

# The Charlotte News

August 21, 2025

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## Please be a 'neighbor,' donate to newspaper

Susan McCullough  
Contributor

Being a neighbor isn't just about our location in proximity to one another, it's a state of mind. The concept referred to as neighboring calls on us to recognize



Susan McCullough

how we are interconnected and vital to one another. In that spirit, there are some things that hold us all together as neighbors — The Charlotte News is one of them.

The paper's 2025 Annual Fundraising Campaign ends Aug. 31. If you haven't done so already, please make a donation today to support this essential link that connects and informs us, helping our town life and culture thrive.

The Charlotte News embodies and nourishes the promise of neighboring. In its pages we see one another, the people and places we love, the traditions we cherish and the milestones we mark. Didn't make the town picnic? Missed the selectboard meeting? No worries — through pictures and accounts from fellow Charlotters, you'll feel like you were there. Not sure how you should vote on town meeting

day? Get the facts, not just the opinions.

It would be all too easy to underestimate The Charlotte News' role in our town life. Why? It just lands in your mailbox every two weeks, without having to sign up, subscribe or pay. With a click, there's eNews in your inbox every Thursday.

But alas, it's not free, and none of it "just happens." The Annual Fund is one of two campaigns run each year to secure the \$170,000 needed to fund the paper's operations.

So please take a moment to contribute using the enclosed envelope or online at [charlottenewsvt.org/donate](http://charlottenewsvt.org/donate). Your gift will keep The Charlotte News operational, for the benefit of everyone in our community.

Another great reason to give now is that the Lionheart Charitable Trust is matching gifts from first-time supporters dollar for dollar. That means that a \$60 gift doubles to become \$120. The match opportunity is limited and ends on August 31, 2025.

Thanks for the gift and for being a neighbor to all.

*(Susan McCullough is a member of the board of directors of The Charlotte News.)*

## After 17 years, constable steps down

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Halloween?

It was one of the first things that selectboard members wondered about when they heard that Josh Flore is stepping down as Charlotte's constable.

They were quick to add what a great job he has done as constable. But still, Halloween?

The selectboard members should not feel callous or flippant about their response to the news of Flore's departure. Halloween is one of the first things he mentions himself. When asked about his best memory of his years as town constable, Flore immediately said, "I've really enjoyed Halloween. Halloween is the best time of



Josh Flore

year."

He has enduring memories of directing traffic, interacting with the specters and spectators at the intersection of Ferry and Greenbush roads on his favorite holiday and watching so many kids grow up over the years.

"Seeing all the kids," Flore said. "It's amazing."

For more than 30 years, Flore has been a Shelburne police officer,

**JOSH FLORE** continued on page 3

## Rescue workers recognized



Photo by Lee Krohn

Sawyer Carr was recognized as Firefighter of the Year at the Fire & Rescue's banquet on Aug. 12.

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Charlotte Volunteer Fire & Rescue held an awards banquet on Aug. 12 at the Old Lantern Inn and Barn, and the recognitions ran the gamut from the serious to hilarious.

For example, chief Jamie Valyou received the Peanut and Jelly Award because guess what he eats for lunch.

"I eat peanut and jelly sandwiches every day," Valyou

admitted.

Lee Krohn said in a social media post, featuring his photos of the event, "Many special awards were given out, all in a lighthearted spirit, celebrating the unique, human qualities of our members."

Valyou said the awards dinner had been an annual event for an evening to relax and unwind outside the firehouse but had not happened for a few years. The department decided to revive it this year.

Among some of the more meaningful awards, Nick Waddington was given the first Lisa Boyle Award for EMS Education Excellence. Lisa Boyle was a former member of the department whose estate got together with the board to find a way to remember her and honor a member of the department who has excelled in rescue classes.

Also, Sawyer Carr was recognized as Firefighter of the Year, and Shelburne

**CVFR** continued on page 3

## Talk continues on Ferry Road traffic

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Another selectboard meeting, another discussion of traffic on Ferry Road south of Greenbush Road and at the intersection of those two roads.

And this is a discussion that goes back more than 15 years and probably before that.

Lane Morrison came again to the selectboard meeting on Sept. 11, representing the senior center as chair of its board. He reiterated, as he had at the previous selectboard meeting, that the senior center was willing to raise funds to buy property, which it would turn over to the town, for parking in the West Village.

The senior center's offer comes out of concern about the dangerous parking and traffic situation there.

Because the senior center is offering to raise money to buy property for parking, board member Lewis Mudge said, this is something that should be carefully considered.

In a letter that Morrison sent to the selectboard, he wrote that there have been several close encounters with folks getting out of cars with

young children in the center of the Ferry Road by the Old Brick Store all the way to the senior center: "Considering traffic rushing to the ferry, it is an accident waiting to happen."

Both Morrison and chair Lee Krohn said this is the dangerous result of a happy circumstance — the success the Old Brick Store and the senior center are enjoying. Both of these positive developments have resulted in more traffic, and as always, there are the vehicles speeding down Ferry Road, rushing to make it to the ferry on time.

"It's a wonderful challenge, not that I'm looking for anyone to be injured or have an accident, but every successful downtown sees itself as having a big traffic and parking problem," Krohn said.

He said the challenge is for the selectboard to look for ways to make changes to the roadway, the intersection or "other aspects of business operations in order to improve safety."

Morrison told the board that town administrator Nate Bareham had found a report of a town meeting from around 2008 when residents

**SELECTBOARD** continued on page 2

# Merrymac Farm Sanctuary leads rabbit rescue

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

On the morning of Tuesday, Aug. 12, a team of 15-20 people from around the state, organized by Merrymac Farm Sanctuary, traveled to North Clarendon to rescue 14 domesticated rabbits.

The rabbits were at a home whose owner had grown too old to take care of them.

Merrymac Farm executive director Era MacDonald and her staff and volunteers managed to recruit five other animal welfare organizations to participate in the rescue. The majority of the rabbits ended up at Humane Societies where they could be spayed and neutered and have other medical needs seen to. And, hopefully adopted.

Five of the older rabbits returned to the animal sanctuary on Lime Kiln Road in Charlotte with MacDonald. These rabbits need long-term, palliative care and are less adoptable.

“The initial thought was overwhelming, but I concluded that if all the Humane Societies within the surrounding areas, as well as Merrymac Farm Sanctuary, each took in a couple of rabbits, we could get them all rescued and into a safe environment without overwhelming any one organization,” MacDonald said.

She applauded the support from the sanctuaries partners like Tractor Supply that helped make the bunny recovery possible.

By Tuesday afternoon, all of the rabbits had been dispersed to the various agencies, and MacDonald was back at Merrymac Farm with her five charges. She does not expect the rabbits to be adopted.

Although some of the animals that



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Era MacDonald stands with the cages of the five rabbits that were rescued from a home south of Rutland on Aug. 12.

Merrymac Farm provides sanctuary for are adopted, for most it is akin to hospice. The farm provides the majority with a healthy and loving environment to live out the rest of their days.

“Aging human populations in Vermont are on the rise, and agricultural animals are not always taken into account by owners when planning for retirement or unforeseen illnesses,” according to a release from Merrymac Farm Sanctuary.

Other organizations partnering in the

rescue effort include Springfield Humane Society, Homeward Bound — Addison County’s Humane Society, Rutland County Humane Society and Chittenden County Humane Society.

“This is not a legal case. It’s kind of a community involvement case,” MacDonald said. “All of these organizations came together for a happy ending that easily could have not been a happy ending.”

## SELECTBOARD

Continued from page 1

approved a plan to narrow Ferry Road and add parking with a sidewalk. After the town meeting that year, the community got upset with that decision.

According to Morrison, those opposed to the town meeting decision said, “We’re not a sidewalk community.”

He said he went to the largest selectboard meeting he’s ever been to at Charlotte Central School with around 600 people. The majority didn’t want sidewalks, so the previous decision was shot down.

Morrison wonders if things have changed enough now that residents would support a sidewalk in the West Village.

One of the things the senior center has done to alleviate the danger is have employees park at the town hall. Morrison said the town might be able to persuade the Old Brick Store to have its

employees park there as well.

“I see young families, mothers and fathers, their butts out into the road with a carriage and a baby. I mean, it’s just an accident waiting to happen,” he said.

There is property across the road where the medical center was proposed and at least two properties next to the senior center, whose owners the selectboard discussed approaching, to see if they were willing to sell.

Although the board discussed the feasibility of putting in gravel sidewalks, board member Natalie Kanner said she had pushed a lot of strollers in her life and pushing them on gravel is not easy. It is likely that people would continue to push their strollers in the road.

Krohn said because Ferry Road is the route to the ferry, the Vermont Agency of Transportation will likely have a role in a decision to modify the road, a process that could take years.

Sarah Beal lives next to the Old Brick Store. She said her family has been impacted by the increase of business there because their parking lot is shared with the store. People are often parking at their end of the lot and cars driving around looking for a parking space make it seem more dangerous, particularly when she is walking her children to school at the Charlotte Children’s Center.

Jolene Kao, who bought the Old Brick Store two years ago, has been very cooperative, Beal said. For example, she discontinued selling donuts because they were drawing so much traffic chaos.

But, things got more dangerous, Beal said, when the Old Brick Store changed from just a store to a store with a seated café.

Jim Hyde joined the discussion remotely to say the problem is multifaceted that one solution won’t fix.

Bareham suggested that maybe he, the town planner and other stakeholders in the issue could get together to troubleshoot some potential short-term solutions.

The discussion wound down with selectboard members deciding which of them would get in touch with which of the individual property owners to see if they’re interested in selling or letting their property be used for parking.

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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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# Letters to the Editor

## Reading The Charlotte News feels like life in an oasis

To the Editor:

Reading The Charlotte News these days feels like visiting an oasis — “something that provides refuge, relief, or pleasant contrast,” according to Marion Webster. On the other hand, reading the national newspapers or watching TV news is like being buffeted by a hurricane. We’re fortunate to live in Charlotte, a beautiful, civil place served by a nonprofit newspaper that keeps us in touch with the people, organizations, meetings and government that define this community we call home. Every two weeks, The Charlotte News is delivered free to every household in town. This costs about \$6,000 an issue, paid for by advertising revenues and contributions from hundreds of Charlotters. It’s been this way for 67 years, a remarkable accomplishment that is a tribute to the newspaper’s donors, advertisers, community writers, staff and volunteers. We can count on The Charlotte News to keep us informed and entertained — so long as we do our part by sending the donations that pay the bills. Please pitch in to the annual fund today. It is quick and easy to make your tax-deductible gift on the secure website at

charlottenewsvt.org or you may send your check to The Charlotte News, P.O. Box 251, Charlotte VT 05445. Thank you.

John Quinney  
Charlotte

## Energy efficiency is first, best tool for lower energy bills

To the Editor:

Vermonters feel it every time we get an energy bill or fill up at the pump: costs are high and unpredictable. Global markets swing wildly, storms knock out power and heating our homes in the winter takes a bigger bite out of our paychecks than it used to. We can’t control global fuel prices. But we can control how much energy we use. That’s why energy efficiency is the single most powerful, affordable tool we have to keep costs down. Efficiency Vermont is now planning our next three years of programs to help Vermonters save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It’s a moment to reflect on the importance of efficiency in our state. And it’s an opportunity for Vermonters to take our survey and share feedback on our programs and services at [efficiencyvermont.com/feedback](http://efficiencyvermont.com/feedback). When a business replaces outdated lighting or upgrades to efficient equipment,

it lowers its bills and strengthens its bottom line. When a home is weatherized, insulated and air-sealed, it uses less fuel to keep us warm in January and less electricity to keep us cool in July. These aren’t just small savings; they add up. Over the past two decades, Vermonters have saved more than \$3.5 billion thanks to efficiency improvements. Efficiency is also our cheapest energy resource. It costs far less to save a unit of energy than to produce one. Every kilowatt-hour of electricity we don’t need is one we don’t have to generate, transmit across expensive power lines and pay for. This means lower costs for utilities, more manageable peaks when demand surges and, over time, more affordable bills for ratepayers. It’s also a homegrown solution. When we cut our energy use, we reduce our reliance on imported fossil fuels and keep more money circulating in Vermont’s economy. That’s energy independence in action — something that benefits every household and business in the state. The benefits don’t stop at the wallet. Efficient appliances and heating systems improve indoor air quality. A well-weatherized home is more comfortable, quieter and healthier. And every bit of energy we save means fewer greenhouse gas emissions, helping us meet Vermont’s

climate commitments while protecting communities from the devastating impacts of a warming world. Some may think of energy efficiency as a “someday” solution, something to get to after tackling other home projects or business priorities. But it really should be the first step. Vermont can build new renewable energy sources, modernize our grid and electrify our vehicles and heating systems. But if we don’t streamline how we use energy in the first place, we’ll need to spend more on generation and infrastructure, driving up costs. Efficiency makes all those other investments work better and cost less. The bottom line: Energy efficiency isn’t just about using less; it’s about living better for less. It’s a proven, practical and immediate way to make energy more affordable for all Vermonters. In a time of economic uncertainty and climate challenges, it’s the common-sense solution we can’t afford to ignore. When it comes to energy, so much happens in a global market that’s beyond our control. But we can control how we use energy, and we can choose to use energy wisely. When we do, Vermont becomes stronger, more resilient and more affordable for everyone.

