me, that cafeteria remains a lasting symbol of the complexity of expecting schools to solve society’s woes.

Clearly, just what their food choices might reveal about our nation’s leaders is open to opinion. From hoe cakes to squirrel stew to jellybeans to chili, there’s a great variety. Sticking with sandwiches, a Franklin D. Roosevelt favorite was grilled cheese. Vice-president Hubert Humphrey’s favorite sandwich was quite a combo: peanut butter, bologna, cheddar cheese, lettuce and mayonnaise on toasted bread with catsup on the side.

For the first-ever White House barbecue on the West Terrace, LBJ’s meal featured burgers, along with black-eyed peas and tapioca pudding.

George W. Bush’s favorite snack food wasn’t a sandwich. A writer for The Guardian concludes that “a regular person would not be able to choke this down”

(<https://tinyurl.com/bdh9pj6d>).

The New York Times’ fulsome description (<https://tinyurl.com/4jtk2sdv>) of what president-elect Jimmy Carter liked to eat included the fact that he plucked his own ducks.

Here’s SNL on Bill Clinton at McDonald’s: [youtube.com/watch?v=eYt0khR_ej0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYt0khR_ej0).

“Dinner with the President: Food, Politics and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House” by Alex Prud’homme describes Michelle Obama and a group of fifth graders sowing seeds from eight varieties of lettuces, as well as radishes, peas, carrots, spinach, kale, chard, collard greens and rhubarb.

This garden is currently being paved over by a president annoyed by wet grass.

“Dinner with the President” also offers the current president’s standard order at the Golden Arches: two Big Macs, two File-O-Fish sandwiches and a chocolate milkshake.

Just imagine the great thrill of being invited to dine with the president of the United States and then, in a room with a portrait of Abraham Lincoln on the wall, tall candles flickering in a gilded candelabra, an abundance of silver trays and the eager

guests clad in their Sunday best confronting a mountain of fast food in cardboard boxes.

The New Yorker (<https://tinyurl.com/3necnx67>) describes it like this: “There is a particular awfulness to McDonald’s or Burger King once it’s gone cold. By the time America’s greatest collegiate football players arrived, in their navy blazers and Sunday shoes, to pick up porcelain plates and work their way through this cardboard buffet, the French fries would have grown cold and mealy, the burger buns soggy, the precise half slice of American cheese on each Filet-o-Fish sandwich hardened to a tough, flavorless rectangle of yellow.”

Reminder: Years ago, this president filmed commercials for Pizza Hut and McDonald’s (<https://tinyurl.com/4jwnj4xu>).

Recommended: Go outside and, while you pull some weeds, just try to imagine a gathering of our nation’s leaders, from the White House to members of Congress to the Business Roundtable to that guy who owns X, in a big field of any produce with this task: “Pull out the weeds!”

Yes, we live in troubling times, but even with the recipient of the Annual Rubber Dodo Award from the Center for Biological Diversity for “greedy and corrupt policies against wildlife, wild places and people” sitting in the Oval Office, we should fear not. Instead, go pull some weeds and think of those strawberries on the Monday Munch menu and know this: “Berry” comes from an Indo-European root meaning “to shine” and “straw” from a root for “to spread, to strew.” This is what Monday Munch offers — a wide spread of sunshine along with good food.

And remember to give a nod to a guy named Joe.

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

Sloppy Joes on a bun with pickle chips, cole slaw and strawberry cake with whipped cream.

(Note: Susan Ohanian, recipient of the George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honest and Clarity in Public Language, has written more than a dozen books about public schools and two other books: “Trump, Trump, Trump: The March of Folly” and “The Little Red Book of Trump Quotations.”)

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