

# The Charlotte News

October 2, 2025

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Vol. 68, No. 08

## Nate Bareham takes state job, resigns as town administrator

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

The Charlotte Selectboard regular meeting this Monday, Sept. 22, ended in a very irregular fashion.

The board came out of the second of two executive sessions with the news that town administrator Nate Bareham was resigning.

Bareham's last day will be Oct. 19, so it will come almost exactly two years after he started in early October of 2023 as town administrator.

All four of the selectboard members present, Natalie Kanner was absent, expressed regret that Bareham was leaving.

"I am saddened to report that we have, with greatest of regrets, accepted the resignation of town administrator Nate Bareham," chair Lee Krohn said, as the board rematerialized in public meeting. "He will be very hard

**BAREHAM** continued on page 5

## Robert Nickelsberg discusses a life in photojournalism

Patrick Aber  
Community News Service

Photojournalist Robert Nickelsberg sat down in Charlotte to discuss his career, explaining his focus on covering international affairs, his experiences as an American abroad and his projection for the future of the medium.

Gearing up for his talk on Oct. 15 at the senior center, Nickelsberg chatted about his book, "Legacy of Lies: El Salvador 1981-1984," and how the events outlined in the book have shaped both him and his career.

**Q: If you want to give a little introduction on how long you've been a photojournalist, how you got started, etc.**

**A:** I began in the late 70s as a photojournalist freelancing in New York and Washington, D.C., and had an interest in Central and South America. In June 1979, with the impending collapse of the Somoza

**NICKELSBURG** continued on page 3

## Jumping to the finish line



from beach  
to beach

Photo by Lee Krohn

On Saturday, Sept. 20, just running wasn't enough for one of the runners in the annual Apple Harvest 10K from the Shelburne Town Beach past the Charlotte Town Beach and back to the Shelburne Town Beach.

## Get ready for the annual procession of farm machinery

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

Don't get so preoccupied with waiting for the Great Pumpkin that you overlook Charlotte's preeminent October celebration.

Of course, anyone with even a superficial knowledge of the town will be able to tell you that we're talking about the East Charlotte Tractor Parade.

This year the annual promenade of agricultural machinery, celebrating Charlotte's roots as an agrarian community, will take place on Sunday, Oct. 12.

If you never experienced this farming fete, it is a not-to-be-missed event. Of course, if you've been before, you know and won't be missing it.

The festivities run from noon to 3 p.m. The locus of activities is between the Green Mountain Hay farm on Spear Street and the Spear Street Store, which you can probably

guess is on Spear Street, specifically at the corner of Hinesburg Road and Spear Street. If you don't know that, you ain't from around here, which means you haven't been to the tractor parade. You need to check it out.

There will be lots of kids' activities at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church and the Grange Hall next door.

In the grassy area in front of the Spear Street Store, Remember Baker will be playing.

The parade itself will begin at 1 p.m., but Spear Street will be closed to traffic from 12:30-3 p.m. There will be parking at the event.

At its Sept. 22 meeting, the selectboard

**TRACTOR PARADE** continued on page 2

Photo by Scooter MacMillan  
The sign says it all. Cars aren't welcomed at this parade, just tractors.





# Unhoused people living at train station concerns selectboard and residents

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

A complicated issue that has residents concerned and selectboard members scratching their heads was added to the board’s agenda at its Sept. 22 meeting — what to do about recreational vehicles that appear to have people living in them and that have been parked for months at the defunct train station on Ferry Road west of Greenbush.

Board member Lewis Mudge was the first to raise the issue, but he was soon joined by fellow board member JD Herlihy. When they got to the point in the meeting that had been carved out for this discussion, they were also joined by residents commenting remotely.

Mudge said that he had driven to the train station the previous Friday and was appalled by what he saw — syringes lying around on the ground, gas cans, propane canisters and a boat.

A visit to the train station a week later revealed that there were several cars that didn’t appear to be drivable and RVs where people appeared to be living.

“There’s a lot to be concerned about, and I think we need to get out in front of it,” Mudge said.

Herlihy compared the situation at the train station to the first season of the television program Breaking Bad.

Mudge said the situation was reminiscent of a homeless encampment on Sears Lane in Burlington that led to court battles and



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

A couple of the RVs providing shelter to unhoused people are parked with the train station in the background.

forceable evictions when the city found the situation untenable in 2021.

Dick St. George who lives just across the tracks from the train station joined the discussion to say people have been sleeping overnight there for years, and it hasn’t been a problem. However, in the last three years, the numbers have increased and many people have started making their home in the parking lot.

“I no longer allow my grandchildren to play over there. It used to be a great place for them to skateboard and rollerblade. A lot of people in town used to walk their dogs there,” St. George said, adding that he has dropped trees to block access points to his property and posted signs everywhere.

“Between the needles and everything else

**TRAIN STATION** continued on page 4

## TRACTOR PARADE

Continued from page 1

amended the request from the parade organizers, increasing the amount of time Spear Street will be closed so that people will have plenty of opportunity to move to the various activities, and if that much time is not needed, the street can be opened back up.

All agreed that if there is an emergency then emergency vehicles take priority. Board member Frank Tenney said there has been an emergency somewhere in the vicinity in the past “and we just all pulled over.”

The parade participants are driving tractors after all. Getting off the pavement is really not an issue.

If you are a farmer, or someone who just has a tractor they’d like to drive in the parade, call 802-881-5208 to participate. You don’t have to RSVP, but it’s the neighborly thing to do.

Also, if you’re going to be driving or riding a tractor, you’ll want to show up at Green Mountain Hay, 3238 Spear Street, at 11 a.m. because they’ll feed you lunch before the parade begins.

Two years ago, the parade was rained out. That’s unlikely to happen again because it’s planned to be rain or shine, but that year it had been steady rain the day before and it was still pouring the day of.

Last year, the turnout was down, presumably because of the uncooperative weather the year before, with just around 40

tractors, but it was still a big time.

The year before, the governor came, but he didn’t drive a tractor. He just milled

around, mingling with the people. And, get this, he didn’t politic at all. Just another lover of the town’s cultivating culture.



### Mission Statement

To engage and inform Charlotte and nearby communities by:

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

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

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

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- Minimize harm.
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### Postmaster/Send address changes to:

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

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# NICKELSBERG

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regime in Nicaragua, a right-wing family dynasty the U.S. government supported, I decided to fly to Costa Rica and travel north to Nicaragua on the Pan-American highway to follow the story.

I went back to Central America with a reporter in 1981 from the San Diego Union newspaper and spent two weeks with the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front) guerillas, crossing the border clandestinely from Honduras into El Salvador. Later in 1981, I made another trip with the same reporter and again crossed clandestinely into Guatemala with the Guatemalan guerrillas from Mexico for two weeks.

**Q: When you talk about being embedded with the guerrillas, how do you embed yourself in those groups of people who might not be accessible to other journalists?**

A: You make contacts outside of the conflict zone. Your point of contact is often a solidarity movement in another country, often Mexico for Central America.

Trust is a big factor. If you are cleared from the outside, that generally gets you through the gate. They vouch for you.

**Q: Why did you decide to focus a large portion of your work on international issues?**

A: I thought I could illustrate foreign policy; it's kind of a highfalutin wish. I went to the University of Vermont. We were still in the Vietnam War, and we were vulnerable to be drafted. We were involved in that mindset of potentially being a combatant against our will.

**Q: When you talk about the U.S. involvement in other countries and places where you were, do you think that your identity as an American journalist impacted how you were treated?**

A: It's very often the government that's perceived as being dark and with suspicion, not the individual. You'll often hear, "It's not you we have a problem with, it's your government."

And that has held true wherever I've been — that's the line you often hear.

**Q: When you were in dangerous places, did you feel that there were moments of humanity that you could cling to? Was that a common occurrence, finding humanity within destructive areas?**

A: You have to be able to relate to that situation of the people that are in danger.

I never had a problem relating to people in developing countries. I can easily live on \$2 a day. I can be in countries where there's no running water or electricity.

**Q: How did you deal with the emotional toll of your work?**

A: Perform. Do it again. It's repetitive, but at the same time, you need to have a filter.

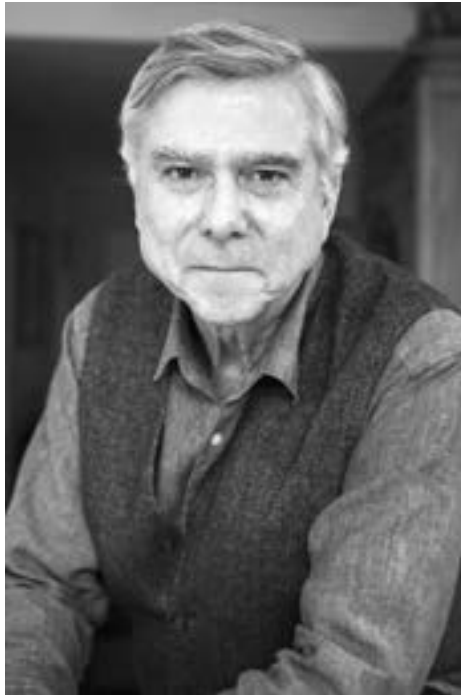
There's no formula. There's no pill. There's no mantra for eliminating the effect of death and violence.

You have to deal with it. But it's going to continue. My pictures are descriptive, not prescriptive.

**Q: Do you have a vision for what you hope your work accomplishes?**

A: To provoke a dialogue. To reveal what was going on behind the scenes.

It also means understanding how peace is achieved. To understand war, you must



Photojournalist Robert Nickelsberg.

understand peace. To understand peace, you must understand war.

To understand the extreme cases, you have to go to those extreme situations.

**Q: Was the majority of your work in dangerous or wartime areas?**

A: With Time magazine, I worked in their (international) bureaus. I worked in those bureaus knowing they were active, dramatic and changing.

**Q: How do you foresee the future of photojournalism with the idea that anyone with a cellphone camera can achieve some level of photojournalism?**

A: Just because Joe Public has a cellphone, he may capture a moment. But in order to tell a story in a series of pictures skillfully, to narrate, to document, to understand what they're looking at, you need to show some intention and knowledge.

Now there's so much choice.

Technology has helped, but it's also minimized the importance of the individual. I don't have a crystal ball. But how you stretch and stitch stories together, that's still journalism.

But is it a viable profession? I don't know.

**Q: When you're making a book, like "Legacy of Lies," how do you go about structuring the narrative that you want to tell through your photos?**

A: I started looking through this black-and-white film which I hadn't seen. It stayed in a box for over 20 years. I'd shot three cameras: two color, one black and white.

When I was archiving, I started to organize all the black and white. I had to do it chronologically for it to make any sense. I saw that there was another story here.

I started to see at the same time in 2021, when Kabul, Afghanistan, was collapsing, that there's a similar pattern of our government committing to violence and sending in soldiers to train a local army. And then all of a sudden, leaving and not doing anything to improve the situation.

This happened over and over again. This happened in El Salvador. So, I saw the relevancy of this film from 40 years ago to today.

It's dark.

So, I feel some kind of reward to put this material together in an organized way. I find some worth and some value in going back



Photo courtesy of Robert Nickelsberg

A United States Army advisor attached to the U.S. Military Group in El Salvador oversees a class of Salvadoran Army soldiers.



Photo by Robert Nickelsberg

ERP guerrillas pause to talk to local residents.

into the past and reinterpreting, reorganizing and re-editing images to present-day context.

**Q: Did the U.S. government ever reach out to you about your work or interfere with your work?**

A: I remain on friendly terms with former diplomats. In El Salvador, I went with the Time reporter to all the off-the-record meetings that I could. Whenever I could, no pictures. I just wanted to listen.

I've been lied to inside an embassy. I still can't believe some of the things that were mentioned to me.

So, my suspicions are researched ones, and I take a more informed picture that way.

**Q: Do you have advice for aspiring photojournalists?**

A: Read as much as possible on the subject you're covering. Be the most informed that you can be. Rise to the challenge of not knowing enough.

I don't know how journalism is going to maintain, but I'm still participating, I'm still encouraging other people to try it.

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



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DATES**

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## Commentary

# Is development a thorn in Charlotte’s town plan’s side?

Peter Joslin  
Contributor

The year was 1986. It was a pivotal time for the town of Charlotte. That year, the Charlotte Land Trust was formed.

As stated on the Charlotte Land Trust’s website, it was “an outgrowth of an agriculture committee appointed by the planning commission to assist in developing a new town plan. Members of the committee were concerned about increasing development in town and agreed to look into forming a local land trust. For the next nine years, the organization assisted in an impressive number of local conservation projects, primarily resulting in numerous conservation easements that are held by the Vermont Land Trust.”

It was also around the same time that the Charlotte Conservation Commission was formed. On its website, the commission states its mission “is to support and advocate for the protection and enhancement of Charlotte’s natural and cultural resources. To achieve this mission, we promote public understanding and appreciation of nature and create education and planning tools for resource management. We also consider engagement in the civic life of our town essential and therefore participate in town planning and policy development processes.”