**LETTERS** continued on page 4

## JOSH FLORE

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so the constable gig was in addition to his other job responsibilities. The resignation should not come as a surprise. With the sudden death of Shelburne Police Chief Michael Thomas on June 30 and Flore stepping up as interim police chief, his workload has grown. “Josh has his hands quite full and does not feel able to handle the duties of being our constable anymore,” said Lee Krohn, selectboard chair. “Hopefully, we’ll find somebody in time for Halloween. Josh always did a great job with that. We’ll miss him very much.” Besides his new responsibilities, Flore cited family things he wants to do. For example, the youngest of his three daughters is off to college, and he doesn’t want to miss any of

her games. One of the hardest things he had to deal with in his 17 years as Charlotte’s constable came in his early years in the position. He had to get a search warrant to seize an animal that was allegedly being mistreated. They found the dog was in very bad condition, but it wasn’t being mistreated. It was very old and in very bad health. The dog had to be put down. That was hard for him to accept. When he talks about it, it still seems hard for him to accept. “I never really expected I was going to have to deal with something of that nature,” Flore said. On the other hand, a responsibility he really enjoyed was working Town Meeting Day. He liked the older style of town meeting where discussions happened in Charlotte Central School’s multipurpose room while Australian ballot voting was going on. It was seeing and talking to people that

made the annual election enjoyable. Flore is a people person and that’s one of the things that attracted him to law enforcement. He didn’t grow up with plans to be a policeman. He was working a job he didn’t like and decided he would rather be working with, and talking to, people. Being a constable must be enjoyable, too, because for a long time, Flore has been doing it for free. He can’t remember when he stopped accepting a stipend from the town of Charlotte, nor how much it was. Besides the added responsibilities of filling in as police chief in Shelburne, there’s also the emotional toll of dealing with the passing of Thomas, who he considers not just a mentor, but also a friend. “I had more questions and wanted to learn more,” Flore said. “My personal opinion is that he left us too soon. It sounds selfish, but I wanted more time with Mike.” Flore won’t be participating in Halloween

in Charlotte this year, even from the sidelines. He thinks his daughter may have a game then. But he does recommend Charlotte’s version of trick or treating and the hordes of ghouls on Greenbush Road to anyone who hasn’t experienced it. “Halloween in Charlotte is the most amazing thing you’ve ever seen,” Flore said. “It’s just awesome.”

## CVFR

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Communications Center dispatcher Laurie Fox received a Life Saving Award for her role in helping a family through a cardiac arrest incident. Izak Furey was honored with the 2025 EMS Provider of the Year award. **Other awards included:**

- Chief’s Award to Robert Caldwell
- Zen Award and Officer of the Year to Kay DellaGrotta
- Firefighter of the Year to Sawyer Carr
- Volunteer of the Year to Nick Waddington
- Rookie of the Year to John Quade.

The night was in large part possible because of the generosity of the Old Lantern Inn and Barn, Backyard Bistro and 802 Print, Valyou said. **Burning concerns** Valyou also said he wanted to remind people to be sure that they follow burning bans. The bans are instituted on a day-to-day basis, according to daily weather conditions. Even when someone has a burn permit from the state, the fire department has the authority to cancel or deny it based upon the guidance it gets from the state concerning fire conditions. “People are supposed to have burn permits whenever they burn,” Valyou said. “Permits are obtainable through 802-985-8051.”





## NEXT PUBLICATION DATES

<b>SEPT. 4</b> <b>Copy Deadline:</b> FRIDAY, AUG. 29	<b>SEPT. 18</b> <b>Copy Deadline:</b> FRIDAY, SEPT. 12
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LETTERS

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As Efficiency Vermont looks ahead, we want your help in improving the work we do together to make Vermont’s energy more affordable. Please join the thousands of Vermonters who have taken 10 minutes to fill out our survey.

Peter Walke  
Montpelier

*(Peter Walke is managing director of Efficiency Vermont.)*

Thanks for successful  
Grange on Green concerts

To the Editor:

The Grange on the Green concert series finished up a great month on the last Thursday in July with rousing bluegrass performed by Forest Station. The cool weather certainly didn’t hurt by encouraging a fairly large crowd of families young and old to come out and enjoy the music. The series has become a mainstay in Charlotte on Thursday evenings in July on the green in front of the library.

The Grange would like to thank the musicians, businesses and volunteers who made the series possible. Point Bay Marina and Shearer Audi, VW and Acura were season sponsors. Lake Champlain Chocolates, Cumbancha World Music, local families and Otter Creek Awnings each sponsored individual concerts. These businesses are all supported in part by Charlotte consumers and we really appreciate their commitment to our community.

Additional support came from the series co-sponsor, the Charlotte Library, as well as numerous Grange members who made brownies and distributed them at intermission. Thanks to Lynne Hale and Kim Findlay for preparing our Grange informational handout and Abby Killey for coordinating the reading by our own Vermont Poet Laureate Bianca Stone.

We want to thank the musicians who entertained us this year: Patti Casey, Greenbush, Dave Vallett and Forest Station, as well as the community of Charlotte for supporting Vermont musicians. We look forward to seeing you next July!

Nick Carter and Frances Foster  
Charlotte

The Charlotte News  
should stick to its mission

To the Editor:

I was on the board of directors of The Charlotte News about 10 years ago when, after much discussion and consideration, we adopted the current mission of the paper. Here it is, cut and pasted from the most recent masthead:

The mission of The Charlotte News is to engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

This mission was based on the premise that although there were many global and national issues that certainly affect townspeople, there were numerous outlets of all shapes and sizes — TV and radio news channels, national and regional newspapers and magazines, websites, blogs, podcasts and social media — all providing coverage and outlets for opinion on these topics from all different points of view.

Some of these issues are highly divisive, to say the least. It was decided that The Charlotte News would differentiate itself by assiduously avoiding these topics, instead concentrating on local news, events and personalities. We all know that there is plenty of fodder for good compelling stories of interest to townspeople right here in our town. It was also agreed that some county or statewide issues of interest might be appropriate to include from time to time.

Thus, I found the inclusion of John Bossange’s (from South Burlington) partisan screed in the recent issue’s Letters to the Editor section troubling, not so much for its content, which I suspect would pass the standards of many sectors of the news media, but for its placement in our local paper, with its clear mission to exclude these types of messages.

Please explain this decision. Has the paper changed its mission but neglected to tell anyone, including its readers?

Robert W. Bloch  
Charlotte

Around Town

Condolences

Lyman Phillips (Phil) Wood Jr.

passed away in Middlebury, Vermont, on Thursday, July 31, 2025. He was born in Stamford, Conn., on Feb. 6, 1940, the son of Lyman and Mary Poling Wood. Sister Nancy arrived two years later.



They spent most summers near family at Cedar Beach in Charlotte, where Phil made many friends playing tennis, swimming, fishing and boating. In 1951, the family left Connecticut for a year-round home in Charlotte. Phil was in the sixth grade, and he was not pleased to learn that softball was played rather than baseball, but on his very first day of school he learned it didn’t matter when he encountered a sturdy fifth grader named Sky Thurber, who pitched “too swift.”

Phil graduated from Charlotte Central School in 1954, Vermont Academy in 1958 and then joined the Army, spending two years in Germany. On one of his leaves, he ate a meal at a small inn in the middle of the French countryside and thought to himself, “If the food is this good here, this is the country I want to live in.”

He married Ellie Bostwick in 1964 and attended Yale University and St. John’s College, graduating from Yale in 1968. This was the same graduating class as George W. Bush, who held a class reunion at the White House when he was president. Daughter Treva was born in Maryland and son Mike in Connecticut. The family moved to San Francisco in 1969.

Phil explored many different career paths: he considered attending law school after getting into Yale, Stanford and Berkeley, worked at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, studied photography and cabinet making, worked at a tech company and a small publisher. Then in 1996, after he and

Ellie divorced, he moved to Paris and opened the San Francisco Book Co., and later, Berkeley Books of Paris — both used, English-language bookstores. He was a bookseller for the remainder of his working years. He married his second wife, Anouck Malaquin, in 1999.

Phil was a seeker with a thirst for a deeper understanding of himself and the world around him. In 1973, he found a way that offered what he was looking for in the teachings of G. I. Gurdjieff. He was an active member of the Gurdjieff Foundation through his years in San Francisco and then continued with the Institut Gurdjieff in Paris. Working with the most senior and respected members in Paris and Holland, he assisted with the translation of important texts. Phil’s love of music was also nurtured by this affiliation as he participated in a choral group and advanced his piano studies.

Phil was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease around 2006 and moved back to the U.S. to The Residence at Otter Creek in Middlebury, in 2023, to be closer to family. He died of complications following a stroke.

He is survived by Treva and husband Bob, Mike, Ellie, Anouck, his grandchildren, Jason, Ben and Lila Burger, step-son Laurent Larrera, nephew Andrew Thurber of Charlotte and step-granddaughter Pénélope, Nancy, Sky, his former brother-in-law and good friend at the end of his life, nieces, nephews and many friends.

The family wishes to thank everyone at The Residence at Otter Creek for all they did to make Phil’s last two years great, and the staffs at the University of Vermont Medical Center and Porter Medical Center for their care, kindness and support during his final month.

A memorial service will be held at The Residence at Otter Creek on Aug. 12 at 4 p.m. Burial will be private.

To plant trees in memory, please visit the Sympathy Store.



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# Nectar preoccupation



Photo by Alexandra Z. Lazar

A close-up photo was possible because a moth was completely preoccupied with getting as much nectar as possible from some black-eyed Susans.

# Swallowtails' tale



Photo by Hank Kaestner

Hank Kaestner was one of the first people to see a swallowtail butterfly in Vermont 20 years ago. Now, he said, climate change has pushed its range north a considerable distance, and it is the commonest large butterfly here. When Kaestner was a 10-year-old lepidopterist in Baltimore in 1955, a swallowtail had never been reported in Maryland.

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# Middlebury film festival — 107 films on seven screens

Regan O'Brien  
Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival

The Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival's 11th annual festival is running through this Sunday, Aug. 24, in Middlebury.

The festival will screen 107 films, 18 of which are student films, on seven screens across downtown Middlebury and the Middlebury College campus, including Middlebury's historic Town Hall Theater and its new wing and Maloney Public Performance Plaza, the Middlebury Marquis Theatre and three campus venues. Filmmakers from more than 58 films are expected to attend. In addition to film screenings, the festival will host panels, master classes, happy hours and evening parties. All of the festival's panel and roundtable discussions are free and open to the public.

A roster of special guests will also appear throughout the festival, including Representative Becca Balint, actors Peter Sarsgaard and Gary Farmer, director and musical composer Allan Nicholls, writer and director Nick Paley, New York Times chief Washington correspondent David E. Sanger, New York Times film critic Alissa Wilkinson, Vermont Poet Laureate Bianca Stone, VTDigger editor-in-chief Geeta Anand, comedian Tina Friml, Daily Show writer Devin Delliquanti, actor and puppeteer Paul Zaloom, and film industry guests from



Courtesy photo

In its 11 years, the Middlebury New Filmmakers Festival has attracted big crowds.

Netflix, WGBH, DCTV and Chicken & Egg Films.

Visiting filmmakers will come from cities around the world, including London, Tel Aviv, Jakarta, Guadalajara, Bratislava, Milan and Brussels, as well as from across New England and the United States. Approximately two-thirds of the festival's screenings will be accompanied by a live, on-stage Q&A from a

visiting filmmaker.

Closing the festival on Sunday will be a screening of 2025 comedy-drama "The Ballad of Wallis Island," directed by James Griffiths. The film follows an estranged pair of former bandmates who reunite for a private show at the island home of a wealthy fan, and the screening will be preceded by the festival's traditional end-of-fest awards ceremony, at which more than a dozen juried awards and prizes will be given to festival

filmmakers.

Among dozens of first and second films by new directors and producers, the festival line-up includes Andrew DeYoung's narrative directorial debut "Friendship," starring Tim Robinson and Paul Rudd; Suzannah Herbert's haunting new documentary film "Natchez," winner of Best Documentary at the Tribeca Festival; Matthew Shear's indie comedy "Fantasy Life," starring Amanda Peet; and "Coroner to the Stars," which chronicles the life of former Los Angeles County Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner Dr. Thomas Noguchi.

