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The Charlotte News

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**Chipmunk gets caught redhanded.
Photo by Lee Krohn**



Major gift supports racial diversity in farm ownership



Bear Roots Farm (pictured above) and Mighty Food Farm were participants in VLT's Farmland Access Program, whereby VLT connects retiring farmers to new buyers, often by purchasing, conserving, and selling the land to new farmers at its lower conserved value. This leadership gift enables VLT to accelerate this program and support other successful farm transfers.

Photo by Paul E. Richardson



Elizabeth Bassett
CONTRIBUTOR

The Clemmons Family Farm was the setting for an announcement on Sept. 30 of a \$6 million gift to support diversification of farm ownership in Vermont.

The High Meadows Fund, with a mission to promote vibrant

communities and preserve a healthy natural environment in Vermont, stipulated that \$2 million of this gift was to be used to expand land ownership and access among people who have been historically marginalized or oppressed based on their race or ethnicity. The gift is the largest of its kind ever made in Vermont.

The executive directors of the Vermont Land Trust, Nick Richardson, and Dan Smith of the Vermont Community Foundation, spoke of the need to diversify both ownership and production on Vermont farms as the state's dairy farms continue to struggle against a host of challenges.

Dr. Lydia Clemmons, President and Executive Director of the Clemmons Family Farm in Charlotte, spoke of her family's history as Black farmers.

"My great grandparents Margie and Walter Beck built a successful farm in Louisiana in the 1930s. The Beck's success, however, inspired resentment and an angry mob burned the farm and chased the family away," Clemmons said.

Clemmons recounted her ancestors' plight, which mirrored the experience of countless other African-American farmers.

"Knowing that the white mob's goal was not only to destroy their home but to kill them in order to take their farm and their oil—my mother's family changed their family name so that it would be harder to trace them," she said. "In doing so, they abandoned their rights to their farm, their crops, the oil—they left all of it behind them."

Clemmons said her family was one of "six

million other African-Americans who fled the racial violence and oppression of the rural south—leaving their farms, their livelihoods, their wealth behind them—to make a way out of no way, to the northern US, the Midwest, and California, during the Great Migration."

In the 1960s, Clemmons' parents, Jack and Lydia Clemmons, a doctor and nurse, bought their farm on Greenbush Road. But rather than leaving the horrors of racism behind, the Clemmons family was to suffer another racially motivated assault in 2017.

"Some 90 years after my mother's family's beautiful farm in Louisiana was attacked by a mob of jealous white farmers, history repeated itself right here on our family's farm in Charlotte," Clemmons said.

Clemmons said she believed "the same hatred and jealousy" that motivated a racist mob to destroy her family's farm in the 1930s "motivated a new group of individuals to try their best to destroy the beautiful farm of an African-American family in Charlotte, Vermont in 2017. But that is another story—and it is documented in a Vermont Human Rights Commission report published earlier this year."

Clemmons went on to say that "words cannot express" her family's "joy and hope" for the gift's potential "to shape a vibrant future for Vermont's farming. Like hundreds of farm families in Vermont, we know first-hand the challenge of holding land and maintaining what we have."

The Vermont Land Trust, in partnership with a diverse group of farmers and community leaders, will work to design and grow the \$2 million fund to expand land ownership and access. The fund's governance, structure, and decision-making will be determined by Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color in Vermont. (BIPOC)

The remaining \$4 million will expand Vermont Land Trust's capacity to put more experienced farmers, of any race and

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Town attorney finds no conflict of interest by Moore

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR
and Mara Brooks
EDITOR

A statement clearing former Zoning Board of Appeals member Ronda Moore of wrongdoing during her time on the board was made public during the Selectboard's regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 27.

The statement, written by Selectboard Vice-Chair Frank Tenney, and approved by the town's attorney, accompanied a three-page timeline written by David Rugh, an attorney for Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, P.C. of Burlington. The timeline was sent to Chairman Matthew Krasnow and Town Administrator Dean Bloch on August 19.

Moore was appointed to the board on May 3 but resigned two months later on July 28.

One month before her resignation, on June 28, ZBA Chair Lane Morrison told the Selectboard at their regular meeting that Moore should be removed.

Morrison alleged that Moore had a conflict of interest because she was an adjoining property owner to the once planned Charlotte Health Center in the West Village Commercial District at 251 Ferry Road.

The company behind the planned health center was Evergreen Family Health.

At a June 3 joint ZBA/Planning Commission meeting, Moore expressed concerns the

property is a wetlands area and that various automotive chemicals could pollute the wetland.

At the meeting, Moore recused herself from voting on whether or not the project required a conditional use permit.

A few days after her resignation, on August 16, Moore led a group of 16 residents' legal challenge to the town's conditional approval to Evergreen for building the health center.

In early September, Evergreen announced that plans for the health center were on hold.

Rugh's report recounted Moore's two months on the board, including her actions at various meetings.

In the statement, Tenney wrote that Rugh's report determined Moore had no conflict of interest during her time on the board.

"There was no 'conflict of interest' present based on a conflict of interest as defined in the then-applicable ZBA Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual," Tenney wrote. "Since Ronda Moore's comments pertained to the health center's site plan application that was heard by the Planning Commission, not the ZBA, her comments did not qualify under the definition of 'Conflict of Interest' under the Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual then in effect."

However, Tenney wrote that he believed ZBA Chair Morrison committed a technical

SEE **MOORE** PAGE 4

Krasnow resigns as chair

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR

2016 to August 2021.

Since August 2021, he has worked as a construction superintendent at Bullrock Corporation in Shelburne.

"After a lot of thought about how I can still serve the town, and really prioritize time commitments professionally and be home for a very special time, I think the best way to go is to step down as chairman of the Selectboard," Krasnow said.

Krasnow then made a two-part motion for the Selectboard to accept his resignation effective Sunday, Oct. 10, and to install selectman James Faulkner as its new chairman as of Monday, Oct. 11, right before the next scheduled regular Selectboard meeting.

Faulkner was first elected to the Selectboard in 2019 after winning a three-year seat vacated by Lane Morrison.

"I've been working in the past six months with Jim on a couple of dozen projects, and he seems that he has the time and experience to devote to it," Krasnow said. "My ability and bandwidth have been dwindling, so we have been working more and more together. I think he is doing a great job and I think it will be a smooth transition."

"My only thing is, why make this a two-part motion?" Vice-Chairman Frank Tenney said. "This should be a one-part motion. I don't

At the regular Selectboard meeting on Monday, Sept. 27, Chair Matt Krasnow announced that he would be resigning as chair but will remain on the board as a member.

Krasnow has served as chair of the Selectboard since March 2014.

At the annual town meeting in March 2020, Krasnow was elected to a three-year term.

Krasnow discussed his resignation at the meeting during an agenda item marked "Personnel issue and Personnel policy – executive session likely."

However, Krasnow said that "I think it's probably best to do this in an open session, just after a lot of thought about this."

Krasnow explained that as he and his wife are expecting another child in two weeks and he is contending with "new professional responsibilities" he did not feel he had "the bandwidth to do service to the town or the Selectboard in leading as chairman of the board."

He added that extra duties associated with the upcoming budget season also played a role in his decision to step down.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Krasnow previously worked as both a maintenance technician and maintenance supervisor at ICV Construction, Inc. in Burlington from April

SEE **KRASNOW** PAGE 4

Town

Krasnow deflects questions, accuses *The Charlotte News* of sensationalism

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR
and Mara Brooks
EDITOR

After multiple emails and phone calls by *Charlotte News* editor Mara Brooks and Investigative Reporter Shaw Israel Izikson, Selectboard Chair Matthew Krasnow answered questions about business conducted at the board's regular meeting on Sept. 27.

It was a two-day process for Krasnow to respond to questions in an email where the resigning selectboard chair accused *The Charlotte News* of inquiries that were "inappropriate at best and incendiary or sensationalizing at worst", detailed his personal struggles in response to questions relating to town business, added additional media outlets to the thread after asking *The Charlotte News* keep his communications "off the record", and copied the selectboard, the town administrator, the publisher of *The Charlotte News*, and others in a bizarre, sometimes heated, exchange.

At the Sept. 27 meeting, Krasnow announced that he would be resigning during an agenda item listed as "Personnel issue and Personnel policy – executive session likely," but that was held in an open session.

After announcing his resignation, Krasnow said he would stay on as a member of the board. He then made a two-part motion for the board to approve: the first part was to accept his resignation effective October 10, and the second part was to appoint Selectboard Member James Faulkner as its new chair as of Monday, Oct. 11, immediately before the next scheduled regular selectboard meeting.

Vice-Chair Frank Tenney objected to the two-part motion, stating that the motions should be kept separate, and questioned the idea of Krasnow choosing his own successor.

Tenney's objections were quickly dismissed by the board, and the motion was passed.

Later in the meeting, a report was presented detailing a timeline of conflict-of-interest allegations made against former Zoning Board of Appeals Member Ronda Moore.

Moore resigned from the ZBA on July 28 after serving less than three months.

At the June 28 Selectboard meeting, Moore was accused by ZBA chair Lane Morrison of a conflict of interest regarding Evergreen Family Health's permit application for a Charlotte Health Center. (Moore owns a property that adjoins what was proposed to be the Charlotte Health Center in the West Village Commercial District.) At the meeting, Morrison asked the Selectboard to remove Moore from the zoning board.

In an interview with *The Charlotte News* last July, Krasnow stated that he believed Moore had behaved improperly by not disclosing her alleged conflict of interest.

In recent months, Charlotte resident and former ZBA member Stuart Bennett had pressured the town for transparency surrounding its role in Moore's resignation and the damage to her reputation. Most recently, Bennett penned a Letter to the Editor in the Sept. 23 issue of *The Charlotte News* demanding accountability from the town.

Krasnow responded to Bennett in an open letter posted on Sept. 24 in Front Porch Forum.

The full report on a conflict-of-interest investigation on Moore, conducted by the Burlington law firm, Stitzel, Page & Fletcher, was presented at the September 27 meeting.

The report cleared Moore of any wrongdoing.

As shown by a dated email, the report was sent to Krasnow, and Town Administrator Dean Bloch, on Thursday, Aug. 19 — more than a month before its findings were shared with the public.

On Tuesday, *The News* emailed Krasnow several items discussed at the Sept. 27 meeting.

After receiving no response for more than a day, *Charlotte News* editor Brooks wrote an email alerting Krasnow that reporter Izikson was trying to reach him for comment before going to press. (Krasnow previously requested that Brooks reach out to him a second time if he did not respond to initial press inquiries.)

Krasnow finally responded to *The News* on Wednesday in an emotional email. He copied the selectboard and Town Administrator Dean Bloch on the correspondence.

According to Freedom of Information rules, when a full selectboard conducts business via email, it is considered municipal business and therefore a public document.

In response to queries from *The News* about the Sept. 27 meeting, Krasnow wrote, "This feels like a lot of (negative) pressure."

"You do realize I work full-time and don't have the luxury to put down the hammer, rake, tape measure, etc. to write my opinions while I'm getting paid an hourly wage, right?" he wrote.

Krasnow went on to give *The News*, and those he had copied on the email thread, a detailed accounting of his personal routine and family obligations and asked that it be kept "off the record, please."

In response, *The News* again attempted to ask Krasnow about the Sept. 27 meeting. The questions included why there had been a delay in releasing the town lawyer's findings, and whether the town planned to issue Moore an apology. *The News* also asked Krasnow when he made the decision to resign, and when each member of the board was notified of his decision.

Krasnow responded that he felt like a "broken record", and described the questions as "inappropriate" "incendiary" and "sensationalizing."

"What confuses me is that your (*The News*) stories are often balanced, measured and largely accurate," Krasnow wrote.

Krasnow then copied *The Charlotte Bridge* editor (and former *Charlotte News* editor), Chea Evans, on the thread.

In his comments at Monday's Selectboard meeting, Krasnow indicated he had been consulting with Faulkner about various chair duties for a period of time prior to announcing

his resignation.

