

The Charlotte News

January 9, 2025

Your nonprofit community news source since 1958

Vol. 67, No. 14

Recreation committee wants new bathhouse

Brett Yates
Contributor

The Charlotte Recreation Committee has developed a plan to build a new bathhouse and pavilion for the town beach. The multi-year project would cost an estimated \$750,000.

If the Charlotte Selectboard agrees to warn the committee's proposed Town Meeting Day article, voters will have a chance to weigh contributing an initial \$40,000. On Jan. 6, the board heard a presentation without taking action.

"At present, the state of the bathhouse is disastrous," said Brandon Tieso, a former beach attendant who now serves on the recreation commission. "It would be nice to have a facility that people could use and feel safe in and hygienic in."

According to recreation chair Julie Phelps, the town's circa-1980 building lacks Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. Slides suggested that its replacement might resemble the new Shelburne Beach House, completed in 2024.

That project's conceptual phase began in 2016. Phelps floated a similar timeline.

In her vision, annual taxpayer contributions would join community fundraising dollars to form the required 50 percent match for a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, for which the recreation committee would apply in 2026 or, more likely, 2028.

Ultimately, the new structure

would "provide accessible and gender-neutral bathroom and changing facilities" and "a covered, protected 'stage' area for musical performances, small gatherings or summer camps," as well as office space for beach employees and storage for pickleball equipment. It could even include outdoor showers.

"I think we're going to go through so many iterations. This is going to be many years down the road. Whatever we end up with may not be what we initially have sat in front of you and asked for," Phelps said. "We'd like to start funding."

At the same meeting, the Charlotte Trails Committee also pitched a potential Town Meeting Day article. It wants to ask voters for \$62,000, which would cover about two-thirds of the cost of a new segment of the Town Link Trail, with the remainder coming from the trail reserve fund.

The funding would pay for a gravel path along the south side of Ferry Road between the old health center and the rail station access road. With the addition of a crosswalk, this would connect the Village Loop Trail to the Cowboy Lewis Trail.

"It's important for us to remember that we want to have all these great things. There's a price tag," selectboard member Kelly Devine said. "I think we'll do our best to try to squeeze everything in. But I'd love to see voters be thinking more about those choices as we try to make them as a town, and how we can come up with a balance that really works well for people across the community."

Mt. Philo Fidos



There have been a few snows good for walking on Mt. Philo recently.

Photo by Lee Krohn

Push still on for inclusion declaration addition to ballot

Scooter MacMillan
Editor

Despite at least one board member's disappointment, the inclusion declaration working group was disbanded after the selectboard's Dec. 16 meeting.

Board member Frank Tenney questioned whether the board had to accept the working group's request to be dissolved, but finally relented when fellow board member and chair of the inclusion working group Natalie Kanner pointed out that the board's own instructions for the group included a provision that the group would disband if it came to an impasse.

"The members did not have a majority in

favor of anything, actually," Kanner said. There was not a majority in favor of writing a town inclusion declaration or not having a declaration.

"We had three members of the working group. Each member voted for one of the three options," Kanner said.

One option the selectboard presented to the inclusion declaration working group was to recommend that the selectboard put the existing statement on the Town Meeting Day ballot for residents to decide, another was recommending that the town draft its own inclusivity statement and the third option was to not make any recommendation to the selectboard.

The existing inclusion declaration

unamended by Charlotte is:

"The town of Charlotte condemns racism and welcomes all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, disability, or socioeconomic status, and wants everyone to feel safe and welcome in our community.

"As a town, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms, commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies and operating procedures reflect this commitment.

"The town of Charlotte has and will continue to be a place where individuals can live freely and express their opinions."

Tenney said he had hoped the inclusivity working group would come back to the selectboard with options for it to consider. This didn't happen.

But the Declaration of Inclusion issue is not done.

Nina Regan was one of the three members of the now defunct inclusion declaration working group. She supported recommending that the selectboard put the declaration on the town ballot, and is going forward as part of a group which may gather signatures for a petition requiring the inclusion declaration to be included on the ballot.

However, Regan has requested that the

INCLUSION continued on page 2

Editorial

Passing inclusion declaration — no brainer

The Charlotte Selectboard should go ahead and endorse the declaration of inclusion. Short of that, the selectboard should at least put it on the ballot and let the voters decide if their town will stand up for inclusion and make a commitment to being a welcoming community.

At the Aug. 12 selectboard meeting, the Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen of Charlotte Congregational Church said he assumed everyone agreed with the declaration and that supporting it is “a no brainer.” To take his thought one step further: Not supporting it is sort of heartless.

The notion that there is some secret message encoded in the declaration’s three sentences is grasping at straws. The words of the declaration all speak to condemning racism and discrimination and welcoming people of all races, religions, nationalities, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status. Passing the inclusion declaration would commit the town to fairness and equal treatment. All of these are values that every individual in town should already espouse and stand up for.

There is nothing in the declaration that would commit the town to economic development of any sort. And lawyers have

confirmed, as if they needed to, that there is nothing in the declaration’s 101 words that would bind the town to any sort of financial obligation.

The convictions laid out in the declaration of inclusion echo a foundational declaration in the history of our country — the preamble to the Declaration of Independence.

As the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson eloquently argued that all men are created equal and born with basic rights. As Jefferson said, these truths are “self-evident.” Or as Goldenbogen framed it, endorsing these rights is “a no brainer.”

The one thing the town of Charlotte would be committing itself to by approving the declaration of inclusion is being nice.

Voting for the town of Charlotte to be nicer isn’t controversial, and the selectboard should not be reluctant to vote for being nicer.

There is a school of thought that holds that legislative representatives should always vote for what their constituents want. In reality, representatives should usually vote for what their constituents want. But there are exceptions.

Moments come, usually of great historical impact, that call for representatives to vote for

what is right instead of what is popular.

In 1920, the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote was deadlocked in the Tennessee state legislature. The youngest legislator, 24-year-old Harry Burn, was a conservative from a conservative district. The debate in Tennessee became known as the War of the Roses because supporters of the amendment wore yellow roses and those opposed wore red roses.

On the day of the crucial vote, Burn came wearing a red rose. It looked as if the measure would fail. But Burn came to the vote also carrying a letter from his mother in his breast pocket. In her letter, his mother admonished him to be “a good boy” and vote for the amendment. He did and the rest, as they say, is history.

History also tells of votes approving the Emancipation Proclamation, Civil Rights or other crucial votes taken when many of the voters represented did not want these motions to pass. Thank goodness that legislators have sometimes cast difficult, possibly even heroic, votes in such moments, voting for what was right but maybe not popular.

Let’s hope our selectboard does as well.

Time to register to run for office or your dog

Mary Mead
Town Clerk & Treasurer

If you are interested in running for office this year, now is the time to take your petition out.

Thirty signatures are required to get your name on the ballot, and a “consent of candidate” form is also required. Both need to be handed in to the town clerk’s office by 5 p.m. on Monday, Jan. 27.

As far as signing the petition goes, if there is more than one candidate running for a single office, you are now allowed to sign any and all candidates’ petitions for that single office.

The following offices are up for election this year:

- auditor — 3-year term (Richard Mintzer, incumbent)
- cemetery commissioner - 1-year term (vacant)
- cemetery commissioner - 2-year term (vacant)
- cemetery commissioner - 3-year term (Jessie Bradley, incumbent)
- Charlotte Library Trustee - 5-year term (Anne Marie Andriola, incumbent)
- delinquent tax collector - 1-year term (Mary Mead, incumbent)
- moderator - 1-year term (Charles Russell, incumbent)

- road commissioner - 1-year term (Junior Lewis-incumbent)
- selectboard - 2-year term (Kelly Devine, incumbent)
- selectboard - 3-year term (James M. Faulkner, incumbent)
- trustee of public funds - 3-year term (Ruth Uphold, incumbent)

Stop in and get your paperwork going if any of these offices are of interest to you.

It is also time to register your dog, the new 2025 licenses are ready to go. Unfortunately, the state of Vermont has increased its portion of the fee by \$2. The cost now for neutered and spayed dogs is \$11 and \$15 for intact males and females.

INCLUSION

Continued from page 1

selectboard just go ahead and approve the inclusion declaration, or if not, that they vote to have it added to the ballot and let residents decide. If either of these votes is passed by the selectboard at its meeting this Monday, Jan. 13, there will be no need to collect signatures for a petition.

But Jan. 13 is the deadline to submit petitions to have articles added to the ballot

for this year’s Town Meeting Day, so a petition would have to be submitted that day and couldn’t wait until the selectboard meeting that night to be included on this year’s ballot. Town Meeting will be on Saturday, March 1, at Charlotte Central School.

The inclusion declaration in Vermont originated in Rutland County in 2020 with a group of volunteers who wanted to make Vermont the most inclusive state in the United States.

The most recent tally is that 159 of Vermont’s 247 towns have passed the declaration of inclusion, said Al Wakefield, who is one of the five Rutland volunteers working to get it passed. That means that almost 65 percent of the state’s towns have passed it or that 79 percent of the population lives in a town that has endorsed it.

He said Charlotte is the only town in Chittenden County that has not adopted it.

When the inclusion declaration was first proposed at a selectboard meeting a couple of years ago, board member Lewis Mudge had hoped it would be passed then and that Charlotte would be one of the first towns in

the state to embrace the declaration.

In response to allegations at selectboard meetings that “if you read between the lines” you will find that the declaration would bind the town to other actions, Wakefield said. “There’s nothing in what we have said or done which indicates that we’re talking about development in any kind of way. I think we’re talking about really the best of what America represents, in terms of welcoming people to our communities.”

Wakefield said that support among Charlotte residents for adopting the declaration is very high: “There’s as active a group of people supporting this declaration as any community across the state.”

Another article petition

Another petition was circulated in town to have an article added to the ballot that would restore to residents the right to vote on land-use regulation changes.

Karen Frost, who has been working on this effort, said when they submitted their petition to town clerk Marry Mead they had 255 signatures, more than enough to have the measure added to the ballot.



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.

Editorial independence

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.

Code of Ethics

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:

- Seek truth and report it.
- Minimize harm.
- Act independently.
- Be accountable and transparent.

Disclaimer

Individuals associated with The Charlotte News may engage in public discussion on issues in Charlotte, including at selectboard and other Town meetings, and on Front Porch Forum. They may also work or volunteer for organizations in Charlotte, including private businesses, the Town government, and nonprofits. When engaging in public discussions, they are expressing personal or organizational views and not necessarily the views of The Charlotte News, its staff, board of directors, or volunteers. Individuals who write opinion pieces for the paper will have their role at The Charlotte News identified, and the piece will be clearly labeled as their personal commentary.

Letters, Opinions and Obituaries

Consistent with our mission, The Charlotte News publishes letters to the editor, opinion pieces and obituaries submitted by our readers. All such materials are subject to review and approval by the editor in accordance with the standards and requirements listed on our website at charlottenewsvt.org/about.

Send submissions, questions, photos, etc. to scooter@thecharlottenews.org.

Editorial Staff

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

Business Staff

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

Board Members

Board Chair: Bill Regan (bill@thecharlottenews.org)
Treasurer: Margery McCracken (treasurer@thecharlottenews.org)
Secretary: Meredith Moses
Board members: Peter Joslin, John Quinney, Julia Russell, Dave Speidel, Andrew Zehner, Vince Crockenberg (emeritus), John Hammer (emeritus)
Technical advisor: Melissa Mendelsohn, Orchard Road Computers

Website: charlottenewsvt.org

Subscription Information

The Charlotte News is delivered at no cost to all Charlotte residences. Subscriptions are available for first-class delivery at \$60 per calendar year.

Want a subscription? Subscribe on our website, charlottenewsvt.org

Postmaster/Send address changes to:

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

Copyright © 2024 TCN, Inc., dba The Charlotte News. Member of the New England Newspaper and Press Association, LION Publishers, Institute for Nonprofit News and the Vermont Press Association.