The festival will also showcase a catalog of films set in Vermont and by Vermont-based film teams, including the student-made documentary feature "Room for Us?" and student narrative, "Free Chair," documentary features "Walk With Me," "Traces of Time," "Far Out: Life On & After the Commune," "Ada" and "Gone Guys."

"This year's festival is overflowing with films that will get people thinking and talking," said festival artistic director, Jay Craven. "And the roundtables will dig into considerations of comedy as a force for change, the role journalism plays in shaping the narratives and myths we live by and more. It promises to be both a celebration of cinema and ideas."

The complete festival schedule, as well as festival passes and individual tickets, along with brand-new discounted and free pass options for Vermonters and students, are available at [middfilmfest.org](http://middfilmfest.org).

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## Poetry at the Grange



Photo by Joseph Bergin

Jorden Blucher of Charlotte read his poems at the Poetry at the Grange event on Thursday, Aug. 14. The next wordsmith up is attorney and fiddler Cindy Hill of Middlebury on Sept. 11.

# Commentary

## Should mega-dairies receive so much government support?

Bill Schubart  
Contributor

Dairy cows have been the icon of Vermont’s pastoral countryside for 150 years, but today’s mega-dairies don’t reflect the tradition of small dairy farms that once dotted our pastoral landscape.

When I got my first job on a dairy farm in Morrisville in 1957, there were over 10,000 dairy farms sprinkled among the hills and soil-rich river basins in Vermont, milking an average of 18 cows daily.

Our neighbors, Gladys and Volney Farr had 28 “girls.” Each had a name and most knew their own oak stanchion when it came time to come in for nighttime milking. Volney hand-milked and poured the buckets through a dairy filter into large milk cans that he delivered daily in his pickup to the Morrisville creamery for processing into fluid milk.

People drank fluid milk in those days. When Dad took the family to Paine’s Restaurant just outside of town, Mrs. Wolfe, the waitress, deposited a large glass pitcher of milk on the table. Today it’s water. Milk fell out of favor with the health-food crowd, though that has since been debunked, but milk never returned as the ubiquitous family drink, replaced largely by sugary sodas that ballooned body sizes and caused diabetes in succeeding generations.

Today, there are some 114,000 cows on 440 remaining dairy farms. This number includes some small-scale regenerative dairy farms producing for the local market, but most cows are in industrial dairy farms milking hundreds or even thousands.

A young friend, who commutes daily to her job, passes through an industrial dairy farm milking some 2,400 cows stalled in massive barns. Fed dry hay and grains, the cows are never on grass and spend their four years confined in small pens, milked robotically thrice daily, “freshened”

(artificially inseminated) annually and then slaughtered when their milk production drops in the natural cycle of ageing. Those 2,400 cows produce 20,000 gallons a day.

A year after the passage of the Agricultural Act of 2014, revising commodity price supports and crop-insurance programs, the U.S. government spent \$24.7 billion in direct and indirect subsidies. Subsequently, the dairy industry received \$43 billion in 2016 and \$36.3 billion in 2017. In 2018, 42 percent of revenue for US dairy producers came from some form of government support. Is this farming or welfare shoring up a dying market?

Today’s milk market is divided into four segments: commodity fluid milk; organic fluid milk; premium markets such as yogurt, butter, cheese, ice cream; and finally, dry (commodity powdered milk and dry whey). On the average, Americans drink 37 percent less milk than they did in 1970. Where possible, the 14 percent surplus milk gets dumped onto international markets but with limited success. Some milk and excess whey are dumped legally onto fields and may drain into nearby waterways.

So much for the market economics supporting Vermont’s sacred cow; now let’s look at the damage.

Industrial dairy in Vermont relies heavily on row cropping of corn to feed its 114,000 cows. It is almost impossible to grow the corn needed to feed them without the use of weed-killing herbicides such as glyphosate, atrazine and dicamba, all of which are legal though subject to “restricted use” in Vermont. All three are known to be detrimental to human health.

Paraquat, which has recently been linked scientifically to the genesis of Parkinson’s disease, is also legal, but subject to “restricted use.” Chlorpyrifos is now banned in Vermont, but atrazine and Syngenta’s paraquat, banned in the E.U., are still used

here. The E.U. allows regulated use of dicamba and glyphosate.

Do you associate large piles of used tires with farms? They are often used as weights to hold down large tarps covering chopped corn or feed grains stored in bunker silos. Recycling old tires costs from \$4-\$12 per tire and more for large tractor tires. Some farms simply bury the tires. Tires are a major contributor to microplastics and breakdown into such when buried. So, not only do we poison our soils with chemicals, we further pollute them with microplastics which then appear in our food.

The final nail in the coffin of industrial ag is the issue of humane treatment of animals. Cows typically have a natural lifespan of 15 to 20 years, but in the dairy industry, cows are often slaughtered around 5 years old when their milk production declines. Cows are not on pasture, eating their natural diet grass, not corn. They’re confined for their short lives in small pens running from 30 to 40 square feet. Freshened yearly, gestation is about the same as humans. “Bob calves” (males) are slaughtered shortly after birth for pet food while heifers (females) are nursed for a short while then removed to calf sheds to mature and be added to the milking stock.

So much for humane treatment of animals.

On a good note, Vermont is seeing

growth among its local, regenerative farms producing dairy, livestock, fruit and vegetables, all consistent with best environmental and humane practices. In 2024, there were some 700 such local farms producing largely for farm stands, local farmers’ markets and local retailers.

To support humane, poison-free, regenerative farmers, we will need to address the fact that healthy, environmentally sound agricultural crops and livestock cost more to produce and thus will cost more to buy.

Given the false economy and toxic environmental impacts of industrial dairy in Vermont, isn’t it time to let the industry collapse under its own weight while shifting our state and consumer financial support to the emerging regenerative, local-agricultural community that lives light on the land and provides us with safe food? In 2024, Vermont’s own Sweet Rowen Farmstead in Glover just won the prestigious award for best produced milk in Vermont. Vermonters benefit by consuming naturally raised produce, free of big ag poisons.

To this end, Vermont’s version of SNAP, 3SquaresVT ([dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT](https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT)), helps local people needing food assistance to source and buy healthy food produced by local Vermont farmers.

## Rokeby hires executive director

From the Rokeby Museum

The Rokeby Museum Board of Trustees announced it has hired a new executive director.

Faith Revell started in the position on Aug. 4.

Revell comes to Rokeby from the Valdez Museum & Historical Archive in Alaska, where she spent 14 years as interim executive director and curator of education and public programs.

“From award-winning exhibitions at the Indiana History Center, recognized with the Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History, to the Award for Excellence in the Field from Museums Alaska, Revell’s work has been celebrated for elevating the way communities connect to history, culture and place,” according to a release from Rokeby Museum.

“Faith’s appointment signals a defining

moment for Rokeby,” said Joel Loquvam, chair of the board of trustees. “Her blend of artistic talent, museum expertise and passion for storytelling will help us bring



Faith Revell

Rokeby’s mission to life in powerful new ways. This is the kind of leadership that transforms an institution.”

Revell is also an accomplished visual artist whose work is found in public and private collections nationwide. Holding a bachelor’s in art from SUNY Binghamton and a master’s from the Maryland Institute College of Art, she now lives in Vergennes.

“In some ways, it reminds me of a condensed Alaska,” Revell said of her move to the Green Mountain State. “What struck me most were the people. The warmth, the sense of purpose and the remarkable story Rokeby tells. That’s what excites me.”

# Outdoors

## Bobolinks in decline, Vermont’s fields key to changing that

Lindsey Papasian  
Community News Service

Hyla Howe trudged through the high grass. She scanned the ground and took note: red clover, sedge, canary reed. Each plant said something about whether the field would be a good spot for bobolinks.

Suddenly came a wave of R2-D2 chirps as 40 or more birds were flushed from their positions in the grass, swirling through the air singing.

“This is amazing!” Howe said. The birds looked like dots dancing overhead. The fledglings were easy to spot in their clumsier flight patterns, and with binoculars, the adult males were clear in their distinctive black-and-white plumage, the adult females sporting brown feathers with yellow breasts.

After a few transects of the field, it was time to go back to the landowner to tell them the good news: The birds had successfully nested, and it was safe to mow.

That’s a day in the life of Howe, hired this year as the first outreach coordinator for the Boboblink Project, an effort run by Mass Audubon, Audubon Vermont and New Hampshire Audubon. She works for the Massachusetts outfit specifically.

Grassland birds like the bobolink are declining faster than any other group of birds in New England. In the last 50 years, over 75



Photo by Lindsey Papasian  
Hyla Howe of the Bobolink Project looks at a New Haven field with binoculars.

percent of the species have seen population losses. Some of the worst hit are bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks, two of 10 species of grassland birds in Vermont. They build their nests on the ground, which makes them

vulnerable to haying and mowing in fields. The Bobolink Project pays the owners of these fields, often farmers, to conduct or pay for bird-friendly management practices. The birds get time and habitat to nest while the landowners get some compensation for letting them do so.

The money to pay participating landowners comes from private donations.

“You don’t think of wildlife as an agricultural product until you remove native prairie, then you kind of have to think about wildlife as an agricultural product,” said Howe. “Essentially, the landowners are raising grassland birds.”

On Howe’s early morning visit to New Haven, landowner Steve Shores was thrilled to hear about the successful nests.

“I am glad you are seeing birds in these fields,” Shores said.

After a catch-up about the farm, life and all its changes, Howe and Shores said goodbye until next year, when she’ll come back to check on the field again.

Every current or prospective piece of land in the project needs to be surveyed yearly.

To be a part of the effort, farmers must alter their haying processes.

That’s done by either delaying the first cut of the season — no disturbance in the field until after July 15 — or delaying a second cut — no disturbance in the field between May 20 and July 24. The delays allow enough time for grassland birds to nest safely.

The birds need enough space as well as enough cover to protect their hatchlings until they can fly.

To get their population estimates, scientists have been out surveying fields, which includes analyzing vegetation and counting female birds to estimate the number of nests in the area using a formula created by Allan Strong, a University of Vermont professor who directs the school’s wildlife and fisheries biology program.

The biggest driver of grassland bird declines has been changes in land use.

The first major land-use transformation, affecting grassland bird populations

in Vermont today, was the demise of sheep farming starting in the 19th century.

Vermont’s sheep boom started in 1811 and lasted until the middle of the century. By 1840, there were over a million sheep in the state, requiring an enormous amount of pasture.

Two hundred years later, the landscape of Vermont is nearly 80 percent forest: Many of the sheep farms were left to fallow and have reforested since. The dairy farms that came in after the sheep craze required less open land — and themselves have declined since.

When farms go out of business and no one’s around to maintain the fields, shrubs and tree seedlings start to take over.

As trees reemerged in disused land, there were less and less grasslands where birds such as the bobolink could build their nests.

The second land-use factor causing grassland bird decline is the intensified management of fields.

“Fields are being cut earlier than they used to, more frequently than they used to,” Strong said. “Bobolinks and meadowlarks don’t really have a chance.”

More than 95 percent of eastern meadowlarks have disappeared in New England, according to the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, and they’re now a threatened species. Bobolink populations have dropped 60-75 percent continent-wide.

“There are fields I’m seeing now with fewer and fewer boblinks,” said Margaret Fowle, senior conservationist at the Vermont Audubon.

Mass Audubon hired Howe to manage the Bobolink Project, do more targeted outreach to farmers and provide more opportunities for education and assistance.

The landowners engaging in the Bobolink Project are excited to help conserve the birds while also getting some money for their participation.

“They pay me not to mow, and I don’t mow anyway, so why not get a little money and save the birds?” said Shores, the New Haven farmer.

He was contacted by the project to consider entering his field into conservation.

Marilyn Marks, a prospective participant who lives down the road from Shores, said she wishes the state would provide landowners a tax credit for maintaining their fields for conservation, expanding a current credit system that cuts rates for land deemed for agricultural use.

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



Photo courtesy Allan Strong  
A female bobolink.

# Gardening

## Hostas top list of shade-loving plants for the garden

Deborah J. Benoit  
University of Vermont Extension

It's the height of summer, and the weather is hot, hot, hot. That doesn't mean work in the garden is done. Instead, venture outdoors in the early morning or late in the afternoon. Avoid working in the sun during the hottest part of the day.

If you've been putting off addressing a shady challenge in your yard, this could be the perfect time to get the job done. To save yourself repeated trips carrying supplies, gather everything you'll need before you start. That includes tools, plants, mulch, a source of water for the plants and water to keep yourself hydrated. Don't forget insect repellent and sunscreen (Yes, you can get sunburned in the shade.).