"I've been working in the past six months with Jim on a couple of dozen projects, and he seems that he has the time and experience to devote to it," Krasnow said at the meeting. "My ability and bandwidth have been dwindling, so we have been working more and more together. I think he is doing a great job and I think it will be a smooth transition."

In an interview with *The News*, Selectboard Vice-Chair Tenney said he was surprised by Krasnow's actions at the September 27 meeting.

"What I expected is Matt to say that he was resigning and for us to vote on that, and then the board could decide on how they were going to go from there," Tenney said.

Tenney said when new board members are voted in, the board usually holds "an organizational meeting."

"If you look back at our meeting in March, even though Matt was basically the returning chair [after the town elections], the meeting was led as though we had no organization at that time. Tenney said. So, the first thing we did was to elect a chair and a vice-chair,"

Tenney said he had "no idea" that Krasnow was going to resign as chairman and nominate Faulkner to take his place. He suggested it may have been Krasnow's way of steering the future direction of the select board before stepping down.

"I was totally caught off guard," Tenney said. "All it said on our agenda was a personnel issue, and that was it. I found out when he (Krasnow) said that he didn't have the bandwidth [to continue as chair] and that he was going to resign. That was the first time I heard about this."

The Charlotte News again asked Krasnow if all the members of the board first learned of the impending resignation at the Sept. 27 meeting.

In response, Selectboard Member Louise McCarren, who had previously told *The News* she would not disclose when she learned of Krasnow's resignation because "Jim and Matt speak for the board," wrote: "This is a personnel matter."

Krasnow responded he had asked Faulkner if he was willing to assume the role as chair before informing the other board members of his plans to resign.

"I didn't speak with 'the board'. I did ask speak [sic] with Jim about it to see if he'd be willing to accept the role," Krasnow wrote in his first direct response to the question.

Krasnow then stated that he "first thought about stepping back in some way about two weeks ago (after the last meeting). I first spoke with Jim sometime after that."

Tenney said he did not know why some selectboard members were left in the dark about Krasnow's plans while others were tipped off sooner.

"I just believe the Selectboard should be transparent within the board and with the public. I don't see that happening all of the time," Tenney said.

The series of emails concluded with Krasnow admonishing *The News*' efforts to learn whether or not he chose his successor prior to publicly announcing his resignation.

"This process has been a real disappointment from the days of John Hammer's community reporting," Krasnow wrote.



Mission Statement

The mission of *The Charlotte News* is:

- to publish rigorous, in-depth, fair reporting on town affairs, and,
- to source stories of interest from our neighbors and friends.

The News is a forum for the free exchange of the views of Charlotte residents and community volunteers on matters related to the town and the people who live here.

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

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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 following standards and requirements:

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- The *News* strives to stay clear of conflicts of interest. If an actual or perceived conflict arises or becomes known at a later date, it will be fully disclosed.
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Town

MOORE

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violation of the *Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual*.

“This violation occurred when the ZBA reopened its hearing on the health care application on June 17 when Lane failed to ask board members to identify conflicts of interest at the start of the reopened hearing as required by the rules,” Tenney wrote.

Tenney also believes that both Morrison and vice-chairman Charles Russell committed a second violation of the *Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual* at a meeting on June 28.

“The Selectboard adjusted its agenda to hear a request by [Morrison and Russell] to remove [Moore] from the ZBA due to an alleged conflict of interest,” Tenney wrote. “This request was out of order because ZBA members Morrison and Russell should have discussed the matter with the ZBA first under the procedure set out by the Rules of Procedure and Ethics Manual.”

Tenney noted that penalties for violations committed by Morrison and Russell have not been established by the town’s rules.

At the September 27 Selectboard meeting, the board reviewed the report but did not take any action.

From the audience, resident Stuart Bennett urged the board to take a vote to accept the report.

“I think you guys can easily take a vote on this,” Bennett said. “Yes or no? Was there a conflict of interest? You all read the report. Just say it!”

Krasnow thanked Bennett without addressing his question.

In an email to *The Charlotte News* after the meeting, Krasnow wrote that the reason it took over a month to make the report public was that the report was emailed “after the date to warn the meeting for August 23rd. As it so happened, the meeting ran for four hours.”

Krasnow wrote that he had not heard back from board members Frank Tenney and Jim Faulkner, who he delegated to work with Rugh on the timeline.

He added that he did not add discussion of the timeline to the September 13 meeting because “no one had requested an update on this issue.”

When asked why the selectmen did not vote to absolve Moore of any conflict of interest or offer an apology, Krasnow wrote “That would be a question for the Selectboard to answer at a public meeting.”

“Is it possible to speak for decisions that weren’t considered by the Selectboard?” Krasnow wrote. “The Zoning Board of Adjustment is the only town body that has evaluated the issue. The Selectboard held a special meeting to determine if it was within its jurisdiction to do so, and the town attorney advised the Selectboard to recommend to the ZBA to follow its rules of procedures and ethics manual”

When asked how much the town paid for legal fees for the investigation and subsequent report, Krasnow said he was not the right person to ask.

In an email to *The Charlotte News*, Moore wrote, “I am vindicated. Thank you Frank Tenney for getting the truth out in the open with his presentation and memo to the Selectboard.”

KRASNOW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

agree with making a two-part motion in picking your own successor. It has nothing to do with whether or not Jim is capable. I just think it should be separate motions.”

Krasnow disagreed.

“As part of the responsibility of being an elected chair, I felt like that I should take some of the responsibility of coming up with the ability to offer a suggestion about how leadership should move, so I did want to make a two-part motion tonight,” Krasnow said.

Tenney said in choosing his own successor, Krasnow had diverted from the board’s normal procedure.

“I understand that, but at the beginning of every year after election day we all come together and we don’t look towards the chair of the previous board to say who should be the chair of the new board,” Tenney told Krasnow. “What happens is someone gets nominated.”

Faulkner said he thought it was important to keep Tenney as vice-chair for board consistency.

“There is a lot of history and knowledge there that [Tenney] can provide,” Faulkner said. “I think he’s invaluable and it’s important as hell.”

“Frank is a real repository of knowledge,”

Selectman Louise McCarren said. “His depth of knowledge of this town and how he works is valuable.”

“I just don’t agree with the double motion,” Tenney said.

The board approved Krasnow’s motions.

In an email to *The Charlotte News* on September 29, Krasnow wrote that he informed the Selectboard at the meeting of his decision to resign.

“I listed it as a possible executive session because open meeting laws allow executive session discussions when matters of employees and appointments need to be discussed,” Krasnow wrote. “My initial plan was to discuss my decision with the board in executive session and discuss how the board wanted to move forward in a cohesive way.”

Krasnow said the town attorney informed him that because the chair is an elected position, there were no grounds to support holding an executive session to discuss the topic.

“They advised me to have the conversation in an open meeting and I followed their counsel,” Krasnow said.

At the Sept. 27 meeting, Krasnow said he had made the decision not to hold an executive session.

“I think it’s probably best to do this in an open session, just after a lot of thought about this,”

he said at the meeting.

When pressed by reporters for *The Charlotte News*, Krasnow admitted that he informed Faulkner of his plans to resign not at the Sept. 27 meeting but “sometime after” he made the decision to resign “two weeks ago”.

Frank Tenney told *The News* that he first learned of Krasnow’s resignation at the Sept. 27 meeting. Other Selectboard members declined to state on the record when they were first made aware of Krasnow’s plans to step down.

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Town

FARMING

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ethnicity, onto the land in the coming years.

“Agriculture is central to our identity and sense of place,” said Nick Richardson, President and CEO of the Vermont Land Trust.

“The climate crisis, demographic change, and broader economics require us to act boldly and change the trajectory of decline,” Richardson said. “Now is the moment to help the next generation of farmers buy land and grow farm enterprises. This gift, and decades-long partnership with the High Meadows Fund, enables us to take a great leap forward in protecting and strengthening agriculture in Vermont.”

In addition to announcing this major gift, Gaye Symington, executive director of

The High Meadows Fund, announced the Fund will transition to a grantmaking entity within the Vermont Community Foundation and not remain a separate non-profit.

“An accelerated pace of investment will have a lasting impact on the future of Vermont’s agricultural economy, rural communities, and food system,” Symington said. “It’s critical to give greater control to those who have been marginalized by traditional approaches to land ownership.”

Smith spoke of the importance of creating “a sense of belonging for all Vermonters.”

“Communities where anyone willing to commit to the working landscape—regardless of race, ethnicity, or economic background—has a pathway to steward the land without fear of discrimination and isolation are key to closing the opportunity gap in Vermont,” Smith said. “We are a rural state where the working landscape has long been central to our economic vitality. To keep that legacy alive and our rural communities vibrant, we need to create conditions that attract, support, and retain a diverse new generation of farmers running a range of successful and sustainable enterprises. This remarkable gift advances that reality.”

Clemmons said she hoped her family’s past experiences would help inform Vermont’s future support of Black-owned farms.

“It’s important for all of us to learn from stories like those I’ve shared from my own family’s experiences in 1930s Louisiana and in 2017 Vermont,” Clemmons said. “Our family’s stories are not unique. They have been experienced by Black farming families across this state and all around this country for generations. Owning and stewarding land comes at a price for those who have historically been oppressed. Learning from the failings of our past as a society is vital for us to avoid the same pitfalls in the future.”

Selectboard approves Russell Trail easement, says it is not closer to Clemmons Family Farm

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR
and Mara Brooks
EDITOR

During their regular meeting on Monday, Sept. 27, the Selectboard approved a motion to move a property easement to the southern edge of a property owned by Margaret and Michael Russell at 2577 Lake Road.

The move was first discussed at the May 24 Selectboard meeting, when the Russells indicated they wanted to move the existing trail easement on the northern boundary part of their property to a southern boundary.

“I appreciate the Selectboard for looking at doing this,” Michael Russell said to the board. “This is going to be a good thing for the town to have a trail in a buildable location that will connect to other aspects of the trail that are under development and consideration.”

Trails Committee Chair Bill Regan said the trails committee supported the new easement.

“I just want to say we support this change,” Regan said. “The current [Russell] easement really doesn’t connect you to very much at all, but with the proposed change you have the opportunity for much more direct connection with the village loop trail and eventually for this becoming part of the extension of the town link trail all the way down to the beach. So, from a trails’ perspective, this is a good idea.”

The board moved to approve the reconveyance of the municipal trail easement back to the Russells in exchange for a new recreational trail easement across their property.

Before the motion was approved, Lydia Clemmons, executive director of the Clemmons Family Farm, asked to be heard.

Clemmons told the board she believed the town was moving the trail closer to the Clemmons Family Farm property despite her repeated requests during the past several months for the town to find an alternative route.

The Clemmons Family Farm is a black-owned, historic 148-acre property and multicultural center and the only one of its kind in Vermont.

At a previous Selectboard meeting, Clemmons expressed concerns that placing a trail near the property could make the farm a target for racially motivated hate crimes.

In late May, Clemmons expressed those concerns again when a scoping study proposed placing the Town Link Trail along the Clemmons Family Farm property line.

“I missed some conversations that have been held,” Clemmons said Monday. “But the last time we had a meeting on this particular part of the trail, I thought that the town had said that it would try to get the trail as far away from the Clemmons Family Farm as possible. And it seems like we are going on as if that conversation never happened, and as if the trauma that happened to my family never happened. As if maybe, you aren’t aware that we have a security guard service guarding the east part of our property on Greenbush Road.”

Clemmons’ safety concerns are not without merit. In June, the state’s Human Rights Commission issued a report that Clemmons was found to have suffered illegal racial and

gender discrimination at the hands of Vermont State Police during a four-month period in 2017. During the time in question, Clemmons requested assistance from the police on multiple occasions in relation to an alleged criminal who had fraudulently gained tenancy at the farm by pretending to be a shepherd.