Support local nonprofit reporting. Donate Today!



CLARIFICATION

The newspaper ran a holiday greeting on its back cover in its last edition.

This message was unintentionally not inclusive. The newspaper does not advocate for any religion, and we intentionally like for all residents to feel included and a sense of ownership in the town’s nonprofit news source.

We sincerely apologize to those whose beliefs were excluded by this message.

Once again, readers have helped meet fundraising goal

Bill Regan and John Quinney
Board of Directors

We are thrilled to report that once again our readers have stepped up to support The Charlotte News. Our fundraising campaigns in 2024 prompted more than 350 readers to donate, providing more than half the revenue that is required to keep us in business.

Almost all gifts received in November and December were matched by our \$15,000 NewsMatch grant and a \$10,000

Thank you!

Anonymous (6)
Alexa Lewis
Alexandra Lehmann
Andre LaChance
Andrea Rogers
Andrew Milliken
Andrew Zehner
Andrew Thurber & Kathryn Perkins
Andrew See
Andy Fite
Anita Royer
Anne & Jim Lampman
Arline Van Gessel
Arthur Birney
Barbara Zimmerman
Barbara Baker
Bernie Regenauer
Beth Sytsma & Ted Roberts
Bill & Nina Regan
Bill Fraser-Harris
Bill & Lynn Fox
Bob & Nancy Bloch
Bob & Kathryn Mesaros
Briar Alpert & Susan Vigsnes
Brooke Taylor Mossman
Brownie Adsit
Capt. Dan
Carl & Carianne Herzog
Carleen Tufo
Carolyn & Jack Kovac
Catherine Stanger & Alan Budney
Cathy Hunter
Charles Moseley
Charlotte & Craig Addison
Cheryl Walker
Chris & Bob Lobel
Christine & Bob Stiller
Christine & John Giraudou
Claire Aube
Claudette Swett
Claudia Marshall & Matthew Zucker
Claudia & Mark Pfaff
Colleen Boyce
Constantine & MaryAnne Gatos
Craig Heindel & Judith Chaves
Dale Bergdahl & Jerilyn
Dana Ward
Daniel Raabe & Rachel Destito
Danielle & James Menk
Dave & Karen Speidel
David Blittersdorf
Deborah Minkler
Deborah Lamden & Enzo Di Maio
Deborah Cook
Deborah Davis
Deborah Smith
Del Sheldon
Dewey Donovan
Dick Tonino
Donna Atwater & Rodney Parsons
Donna & Remo Pizzagalli
Dorothy Grover-Read & Stewart Read
Doug Mariboe
Ed Sulva
Edorah Frazer
Eileen Curtis

challenge from seven friends of The Charlotte News. As a result, the newspaper will receive an additional \$25,000 over and above your donations.

We are so grateful.

It means a lot to us to know that the newspaper has this level of public support. It also means that we're answerable to you, our readers. We welcome your feedback on the newspaper's coverage of town issues and your suggestions for how we can do better, including ideas for stories. You will find the email addresses for our editor and board members on page two of this newspaper and

on the "about" page of our website.

As you know from our campaigns, this newspaper costs about \$150,000 a year to produce. That covers printing, postage, salaries, software, insurance, and so on. Yet the newspaper is delivered for free to every household in Charlotte and published, in full, on our website. Twice a year, we ask you, our readers, to pay for this public service, and you do not disappoint.

If you were intending to send a gift but didn't get to it in the rush of the holidays and year's end, it's not too late. Be an early bird in 2025 with a donation on our website,

charlottenews.org.

Below, we've listed the more than 350 individuals and couples who made 575 gifts to The Charlotte News last year. We've added the names of spouses and partners wherever possible. In other instances, the information wasn't provided, and we apologize for the omissions. We've checked this listing carefully, but if we've made errors, please let us know with an email to John at john@thecharlottenews.org. In the future, we'll be sure to give credit where its due.

With best wishes for the New Year and thanks to our 2024 donors:

Eleanor Russell
Eleanor Capeless
Elizabeth Humstone
Elizabeth Bassett & John Pane
Elsie Kiley
Emily Dempsey
Erin Hanley
Erin Ross
Ernest Pomerleau
Evan Osler & Elizabeth Watson
Frances Foster
Gail Holmes
Garrett Sadler
Gary & Karin Small
Gay Regan
George Howe
George & Kathleen Fox
Glen Carleton
Glen Findholt
Gopi & J.P. Advani
Grady Thomas
Gregory & Fraya Smith
Gretchen Morse
Hank & Josie Kaestner
Heather & John Dwight
Heather Abele
Helen Toor
Helena Spear
Henry Hagar
Holly Groschner
Ian Govett & Karen Nolin
Jackie Coleburn
James Faulkner
James & MaryEllen Hebert
James & Alice Murdoch
James & Patricia Dobson
Jan Blomstrann
Jane Carleton
Jane & David Ross Allen
Janice & Tom Heilmann
Jeannie MacDonough
Jed Borovik
Jeff & Susan McDonald
Jeffrey Small
Jennifer Stadnik
Jenny & Jordan Wilson
Jenny & Dan Cole
Jessica Rauch
Jessie Price & John Streng
Jill Smith
Jill & Edward Wilkens
Jill Wolcott
Jim & Dee Hodson
Jim Squires & Debbie Dodd-Squires
Joan Weed
Jodi & Jeff Smith
John Limanek & Laurie Thompson
John & Nancy Rosenthal
John Thibault
John Sheehan
John Quinney & Colleen Armstrong
John & Dorrice Hammer
John Cammack
John & Joan Ernst
Jonathan & Erika Bearman
Jonathan Silverman & Martha Whitfield
Joseph & Cornelia Tierney
Joseph & Jennifer Dickerman
Joseph Lasek
Julia Russell

Julian Kulski & Lisa Boyle
Karen Tuininga
Karen Weber
Karen & Bill Bruett
Karina & Stuart Warshaw
Karyn & John Lunde
Kate Lampton
Katharine Hikel
Katherine & Bill Schubart
Katherine Ranallo
Katherine Arthaud
Kathlyn Furr
Kenneth & Lisa Miller
Kerrie Pughe
Kevin Pumiglia & Kathryn Leopold
Kevin & Deidre Goldenbogen
Kim & David Ziegelman
Kim Findlay
Kimberly Warren
Kristy Spengler
Lane & Janet Morrison
Larry Sommers & Joanne Dennee
Laura Cahners-Ford
Laura & Peter Osborne
Laura St. George
Laurel Lakey & Jared Ulmer
Lauren Hart
Laurey & Alden Mauck
Laurie Green
Laurie Thompson & John Limanek
Lee Wasserman
Lee Suskin
Lee Krohn & Carol Talley
Lee Ann Cox & Enrique Corredera
Lell & Rex Forehand
Lesli Blount
Leslie & Junior Lewis
Linda Gilbert
Linda Hamilton
Lindsay Longe & Chris Mack
Lindsay & Sam Smith
Lisa Crispin & Robert Downing
Lisa Steele & Scott Hammond
Liz & Jim Foster
Liz & Chuck DesLauriers
Lois Obregon
Lois McClure
Lori Racha & Damon Silverman
Lorraine & Joseph Koffman
Louise & Jonathan Fairbank
Lucie Lehmann
Lynne & Stephen Hale
Lynne & Scott Jaunich
Lynne Bond
Macy Margolin
Magdalena Naylor
Marc & Annie Richter
Marc Wieman
Mare Hopkins
Margaret & Michael Lazar
Margery & Russ McCracken
Mark & Ann Dillenbeck
Mark & Jill Lyons
Mark & Victoria Powers
Martha & Russell Partridge
Martha & Mike Wool
Martha & Joe Barton-Rivera
Martha Mitchell
Mary & Tim Volk
Mary Van Vleck
Mary Holmes
Mary & Charlie Brush

Maryanne Kyburz-Ladue
Marybeth Gilliam
Matthew & Rebecca Coll
Matthew Tolosky
Meaghan & Ethan McLaughlin
Meg Berlin
Meg & Whit Smith
Meghan & Matthew Siket
Melanie Goodman
Melanie Bui
Michael & Justine Dee
Michael & Shelby Teaster
Mike & Janet Yantachka
Mimsy Murray & Stan Monk
Missy Kraus
Moe Harvey & Mary Mead
Molly McClaskey & Gill Barlow
Nadine Canter
Nan & Ben Mason
Nancy Aronson
Nancy Wood
Nancy Petty
Nick Vanderkloot
Pamela Powell
Patricia Waters
Patricia O'Donnell & Jim Donovan
Paul Wadler
Peggy & Jim Sharpe
Penelope Hoblyn
Peter & Nancy Richardson
Peter Holmberg
Peter Swift & Diana McCargo
Peter & Diane Rosenfeld
Peter Post
Peter & Meredith Moses
Peter & Julia Voll
Peter Macia
Peter & Paula Joslin
Peter Cole
Phyllis Mazurski
Polly Harris
Ralph Brooker
Randy & Karen Ramsden
Randy & Nancy Longe
Raymond & Mary Mesirow
Richard & Wendy Hendrickson
Richard & Linda Stowe
Richard & Juliette Latimer
Richard & Sandi Detwiler
Richard Kerschner
Richard & Kathryn Ahrens
Rick Blount & Andrea Grayson
Robbie Hodgson
Robbie & Susan Hall
Robert & Marjorie Archer
Robert & Deborah Donahue
Robert Carmody & Mary Scripps
Robert Steis
Robert & Yolande Larson
Robert Nickelsberg
Robert Der Stein & Kathryn Milillo
Roberta Whitmore
Roberta & John Stetson
Robin & Robert Coleburn
Robin & Bob Turnau
Robin Hayden
Rocki-Lee Dewitt & Josephine Herrera
Ronda Moore
Ruah Swenerfelt & Louis Cox
Sam & Judy Pugliese
Sandy Jones

Sandy Schofield
Sarah Spooner
Sera Anderson
Shari Bell
Sharon Mount & Barry Finette
Stan & Bettina Wasilewski
Stephanie & Jim Wells
Stephany & Bruce Hasse
Stephen Crane
Stephen Kiernan
Stephen Johnson
Stephen & Margaret Foster
Steve Wisbaum & Suzanne Lourie
Steve Kantor
Steven Spadaccini
Steven Siket
Sue & Dave Schermerhorn
Susan Horsford
Susan & Nick Carter
Susan & John Lavigne
Susan Hong
Susan Tobin
Susan Stuck
Susan McCullough
Susan & Jim Hyde
Susan & Hans Ohanian
Susan Sim
Susanne & Chris Davis
Suzanne Slesar
Suzy Hodgson & Mike Walker
Taylor Root Family Charitable Fund
Ted LeBlanc & Jane Kearns
Ted Scatchard
Ted & Anne Castle
Ted Montgomery
Terry Close & Jonathan Hart
Theresa Carroll
Theresa & Bill Petrow
Thomas Macia
"Thomas McAuliff Jr. & Janella Pennington"
Thomas Maci
Thomas & Susan Little
Thomas & Naomi Randall
Tim McCullough
Tim & Jenn Higgins
Timothy & Suzanne Hawley
Tina & Ric Flood
Toby Barlow
Tom & Michelle Tiller
Tom & Lorna Bates
Tom & Ebeth Scatchard
Toni & Bob Monsey
Tracey Beaudin
Valerie Graham
Vera Simon-Nobes
Victor & Wanda Bean
Victoria & John Rizzi
Vince Crockenberg
Virginia Keyser
Wendy Hawkins
William & Patricia Nestork
William Pendlebury
William Thompson
William Lockwood
Wolfer Schneider
Zackary Macik

(Bill Regan is chair of the board of directors of The Charlotte News. John Quinney is chair of the board's fundraising committee.)