Take a moment to look at that shady spot. Is it under a tree or in the shadow of a structure?

All shade is not created equal. It could range from light, dappled shade to deep shade. When selecting plants, take into consideration that plants that can do well in partly shaded areas may not be happy in full shade.

When selecting perennial plants, be sure to check the tag for light requirements and their United States Department of Agriculture Plant Hardiness Zone. If you're not sure what hardiness zone you're in, you can find it at [planthardiness.ars.usda.gov](http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov) using your zip code.

For maximum impact, choose a selection of plants in different sizes, with contrasting leaf size, shape, texture, color and variegation. Alternatively, choose one plant in a variety of cultivars to make a bold statement. Hosta and heuchera offer an abundance of choices.

Be sure to take into consideration the mature size of the plants you select. If you're concerned about empty space between plants, add in some shade-loving annuals such as impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*) or coleus (*Coleus*) for a pop of color until the perennials mature.

Hosta tops the list of shade-loving plants in many gardens. They're so popular they may seem commonplace, but they're

reliable and come in a variety of sizes and shades of green, some with variegated foliage.

Coral bells (*Heuchera*) offer colorful foliage, scalloped leaves and delicate flowers. They're low growing, well behaved and make a good companion for other shade-loving plants. Solomon's seal (*Polygonatum*) emerges in spring with bell-like flowers hanging from graceful arching stems.

Ferns offer feathery fronds in shades of green. Consider the Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum*) for variegated foliage. The ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*) is native to Vermont. Astilbe (*Astilbe*) offers similar foliage plus feathery flowers.

If your shady spot is under a tree and roots are a concern, consider using containers instead of planting in the ground. Group together several containers of similar size, shape or color for maximum effect. It's a good opportunity to use annuals or tender perennials that can be replaced in the spring for a new look.

On a shady hillside where the grass won't grow or mowing is difficult, plant a mass or a drift of a shade-loving groundcover to add interest and save labor.

If you find yourself with questions about gardening, reach out to the University of Vermont Extension master gardener helpline by phone at 802-656-5421, Thursdays, 9 a.m. to noon, until Oct. 30 or online at [go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp](http://go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp) year-round.

Adding a focal point such as a bird bath or garden art can draw the eye into a shady spot. A seating area will provide a place to relax and enjoy the shade on sunny days. Those details can make all the difference.

Finally, don't forget to mulch and water well. Then step back and admire your beautiful, new shade garden.

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



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

Hostas are available in a variety of sizes and shades of green, including some with variegated foliage, making them the perfect addition to any shade garden.



Coral bells, with its colorful foliage, scalloped leaves and delicate flowers, is a stunning perennial that nicely compliments other shade-loving plants in the garden.

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# Gardening

## Coneflower: great addition that doesn't multiply your work

Deborah J. Benoit  
University of Vermont Extension

If you don't already grow purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*) in your garden, you've most likely seen this purplish-pink, daisy-like flower adding a pop of color in someone else's yard. They're a great choice if you're looking for an easy-to-grow, native perennial.

Coneflowers are hardy in United States Department of Agriculture Hardiness Zones 4 to 9. Some varieties are hardy to Zone 3. Be sure to check the tag on the variety you choose to confirm its hardiness and preferred growing conditions.

Historically, coneflowers were used as an herbal remedy by Native Americans and, later, European settlers. Its uses included pain relief, treatment of colds and sore throats, dressing wounds and treating infections.

Today, coneflower cultivars are available in a variety of colors. In addition to the familiar pink, gardeners' choices include white, yellow and shades of red and orange, as well as variations in flower form.

Consider using coneflowers as a focal point in a naturalized or wildflower garden. They also perform well in borders or cottage gardens. Wherever



Photo by Deborah J. Benoit

With their colorful blooms and abundant supply of nectar and pollen, coneflowers attract a wide variety of pollinators, including bees, butterflies and even hummingbirds.

you use them, coneflowers will attract pollinators, including bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, to your garden.

Coneflowers can grow between 2 to 4 feet high and 1 to 2 feet wide. They bloom

best in full sun. They'll grow in partial shade as well, though lower light levels will result in fewer flowers. Coneflowers bloom throughout the summer and make long-lasting cut flowers.

As winter approaches, coneflowers die back to the ground and go dormant, with new growth emerging in the spring. You can deadhead spent flowers and cut back old growth at the end of the growing season or put off tidying up your coneflower bed until spring. If you wait, birds and other wildlife can feed on the dried seed heads, and the upright stems can provide a nesting spot for native bees.

Coneflowers will self-seed. If you start seeds on your own, keep in mind that a period of cold, moist stratification aids in germination. If you sow seeds outdoors in the fall, you'll see new plantlets emerge in the spring.

Mature coneflowers can be propagated by root division in early spring or late fall. In the spring, while the plant is still dormant, dig up the clump of fibrous roots and divide, being sure to leave several inches of roots in each section. Replant or pot immediately and water well.

If dividing in the fall, wait until the plant stops flowering and has begun to go dormant. Allow sufficient time before the ground freezes for the roots to adjust after replanting.

Plant coneflowers in well-draining, loamy soil, although they are adaptable to

**CONEFLOWER** continued on page 11

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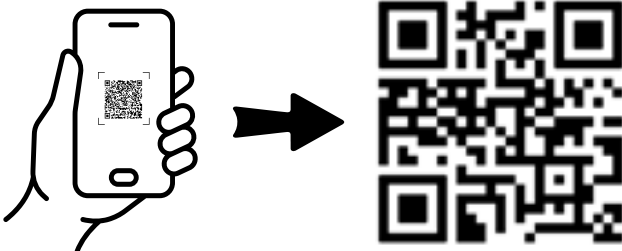
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# Conservation Currents

## Thank you for following state’s Shoreland Protection Act

Sharon Mount  
Contributor

The Shoreland Protection Act, passed by the Vermont Legislature in 2014, regulates activities within 250 feet of the mean water level of lakes greater than 10 acres in size.

For Charlotters, that is Lake Champlain. The intent of the act is to allow reasonable development along the shorelands of lakes while protecting aquatic habitat, water quality and maintaining the natural stability of shorelines.

Fortunately, there is a handbook supplied by the state, available at no cost at <https://tinyurl.com/y5tzwm4x>. There is also a summary of the act on our town website at <https://tinyurl.com/4sn3z78d>.

The handbook explains all aspects of the Shoreland Protection Act and provides definitions and graphics demonstrating how to take measurements, precisely what activities require a permit and which may only require registration, a more simplified permitting process. It also includes a list of activities which are exempt from the act. The handbook provides a list of vegetation clearing activities that are allowed, need

to be registered or need a permit. The permitting and registration processes are explained and forms provided.

Fortunately, the handbook also includes contact information for questions, as it can get complicated. There is a reason the handbook is 24 pages.

But a selection of some, but not all, redevelopment activities or new development needing a shoreland protection permit include:

- Redevelopment such as: expanding an existing building, expanding a driveway or building a new garage, building a new accessory building, clearing more vegetation, expanding lawns or gardens into wooded areas or tearing down a building and replacing it on a different footprint.
- New development such as clearing of existing natural vegetation, creation of new impervious surfaces such as a house or adding an accessory structure or driveway.

Thank you Charlotters for your efforts to maintain a healthy lake ecosystem and safeguarding Vermont’s natural resources and beauty by understanding and following the guidelines set by the Vermont Shoreland Protection Act.

## CONEFLOWER Continued from page 10

a variety of conditions. When in doubt, a soil test can tell you what, if any, fertilizers or amendments will be beneficial. For more information on soil testing, see [go.uvm.edu/soiltest](http://go.uvm.edu/soiltest).

Coneflowers are a low maintenance addition to the garden and are relatively pest and disease resistant. The solution to a problem such as drooping leaves might be as simple as supplemental watering during excessive summer heat.

While deer will likely bypass coneflowers, rabbits, chipmunks and groundhogs may take a nibble. Watch for aphids and deal with them with a strong

spray from the hose. Knock Japanese beetles into a bucket of soapy water.

Other problems may include diseases such as powdery mildew, Fusarium wilt or aster yellows. If you have questions about growing coneflowers or find yourself trying to identify a pest or disease, contact the University of Vermont Extension master gardener helpline by phone (802-656-5421, Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon) from April to October or online year-round at [go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp](http://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.)*



Coneflowers are adaptable to a variety of growing conditions although they prefer well-draining, loamy soil and full sun.

## Canine contemplation



Photo by Claudia Pfaff

Great Danes Curly and Lambeau enjoy the view from their dock on Whalley Road.

# Education

## ECHO, Leahy Center opens monstrous permanent exhibit

Nicole Bova  
Contributor

ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain has unveiled a new permanent exhibit that dives into the science and history of Vermont’s most iconic legend — Champ: America’s Lake Monster.

ECHO’s exhibits team has been working on this project for over a year. The exhibit allows guests to investigate hundreds of years of reported sightings, delve into the science and history of incredible creatures both real and unproven, and imagine their version of the Lake Champlain Monster.

Through three levels of hands-on interactives, local history, a life-sized sculpture and real-world science, America’s Lake Monster invites guests to dive deep into the legends and lore of Lake Champlain and find their answer to the age-old question: Do you believe in Champ?

“Our in-house exhibits team knocked it out of the park, creating an exceptional exhibition showcasing the science, history and culture of Champ,” said Carolyn Crowley, ECHO’s creative director.

“From an interactive historical timeline to designing your own Champ to examining Sandra Mansi’s photographic evidence, guests will experience this beloved creature from every angle.”

Activities in the expanded exhibit include:

- Champ Through the Ages: From Monster to Mascot Timeline — Investigate the history of Champ and test your skills with three interactive minigames in this hands-on archive filled with hundreds of years of lake monster history.

- Champ Interactive Design Studio — Learn about the changing face of Champ, then design and color your own version of the Lake Champlain monster and release it into ECHO’s interactive digital aquarium.

- Champ: Believer or Skeptic? Multimedia Displays — Examine the evidence and hear from local experts as they break down the real-world science surrounding the Lake Champlain Monster and the world-famous Mansi photo.

- Sculpture & Photo Op — Enjoy 360-degree views of the largest and most realistic sculpture of Champ ever created as you explore all three levels of America’s Lake Monster. Don’t forget to stop by the



Courtesy photo

New permanent exhibit of Champ on display at ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain.

photo op on the third floor to snap a selfie.  
(Nicole Bova is director of development

at the ECHO, Leahy Center for Lake Champlain.)

## Make the leap — find ‘your people’ through chit-chat

Margo Bartsch  
Contributor

“Finding my people” is a vibe many high school students describe when visiting college campuses; yet, at college, many struggle to find their people. Inside Higher Ed reported in a 2023 Thriving College Student Survey about the overlapping emotions of college life.

Around 65 percent of students feel stressed and 57 percent feel anxious, worried or overwhelmed often or all the time. At the same time, around 55 percent feel happy often or all the time.

How can students push themselves into a more positive mindset? Chit-chat is a way to break the ice to find your people.

College students are not alone when feeling lonely in a new place. The New York University blog, Meet.NYU, features student writers who share their thoughts and hurdles in adjusting to college. The 2024 article, “An Introvert’s Declassified School Survival Guide: Making Friends at NYU,” coins the phrase, “Say ‘The Thing.’” The idea is to take the leap and say “hi.” Don’t be afraid to force yourself to reach out to familiar faces from class, the library or dorm.

Although it is easy to bury your face in your phone screen while waiting in line at the bookstore or coffee shop, these default actions isolate you from noticing visual or verbal cues from those around you. Forming friendships typically begin while

talking to someone.

Psychology Today published the 2023 article, “Why small talk, with almost anyone, is so rewarding: Connection is important, even with people not important to you.” It explains that people who have conversations with someone outside their friend group (weak tie) can eventually form deeper connections (strong tie).

In fact, extroverts report greater happiness on days when they had more weak interactions compared to their typical number of stronger interactions.

The book, “Creative Acts for Curious People: How to Think, Create and Lead in Unconventional Ways,” by Sarah Stein Greenberg from Stanford University, includes a chapter on how to talk to

strangers:

“I think one of the things that’s hard for us to remember is how much we don’t know that we don’t know. You can often be surprised by what you learn through a live interview or through a human connection. That is just tremendously valuable for getting past our own biases or past our own routines or habits of mind.”

Forbes featured the 2023 article, “For Wellness and Happiness, Study Shows that Conversation is Key.” It profiles a University of Kansas research study that says making friends is an investment. It takes around 40 to 60 hours of time to build a casual friendship and around 200

**EDUCATION** continued on page 13



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## Sports

# Vermont shines at Shrine contest with New Hampshire



Photo by Calvin Morse

From left, Dylan Frere, Sean Kennedy, Jacob Armstrong, Caleb Scrodin and Joshua Quad represented Champlain Valley Union High as part of the Vermont team battling New Hampshire in the 72nd annual Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl on Aug. 2. In front are CVU coaches Rahn Fleming and John Stempek.