“You have routinely complimented the Russells on all of their hard work and all that they’ve done,” Clemmons said to board member Louise McCarren. “Do you know that our family has been here for 60 years holding onto this land and doing nothing but give back to the community? We are a historic site, and we are asking the town of Charlotte to care.”

“I was under the impression that this southern route takes the trail farther away from your farm,” McCarren replied. “If I’m wrong on that, I’m wrong.”

“We had this conversation before, Louise,” Clemmons said. “We feel, vehemently, that this makes our farm more vulnerable.”

Selectboard Chair Matt Krasnow suggested Clemmons had misunderstood the purpose of the motion.

“I think that Lydia, from what I am understanding what you are saying, is you are talking about the larger scoping study that was looking to place the town link trail on a determined path from the center of town to Charlotte Beach,” Krasnow said. “This has no bearing on that process at all. It may, or may not be, in a path that the town at some point in the future looks at placing on the Town Link Trail. But that is not what is before the Selectboard right now.”

Krasnow said that the existing trail easement going across the Russell property is closer to the Clemmons’ property.

“It runs more to the northern part of [the Russell’s] existing property,” Krasnow said. “What this does is that allows for more options to be further from your property on the southern end of their property. It creates an additional spur that could get it even closer to Ferry Road if needed.”

Krasnow said that no decisions were being made at the Sept. 27 meeting about the determined route of the Town Link Trail from the center of town to Charlotte Beach.

“Any process that would endeavor to do so, would be done thoughtfully and sometime down the road in the future,” Krasnow said. “But certainly, that is not what is happening tonight.”

“This is separate,” Margaret Russell said. “No matter what, the easement is being moved away from the Clemmons property. To me, that sounds like a positive for both of us.”

The board voted to pass the motion with member Lewis Mudge abstaining.

When reached for comment by *The Charlotte News*, Mudge explained his vote -- or lack thereof.

“I appreciate the Russells changing their easement, people who provide easements are doing the town a service,” Mudge said.

“Mudge said he abstained due to what he called ‘the trails issue’.”

Mudge said he was “dismayed” by the town’s attempt to avoid addressing Clemmons’

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The Charlotte News

Opinion

Charlotte doesn't need a Development Review Board

The town is considering a DRB to replace the ZBA and Planning Commission. Three former ZBA chairs say that's not a good idea.

By Contributors Frank Tenney, Stuart Bennett and Jonathan Fisher

We all like living in Charlotte. Why? One reason is that Charlotte has limited commercial development. This is a direct result of our cautious, deliberative permit approval process.

All towns, including Charlotte, control development with their own Land Use Regulations (LURs). The LURs are not imposed on the town, we all vote for them. They are detailed, and their implementation requires a deliberate approach. They are not designed to be quick and easy.

Charlotte's LURs are flexible and can be amended annually at Town Meeting. In fact, just last year the LURs were amended for On-Farm Businesses, and many terms and definitions were updated. There will be more amendments proposed next Town Meeting as well.

The flexibility to amend our LURs is a good thing. But we should wait to see how the

amendments work before debating a DRB format. There is no rush. The current system is working well.

The saying "If it's not broken, why fix it?" applies. Are there any projects that did not get an appropriate result with the ZBA/Planning Commission format? We couldn't think of any.

There is nothing wrong with the Charlotte zoning process. Rather, the issue is adherence to the process. Developers want the process to be quick and simple, but that's typically not in the best interests of the town. The recent Charlotte Health Center is a perfect example of the efficient review and approval of a project by both the ZBA and Planning Commission. A DRB would not have improved that result.

Delays caused by statutorily sanctioned appeals are not a reflection on the Charlotte approval process. The right to appeal a permit is controlled by Vermont statutes and would not change with a DRB.

Form should follow function—a two-step process. Currently, the ZBA first evaluates whether a use can be approved. If the use is approved, the project's design is fine-tuned by

the Planning Commission through site plan review.

The aesthetic appeal of a site plan could improperly influence the decision on appropriateness of use. When a great-looking site plan is presented, it can be natural to feel excitement or envision what the project will ultimately look like. But emotional bias, conscious or otherwise, can result in details being overlooked. Such risks are likely with a DRB, which evaluates use and design simultaneously.

The mixing of emotion with use review is a common developer strategy to get projects approved.

Consolidation of power is a bad thing. A DRB would have only five appointees to consider both design and use. Currently, the Selectboard appoints five citizens to the ZBA and seven citizens to the Planning Commission. How does consolidation of power and reduced citizen participation benefit the citizens of Charlotte?

Amended LURs would be the same under the current ZBA/Planning Commission format or a DRB. So why shift the work of the ZBA and the Planning Commission onto only a five-

member DRB?

A change to a DRB would disrupt the zoning office staff. The Selectboard just hired an HR company to verify and value each employee position. Time and money well spent.

If a DRB is instituted, the roles of the zoning administrator, town planner, and the planning and zoning assistant would have to be re-evaluated. Job descriptions and compensation would need to be adjusted. We should allow these new town employees to get their feet on the ground before we disrupt their positions. One office staff has been in their role for about one-and-a-half years, one three months, and the other just over a month.

For the above reasons, we feel strongly that the town should not replace our current ZBA/Planning Commission with a Development Review Board.

Thank you.

Frank Tenney – Select Board Vice Chair, and former ZBA Chair

Stuart Bennett – Former ZBA Vice Chair and Chair

Jonathan Fisher – Former ZBA Chair

TRAIL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

"legitimate concerns" at the Sept. 27 meeting.

"I was surprised that, although we had this endorsement from Bill Regan and the trails committee, that when Lydia Clemmons wanted to talk about her very legitimate concerns with regard to the trail, it was suddenly like, 'no, no, no, we're just talking about the easement,'" he said.

Mudge said Regan's statement that moving the easement was "a great idea" for the town link trail "opened the door" for Clemmons to voice her concerns.

"Lydia has every right as a towns person to bring up her concerns, I consider them to be valid," Mudge said. "This movement of the easement has been talked about in the past. I had been for it. But there was a very direct correlation between the trail and the easement. And then I perceived that all of a sudden we didn't want to hear from the Clemmons family farm on that issue."

Mudge said that he "regrets" not having

spoken up more at Monday's meeting.

"I was frankly, trying to collect my thoughts," he said. "I thought, the Russells are doing a service to the town, [so] I didn't want to vote against it, but I didn't want to vote for it."

Mudge added that Clemmons also raised a "salient point" in her statements at Monday's meeting.

"We certainly speak often, and rightly so, about what townsfolk are doing for the town, but we haven't spoken enough about thanking the Clemmons Family Farm for all that they do," Mudge said. "I think it's high time that we all take the time to thank them as well. They do a lot for the town, they do a lot for the whole community."

"The Clemmons Family Farm is a treasure, and we need to recognize that," Mudge said.

In an email to *The Charlotte News* after the meeting, Clemmons said that she has stated her position on the Russells' easement at previous town meetings and had no further comment.

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Around Town

Congratulations:

to **Champlain Valley Union High School** for being ranked among the top 10 Vermont public high schools by Niche.com, a school evaluation website. CVU ranked third behind South Burlington and Mount Mansfield. Charlotte Central School ranked 10th among public middle schools.

to **Kathryn Blume** of Charlotte who is one of three lead actresses in a play, *The Suffragist Reenactment Society*, that premiered Saturday at Main Street Landing's Black Box Theater in Burlington. The play was written by another Vermonter Mary Beth McNulty. The three leads get together and vote on which famous moments in history they will remember and celebrate on Independence Day. Voting by women, suffragism, becomes the topic, and they quickly ask each other how to overcome people from trying to disenfranchise voters.

to **Lydia Clemmons** of Charlotte, who received the Arthur Williams Award for Service to the Arts. In addition, Lydia Clemmons received the Con Hogan Award for creative, entrepreneurial community leadership from the Vermont Community Foundation. The Hogan Award honors a community member who shows deep community involvement, generosity and enthusiasm in their work. Lydia is the steward of the Clemmons Family Farm off Greenbush Road where she teaches African culture through the farm site. Lydia has 35 years of community development experience, both here and in Africa. The Clemmons Family Farm is one of the 0.4 percent of farms in the U.S. that remains Black-owned, and its history remains an important teaching tool. Lydia's father, Jackson Clemmons, grew up in

southern Wisconsin before attending medical school. Lydia's grandfather had been moved to Wisconsin from the deep south to integrate an otherwise all-white-staffed headquarters of the Fairbanks-Morse Power Corporation in Beloit, Wisconsin.

Sympathy:

is extended to family and friends of **William E. Scott** of Golden Valley, Arizona, who passed away at the age of 79. He was born in Burlington in 1942 and served as chief of the Charlotte Volunteer Fire Department in the 1960s. He was a well-known crane operator, who at one time in the 1980s hauled the Apollo 11 across the state of Vermont. The family urges those who wish to make a donation in Bill's memory to consider a local humane society.

is extended to family and friends of **Harriet S. Sherman** of Pittsboro, North Carolina, who died Sept. 14 at the age of 71. Harriet spent most of her life as an educator, beginning her career at Charlotte Elementary School before moving to Hawaii. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the SECU Bryan UNC Hospice Home in Pittsboro (go.unc.edu/UNChospice) or to the COR Food Pantry (www.CORAFoodpantry.org).

Marion Otis Handy McDougal Bausch

Maize Bausch, a.k.a. Marion Otis Handy McDougal Bausch, died peacefully on May 15, 2021, at Mayo Health & Continuing Care in Northfield, Vermont, aged 96 years.



Maize Bausch

Born in Greenwich, Connecticut, on March 16, 1925, Maize spent much of her childhood at family homes in Barnstable, Massachusetts, and Akron, Ohio. In Barnstable on Cape Cod, she grew up by the sea, sailing small boats with her brothers and sisters. After graduating from Vassar College, Maize explored her artistic inspiration at the Arts Students League in New York City, inspired initially by Van Gogh and later influenced by Kandinsky, Picasso and Pollock.

Maize was married to Edward D. McDougal III on his return from Europe at the close of World War II. Together they had three children: Nicholas, Charles and Jane. After the dissolution of this marriage, Maize departed Vermont in the late 1950s for Ajijic on Lake Chapala in Mexico. She set up a studio there and shared a home with sister Tinker, a.k.a. Virginia Handy Heffron. Then after brief stays in Stinson Beach, California, and New York City, Maize and family settled in Williston, Vermont, in 1960. She taught art at the Overlake Day School in Burlington for a decade. She was much loved by her students as they discovered the joy of artistic creativity Maize revealed to them.

During a summer camping trip with friends in the Adirondack Mountains, Maize met Carl L. Bausch Jr. whom she married in 1966. Together they built a house in Charlotte, where they both pursued their creative ambitions: Maize painting and Carl building canoes. Maize extended and deepened her commitment to her art, not only painting, but also making pottery from native clay. Refreshing their connection with nature, Maize and Carl explored Canada's rivers and lakes on canoe trips together.

Maize created some of her best paintings late at night to the sounds of Bach, the Beatles, Monk and Coltrane. Her work was exhibited throughout Vermont and New England in the 1970s through 2000s, culminating in a retrospective at the Walkover Gallery in Bristol, Vermont, in 2013, Maize's 88th year.

Maize encouraged her children to find their way in life by discovering the joy of creativity in art and personal relationships, saying "*Become an artist of Life!*"—Charlie and Nick in musical pursuits and Jane in her weaving. Though Jane was born with multiple disabilities, Maize's devotion enables her to lead a full life beyond all expectations. Jane has been able to live independently, gainfully employed, while developing her own talents in fabric arts. After Carl's death, and as her grandchildren were born, Maize showered them with love, spending hours together in play and in the garden, and also, reading and painting together in her studio.

Maize was predeceased by her parents, John Littlefield Handy and Virginia Seiberling Handy; sisters Virginia Handy Heffron and Annabelle Handy Kirby; her brother John L. Handy Jr.; and her husbands, Edward D. McDougal III and Carl L. Bausch Jr. She is survived by her children, Jane Otis McDougal, Charles Blayne McDougal and Nicholas Ulysses McDougal; grandchildren Nicholas Charles Arbuckle McDougal and Quincy Sinclair McDougal; her sister Sylvia Handy Bowman of Port Townsend, Washington; her brother Edward A. Handy of Cambridge, Massachusetts; and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service will be announced at a future date.