Local advertisers: The heart of our community newspaper

Susie Therrien
Contributor

Our community newspaper is a vital resource that connects us all, sharing local news and events that matter. The Charlotte News thrives, in part, thanks to the support of our local advertisers — businesses that believe in the power of community journalism.

Why advertisers matter

Our advertisers are more than just names in print; they are essential to our community's fabric. By investing in our newspaper, they help ensure we can deliver quality news that keeps you informed. Your support for these businesses and organizations helps them thrive, creating a cycle of mutual benefit that strengthens our entire community.

Together we thrive

Next time you see an ad in The Charlotte News, consider visiting that business or using their services. Your patronage not only supports them but also reinforces the importance of local news.

Thank you to our 2024 advertisers

Thank you for being an essential part of our community. Together, we can ensure our newspaper remains a source of pride and information for everyone.

A Little Something
Acorn Painting
All Earth Renewables
Animal Hospital of Hinesburg
Beagle Builders
Bittner Antiques
Building Energy
Catering By Dale LLC
CCS Holiday Market
Champlain Valley Compost Co.
Champlain Valley School District
Charity for Vermont
Charlotte Fire and Rescue Service
Charlotte Grange
Churchhill Landscaping
College Essay Coach
Copper Leaf Financial Services
Copper on Dorset
Culligan Water
Dantzcher, Adam
Darling's Boatworks
Drop the Racquet

Efficiency Vermont
Fat Cow Farm
Flynn Theatre
Furchgott & Sourdiffe
Green Mountain Access
Heal Hyperbarics and Innovative Wellness
Hello Neighbor — Tractor Works
Hickok and Boardman
HomeShare Vermont
Horsford's Nursery
Howard Center Educational Series
Jackman's Inc.
Jamie Two Coats
John Eastman Electrical Services
Jonathan Hart Photography
Keller Williams Realty
Lake Front Painting
Lane Morrison
Lone Wolf Energy
MYSA
Nancy Jenkins Real Estate
Night Eagles Wilderness Camp
Northern Basements
Parenting Wellness Consulting & Psychotherapy
Patalin's Sugarhouse
Peace of Mind Pet & Plant Care
Pease Mountain Law

Pêche Medical Spa
Philo Car Club
Pleasant Mount Farm
Pleasant Valley Landscaping
Point Bay Marina
Polli Construction
Red Rose Renovations
RVG Electrical Services
Sargent's Tree Service
Shear Cuts
Shelburne Dental Group
Shelburne Museum
Stone Block Antiques
Stone's Throw Pizza
Thomas Hirschack
Titus Insurance Co.
Town of Charlotte
True Blue Home Service Ally
US Sherpa
Vergennes Animal Hospital
Vergennes Opera House
Vergennes Partnership
Vermont Commons School
Vermont Construction Company
Wake Robin Residents' Association
(Susie Therrien is advertising manager at The Charlotte News. She can be reached via email at ads@thecharlottenews.org.)

Letters to the Editor

Asylum seekers' stories echo 300 years of U.S. immigrants' stories

To the Editor:

Picture a young woman, 9 months pregnant, compelled by forces beyond her

control to leave home and make an arduous journey with her betrothed to a foreign land, unsure of their welcome there.

At this time of year, most of us raised in the Christian tradition would pretty immediately, if unconsciously, imagine this young woman

as Mary, "heavy with child," compelled by a decree by Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus, to travel with Joseph to Bethlehem, to be counted in a compulsory census. Given the secularization of the Nativity story, even people of other faiths, or no faith at all, know Jesus's birth story, if only through secular sources like Linus standing in the spotlight on stage to recite the story in the animated classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

But what if this story is not Biblical at all, but contemporary? In fact, this story is that of one of the asylum seekers who came to Vermont just a few years ago with her husband. She walked through the treacherous jungle of the Darien Gap that links South America to Central America and on to the U.S.-Mexico border, all while many months pregnant, to seek asylum from the violence and hopelessness of her native land. And what if you knew that this woman's story, unlike Mary's, is not at all unique, but far too common, and one that at times has resulted in the death of the mother and her unborn child, either due to the terrible conditions of the journey or her treatment at the border?

Since 2018, the nine community-based organizations that comprise the Vermont-New Hampshire Asylum Support Network have organized in their own backyards to offer welcome to strangers much like this pregnant woman and her husband. Residents of Vermont towns from Brattleboro to Burlington and St. Johnsbury to Rutland have banded together to provide asylum seekers with safe and warm places to stay and other assistance when little other help is available.

Stories of welcoming the stranger are not confined to one or another country or culture. Indeed, admonitions to welcome the stranger with extravagant hospitality abound in societies around the globe and across time lest the stranger turn out to be a friend, or perhaps an angel, an ancestor or even a savior.

One reason the value of welcoming the stranger has such universal power may be that so many of us, perhaps most of us, have

at one time or another been "a stranger in a strange land." Certainly, the vast majority of us Vermonters have ancestors who came to the United States at some point over the past three centuries looking for safety, opportunity and the freedom to pursue their dreams. The asylum seekers coming to Vermont right now are no different from our ancestors. They seek safety for themselves and their children. They yearn for the chance to live free of the threat of violence or persecution for who they are, the color of their skin, their religious beliefs or their political perspective. They are ready to work hard, contribute to their communities and live in peace with their neighbors.

In other words, they are just like the rest of us.

We in the Vermont-New Hampshire Asylum Support Network groups ask that each of us remember our own family's "coming to America" story and greet the newest immigrants to our country, whether refugee, asylum seeker, migrant worker or some other designation with generosity of spirit and the understanding that we — or someone in our background — was also a stranger here once, too.

Christine James
East Burke

(Christine James is a board member of the Northeast Kingdom Asylum Seekers Assistance Network.)

Won't be supporting this year's school district budget

To the Editor:

To quickly review, I was banned from publishing on Front Porch Forum on Dec. 9 for violating their Terms of Use. Not worth discussing any more. So, I will not be appearing on the forum going forward. I agree with many of you that the forum is a poor choice for policy discussions, but it is quick. I put together this contact group "Hinesburg Education Finance Issues" to email updates, but if your name was

LETTERS

Continued from page 4

included by mistake please let me know. Or, if you know of someone interested in being included let me know. But I thank all those who responded to my banishment updates, notifications and sent help and support.

The Champlain Valley School District superintendent and board plan on finalizing the FY26 school budget on Jan. 21, 2025, and publishing a warning by Feb. 2, 2025. Needless to say, not a great time to lose contact with Hinesburg taxpayers.

The only concern of mine is how best to get the message out about education finance related issues, especially property taxes. It appears this year, however, there is greater interest from the voters and legislators, and maybe less of a need to clarify some details. I'm pretty sure that most news outlets will be publishing frequent articles starting in January 2026 when the legislature begins work. Whether they will be reporting the complete truth and details remains to be seen.

As I stated in a previous forum post, I will not be supporting the FY26 CVSD school budget as proposed and suggest you don't as well. The board is recommending a \$103,020,140 budget that will come with another substantial property tax hike (likely more than 5.9 percent). The town of Hinesburg is also warning of a property tax hike. My answer to both administrations is to level-fund next year. We cannot take another year of 20 percent property tax increases. Although the Governor or Legislature may

take steps next year to soften the blow, many education association members believe it will be revenue "juggling" and not the result of law changes.

Even if the Legislature and Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont can get their act together, which looks doubtful, there is little hope of finding an effective immediate cure. I have attended 24 of the 28 commission, subcommittee and public-input meetings. I think I have a pretty good understanding of how the discussion went and was more than a little disappointed that the commission chose to take no action toward their responsibility to recommend cost containment solutions. Honestly, based on the statements from some key players, it was hopeless from the start.

The best long-term solution that I have seen is similar to what is being proposed by Senator Scott Beck, referred to as the foundation formula. Governor Scott believes it will satisfy the Brigham test. I attempted to write about this method but was banned by the forum.

John Clifford
Hinesburg

Don't rush to restore resident vote for land-use regulation changes

To the Editor:

Respectfully, and somewhat hesitantly as I do not usually wade into these types of political matters in our community, I wonder about the concern and urgency of the petition restoring resident voting on

land-use regulation changes. Yes, for now, the selectboard does have the authority to approve or reject proposed zoning regulations ("land-use regulations" in Charlotte parlance). This is no different than in many other Vermont communities. This approach does not inherently open the door to "widespread development" as some have suggested, nor have I seen any indication among this selectboard to support widespread development. If anything, the consistent theme in Charlotte has been just the opposite, with challenges to just about anything proposed upon the land.

Selectboards are elected to manage town affairs, including the creation of a wide array of governance policies (which can include land-use regulations). If thought better to require these to be subject to townwide vote, so be it. Just be aware that the other side of the coin is that it also makes it that much more complicated and far less timely to consider adopting what might be considered "good" regulations or important, desirable or required updates; it's not just about the ability to vote down rules that might be considered unwise.

The process of proposing land-use regulations is complex in any form. I've worked under both systems (selectboard vote or townwide vote). The former is more efficient and allows important work to progress more timely, but does not inherently rush the process nor lead to undesirable outcomes; the latter slows the process

significantly and does not inherently lead to better outcomes.

Know also that, even if the selectboard retains authority in this matter, there is still a petition process available to challenge a selectboard decision to approve or reject land-use regulations; that's why these decisions do not become effective immediately. This check and balance exists in state statute.

In the end, both are lawful processes under current law, and the voters will get to decide if or when this petition succeeds.

That said, and importantly, if this petition succeeds locally, it might require the town to create or amend what's known as a "charter." Under state law, towns adopt a charter that gives them certain legal options or abilities that differ from standard state practice or requirements. If a charter is needed, it's important to know that adopting or amending a town charter is its own complex process that must proceed according to strict rules and time frames. Charters must also be approved by the Legislature, and getting its attention and approval is not in any way guaranteed.

Thanks for listening. In writing this, I am not urging anyone to vote in any particular direction; rather, I hope to help illuminate more fully the matter before us, and to offer informed perspective from 35 years of public service in municipal government, much of which was related directly to land-use planning and regulation.

Lee Krohn
Charlotte

Trail group works for safe bike trails for commuting

Kate Kampner
Community News Service

Imagine a commute without the worry of traffic jams, potholes or detours, a path to town that's nearby, maintained and linked to routes just like it all over the state.

That's the Cross Vermont Trail Association's vision — to create a web of trails for bikers and walkers to have easy access and safe travels between north-central Vermont towns.

"The goal of the work we do is to have trails that connect, that go where people want to go," Executive Director Greg Western said, explaining how the organization joins existing trails with connector paths like jigsaw pieces.

Groups like Cross Vermont are increasingly tailoring their work to people outside the usual biking and hiking crowd who want an alternative to roadways: commuters.

"Our whole mission is trails that go somewhere," Western said. "The whole point is that you could use it to commute."

One example: The group built a bridge over the Winooski River, which Western said "gets you a couple miles off of Route 2." Since 2019, there have been at least 18 crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists on Route 2 in Chittenden County, according to the state Agency of Transportation's crash database.

"It's just a way to cut off miles of crappy highway with shoulders and people speeding," Western said. "People use bits and pieces of it."

Cindi Wight, who directs Burlington's parks and recreation department, uses the city's bike path to commute to work.

"It's just a nice way to start your day when you have this green corridor that you're biking through," she said.

During the wintertime, her department plows the western side of the Greenway Path, allowing people to ski on the east side and walk, run or bike on the other.

"People who are commuting can use the path, but people who want to ski can use the snow," she said, adding later, "A nice way to extend the biking season is to add winter



Photos by Olivia Miller

Left: A pathway around the Intervale in Burlington on a winter day. Right: A post marking a Burlington Wildways bike trail around the Intervale in Burlington.

biking."