Since then, the Charlotte Land Trust has continually demonstrated its mission in conserving land and the Charlotte Conservation Commission has been advocating its mission in regards to development — where it should and

should not occur. As a result, the town has demonstrated, in concrete ways, how it has protected specific parcels and locations from development in order to preserve areas of high public value, as outlined in the town plan. But, there is another side to this story. The principle policy statement for the town of Charlotte is the town plan. Two goals stand out:

- “To reinforce historic settlement patterns by focusing growth in our hamlets, and east and west villages, while conserving our Areas of High Public Value.”
- “To promote social, economic, cultural and racial diversity and sense of community through actions that encourage moderately priced and affordable housing, a sustainable agricultural economy, social, educational and commercial services, and environmentally-sound rural and small business enterprises.”

These goals are not new. The 1986 town plan stated: “Charlotte residents recognize the importance of decent, reasonable priced housing for all economic and social groups. The town will support, to whatever extent possible, the development of a varied housing stock to satisfy a range of residential needs.”

Fast forward to today, almost 40 years since concerns about development arose and resulted in the formation of the land trust and conservation commission. The question is: Does Charlotte have a development problem today? Too much? Not enough? Where should the focus of development be?

It is a pivotal time for the town. The Charlotte Planning Commission is about to

**COMMENTARY** continued on page 5

## TRAIN STATION

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over there and the trash, and the rats coming from the trash, it’s just not a fun thing to have sitting next door,” St. George said.

“I’m very sympathetic to the situations that these folks are in,” Mudge said, but his kids wanted to ride their bikes there, and he wasn’t even comfortable being in his car there.

“It’s people that are super rich that don’t like seeing poor people around them,” said a person who was at the site this past Saturday, Sept. 27. He said he lives in Charlotte but wouldn’t give his name.

He said he isn’t living there himself, but he was friends with some of the people who do and he comes around to visit and pick up trash. He said he wasn’t aware of needles and syringes being there.

Four Jake said he had been staying there with his wife who is recovering from injuries she received in a car crash. Jake said he has been looking for a job and hopes to find a home where they can move.

Jake and his wife said they don’t do drugs or drink, that they’re just down on their luck.

They said the gas is used to fuel a broken-down car on the property that is used to recharge the batteries they use for electricity.

For the town, the situation is further complicated in that it is difficult to ascertain what agency is responsible for dealing with it. At the selectboard meeting, town administrator Nate Bareham said he had not been able to get in touch with the railroad, but he had heard from Vermont Agency of Transportation that morning. They said they would be sending someone from their “encampment team” to look into the situation, but didn’t say when this person will be visiting the site.

The board members voted unanimously to send a letter to every government department or company that might have some authority over the situation.

This past Tuesday, the letter had been drafted and was waiting on getting all the board members signatures before sending it to the Vermont Department of Transportation, the Vermont Department of Health, the Vermont Department of Public Safety, the Vermont Rail System and Vermont Transco, which is the limited liability corporation that owns Vermont’s high voltage transmission system.

The letter asks that agencies take the appropriate action to address the encampment and said “the town is prepared to assist in any coordinated efforts to ensure a safe and humane resolution.”



# Vanilla experience



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Hank Kaestner didn't just talk about the history of vanilla at the library on Tuesday, Sept. 23; he also brought Ben & Jerry's vanilla ice cream, which has been consistently ranked as the best, for his audience to sample.

## COMMENTARY

Continued from page 4

hold its first public hearing on their proposed updates to the land-use regulations Thursday, Oct. 16, at 7 p.m., at the town hall.

This is the result of over two years of work by the planning commission, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and the town at large on the East and West Village Project and will be followed next year by an update to the Charlotte Town Plan, as required by state statute.

The town plan and the land-use regulations should work in harmony. The town plan is aspirational but also identifies specific goals which should be reflected in the land-use regulations. In a number of important ways, this has not been the case for at least the last 20 years.

One of the many substantive changes originally recommended for the village districts by the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission was to change the density requirements for residential development in the village districts from 5 acres to 1 acre. Other than a 1-acre, mixed-use option (commercial and residential

only), this was not approved by the planning commission.

The planning commission's recommended changes to the village districts are modest, reflecting the town's continued reluctance to make more substantive changes to the land-use regulations to enable reasonable development in these districts. This was also reflected in the considerable opposition to many of the development ideas suggested in the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission's first iteration of proposed changes to the village districts.

Do we want sidewalks and additional parking to support safety and commercial growth in the villages? Do we want thriving village centers with moderate housing options and thoughtful commercial development? Or, do we want the continued creep of development in the rural countryside?

Will 2026 be another 1986? The Charlotte Land Trust and the conservation commission are actively working to retain Charlotte's rural character, yet the majority of development continues in the rural district, not in the village districts. If this is what the town wants, the town plan and land-use regulations should reflect this.

## Around Town

### Congratulations

**Stella Martenis** of Charlotte was named to the Community College of Vermont's dean's list for the summer semester.

**Nicholas Reynolds** of Charlotte was named to the Community College of Vermont's president's list for the summer session.

## BAREHAM

Continued from page 1

to replace, but we will do our best in the interim."

Krohn said the board was going to immediately initiate searches for both an interim town administrator and a person to permanently fulfill that role.

He and Kanner, Krohn said, will be the board's "hiring committee for the interim" and more details will be forthcoming about the structure of the permanent town administrator hiring committee.

"You've provided a ton of vital services to this town. So big 'thank you,'" board member Lewis Mudge told Bareham. "You've been a joy to work with."

Frank Tenney said, "I do appreciate you Nate. You've pulled us through a rough period."

JD Herlihy said he'd searched for a way for the board to refuse to accept Bareham's resignation. Apparently, his quest was futile.

Bareham has accepted a job as a district coordinator with the state land-use review board in Montpelier.

This position more closely aligns with his professional interests and personal circumstances.

"It just seemed like it was going to be a better fit for me in my personal life," Bareham said. He has a family member with a terminal illness and wants to be able to spend more time with them.

Part of the responsibility of being a town administrator is being "on call 24/7 to answer questions and to handle issues that come up," he said.

"I've had a wonderful working relationship with the board, great working relationship with staff. There are no ulterior motives for me deciding to leave the town," Bareham said. "It was, truthfully, a very hard decision



Nate Bareham

for me."

"There's been a lot of really wonderful opportunities for me to grow as a professional that I'm grateful for," Bareham said. "I thoroughly enjoyed all the work that I've been able to do in Charlotte."

One of his big opportunities for professional growth was overseeing the Spear Street bridge reconstruction after it was washed away in Hurricane Beryl. But Bareham was also integral to ongoing conversations about budgeting, a lot of work on the town plan update, having a new town planner come on board.

In his new position, Bareham hopes to work on Act 250 decisions. He is particularly interested in this act because Vermont is one of the few states that have this kind of land-use structure and in how crucial it is to the state's future.

"I've always found that fascinating from a legal perspective, and it's something I'm very excited to step into," he said.

## Cozy Days Start with Quincy Mae!

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# Letters to the Editor

## Hunger won't disappear by ignoring it

To the Editor:

The recent decision by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to cancel the Household Food Security in the United States report is unacceptable. This annual survey has, for nearly three decades, measured food insecurity across the country and served as an important way to acknowledge and respond to the reality that the injustice of hunger impacts millions in our nation.

This abrupt announcement comes on the heels of devastating funding cuts and eligibility changes to SNAP, passed by Congressional leaders in July. SNAP, known in Vermont as 3SquaresVT, helps tens of thousands of Vermonters, and millions across the U.S., afford groceries and put food on the table. Now leadership in Washington is dismantling the tools we use to measure hunger. It seems clear that the federal administration intends to try to justify their historic funding cuts and eligibility changes to our nation's most effective anti-hunger program by making hunger invisible. But deliberately and systematically causing hunger for millions of our family members, neighbors and friends cannot be justified, ever.

SNAP is a proven program to lift people out of poverty and reduce the risk of hunger. Yet, Congressional leaders passed a law to make it harder for low-income people to tap into SNAP. Among those harmful changes is

eliminating eligibility for many immigrant groups, which will impact as many as 1,600 Vermonters. Further, their decision to expand existing work reporting requirements—which ignores systemic barriers in the labor market and does nothing to create good, consistent jobs or provide affordable, accessible transportation and childcare—will risk benefits for as many as 7,700 Vermonters.

Because the USDA has consistently tracked food insecurity data for decades, we know for a fact that expanding SNAP benefits, as Congress did during the COVID-19 pandemic, reduces hunger and food insecurity. And because USDA has consistently tracked food insecurity data for decades, we know that these new and drastic cuts to SNAP mean people will lose vital grocery money, be forced to make impossible choices and fall away from food security.

More people will go hungry because of Congressional Leaders' decision in July to slash SNAP; we all know it, and decades of data show it. Collectively, we must not permit Congressional leadership and the federal administration to avoid the consequences of their harmful policy choices by erasing a key national measurement of hunger.

For advocates and organizations that work to support Vermonters in meeting their basic needs, we know that you can't just delete data reports to solve a problem. Partners across Vermont that support food security efforts are seeing longer lines at food shelves. We are hearing that parents are skipping meals so their kids can eat and that immigrant

community members are facing barriers that leave them experiencing increased food insecurity and isolation.

The reality of hunger doesn't disappear when you stop measuring it. What does become more challenging is confronting these realities with data-backed decision making and the possibility of holding policymakers accountable. Without data, we lose the ability to measure meaningful progress, track need and ensure policymakers have the insights they need to keep our communities healthy and strong.

We call on the USDA to change course and restore the annual Household Food Security in the United States report. And while we continue to push for accountability from the current administration, we all must demand that our state and local governments continue to protect and strengthen programs that keep food on the table for our neighbors. Hunger will not vanish by ignoring it. Vermont has always been a leader in food security, and now with federal support and accountability shrinking, we need our state to step up to ensure the best outcomes for all of us who live here.

Anore Horton  
Williston

*(Anore Horton is executive director of Hunger Free Vermont.)*

## Another view of the Vermont Futures Project

To the Editor:

Better (not Bigger) Vermont is a non-profit organization that works to promote steady state economies in Vermont. We want Vermonters to recognize the need for an ecologically sound economy and the need to balance our human population and consumption with our region's limited resources.

Recently the Vermont Chamber of Commerce hosted a conference in Burlington titled "Vermont Solutions Summit: Actionable Economic Strategies." The program focused on workforce growth, housing expansion and community revitalization. Kevin Chu, from the Vermont Futures Project, was a keynote speaker and presented four "Myth Busters" slides, attempting to "debunk common myths and equip audience members with data to become ambassadors for growth." Everything written on his slides is true and reflects the beliefs of Better (not Bigger) Vermont, except for the one word, "myth."

### Vermont Future's slide No. 1

"Population and housing growth is going to turn Vermont into New Jersey while ruining our rural character and small-town feel."

Almost no one sitting in a weekday traffic jam leaving the Burlington area could be faulted for shouting at their dashboard, "What is this? New Jersey? South Burlington and Williston are ground zero for the housing push and exits 12, 13, 14 and 15 have the eerie look of a New Jersey exit. Taft's Corners in Williston, Route 2 in Winooski and South Burlington, Route 15 in Essex Junction and beyond are filled with sprawling subdivisions, mega stores, malls and terrible traffic congestion. Our quality of life there has been diminished. Other rural roads and highways in Vermont around cities and towns like Rutland, Barre, St. Johnsbury, Manchester and Brattleboro, are well on their way to what is experienced in Chittenden County.

Why not be honest with Vermonters? The

rural character of our state from these areas and in many other towns is being destroyed by sprawl and have certainly lost their small-town feel. Tell Vermonters that the loss of our small-town rural character is the price you believe we must pay for economic growth and development. Stop selling the lie that growing the population and building more homes will not have an impact.

### Vermont Future's slide No. 2

"Vermont doesn't have the "carrying capacity" for more people. It'll overburden the state and increase costs."

No one enjoys paying their taxes, especially those who are paying for the new and extended "carrying costs," now reflected in recent property tax bills. For all year-round Vermonters who pay taxes, new sewer and stormwater systems, fresh water lines, wastewater treatment plants, additional road maintenance projects, expanded police and fire services, more DPW machinery and personnel, and of course, additional classrooms and teachers for the new students living in the subdivisions and town centers in our communities all cost money, and lots of it. It's been long proven that growing the grand list and impact fees never come close to covering the long-term impacts of "carrying costs" on resident taxpayers.

Why not be honest with Vermonters and tell us that is the price and burden we will need to pay to cover the "carrying costs" of more people living in our communities? Stop selling the lie that there will be no burden and an increase in our property tax bills.

### Vermont Future's slide No. 3

"Vermont's population is not growing so we don't need more homes. Building new housing will increase costs for Vermonters while benefiting developers and out-of-staters."

The population has been growing very slowly during the past 10 years. The weather is too harsh for many, and the cost of living in Vermont is more expensive than in many cities and urban centers south of Vermont. For that reason, families have not moved here. Complicating this factor is the greed from developers who continue to build homes and condos in Chittenden County ranging in price from \$600,000 to \$1,200,000. In 2024, the state saw an increase of 38 percent in out-of-state investors. Over 58,000 homes in Vermont are now either unoccupied, are rentals, bed and breakfasts or partially occupied for less than 180 days by out-of-state residents. Out of staters are the only people who can afford to purchase homes priced for the open market.

Why not be honest with Vermonters and leaders in the business community? Tell them that constructing moderate and affordable homes for those already here and for those looking to relocate and work here will not happen because it is not profitable enough. Stop selling the lie that new homes will attract more people.

### Vermont Future's slide No. 4

"Growth and development are a threat to Vermont's environment and beauty."