Calvin Morse  
Contributor

Although Vermont appeared to be cruising to a victory, scoring three touchdowns in a row and ending the first half ahead 19-0, the 72nd Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl turned into much more of a contest in the second half. Vermont State-Castleton’s Dave Wolk Stadium is sort of becoming the home of annual two-state rivalry. This was the tenth straight year the Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl was played there. Midway through the third quarter, New

Hampshire returned an interception 47 yards to the Vermont 2-yard line. New Hampshire punched it in on the next play and a successful PAT finally put the Granite Staters on the scoreboard 19-7. With less than 10 minutes left in the fourth quarter, New Hampshire scored another touchdown. New Hampshire got the ball again and had one final drive extended to midfield by a controversial tripping call, but four unsuccessful plays gave the ball back to Vermont, which was able to take a knee and run out the clock for the final 19-14 score.

## EDUCATION

Continued from page 12

hours to build a close relationship. This communications analysis details that focusing on others, more than oneself, can create a foundation of friendship and improve well-being. Listening to each other, showing care and valuing others shows support, respect and being present. Having fun and laughter can forge friendships. The Journal of Research in Personality describes that joking around and laughing can create bonds and contribute to the well-being of each person. Shared experiences help people feel connected and a sense of belonging that affects personal and social happiness. Pushing outside of your comfort zone or tribe can expand your friend groups. The 2022 BBC article, “Why Talking to Strangers Can Make Us Smarter,” supports why chit-chat can make us wiser and happier. Starting a conversation with a new person can be tricky, but can build social networks, community engagement and trust around us. For example, if you see a bumper sticker on a car or a sticker on a laptop with a

familiar place or symbol, this can be a natural conversation starter with a stranger. The idea of six-degrees of separation is that we are connected by six or fewer people that we mutually know. It really can be a small world! The back-to-school buzz is the perfect time for social interactions by attending activity fairs, joining clubs and participating in study groups. Casting a wide net keeps options open if some ideas do not work out. Once you start talking and making friends, your friend group will multiply! Communicating directly with people and through technology is not mutually exclusive. After meeting someone, keep the conversation going through social media. Chit-chat can ignite friendships. Remember, everyone is in the same boat adjusting to a new place. It takes two people to complete a conversation. *(Margo Bartsch founded College Essay Coach, a full-service college admission business, and has been an adjunct professor in business at Champlain College and at Middlebury College.)*



## Sports

# The Diamond Island Regatta was a ‘breeze’ this year

Tim Etchells  
Contributor

A year ago, the Champlain Valley was recovering from a battering by tropical storm Debby. This year, Aug. 9 and 10 could not have been much better for a weekend of sailboat racing on Lake Champlain.

Organized by the Diamond Island Yacht Club and Point Bay Marina in Charlotte and benefiting the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum in Ferrisburgh, the Diamond Island Regatta on Saturday and Sunday’s Split Rock Race featured a combination of sunshine and mostly gentle breezes. In the end, there was plenty of wind to get the assembled sailboats around the race courses on both days.

On Saturday morning, 25 boats were on the starting line for the 13th edition of the Diamond Island Regatta. Diamond Island Yacht Club’s signature sailboat race took boats on a course of about 10 miles, from the start-finish line in Town Farm Bay, south to Diamond Island off Ferrisburgh, north to Cedar Beach off Charlotte and back to the finish. The race started in a moderate breeze, which waned a bit during a long downwind leg, and then picked up again on an upwind leg taking boats back to the finish.

The next day, 16 boats sailed in the fifth annual Split Rock Race in light winds that still kept the boats moving. On a shorter course, about 5 miles, the fleet headed upwind from the start-finish line in Town Farm Bay south to Diamond Island and then returned downwind to the finish.

Boats came from all over the lake for the weekend of racing, with sailors from, among other places, the host Diamond Island Yacht Club in Charlotte; the Lake Champlain Yacht Club in Shelburne; the Malletts Bay Boat Club in Colchester; the Valcour Sailing Club in Plattsburgh, N.Y.; Willsboro Bay on the New York side; and as far away as Mooney Bay, north of Plattsburgh.

The first boat to finish in the Diamond Island Regatta on Saturday, in 2 hours, 1 minute and 21 seconds, was Lisa J., a Mumm 30 sailed by Tris Coffin, who sails at both Lake Champlain Yacht Club and Malletts Bay Boat Club. Lisa J. was also the winner in the Spinnaker A division on corrected time. First place in the Spinnaker B class went to Lift Ticket, a J/92S, 30 feet long, sailed by Sam Pratt from Malletts Bay Boat Club. Spinnaker C class went to Tom Porter, who sails at both Diamond Island Yacht Club and Lake Champlain Yacht Club, on Osprey, a C&C 33 MKII.

In the jib-and-main classes, Morning Star Again, a Catalina 320, sailed by John Stetson of Lake Champlain Yacht Club, captured jib-and-main A. In the jib-and-main B class, Mackinac, a Pearson 32 sailed by Tim and Betsy Etchells of Diamond Island Yacht Club, came out on top.

The multihull class (new to the Lake Champlain Championship Series this year) was won by Magic Carpet, a Corsair F27 Trimaran, owned and sailed by Jimmy Brown.

In Sunday’s Split Rock Race, the win in the Spinnaker A class went to Polar Express, a Henderson 30 sailed by Chris Duley of Valcour Sailing Club. Enki, a C&C 99 sailed by Cindy Turcotte of Lake Champlain Yacht Club, won the very competitive Spinnaker B class; the top four boats in the class finished

within less than a minute of each other. Pas de Deux, a 30-foot Pearson Flyer sailed by John Beal, got the win in the Spinnaker C class.

In the jib-and-main classes on Sunday, Fritz Martin of Diamond Island Yacht Club sailed Slingshot, a J/30, to the victory in A. And Tim and Betsy Etchells, sailing Mackinac and representing Diamond Island Yacht Club, won in B.

Full results can be found at the Diamond Island Yacht Club website at [diamondislandyc.org/dir-srr-results-for-2025](http://diamondislandyc.org/dir-srr-results-for-2025).

As is the case every year, the biggest winner over the weekend was the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum. The money raised by the benefit events — the pre-race breakfast, the lobster dinner, T-shirt and hat sales, a fundraising raffle and a silent auction — is still being tallied, but is expected to reach \$4,000, easily breaking last year’s record of about \$2,700.

The post-race party on Saturday afternoon included live music by Bob “Cooper” Recupero. The party also included a presentation about some of Lake Champlain’s most famous shipwrecks from Chris Sabick, executive director of Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, who talked about several of the wrecks that sit beneath the race courses.

In addition to the club and Point Bay Marina, other sponsors contributing to a successful two days of racing, socializing and fundraising for the museum included: Safe Harbor Shelburne Shipyard; The Moorings, Mallets Bay; Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, Ferrisburgh; Helly Hansen, Burlington; Nautical Circuits, Lake Champlain; West Marine, South Burlington; Basin Harbor Resort, Ferrisburgh; Safe Harbor, Willsboro Bay, N.Y.; The Upper Deck, Willsboro, N.Y.; Amalgamated Culture Works, Burlington; Burlington, Harbor Marina; FastSigns, Burlington; The Old Dock, Essex, N.Y.; Backyard Bistro, Charlotte; Hinesburgh Public House; Bibens ACE Hardware, Colchester; Dunkin’, Shelburne; and Shaw’s, Vergennes.

**TOP FINISHERS**

**Diamond Island Regatta, Aug. 9**  
\* Finishes based on corrected time \*  
(boat name | boat model | skipper | club)

**Spinnaker A**

1. Lisa J., Mumm 30, Tris Coffin, Lake Champlain Yacht Club/Malletts Bay Boat Club
2. Odinn, J/111, Kjell Dahlen, Lake Champlain Yacht Club
3. Polar Express, Henderson 30, Chris Duley, Valcour Sailing Club

**Spinnaker B**

1. Lift Ticket, J/92S, Sam Pratt, Malletts Bay Boat Club
2. Rum Butter, C&C Redline 41, Ted Castle, Diamond Island Yacht Club
3. In Progress, Express 34, Benedek Erdos, Malletts Bay Boat Club

**Spinnaker C**

1. Osprey, C&C 33 MK II, Thomas Porter, Diamond Island Yacht Club/Lake Champlain Yacht Club
2. Pas de Deux, Pearson Flyer, John Beal, Diamond Island Yacht Club
3. Joyride, J/30, Lennart Lundblad, Malletts



Photo by Lea Ann Smith

From left, Rum Butter, sailed by Ted Castle from Diamond Island Yacht Club, and In Progress, sailed by Malletts Bay Boat Club’s Benedek Erdos, glide along the New York shore under spinnaker during Saturday’s Diamond Island Regatta, with Split Rock Mountain providing the backdrop.

### Bay Boat Club

#### Jib & Main A

1. Morning Star Again, Catalina 320, John Stetson, Lake Champlain Yacht Club
2. Schuss, J/30, Cameron Giezendanner, Malletts Bay Boat Club
3. Slingshot, J/30, Fritz Martin, Diamond Island Yacht Club

#### Jib & Main B

1. Mackinac, Pearson 32, Tim & Betsy Etchells, Diamond Island Yacht Club
2. Meridian, O’Day 28, Julie Trottier, Malletts Bay Boat Club
3. Salsa, Ericson 34, Sean Linskey, Diamond Island Yacht Club

### Split Rock Race, Aug. 10, 2025

#### Spinnaker A

1. Polar Express, Henderson 30, Chris Duley, Valcour Sailing Club
2. Odinn, J/111, Kjell Dahlen, Lake Champlain Yacht Club
3. Lisa J., Mumm 30, Tris Coffin, Lake Champlain Yacht Club

#### Spinnaker B

1. Enki, C&C 99, Cindy & Marc Turcotte, Lake Champlain Yacht Club
2. Lift Ticket, J/92S, Sam Pratt, Malletts Bay Boat Club
3. In Progress, Express 34, Benedek Erdos, Malletts Bay Boat Club

#### Spinnaker C

1. Pas de Deux, Pearson Flyer, John Beal, Diamond Island Yacht Club

#### Jib & Main A

1. Slingshot, J/30, Fritz Martin, Diamond Island Yacht Club
2. Schuss, J/30, Cameron Giezendanner, Malletts Bay Boat Club

#### Jib & Main B

1. Mackinac, Pearson 32, Tim & Betsy Etchells, Diamond Island Yacht Club
2. Meridian, O’Day 28, Julie Trottier, Malletts Bay Boat Club
3. Salsa, Ericson 34, Sean Linskey, Diamond Island Yacht Club



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# Our Local Feast

## Hard to imagine lobster or clams without fresh corn

Dorothy Grover-Read  
Contributor

In New England, fresh Maine lobsters shine in the summertime, especially when combined with our local harvest of golden corn.

They go together. One rarely sees a lobster or clam bake without a side of fresh corn. The textures and the sweetness complement each other.

We wait all year for corn season to begin and enjoy it right to the frost in early autumn. The corn this year from our farms is fat and sweet, and we’ve used it in everything from straight up on the grill to a creamy chowder.

Everyone loves a lobster roll, but there are two camps. While both versions use a classic, split-top bun, toasted of course, those who want the Maine style enjoy it filled beyond the brim with a light mayonnaise-based salad, served cold. The best have few ingredients: lobster, onion or shallots, maybe a bit of celery or celery seeds, and mayonnaise. Anything more than a squeeze of lemon extra and you tread on dangerous culinary ground.

Served hot, the Connecticut version features the lobster meat on the grilled bun and doused in melted butter. Maybe a squeeze of lemon, but it is simplicity at its best. My son actually loves the Maine version, topped with melted butter, the best of both worlds.

With a small gathering planned, I thought it would be fun to stretch two lobsters (1 1/2 pounds, hard shell) by putting them in a salad and adding other seasonal ingredients. A little mayonnaise here was good, but not too much. The lobster needs to shine and not be obscured with too much fat. Acid of course, and a bit of onion.

Piled atop a bed of local little gem lettuce, with a reserved claw for garnish, it made a lovely centerpiece for the table and was enjoyed heartily by all. If you like, this is equally tasty piled into a toasted or grilled split-top bun, butter optional.

While we are lucky to have access to fresh lobsters all year long, in a pinch, you can always use frozen lobster meat and frozen



Photos by Dorothy Grover-Read

This year’s corn is plump and sweet despite a late start from so much rain in the spring. It’s all good now.

corn. The texture will be a little different, but still delicious.