She encouraged people to try it.

Local Motion, a statewide advocacy group for bikers and walkers based in Burlington, each month hosts "EZ Breezy Rides," outings meant to teach people routes around the city, especially first-time bike commuters.

"If you just know where you're going, have a plan of action before you head out the door. It feels a lot more comfortable," said Val Cyr, a communications specialist at Local Motion. The organization's office sits on the Burlington Bike Path, which many people from its team use to commute.

Burlington Wildways is an organization that connects natural areas and paths around Vermont's largest city. It provides education programs for those interested in managing, advocating for and teaching people about natural and wild spaces.

Alongside that, the group maintains 5.6 miles of linked trails that run from Salmon Hole Park to the Ethan Allen Homestead, both natural and paved.

Patrick Dunseith, a member of Wildways

and a regular bike commuter, is also a land manager at the Intervale. One of the trails at the property is a 2-mile puzzle piece in both the Wildways and Cross Vermont networks.

Dunseith hopes to see more lighting on paths as it gets darker earlier, as well as see people keeping the trails cleaner.

"With natural trails or social trails, they're spaces that we can just look at like, 'This is somebody's responsibility.' Or we can look at it as, 'This is a collective resource, and I'm part of this place too as a user. It's my responsibility as well,'" he said.

Retirees Gail and David O'Brien, two East Hardwick residents in their 70s, are frequent travelers on their local section of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, a 93-mile path from St. Johnsbury to Swanton.

Biking for about 3 1/2 miles on the trail, the couple can get to Hardwick to go grocery shopping, attend town meetings and volunteer at the Hardwick Food Pantry, where they ride to and from every Monday.

"We try to err on the side of using our bikes as much as we can," David said. "It's just

knowledge because it's a beautiful section of the trail."

This year, the couple became rail trail ambassadors — volunteers who act as "a presence on the trail when people are stopped and look like they're lost or confused," Gail said.

They also report fallen trees and other problems on the trail and remind people to leave no trace.

"We know so many people in the Hardwick area that weren't biking that bought bikes and started biking because of the rail trail," Gail said.

David shares the same sentiment: "The more that people decide that they can get here to there on a bicycle or walking, rather than the convenience of the car, is going to be obviously good for the environment and good for their health."

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

Around Town

Condolences

Barbara Catherine Nolfi, a fiery champion of women's rights and justice for all, died peacefully in the presence of her beloved partner Don on the beautiful, warm fall day of September 29, 2024. Barbara's life was an extraordinary journey of service, vision, implementation and realization that led to a better life for many Vermonters.

As an inspired trailblazer, she was a founder of Earthworks Commune in Franklin, Vermont, as well as key Burlington institutions: the Onion River Food Coop, the People's Free Clinic (now the Community Health Centers), the Burlington Women's Health Center, and Burlington Cohousing East Village as well as the Charlotte Family Health Center. She served as a Progressive Burlington City

Counselor for eight years and Burlington Parks and Recreation Commissioner for 12. The main stories of Barbara's adult life are of solidarity with women and children, and of valuing collective living even in the face of its numerous (and often humorous) challenges.

Barbara was born in Bryan, Texas on July 28, 1942, the second child of Fredrick Macintosh Smith and Catherine Klein. She was proud of being an enrolled member of the Muscogee (Creek) nation through her father's family. She grew up in rural Oklahoma and in Southern California, studying for two years at Pomona College, then finishing her bachelor's at the University of California, Berkeley, where she met Jim Nolfi. In 1968, in Salmon Creek, Calif., Barbara gave birth to their son Dylan. Barbara and Jim moved to Vermont in 1969 — the year of Woodstock — where Jim had a teaching job with the University of Vermont's zoology department.

The following year Barbara entered a major period of personal growth and radicalization when she and Jim moved to the Earthworks Commune. At the commune, Barbara realized the value of living together and sharing resources. She described this period of her life as being "freed up from the loneliness of being a young mom by living with other women and children." "Smashing monogamy" was part of the 60s culture and Barbara and Jim's marriage did not survive. At the same time, Barbara became an organizer of Free Vermont, a collective of "communards" who brainstormed ideas for improving the lives of Vermonters.

Their top priorities were creating food coops and health care for all. In 1971, she became a founder and ultimately a staff member of the People's Free Clinic. With the help of sympathetic doctors, she received training as a home birth midwife. With Dr. Richard (Bunky) Bernstein and others, she founded the Charlotte Family Health Center. It was there, with Bunky's help, that she became certified as a physician's assistant. She also expanded her midwifery practice and, over the course of seven years, assisted with the birth of more than 100 babies.

Barbara stayed steadfast in her commitment to helping improve the lives of all people. In addition to parenting her young son, working in a clinic and practicing as a midwife, she also found the time to work with others to create the Onion River Food Co-op, which opened in 1973. She went on to sit on the board of the Co-op, and served on the finance committee for over a decade.

When Dylan was in eighth grade, Barbara began attending the University of Vermont's nursing school, graduating with her nursing degree in 1983. The previous year, she had met Don Schramm, through postings in Single Vermonters. Don brought his 4-year-old daughter, Hannah, into the new relationship. Don and Barbara, throughout 42 years together, continued to feel that they had won the lottery by finding each other. They cherished their close relationship and their blended family.

AROUND TOWN continued on page 7

Hi! Neighbor

Suzy Hodgson believes collaboration is a key part of sustainability

Phyl Newbeck
Contributor

Suzy Hodgson is a strong believer in collaboration. That is evident in both the way she works and in some of her projects, including those combining forestry and agriculture.

After well over a decade of service, Hodgson recently resigned from the Charlotte Energy Committee due to time constraints.

She was reluctant to take credit for any of the committee's work, noting that everything was a collaborative effort. The committee has been using a co-chair model to ensure that their work is not seen as a solo effort, and Hodgson said that almost all the work she has done has been in tandem with others.

Hodgson is a sustainable agriculture outreach specialist at the University of Vermont's Center for Sustainable Agriculture. Last summer, the group led a solar grazing workshop at Meach Cove Farms in Shelburne.

Hodgson said that in 2024, Vermont had 85 days where the temperature rose above 80 degrees with the last day occurring on Sept. 20. For that reason, she believes Vermont farmers need to think about providing shade for grazing animals, and one way to do that is with solar panels. A by-product of that combination is eliminating the need to mow around the panels.

Hodgson's main work at the University of Vermont is in education and outreach for climate mitigation, specifically the things farmers can do to reduce greenhouse gases without negatively affecting production. Since Vermont is known for small, diversified farms, she has been studying various forms of agroforestry.

Hodgson explained that agroforestry is a way to cultivate crops with a light touch. For some, solar grazing may solve problems, while others may turn to agritourism or forest farming. As an example of the latter, Hodgson described a farmer who planted the high value native plants goldenseal and American ginseng in a forest. Using that method, plants require less work to cultivate and co-exist with other forest functions like sugaring.

A complimentary tactic is silvopasture which entails planting trees in pastures,

providing an opportunity for animals to find shade. Studies have shown that overexposure to heat for cows that don't have access to barns, can have an adverse effect on the amount of milk they produce.

Other methods of agroforestry include alleycropping which involves thinking vertically, as well as horizontally when planting rows, riparian corridors which protect waterways from agricultural runoff, and wind breaks which help protect cropland from excessive wind and rain. Since trees can be expensive to buy and plant, there are federal grants to help farmers create wind breaks.

One of Hodgson's first forays into agriculture was co-founding the website yourfarmstand.com. Initially, she wanted to work on hub and spoke food models to find ways to aggregate and distribute food. When that didn't work out, she turned her attention to CSAs and attempted to create a model where consumers didn't have to stick to the products of just one farm and could shop at times convenient to them.

Unfortunately, although the model was good for consumers, it was hard for the farmers to make it a sustainable business. Even though the project didn't work out, Hodgson said she learned a lot about running a local business and got to know area farmers and their crops.

Over time, Hodgson has become more and more interested in trees. "Seventy-six percent of Vermont land is covered in trees," she said. "Summers are getting hotter so it may be time to look at trees that grow in southern Vermont, Massachusetts, or even Connecticut."

Hodgson described a process called assisted migration where people plant trees that are native to warmer climates. She tried this process by purchasing some seedlings from the oldest sycamore tree in Connecticut; one which has been growing for at least 200 years. She coddled the seedlings inside during the winter and they were growing well outside until a microburst of wind snapped them.

Hodgson notes that she and her Charlotte neighbors are lucky because they can work together to repair the damage caused by climate change, but she recognizes that not everyone has that advantage. "There are people who lose everything from climate change," she said, "and because of a lack of



Photo by Kevin Burget

From left kneeling, Suzy Hodgson, Rebecca Foster, Chloe Silverman, and standing, Jamey Gerlaugh, Jacqui DeMent, Wolfger Schneider, Mike Yantachka and Deirdre Holmes, members of the Charlotte Energy Committee gather at the Charlotte Central School compost shed with its new solar panels.

funds they aren't able to recover."

Hodgson is hopeful about the future of the planet. "I'm optimistic because we are creative," she said. "There are things we can do to change trendlines and the angles of our trajectory. We're all breathing the same air. Almost everything we do for the environment

is for the public good."

Hodgson believes there is a greater understanding that people can lead a full life while still respecting the environment. "People are learning to live well with less impact," she said.

AROUND TOWN

Continued from page 6

In addition to her work as a nurse on the pediatrics ward in Mary Fletcher Hospital, Barbara began working with Don at Data Systems, where she learned how to program complex accounting systems. Later she served as a traveling physician's assistant for Planned Parenthood of Vermont.

In 1989, she and Don, with several others, began the process of creating a cohousing community in Burlington. After 17 long years of persistence, they finally succeeded and moved into Burlington Cohousing East Village in 2007 where they lived together for the rest of her life.

Barbara loved the outdoors. Anything one did was better done outdoors. She swam, walked, camped, hiked, fished, biked, canoed and gardened. She loved watching and listening to birds and finding wild flowers in the woods. She was happy just sitting on a stream bank listening to the water. She always knew what phase the moon was in and would often get up in the middle of the night and go out and look at the moon.

Though Barbara was hammered with various ailments in the last few years of her life, such

as atypical Parkinson's and multiple myeloma, it was ultimately a stroke that took her quickly and quietly away from us. She was buried at Burlington Cohousing on Friday, Oct. 4, in a grave that her fellow cohousers, family members and several friends helped dig. She didn't necessarily want to be the first green burial at Cohousing (and she certainly didn't condone cutting in line), but the circumstances were unavoidable.

Barbara is survived by her sister Janet Kawelo and brother-in-law Galbraith Kawelo, both in Kailua, Hawaii; her son Dylan Nolfi, daughter-in-law Ariana Makau, grandchildren Billie Nolfi-Makau and Melina Nolfi-Makau all in Oakland, California; step-daughter Hannah Murray, step-son-in-law Steve Murray, granddaughters Grace Murray and Caroline Murray all in Concord, New Hampshire. She is also survived by innumerable friends, Cohousing neighbors and comrades too many to name individually.

A celebration of Barbara's Life will be at 2 p.m., Dec. 7, at Main Street Landing's Film House. Those who wish to express their sympathy by supporting a cause dear to Barbara's heart are invited to consider a donation to the Community Health Centers.

Education

Charlotte Central School winds down 2024, jumps into 2025



Courtesy photo

The Charlotte Central School Lego Hawks competed in the FIRST LEGO League Northern Qualifier at Shelburne Community School, securing their spot in the Vermont state finals on Jan. 18 for a second straight year.