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Town

Planning Commission reviewing new rules of procedure—in private

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR

The town's Planning Commission reviewed the first draft of new rules of procedure at its meeting on Thursday, Sept. 16.

It was noted at the meeting that town staff had mistakenly posted the wrong document to the town's Dropbox account.

Members of the commission agreed to review the first draft of the new rules at its next meeting on Thursday, Oct. 7, at 7 p.m.

When *The Charlotte News* requested a copy of the first draft of the updated rules of procedure from the town, Planning and Zoning assistant Rebecca Kaplan wrote via email that "the first draft is still up for discussion



and not a document ready to be linked to our website."

The town's current Planning Commission rules of procedure, which were originally adopted in March 2006, are available at this link: [charlottevt.org/Planning Zoning Wastewater Permitting/Planning Commission/Rules of Procedure & Ethics Manual](http://charlottevt.org/Planning/Zoning+Wastewater+Permitting/Planning+Commission/Rules+of+Procedure+&+Ethics+Manual). [www.charlottevt.org/Planning, Zoning & Wastewater Permitting/ Planning/Planning Commission/ Planning Commission Rules of Procedure & Ethics Manual](http://www.charlottevt.org/Planning,Zoning+&+Wastewater+Permitting/Planning/Planning+Commission/Planning+Commission+Rules+of+Procedure+&+Ethics+Manual)

Charlotte Democrats meet

Nancy Richardson
CONTRIBUTOR

The Charlotte Democratic Committee met on Thursday, Sept. 23, to select officers and name delegates to the County Democratic Committee. This reorganization is required by Vermont law and occurs every two years in odd-numbered years. Ten members of the party voted on the following officers: Chair, Braxton Robbason; Vice-Chair, Mike Yantachka; Secretary, Nancy Richardson; and Treasurer, Terry Silva. It was noted by Rep. Mike Yantachka that the Charlotte Democratic Committee welcomes all Democrats to join the local committee.

A County Democratic Committee meeting will be held on Oct. 27. In addition to electing delegates to the State Committee, a number of issues will be addressed, including the recent increase in the population of Chittenden County that has resulted in one additional Senate seat and two Representative seats for the Vermont Legislature.

Delegates to the County Democratic Committee are: Braxton Robbason, Mike Yantachka, Ed Cafferty, Matt Krasnow, Seth Zimmerman, Nancy Richardson, and Alternate Lorna Jimerson.

Letter to the Editor

In support of a DRB

Land uses in Charlotte are regulated by two citizen boards. Both are appointed by the Selectboard. Prospective members present their interest to serve, their experience and credentials, and something about why they are seeking the appointment. There is no particular criteria that guides the Selectboard in approving members of either the Planning Commission or the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Both the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board conduct separate reviews of many of the projects that are proposed for development in town. The basis for their actions—approval, disapproval or seeking changes—resides in the Land Use Regulations. The LURs include and integrate traditional zoning bylaws and subdivision conditions. The matters of focus of the two boards, however, are different.

Planning reviews subdivisions, boundary line adjustments and site plans. Zoning is concerned with conditional use applications and hears appeals. Problems sometimes arise when projects produce inconsistent

or even contradictory results. Dual reviews take time, can create confusion, and may open opportunities for protracted challenges by neighbors who wish to assert individual self-interests.

A Development Review Board in Charlotte would exercise a coherent process of regulation over developments throughout town. It would replace Zoning entirely, and Planning's project review role would be eliminated. Planning would then have time to tend to broader matters of importance to residents, how the Town Plan reflects them, and whether Land Use Regulations promote implementation of approved policies.

A DRB would be established with clear purpose and improved capacity to apply and interpret the LURs. Its principal function would be to determine whether development proposals comply with the rules and requirements set by the Selectboard. These are reasons why 75 percent of towns in Vermont have adopted the DRB model. It will be good for Charlotte, too.

Peter Richardson
Charlotte

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The **Charlotte News**

Calendar Events

We welcome appropriate community event listings with a maximum of 100 words. Print fees may apply to community events outside of Charlotte.
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Saturday, Oct. 16

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Hosted by Access CVU: cvsdvt.ce.eleyo.com.

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The **Charlotte News**

Town

Planning Commission debates pros and cons of Development Review Board

Members get into the weeds on what a new board would mean

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR

Since spring, municipal boards, including both the Selectboard and Zoning Board, have debated about forming a Development Review Board for the town.

The debate carried over to the Planning Commission's regular meeting on Sept. 16.

Commission Vice-Chairman Charlie Pughe, who led the meeting in place of absent Chairman Peter Joslin, led a conversation that discussed the potential pros and cons of having a formal board for Charlotte.

"The last time we talked about this, we had a large difference of opinions," Pughe said. "It didn't seem like there was any real large consensus. The latest ask from the Selectboard is that we try to list the pros and cons of a Development Review Board. If we can't reach an agreement, at least we can develop a good list."

Commission member Kyra Wegman

"Mike Dunbar is routinely sort of flouting the rules whenever he wants to. There is no recourse to make him do anything because he would rather pay a fine than work with the town."

Kyra Wegman
Commission member

questioned the idea of the town forming a Development Review Board in the first place.

"The argument that keeps resonating with me is that, in a theoretical sense, I

understand the need to separate a judicial and legislative party," Wegman said. "But I am not clear on what problems we are solving if we form a Development Review Board. Who will enforce the town plan for the Development Review Board? That's not clear to me and it's super confusing on how that will work."

Pughe told Wegman that the Planning Commission would be the ones to enforce the town plan and regulations for the Development Review Board.

"Any decision by the Development Review Board can be appealed to the court," Pughe said. "And the court would say whether or not we are following the rules."

Wegman disagreed.

"That makes it the citizens' job financially and morally to be policing a body that is an upside-down pyramid and inefficient," Wegman said. "If efficiency is the goal by forming this board, I'm not sure what problem that solves."

"But the situation is true regardless of whether we move to this model or stay with the current structure we have," Pughe said. "It's the rules of the game, as it is defined in the state statutes. We have no control over that."

Pughe said that the town would have to be careful about who they pick to serve for any Development Review Board.

"A potential candidate might be asked by the town about what projects they would not approve," Pughe said. "The candidate says something about the projects they may not vote for. The town goes 'thank you very much' and goes on to the next person. What they are looking for is someone who will rubber-stamp development."

In response, Wegman said she did not see how a Development Review Board would be beneficial for the town.

"Mike Dunbar is routinely sort of flouting the rules whenever he wants to," Wegman said. "There is no recourse to make him do anything because he would rather pay a fine than work with the town. We are

potentially exposing ourselves to more of that. It seems to be a great way for citizens to lose the ability to control what happens in their town."

Two days before the Planning Commission's meeting, the town sent a notice to Backyard Bistro Gemini Properties, LLC owners Dunbar and Debra Kassabian saying that the Charlotte Crossings' Backyard Bistro violated the town's Land Use Regulations.

At the meeting, Wegman said that "it sounds a little bit unsettling that we are here to serve the applicants."

We are here to serve the town," Wegman said. "Applicants are here to make money and not necessarily serve the town. While I realize that we need a robust economy and we need money coming in, if that becomes our only goal then we are going to lose the character of this town."

Commission member Kelly Devine disagreed and said that not everyone coming before the town's zoning commissions is looking to make money.

"People are coming [to the zoning commissions] because they are looking for an extra bedroom in their home or because they want to build a garage," Devine said. "These are all homeowners in our town and many of them worked hard to have homes for their whole life. This is an old farming town. This is not a town where people come if they want to make a lot of money in real estate development. I guarantee that."

Commission member Bill Stuono disagreed, stating, while members of the Selectboard believe that forming a Development Review Board could be done without voter approval, he disagreed with the idea of forming a board without voter input.

He also said that until the town made some strides towards improving water and sewer capacity, not much would change in regard to development in town.

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Town

Charlotte Community Partners shares results of town's Resilience Assessment



Mara Brooks
EDITOR

Charlotte Community Partners (CCP), in consultation with Vermont-based Community Resilience Organizations (gocros.org), released the final report of its 2020–2021 Charlotte Resilience Assessment. The

report, which compiles data collected from October 2020 to June 2021, seeks to assess the town's ability to "bounce back" from hardships such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last November, the CCP circulated a "resilience survey," asking Charlotte residents how resilient they believed the town to be in five key areas: Basic Needs and Services, Environmental and Natural Systems, Physical Infrastructure, Community Relations and COVID-19 Pandemic.

Respondents ranked each section on a scale from one to five (one/1 being not very resilient and five/5 being very resilient), or "Not Sure."

One hundred eighty residents participated in the survey.

Insights obtained from the survey included:

- **Basic Needs and Services:** Between 30 percent and 45 percent of the respondents had concerns about resilience around food equity, energy, health services and housing. For personal health and well-being, 45 percent ranked Charlotte resiliency as a 4 or 5.
- **Environment and Natural Systems:** The town's environmental stewardship and land use received high marks for resilience; invasive species management fared less well, with 29 percent marking it a 1 or 2.
- **Physical Infrastructure:** Emergency shelter access received a low grade with 46 percent of respondents ranking it as a 1 or 2, and 38 percent stating they were not sure. Respondents also gave low marks to cell service and broadband accessibility, with 39 percent ranking it as a 1 or 2. Public/private facilities were ranked as being a 4 or 5 in resiliency.
- **Community Connections:** Results indicated a fair amount of uncertainty (Not Sure) in the areas of Self Sufficiency and Awareness and Education. The results

in Civic Engagement indicated most respondents do not believe the town is very resilient with 38 percent scoring it a 1 or 2.

• **COVID-19:** Seventy-three percent of respondents indicated they were doing well during COVID-19; but many were unclear about community resilience in the areas of mutual aid or around schools and families.

"This is merely a glance at what the results show, and further discussion is needed amongst various groups, committees and organizations in town to discern what the results indicate and how they can be helpful," the report stated. "The ongoing work of the CCP will be to try to engage various groups to stimulate discussion around the results, with the hope of making our beautiful town, through collaborative community engagement, more resilient and welcome to all."

The CCP, led by Cindi Robinson of the Food Shelf, Margaret Woodruff of the Charlotte Library, and Rev. Kevin Goldenbogen of the Charlotte Congregational Church, was formed in 2020 in response to the



COVID-19 pandemic. Along with creating and facilitating the Community Resilience Assessment, the organization seeks to address climate change, energy, food, environmental health, land and water, and living economies.

Last fall, CCP partnered with Community Resilience Organizations "to guide

us in the process of conducting a resilience assessment for Charlotte," the report said.

"We hope to bring our town together in a common endeavor to work on the issues and concerns that face us now and those that will impact us in the future," a statement on the CCP website reads.

Charlotte Community Partners has met twice a month since last April. It includes representatives from CCS, the Charlotte Senior Center, Transition Town Charlotte, Seed Library, CVFRS, the Grange and others.

To view the Charlotte Resilience Assessment report, go to: bit.ly/ccp05445.

For more information on the CCP, contact Margaret Woodruff at margaret@charlottepubliclibrary.org.



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Town News from the Charlotte Energy Committee

Rebecca Foster
CHARLOTTE ENERGY COMMITTEE CHAIR

The turnout was remarkable on a drizzly day in the low 50s to celebrate the newly installed solar system at the CCS compost shed. Sun-themed music defied the elements, and the battery that was still charged from the last time it was sunny powered a string of festive lights. The Oct. 2 event was organized by the Charlotte Energy Committee (CEC) and joined by the Charlotte Grange, Charlotte Community Partners, Sustainable Charlotte, and Window Dressers. The Mini-Fest officially celebrated the CEC's dual-use project, demonstrating the beauty and utility of solar power combined with pollinator meadows.