Vermont's greatest asset is its environment and beauty. It's what drives our largest industry, tourism. There is no beauty in Taft's Corners or surrounding the major exits along the Interstate and along overdeveloped major road corridors that take tourists into

LETTERS

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our mountains and lakes. Visitors can get that experience in New Jersey. In addition to the loss of natural beauty is the disastrous loss of natural lands, open spaces, meadows, wetlands and forested areas that we desperately need to combat the climate crisis. These undeveloped lands provide a variety of climate mitigation forces that are critical to maintaining our clean water, clear air and unpolluted soil.

Why not be honest with Vermonters, our environmental agencies and the captains of our tourism industry? Tell them that our environment and beauty, the signature assets of our state, will need to be sacrificed in the name of economic growth, and that you want to create a new image for Vermont as a place for businesses to grow. Stop selling the lie that development will not threaten the environment and our tourism industry.

The Vermont Futures Project’s mission has never addressed economic sustainability. Instead, the organization continues to promote their own myths of population, housing and workforce growth. The four slides are their attempt to bury the truth by calling our position statements “myths.” They are not. They are the uncomfortable truths that reflect the beliefs of Better (not bigger) Vermont, and many other environmental and civic organizations today.

John Bossange  
South Burlington

Autumn tagging



Photo by Scooter MacMillan

Overnight it appears that some seasonal graffitist has slipped into the woods and onto the mountainsides, dribbling splashes of autumn.

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## Food Shelf News

# Celebrating another food shelf hero ... and elderberries

Katherine Arthaud  
Contributor

The elder plant (genus *Sambucus*), which grows widely in temperate regions of the world, is highly regarded for its health-supporting properties. Elderberries contain high concentrations of vitamin C and other immune-supporting phytonutrients and antioxidants and provide antiviral benefits that reduce the risk and severity of colds and flu.

The common name, elderberry or elder, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon word “aeld” meaning “to kindle” or “fire,” relating to the way the hollowed-out stems of the elderberry were used for blowing on kindling to get a flame going.

Evidence of the cultivation of elderberries dates to the Stone Age. Documentation by the Greeks, Romans and other cultures show that elderberry was a beneficial plant used for food as well as medicine.

In Europe, elderberry was popular for its use in the home. One of its apparent side benefits was the ability to ward off evil, so it was often found planted near homes as protection from harmful spirits and other attacks.

Use of elderberry in the Americas dates as far back as 1300-1000 BCE, when it was used as a salve for cuts, abrasions and burns. Traditionally, the elderflower was also made into an infusion (tea) to treat fever and colic in babies, while the berries were used to treat coughs and colds.

Steve Wisbaum, a local elderberry enthusiast, moved to the Ten Stones Community in Charlotte in 1998 with his wife Suzanne Lourie. Since 1996 he has been owner and operator of Champlain Valley Compost Company.

He got the idea of growing elderberries from Tom Hardy, who was the founder of Honey Gardens in Ferrisburgh. Long interested in organically grown and wild-harvested food, as well as alternative medicine and wellness, Wisbaum heard that Hardy was offering an elderberry workshop and jumped in. At the workshop, Hardy encouraged participants to bring plants home with them.

“I did, and that was the beginning,” Wisbaum said.

Before his first plants were mature enough

to bear fruit, Wisbaum got permission to harvest surplus elderberries from local property owners. Over the past two decades, he’s planted more elderberries around his home, while members of the Ten Stones Community have included elderberry with the hundreds of native shrubs and trees they’ve planted to replace large populations of buckthorn and honeysuckle on the property. Wisbaum soon found himself working with large quantities of elderberries and in little time had so much homemade tonic that he was giving bottles away as gifts.

This past spring, Wisbaum was struck by the sight of thousands of white flowers on all these elderberry shrubs. Knowing they would produce many hundreds of pounds of elderberries by late summer, a lightbulb went on and Wisbaum got the idea of doing workshops himself, a la Tom Hardy in Ferrisburgh.

“Because I didn’t want it to be a money-making venture for myself, I realized that this would be a good way to raise money for the many people in our community experiencing food insecurity,” he said. So, he asked participants in his workshops to donate \$25 to \$50 per quart of elderberry juice taken home, which he’d divide between the Charlotte Food Shelf and the Vermont Foodbank.

“We probably ended up utilizing a good 80 to 90 percent of the elderberries growing on the property,” Wisbaum said, which was one of the goals; to see the berries utilized.

Plus, the workshop participants really appreciated learning how to harvest the berries and make tonic. “On so many levels it was definitely a success,” he said. “Beyond anything I could have imagined; gratifying on so many levels.”

Wisbaum plans to offer the workshops again next year, but timing can be tricky. The harvesting season of elderberries is relatively short, and you need to get to the berries before the birds do. This all makes scheduling workshops challenging. You basically have a two to three-week window, Wisbaum explained, roughly the last week of August and the first two weeks of September.

Another significant benefit to workshop participants was the monetary value: An 8-ounce jar of elderberry “syrup” available in stores typically costs \$20 to \$25, or



Courtesy photo

From left, Kim Janson, Debra Welsh, Betsy Williams, Susan Hurd, Bob McNamara, Marianne Lucenty-McNamara and Shari Bell participated in one of Steve Wisbaum’s workshops on harvesting elderberries and making tonic.

\$80 to \$100 per quart. However, these products typically only contain 25 to 40 percent elderberry juice, with the other 60 to 75 percent being honey. But workshop participants got to take home a quart of elderberry juice that can make at least a quart and a half of tonic, which works out to \$120 to \$150 worth of tonic (retail price) for a \$25 to \$50 donation to the food shelf and the food bank.

The food shelf is so grateful to Steve Wisbaum for his contribution to our community, and for recognizing not only the value of the elderberry plant but also the value of supporting those in greater need in our midst.

The food shelf would also like to extend our thanks to the following for their generous donations: Kathleen Nolan, Karen Staller, Ann Wittpenn, Lynne and Stephen Hale, Margaret Berlin, Steven Wisbaum and Suzanne Lourie, John Henry Siedlecki, Cecily Stokes-Prindle, Jocelyn Schermerhorn, Anita Royer, Sherri Browdy, Lisa Crispin, Susan Hyde, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish and Hannaford’s Fight Hunger Bag Program.

We also thank Annie Kelton for homegrown apples, Patricia O’Donnel for local organic apples and peaches, Steve Epstein and Arlene Marks for squash and haddock, Colleen Armstrong for beautiful tomatoes

and Hilary Maharam for gorgeous flowers from her garden. Our apologies to anyone we have missed. We thank you one and all. We couldn’t do this without your help.

### Announcements

Our winter clothing drive, which is held in conjunction with the Charlotte Grange, will take place in October. This drive is a collaborative effort coordinated by Alicia Cooper from the Grange and Katie Shearer from the food shelf distribution. Winter clothes will be available at our food shelf distributions on Saturday, Oct. 25.

The food shelf has a new website, and we extend our deep appreciation to Kim Findlay for donating her time and expertise to manage it for us. Please check it out at: [charlottevtfoodshelf.org](http://charlottevtfoodshelf.org).

### Our schedule

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

Wednesday, Oct. 8 and 22 (Donations can also be brought in on Wednesday distribution days.)

Saturday, Oct. 11 and 25

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

If you would like to donate to the Charlotte Food Shelf, you can use your PayPal account or your credit or debit card. If you prefer to donate via check, you can make checks payable to Charlotte Food Shelf, Inc. and mail to: P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, VT 05445. For more information, call 802-425-2402.

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

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

For any other inquiries please contact Peggy Sharpe at [ckmj@comcast.net](mailto:ckmj@comcast.net).







# Drought woes

Photo by Lee Krohn

Swimming at the Charlotte Town Beach requires a rocky traverse with the drought moving the shoreline farther and farther.

# Changing of the garden



Photo by Lee Krohn

From left, Beth Sytsma and Ted Roberts stand in front of the Memorial Garden. They led the effort of changing the garden's floral attire from summer to fall.





# Champlain Valley’s football season up and down so far

Scooter MacMillan  
Editor

The Champlain Valley Union High football team is still searching for its identity. Are the Redhawks the team that deftly handled Bellows Falls Academy-St. Albans and South Burlington/Burlington? Or are they the team that suffered blow-out losses to Rutland and Middlebury?

With the vast majority of the players who led CVU last year to one of the most dominating seasons of high school football in Vermont history graduated or gone to prep schools, the Redhawks and their coaches are still searching to discover who this year’s team is.

With half of the 2025 season done and four games remaining, the Redhawks now are proceeding to the meat of their regular season. With home games against Essex and Colchester in the next two weeks and both of those teams sporting 2-2 records that are identical to CVU’s, these next two games may be the turning point when the character of all three of these teams is revealed.

After those two contests, things will get really real for the Redhawks, who will travel to St. Johnsbury Academy and then to Burr & Burton to close out the regular season. Both of those teams have 3-1 records now.

## CVU 23, Burlington-South Burlington 14

The winless Seawolves came to Hinesburg and left the contest on Saturday, Sept. 20, still searching for a victory.

The Redhawks took the opening kickoff and served the Seawolves a steady diet of John Saladino with just a couple of passes thrown in. With four and half minutes left in the first quarter, Saladino took the ball in from 5 yards out, putting CVU up 7-0.

With almost two minutes left in the opening frame, Alex Jovell kicked a field goal to give the Redhawks a 10-0 lead, but

South Burlington-Burlington responded with a touchdown of its own. The Seawolves attempted a 2-point conversion that failed so the score stood at 10-6 as the first half ended.

Two Jovell kicks in the third quarter put the Redhawks ahead by 10 at 16-6.

At the 6:45 mark in the fourth quarter, another Saladino touchdown from a couple of yards out made it 23-6.

A Seawolves touchdown and a successful 2-point conversion made it 23-14 with less than a minute and a half left.

CVU’s scoring was handled by Saladino with two touchdowns and Jovell who had three field goals.

## Middlebury 42, CVU 0

Champlain Valley traveled to Middlebury this past Friday, Sept. 26, with expectations that this game would reflect the improvement they had made since their opening season loss at Rutland, but it was not to be.

The Redhawks must have left both their offense and defense in Hinesburg, giving up six touchdowns and scoring none.

Whether it was throwing mechanics or receivers missing their assignments, there were a number of overthrown passes. Likewise, there were too many times when Redhawks players were in a perfect position to make a decisive tackle only to have the ball carrier slip away.

Coach Frank Parisi was visibly disappointed after this game and called out his players for lack of effort on both sides of the ball.

“We want to get 11 guys on the field that are going to give effort and want to tackle,” he said afterward.

On its first possession, Middlebury moved the ball with a mixture of running and passing plays. At just over eight minutes into the first quarter, running back Logan McNulty took the ball to pay dirt from 14 yards out to get the Tigers’ scoring started.

After falling behind by a touchdown, the



Photo by Calvin Morse

The Redhawks’ Connor Nichols sheds Seawolves’ would-be tacklers.

Redhawks tried to establish some confidence in their offense by going for it on fourth and 11 and on fourth and 14. The second gamble didn’t work out, and they turned the ball over to the Tigers on downs.

The coaches’ hopes that the gutsy calls would turn out successful, providing momentum that would put the Redhawks out front and help them find their mojo, were dashed.

Football, like most sports, is a capricious contest where each team is hoping for a play that will pump up their confidence, giving them the expectation that they will win. A game is so much a mental quest, and often one or two plays can swing players’ attitudes, making one team expect to win while the other is mired in doubt.

Less than three minutes after the unsuccessful fourth and 14, McNulty

scampered across the goal line again to put his team up by two touchdowns.

Middlebury gambled itself then, successfully attempting an onside kick, and the Tigers recovered the ball around the 41-yard line. On the short field, it took them less than a minute to score another touchdown.

In the remaining three and half minutes before halftime, Middlebury was able to score twice more to go into the break ahead 35-0.

The third quarter began with the Redhawks kicking off. The Tigers used a variety of running plays to march the ball down the field and, with seven minutes left on the clock, notched another touchdown for the game’s final score by either team to go up for the winning margin of 42-0.

A number of games in CVU’s march to

**SPORTS** continued on page 11



## Getting fired up

Photos by Scooter MacMillan

On Sept. 20, Champlain Valley Union High celebrated its version of homecoming with Spirit Day, the culmination of Spirit Week. On this Saturday, 11 JV and varsity games were played in boys soccer, girls soccer, field hockey, boys volleyball and girls volleyball, including the varsity Redhawks’ football game with the South Burlington-Burlington Seawolves. It was a beautiful day with extra helpings of enthusiasm.



## Education

# Almost LEGO League time at Charlotte Central School

Naomi Strada  
(Summarized by Tom Scatchard)

The 2025 FIRST LEGO League season is almost here. FIRST LEGO League is a global robotics program for students in fourth-eighth grades. It introduces kids to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) through hands-on, real-world problem solving using LEGO bricks.

The season kicks off on Sept. 30. Practice will be one to two times per week through January, leading up to the Vermont state finals. Most practices will be held on Tuesdays and some Thursdays from 2:45-4:15 p.m. A detailed schedule, including competition dates, will be shared soon.

### School library news

You're never too old for a picture book. Most students at CCS have heard Mrs. Huestis say this over and over. Whether you are a kindergartener learning about how to use your new school library or you are a middle schooler finding the perfect picture book to turn into a reader's theater script, the possibilities are endless.