Naomi Strada
Summarized by Tom Scatchard

The mid-December PTO-sponsored Holiday Market was a perfect example of generosity in action. It brought together neighbors, students, caregivers and artisans sharing their passions and stories. Here are a few of many from the days before the holiday break:

- Erika Norris, art educator, helped build connections through a fun and engaging staff trivia activity, weaving the faculty and students into a tighter-knit team
- Andy Smith and Chris Gribnau recently guided a diverse group of students on a journey of perseverance and discovery. Their efforts culminated in a powerful musical experience in the Multi-Purpose Room where students, some discovering their “musical side” for the first time, created something truly inspiring
- A staff appreciation lunch, organized by the PTO and donated by Healthy Living, was a moment of connection and gratitude. Surrounded by food, cookies and sweet treats from community donations, the staff recharged through laughter and shared stories.

FIRST LEGO League

On Saturday, Dec. 14 the Charlotte Central School Lego Hawks competed in the FIRST LEGO League Northern Qualifier at Shelburne Community School.

With a strong showing of 220 points in the robot game, a well-executed Innovation Project and a robot presentation, the Lego Hawks secured their spot in the Vermont state finals on Jan. 18 for a second straight year.

CVU Arts Night 2025

The CVU Arts Night will offer an opportunity for eighth-grade singers from across our district to practice and perform with other incoming freshman and high school students. 5-9 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 9, at Champlain Valley Union High with performances and exhibits.

Eighth grade members of the Charlotte Central School chorus will meet in the high school chorus room for a rehearsal with eighth graders across the district. At 6:30 p.m., the performance of the Champlain Valley School District eighth grade choir will take place in the auditorium

Student journalists collaborate with The Charlotte News

On Friday, Jan. 3, Scooter MacMillan, editor of The Charlotte News, met with the fifth and sixth grade Student Leadership Council’s student journalists and their advisor, Dave Baird.

Together, they began brainstorming an exciting collaboration to feature Charlotte Central School student writers in The Charlotte News on a regular basis, showcasing their voices and talents to the wider community.

Adam Bunting selected as CVSD’s permanent superintendent

Tyler Cohen
Contributor

The Champlain Valley School District board announced at its Tuesday, Dec. 17, meeting that Adam Bunting has been chosen as permanent superintendent. Bunting, who brings more than two decades of experience working in the school district, has served as interim superintendent since July 1.

“Adam is the right leader for our district and for navigating the moment we are in and the hard work ahead of us,” said board chair Meghan Metzler. “His focus on doing what’s best for students, the employees of CVSD and our community is unparalleled.”

With more than 25 years in teaching and

administrative roles at Champlain Valley Union High School and in Montpelier, Bunting has spent his entire career educating Vermont’s youth. A 1994 graduate of CVU, he holds degrees in English and school leadership from Connecticut College and Harvard University, respectively.

He earned recognition as Vermont Principal of the Year in 2018, served on the Governor’s Opioid Coordination Council and has been published in numerous educational journals and books.

“As superintendent, my role will be to collaborate with the entire community to create the conditions for these powerful,

BUNTING continued on page 9

Food Shelf News

Lots of gratitude for outpouring of community generosity

Katherine Arthaud
Contributor

In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," the narrator says of Scrooge (after he's been visited by the spirits of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come), "And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!"

Well, I think it may truly be said of the Charlotte community that they know how to keep Christmas well. If indeed, love and generosity are at the heart of what keeping Christmas well is all about.

Yes, this holiday season, Charlotte Food Shelf and Assistance is so very, very grateful for the community, whose gifts of time, money, goodies, food and toys has helped support 28 families and 22 children.

We have a lot of thank you's to voice, so here goes:

First, we want to start off by thanking the many organizations and individuals who made the holidays special for the 22 children in our Food Shelf families, including WowToyz of Vergennes, which graciously and generously donated toys, thoughtfully selected for the specific group of children from our client families; and the Flying Pig Bookstore of Shelburne, which kindly included the Charlotte Food Shelf in its Snowflake Book Program this year, generously providing each child with an age-appropriate book to enjoy over the holidays and beyond.

A big thank you as well to the generous congregants at Charlotte Congregational Church and Our Lady of Mount Carmel who participated in the Giving Tree Program, where individual congregants took the opportunity to select and grant the holiday wish for a specific individual child from our Food Shelf families. A special thank you, too, to Christy Gallese and Kelly Stockwell, who coordinated the Giving Trees this year.

Thank you to Evan Metropoulos for his long-standing commitment as Secret Santa, providing a special surprise each year for each and every child. His generosity and creativity are deeply appreciated.

Wait! There's more!

Big, big thanks to all the additional members of our community who played a part in making this a special holiday for the children. Their contributions came in the form of time, toys and gift cards. Thank you, Number One Toy Elf Laura Iglehart, and Jon Davis, Wolfie Davis, Amelia Davis, Jody Tritt, Amanda Herzberger, Amy Rohrbaugh,

Stephanie Wells, Sage Bagnato, Deenie Galipeau, Casey Johnson, Caroline Perry, Molly Paskin and Nina Hill. You did so much to make this Christmas special for the children.

Thank you, Holly Rochefort, for organizing community baked goods. Thank you, Red Onion, for the generous donation of baked goods, and thank you, Carol Clay, for organizing this.

There's more! It's like a Christmas stocking with no bottom!

Thank you to the Krolicks, who donated a holiday basket of goodies. Thank you, Susan Blood, for donating holiday candles. Thank you to the Gatos family for cooking baskets. And thank you to the anonymous holiday elf who donated cheddar cheese, a great addition to any feast or snack.

Thank you to the Hands organization for its donation of Hannaford gift cards for all our seniors, beautifully illustrating that the spirit of Christmas is not only for the very young.

And — we are almost done, but not quite — a heartfelt thank you to the many who donated funds to help keep the food shelf alive and well and thriving: John and Carolyn Kovac, Scott and Lynne Jaunich, Rex and Lell Forehand, Thomas Cosinuke and Anne Kelton, Kirk and Loretta Walters, Kathleen Posey, Lenore and Myron Sopher, Eleanor and Mark Capeless, John and Heather Dwight, Jan and Larry Sudbay, Rose Bernier, Kenneth French, Cecily Stokes-Prindle, Lynn Cluff, Jocelyn Schermerhorn, Joseph Keenan, Cynthia Burns, Chris Ritcey, Belinda Mucklow, Carol Talley, Kimberly Warren, Karina Warshaw, Gary Landrigan, Jeffrey Horbar, Rhonda Doonan, Laurel Lakey, Lisa Crispin, Patrice Machavern, Stan Wasilewski, Susan Raber Bray, Lee Krohn, Tiller, Karen Frost, Gordon Root, Susan Crockenberg, Dana Ward, Lorraine Koffman, John Henry Siedlecki, Martine Richards and Helen Toor.

We want to give another shout-out before we are through to Champlain Valley Union High School student volunteers, who have been so incredible helping out over the past weeks. And to Charlotte Central School teachers and students for all the non-perishables they collected for holiday distributions. And the Charlotte Children's Center for their December food drive. You are all wonderful and we appreciate you.

Finally, and we really do mean finally, thanks to Laura Crandall for the many dozens of eggs donated, and for monetary donations thanks to Vermont Community Foundation, profits from John and Christy Hagios' blackberry patch, Michael and Janet Yantachka, William Lockwood, Rocki-Lee

director for nine. He served as principal of Montpelier High School from 2012 to 2015 before returning to CVU in 2015, where he worked as principal and led the design and implementation of personalized, proficiency-based learning for the school's 1,300 students.

"I am humbled and motivated by the scope and importance of this role," Bunting said. "It's an honor to continue leading this district toward growth and belonging for all through purposeful, dynamic collaboration."

(Tyler Cohen is the Champlain Valley School District communications manager.)



Photo courtesy of Margaret Sharpe

Snowy, blustery weather did not slow down, from left, Peggy Sharpe, Maria Blanchette, Laura Iglehart, Nancy Bloch and Janet Landrigan in their early morning preparation for the holiday food shelf distribution on Dec. 21.

Dewitt, Robert Carmody, Wolfger Schneider and Hannaford Hunger Bag Program.

And just before we wrap this up for ultimate final thanks, here is a list of people who sent in checks to the food shelf whose generosity means so much, Frances Foster, Jan L. Blomstrann, Carl and Carlanne Herzog, Kathetine Lampton, Julian Kulski, Stewart and Dorothy Read, Hugh and Leslie Lewis, Ted Montgomery, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Andrew and Erin Ross, Barry Finette and Sharon Mount, Thomas and Lorna Bates, Robert and Yolande Larson, Jessie Bradley, Susan Lavigne, Susan Smith, Richard Mintzer, Carleen Tufo, Kevin Pumiglia, Christopher and Susanne Davis, Paula and Peter Joslin, Aileen Kraus, Benjamin Haydock, Kathleen Nolan, Frank and Regina Berk, David Wheeler, and Robert and Toni Monsey. Many thanks to the

Charlotte-Shelburne-Hinesburg Rotary for the donation that made possible the purchase of Christmas hams. Thank you to the following for additional donations: Joseph and Kathleen Carrara, Emily Laird, Jolene Kay, and Aaron and Cecily Wallman Stokes. And thank you to Alexandra Lehman, who made a large contribution from her handmade felt ornaments sold at the Old Brick Store.

I hope we haven't missed anyone. There are so many to thank. For any we might have missed, we apologize, and we thank you. Please let us know if we missed you, and we will make sure to give you a shout-out in the next article.

In short: What a tremendous outpouring of generosity from our community. We cannot thank you enough. Our eggnog runneth over.

A happy, abundant, peaceful, joyful, blessing-filled New Year to all!

BUNTING

Continued from page 8

transformative experiences across and through our system," Bunting says. "When we share values, hold all our students in unconditional high regard, partner with caregivers and provide dynamic, authentic learning opportunities, we do nothing short of inspiring a better world."

Bunting began his career at CVU, first as a substitute teacher and coach before becoming an English teacher for three years and a house



**Restoration, Preservation, and Construction
of Antique and Classic Boats**

802-425-2004

821 Ferry Rd., Charlotte | sam@darlingsboatworks.com

Our Local Feast

Traditional New England of Boston brown bread is a treat

Dorothy Grover-Read
Contributor

The traditional Saturday night supper of beans when I was growing up often included Boston brown bread. This was the comfort meal, a bowl of stewed yellow-eyed beans and a biscuit or brown bread, an oddity that delighted us as children because the breads were baked in round coffee or bean cans, so their shape was unique.

This bread has its roots in Colonial America and has a unique flavor and texture — moist, definitely savory, with texture from the cornmeal, but with only a hint of the molasses and sugar it contains. While there are sweet ingredients, it is most definitely not a sweet bread. Its flavor reads as a savory when served with butter and a bowl of beans. The raisins are a little surprise now and then.

Yet, you can add some cream cheese, a bit of jam, and it is transformed into a sweet and tangy tea bread.

Boston brown bread (or Yankee brown bread, New England brown bread) is most often served straight up, but adapts to different additions; my mother always put raisins in hers, but other cooks left it plain. I love it with a bit of chopped-up crystallized ginger and also chopped nuts, all of which would be shunned by traditional homemakers, most of whom thought even the raisins were an atrocity.

You can still find canned brown bread in just about every supermarket in New England, but the flavor of the mass-produced loaf is usually stale and the texture unpleasant, so homemade is the way to go. If all you've ever had is the processed version, you're in for a treat from your oven.

The bread is made with a blend of grains that compose the early New England flour mix of graham (a type of wheat), rye and cornmeal. Wheat was difficult to grow in the harsh climate and short growing season of the northeast, but rye and corn were steady crops, so this blend of flours worked well for early New Englanders in many recipes.

Brown bread was referred to as a “thirded bread” because of the ratio of the three grains. Molasses was the original sweetener

of choice, one that lends moisture as well as flavor to the bread, along with a bit of bitterness, a nutritional boost and the dark color. But honey or maple syrup was used as well, imparting a much lighter color and more subtle notes to the bread.