Photos by Rebecca Foster



Mike Yantachka sports the library's Planet Pack for picking up litter. Other Conservation Corner objects that can be borrowed from the library were on display in the compost shed, including a Kill A Watt, a firewood moisture meter, books and the prized thermal camera—be sure to sign out the camera so you can use it to detect cold leaks during your Button Up energy visit!



Right: Lauren Akselrod and her children were one of five lucky winners of a raffle prize for taking the bike and pedestrian road survey, which the CEC collaborated on with Local Motion and the Trails Committee. We got a tremendous wealth of feedback from the large number of respondents to the survey. Local Motion will be presenting the findings at the Selectboard meeting on Oct. 25. Note the display of DIY weatherization materials from the CEC's Energy Shelf just behind Lauren—and in the far back, the inverter and battery for the solar system. Remember to check out ButtonUpVermont.org as soon as possible to get a free virtual energy visit that will help you discover the parts of your home that need buttoning up.



Below: The compost shed is a cozy place to huddle in the rain. Top row: Jamey Gerlaugh (Window Dressers), Jacqui DeMent (CEC), Wolfger Schneider (Sustainable Charlotte), Representative Mike Yantachka (Charlotte Community Partners), Deirdre Holmes (CEC). Bottom row: Suzy Hodgson, Rebecca Foster, Chloe Silverman (all CEC)



Above: Throngs of young Charlotte athletes were drawn to the smoothie bike lent by City Market for the occasion. CEC student member Chloe Silverman (CVU '22) gets the blender, full to the brim with frozen fruit, cranking for the young guests.



The sign on the perky electric car in the rain reads: "If all Vermont cars were electric, we would save over 800 million dollars in gasoline costs every year."

Hi, Neighbor!

Matt Bonoma: Spreading sweetness one cookie at a time



Phyl Newbeck
CONTRIBUTOR

Matt Bonoma's wife, Maggie, grew up in Vermont and he grew up in Massachusetts. "She wanted to raise our kids here and she worked on me for 15 years," Bonoma said. "In 2019, the timing was right and so far it's been wonderful.

Charlotte is fantastic and the area offers everything we've been looking for."

Bonoma is the new owner of Vermont Cookie Love in Ferrisburgh. Although he had never worked directly in the food industry, he believes the purchase isn't as much of a departure from his previous work as one might think. For 10 years, Bonoma worked for Red Idea Partners in Colorado, which he described as "a consulting and early-stage venture capitalist business that worked almost exclusively in the food and beverage industry." In 2016, BizWest Media named Bonoma one of their 40 under 40 honorees. "That was a fun honor to get," he said. "I like to think it was part of being useful, helping businesses grow, and helping entrepreneurs. Now that I'm one myself, I know that there are more balls up in the air than you might think."

Vermont Cookie Love differs from the companies Bonoma worked with in that it's a well-established business. "That makes it easier and harder," he said. "It's easier because the business has a foundation, so we don't have to struggle to gain traction with consumers." Bonoma praised previous owner Paul Seyler for his work in developing the company. "We bought a foundation and now we can start building in areas where I see opportunities," he said. "The nice thing about being the owner is we can build things that are interesting to me."

Among those areas Bonoma finds interesting are gift boxes and ecommerce. "Right now that's a small part of what we do," he said. "But who doesn't love getting a big box of cookies in the mail?" Bonoma gave the example of sending someone a housewarming gift. "A lot of things will just get stuck in a drawer," he said, "but sending cookies is an experience rather than just another ice cream scoop." Bonoma also sees a future in business gifting. "A realtor is a good example," he said. "Instead of a bottle of champagne you might not drink, why not send cookies, which say 'home and comfort' and feel like a natural fit?"

Bonoma is also intrigued by the thought of additional physical locations for Vermont Cookie Love. "Just seeing how passionately people are connected as a summertime tradition in Addison and Chittenden County," he said, "I think we could have one in Burlington or Williston and Middlebury to increase the footprint and keep people from having to drive far for a cookie or a creemee."

Bonoma is particularly fond of Vermont Cookie Love's mocha milkshake and a chocolate creemee made with in-house chocolate sauce. On the cookie front, he's partial to their oatmeal cookie, which he finds interesting because he had never been a fan of that product before. "In the past I wouldn't have paid for one," he said, "but it's rich and buttery and reminds you of childhood. It's my favorite, but you still can't go wrong with classic chocolate chip."

For now, Bonoma is trying to understand every part of the business. "I've spent time in the office, with customers, on the creemee window, ordering, baking and everything else," he said. "You can't have just one person who knows how to do particular tasks, like order ingredients." Bonoma feels that the information he gets from interfacing with his employees and customers is invaluable. "You don't get that information other than from experience," he said.

Vermont Cookie Love currently has a mix of eight part-time and full-time employees with roughly double that number in the summer. "One of my priorities," Bonoma said, "is to keep the business open during what is traditionally the off-season to stay connected to the community and our customers and offer secure and stable full-time employment."

Although Bonoma wants to keep the things that have made Vermont Cookie Love popular, he also wants to add new cookie flavors and winter-based products like homemade hot chocolate and other baked goods. "I'm hoping to keep everything that's great in place, but over time, incrementally add new things that



Photos contributed

people will love," he said. "I love the experience of going to a favorite store or restaurant and seeing something new. I want people to have a little bit of that experience. What you love is still on the menu but you might find a new favorite."



Town

Charlotte Food Shelf News

Susan Ohanian
CONTRIBUTOR

The Food Shelf welcomes two new board members Anne Marie Andriola and Giles Anderson, both longtime food distribution volunteers.

During this difficult COVID year, the Food Shelf has welcomed four additional volunteers: Elaine Edelman, Marcia Vogler, Mary Beth Gilliam and Jim Hyde.

We're reaching out to tell others in the community that there are more volunteer opportunities if you have a couple hours once a month. Opportunities include Foodbank delivery, stocking shelves, preparing bagged items for distribution, and substitute food delivery driver to elders. We look forward to continued community participation in these

challenging times. For information please call: 425-3252.

We extend a special thank you to Diane Cote for 11 years of writing letters to all our community donors. Diane has passed the baton to volunteer Garrett Sadler.

Career Training

Here's an opportunity for someone looking for a career in food service. The Vermont Food Bank is currently accepting applications for enrollment in its workforce training program, Community Kitchen Academy. Beginning Nov. 1, this seven-week culinary job training program offers hands-on learning from industry professionals in a commercial kitchen; job placement support is offered to students completing this course. For the Burlington program, apply online: vtfoodbank.org/cka

Schedule

The Food Shelf is open the second and fourth Wednesday of every month from 4 to 6:30 p.m.

For emergency food, call John: 425-3130.

Assistance

The following types of assistance are available:

- adult preventive dental care assistance
- emergency assistance with fuel and electric bills

Check the Food Shelf website for more information of different types of assistance and eligibility.

Applications are available at the Food Shelf and online. The website also contains information about other Vermont resources

offering further assistance, charlotteucc.org/charlotte-food-shelf.

Be aware that emergency assistance outside the scope of established programs is possible. Call 425-3252.

The Charlotte Food Shelf is located in the Congregational Church vestry at 403 Church Hill Road. Our organization is run by volunteers, and all donations made to the Food Shelf go directly to nutritious food and assistance to our neighbors in Charlotte and North Ferrisburgh.

Checks may be mailed to Charlotte Food Shelf, P.O. Box 83, Charlotte, VT 05445.

We are looking forward to the holidays that will be here before we know it. The Food Shelf extends a grateful thank you for the ongoing generous community support.

Education

There's more to college rankings than meets the eye



Margo Bartsch
CONTRIBUTOR

Buying a house and paying for college are two of the biggest expenses for families. To help people decide, there are various rankings; however, each list typically focuses on different criteria. For example, in choosing a

home for best places to live, some rankings highlight jobs, while others emphasize healthy living. Similarly, college rankings prioritize distinct variables. Each list's calculations include different evaluative criteria and weighting of factors for families to analyze depending on preferences.

Rankings can be an important consideration in forming a student's college list. Last month, three publications published their rankings based on data from this year's current freshman class. Each has a different methodology in calculating their top colleges: *U.S. News Best College Rankings 2022*; *Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings 2021 (WSJ/THE)*; and *Forbes Top Colleges 2021*. Being aware of each ranking's different variables is important in understanding the uniqueness of each publication.

This article illustrates the college rankings of three local schools, highlighting the University of Vermont (public university), Dartmouth College (private university) and Middlebury

College (liberal arts college), and showing the differences. Families should review college rankings with an eye toward the priorities that are most relevant to each student's goals.

First, *U.S. News* is one of the most popular college rankings. It is the only publication that separates national universities and liberal arts colleges, each with their own ranking. For ranking the local three schools, UVM is 117, Dartmouth is 13, and Middlebury is nine.

U.S. News is best for focusing on the college reputation and student experience in giving these criteria a 60 percent weighting. The largest contribution of 40 percent is divided equally between Faculty Resources and Expert Opinion, comprised of top administration, faculty and student feedback. The remaining 20 percent includes: Financial Resources, detailing the average spending per student (10 percent); Student Excellence, including admissions criteria of standardized test scores and high school GPA (seven percent); and Alumni Donations, highlighting loyalty (three percent).

The final 40 percent calculates Outcomes to include: graduation/retention rate (22 percent); graduate rate performance (eight percent); social mobility (five percent); and graduate indebtedness (five percent). The report focuses on degree completion as essential to optimize employment opportunities and graduate studies.

Another publication is the *WSJ/THE*,

combining national universities and liberal arts colleges. For the three local schools' rankings, UVM is 299, Dartmouth is 13, and Middlebury is 40. The ranking includes 15 factors across four categories: Student Outcomes (40 percent), Academic Resources (30 percent), Student Engagement (20 percent), and Learning Environment (10 percent).

The *WSJ/THE* list's primary emphasis of 40 percent is monetary Outcomes focusing on return on investment (earnings after graduation). Data is compiled from government sources, including the College Scorecard (www.collegescorecard.ed.gov), created during the Obama administration. It compares the costs and value of higher education in five areas: cost, graduation rate, employment rate, average amount borrowed, and loan default rate.

The next largest factor is Student Resources, including teaching expenses, student-faculty ratio and faculty publications (30 percent). The remaining variables are Student Engagement, aggregated from student surveys (20 percent) and Learning Environment, calculating the percentage of student and faculty diversity, need-based financial aid and international students (10 percent).

Finally, the *Forbes* list also combines national universities and liberal arts colleges. With the three local schools' rankings, UVM is 164, Dartmouth is 11, and Middlebury is 44. There are seven weighted criteria: Alumni Salary

(20 percent); Debt (15 percent); Return on Investment (15 percent); Graduation Rate (15 percent); Forbes American Leaders List (15 percent); Retention Rate (10 percent); and Academic Success (10 percent).

The *Forbes* methodology puts more weight on the College Scorecard data in calculating Outcomes. It tracks college graduates' earnings using IRS data (for those receiving financial aid) and the average number of years to pay college costs, including loan defaults.

Overall, in comparing the three ranking publications, there is not a set definition for each variable and weighted contribution; it can be like comparing apples to oranges. Thus, it is even more important for every family to review the elements of each list and prioritize the criteria most essential for the student's desired college experience (current and future).

Attending college is like finding your new home away from home. College rankings provide numerical guidance but are just one piece of the application puzzle. They never fully capture the campus vibe that creates a personal face, bringing context to the rankings. Depending on the student's unique priorities, various rankings show that one size does not fit all.

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

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Education

School district to develop equity audit

Shaw Israel Izikson
CONTRIBUTOR

The Champlain Valley School District (CVSD) is developing an equity audit that will be concluded by the spring.

Traditionally, equity audits are used by schools to assess diversity, equity, and inclusion measures.