### Lobster rolls

- Meat from two lobsters, about a pint, chopped
- 2 cups corn kernels from three or four ears
- 1 cup purple onion, minced
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup parsley, minced
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
- juice and zest of a lemon
- splash of hot sauce
- gem lettuce

The easiest way to prep this is to steam or boil two lobsters and three or four ears of corn together in a really big pot. The corn will be done and ready to fish out of the pot first.

Cool, then remove the meat from the lobsters, reserve one claw for garnish if you like, cut it into uniform pieces and toss in a large mixing bowl. Cut the corn from the cob and add to the bowl.

#### To this add:

- 1 cup purple onion, minced
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup parsley, minced

In a separate bowl, combine the dressing ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons white wine vinegar
- juice and zest of a lemon
- splash of hot sauce

Whisk this well, then pour over the lobster and corn mixture, and season with some salt and pepper to taste.

Line a salad bowl with gem or other lettuce and mound with the salad. Top with the reserved claw, a little more black pepper and some smoked paprika for color. Serve chilled.



A winning combination in many dishes from salads and chowders to a fun little appetizer. By cooking these together, you save time and a big pot to wash.



Lobster and corn salad is a refreshing summer salad that uses the best sweet corn of the season married with the succulence of New England lobster.



A frugal New Englander will be happy to squeeze out six generous portions of this corn-based chowder using just one big Maine lobster.

## On Books

# One to make you laugh, one to make you lock doors and windows

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

Need a good book? A good laugh? I have just the thing: “This American Woman” by comedian Zarna Garg. Who is she? In her own words: “A little about me. I’m an immigrant. I’m here to take your jobs. Watch out Jerry Seinfeld!”

“I’m not your typical Indian woman,” Garg tells her audiences. She got into standup in her late 40s because, after 16 years as a stay-at-home mom, her kids encouraged her to try it. They told her, “All our friends want to hang out here because you make them laugh. Your stories are your thing.”

“If you hate my comedy, blame them,” she says.

“My kids are very impressed with themselves,” she says. “They found a way to get their mom out of the house on nights and weekends.”

Garg is licensed to practice law in NYC, but “I was really bad at it,” she says. “At one point all my clients were in jail. They were guilty, but that’s not the point.”

Garg is happily married to a man named Shalabh, an engineer whom she met on an Indian dating site; he was inexorably drawn to her humor and spirit.

“My husband, he’s a great guy,” she says. “You know, he went to a good college, has an amazing job. ... He’s what you here would call a catch. I know this because his mother reminds me. Every day.”

“Turning her everyday life as an immigrant mom into comedy gold,” someone recently commented about Garg. It’s true. She’s published a memoir, currently hosts “The Zarna Garg Family Podcast” and is starring in her second comedy special on Hulu: “Practical People Win.” I think I also heard something about a movie.

“From the start, my mother knew I was different,” Garg said, in a recent interview with Marc Myers (Wall Street Journal). “In India, after a child is born, a Hindu priest customarily visits the hospital to chart a newborn’s astrological signs. My chart said, ‘This girl is going to talk and talk and talk.’ My mom was horrified. In India, this was really bad news.”

When Garg was 14, her mother contracted hepatitis, and though hepatitis is curable, she kept her illness to herself until it was too late. The day after she died, Garg’s father announced, “I’m done parenting. You need to get married.” (He was talking about arranged marriage.)

But Garg had been exposed to the American way of doing things through bootleg copies of “Family Ties,” “Growing Pains” and “Three’s Company,” which taught her, among other things, that getting married was a choice. Her choice.

Her father disagreed. He told her she



must marry or leave. “So, I left,” says Garg. She stayed with school friends as much as she could, trying her best to keep up attendance at school despite no stable, predictable place to rest her head at night, but it was all extremely difficult, humiliating and exhausting. And so, upon graduating from high school, at age 16, Garg moved to Ohio to live with her sister and her sister’s husband.

But please don’t let this summary of comedian Zarna Garg’s early life gloss over for you the deep heartache, hardship and tragedy that was part of her growing-up years. Though she has attained amazing success as a comedian and real happiness in her personal life, Garg has had her fair share of misery and loneliness. For me, reading about her life, where she comes from and all that she has experienced, makes her current good fortune all that much more impressive and extraordinary.

The story Garg tells about meeting her husband is one of my favorite parts of this book. Besides being laugh-out-loud funny, it serves to highlight Garg’s indomitable authenticity as well as her fearlessness. If there were to be a moral tacked on to her story, I imagine it might be something like: “Be yourself. Be true to yourself. Don’t be afraid. Take risks. Work hard. Great things will happen.” (Of course, her moral would be much funnier.)

Garg currently resides in Manhattan’s Upper East Side with her husband Shalabh and their three children. Her father died two decades ago; they never reconciled. “He’d probably be disappointed in me, but I’ve been lucky,” she says.

She also says that though her kids “nudged” her into comedy, “nothing would have been possible without my sister and brother-in-law. They were the first to believe in me and love me just the way I am.”

Honest, inspiring, hilarious, at times heartbreaking, this is a really good book. Read it, or even better, listen to it on Audible, read by the author herself. So glad I stumbled upon this one. It’s a gem. Highly,

highly recommend.

A very different read is Joyce Carol Oates’ “Fox,” which I picked up on the fly at the Harvard Square Bookstore a few months ago. The author, born in 1938, published her first book in 1963 (when I was 4 years old) and has since published 58 novels, along with numerous plays, novellas, short stories, poems and works of nonfiction.

Oates — winner of the National Book Award, among other prizes and accolades — grew up in Millersport, N.Y., in a working-class farming community, the eldest of three children. Her mother was of Hungarian descent; her father, a tool and die designer. Her youngest sibling, Lynn Ann, has autism and is institutionalized. Apparently, Oates has not seen her since 1971.

Though Oates describes her family as happy and close knit, her childhood, she says, was a “daily scramble for existence.” Her family tree contains, among its many branches and leaves, suicide, murder and attempted murder, which might help explain the strain of darkness in this, her most recent novel.

I don’t know if you’ve done the math here, but Oates was 87 years old when “Fox” hit the stands, which absolutely blows my mind, as the novel is technically so excellent and so detailed, so modern and so creepy and so addictively compelling. I know I say this a lot, but it really is true, you can ask my dogs, I could not put this book down.

Author Rebecca Makkai says that “Fox” is Oates’ “most compelling book in her remarkable career.” Michael Connelly says

the book is “mesmerizing,” calling attention to the many depths of character explored by the novel, and the way Oates “captures the nuances of the choices people make.” Gillian Flynn says that reading “Fox” is “like being spellbound by a hypnotist who may not wish you well, who leads you, with a deceptively gentle hand, toward that dark forest you fear.”

Yes, I agree, this book is a creepy, compelling, addictive, hypnotizing, nuanced read. Without giving too much away, I will just say that it is about a charming, quietly charismatic English teacher — a little bit preppy, winning smile, great credentials — who has been hired to teach English to middle schoolers at the prestigious Langhorne Academy; and to make a long story short, he isn’t quite who he presents himself to be. Reminiscent of Patricia Highsmith’s Tom Ripley, he is a beautiful, alluring monster, winning hearts left and right while preying on his enamored, pre-pubescent female students.

This is one of the best books I’ve read all year. It’s a long one too — 651 pages. But if you are anything like me, you will whiz through it, while ignoring phone calls, texts, chores, invitations and bedtimes. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

Brilliant. Read it. It will give you the creeps and hook and astound you. A little in the style of Donna Tartt’s “A Secret History” — “Fox” is that kind of dark. Clearly, age is no impediment to artistic genius. Highly recommend this one.



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# Calendar

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

### Festival of woodcarving

**Wednesday, Friday, Aug. 20-22**

Green Mountain Woodcarvers Matt Strong and Bob Lindemann lead a three-day workshop to create a scaled-down great blue heron. More info: <https://tinyurl.com/mry28y4n>. The woodcarving festival will be followed by the annual carvers show on Saturday, Aug. 23, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. At the show, discover some of the variety of styles and techniques possible: from caricature carving to wildfowl, birds to Scandinavian flat plane carvings. Demonstrations are planned throughout the day. This is a good opportunity to learn how woodcarvers, using simple hand tools, transform a block of wood into a piece of art.

### Shelburne Museum yoga

**Sunday, Aug. 24, 5:30-7 p.m.**

Join a special after-hours experience blending art, mindfulness and movement. Begin with a guided tour and art-based meditation in the Dana-Spencer Textile Galleries at Hat & Fragrance featuring the exhibition, "Dahlov Ipcar: the Possibilities of Pattern," designed to spark reflection and presence. Then join an all-level yoga class led by Lynn Alpeter, surrounded by the natural beauty of the museum grounds. Bring your own yoga mat; \$10 for members; \$15 for non-members; advance registration required at <https://tinyurl.com/dd4z269r>. Additional dates are Sept. 2 and Sept. 24.

### Sunset bird & nature walk

**Aug. 28, 7 p.m.**

Enjoy a sunset stroll around Birds of Vermont's clearings. Erin Talmage and Ali Wagner will lead the walk. Not an early riser? You're not alone. Some birds also prefer to sing, call or display in late afternoon and early evening. Although we may see and hear fewer species than we do at dawn, a late-day ramble gives us more time to appreciate each kind and to better learn their songs. Call 802 434-2167 to reserve your spot or visit [birdsofvermont.org](http://birdsofvermont.org).



Photo by Kintz

The Mad River Valley Craft Fair in Waitsfield on Aug. 30 & 31 features four bands, the work of more than 85 artists, food, facepainting and presentations on dinosaurs.

[org/special-upcoming](https://www.mrvvalley.org/special-upcoming). Suggested donation: \$5-\$15.

### Mad River Valley Craft Fair

**Saturday & Sunday Aug. 30 & 31, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.**

The 54th Mad River Valley Craft Fair will be held rain or shine on Labor Day weekend at Kenyon's Field, Route 100, Waitsfield. The fair features the work of more than 85 artists, including Jonathan Hart of Charlotte and his fine art photography of water. There will be four bands, a food court & bar, door prizes and free facepainting. There will be the Dinoman Science Show at noon each day, which uses magic, clever explanations and incredible props to present a program on dinosaurs. The fair supports the Valley Players Theater in Waitsfield.

### Chamber-folk music

**Saturday, Aug. 30, 7:30-10 p.m.**

Toronto-based chamber-folk string quartet Medusa appears at the Burnham Hall to

kick off the Burnham Presents concert series. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the music at 7:30 p.m. There will be homemade desserts available. Tickets and info at [burnhampresents.org](http://burnhampresents.org).

### The Steph Pappas Experience

**Sunday, Sept. 7, 1-2:30 p.m.**

For a third year, The Steph Pappas Experience returns to perform on the lawn of the Charlotte Museum at 215 Museum Road. There will be refreshments and the museum will be open 1-4 p.m.

### CHARLOTTE

#### Taiji classes at the Grange

**Mondays & Wednesdays, Sept. 8-Nov. 5, 6-7:30 p.m.**

Felipe Toro will lead introductory taiji classes at the Grange on Monday and Wednesday evenings. Taiji quan or taiji (tai chi) is an internal martial art system which emphasizes the development and control of qi (chi) within the body. There is a

suggested donation of \$90 for the 18-class series and registration is required with Toro at [champlainwellness@gmail.com](mailto:champlainwellness@gmail.com).

### Age Well luncheon

**Tuesday, Sept. 9, 11:30 a.m.**

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a free luncheon for anyone 60 or older in the St. Catherine of Siena Parish Hall at 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 a.m., and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is chicken, corn and potato stew, crackers, Oregon blend vegetables, wheat dinner roll, apple cake and milk. The deadline to register is Sept. 3. Contact Pam Niarchos at 802-662-5283 or [pniarchos@agewellvt.org](mailto:pniarchos@agewellvt.org).

### CHARLOTTE

#### Poetry at the Grange

**Thursday, Sept. 11, 6:30-8 p.m.**

Poets and everyone interested in poetry are invited to the historic Charlotte Grange Hall. Bring a few of your favorite poems or your own poetry to read or recite, or just come to listen. Poetry at the Grange is held in collaboration with the Charlotte Library every second Thursday of the month.

### CHARLOTTE

#### Coffee and muffins

**Friday, Sept. 12, 8:30-10 a.m.**

Grange Hall, 2858 Spear St. Please note that the date has changed for the Grange's coffee and muffins happy hour. Join neighbors and members of the Charlotte Grange for free coffee, tea and homemade muffins at the Grange Hall on Friday, Sept. 12.