It's completely whole grain, too, so it packs a lot of nutrition.

Whether you think of this as a quick bread or a steamed pudding, it is in a category of its own, and it is fun to make. This will serve as a happy sidekick to whatever main course dish you make, a fancy tea service, or part of a spread for a party with the addition of smoked salmon, or crispy cucumbers.

Graham flour is hard to find, so here we used the hard red winter wheat flour and yellow dent corn meal from the Nitty Gritty Grain Company right here in town. Local, organic, we couldn't get closer to what the Colonists originally made with this combination.

There are no eggs in this quick bread, so if you are cooking vegan, simply sour a plant milk with a bit of vinegar to substitute for the buttermilk. If you are not a fan of raisins, you can substitute dried cranberries or currants.

Boston brown bread

First, prepare your “pans.” Generously butter three 25-ounce cans (I use the large chickpea cans; 28-ounce tomato cans are a bit too wide) and then sprinkle well with cornmeal.

Set up your stockpot with a rack in the bottom, canning jar rings or even crumpled-up aluminum foil so the cans do not sit directly on the bottom of the pot, or the bread will overbake on the bottom before the top is set. Put the water kettle on to heat.

In a large bowl, combine:

- 1 cup whole-wheat flour or graham flour
- 1 cup rye flour
- Scant 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1 cup raisins
- 2 tablespoons candied ginger, optional
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts, optional.



Photos by Dorothy Grover-Read

It isn't every day you bake your bread in a bean can placed in a steam bath, but that is part of the charm of Boston brown bread.



It may be a savory bread, but brown bread can hold its own with a sweet topping at an afternoon tea party. Here, we've added cream cheese and some marmalade.



Traditional Boston brown bread is no ordinary loaf, a little different in shape and flavor, savory definitely, but with just a hint of sweet.

Set the dry ingredients aside. Mix together:

- 1 1/2 cups buttermilk
- 1 cup unsulfured blackstrap molasses
- 1/4 cup brown sugar

- 2 tablespoons melted butter.

Add this to the dry ingredients and mix just until blended. Divide the batter evenly between the three cans, then cover them with a buttered piece of parchment or waxed paper and secure with a little cotton twine. Leave some headroom for expansion. Now they are ready for their steam bath.

Place the cans in the stockpot and fill with hot water halfway up the cans. Turn on the heat to high to bring to a simmer, then cover the pot and reduce the heat to the lowest setting that will keep the water at a gentle simmer, checking the water level now and then and adding more if necessary. Let steam for 2 to 2 1/2 hours, or until firm on the top when touched.

Remove from the water and set on a rack to cool for about 20 minutes, removing the paper hat.

Let the breads cool for a bit before you remove them. Shake out of the can, or, if it is sticking at all, cut off the bottom of the can and push the bread through.

Serve warm or cold. Delicious warm with butter, a bit of local honey or with orange marmalade, cream cheese or both.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

Half and full-year options with **FREE** color starting at \$22 cost per issue. Contact: ads@thecharlottenews.org



Philo. Surveying
LLC

PHILOSURVEYING.COM

Jason C. Burt, Licensed Land Surveyor
jason@philosurveying.com
802-782-9273 | Charlotte, VT



Patalin's Sugarworks
Maple Syrup

100% Pure Maple Syrup
Made the Old-Fashioned Way
Wood Fired - Deep Rich Flavor
No Reverse Osmosis



Pat and Aline Leclaire
669 Lime Kiln Road
Charlotte, Vermont 05445
leclairaline1@gmail.com
802-373-6779

BEAGLE BUILDERS, LLC

ROOFING, SIDING & EXTERIOR FINISHES



WINDOWS & DOORS
DECKS, PORCHES & SUNROOMS
REMODELING & ADDITIONS

Monkton, VT beaglebuilders@gmavt.net
802-453-4340 CALL US! 802-355-0807



copper leaf
FINANCIAL

Empowering families through
financial planning.

Our team includes CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™
professionals.

802-878-2731 | CopperLeafFinancial.com


ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS HERE!

Half and full-year options
with **FREE** color starting
at \$22 cost per issue.

Contact:
ads@thecharlottenews.org

Brushhogging by Adam
Taking your bush to brush.

Adam Dantzsch
Proprietor



Services:
Brush-Hogging
Chain-Sawing
Driveway Repair
Excavating
Lawn Mowing
Delivery/Haul-away
Roadside Mowing

802-578-8347
adamdantzsch@aol.com



Investing in better water

- Water Filtration Systems
- Water Delivery
- Water Softners

Call us today!
Culligan Water

802-865-0000
154 Brentwood Drive
Colchester

Sacred Hunter

An ode to Gray Stevens, a legend of outdoor sports

Bradley Carleton
Contributor

As I walk onto the ice in the darkness, the horizon is just beginning to show her true colors. She is merging from a dark blue to a royal purple, and I know that, as with all darkness, we will again witness the blessing and warmth of the light.

As always, I test the ice with my spud (not the potato kind) because I know from experience that not all ice is uniform in thickness and there are underwater springs in some lakes and ponds.

I found this out years ago when a couple of us were foolish enough to think that if there were already a dozen people on the ice, it must be safe, right? About 200 yards from shore, I went through up to my waist. Fortunately, it was a low-water year and my feet touched the mucky bottom. I was able to pull myself out, but the momentary terror of my icy immersion was enough to carve out a deep neuro pathway into my brain.

But I continued to fall in love with this sport ever more deeply. Once you've learned to "read" the ice, whether it is clear and black (good) or soft and honeycombed (bad) and what the booming sounds under the surface mean, it can allay some of the fear. The deep booming sounds when it's below freezing, the ones that sound like depth charges, are actually the lake "making ice," which is done from below the surface. Ice grows from beneath and deteriorates from above.

Many well-respected ice-fishing veterans will venture out on 2 inches of clear black. Then again, almost every year, one of those "veterans" plunges into the frigid water and doesn't come out alive. I've fished on 3 inches. I won't do it again. Four is my minimum, and I'm much happier on 6 or



Photo by Jack Rowell

Gray Stevens, founder of the Vermont Outdoor Guides Association, was a tireless promoter of hunting, fishing and all outdoor sports in Vermont.

more. Interior lakes freeze up sooner and get thicker faster than Champlain, so we like to travel into mid-state or northern ponds.

There have been so many great times on the ice in the last 35 years. Days where we filled buckets of white perch and, once or twice, a sled full of yellow perch. It's hard to explain the excitement when the ice rod in your hand suddenly jerks strongly down, bending to the hole.

You never really know for sure what is on the other end of the line. It could be a nice "yellowbelly" or an iridescent rainbow trout. If the rod is bent all the way over and is not bouncing back, if the line is screaming off the reel, it could be a "gator" (a colloquial term for northern pike). If it is the latter, you may find yourself yelling to the rest of your party for help. Northerns have a pretty sharp

set of teeth and can do some real damage to your hand if not handled properly.

There is so much to learn and the importance of seeking knowledgeable instructors or mentors is paramount. Hundreds of women learned about the joy of ice fishing through a program called "Doe Camp," which ran for more than 20 years under the auspices of Vermont Outdoor Woman through an organization called Vermont Outdoor Guides Association started by Gray Stevens. This is where my story turns bittersweet.

Today, I am walking onto the ice for the first time this season. I am bundled up in my flotation suit, balaclava, heavy arctic mittens and towing my sled with my ice rods, lures, auger and my favorite pickle bucket. I am breathing through a small opening in my balaclava and my nose hairs are rattling in the below-zero temperature.

But, like any half-crazed ice fisherman, I am grinning as I walk into the north wind. The lake is making that deep bellowing sound, which both surprises and comforts me. I am walking toward a spot I was shown decades ago by this legendary outdoorsman.

A tear rolls down my cheek as I reach my spot far out in the bay. It tracks down my cheek and slowly freezes before reaching my chin.

I am thinking of my dear friend, Gray, and speaking aloud to the impending sunrise. "Gray, I know that where you are, the sun is shining and the perch are biting like crazy." I can envision the soft light of a winter's dawn emphasizing the weathered cracks in your grizzled face. Yours is the face of a true mountain man. A legend among outdoorsmen and women. I can imagine your mischievous smile as you greet the dawn with your deep-chested laugh.

Gray Stevens, a true leader and

ambassador of all traditional sports, left us this past December just days away from the New Year. For those who didn't know Gray, he was a tireless promoter of hunting, fishing and all outdoor sports in Vermont. He started Vermont Outdoor Guides Association and worked to promote and protect all that we cherish. The association listed every credible guide service, outfitter and state resource for maps and activities across the Green Mountains, from Bennington to Alburg to Newport and beyond. When there was a threat to one of our beloved sports, he made sure that the issues were relayed to anyone who wished to stand with him and let our politicians know we spoke as one. As a founder of Vermont Outdoor Woman and the concept of "Doe Camp" he introduced women to the outdoor adventures of hunting, shooting, fishing, wilderness survival. Most importantly, he inspired women to find their voice and to stand confidently among the "old-boy network" of outdoorsmen as equals.

As I drill my holes into the ice of our lakes and ponds this month, if I am facing away from you, into the wind, sitting quietly, please respect that the tear rolling down my face is in his honor. If you choose to, pull up a seat and sit quietly beside me. Don't say a word. Just sit with me, quietly, while I pray that Gray is watching us from the Great Pond above.

(Bradley Carleton is executive director of Sacred Hunter.org, a privately owned limited liability corporation that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature through hunting, fishing and foraging. His writing can be followed on sacredhunter.substack.com.)

Community Roundup

United Way hopes for New Year's volunteering resolutions

The United Way hopes you will

make volunteering your New Year's resolution. Its Volunteer Connection site (unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com) helps connect agencies and volunteers.

Here are some opportunities for volunteering with the United Way:

- Burlington Partnership for a Healthy Community believes every young person deserves a chance to live and thrive in an environment free from the harm of substance abuse. They have a number of volunteer opportunities available, everything from helping to make nicotine quit kits to serving on their board of directors. To learn more, contact Mariah Flynn at mariah@burlingtonpartnership.org

- Vermont Adult Learning asks: Do you have teaching experience you would like to put to good use? If so, Vermont Adult Learning needs volunteers to serve as one-on-one tutors, teachers and advisors. Current specific needs include an English language learning tutor to help non-native English speakers at various levels of proficiency; GED preparation tutor to assist students studying to take the GED in language arts, math, science and social studies; adult basic ed tutor to help students acquire reading, math and writing skills to meet their career goals; computer skills teacher to lead basic digital literacy workshops; and college and career transition advisor to assist students

finishing their high school credentials programs and planning next steps. Contact: Forrest Gardner at 802-275-4933 or email fgardner@vtadultlearning.com.

- ECHO Leahy Center for Lake Champlain is looking for volunteers to help care for fish, reptiles and exotic amphibians. Have fun learning about habitat design, animal behavior, diets and more. A full semester or summer commitment (three-four months) is desired with a minimum of one four-hour shift per week. Contact Billy Ernest at 802-864-1848 ext. 149 or email volunteer@echovermont.org.

- Feeding Champlain Valley needs volunteers, age 18 and older, to fill a number of needs including stocking shelves, refrigerators and freezers with fresh food; prepping and serving breakfast and lunch for the hot meal program; helping clients sign in to receive groceries, prepping or delivering groceries to stay-at-home clients. Volunteer opportunities available across Chittenden, Grand Isle and Franklin Counties. Contact Ansley Laev at 802-829-5797 or email alaev@cvoeo.org or braimes@cvoeo.org.