According to CVSD Superintendent Rene Sanchez, who spoke about the planned equity audit during the CSVD Board of Directors regular meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 21, the school district will use an equity audit for several purposes: to develop an understanding of the scope and nature of racism in the district; to develop an understanding of the district's discipline system and evaluate the school district's policies through an equity lens; and to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on student outcomes and indicators.

The planned areas of focus for the audit will be the school district's culture, academic achievements, disciplinary practices, curriculum, and teaching capacity, and the support services it offers students, families, and staff.

"Just last year the school district passed an equity policy and an equity definition," Sanchez said. "Since that was honored by the board, we know that equity floats throughout all different parts of the school district when it comes to instruction, to curriculum, to transportation, to budget, to all different aspects of the district. I wanted to make sure that we had a baseline so as we move forward and we are recognizing the value of the equity policy passed by the board that we can point towards either progress or maintenance of equity practices."

Sanchez said that he and other members of the district want to know where the district stands when it comes to equity.

"It will lead to conversations that we can have at the schools and the community so everyone would have a more concrete understanding



of what it means to practice equity," Sanchez said. "Once we have the information that we need, we will identify important stakeholders and ask them to help us brainstorm some solutions that we can have in place going forward."

Sanchez said the school district will use the equity plan to ensure the school district makes progress on a regular process.

According to Sanchez, the school district has received four different proposals from companies that want to conduct the equity plan for the district: New York University Metro Center, Mass Insight, Education Development Center, and a combined proposal from Up for Learning and The Center for School Climate and Learning.

However, the Superintendent did not say what the estimated costs were for each company's services.

According to a timeline provided by Sanchez, the school district planned to decide which company to use to conduct the audit by Friday, Oct. 1 and planned to begin working with the selected organization on Monday, Oct. 4.

When contacted by *The News* on Tuesday, Oct. 5, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Sandy Raymond said Superintendent Sanchez will be meeting on Thursday, Oct. 7 with the DEI Group. Raymond said although a formal announcement has not been made, the process of picking an organization has been going well.

Sanchez said the school district will be holding meetings and listening sessions in the fall for district stakeholders, and collecting data through a focus group survey in the winter.

Sports

Red Sox run for the pennant

Henry Bushey
CONTRIBUTOR

As the air becomes cooler and the leaves begin to fall, so too the Major League Baseball season comes to an end. For the Red Sox who are, at the moment, 89-69 (20 games over the .500 mark), this season was a huge turnaround from the 2020 campaign, in which the Sox were only 24-36.

This season has seen somewhat of a resurgence from stars such as left-fielder/designated hitter JD Martinez who, while he still may not be back to his previous numbers, has made huge improvements since 2020.

The season has also seen the return of Rafael Devers to his 2019 form, when he hit 32 home runs, with 52 doubles, and 115 RBIs. While he may not reach those RBI and doubles marks, he has already surpassed the home run mark, with 35 on the year. He also earned his first career All-Star nod, in which he started for the American League, next to superstar shortstop and teammate Xander Bogaerts. Bogaerts has been excellent this

year as well, clubbing 23 long balls with 79 RBIs, along with a .296 batting average.

Hunter Renfroe and Nathan Eovaldi are also huge pieces in the Sox's success this season, with both players turning out career years. Renfroe has been an effective defender in right field, batting at a .262 clip. He has 30 home runs, and 93 RBIs as the cherry on top. Eovaldi has been the steadiest starting pitcher Boston has had all year. Yes, he did give up seven quick runs against the Yankees in that crucial series, but that's just a blip on the record. His ERA stands at a respectable 3.75, which is inflated by that Yankees start. Chris Sale is also back and contributing at the big-league level. All in all, the Red Sox look improved and ready, both for a potential playoff spot this year, and for next season.

This is the first of a series of monthly articles by CVU student Henry Bushey. Henry has an interest in journalism, particularly in sports writing, and will be picking his topic month by month. He lives in Charlotte.

Sacred Hunter

Opening day of duck season



Bradley Carleton
CONTRIBUTOR

The south wind blows and the ridgepole of the old one-room camp creaks above our heads. We are on the shores of mid-Lake Champlain. With the window slightly cracked open, we can hear the waves lapping against the rocky shoreline. Beyond the polished stones lies the bay, the outline of the islands with the Adirondacks looming in the dark background. Inside the cabin, a Vermont Castings Vigilant woodstove burns the last of the spirits of the beech that had fallen outside the west window last winter. Blue-green and orange flames tongue the remaining log, digesting its pulp in a flurry of whistling air. I am sitting in the old Kennedy rocking chair sipping my Lapsang Souchong tea that reminds me of a childhood spent longing for moments like these. We are winding down after a dinner of roast duck, acorn squash and late-picked green beans from the garden. An empty bottle of hearty merlot stands on the table in the center of the dining area, a testament to a culinary stroke of genius. We revel in the silence of the crackling fire and the wind whistling around the old green door with the crack in the center. Tomorrow is the opening day of the second half of duck season on the lake.

The dishes are done, I am showered and ready for the rack. In the corner of the room is my bunk, made of crude 2x4s and plywood, with a mattress and an old Hudson's Bay six pelt blanket doubled over and neatly tucked into the slats beside the hemlock wall. The small oil lamp glows yellow in the corner over the dining room table, casting an arc of warm light on the ceiling. "I'm gonna hit the sack. Three a.m. comes early ya know," I declare. Within minutes I am in the astral channel of unconsciousness and bliss.

The old Big Ben alarm rings loudly, interrupting my dreams of mallards flying perilously close to my blind. It is rude, but effective. There is no drifting back to sleep after the ear-shattering ring of Big Ben. I roll over, groaning, as my feet hit the cold plywood floor. I shuffle quickly over to the woodstove and throw another log on the searing embers. It catches and within minutes is radiating a new warmth to the cabin.

Breakfast is underway and the smell of cob-smoked bacon permeates the room. Steel-cut oatmeal is bubbling away on the back burner of the old gas stove. French roast coffee is popping in the tin percolator. We fill our bellies with the best breakfast of the year and pull on our camo gear. The walk to the canoe is a short one—maybe 100 yards. The south wind has switched around to the north and the sky has cleared into a starlit pre-dawn.

In the shadow of a waning crescent moon, we pull the old Mansfield canoe up into the weeds of the swamp. The wild rice stalks rise seven feet above us as we step into the primordial ooze, which releases the vapors of decaying vegetation and assaults our noses with its putrid fragrance. Only a duck hunter can love these smells. We set out the plastic deceivers in the middle of the channel that is choked with smartweed and wild celery. The decoys bob gently in the breeze, spinning from side to side as if they were real birds searching for seeds.

We trudge back to the canoe and drape the tall sedge grasses over the gunwhales. Then we retreat into the puckerbrush and saplings of the shoreline 20 yards away. Behind us, to the east, the sky begins to brighten reluctantly and the moon shadows fade over the slough in front of us. Whistling wings can be heard every few moments.

Finally a loud "qwaaaack!" breaks the silence of the dawn, and the south end of the swamp erupts in a flurry of beating wings. The swamp comes alive and we are surrounded by the sounds of air being flushed over the mighty pinions of ducks. Greenwing teal buzz the decoy spread. Big winged mallards vocalize their raspy guttural calls. The whining "wooo-eeek" of wood ducks whistles throughout the riparian haven. I check my watch. Six-thirty a.m. Two more minutes until legal shooting.

Birds are dive-bombing the decoys and swimming around trying to determine why all these other ducks are not talking to them. Seconds later, they realize they have been duped by the plastic imposters and depart with a loud squeal of disdain. The last two minutes feel like an hour. A distant shot from far south alerts us that it is time.

We stand up behind our wall of grass and look down both sides of the channel. I whisper

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SPORTS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Football, men's soccer, field hockey and women's volleyball gained wins last week

Edd Merritt
CONTRIBUTOR

Max Desito completed 12 of 18 passes for 300 yards and four touchdowns as CVU toppled BFA-St. Albans 35-7 last Friday. Jack Summer, with eight carries and two catches, also scored a pair of touchdowns. According to Coach Rahn Fleming, CVU's speed overwhelmed BFA. The win gave the Redhawks a 4-1 season record so far this year, their only loss a 35-23 defeat at the hands of St. Johnsbury.

CVU's Sam Dennison scored the lone goal as the men's soccer team blanked Colchester 1-0. Despite the low score, CVU dominated play. Goalie Alden Jaremczuk was called upon for

four saves compared to 18 by the Colchester tender.

It took a late-tying goal by Sydney Mast and an overtime goal with only two minutes remaining by Tess Everett for the Redhawk field hockey team to knock off Rice, 2-1.

Women's volleyball also defeated BFA in a match win of 3-0. Redhawks won the closest set 25-23.

Earlier in the week, the women's golf team traveled to Alburgh Country Club, where they took second place to Essex. CVU's Ryan Sleeper shot a 49, four strokes behind Essex medalist, Ashley Stempek. CVU placed ahead of five other schools.

Williston Country Club was the course for the Northern Vermont Men's golf championships. CVU men placed first as a team, and Bryce Bortnick's 73 for 18 holes made him the medalist. Kaiden McClure tied for 14th with an 86.

Sacred Hunter

DUCK SEASON

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

excitedly, “Incoming triple at two o’clock,” which in avian lingo means that a group of three birds is approaching the spread at the angle of the watch just to the right of straight out (which is noon). I give one raspy grunt on my drake whistle and the birds suddenly lock their wings and drop their feet, swinging from side to side as if they were small fighter jets looking for a landing on an aircraft carrier. The three mallards begin to backpedal, beating their powerful wings in a forward motion to slow them down directly over the center of the decoy spread. As their feet reach out to make a landing, I call the shot.

We rise in unison and our guns bark out their deep percussive tone. Two large drake mallards lay belly-up in the water. Simultaneously, we notice that on the legs of both birds there are affixed two shiny aluminum bracelets, known as “bands” to waterfowlers the world over.

These are trophy birds—ones that have been caught and banded by biologists.

We retrieve them with alacrity and, once back in the blind, admire the extraordinary iridescent sheen on their green heads, the perfectly mottled herringbone pattern of their flanks and their magnificent auburn breasts. The wing speculum is as though an artist had painted a perfect shade of deep blue and outlined it in white.

These are spirit birds. They have been given to us to love, admire and to nurture our souls. We drink in their beauty and praise their grace. These birds will be served to our families on the coldest, darkest nights of the winter, when we will regale our guests with the story of how they came to our prayers.

Bradley Carleton is Executive Director of Sacred Hunter.org, a non-profit that seeks to educate the public on the spiritual connection of man to nature.



Zack Gregory in the blind.

Photo by Bradley Carleton

Charlotte Cooks

Attention, Charlotte cooks! Do you have a favorite recipe you would like to share with our readers? The Charlotte News welcomes everyone to submit their favorites. Email Anna Cyr: anna@thecharlottenews.org.

Blackberry chili pepper duck with wild rice

By Bradley Carleton

Honor the flight of this majestic animal by savoring the spirit of its wild nature.

Ingredients

2 wild ducks—mallards, blacks, wigeon, gadwall or other “dabbling ducks, halved and deboned, leaving breast and leg attached, skin on

2 cups duck stock—chicken stock can be substituted

8 oz. blackberry preserves

8 oz. dried cranberries

1 medium chili pepper

½ cup merlot

Crème de Cassis

1 Tbsp. minced orange peel from fresh navel orange

1/2 cup *real* wild rice (usually from Minnesota)

rosemary

thyme

salt

pepper

Cover rice in pot with ½ inch of water and a pinch of salt.

Cook for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally until all water is absorbed.

Add one Tbsp. water, if necessary, during cooking, so as not to burn rice.

Rice should “pop” open and have a nutty flavor with a chewy consistency.

Put halved ducks on broiling pan, meat side down.

Rub rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper on skin. Set aside.

Pour stock into large saucepan and reduce by half over medium high heat.

Add dried cranberries and finely chopped chili



Photo by Bradley Carleton

pepper

Reduce heat to medium and cook until cranberries plump.

Add blackberry preserves and stir until sauce thickens.