Parents and caregivers at home can also have fun with picture books. A favorite author shared at the school is Mac Barnett, the country's newest National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Mac says, "The picture book is a sophisticated, vibrant and beautiful art form. I believe wholeheartedly in the boundless possibilities of children's books - and the brilliance of the kids who read them." Mac writes amazing interactive picture books that students love to share again and again.

This month, the Charlotte Central School library is featuring stories written by, illustrated by and about members of the Hispanic community.

### MathCounts

MathCounts is a national middle school mathematics competition that builds problem-solving skills and fosters achievement through four levels of fun, in-person "bee" (as in spelling bee) style contests. MathCounts is open to:

- anyone who likes sixth through eighth grade math
- anyone who might not like math yet but



Courtesy photo

Social studies teacher Tyler Alexander has published a book called "If I Can Get Home this Fall," the story of a Civil War soldier from Glover.

wants to like it more

- anyone who wants to be part of a community

MathCounts offers students a chance to do collaborative problem solving with problems that are a little bit different than what they usually see in math class. There will be weekly practice, starting on Thursday, Sept. 25, after dismissal until 4 p.m. in Rachael Miller's room. Charlotte Central School will bring a group to the district and regional competition, which could qualify for the state and national competition.

### Alexander publishes book

Tyler Alexander, a social studies teacher at Champlain Valley Union High School and an eighth-generation Vermonter, just published a book. "If I Can Get Home This Fall" is the story of Dan Mason, a Civil War soldier from Glover, whose letters Alexander uncovered years ago while researching his own ancestor from the same town in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

Alexander shares how his father inspired his early interest in Vermont and Civil War history and encouraged him to go into teaching; how Dan Mason's story shows up in Alexander's teaching; and how the values and themes Alexander uncovered from Vermont's history hold true to this day, including in his own life.

## SPORTS

Continued from page 10

the state title last year teetered on the balance with it unclear which team would dominate the scoreboard. Time and again, it seemed as if one outstanding play tilted the contest in CVU's favor, and then it was off to the races with the Redhawks taking on the character of an unstoppable force.

"It's the other way around now," Parisi said. "We're the ones taking it. Last year, we were the ones delivering that knockout punch or that big play or big stop."

The coach said all he and the other coaches can do to help their players get their heads adjusted to the expectation that they will win is to keep reinforcing effort and heart.

Parisi said he played a lot of kids against Middlebury, which was a good thing to do in a contest that was out of hand, because it gave the coaches an opportunity to see who is expending the effort and who appears to just be going through the motions.

"We'll take a look at the film and move kids in different places where we need them," he said.

Even in the loss he saw a number of players who responded and who will be playing more.

Champlain Valley's next two games are at home. This Saturday, Oct. 4, they will be hosting Essex at 1 p.m. and the next Saturday, Oct. 11, Colchester will come to town, also at 1 p.m.



# Vergennes Opera House show to go on during construction

Gerianne Smart  
Contributor

Facing several months of a dark stage due to construction, the Friends of the Vergennes Opera House decided to take the show on the road for most of their 2025-26 season with the Vergennes Opera House “Off Stage” series.

The Off Stage series is a schedule of Vergennes Opera House sanctioned-produced-promoted events taking place in surprising and wonderful spaces around Vergennes while the opera house’s All Access Project construction is underway. During construction, the entire theater will be inaccessible, while a new elevator tower is built, creating an accessible entrance to the second-floor space along with a courtyard walkway to the new tower. Stage and dressing rooms are being renovated for accessibility as well.

Artists will be performing at area restaurants, Bixby Library, Vergennes Grand Senior Living and two churches. All events will be free (though donations to the Vergennes Opera House are greatly appreciated) with the exception of the very popular Broadway Direct show which will be held at the Vergennes Congregational Church. Tickets for Broadway Direct are available online.

The Off Stage series schedule is:

- Saturday, Oct. 4, 6-8 p.m., at Rockers Pizzeria — The Will Patton

Quartet - Combine a jazz mandolinist with a symphony violinist who also plays bluegrass and swing; add a string bass player from the Chicago blues clubs, a lifelong guitarist and a Brazilian percussionist; stir in a little rock & roll attitude. All in all, a great night of music! Free.

- Saturday, Oct. 18, noon, at the Bixby Library — Alyx Magic, Vermont’s own Alyx Hilshey, a nationally touring comedy magician, is returning to Vergennes to dazzle and amaze with her magic, sense of humor and play. She was featured in 2024 on the CW Network’s Penn & Teller: Fool Us. Free.

- Saturday, Nov. 22, 2-6 p.m., at Lulu Ice Cream and Rockers Pizzeria — Big Blue Trunk Balloon Fun with Mike Randall’s balloon twisting, which is fun for kiddos and adults alike. He’ll be twisting it up at Lulu first, then going next door to Rockers.

- Sunday, Nov. 23, 3 p.m. at the Champlain Valley Christian Reformed Church’s Thanksgiving Community Hymn Sing — The third annual celebration featuring the Champlain Brass Quartet and the Addison County Gospel Choir. An uplifting community event. Songbooks provided at the door. Free.

- Friday, Dec. 5, 7 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 6, 3 p.m., at the Vergennes Congregational Church — Broadway Direct 20th anniversary show, with Broadway veteran Bill Carmichael Walsh who will once again be joined by friends



Photo by Lee Krohn

With the Vergennes Opera House under construction, most of the 2025-26 season will be performed “on the road” at wonderful spaces around Vergennes.

directly from Broadway stages. This show will also feature some amazing local talent. Tickets (\$20 adults or \$10 Students) at VergennesOperaHouse.org

- Saturday, Jan. 10, 6-8 p.m. at 10 Green Street Wine Bar — Duo Dulce Cello & Violin is a classic duet featuring John Dunlop on cello and Laura Markowitz on violin. Both are members of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and play with the Eleva Chamber Players, the Opera Company of Middlebury and other unique ensembles. A beautiful night of music. Free.

- Friday, Jan. 23, 6-8 p.m. at Rockers Pizzeria — The Hokum Brothers, Vermont’s premiere comedy band features Woody Keppel, Allan Nicholls and Gus Ziesing. This is a playful band presenting a kitschy blend of ragtime, folksy tunes, vaudeville and early jazz. Free.

- Saturday, Feb. 14, 2 p.m. at Vergennes Grand Senior Living — Bill Walsh and Dan Levine, two former Broadway veterans, will perform popular love songs and show tunes. Free.

- Saturday, Feb. 28, 6-8 p.m. — Josh Clevestine is an Adirondack folk musician who is reminiscent of Johnny Cash, with his cross-picking guitar, deep voice and honest lyrics. Free.

The All Access Project is slated to be complete by March of 2026 and the Friends of the Vergennes Opera House have scheduled three events inside the theater to round out the 2025-2026 season:

- Saturday, March 28, 7:30 p.m. — Gina Coleman & the Misty Blue Band Roadhouse Revival Gospel Blues Show is the first show with the All Access Project completed. Misty Blues is an internationally recognized group recording and performing original contemporary blues music for the past quarter of a century. Over the past few years, they curated their Roadhouse Revival Gospel

Blues Review, which is a rousing non-secular celebration of tent revival classics. Tickets \$20.

- Saturday, April 18, 7:30 p.m. — LC Jazz Free community concert has a 17-piece orchestra with vocalists who warm up the hometown crowd in the dead of winter with great dancing music. Always a favorite and always a blast. Free, but donations will be taken at the door to benefit the band’s high school music scholarship fund.

- Friday, May 1, 7:30 p.m. — The Kruger Brothers sold out quickly in 2024. A fixture in the world of acoustic music, the trio shares their unique ability to infuse classical music into folk music. Remarkable for their discipline, creativity and their sincere (and often funny) stage presence, this will surely close out the season with another sold-out show. Tickets \$40 in advance or \$50 at the door.


The entire season is made possible by the generosity of the season and show sponsors. Our season sponsors are: Vergennes Grand Senior Living, Mark & Julie Basol, Realtor Sue Walsh, Berkshire Hathaway Vermont Realty Group, Vergennes Partnership, Geoff & Susan Nelson, Ed & Beverly Biello, Vergennes Animal Hospital, Amanda Bodell & Jeffry Glassberg, Jackman Fuels, H.J. LeBoeuf & Sons Contractors & Builders, Mike & Maggie Catillaz, Ned & Lauren Pike, Philip & Roberta Puschel, Peter & Liz Markowski, Bob & Deb Hartenstein, the Schaefer Family, Connie & Bill Houston, Lizbeth & Timothy Ryan, Patricia Butler, Casella Waste Management, Otter Creek Awnings and in memory of Garry Simpson.

More information and updates, visit vergennesoperahouse.org.

(Gerianne Smart is president of the Friends of the Vergennes Opera House.)

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# Updated Charlotte Farm survey shows more farms in town

Lynne Hale  
Contributor

There’s a growing number of farms in town thanks in part to more small operations and access to conserved land.

The Charlotte Land Trust and the University of Vermont’s Center for Rural Studies released an update to the Charlotte Farm Survey earlier this year.

The survey was first published in 2022. This version again includes both farmer interviews and the most up-to-date data available and was created to identify trends over time.

The prior report used data from 2017 and 2007. The most significant finding of this updated report is that the number of farms in Charlotte has grown from 71 in 2007 to 80 in 2022.

This overall growth in farm numbers comes at the same time as dairy has waned. The town is down to just one operating dairy farm from nine in 2007.

Farms raising meat animals have become one of the most common types of farms — from 32 in 2007 to 40 in 2024. Produce and diversified farms, including community supported agriculture (CSAs), as well as farms offering specialty products and direct sales are increasingly part of Charlotte’s farming scene, while farms raising hay, corn and soybeans for fodder are also a prominent part of the landscape.

Smaller-scale farms are on the upswing. The growth in the number of farms with less than 500 acres outpaced the decline of farms with over 500 acres. And growth in farms with sales of less than \$50,000 outpaced the reduction in farms with sales over \$250,000 annually. Given their smaller scale, these operations often are not the sole means of financial support for a farm family; two thirds of farmers surveyed reported that they had off-farm employment.

In the original 2022 survey, farmers highlighted the lack of affordable housing for themselves and farmworkers in Charlotte as a problem. This newly released report delves further into the housing woes and notes that the median sales price of a home in Charlotte is higher and has increased more than that in Chittenden County and the state overall.

The study highlights the role that conservation has played in keeping agricultural land affordable for farmers. The majority of the farmers who participated in the farm study have conservation easements on their land. Some conserved land they were already farming. Others, just launching farms, purchased land when it was conserved, and the price was thereby reduced. Either way, the purpose of conservation was to keep the land in farming by making the land affordable and the business financially viable.

There is still time to visit many of Charlotte’s farms and to sample the wonderful variety of products produced right here in town. The Charlotte Grange’s Farm map ([charlottegrange.org/the-charlotte-farm-map](http://charlottegrange.org/the-charlotte-farm-map)) can direct you to them.

To see the full Charlotte Agricultural Land Scape Study (2024 data update), visit the Charlotte Land Trust website at <https://tinyurl.com/4ywyb4cm>.

Hard copies of the study are available at the Charlotte Library and Town Hall.