**CHARLOTTE
TOWN MEETINGS
AND AGENDAS**

**Visit charlottevt.org
for more information**

<p>Regular Selectboard Meeting Monday, Jan. 13, 2025 at 6:30 PM</p> <p>Planning Commission Meeting Thursday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.</p> <p>Meeting of Town's Elected Auditors Wednesday, Jan. 22, 4:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Development Review Board Meeting Wednesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m..</p> <p>Regular Selectboard Meeting Monday, Jan. 27, 6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Conservation Commission Meeting Tuesday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.</p>
---	--

Calendar

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

Celebrate the Arts Night Thursday, Jan. 9, 5-8 p.m.

After a six-year hiatus, the Champlain Valley School District is bringing back the longstanding winter tradition of Celebrate the Arts Night at Champlain Valley Union High. Join students from across the school district for an evening of entertainment and celebration, showcasing performing and visual arts from the district's six schools. The 13th Celebrate the Arts Night brings together art, music, theater, media arts, foods, business, design and technology in a one-night-only exhibition of student creativity.

Shelburne Age Well luncheon Tuesday, Jan. 14, 11:30 a.m.

St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well are offering a lunch on Jan. 14 for anyone 60 or older in the St. Catherine of Siena Parish Hall at 72 Church Street in Shelburne. The check-in time is 11:30 a.m. and the meal will be served at noon. There is a \$5 suggested donation. The menu is porkchop with pineapple sauce, mashed sweet potatoes, green and black beans, wheat bread and pears. The deadline to register is Jan. 8.

Vermont's winter birds (Williston) Jan. 18, noon-1:30 p.m.

Join the Birds of Vermont museum director Erin Talmage at Williston's Dorothy Alling Memorial Library to learn about Vermont's winter birds, birding and conservation. Vermont in winter is cold, muddy, slushy, icy, snowy, but there are still birds. Which ones? How come? What do they eat? How do they shelter from the weather?

Shelburne Age Well luncheon Tuesday, Jan. 21, 11:30 a.m.

The menu for Jan. 21 St. Catherine of Siena and Age Well lunch is mac and cheese, green beans, stewed tomatoes, wheat roll and an apple. The deadline to register is Jan. 15.

Lost Ski Areas stories

Thursday, Jan. 23, 6:30 p.m.

Did you know that at one time there were



Courtesy photo

Culomba will perform at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier on Saturday Jan. 25, 3 p.m. This is a free concert featuring a wide variety of music traditions.



Photo from Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum

Skiing at North Country Ski Park in North Hyde Park in the 1960s.

five ski areas in both Waterbury and Stowe, two in Morrisville, and one each in Hyde Park, Johnson, Jeffersonville, and Cambridge? Or that the second rope tow in Vermont was built in Cambridge? Over the decades, Vermont has lost 185 ski areas, leaving only 20 remaining today.

Join the Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum's monthly Red Bench series on Thursday, Jan. 23, as ski historian Brian Lindner and "Searching for Vermont's Lost Ski Areas" exhibit curator Poppy Gall share the stories of 15 lost ski areas. This discussion is held in conjunction with the museum's new exhibit, Searching for Vermont's Lost Ski Areas — Part 2, which highlights all known "lost" ski areas in Vermont; those now defunct as well as "lost and found" areas that have been revived after years of closure. Part 2 includes new discoveries and a handful of ski areas that were planned but never opened. To learn more about the exhibit or to share information about a Vermont lost ski area, visit vtssm.org. Doors to the museum at 1 South Main Street, Stowe, open at 6 p.m., and guests are invited to explore the exhibits and socialize. The discussion begins at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$10.

January bird monitoring walk

Saturday, Jan. 25, 8-9 a.m.

All birders (current, experienced, newbie and would-be) are welcome to join the Birds of Vermont Museum's monthly

monitoring walk outdoors on the museum's trails in forest and meadow. Most fun for adults, older children. Bringing binoculars, dressing for the weather, tick repellent and water bottles are recommended. It is free but a \$10-\$15 donation is suggested. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/msh67zfh>.

Free Ice Fishing Day

Saturday, Jan. 25

Free Ice Fishing Day is a day when anyone, resident or nonresident, may fish legal Vermont waters without a fishing license. The Free Ice Fishing Festival is the same day. At the Ice Fishing Festival learn ice fishing basics, from tip-ups to filleting fish. Tom's Bait and Tackle is donating all bait for the day. The festival will be held at Silver Lake State Park, 20 State Park Beach Road, Barnard, from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Fish and Wildlife staff and volunteers will teach the basics of ice fishing. Be sure to dress warmly in layers and wear winter boots. Yaktrax or ice cleats are also a great idea for traction. For more information, contact Corey Hart (corey.hart@vermont.gov) by email or call 802-505-5562.

Culomba concert

Saturday, Jan. 25, 3 p.m.

Capital City Concerts presents Culomba on Saturday Jan. 25, 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Church of Montpelier, a family concert with pay-as-you-can admission. The professional vocal ensemble, Culomba, brings its rich harmonies and eclectic folk traditions through music spanning American folk, Georgian, Corsican, Balkan and the Renaissance. To learn more, go to capitalcityconcerts.org.

Week for artists in Johnson

Friday, Jan. 31

The Vermont Studio Center at vermontstudiocenter.org is accepting applications through Jan. 31 for Vermont Week, May 5-12. Vermont Week at the Vermont Studio Center provides fully funded residencies for 30 Vermont artists and writers, which includes private accommodations, private studio space, daily meals and access to Johnson Village amenities. Vermont Week will culminate with an open studios celebration 2-4 p.m., Sunday, May 11.

Vermont Flower Show

Friday-Sunday, March 7-9

The 2025 Vermont Flower Show at the Champlain Valley Expo will celebrate gardening through the ages and how to learn from the past in cultivating our gardens for the future. At this year's show you will stroll through fields of tulips, experience an English cottage garden and a tea house garden. You will take a walk back in time through Medieval, Islamic and Victory gardens. The show is Friday, March 7, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Saturday, March 8, 10-6 p.m.; and Sunday March 9, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Daily admission is \$28 (\$26 until Dec. 31) for adults, \$23 (\$21 until Dec. 31) for seniors (60+) and college students, \$10 (\$8 until Dec. 31) for students (ages 5-17) and free for children 4 and under. Tickets can be purchased at vnlavt.org/event/the-vermont-flower-show. Free parking.

Library News

Library welcomes new year with holiday singalong

Margaret Woodruff
Director

The library closed 2024 with a few fun activities, including a holiday singalong with Julia Wayne and Ari Bowles (and many enthusiastic singers from the Charlotte Children's Center).

Our vacation time also featured a DIY fairy golf hole. Young crafters created some clever challenges with re-used materials and a lot of imagination.

Thanks to all who donated cold-weather hats and mittens to our Mitten Tree. The accessories were given to the Chittenden County Women's Correctional Facility.

If reading is on your New Year's Resolution list, consider one of these titles from our Top-Ten Fiction Titles for 2024:

- "The Women" by Kristin Hannah
- "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus
- "The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store" by James McBride
- "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks
- "North Woods" by Daniel Mason
- "Frozen River" by Ariel Lawhon
- "Remarkably Bright Creatures" by Shelby Van Pelt
- "The Hunter" by Tana French
- "The Thursday Murder Club" by Richard Osman.

Programs for kids

MLK Day: Share Your Dreams Saturday & Monday, Jan. 18 & 20

Make a difference to honor the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Share your hopes and dreams on the "I Have a Dream" mobile and help to build our community-care kits. Write a postcard message to an elected official or someone who shares your dreams. We'll have art supplies out, including a LEGO printing station, to make your postcard unique.

Monthly Babytime Saturday, Jan. 4, 10 a.m.

You're invited to an unstructured hour for parents, caregivers, and babies to play, explore books, and chat in the young children's area. Ages birth to 18 months.

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.

After-school book club Tuesdays, 3 p.m.

Do you enjoy reading and talking about books? Ride the bus to the Charlotte Library and enjoy an afternoon of book sharing and crafts every Tuesday after school. Grades 1-3, registration required. Contact Cheryl at youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org.

Preschool free play Wednesdays, 10 a.m.

Play in the preschool years enables children to explore and make sense of the world around them, as well as to use and develop their imagination. Explore the sensory table, sorting, playing with blocks, playdoh — these are a few of the open-ended projects planned for Wednesday morning play-based learning at the Charlotte Library.

Wildcard Wednesdays

Join us after school on Wednesdays for our series of creative and fun activities, from crafts to coding, from baking to biology. Fifth grade and up. Take the bus from Charlotte Central School with parent notification. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/mr2mav4b>.

Babytime Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

You're invited to an unstructured hour for parents, caregivers and babies to play, explore books and chat in the young children's area. Ages birth to 18 months.

Let's Lego Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Drop-in for Lego free play. We'll have loads of Lego bricks out, along with some books and prompts for inspiration. For all ages. Please note: Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult.

Programs for adults

Stillwater meditation Saturdays, 9 a.m.

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

Get some permaculture Mondays, Jan. 6-Feb. 3, 7 p.m.

Join master gardener Karen Tuininga for a five-week book study with "The Vegetable Gardener's Guide to Permaculture: Creating an Edible Ecosystem." Register at <https://tinyurl.com/bdesfbfn> to let us know you'll be attending. Copies of the book available at the library circulation desk.

Power of water gallery talk Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.

Jonathan Hart will talk about his exhibit "The Power & Poetry of Water" on display at the library. Hart creates images of water and the results of water in natural environments as he feels, sees and imagines them. Discovering his connections to water is a strong force, and he becomes aware of the infinite. Jonathan seeks to spark curiosity, wonder and the importance of protecting our precious water resources. Join him for an informal introduction to his work. Light refreshments will be served.

Tech Help at senior center Wednesday, Jan. 15, 10 a.m.-noon

Email enigma? Kindle conundrum? App apprehension? Computer questions? Or maybe you want to learn how to use your library card to read or listen to books on a device. Sign up for a 20-minute, one-on-one session at the senior center with Susanna, Charlotte Library's Technology Librarian, for some tech support. She will troubleshoot with you and will provide suggestions for next steps. Make sure to bring your device and any necessary login information. When registering, please provide a specific topic/item that you need help with and include the device you will be bringing to the session (e.g. Windows laptop, Mac laptop, Kindle, iPhone, iPad, Android phone, etc.). To register, call the Senior Center: 802-425-6345.



Photo by Julia Wayne

The library held a holiday singalong with Julia Wayne and Ari Bowles.

Short story selections Wednesday, Jan. 15, 1 p.m.

Join Library Director Margaret Woodruff to share and discuss short stories old and new on Zoom. Our group meets on the third Wednesday of each month. Story selections are sent out by email the Friday before the meeting date. Please contact Woodruff at margaret@charlottepubliclibrary.org if you'd like to join the group.

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

Join this open group to discuss books related to parenthood. The group is now reading "Other People's Houses" by Abi Waxman now. In "Other People's Houses" repercussions of an affair reverberate through four carpool families, navigating a moral minefield that could make or break a marriage. Pick up a copy at the circulation desk.

Tea & a Movie Friday, Jan. 17, 2 p.m.

Join us for the showing of a movie based on a Jane Austen novel of the same name. Enjoy tea, homemade cookies and the good company of Austen's characters and fans.

Mystery book group Monday, Jan. 20, 10 a.m.

Author Susan Spencer Taylor joins us via Zoom to discuss her latest mystery, "Agony Hill," which was recently featured in the Seven Days book issue. The plot features Bostonian Franklin Warren who arrives in Bethany, Vermont, to take a position as a detective with the state police. Warren has barely unpacked when he's called up to a remote farm on Agony Hill. Former New Yorker and back-to-the-lander Hugh Weber seems to have set fire to his barn and himself, with the door barred from the inside, but things aren't adding up for Warren. Copies available at the circulation desk.

Ottolenghi cooking book club Tuesday, Jan. 21, 5:30 p.m.

For our January session, we invite you to select a recipe from your favorite Ottolenghi cookbook or stop by the library to pick a recipe from ours. Make up your dish to share and join us for supper.