### Fall woodland training

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 12-14**

Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife invites landowners, foresters and conservation-minded individuals to its fall cooperators training, held at Kehoe Conservation Camp on the shores of Lake Bomoseen. This free, 2 1/2-day program immerses participants in the science and art of woodland stewardship. With

**CALENDAR** continued on page 20



Courtesy photo

Vermont Coverts invites forest enthusiasts to its 40th anniversary Woodlands for Wildlife, an event celebrating wildlife habitat, on Sept. 21. More details and how to register above.

## CHARLOTTE TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

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

### Planning Commission meeting

Thursday, Aug. 21, 7 p.m.

### Regular Selectboard meeting

Monday, Aug. 25, 7 p.m.

### Conservation Commission meeting

Tuesday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m.

### Development Review Board meeting

Wednesday, Aug. 27, 7 p.m.



### Planning Commission meeting

Thursday, Sept. 4, 7 p.m.

### Regular Selectboard meeting

Monday, Sept. 8, 7 p.m.

### Development Review Board meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.

### Planning Commission meeting

Thursday, Sept. 18, 7 p.m.

CALENDAR

Continued from page 19

presentations from state and local experts in forestry and wildlife management and stories from fellow landowners, the training explores forest ecology, habitat enhancement, invasive species control, conservation planning and how to maintain connected and resilient landscapes. Applications are open now. Learn more or apply at [vtcoverts.org](http://vtcoverts.org). For questions, email [info@vtcoverts.org](mailto:info@vtcoverts.org).

Lake Champlain Challenge Race  
Saturday, Sept. 13, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Challenge Race is an annual summer race on Lake Champlain that's open to all human-powered vessels, who race to complete a 3-mile course. Race categories include: rowing gigs (fixed seat and sliding seat, solo and crew), kayaks, canoes, paddleboards and miscellaneous. The only requirement is the boat must be propelled by human power. Awards will be given for fastest in each category and most creative race name. After the race, all are invited to a free lunch buffet, hosted by the museum's rowing clubs. The Challenge Race is \$30 a person and payment will be collected in person at check-in. Pre-registration for the Challenge Race is strongly encouraged to guarantee a spot in the race and lunch. Registration encouraged at <https://tinyurl.com/bdf7h7df>.

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte Walks

Friday, Sept. 19, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Get more familiar with Charlotte's public



Photo by Al Prine

Steph Pappas will perform on the lawn of the Charlotte Museum on Sunday, Sept. 7.

trails or meet and chat with other residents by joining a Charlotte Walks. Every third Friday of the month members of the Grange and others meet at a different trailhead at 8:30 a.m. These walks generally last about an hour and are led at an adult walking pace. The location of the September walk will be announced later.

Words in the Woods

Saturday, Sept. 20, 11 a.m.

Vermont Humanities Words in the Woods events allow Vermonsters and visitors to enjoy our state's natural beauty while listening to and reading literature in the outdoors at different Vermont State Parks. The fifth of this year's readings will be at Mt. Philo State Park and will feature

the Young Writers Project (YWP), an independent nonprofit begun in 2006 in Burlington to inspire, mentor, publish and promote young writers and artists. Vermont Humanities will cover park entries for the program.

Vermont Coverts anniversary

Saturday, Sept. 21

Vermont Coverts: Woodlands for Wildlife invites landowners, conservation professionals, and forest enthusiasts to join in celebrating its 40th anniversary on Saturday, Sept. 21, at Lareau Farm and Forest in Waitsfield. The event will be a full day of learning, connecting and honoring decades of work supporting wildlife habitat across Vermont. Vermont Coverts has

trained over 900 cooperators, dedicated landowners who share information and inspiration in their communities to encourage sound forest and wildlife stewardship. The day will include walks, talks and panel discussions. Panelists will explore themes of biodiversity, connectivity and the future of land stewardship in Vermont. Register at [vtcoverts.org](http://vtcoverts.org). For more info, email [lisa@vtcoverts.org](mailto:lisa@vtcoverts.org) or call 802-877-2777.

CHARLOTTE

Storytelling at the Grange

Thursday, Sept. 25, 6-8 p.m.

Samara Anderson is hosting a storytelling event at every public library in Vermont. This will continue until as many of the 185 Vermont public libraries as possible have hosted one of her storytelling events. In Charlotte, the storytelling event will take place at the Grange. Come as an audience member or as a storyteller. Email Anderson at [anderson\\_samara@yahoo.com](mailto:anderson_samara@yahoo.com) to sign up as a storyteller or get more info.

Vermont Female Farmers

Wednesday, Oct. 1-Jan. 3, 2026

The Henry Sheldon Museum a photography exhibition by Vermont-based artist JuanCarlos González on view from Oct. 1-Jan. 3, 2026. This striking portrait series offers a look into the lives of farmers shaping the landscape and future of Vermont agriculture. Complementing the photography are select objects in the Museum's collection of farming tools and artifacts that have rarely been on view.

Green Mountain Bike Club's end of summer rides

- All riders must fill out one waiver of liability per season.
- Although it isn't mandatory, we ask cyclists to sign up on-line prior to doing a Green Mountain Bike Club ride.
- All riders must wear helmets and obey the rules of the road. Please do not ride two abreast if there is traffic in either direction.
- In the event of inclement weather, ride leaders will notify those who have signed up in advance and post to the listserv if the ride is being cancelled no later than two hours before the start of the ride.
- Riders below the age of 18 must have a signed waiver from a parent.
- Rides begin promptly 15 minutes after the meeting time.
- All riders should carry some basic tools including a pump or CO2 cartridge, tire levers, and a spare tube or patch kit.
- Social rides are more leisurely versions of the mapped ride, usually the shorter route with longer food breaks. Always contact the social ride leader before the ride to make sure those versions of the ride are taking place.
- The time and date of social rides is subject to change based on weather conditions. Please email [lightspd@comcast.net](mailto:lightspd@comcast.net) to be added to the social riders' email contact list, which is the only guaranteed notification for these rides. Weekend social rides are usually announced by Thursday and group size is limited.

Date: Saturday, Aug. 23

New gravel ride: Middlebury to Snake Mountain Gravel Grinder

Meeting time: 9:15 a.m.

Meeting place: Academy Street Municipal Parking Lot, Middlebury

Leader: Brian Howard — 802-304-0610, [bjhowd@gmail.com](mailto:bjhowd@gmail.com)

Co-leader: Carlie Krolick — 802-999-1813, [ckrolick@gmavt.net](mailto:ckrolick@gmavt.net)

Date: Sunday, Aug. 24

Ride: Venise En Quebec — Ride 40 miles from Alburgh across the border through farmland to Venise en Quebec, a summer resort on Missisquoi Bay where we will stop for lunch. There are stores and restaurants or you can bring your own lunch. The return is through Alburgh Springs border crossing. Bring your passport or Vermont Enhanced Driver's License as the required customs documents. Be aware that the border crossing closes on the Quebec side at 4 p.m.

Meeting time: 9:45 a.m.

Meeting place: Alburgh Community Education Center

Leader: John Bertelsen — 802-557-4633, [jo.bertel@gmail.com](mailto:jo.bertel@gmail.com)

Co-leader: Karla Ferrelli — 802-864-0101, [karla.ferrelli@gmail.com](mailto:karla.ferrelli@gmail.com)

Date: Sunday, Aug. 31

Ride: Hinesburg Hollow — This hilly route travels south through Huntington via the beautiful Hinesburg Hollow Road. The short route is 25 miles and returns to Williston via North Road (and a little bit of dirt) while the long route is 47 miles and continues through North Ferrisburgh to the lake and back through Hinesburg.

Meeting time: 8:45 a.m.

Meeting place: Williston Central School by

the tennis courts

Leader: Kevin Batson — 802-825-2618, [kevbvt@gmail.com](mailto:kevbvt@gmail.com)

There is no co-leader for this ride.

Date: Sunday, Sept. 7

New Ride: Miner Farm Delight — Start the ride from the Grand Isle Ferry Dock, Take the Ferry over to Cumberland Head and ride scenic and quiet roads on the New York side of Lake Champlain. There is a brief section on the New York State Empire Trail and on Miner Farm Road before returning to Vermont on the ferry. Bring money for the ferry.

Meeting time: 9:45 a.m.

Meeting place: Grand Isle Ferry Lot

Leader: Brian Howard — 802-304-0610, [bjhowd@gmail.com](mailto:bjhowd@gmail.com)

Contact Donna Leban at [donna.leban@gmail.com](mailto:donna.leban@gmail.com) for social ride sign-ups.

Date: Sunday, Sept. 14

Ride: Century Day — Three rides, all following the same route for the first 25 miles with a food stop in Bristol. The metric century is 62 miles via Bristol and Vergennes. The full century is 100 miles traveling down to the Crown Point Bridge and returning through the Champlain Valley. Those looking for an extra challenge can do the Double Gap century which is 113 miles and includes the Middlebury and Appalachian Gaps.

Meeting time: 7:30 a.m.

Meeting place: Veterans Memorial Park,

South Burlington, Cairns Arena back lot

Leader: Kevin Batson — 802-825-2618, [kevbvt@gmail.com](mailto:kevbvt@gmail.com)

Co-leader: Brian Howard — 802-304-0610,

[bjhowd@gmail.com](mailto:bjhowd@gmail.com)

Date: Saturday, Sept. 20

Gravel ride: Stone Walls and Solar Panels — This scenic 30-mile ride goes from Underhill to Cambridge on mostly gravel roads past a myriad of old stone walls and not-so-old solar panels. Our midway point is the store at the end of Upper Pleasant Valley Road in Cambridge.

Meeting time: 9:15 a.m.

Meeting place: St Thomas Church of Underhill, 6 Green Street

Leader: Phyl Newbeck — 802-734-7016, [vtphyl72@gmail.com](mailto:vtphyl72@gmail.com)

Co-leader: Jon Shenton — 802-734-8092, [jon@jonshenton.com](mailto:jon@jonshenton.com)

Date: Sunday, Sept. 21

Ride: Addison Ambler — This route travels south from Vergennes to Weybridge via Route 125 and then west to Bridport and West Addison and back to Vergennes on quiet roads. The short ride is 45 miles, and the long version is 60 miles with roughly 2 miles of dirt roads as an alternative to Route 22A from Bridport to Shoreham. There is no designated rest stop or food stop but the Champlain Bridge restaurant at the foot of Champlain Bridge on the Vermont side is a suggestion, if you wish to get food before heading back to Vergennes.

Meeting place: Vergennes Union High School, Monkton Road, east parking lot

Meeting time: 9:15 a.m.

Leader: Kevin Batson — 802-825-2618, [kevbvt@gmail.com](mailto:kevbvt@gmail.com)

There is currently no co-leader for this ride.

# Library News

## Charlotte Library has a bike-repair station thanks to Rotary

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

Thanks to a gift from the Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary, the library now hosts a bike-repair station, complete with bike pump.

You can find the bright yellow station right next to the book drop in the library parking area. We are very grateful to the Rotary for supplying this addition to the library and to Chris Davis for the installation.

### 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 in addition to notices on social media and the library and senior center websites.

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

Don't forget that the photo gallery project continues. Send the library a photo of your favorite pooch (or pooches) to display at the library. Your pups will be in good company because the library has had to expand the display area.

### Crafty activities

#### Paint the world

Stop in to paint a mini masterpiece and contribute to the library's community collage at the library's craft stop. It's for every age.

#### Chalk the walk

Let your creativity shine. Help decorate the library sidewalk with messages and pictures of joy, optimism and inspiration for our community. If you're so inclined, share your artwork online and post with the hashtag #ChalkTheWalkVT.

#### Share your harvest table

##### Tuesdays-Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Are you overflowing with kale, carrots or cucumbers? Share with your neighbors. The library will have a table set up on the porch throughout the summer. Bring what you can, take what you need. Please drop off veggies at the desk.

### Weekly programs for kids

#### Preschool story time

##### Tuesdays, 10 a.m.

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

#### Preschool free play

##### Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Play in the preschool years enables children to explore and make sense of the world around them, as well as to use and develop their imagination. Explore the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks,

playdoh — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library.

#### 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. The library will 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 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](mailto: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 meditators are welcome.

#### Tech-help, drop-in sessions

##### Tuesdays in August, 1-3 p.m.

Drop in for up to 30 minutes of one-on-one tech help with tech librarian Susanna Kahn. She will work with you to troubleshoot issues and answer your questions in easy-to-understand, non-techy language. You'll leave with solutions or clear next steps. If needed, bring your device and any login information.

#### Thursday book group

##### Thursday, Aug. 21, 7:30-9 p.m.

In "Circe" by Madeline Miller, the house of Helios, god of the sun and mightiest of the Titans, a daughter is born. But Circe is a strange child — not powerful, like her father, nor viciously alluring like her mother. Turning to the world of mortals for companionship, she discovers that she does possess power, the power of witchcraft, which can transform rivals into monsters and menace the gods themselves. Copies available at the circulation desk. This is on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/5b4u38xj>.