*(Lynne Hale is a member of the board of the Charlotte Land Trust.)*

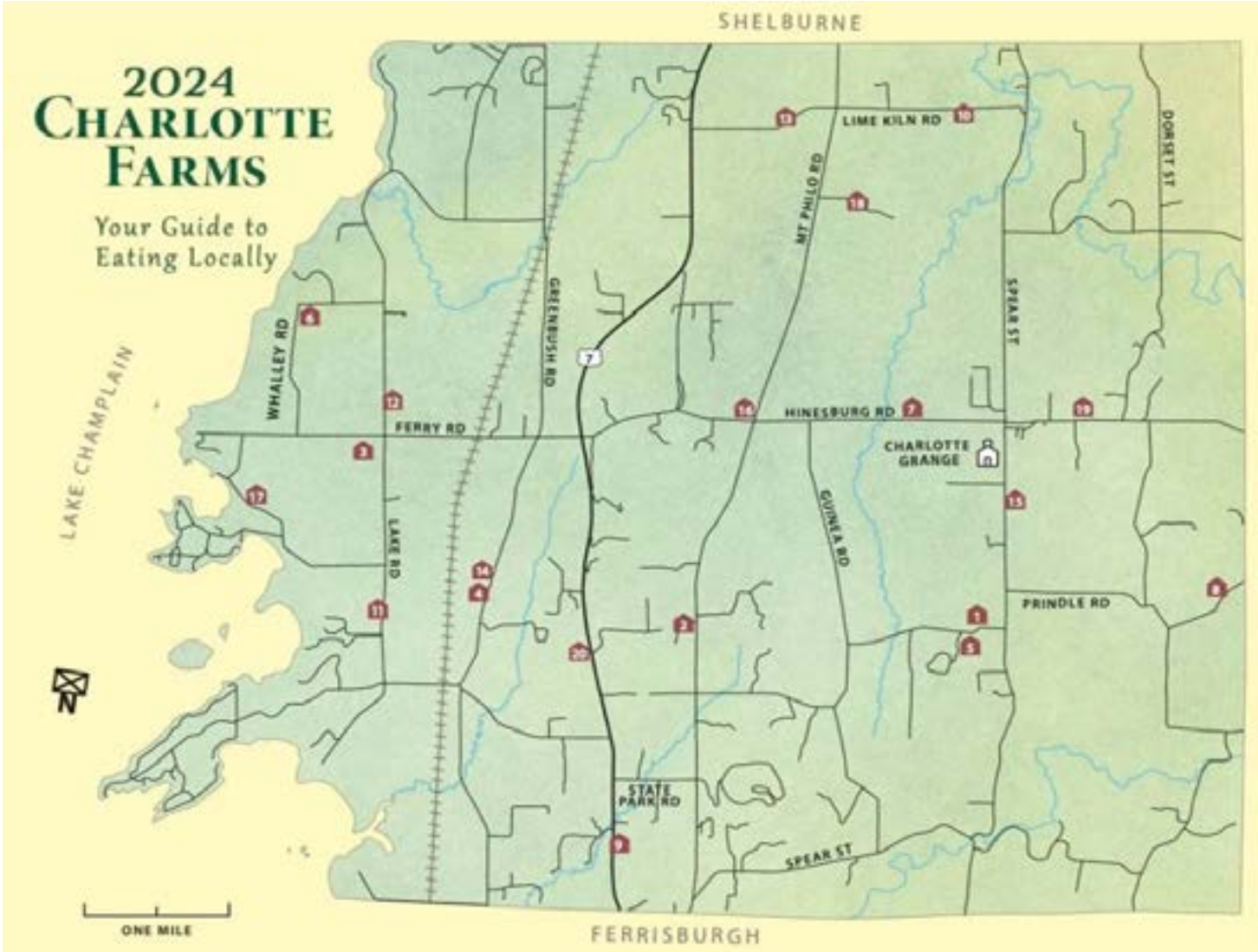


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Grass-fed beef, chicken and eggs.  
[grasscattlecompany.com](http://grasscattlecompany.com)
- 8. Greylaine Farm**  
553 Garen Road  
Grass-fed lamb.  
[greylainefarm.com](http://greylainefarm.com)
- 9. Head Over Fields**  
6035 Ethan Allen Highway  
Farm stand and CSA.  
Organic vegetables, flowers, herbs and local products.  
[headoverfieldsvt.com](http://headoverfieldsvt.com)
- 10. LaBerge Brothers**  
1904 Lime Kiln Road  
Beef and sweet corn.  
802-985-8827
- 11. Nitty Gritty Grain Co. of Vermont**  
4458 Lake Road  
Available in local stores.  
Organic wheat and corn.  
[nittygrittygrain.com](http://nittygrittygrain.com)
- 12. Paradiso Farm**  
2969 Lake Road  
Farm-roasted coffee.  
[paradisofarm.com](http://paradisofarm.com)

- 13. Patalin’s Sugarworks**  
669 Lime Kiln Road  
Maple syrup.  
[Pat.a.leclaire@gmail.com](mailto:Pat.a.leclaire@gmail.com) or 802-985-8225
- 14. Pelkey’s Blueberries**  
3968 Greenbush Road  
Pick-your-own blueberries.  
Blueberries, jam, pies and creemees.  
802-425-3281
- 15. Phiels of Philo Apiary**  
3307 Spear St.  
Honey.  
[bobgiknis@gmail.com](mailto:bobgiknis@gmail.com)
- 16. Philo Ridge Farm**  
2766 Mt. Philo Road  
Grass-fed meat, organic produce.  
[philoridgefarm.com](http://philoridgefarm.com)
- 17. ShakeyGround Farm**  
289 Converse Bay Road  
Farm stand and CSA.  
Organic produce and grass-fed meats.  
[shakeygroundfarm.com](http://shakeygroundfarm.com)
- 18. Sobremesa**  
Available in local stores and Burlington and Shelburne farmers markets.  
Kimchis, krauts and kombuchas.  
[sobremesavt.com](http://sobremesavt.com)
- 19. Stony Loam Farm**  
2755 Hinesburg Road  
CSA and available in local stores.  
Organic vegetables, herbs and flowers.  
[stonyloamfarm.com](http://stonyloamfarm.com)
- 20. Sweet Roots Farm**  
4702 Ethan Allen Highway  
Onsite farm stand and pick-your-own blueberries.  
Organic vegetables, farm-grown fruit, local products and groceries.  
[sweetrootsvt.com](http://sweetrootsvt.com)





## Environment

# Traveling to the Arctic for learning from its icy core

Madelyn Nonni  
Community News Service

Picture flat white snow as far as the horizon. No trees, no rolling mountains. Just an endless scene of ice and frozen earth, underneath an illuminated sky with the sun high in the air, regardless of the time of day.

This is what Castleton junior environmental science major Olivia Rutkowski saw as she stepped off a snowmobile in Cambridge Bay, Canada, this past May.

For two weeks, Rutkowski and five others lived and worked in the Arctic environment, collecting cores of snow, sea ice and permafrost to uncover more about the microbes hidden beneath the surface.

The research effort is in collaboration with the Dynamic Research of Arctic Cryospheric Organisms team, or DRACO. It's a group of professors and students researching polar environments down to the nanoscale. The project is led by associate professors Ross Lieblappen and Michelle Sama of Vermont State University-Randolph.

Joining them were environmental science and chemistry professor from Castleton Andrew Vermilyea and Vermont State University-Randolph student researchers Elizabeth Goodell and Dominic Mazzilli.

"I've done field work around Castleton and Poultney, but this was my first time going out of the country to do it. It was definitely a new experience," Rutkowski said.

The first week of the trip was spent snowmobiling over 7 feet of ice to locations 15 to 45 minutes away to get samples of snow by ice drilling. The group would get as many samples as the day allowed to have thorough data pulled.

Before the day could end, the group would head back to the lab to process the samples.

"For my samples, it was putting them in a bucket, putting them in an incubator, melting them down, filtering all that water, assigning it a code so that I know which site it's from," Rutkowski said.

Rutkowski and Vermilyea are a part of a slightly different research effort.

"We're looking at microplastics in pristine environments like the Arctic. The ocean, when we pull sea ice samples, our global oceans are connected. As plastics just degrade, they can be transported there, and

you can see them in ice and water up there. They also can end up in the atmosphere, microplastics. From burning and processing of plastic and all kinds of reasons, and then can hang around up there for a long time and be deposited with rain and snow," Vermilyea said.

Much of the work done in the field also transfers to further research after returning home.

Vermilyea adds that looking ahead for Rutkowski and her studies, the time she is putting in back in Castleton will be focused on developing more methods to research microplastics in soils, and accurately quantify them.

"Two weeks of field work creates two years of work," Vermilyea said.

The second week of research consisted of collecting permafrost cores, which can be compared to solid cores of frozen soil. These extracted cores are gathered by drilling down using a corer. Sometimes it can take hours, if the corer stops spinning and freezes to the ground.

"Sure enough, we got the core barrels frozen in the ground, about a foot down," Lieblappen said. "You can't yank that out, no matter how strong you are. Rather than going home for dinner, now we're at it for four hours, chipping away at it. One person had like a pickax, one person had a chisel with a hammer, and we just took turns. We had a little bit of movement. So, one person was holding the core barrel, trying to keep it moving as much as possible to not freeze it more,"

Lieblappen and his team invested in a state-of-the-art nano-CT scanner located on the Randolph campus to capture images of permafrost, snow and sea ice down to the micron level.

The trip to Cambridge Bay was DRACO's fourth research fieldwork trip. June 2024 brought them to Fairbanks, Alaska, and, in July, they were in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. This winter, the group was in Utqiagvik, Alaska.

Their goal is to fully characterize terrain from different geographical locations, like collecting permafrost from regions that are far apart from each other.

"The idea being that these biomes that have microbes there could potentially be very



Photos courtesy of DRACO Team

Vermont State University Castleton student Olivia Rutkowski collects snow samples in the Canadian Arctic.

distinct. So, we want to kind of have a wide sampling of regions of the Arctic that we're grouping," Lieblappen said.

But the work doesn't end after the cores and samples are collected and brought back to the lab in heavily insulated core boxes full of heavy-duty ice packs or a cryoshipper, basically a freezer. These shipping containers can keep the samples frozen and cold for about 48 hours, and are constantly being temperature-watched and tracked during travel.

"If the samples thaw out on the way home, it's all for nothing. That's the most worrying part when you're traveling home and you're waiting for baggage claim," Vermilyea said.

These fieldwork trips offer students valuable hands-on skills, professors said.

"The students do literally everything. It's hands-on learning at its core. Olivia was driving the snowmobile with gear. She was running the corer with a big auger engine

head on it," Vermilyea said. "She was in the lab processing and filtering samples, taking notes. It's just such a learning experience, but they're not just hanging around and observing."

Having this level of responsibility is rare for undergraduates. Lieblappen said, "Undergraduate students are the ones being able to use state-of-the-art equipment, making these discoveries, doing all the work themselves."

The hands-on nature of the Arctic fieldwork, combined with exposure to cutting-edge equipment, gives students like Rutkowski confidence and a tangible foundation for future research. "It sets up a path for my career. I've always wanted to do cold-weather research," she said.

*(This story comes via the Community News Service, in partnership with Vermont State University Castleton.)*



Vermont State University Castleton students Olivia Rutkowski (right) and Dominic Mazzilli study samples from the Canada trip.



# Community Roundup

## \$100,000 in journalism awards going to Vermont news outlets

For the first time, the state of Vermont has partnered with local philanthropists to provide financial support to news outlets that bolster civic engagement.

The state legislature directed \$50,000 in this year's budget to establish the Local Civic Journalism Awards. The Vermont Community Foundation's Press Forward Vermont initiative announced Monday that it would match the state funding with an additional \$50,000.

The inaugural awards this fall will provide up to \$10,000 apiece to selected news outlets that inform and engage the communities they serve, leading to increased civic participation. The awards are open to all professional news organizations that cover Vermont, regardless of medium, business model or ownership, and provide factual information that might not otherwise be available.

The awards are not intended to fund a specific project, but rather to support the continued operation of essential institutions. Potential recipients should have a demonstrated track record of serving Vermonters and upholding rigorous journalistic standards.

Anyone can nominate a news outlet for the Local Civic Journalism Awards, including but not limited to the entity's leaders, employees, contributors, audience or other community members.

The nominating periods opened Sept. 22 and closes Oct. 29 at noon.

The Vermont Secretary of State's Office oversees the Local Civic Journalism Awards, but recipients will be selected by an independent panel of journalists, academics and industry veterans convened by the University of Vermont's Center for Community News. The awards will be distributed in November 2025.

To nominate a news outlet for the Local Civic Journalism Awards, visit <https://tinyurl.com/yc2cf2tu>. For more information, email [paul@paulheintz.com](mailto:paul@paulheintz.com).

## Shelburne Farms hires Patterson as cheese & catalog manager

Shelburne Farms has hired Eric Patterson, former plant manager with Marin French Cheese in Petaluma, Calif. He has joined the organization as its cheese and catalog manager.

Patterson has over 20 years of experience in the cheesemaking industry. After college and spending time on organic farms in California, he dreamed of growing ... hay. That dream led to acquiring a herd of goats, with a subsequent refrigerator full of goat's milk, and it inspired Eric to learn to make feta and chevre at home.

To further study the cheesemaking art, he joined the renowned Cowgirl Creamery in Point Reyes, Calif.

"Getting your hands in a vat of curds is pretty addictive," Patterson said.

He spent the next 20 years at Cowgirl



Eric Patterson

Creamery making cheese, before moving to Marin French Cheese, the oldest continuously operated creamery in the United States.

Shelburne Farms is an education nonprofit on a mission to inspire and cultivate learning for a sustainable future.

## Devine leaving presidency of Burlington Business Association

After more than 17 years as president and executive director of the Burlington Business

Association, Kelly Devine has announced her departure, effective at the end of the year. Devine has led the organization through significant initiatives to enhance downtown Burlington's vibrancy, safety and economic health.

Chair of the board Chelsea Condos said, "Her commitment, energy and vision have transformed downtown Burlington in ways that benefit every resident, business owner and visitor."

"From the day I began in 2007, I've believed in the power of collaboration, between businesses, city government, nonprofits and residents, to build a downtown that is safe, welcoming, vibrant and economically thriving," Devine said. "I'm proud of what we've achieved together."



Kelly Devine

## Button Up Vermont urges using state rebates, expiring tax credits

As temperatures drop across the northeast, partners in the statewide Button Up Vermont campaign ([buttonupvermont.org](http://buttonupvermont.org)) are urging homeowners and renters to prepare their homes for colder temperatures using Vermont weatherization and heat pump rebates and using soon-to-expire federal tax credits for projects completed this year.

Weatherization rebates from Efficiency Vermont, Vermont Gas Systems and other partners aren't going anywhere. But federal home energy tax credits for things like energy-efficient windows and doors, insulation and air sealing, and heating systems all expire at the end of the year.

That's why this year's Button Up Vermont campaign, which kicked off Oct. 1 with a month of webinars, events and other promotions, focuses on helping Vermonters understand how to make their homes more comfortable using all the state and federal incentives available.

"Buttoning up a home can make it more comfortable while also lowering your heating bills," said Peter Walke, Efficiency Vermont's managing director.