Men's book group Wednesday, Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m.

The monthly men's book group is discussing "The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store." In 1972, when workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, were digging the foundations for a new housing development, the last thing they expected to uncover was a human skeleton. Who the skeleton was and how it got buried there were just two of the secrets that had been kept for decades by the residents of Chicken Hill, the dilapidated neighborhood where immigrant Jews and African Americans lived side by side, sharing ambitions and sorrows. Copies available at the circulation desk. Group meets monthly. Join us at the library or on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/4dsa85xk>.

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., unless otherwise rescheduled following the Opening Meeting Law. The next scheduled board meeting is Thursday, Feb. 5, at 6 p.m. Contact the library or visit the library website (charlottepubliclibrary.org) for more information.

Senior Center News

Include senior center in your New Year's resolutions

Lori York
Director

Happy New Year!

If focusing on improving health is a 2025 resolution, the Charlotte Senior Center has a wide range of activities to support this goal. There are opportunities to participate in exercise, yoga and meditation classes. Strengthening social connections is also important for well-being, and the center offers a variety of board and card games, language conversation groups, art programs and lively discussion groups. Start the year with a renewed focus on both physical and mental wellbeing.

Exercise

Chair yoga

Tuesdays, Jan. 14-Feb. 18, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Join Lynn Alpeter, former co-owner of Yoga Roots and a yoga teacher, for a gentle and accessible chair yoga class designed to help you connect with your breath, move your body and lift your mood. Whether you're new to yoga or looking for a more supportive practice, this class is perfect for anyone seeking to increase flexibility, balance and relaxation. Using a chair for support, we'll explore mindful movement and simple stretches that can be easily adapted for all levels. Leave feeling uplifted, energized and centered. Cost: \$60 for the 6-week series. Registration and payment required by January 10. To register, call 802-425-6345.

Meditation

Thursdays, Jan. 9-Feb. 6, & Wednesday, Feb. 12, 5-6 p.m.

The New Year provides an opportunity to focus our attention on those habits that will help us thrive. Meditation is one of those practices that can help reduce pain, anxiety and stress, while making our life more joyful and peaceful. Come join Charlie Nardozi for this six-week series on meditation exploring how to meditate and use meditation in our daily living. You can join the class live, via Zoom or just get the recording afterward. The final class will be held on Wednesday due to the Blood Drive scheduled for Thursday. Contact Charlie for more information at cnardozi124@gmail.com. Cost: \$60 for the six-week session. Register at 802-425-6345.

Let your yoga dance

Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2:45-3:45 p.m. & Friday, Jan. 24, 1-2 p.m.

Join Heather Preis for this fun free introductory class. If there is interest, this class will be offered starting in February. Let Your Yoga Dance incorporates basic dance-like movements to music, guided by the body's energy system (chakras). It is a safe, compassionate, gentle movement practice, allowing for individual expression and nonjudgmental acceptance. This class is appropriate for all levels of fitness and abilities. Everyone can "let their yoga dance." Free introductory sessions. Registration is suggested at 802-425-6345.

Tai chi

Thursdays, 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m.

The Yang international short form is the most popular form of tai chi practice. It

consists of slow, continuous, soft circular movements which are coordinated with breathing. Regular practice helps to improve balance, mind-body connection, mental awareness, flexibility, stability, coordination and overall health. When practiced in the company of others, it is both uplifting and energizing. Taught by a certified instructor who has studied with the founder of the Tai Chi for Arthritis Association. Email questions to belizahammer@hotmail.com. \$10 a class. No registration required. \$10 a class. No registration required.

Bone Builders

**Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.,
Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m.-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.

Pilates fitness

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

Join Phyllis Bartling in this pilates class, geared to folks 55+. This class is challenging and includes upper-body strength work with hand weights and mat exercises while working on core muscles to improve balance, strength and posture. \$10 a class. No registration required.

Yoga strength-building practice

Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon

Heidi Kvasnak leads an integrative practice that builds strength and stability while maintaining a sense of ease and spaciousness in both body and mind. The group will practice longer-held postures that strengthen muscles, bones and core, as well as breath-led flowing movement, including sun salutations. Prerequisite: Must be able to easily get down to and up from the floor with or without props. \$10 a class. No registration required.

Community

January exhibit

The Magical World of Birds exhibit with photography by Barbara Motyka will be showing at the senior center during January.

Photography discussion group Sunday, Jan. 12, 2-4 p.m.

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

Friendship Gatherings

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 12:30 p.m.

Friendship Gatherings, formerly the Gen-Hub group, is a new group of social gatherings for seniors interested in building friendships and making new connections.



Photo by Lori York

Bone Builders is a strength training and balance class that is offered four times a week at the senior center.

Join us for light refreshments and lots of conversations and mingling. If there is interest, we will plan for gatherings monthly. Registration required at 802-425-6345. Free.

Charlotte Death Cafe

Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2-3:30 p.m.

Come together in human fellowship to celebrate life by voicing concerns, share questions, ideas and stories around death and dying at the monthly Death Cafe. These are not always easy conversations. But when we share, heart to heart, we build community and experience a special joy that enhances our lives. Questions? Email ppolly62@ymail.com. Free. Registration required at 802-425-6345.

Programs

Brain games

Fridays, 2-4 p.m.

There are many ways adults can stimulate their brains to increase mental health, improve memory skills and contribute to overall well-being. Research finds that positive interaction with others and engagement in stimulating group activities sharpens cognition and increases memory ability. Come play various games, share laughter and enjoy one another's company. Some games are available, but also feel free to bring your own games. Free. No registration required.

Snowy winter landscape

Thursday, Jan. 30, 12:30-2 p.m.

Bring a friend and enjoy a relaxing afternoon sipping coffee and painting with acrylic paints on canvas. Unlike traditional paint & sips, this "coffee & canvas" will allow you to explore and create your own unique painting. But don't worry, there will be plenty of inspiration from paintings of landscapes with lots of instruction. No prior painting experience needed. All materials included.

Cost: \$30. Registration at 802-425-6345 and payment required by Jan. 23.

Shanghai mahjong

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

New or experienced in the Shanghai style of mahjong, you are welcome to join this informal get-together. For questions email Nan Mason: anne.mason@uvm.edu. Free. No registration required.

Meals

Menus are posted on the website: charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Monday lunches

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

Senior center info:

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

Lori York, director,
lyork@charlotteseniorcentervt.org
212 Ferry Road, Charlotte
802-425-6345

charlotteseniorcentervt.org

Follow the senior center on Facebook or Instagram at charlotteseniorcentervt.org.

Write Ingredients

Cornbread are square at Charlotte Senior Center

Susan Ohanian
Contributor

At press time the volunteer cooks at the Charlotte Senior Center are undecided about whether their main course will be lasagna, soup or chili.

For sure, the menu will include a simple green salad, cornbread and chocolate chip cookies.

Cornbread offers many possibilities. When ordering sopa in Paraguay, you don't get a steaming bowl of broth but instead a dense and cheesy hunk of a cornbread that rates its own page in Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/sopa_paraguaya).

There are a number of origin stories about this particular cornbread. According to a New York Times piece, in the mid-1800s, when Carlos Antonio López was president of Paraguay, he was often served corn soup for lunch. But one day, the chef added in too much cornmeal. Trying for a fix, the chef put this sopa into the oven and then served it as cornbread. President López loved the bread so much that he named it sopa Paraguaya and decreed it a national dish (<https://tinyurl.com/m6runx2h>).

This is a "maybe so" story. A number of food sleuths point to much earlier roots for the dish, tracing it to the Cario-Guaraní, Indigenous people in Paraguay,

Whatever its origins, put "cornbread" in a search at The NY Times, and you'll find over 1,600 possibilities. From cloves, cabbage, chorizo, Cajun seasoning and coconut to pecans, pumpkin, peppers, sweet potatoes — and more.

Let Craig Claiborne, Pierre Franey and Mark Bittman argue about whether cornbread should be made with regular or evaporated milk. Bill Clinton has noted his love of the simplest of cornbreads: hot-water cornbread.

The very idea of "cornbread madeleines with jalapeño" stopped me in my tracks. The recipe calls for both buttermilk and whole milk, and a whopping two teaspoons of salt. As ever, let the reader beware. Many readers who tried the recipe complained about way too much salt.

In "Dinner with the President: Food, Politics, and a History of Breaking Bread at the White House," Alex Prud'homme



Adobe stock photo

describes corn dodgers, small oval-shaped treats, about 2 inches long, made with stone-ground cornmeal fried in butter or bacon drippings — Abraham Lincoln's equivalent to Proust's madeleines. Lincon's cousin Dennis Hanks remembered young Abe putting a book inside his shirt, filling his pants pockets with corn dodgers before going off to plow or hoe: "When noon came he'd set under a tree an' read an' eat."

Here in Charlotte, every time I make cornbread I think of the ongoing quarrel between my mother and her mother. Cooking near Los Angeles, Grandma used a little sugar. Near Sacramento, Mom was vocal about regarding sugar in cornbread as the eighth deadly sin.

Don't look to the paper that offers "all the news that's fit to print" for an answer. Craig Claiborne and Sam Sifton don't use sugar; Pierre Franey recommends 1 teaspoon; Mark Bittman's recipe calls for a whopping 1/4-1/2 cup of sugar.

"The Emily Dickinson Cookbook" shows us that while writing poems about corn, Emily used two tablespoons of brown sugar when making her corn cakes.

Forget quarrels about sugar and heed New York Times opinion writer Margaret Renkl's cornbread memory, written during the pandemic, "Cornbread Now, More than

Ever": "My great-grandmother died when I was in college, taking her recipe for lacy corn cakes with her to the grave, and my grandmother and my mother are gone now, too. Still, I feel them nearby whenever I take a skillet full of cornbread out of the oven."

Renkl concludes (<https://tinyurl.com/ypzwpj78>): "Whatever else is happening outside my windows, whatever struggles are still ahead, just the sight of that golden disk of buttery goodness can make me feel a tiny bit better."

Inspired by "Recipes for Connection," a booklet published by U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, Project Gather promotes the idea that eating with others can bring joy, build interpersonal connections and help solve a loneliness epidemic affecting so many people. In Murthy's words, "When we gather with others around food, we not only feed our bodies but also nourish our spirits."

I don't want to knock this noteworthy endeavor but can't help noting that one of the "collective of change makers" sponsoring the Project Gather website (projectgather.org) offers a 16-ounce bottle of Heritage Extra Virgin Olive Oil, made with olives hand-picked in Ojai, Calif., for \$85 (plus shipping). For those not picking olives, Ojai is a town noted for meditation,

yoga, spas and wine tasting.

Another sponsor describes chefs infusing coffee with sunchoke purée and avocado, and flavoring it with ginger, lemongrass and rosemary smoke. We're told that in some high-end places coffee drinkers can get the Zen of coffee, the omakase treatment. Through five courses, coffee comes with lemon grass, kumquat ice cream, honey-apple syrup, blueberries, fermented tomato juice. And more.

When you go to Monday Munch at the Charlotte Senior Center, you won't find pumpkin or sweet potatoes in your cornbread or fermented tomato juice in your coffee. What you will find is a golden disk of buttery goodness served in a place offering good nourishment for your spirit as well as your body.

As we face another Trump crisis, I offer the third book in my Trump series: "Trump, Trump, Trump: The Swan Song." There are plenty of laughs, but for a "feel good" vibe, be sure to eat cornbread while reading it. Actually, you'll find more laughs in the orange guy's own words: "The Little Red Book of Trump Quotations."



HAPPY NEW YEAR!



**JAMIE TWO-COATS
TOY SHOP**

54 FALLS ROAD I
MON-FRI 10-5, SAT-SUN 10-4
802-985-3221

PRESORTED STANDARD

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 05482
PERMIT NO. 9