Add ½ cup of merlot.

Cook for 2 minutes.

Cook for 4–6 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Remove from heat. Set aside.

Broil ducks for 4–6 minutes, watching very carefully, to brown and crisp the skin.

Turn ducks over, meat side up.

Broil for 1 minute.

Be sure not to overcook; meat should be red in center and not pink. If overcooked, it will taste like liver.

Remove from heat.

Pour drippings into sauce.

Put sauce back on medium low heat, stirring in drippings.

Cook for 2 minutes.

Add 1 tsp. Creme de Cassis.

Cook for 1 more minute.

Slice breast cross grain at an angle, approximately 3/8 inch thick.

Lay slices over bed of real wild rice

Ladle sauce over duck.

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Charlotte Cooks

CHARLOTTE COOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Pavlova

A popular New Zealand Christmas Dessert

By Colleen Armstrong

I am married to a New Zealander, who shares his birthday with the Christ child on December 25th. When we celebrated our first Christmas together, John's request was "Pavlova". The meringue-based dessert is named after the famous Russian dancer, Anna Pavlova. Evidently, it was created for her in the 1920s when she performed in Australia.

It is a fitting dessert for southern hemisphere countries because Christmas Day is a summer's day with plenty of fresh fruit such as strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries.

I recommend creating Pavlova during Vermont's warmer months when the garden's raspberries and blueberries are plentiful.

I must confess that it was several years before I discovered the best method for baking the meringue. It should have the shape of a top hat. In the early days, my meringue was more pizza crust shaped than a thick, stacked, egg white tower.

PAVLOVA Originally from Jen Alexander

Ingredients

4 extra-large egg whites at room temperature

1 rounded cup sugar

1 Tablespoon (TBLS) corn starch

1 TBLS cider vinegar

1 TBLS vanilla

1 - 2 cups heavy cream

½ cup shaved dark chocolate

Fresh raspberries, strawberries, kiwi, blackberries, or blueberries – select two or three fruits.

1. Preheat oven to 250° – 275°F with the rack at center height in the oven.
2. Grease a 9-inch spring-form pan with plenty of vegetable shortening.
3. Beat the egg-whites until they are firm. If in doubt, beat them a little longer.
4. Gradually add the rounded cup of sugar to the egg-whites.
5. Fold in the cornstarch, vinegar, and vanilla.
6. Place the egg-white mixture in the center of the spring-form pan. It should stand 3" – 4" tall with a round shape. Smooth the top of the mixture.
7. Place in the oven for 1 1/2 hours. Test

for complete baking with a toothpick. Nothing sticks to the toothpick.

8. Turn the oven off. Leave the meringue in the oven until it is completely cool.
9. Whip the cream with your favorite additives (1 teaspoon vanilla extract, 1 TBLS maple syrup). Spread on top of the meringue.
10. Decorate the top and base of the plate with fruit.
11. Sprinkle chocolate on top of the fruit.
12. Serve immediately.

Note: You can bake the meringue one or two days ahead of dessert time.

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Charlotte History

John Adam Kasson

Dan Cole

CHARLOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In 1863, Rev. Bernice Darwin Ames wrote Charlotte's history for Abby Hemenway's *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. "Hon. John A. Kasson is one of the most distinguished men Charlotte has produced. He graduated at the University of Vermont in 1842, practiced law for a time in New Bedford, Mass., and subsequently settled in Iowa."

Kasson developed a natural flair for diplomacy, and every American President from Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt utilized his talents. He worked with representatives of nearly every European country and became a favorite of powerful Prussian Chancellor and pragmatic diplomat Otto von Bismarck.

Adam and Honor (Steele) Kasson left Connecticut for Charlotte in 1816, buying the large house at the Four Corners (West Village) known as the Barton tavern. With them was their son's family: John Steele and Nancy (Blackman) Kasson and three children. Three more were born in Charlotte: Chester (1816); George Dixon (1819, died 1820); and John Adam, born January 11, 1822. John attended the local school at the "Corners."

"The 'Corners' had its tavern, of course, kept by Joseph Barton; ... Charles Kasson; Calvin C. Martin; and latterly by Luther R. Hubbell. ... Hon. John A. Kasson of Iowa was born in this house, and was quite a lad when his parents removed from town." (Higbee; *Around the Mountains*)

Higbee was inaccurate. Kasson's father died in the house in 1827, his grandfather in 1828, an aunt and uncle in 1831, and his grandmother in 1835. The causes of death are not known, but were likely consumption. All are buried in Barber Cemetery (West Burying Ground).

Nancy and her sons Chester and John removed to Burlington where her eldest son Charles Kasson was an established attorney. John graduated from Burlington Academy in 1838 and the University of Vermont in 1842. He began legal training with his brother before accepting a contract to tutor the children of a Virginia plantation owner. He became incensed over slavery and quit after six months. He returned to live in Massachusetts, a political activist leaning toward the egalitarian Locofoco party.

He obtained his LL.D. and was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar. As many ambitious young men did, John became a Mason (Bedford's Star in the East Lodge) but chafed under conservative Massachusetts politics that hindered ambitious young men. He decided to move west, but before departing was appointed a delegate to the Free Soil (Whig) Convention in Buffalo, New York, in 1848. He helped frame the platform that declared all United States territories should prohibit slavery.

Once out west, Kasson built a lucrative law practice in St. Louis, returning to Washington, D.C. on April 30, 1851 to marry Caroline Eliot, daughter of Rev. William and Margaret Eliot. Before he moved to Des Moines, Iowa, John

formed many influential friendships, including the politically prominent Blair family, and Edward Bates, who would become Abraham Lincoln's Attorney General. At Indianola, Iowa, John and Caroline welcomed their only child, Emma Cushman Kasson, born May 9, 1855.

John helped establish the new Republican Party in 1854 and was Chairman of the Iowa Republicans in 1858. At the 1860 Republican Convention in Chicago, he was the final arbiter for the Platform Committee, and Horace Greeley credited him with negotiating a cohesive platform from among the various factions. Abraham Lincoln took notice and appointed him First Assistant Postmaster General under Montgomery Blair.

Kasson was dispatched as U.S. Commissioner to the 1862 International Postal Congress in Paris and negotiated reciprocal postal delivery treaties with Great Britain, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and Italy—most still continue today. This brought him into the sphere of a new Prussian minister, Otto von Bismarck, while establishing his credentials as a master negotiator. What differentiated Kasson from other diplomats was his placement of priorities: country over personal advancement.



Photo credit: Library of Congress

Beginning in 1877, Kasson worked more closely with Bismarck (now Chancellor of a unified Germany) as Minister to Austria-Hungary, serving under presidents Grant, Hayes and Garfield. Subsequently Kasson became Minister to Germany under President Arthur.

Following Kasson's appointment by President Arthur as Special Envoy to the International Conference in Berlin on the Congo, Bismarck welcomed Kasson to the city. He served under President Cleveland as Special Envoy to the International Conference on Samoa, also in Berlin. Both conferences intended to prevent wars by minimizing colonial ambitions of competitive European powers.

In between, Kasson served in the Iowa legislature and six terms in Congress. He was absent from home so often that it came as no surprise that his wife divorced him.

Kasson was selected president of the Committee on the Centennial Celebration of the Adoption of the Constitution in Philadelphia in September 1887; in 1889 he authored a history of the Constitution. In 1898, President McKinley appointed Kasson to the United States and British Joint High Commission to adjust disagreements with Canada.

The year 1897 saw passage of the Dingley Tariff Act under McKinley. McKinley tapped Kasson to be Special Commissioner to negotiate reciprocal tariff treaties under the act. After McKinley's assassination, influential Senate leader Nelson Aldrich, lobbied by business interests, blocked approval of the treaties. President Teddy Roosevelt let the matter drop, and Kasson angrily refused to accept his pay—effectively finishing his career.

From humble beginnings, John Adam Kasson became an indispensable negotiator and world-renowned statesman. He became ill with pneumonia and died in Washington, D.C. on May 18, 1910 in his 88th year, as Halley's Comet passed over.

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Town

Charlotte Senior Center news



Carolyn Kulik
SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR

“[One] who learns but does not think is lost.

[One] who thinks but does not learn is in great danger.”

~ Confucius

Courses

Course descriptions can be found in the printed Fall Schedule or on the website: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. Registration and payment is in person or by phone (425-6345).

Mindfulness for Life with Jill Abilock

Tuesday afternoons, 1:30–2:30. No fee. Please note that this class meeting time has changed.

Walk-ins are welcome.

Course continues to 10/26.

You can't always change what you experience in life, but you can change how you experience it. Mindfulness Meditation provides tools that help change *how* you experience things, increasing fulfillment and happiness, and reducing stress.

Exploring Line & Color: A Creative Process Workshop

with Jonathan Silverman

Register by 10/15. Suggested \$5 donation to cover materials.

Tuesday morning, 10/19 from 10–11:30. This 1.5-hour visual art workshop will focus on exploration, discovery and *play*. Simple prompts and using pencil, markers, and pastels will replenish the artist within for those who claim not to have any artistic DNA—and also for those with artistic experience. The supportive and joyful environment will emphasize process and surprises. Co-sponsored by the Charlotte Library. (See also information on Jonathan Silverman's art exhibit for Oct and Nov. in Art News below.)

Exercise – Ongoing courses

These are ongoing throughout the year—and you can join at any time. These classes take place in our spacious Great Room. You're invited to come and check out a class one time—for no charge. You may check out several different classes. Stop by and fill out an address form. Walk-ins are welcome.

Be sure to see the course descriptions in the Fall Schedule or see the website for the details. You are also always welcome to call with questions or stop in.

- Chair Yoga – Mon., 9:30 a.m.
- Gentle Yoga – Mon., 11:00 a.m.
- Pilates Plus – Tues., 8:30 a.m.
- Essentrics – Wed. – 8:30 a.m.
- Pilates – Thur., 8:30 a.m.
- T'ai Chi for Beginners – Thurs., 10 a.m. (This is now back on Zoom.)
- T'ai Chi – Advanced – Thurs., 11 a.m.
- Essentrics on Fri. – 9:30 a.m.

Wednesday Talks & Events at 1 p.m.

All Wednesday talks and events are now in person. Masks are required for everyone who plans to attend. Important: Please note that registration is necessary these days, so that we can manage the audience size. You can call between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to sign up.

10/13: Bones, Breaks & Balance: Separating Myths from Facts with Tina D'Amato, DO

Focusing on prevention strategies and education around bone density and fractures in seniors, we will review the often confusing and conflicting information about calcium supplements, touch on Vitamin D and other supplements, and prescription medications. Resources for self-directed and group exercise as well as physical therapy will be reviewed. ~ Dr. D'Amato is a family medicine physician working at Charlotte Family Health.

10/20: Annual Meeting of the Friends of Charlotte Senior Center

Join us to become better acquainted with the workings of our organization. An update of our financial position will be given, any questions will be answered, and the election of board members will take place. Hope to see you there.

10/27: To be announced.

11/3: An American Family in the Evil Empire with Steve Goldstein

11/10: Immigration Challenges: The Road Ahead with Greg Smith



Above: Sue Foley's Monday Munch Cooking Team (left to right) Bev Burley, Sue Foley, Andy Hodgkin, Carol Strobeck. Below: Seniors enjoy the lunch the team prepared. Photos by Lori York



Lunch schedule

Our meal schedule is currently in flux. Monday lunches are continuing; Wednesday lunches are suspended indefinitely at the moment.

Please call in advance to be certain that a Monday lunch will be offered on the day you plan to come. Reservations are not required. The next Monday lunch is Oct. 11. Suggested donation is still just \$5. Meal time is 11:30-12:30. Take out may be requested.

Menus ~

- 10/11
Autumn Vegetable Soup
Cape Cod Salad
Apple Dessert
- 10/18
No lunch served today.
- 10/25
Menu TBD

Menus are also posted on the CSC website: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. Our café is spacious and airy, and our porch has tables with big sun umbrellas.