#### Japanese boat building

##### Tuesday, Aug. 26, 5 p.m.

Douglas Brooks has been researching and building Japanese wooden boats for



Photo by Margaret Woodruff

The Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary donated a bike-repair station to the library.

over 30 years. In a tradition that has almost disappeared, he worked as an apprentice alongside nine master boat builders throughout Japan, all craftspeople in their 70s and 80s. Learning the well-kept secrets of this specialized craft, he has documented their designs and techniques. His teaching, workshops, five books, and many articles have indelibly raised awareness of this craft. Brooks will share his story in learning traditional Japanese boat building, and its connection to Japanese aesthetics and

culture.

#### Art reception

##### Friday, Sept. 5, 5-7 p.m.

Join Sarah Wesson for the opening reception of her exhibit, "Within Walking Distance." Wesson has painted extensively in Italy, Vermont and Maine. For a decade she exhibited and sold her paintings from

**LIBRARY** continued on page 22



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LIBRARY

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her studio in downtown Middlebury. She continues to exhibit in various galleries around the state. She has taught painting at the Middlebury Studio School, curated art shows and now works out of her home studio in Ripton. She studied painting and drawing at The Art Students League in New York City. “Within Walking Distance” is a watercolor show of plants that the artist collected on various walks near her house and a few vegetable paintings as well.

Recurring programs

Book chat  
Wednesdays, 3 p.m.

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

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

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

Library contact information:

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



Image by Sarah Wesson  
“Lean on Me” is one of Sarah Wesson’s paintings in her Within Walking Distance exhibit at the library

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for the newsletter at <https://tinyurl.com/n5usd25r>. The Charlotte Library Board of Trustees meets the first Thursday of each month at 6 p.m., except the month of August unless otherwise rescheduled following the Open Meeting Law. The next scheduled board meeting is 6 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 4. Contact the library or visit the library website ([charlottepubliclibrary.org](http://charlottepubliclibrary.org)) for more information.



Photo by Margaret Woodruff  
Stop by the Craft Stop at the library and contribute to the community collage.

Senior Center News

Autumn is good time to fall into a senior center class

Lori York  
Director

As summer winds down and families prepare for the back-to-school season, the senior center is looking ahead to its fall lineup of programs. Many activities that take a break during the summer months will return in September. It is also the perfect time to explore a language conversation group or join a beginner Italian class. For those feeling creative, there’s the opportunity to join a fall-themed watercolor class or one of the weekly arts groups. There are also a variety of exercise classes ranging from core & strength fitness to yoga, tai chi and bone builders classes.

Art

August art exhibit

For the month of August, the senior center is showcasing an exhibit by the Friday Arts Group, a collective of local artists. The display features a vibrant selection of watercolors, acrylics, oils, photographs and assemblages.

Arts group  
Fridays, 10 a.m.-noon

Explore your inner artist with the

Friday morning arts group. This weekly group is designed for artists of all levels who are seeking inspiration and support in a welcoming and social environment. Whether you’re just starting or have years of experience, you are invited to bring whatever project you’re currently working on. Free. No registration required.

Creative arts & crafts group  
Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-noon

Paint, draw, knit, scrapbook — whatever sparks your creativity. Bring a project or try something new in this friendly, inspiring group. For questions, email Katie Franko at [kfranko@gmavt.net](mailto:kfranko@gmavt.net). Free. No registration required.

Watercolor workshop  
Tuesdays, Sept. 9-30, 9 a.m.-noon

Celebrate the beauty of autumn in this fun and supportive four-part watercolor class. We’ll explore fall-themed and classic New England scenes, building on your skills while enjoying the vibrant colors of the season. Some watercolor experience is helpful. A materials list will be provided upon registration. Cost: \$165. Registration and payment required by Tuesday, Sept. 3. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Languages

Advanced Italian conversation  
Fridays, Sept. 5-Dec. 19, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Parlanti esperti di italiano si incontreranno per discutere di questioni contemporanee e per condividere approfondimenti ed interpretazioni della cultura, della musica e della letteratura italiana. Free. To register, email Nicole Librandi at [nicolelibrandi2@gmail.com](mailto:nicolelibrandi2@gmail.com) by Friday, Aug. 29.

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](mailto: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? Email Dan York at [dyork@Lodestar2.com](mailto:dyork@Lodestar2.com).

Italian for beginners  
Fridays, Sept. 12-Oct. 24, 10-11 a.m.

Curious about learning Italian or looking to refresh your basics? Join instructor Nicole Librandi in this lively beginner-friendly class where you’ll discover the beauty of the Italian language and culture through conversation, reading, writing, singing and humor. Cost: \$60.\*(plus a small supply fee payable directly to the instructor) Registration and payment due by Friday, Sept. 5. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Outdoor programs

Experienced hiking group

Love tackling challenging hikes? We’re forming a group for experienced hikers interested in exploring scenic trails across Vermont and the Adirondacks. If you’d like to join, email Michael Rubin at [mjrubin99@gmail.com](mailto:mjrubin99@gmail.com).

Gentle walk  
Thursday, Aug. 28, 9 a.m.

Enjoy the beauty of nature. Come walk at a gentle pace with other seniors. The group will meet the fourth Thursday of the month for a congenial, non-strenuous walk. Location to be determined based on

## SENIOR CENTER

Continued from page 22

conditions of the local walks. Meet at 9 a.m. in the foyer of the Charlotte Senior Center. Questions? Call Penny Burman at 916-753-7279. Free. Registration required.

### Women's kayak trips

#### Second & fourth Friday mornings

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

### Games

#### American-style mahjong

**Tuesdays, 12:45-3:45 p.m. & Wednesdays, 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:anne.mason@uvm.edu). Free.

### Bridge

**Mondays, 12:30-4 p.m.**

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

### 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 [jonathanhart1@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanhart1@gmail.com).

### Exercise

#### Core & strength fitness

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

Join Phyllis Bartling for a hybrid strength and core class designed specifically for individuals 55 and older. This safe yet challenging workout combines upper-body strength exercises with hand weights and mat exercises that focus on strengthening core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture.



Diane Xiques designs her clay slab during a pottery workshop at the senior center.

Cost: \$10 a class. No registration required.

#### Tai chi-yang style short form

**Thursdays, 9:45-10:45 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. Hammer, 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 Hammer at [belizahammer@hotmail.com](mailto:belizahammer@hotmail.com). \$10 per class. No registration required.

#### Bone Builders

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

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

### Meals

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

#### Monday lunches

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

#### Senior center info:

The senior center offers programs for



Photos by Lori York

Balls and weights are key for building core strength in the senior center's core & strength fitness class on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.



A hearty, flavorful and imminently munchable lunch is prepared and served by volunteers every Monday Munch.

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

Lori York, director,  
[lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org)  
Thylen Tenney, assistant director,  
[ttenney@charlotteseniorcentervt.org](mailto:ttenney@charlotteseniorcentervt.org)  
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte  
802-425-6345  
[charlotteseniorcentervt.org](http://charlotteseniorcentervt.org)

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The Charlotte News

## Write Ingredients

# Significant events on Aug. 25, including Monday Munch

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

- Here are just a few significant events occurring on Aug. 25:
- 1609 Galileo Galilei demonstrated his first telescope to Venetian lawmakers.
  - 1718 Hundreds of French colonists arrived in Louisiana and founded New Orleans.
  - 1768 Captain James Cook left Plymouth, England, on his first voyage aboard the Endeavour, bound for the Pacific Ocean.
  - 1814 British forces destroyed the congressional library, then housed in the Capitol’s north wing.
  - 2025 Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center, 212 Ferry Road.

Speaking of libraries, the card catalogue at Harvard University’s flagship library, the Widener, offers 111,500 listings for Emily Dickinson. And there’s more: At the Houghton Library, adjacent to the Widener, you’ll find the Emily Dickinson Collection, the world’s largest Dickinson archive with over 1,000 poems and letters handwritten by Emily. The collection (<https://tinyurl.com/e2e5b9kd>) also houses personal effects from Dickinson’s life.

Harvard lets us take a look at Dickinson’s “Herbarium” (<https://tinyurl.com/w2txptxm>), a wonderful collection of pressed flowers that she compiled in her youth. The 66-page leather-bound book contains 424 pressed flowers, each catalogued by Emily with its Latin name, alongside her detailed notes. Enjoying this bounty online is surely great food for the mind.

Dickinson’s father was treasurer of Amherst College, and her parents, prominent in the town, were famous for their hospitality. Dickinson was known to the people of Amherst for her baking, not her poems. Village children were enthusiastic about the gingerbread she lowered to them from her bedroom window.

On Dec. 8, 2024, the Houghton Library hosted its ninth annual Emily Dickinson party. To commemorate her 193rd birthday, Houghton staff members got together to bake a scaled-down version of Emily’s black cake, a dense, sticky cake that her recipe calls for 19 eggs, two pounds of butter, and



Harvard University Library

Photo courtesy Harvard University

five pounds of raisins as well as currants and citron. The Houghton staff noted that her recipe would produce a 20-pound cake. With its ingredients from the Caribbean, Emily’s cake is not without controversy (<https://tinyurl.com/2s49ezh6>). Despite enthusiastic reader comments, I’ve rejected The New York Times recipe for an Emily-inspired devil’s food cake that editors note is “definitely a project, but one well worth making if you want to impress.” The newspaper of record includes a teaspoon of coarsely ground pepper in the frosting. The much pared-down version of the black cake in “The Emily Dickinson Cookbook: Recipes from Emily’s Table Alongside the Poems That Inspire Them” by Arlyn Osborne lists salt, cinnamon, allspice, nutmeg, molasses and brandy as ingredients in the famous cake. But no pepper. Pepper or not, certainly the image of Emily Dickinson rolling up her sleeves to mix 20 pounds of batter for a cake to share with friends is a stark contrast to the otherworldly poet we read about in school.

### Food fight

Historians have noted that a disgruntled crowd threw turnips at Roman Emperor Vespasian (died A.D. 79). Donald Trump

has argued that he’s had to be aggressive about stopping fruits and vegetables flying at him. You can read his deposition filed by the Bronx country clerk, April 26, 2022, in a lawsuit that accused Trump’s security detail of assaulting protestors who allegedly planned to toss food at a 2015 Trump campaign rally. Trump worried about dangerous bananas: “You can be killed if that happens. ... To stop somebody from throwing pineapples, tomatoes, bananas, stuff like that, yeah, it’s dangerous stuff.” For those with time on their hands, there are lots of videos online of people slicing a banana by throwing a playing card at it. In an extensive article on food fights around the world, The Washington Post noted that “one of the rules of La Tomatina — the festival in Bunol, Spain, where participants sling tomatoes at one another in celebration — is that you smash the tomatoes before throwing them at another person, to lessen the impact (and maximize the squish?).”

### A warm oven

Dickinson added a note when she shared her baked goods. “I enclose Love’s ‘remainder biscuit,’ somewhat scorched perhaps in baking,” she wrote a friend who

received slightly burnt caramels. “But ‘Love’s oven is warm.’” As you can see by looking at the Houghton Library archive, some extant Dickinson manuscripts are blotted with food stains. “Love’s oven is warm” is the perfect touchstone for Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center, where volunteer cooks gather together to provide a tasty meal for whoever walks in the door at 212 Ferry Road. Reminder: The work of these volunteers starts before Monday. Take a moment and think about what is involved in shopping for the ingredients in those meals served to more than 50 people. For a fascinating look at Emily’s nineteenth century triumph over e-mail, browse through the 1,204 extant letters in “The Letters of Emily Dickinson,” edited by Cristanne Miller and Domhnall Mitchell. The Emily Dickinson Archive offers a lexicon where one can browse alphabetically through more than 9,000 words in Dickinson’s poetry. Here’s New Englandly ([edickinson.org/words/8077](http://edickinson.org/words/8077)): New Englandly *adv.* see New England, proper *n.* 1. Natively; with an ethnocentric attitude; like a North American; as a resident of Massachusetts; from the viewpoint of my birthplace; [fig.] hopefully; optimistically; New Englandly 2. New Englandly, *adv* 3. see New England, proper *n.* 4. Natively; with an ethnocentric attitude; like a North American; as a resident of Massachusetts; from the viewpoint of my birthplace; [fig.] hopefully; optimistically; positively; with faith; [metaphor] eternally. 5. positively; with faith; [metaphor] eternally. In the spirit of that New Englandly hope, faith and optimism, the Charlotte Senior Center welcomes everyone to come enjoy Monday Munch. Come, eat, and when you go home, write someone a letter.

**Monday Munch**  
**Aug. 25, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**  
Ham and Swiss cheese sliders, potato salad, pickles and a dessert to be announced.  
**Sept. 1**  
Closed for Labor Day.

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