Both Efficiency Vermont rebates and Vermont Gas Systems incentives offer customers up to \$9,500 for comprehensive weatherization projects. Incentives vary based on household size and income. Income-eligible households may qualify for free weatherization through the state's weatherization-assistance programs.

"With federal rebates set to expire at the end of the year, now is the time to leverage rebates and reduce the cost of

these energy-saving home improvements," said Neale Lunderville of Vermont Gas Systems. "Our teams work directly with customers to assess how they can get the most bang for their buck and improve comfort."

Vermonters who complete home energy projects by Dec. 31 may also be able to use federal home energy tax credits.

View webinars on the tax credits at [buttonupvermont.org/events](http://buttonupvermont.org/events).

Telltale signs a home is losing heat and needs "buttoning up" include:

- Drafts, even when the heat is on. This could be a sign that cold air is leaking in and that heat is leaking out, wasting energy.

- Snow melting unevenly on a roof, indicating an attic in need of air sealing and insulation.

- Icicles or ice dams forming on a rooftop, a sign that heat is escaping through the roof.

- Mold. A lack of insulation or proper ventilation can cause moisture to rise and get trapped, creating unhealthy indoor air and potentially other issues for a home if left untreated.

Insulating and air-sealing a home as part of a comprehensive weatherization project can address these issues, as well as important health and safety considerations of a home, like moisture management, ventilation and indoor air quality.

## Saint Michael's College wins biotechnology pipeline grant

The National Science Foundation has awarded a \$400,000 grant to Saint

Michael's College, which will be used to build a pipeline to Vermont's growing biotechnology industry.

The grant will be in effect until 2028.

Together with teams from Grinnell

College,

Linfield

University

and National

University, the

Saint Michael's

College team

will pursue the

following goals:

- Identifying each cohort institution's place in its regional innovation ecosystem.

- Developing a strategy to effectively engage a broad network of external partners.

- Building institutional structure and culture to support use-inspired research and tech-transfer initiatives.

"We have incredibly diverse and capable students right here in Vermont that can contribute to the growing biotechnology industry; they just need training and opportunity," said biology professor Lyndsay Avery, who led the efforts to secure the grant.

The Saint Michael's College biology department has already been working to build the biotech pipeline through its CURE approach to science education. CURE, which stands for course-based undergraduate research experience, offers students the opportunity to conduct authentic research during their regular classes and labs. Undergraduate students also have further opportunities for grant-funded research outside the classroom.



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# Wrapping up the water-quality stewardship field season

Kate Kelly  
Contributor

For yet another summer, volunteers of all ages hopped in kayaks and canoes to remove European frogbit, a non-native invasive plant species that spreads rapidly in bays and wetlands if given the opportunity.

In 2007, Lewis Creek Association initiated the “Water Quality Stewardship Program” and has since worked annually to manage the invasive plants and water quality of the rivers and streams that drain directly into Lake Champlain. The volunteer-driven frogbit removal project is the result of cooperation between many individuals and groups, including the Lewis Creek Association, Charlotte, Shelburne, Hinesburg, Shelburne Bay Boat Club and a supportive Charlotte property owner.

European frogbit, a common aquarium plant, spread to the United States via the St. Lawrence River after it was introduced to arboretum ponds in Ottawa in 1932. It is now considered an aquatic invasive species because it dominates native species in the competition for sunlight, nutrients, and surface area.

Lewis Creek Association’s volunteer efforts have proven highly successful since friends of Lewis Creek Association discovered frogbit covering 50 percent of Town Farm Bay in 2007. Annual paddling and weeding trips, with a side of bird- and turtle-watching, have reduced the coverage of frogbit to just under 5 percent. In contrast, when frogbit was discovered in the wetlands of the LaPlatte Natural Area, it had a much lower percentage cover; this gave Lewis Creek Association’s program and volunteers the opportunity for “early detection, rapid response.” Though the invasive plant will never be eradicated in either

location, maintaining this low population allows native plants and animals to thrive.

This summer, volunteers spent 234 hours removing 2797.5 pounds of frogbit from Town Farm Bay, more than three and a half times what was harvested in 2024. Volunteers spent 46 hours harvesting 765 pounds of frogbit, also more than 2024, in the LaPlatte River wetlands.

Early season precipitation impacted the water level of Lake Champlain, increasing the amount harvested by volunteers. Frogbit became more visible to volunteers at both Town Farm Bay and the LaPlatte River wetlands because the higher water levels submerged the native lily pads (*Nymphaea odorata*), which often cover much of the water surface area later in the year. High water levels also allowed volunteers at the LaPlatte River wetlands to paddle into an area that, when water levels are lower, is inaccessible area to boaters; this area produced the majority of frogbit harvested in the LaPlatte River wetlands, likely because volunteers were unable to harvest from this area during most previous summers.

Lewis Creek Association’s Water Quality Stewardship Program also includes annual water-quality monitoring of the LaPlatte River, Patrick Brook, McCabe’s Brook, Thorp Brook, Kimball Brook and Lewis Creek and its tributaries by volunteers for South Chittenden River Watch. Volunteers collect water samples which are analyzed by the Vermont Agricultural and Environmental Laboratory as part of the state LaRosa Partnership Program and interpreted by Lewis Creek Association technical consultants and staff.

The sampling season has recently wrapped up. It included sampling for nutrients (phosphorus, nitrogen) and chloride to research Lake Champlain nutrient-loading



Photo by Nina DeSilva

Volunteers removing frogbit from Lower LaPlatte River.

sources so the association can identify potential water quality improvement projects

This year’s results will be available on the Lewis Creek Association’s website ([lewis creek.org](http://lewis creek.org)) in the winter of 2025-26. To see the last four years’ results, visit [bit.ly/lca-waterquality](http://bit.ly/lca-waterquality). More information on water quality and what you can do to improve it are on Lewis Creek Association’s YouTube channel at [bit.ly/lca-youtube](http://bit.ly/lca-youtube).

This water-quality stewardship program is important for maintaining productive and scenic waters and for recruiting wa-

ter-quality advocates. Having this program funded through town budgets is crucial, since it allows the whole community to take ownership of local water quality and natural resources.

If you are interested in assisting with water-quality monitoring or invasive plant removal in 2026, please reach out to the Lewis Creek Association Watershed’s program assistant at [sara@lewis creek.org](mailto:sara@lewis creek.org).

*(Kate Kelly is program manager for the Lewis Creek Association.)*

# Ageism Awareness Day planned to raise ageism awareness

Tracey Shamberger  
Contributor

Age Well and the American Society on Aging celebrate Ageism Awareness Day on Oct. 9.

Modeled after the United Nations’ International Day of Older Persons (Oct. 1), this day shines a spotlight on the existence and impact of ageism in society. This year’s theme emphasizes the diverse and meaningful experiences of aging, countering the myth that age defines identity.

“Aging is a universal experience, but it happens in different ways for different people. Too often, we focus on what we lose and assume that everyone who is older shares the same concerns. That’s simply not true. Society is stronger when we embrace the many different voices and perspectives that make us who we are. Our age adds to that richness and should be viewed as an asset,” said Leanne Clark-Shirley, president of the American Society on Aging.

Ageism, one of the most socially accepted forms of prejudice, is defined by the World Health Organization as “the stereotypes (how we think), prejudices (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) toward others or oneself based on

age.” It affects people of all ages whenever assumptions are made about them simply because of how old they are.

Ageism can be found everywhere, from workplaces and health systems to entertainment, advertising and media. Despite many pervasive myths about aging, the reality is quite different:

## Common myths about aging:

- Myth — If I avoid aging, I’ll be happier and healthier.

Reality — Changing negative perceptions about aging can improve quality of life and even increase lifespan by up to 7.5 years.

- Myth — Aging is the same for everyone.

Reality — The aging experience varies widely based on genetics, policies, culture and access. Ageism often intersects with other forms of discrimination.

- Myth — Older adults can’t learn new things or are hoarding wealth.

Reality — Older adults are diverse in skills, beliefs and income. Lifelong learning and growth happen at every age.

- Myth — Generational divides are deep and unbridgeable.

Reality — We often share more

across generations than we think. Intergenerational collaboration benefits everyone.

“The American Society on Aging and our members, partners and allies are committed to raising awareness about ageism and its harm. Together, we’re advancing a more complete narrative, one

that recognizes the many ways people experience aging while working to break down barriers,” said Leanne Clark-Shirley.

*(Tracey Shamberger is director of business development and communication for Age Well.)*

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with any questions.



# Sacred Hunter

## It's that time of year when hunters wake up with the world

Bradley Carleton  
Contributor

The neon green numerals on the bedside clock flicker in unison with the buzzing of the alarm. It is 3:30 a.m., and it is time for the hunter's eyes to open. Sleep has been restless, punctuated with dreams of handsome racked bucks walking toward the tree stand.

It is the time of the year when the alarm does not bring a feeling of reluctance to perform domestic obligations and mundane activities of daily life. Instead, the gentle buzzing of the alarm means that it is time to engage the primitive instinct that lives in the heart and soul of those of us who pursue connection to our chosen spirit animal. It is the call to arms for those who feel the deep, primitive genetic drive to hunt.

Rising from the comforts of a fluffy nest next to the warm body of your partner is driven by a deep longing to be in the woods. Dressing in a base layer will allow the sweat of our efforts to be wicked away from the skin, so that we will not freeze, even though we are fully clothed. A quiet, hushed groan acknowledges our departure from the bed.

Gathering the bow and arrows at the back door, we hear the chirping of crickets in the dark moon shadows surrounding the house. Climbing into the truck, as the door closes, a barred owl hoots from an old pine tree across the dirt road.

Arriving at the fourth-class logging road by 4:30, the watch is checked, and the estimated time to arrive at the stand should be 5:18 if our bearings are set correctly. Legal shooting time, determined by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, is meant to approximate the moment one-half hour before actual sunrise, when the target can be clearly confirmed. This year, it is 6:18 a.m., one hour after arriving at the stand. This will give the woods time to accept our unseen presence and settle into the routine of early light.

Having climbed the aluminum ladder to the seat and clipped the heavy-duty carabiner to the safety harness attached to the trunk of the oak, it is time to practice breathing and allow our own spirit to blend in with the surroundings. Eyes close, and the rhythm of our breath blends into the symphony of the dawn. Leaning back into the tree, we become an extension of it.

Sounds of shuffling on the ground beneath the stand pose the question: What other animal shares this space with me? Could it be a raccoon? An opossum? Or a "Quilly Pig" (the nickname given to the shy porcupine by my dear deceased friend, Johnny MacDonald)? The sound of claws gripping bark means it is climbing up the tree. It stops suddenly, and a small snorting sound tells me it has scented me and no longer wishes to share the old oak. It clumbers off into the near dawn, heading uphill to the rocky outcropping where it will sleep undisturbed until dusk.

The eastern horizon begins to show subtle hints of light, indigo blue blending into a sage green as if a master painter were mixing colors to captivate the wonder of the viewer.

Distant sounds of leaves shuffling from up the hill draw my eyes to scan the backlit ridge for horizontal shapes that break up the vertical mise-en-scène of the trees. Indefinable shapes appear to move from left to right. There is a trail on the ridge that leads toward the bedding area of this small herd of white-tails. It traverses the saddle where the tree stand is positioned and rises onto another high point that provides a clear view. The whitetail uses these spots to bed, where the cooperative breezes bring the scent of anything unusual in their area. These scents can be quickly assessed and, if unnatural to the area, trigger the alarm that it is time to move.

The sun has now risen to offer the painter an even greater selection of colors for the palette. Burnt orange and ochre blend with the sage. Pillars of golden light caress the upper branches of the trees. The flaming orange and scarlet-red leaves glow in autumnal splendor. Caught in the reverie of autumn's early light, it is hypnotic to feel like I am part of all of this.

Suddenly, there is motion under the stand. It is large, brown and curious. A wet nose is pressed against the ladder of the stand, then a short tongue slides out to "taste" the cold aluminum. It is a smallish fawn that has run ahead of the pack to explore another luscious autumn dawn. The fawn looks back over its shoulder at something that only they know is there.

My eyes scour the hillside to see what she does. A brown face with charcoal eyebrows and a patch of white underneath. A doe, watching her fawn. She calls a gentle bleat,



Photo by Bradley Carleton

Sometimes the tools of the hunt are superfluous to reaping the gifts nature provides.

telling the youngster to return to the chosen path. The fawn runs back to join her group.

As the sun rises, the thermal winds change direction. It has been six hours since climbing into the stand. It is time to get on the path toward my group and find sustenance to provide energy for the evening hunt.

Climbing down the ladder, booted feet now on the solid ground, I am grateful. Each day brings gifts. Some days the gifts are not what we are looking for, but the ones we need. To

have witnessed the quillypig, the sunrise, the birdsong, the beauty of the whitetail and the curiosity and innocence of the fawn are all the motivation needed to rise from the bed and seek out the place where I belong.

*(Bradley Carleton is the founder and director of Sacred Hunter.org, which teaches the public respect and empathy through hunting, fishing and foraging. Please consider subscribing to Bradley's writing at sacredhunter.substack.com.)*



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# Calendar

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

## CHARLOTTE

### Fall children's clothing drive Through Oct. 4

Please consider donating your child's used clothing, footwear and outerwear to the Grange's fall children's clothing drive and outerwear drive. A weather-proof bin will be located by the front door of the Grange Hall for drop-off Sept. 22-Oct. 4. The fall drive also strives to provide all children served by the Charlotte Food Shelf with a full winter gear set-up. Donations of children's winter jackets, mittens, hats, snow pants and snow boots are welcomed. Volunteers are needed. Email alcoop.vt@gmail.com to sign up or learn more.

### Poetry, science intersection Friday, Oct. 3, 1:30 p.m.

Join Sundog Poetry and significant voices in the fields of environmental science and poetry on Friday, Oct. 3, to discuss the necessary intersection of poetry and science at the Champlain Room at Champlain College. The event will include a moderated panel discussion, a poetry and prose reading and programming for student environmental groups and writing workshops. The program is free, but there's a suggested \$25 donation. Registration requested.

### Learn circus arts Friday, Oct. 3, 3:15 p.m.

The Fletcher Free Library invites kids to step into the spotlight with Intro to Circus Arts. This free, family-friendly program, led by Cirque Us, a circus entertainment and education company, will take place on Friday, Oct. 3, 3:15 p.m. at Contois Auditorium in Burlington. Led by professional circus artists, this interactive workshop introduces participants ages 6+ to the fundamentals of circus performance, from juggling and balancing to movement and teamwork. No experience is necessary, just a sense of adventure and fun. As a special bonus, all participants will receive free admission to the Cirque Us 6 p.m. performance at Contois Auditorium. To learn more about these library programs and additional free offerings, visit fletcherfree.org.

## CHARLOTTE

### Repair Café Saturday, Oct. 4, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Get your broken stuff fixed at the Repair Café in the Charlotte Congregational Church Vestry. The Repair Café is hosted by Sustainable Charlotte, the Charlotte Grange, the Charlotte Library, and the Charlotte Energy and Climate Action committee and is open to anyone in any town. Registration required at sustainablecharlottetv.org/events/repair-cafe to let us know what you are bringing. There will be home-baked goods, chili, salad, bread and drinks for sale. The fixing is free. The volunteer fixers ask that attendees, if able, bring a food or monetary donation to the Charlotte Food Shelf.

## CHARLOTTE

### Fire & Rescue open house Saturday, Oct. 4, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Charlotte Volunteer Fire and Rescue Service is celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary at the station. There will be barbecue, bagpipes, tours of the firehouse, a demonstration of how emergency workers take a vehicle apart after an accident and more. It's free.

### Reading and music performance Saturday, Oct. 4, 11 a.m.

Author and teaching cellist Melissa Perley will read from "The Violin Family Plays New Music" at Bear Pond Books in Montpelier and play the cello, accompanied by Tom Frink on the clarinet, to celebrate the release of her second children's book.

## CHARLOTTE

### Congregational Church concert Sunday, Oct. 5, 4 p.m.

Annemieke McLane, an award-winning pianist, will present a concert entitled: A time travel through piano music history from Handel, Bach, Chopin, Grieg to Gjeilo. The concert will include works like the Italian Concerto, the 4th Ballade by Chopin and Peer Gynt Suite movements. The concert is free, although donations to Malayaka House in Uganda are encouraged. The concert is on Sunday, Oct. 5 at 4 p.m. at the Charlotte Congregational Church.

### The Stories They Tell Tuesday, Oct. 7

Frog Hollow Craft Gallery presents The Stories They Tell, a two-person exhibition featuring works by Stowe, Vermont artists, ceramicist Zoé Bedell and mixed-media artist Peggy Smith. From her home studio, ceramicist Bedell creates a world where the organic and the man-made coexist. Smith is an artist who has explored a wide range of mediums from fiber arts to clay; her current focus is a blend of book arts, sculptural clay work and manipulated photography.

### Revolutionary War Gunboats Thursday, Oct. 9, 7-8 p.m.

Chris Sabick, executive director of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, will give a talk on Revolutionary War gunboats in the auditorium of the Hoehl Family Education and Visitor Center. It will last approximately 30-45 minutes with time for Q&A afterwards. The talk is free with registration at <https://tinyurl.com/4z7nvx8r>.

### 'Blithe Spirit' Fridays-Sundays, Oct. 10-26

The Valley Players will present "Blithe Spirit" by Noel Coward at their theater at 4254 Main Street in Waitsfield. Friday and Saturday night shows are at 7 p.m., and Sunday matinees are at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$14 for seniors and students and \$18 for adults. For tickets and more information, visit valleyplayers.com or email boxoffice@valleyplayers.com.

### Rokeby's fall family day Saturday, Oct. 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Rokeby Museum sponsors fall family day as a time to introduce children to the site and buy family membership at the limited-time price of \$65. Annual membership



Courtesy photo

Madame Arcati (Sarah Storjohann) falls into a trance and other characters try to help in the Valley Players' production of "Blithe Spirit" playing Oct. 10-26 in Waitsfield.

entitles you to free entry to the museum, virtual or in-person programs, a discount in the museum shop and reduced-rate tickets to events. A discovery hunt, nature art making, trail hiking, games, picnicking and art will be featured at this event. Kids are free on this day.

### Quilt show Saturday & Sunday, Oct. 11, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., & Oct. 12, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

"Quilting in the Land of Milk & Honey" will be presented at the Middlebury Recreation Center, 54 Creek Road, Middlebury. It will include quilt-turning presentations, a raffle and handmade gifts. Lunch and snacks will be available. Admission is \$7 with children under 12 free. For more info, visit [milkandhoneyquilters.com](http://milkandhoneyquilters.com).

### Explore Lewis Creek watershed Saturday, Oct. 18, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.

The Lewis Creek Association's Mountains to Mouth: an Exploration of the Watershed is a day-long celebration of the natural, cultural and landscape history of Monkton and portions of the Lewis Creek watershed at the Monkton Town Hall. In the morning, experts will lead field trips exploring the geology, history and wildlife of Monkton, and landscape painting will be offered along Lewis Creek. From 1-3 p.m., there will be children's activities and talks on pollinator gardens, local history, aquatic invasive species in local ponds and best management practices for lakeside properties. Lunch and remarks will be 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. with lunch and refreshments provided or bring a picnic. More info at [lewiscreek.org](http://lewiscreek.org) or email [kate@lewiscreek.org](mailto:kate@lewiscreek.org).

### Carve-in at Birds of Vermont Saturday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

At the Green Mountain Woodcarvers carve-in and annual meeting at Birds of Vermont, members will be working on a variety of carving projects. Carvers are always happy to explain how they carve and to share their expertise with others. More info [greenmountainwoodcarvers.org/carvein.html](http://greenmountainwoodcarvers.org/carvein.html).

### Tree identification for birders Sunday, Oct. 19, 1-3 p.m.

Have you ever noticed a bird, then wondered what kind of tree it was in, or why it was there? Take a walk and explore tree identification with forester Kathleen Stutzman at Birds of Vermont. Open to folks with any and all levels of familiarity with trees or birds. Suggested donation \$10-\$30. Register by phone at 802-434-2167 or visit [birdsofvermont.org/event/tree-identification-for-birders-and-friends](http://birdsofvermont.org/event/tree-identification-for-birders-and-friends).

### October bird monitoring walk Saturday, Oct. 25, 8-9 a.m.

Birders, current, experienced, newbie and would-be, welcome to join the Birds of Vermont monthly monitoring walk to record birds on the museum's trails, forest and meadow. Bring your own binoculars, dress for the weather. We recommend bringing tick repellent and a water bottle. Free, suggested \$10 donation. Registration will be posted at [birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming](http://birdsofvermont.org/special-upcoming).



## CHARLOTTE TOWN MEETINGS AND AGENDAS

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

**Trails Committee Monthly meeting**  
Tuesday, Oct. 7, 6:30 p.m.

**Development Review Board meeting**  
Wednesday, Oct. 8, 7 p.m.

**Planning Commission meeting**  
Thursday, Oct. 9, 7 p.m.

**Regular Selectboard meeting**  
Monday, Oct. 13, 7 p.m.

**Charlotte Energy & Climate Action  
Committee meeting**  
Tuesday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.



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# Library News

## Things have been hopping at the library during the summer

Margaret Woodruff  
Director

Ever wonder what happens at the library during the summer months? Lots of reading and tons of activity, that's what. Charlotte kids of all ages raced through the summer reading materials, signaling a record-level of reading. In addition, kids and families took advantage of more than 60 programs from June through August. Over 500 kids, moms, dads and caregivers attended programs that ran the gamut from musicals and music sessions to presentations about the summer sky and animals in our wildlands. We are so grateful to Cheryl Sloan for putting together such an amazing slate of entertaining and engaging programs to help foster literacy of all kinds for all ages.

### Vermont Reads

Our Vermont Reads series kicks off on Thursday, Oct. 2. Stop by to get your copy of "The Light Pirate." Enjoy some local refreshments, take a tour of our climate-friendly gardens and make a weathervane to take home.

### Vermont Reads series:

- Thursday, Oct. 2: Kick-off
- Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2 p.m.: "The Light Pirate" book discussion at Charlotte Senior Center
- Thursday, Oct. 9, 7 p.m.: Community Connections: CARE, VT-Alert and Ally programs
- Thursday, Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.: Thursday Book Group discussion of "The Light Pirate" on Zoom
- Thursday, Oct. 30, 7 p.m.: "Drawing Hidden Systems" with graphic novelist Dan Nott

### Programs for kids

#### Baby time

**Saturday, Oct. 4, 10-11 a.m.**

On the first Saturday of the month, join other families in an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the young children's area. Ages birth to 12 months.

#### Toddler time

**Saturday, Oct. 4, 10-11 a.m.**

On the first Saturday of the month, join other young families with toddlers for an unstructured hour of play and exploration in the program room. Ages 12 months to 24 months.

#### International Observe the Moon Night

**Saturday, Oct. 4**

Pick up your moon observation kit at the library.

#### 'Fresh-Picked Poetry' StoryWalk

A new StoryWalk, with the support of the Vermont Department of Libraries, has been installed on the Charlotte Library Green. Just in time for fall's abundance of vegetables at local farmer's markets, Michelle Schaub takes readers to the market. What to see, what to eat and how produce is grown. "Fresh-Picked Poetry" is illustrated by Amy Huntington.

### 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



Photo by Margaret Woodruff

A bumblebee enjoys the sunny zinnias at the Charlotte Library.

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.

**LIBRARY** continued on page 22



## Tale spinning

Photo by Lee Krohn

Lexie Kensington entertains a good crowd gathered at the Grange on Thursday, Sept. 25, for an inaugural storytelling event.



LIBRARY

Continued from page 21

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

Stillwater meditation  
Saturdays, 9 a.m.

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

'On Books'  
Tuesday, Oct. 7, 5:30 p.m.

Many of us look forward to Katherine Arthaud's regular "On Books" column in The Charlotte News. Join Arthaud at the library for a casual conversation about reading, reviews and books.

Community cares  
Thursday, Oct. 9, 7 p.m.

August Toynton, public health specialist at the Vermont Department of Health, introduces three programs essential to community safety in the event of a weather emergency. Learn about CARE, VT-Alert and the Ally program in this informational program with lots of time for questions. This is a Vermont Reads event. Pick up your copy of "The Light Pirate" at the library.

Fall wellness for you & your family  
Friday, Oct. 10, 2 p.m.

Join local doctors, Elizabeth Hunt and Andrea Regan, for an overview of wellness and health maintenance for the fall season.

Bring your questions and learn about the latest information on general health maintenance, seasonal updates and vaccines.

Grassland Birds & the Bobolink Project  
Tuesday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m.

Join Kevin Tolan, Staff Biologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies and Hyla Howe, Mass Audubon's grassland bird biologist and the Bobolink Project program manager, for a conversation about their projects. The two scientists will share their work with grassland birds, the Bobolink Project and efforts to maintain and improve bobolink habitat in the Champlain Valley. Presented in partnership with the Charlotte Land Trust and the Charlotte Park & Wildlife Refuge Committee.

Let's talk about Hospice  
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 4 p.m.

Join Julie Foy-Pack for a brief presentation about hospice care and end of life, what to know, ask and expect. Learn who qualifies for hospice care, what services are included under hospice care and common myths and misconceptions. A Q&A session will allow time to ask questions, share thoughts and connect with others in a supportive space. Presented by the University of Vermont Health Network: Home Health & Hospice.

Short story selections (rescheduled)  
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1 p.m.

Join library director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new. This is an online program. Join on Zoom at https://tinyurl.com/2uxwrsyr.

Better Together book club  
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 7 p.m.

You're invited to join this group that discusses books related to parenthood. In the group's current book, "The Berry Pickers" by Amanda Peters, a 4-year-old Mi'kmaq girl goes missing from the blueberry fields of Maine, sparking a tragic mystery that haunts the survivors, unravels a community and remains unsolved for nearly 50 years. Copies available at the circulation desk. Find the audiobook on Hoopla.

Men's book group:  
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 7:30 p.m.

Tommy Tomlinson was watching a dog show on television a few years ago when he had a sudden thought: Are those dogs happy? How about pet dogs — are they happy? Those questions sparked a quest to venture inside the dog-show world in search of a deeper understanding of the long-term relationship between dogs and humans. In "Dogland: Passion, Glory, and Lots of

Slobber at the Westminster Dog Show," he shares his surprising, entertaining and moving adventures.

Thursday book group  
Thursday, Oct. 16, 7:30 p.m.

Join a discussion of the Vermont Reads 2025 selection, "The Light Pirate," by Lily Brooks-Dalton on Zoom at https://tinyurl.com/ycxw56ca. Named after a catastrophic storm, Wanda is born into a world that's rapidly changing. Rising sea levels and devastating weather patterns transform her coastal Florida town. As she moves from childhood to adulthood, Wanda adapts to this remade landscape, finding adventure, love and purpose in a place largely abandoned by civilization.

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  
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 Opening Meeting Law. The next scheduled board meetings are tonight, 6 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 2, and Thursday, Nov. 6. Contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Youthful poesy



Photo by Joe Bergin

Roman Strayer-Benton, Shelburne's Junior Poet Laureate will kick off Youth Poetry Night at the Grange, 6:30-8 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 9. Afterward, young poets between the ages of 10 and 19 are invited to recite original or favorite poems.



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# Senior Center News

## Board games, photojournalism talk, blood pressure tips, etc.

Lori York  
Director

This month, the senior center is partnering with students from Champlain Valley Union High School for two programs: a classic board-game afternoon and a Harkness-style conversation group.

Additional programming includes a presentation with slides on Robert Nickelberg's photo book "Legacy of Lies: El Salvador 1981-1984," as well as a discussion of the Vermont Reads book "The Light Pirate."

New this month, the center is offering a blood-pressure management workshop in collaboration with My Healthy Vermont, and a cooking class specifically designed for individuals living alone, offered by Harbor Village Senior Communities.

### Presentations

#### Book discussion with Robert Nickelsberg Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1 p.m.

Join award-winning photojournalist Robert Nickelsberg for a discussion of his new book, "Legacy of Lies: El Salvador 1981-1984." Through imagery shot for Time magazine, Nickelsberg documents the human cost of El Salvador's civil war during its most violent years, a conflict deeply influenced by Cold War politics and U.S. intervention. This event will feature a 19-image presentation followed by a Q&A session. Gain a deeper understanding about the lasting impact of foreign involvement in Central America. The Salvadoran civil war is what sparked the massive immigration traffic north. It is the foundation to the chaos now plaguing officials in Washington, D.C., and at the U.S.-Mexican border. Registration is appreciated by calling 802-425-6345.

#### Harkness conversations

##### Mondays, Oct. 13 & 27, 4-5 p.m.

Experience the power of the Harkness conversation method, taught by Champlain Valley Union High School students. A unique approach to discussion where participants lead the learning. This program invites you to share your perspectives and engage deeply with various topics from short readings to daily life, in a collaborative, participant-led way. Registration required by calling 802-425-6345.

#### Healthy cooking for one

##### Friday, Oct. 17, 12-2 p.m.

Chef Shaun from Harbor Village Senior Communities for a fun and informative healthy cooking class designed just for one. Learn simple, nutritious recipes perfect for solo dining with tips on portioning, freshness, and flavor. Free. Registration required. Space is limited.

#### Vermont reads book discussion

##### Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2-3 p.m.

The Charlotte Senior Center will host a discussion of "The Light Pirate," the Vermont Reads selection for 2025. Named after a catastrophic storm, Wanda is born into a world that's rapidly changing. Rising sea levels and devastating weather patterns transform her coastal Florida town. "The Light Pirate" by Lily Brooks-Dalton is a meditation on the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness. Pick up a copy at the library. To register, call 802-425-6345.

### Programs

#### Board games

##### Friday, Oct. 3, 1-3 p.m.

Join the CVU Senior Citizen Service Club at the Charlotte Senior Center for games, laughter and great company on Friday, Oct. 3. They'll be playing a variety of classic board games, socializing and spending quality time with the wonderful seniors in our community. You're welcome to bring your favorite game and teach others how to play; it's all about sharing, learning and having fun together. Registration is greatly appreciated, 802-425-6345.

#### Alzheimer's caregivers support group

##### Wednesday, Oct. 8, 3-4 p.m.

Are you caring for someone with Alzheimer's? Do you know someone who is? Please join us for our monthly Caregivers Support Group on the second Wednesday of each month from 3:00-4:00 p.m. The meetings provide a safe place for caregivers, family, and friends of persons with dementia to meet and develop a mutual support system. For more information email Louise Fairbank at [louisefairbank67@gmail.com](mailto:louisefairbank67@gmail.com).

#### Blood pressure management workshop

##### Thursdays, Oct. 23-Dec. 18, 1-2:30 p.m. (no meeting Thanksgiving)

Join us for an eight-week workshop series offered by My Healthy Vermont and designed to empower you with the tools and strategies to better manage high blood pressure. Each 90-minute weekly session focuses on practical behavior changes, including how to effectively use a home blood pressure monitor, manage medications, improve nutrition and reduce stress. Take control of your health in a supportive, educational environment. Registration can be completed ahead of time by calling Caitlin Moroney, enrollment specialist and workshop facilitator, at 802-859-5913 or by attending the first session on Oct. 23.

#### Spanish conversation

##### Tuesdays, October, 10-11 a.m.

¿Habras Español? We will meet weekly. At each session one member of the group will announce the topic of conversation for the following week. Come join our group for conversation in Spanish. Questions? Email Bernice Wesseling at [Bernice.Wesseling@uvm.edu](mailto:Bernice.Wesseling@uvm.edu).

#### Memoir writing

##### Wednesdays, Oct. 15-Dec. 17, 1-2:30 p.m.

Storytelling connects us with our own life experiences while offering a legacy to future generations. Join Laurie Caswell-Burke as she guides you in documenting the stories that have shaped you. During this 10-week class you will write, read and exchange our work with the goal of moving your stories forward. Through storytelling techniques, explore personal memories and create a focused narrative that explores thoughts, personal narratives, recollections and emotions. Cost: \$80 plus \$20 materials fee paid directly to the instructor. Registration and payment due Oct. 8. To register, call 802-425-6345.

### Games

#### American mahjong

##### Tuesdays, 12:30-3:45 p.m.

##### & Wednesdays, 6 p.m.

Enjoy American mahjong with



Photo by Lila Webster

Champlain Valley Union High students are partnering with the senior center to host a classic board-game afternoon and to lead a Harkness-style conversation group.

opportunities to play twice each week. Beginners and experienced players are welcome to join. Tuesday afternoons is a drop-in class. Invite your friends and come play mahjong. If you are brand new to mahjong, experienced player Jane Krasnow will be on hand Wednesday evenings to teach newcomers and guide play throughout the evening. Krasnow starts a beginner-friendly class at the beginning of each month. Already know how to play? Come and enjoy a night of friendly competition. Please email Jane Krasnow at [jane.krasnow@gmail.com](mailto:jane.krasnow@gmail.com) to let her know you are coming.

#### 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

#### Experienced hiking group

##### Wednesday, Oct. 15, 9 a.m.

Love a challenge? Join our hiking group, designed for experienced hikers ready to explore trails across Vermont and the Adirondacks. This month, we'll tackle Camel's Hump. Space is limited to eight participants, so early registration is encouraged. We'll meet in the senior center foyer and carpool to the trailhead. Hikes are weather dependent and may be rescheduled in case of inclement conditions. Registration required. To register, call 802-425-6345. For questions, contact Michael Rubin at [mjrubin99@gmail.com](mailto:mjrubin99@gmail.com).

#### Core & strength fitness

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

Join Phyllis Bartling for a hybrid pilates class designed specifically for individuals 55+. 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. 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. Eliza, a certified instructor, has studied with Dr. Lam, 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 warmly welcome to observe a class or reach out to Hammer at [belizahammer@hotmail.com](mailto:belizahammer@hotmail.com). Cost: \$10 a 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.

#### Men's Breakfast

##### Friday, Oct. 10

Doors open at 7 a.m. and breakfast is at 7:30 a.m. On the second Friday of every month, a group of men come together for a morning of breakfast and fellowship. This month the group welcomes Charlotte resident Brandon Tieso as guest speaker. Tieso will be sharing insights on Artificial Intelligence (AI) — what it is, why it matters and how it's shaping our world. Suggested donation: \$6. If you plan to attend the Men's Breakfast, please register by emailing Lane Morrison at [lmorrison@gmavt.net](mailto:lmorrison@gmavt.net) no later than Tuesday, Oct. 7.



# Write Ingredients

## Oct. 2 is birthday of Peter Rabbit and mac-and-cheese day

Susan Ohanian  
Contributor

From French explorer Jacques Cartier visiting the Iroquois settlement of Hochelaga (later Montreal) to 13-year-old Louis XIII being declared an adult, to George Washington sending proposed constitutional amendments (Bill of Rights) to the states for ratification, to Phileas Fogg setting out on a famous voyage, Oct. 2 is quite a day in world history.

For me, first and foremost, Oct. 2, 1902, Beatrix Potter’s “Tale of Peter Rabbit” was published in London. Words cannot express how this book captivated third graders, children aptly named “lousy readers” by Prof. Richard Allington, president of the International Reading Association, advising teachers to start with reality.

A boy, who whined every day for months how much he hated books, insisted on keeping a copy of “Peter” in his desk because, he said, “I like how it feels when I run my hands over it.”

In December, I gave everyone a copy of “The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin,” Potter’s tale of a naughty squirrel who loses his tail.

### Celebrating mac and cheese

This Oct. 2 is mac-and-cheese day at the Charlotte Senior Center’s Monday Munch. From Thomas Jefferson to Agatha Christie, you’ll find appreciative remarks about mac and cheese. Even the often-cranky Judge John Hodgman in The New York Times seems to smile as he announces, “Nobody is sad when mac and cheese shows up at a party.”

That said, glancing through the zillions of New York Times entries for mac and cheese, one finds some oddball recipes. Leading the list is Spam Macaroni and Cheese. This is followed by macaroni with lobster, crab, hamburger, and chorizo. I was surprised that Velveeta made it into the newspaper of record, but there it is: A recipe for Peanut Butter Noodles with Velveeta.

Martha Stewart proclaims her recipe is “perfect macaroni and cheese” (béchamel sauce made with sharp white cheddar and Gruyère cheeses). In this context, when we



Adobe Stock photo

lived in upstate New York and came up to Lake Champlain every weekend to sail, there was always an emergency blue box in the hold: Kraft Macaroni and Cheese Dinner (first marketed in the U.S. in 1936).

In February 1789, William Short wrote that, at Thomas Jefferson’s request, he procured a “mold for making macaroni” in Naples and sent it to Jefferson in Paris. In 1790, the mold was shipped to Philadelphia. Among Jefferson’s papers is his handwritten recipe for macaroni and cheese.

### Fun food reading

I looked for food poems to amuse third graders, and Shel Silverstein delivered the goods:

Spaghetti, spaghetti, all over the place,  
Up to my elbows — up to my face,  
Over the carpet and under the chairs,  
Into the hammock and wound round the stairs.

Filling the bathtub and covering the desk.

A New York Times review (Aug. 10, 2024), written 50 years after Silverstein’s book was published, called the book “freewheeling, alliterative and silly ... a cockamamie carnival wrapped around a font of timeless commentary.” I’d put a

strong emphasis on “timeless” and add “wonderful.”

When I taught those kids who hated books, once a week we tried for sustained silent reading: students sitting with a book of their choice for 50 minutes. That’s an excruciatingly long time for kids. Kids would twitch, poke, fall asleep, fall out of chairs and cause shelves to fall.

My students were astonished that I read, too. Most of those children had never seen an adult engage in sustained silent reading. I’d ask today’s busy parents to think about what their children see them doing.

### Developing a newspaper habit

When I taught seventh and eighth grade lousy readers, after much “discussion,” I persuaded the authorities to let me use a large part of the book budget for four copies of the local daily newspaper. We did a lot with the paper. Some days I’d challenge a student to find the weirdest story: surgery performed on an elephant, bubble gum-blowing contests, a cat who inherited a fortune.

When I set Gennaro to this task, he complained, “You aren’t even going to tell me which section?” About 10 minutes later,

he shouted, “I found it! I found it!”

He turned to his fellow lousy readers and read them the story of a man who got so angry at his lawn mower that he picked up a gun and shot it.

Roosevelt grabbed my copy of The New York Times every Monday, informing me that was the day they ran the best sports pictures, something I hadn’t realized.

When a state education evaluator expressed concern that The New York Times might not be appropriate material for a “corrective reading situation,” I invited this boy, who was periodically picked up off the streets and sent off to juvenile detention centers, to perform. Roosevelt was lousy at deciphering school textbooks, but he could make a box score sound like Moses announcing the contents of the tablets.

I brought in restaurant menus and a New Yorker article about the founding of Baskin-Robbins. Students made an 8-foot high, multi-colored ice cream cone to hang outside the classroom door. On a roll of adding machine tape stretched down the hall, students wrote the name of every ice cream flavor they’d read about, plus the many, many flavors they invented.

To add a new flavor to the adding machine tape, a student first had to read all the previous flavors aloud. As the list grew from five to 50 to 100 and more flavors, students and teachers from other parts of the school came to read it.

“They want to see our list,” these students, grouped together as the worst readers in our school, noted with pride.

### Monday Munch

**Oct. 6, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Homemade macaroni and cheese, glazed carrots, crescent rolls and pumpkin bars with cream cheese frosting.

**Oct. 13, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Fall harvest soup with local farm vegetables (vegan), green salad, bread, beverages and Janet’s apple cake with caramel sauce.

*(Susan Ohanian was recipient of the George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language.)*

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