Art news

The October & November Art Exhibit

These two months will display Jonathan Silverman's "Visual Dancing: The Interplay between Intent and Spontaneity." His artwork ranges from landscape and abstract watercolors and pastels, to whimsical driftwood character sculptures, to functional and non-functional pottery inspired by Japanese aesthetics. His work explores juxtapositions of color, balance, form and movement that illustrate the dance between intent and spontaneity. Please note that the art

opening for this show, originally scheduled for 10/8, has been cancelled.

Notes on masks

If you'd like to visit or join an activity, there are some mask requirements to keep in mind. Plus, some activities, like Bridge and Mahjong, are requiring participants to be fully vaccinated because they take place over long periods of time and in close proximity. Please do call to check if you want to join a new activity.

Here is where things are now at the Senior Center.

If you are . . .

Fully vaccinated:

No mask required—but strongly encouraged. Social distancing advised.

Not vaccinated:

Mask required. Social distancing required. (6 feet).

Not vaccinated & not wearing a mask (for any reason):

Kindly do not plan to visit at this time. We ask that you come back after the mask guidance for the Senior Center is updated.

Please visit our website for expanded course descriptions and more information: CharlotteSeniorCenterVT.org. The mission of the Senior Center is to serve those 50 and up; some course enrollments are limited and, if a course is not full, younger participants are most welcome to enroll. Questions? Call or stop by between 9–4, or leave a message at 425-6345. See you soon!



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Town

Library news



Margaret Woodruff
DIRECTOR

Happening at the Library

**Library Book Sale:
Oct. 4 through Oct. 30**

The annual Charlotte Library Book Sale, sponsored by The Friends of the Charlotte Library, has been a

popular and highly anticipated event since its modest start in 1995. As with many of our cherished activities, the pandemic has caused us to reimagine the book sale with an eye to safety, so we will be attempting a mini book sale to be held in the new program room during the month of October.

Shopping hours: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday, noon to 2 p.m.

Donation hours: Wednesday and Saturday, noon to 2 p.m. (please limit to two boxes per drop-off)

October Events:

The Charlotte Library will be closed for Indigenous Peoples Day on Monday, Oct. 11.

For kids:

Build to Launch:

A STEAM exploration series

Join the all-new LEGO® Space Team and their NASA Artemis I team counterparts for a 10-week interactive digital learning adventure. With each episode, students will find themselves in the shoes of NASA engineers, scientists and, of course, astronauts. Through open-ended lessons, students will get hands-on and solve the same types of problems the Artemis I Team faces as they build toward launch!

The Charlotte Library is a learning center for this program. Because the library is currently not hosting groups in person, please sign up for weekly online links for this self-directed program for your student to participate from home. The library has some Lego Education Kits to check out. They are not made specifically for this program but perhaps could be used for some of the lessons. Please contact Cheryl Sloan, youth@charlottepubliclibrary.org, for more information.

After-School Citizen Science: Zooniverse

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 4–5 p.m.

Giraffes, zebras, lions, oh my! Assist wildlife biologists in Africa from Vermont! Be a



citizen scientist and identify animals caught on camera to help scientists understand the diversity and dynamics of wildlife populations. Together, we will learn how to classify and record animal images as part of the “Zooniverse” team. If you love animals, this program is for you! No previous experience necessary. *Fourth grade and up. Registration required for Zoom link.*

For adults and families:

Emergency Preparedness:

Let's Be Ready Together

Tuesday, Oct. 12, 7 p.m.

Extreme weather impacts us all, wherever we live. Learn how to protect yourself, your family and your neighborhood in the event of a weather emergency. Chris Davis and Karina Warshaw from Charlotte's Emergency Management Team explain how and why it is essential to make preparations, including the essentials for a “Go-Bag” kit. Ruah Swennerfelt from Sustainable Charlotte introduces the “Ready Together” program, a national Transition effort to foster neighborhood emergency preparation. Pick up your playbook and copy of “Ready Together” at the library beforehand and enter to win an emergency radio, too. Register in advance.

Save the Lake by Being BLUE

Wednesday, Oct. 13, 7 p.m.

Lake Champlain Sea Grant partners with BLUE, an innovative program that certifies homes, businesses and institutions as watershed friendly. Learn how you can take part as the crew from the Lake Champlain Sea Grant at UVM shares the details of this innovative program that helps us help the lake. Please register in advance.

Mystery book group: *The Keeper of Lost*

Causes by Jussi Adler-Olsen

Monday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m.

Carl Mørck used to be one of Copenhagen's best homicide detectives. Then a hail of bullets destroyed the lives of two fellow cops, and Carl—who didn't draw his weapon—blames himself. So, a promotion is the last thing he expects. But Department Q is a department of one, and Carl's got only a stack of Copenhagen's coldest cases for company. His colleagues snicker, but Carl may have the last laugh, because one file keeps nagging at him: a liberal politician vanished five years earlier and is presumed dead. Hard copies available at the library. Ebook available on Libby and audiobook available on Hoopla. Join us via Zoom here.

Spiritualism and the

Robinsons of Rokeby

Tuesday, Oct. 19, 7 p.m.

Join Dr. Lindsay Varner, Rokeby Museum director, for a discussion on the Spiritualist movement of the 19th century. In the 1840s, the Robinson farm in Ferrisburgh (today Rokeby Museum) held a series of séances that were recorded by a close friend and preserved in the museum's collection. Dr. Varner gives an overview of the history of Spiritualism, its ties to the Great Awakening, and shares a few words from the Robinsons' communications with the spirit world. Register in Advance.

Men's Book Group: *Machines*

Like Me by Ian McEwan

Wednesday, Oct. 20, 7 p.m.

Britain has lost the Falklands war, Margaret Thatcher battles Tony Benn for power, and Alan Turing achieves a breakthrough in artificial intelligence. In a world not quite like this one, two lovers will be tested beyond their understanding. Hard copies available at the library. Listen to the audiobook on Hoopla. *Join the Men's Book Group*

Of Wheelmen, the New Woman and Good

Roads: *Bicycling in Vermont,*

1880 to 1920

Tuesday, Oct. 26, 7 p.m.

Luis Vivanco explores the early history of the bicycle in Vermont, tied to important changes in industrial production, consumerism and new cultural ideas about auto-mobility and effortless speed. A Speakers Bureau program from the Vermont Council on Humanities. Register in advance.

The Addiction Inoculation: Raising Healthy

Kids in a Culture of Dependence

Wednesday, Oct. 27, 7 p.m.

Join Charlotte resident and best-selling author Jessica Lahey to discuss *The Addiction*

Inoculation, a comprehensive resource parents and educators can use to prevent substance abuse in children. Based on research in child welfare, psychology, substance abuse and developmental neuroscience, this essential guide provides evidence-based strategies and practical tools adults need to understand, support and educate resilient, addiction-resistant children. Register in advance.

For the latest information about programs, books and activity kits, sign up for our monthly newsletter: Charlotte Library Newsletter.

Library Contact Information

Margaret Woodruff, Director
Cheryl Sloan, Youth Services Librarian
Susanna Kahn, Tech Librarian
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Champlain Valley School District (Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George and Williston)

Child Find Notice

Champlain Valley School District is required by federal law to locate, identify and evaluate all children with disabilities. The process of locating, identifying and evaluating children with disabilities is known as child find.

Champlain Valley School District schools conduct Kindergarten screening each spring, but parents may call to make an appointment to discuss their concerns at any time. As the school district of residence, CVSD has the responsibility to identify and provide services to any child with special needs who may require special education and related services in order to access and benefit from public education.

If you have, or know of any CVSD resident who has a child with a disability under the age of 21 or a child who attends a private school located in Charlotte, Hinesburg, Shelburne, St. George or Williston, Vermont, we would like to hear from you. Sometimes parents are unaware that special education services are available to their children.

Please contact the School Principal (Charlotte Central School - 425-2771, Hinesburg Community School - 482-2106, Shelburne Community School - 985-3331, Williston Central/Allen Brook Schools - 878-2762) or the Director of Student Support Services, Meagan Roy at 383-1234 or mroy@cvsdvt.org.

A good book

Katherine Arthaud
CONTRIBUTOR

Before I came upon *Seating Arrangements*, I had never heard of Maggie Shipstead. It seems she went to Harvard University, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and went on to become a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford. *Seating Arrangements* is one of three novels—along with *Astonish Me* and *Great Circle* (currently shortlisted for the Booker Prize).

Apparently Shipstead's writing has appeared just about everywhere—the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Guardian*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Departures*, *Outside* and *The Best American Sports Writing* (to name a few)—but somehow, I missed it. Thankfully, the reading angels caused me to stumble upon this seriously dazzling book.

The writing is beautiful. There's a touch of Virginia Woolf whose *To the Lighthouse* also takes place over a very short span of time and focuses on one upper middle class white family/close friend grouping. There is also a pinch of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite*, which I saw back when I was a child and remember as having a distinctive slapstick quality related to the many sudden entrances/exits of multiple characters. And, also, though the prose style and length couldn't be more dissimilar, there is a peculiar and rather amusing parallel to Melville's *Moby Dick*, as one of Shipstead's principal characters, Winn Van Meter, father of the bride, has what could only be described as a monomaniacal desire to gain admittance to a fancy island country club, reminiscent of Captain Ahab's similarly obsessive desire to slay the giant white sperm whale that once bit off his leg at the knee. (Both coveted club and Ahab's vessel share the name Pequod.)

Seating Arrangements takes place on an island: Waskeke—which bears a striking resemblance to Nantucket, to the point that I can't help thinking it must have been Nantucket the author was thinking of when she conjured this novel. The action revolves around the hub, or centerpiece, of a wedding: Winn and Biddy's daughter, Daphne (seven months pregnant) is marrying upstanding, socially acceptable, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Greyson Duff (and yes, he is the father of the unborn child).

From the start, we learn that for Winn Van Meter, his eldest daughter's wedding is not the joyful occasion one might assume. Winn's wife Biddy (mother of the bride) (the name says it all) is all in, but from the



very start, readers are confronted with Winn's annoyance and ambivalence. It is he who is tasked with the transporting of the iconic wedding dress from the family home in Connecticut to Waskeke, where the wedding will be held, and people just can't seem to stop peppering him with reminders. That's annoying enough. And then he arrives at his beloved island home only to find it filled with a plethora of wedding flowers blocking the hall and entryway and an awful lot of bridesmaids.

"Waskeke was the great refuge of (Winn's) life, where his family was most sturdy and harmonious. To have all these people, these wedding guests, invading his private domain rankled him. ... He wished that the ferry would take him back into a world where the girls were still children and just the four of them would be on Waskeke. ... He would carry out his role gladly, but the weekend, now surveyed from its near edge, felt daunting, not a straightforward exercise in familial peacekeeping and obligatory cheer, but a treacherous puzzle, full of opportunities for the wrong thing to be said or done."

And what a treacherous puzzle it all turns out to be. Like Ahab, Winn sustains a wound to his leg, though in his case, not from a whale, but rather, a golf cart that reverses suddenly into his bike while he's riding home from tennis (so Nantucket). Coincidentally, the unapologetic golf cart driver happens to be on the staff of the much-coveted Pequod, which for some mysterious reason does not seem eager to accept Winn as a member.

Lots happens in this book. There is even a whale. Well, there are actually many whales, if you count the little embroidered ones on the groom's brother Francis' pants (though he is a Buddhist, sort of, and maintains that the pants are "ironic" and not as preppy as they look).

This book is comical in moments, and witty, but it is also poignant, philosophical and at times poetic. Between moments of jocundity, it glances upon timeless issues, such as parenthood, marriage, friendship, memory and what it means to pursue and to let go.

Winn is a particularly compelling character, and so is his second-born, Livia—Harvard sophomore, aspiring marine biologist and bridesmaid. Winn's

desperate quest to gain entry to the Pequod forms an ungainly parallel to Livia's similarly desperate quest to find love. (It would appear neither is particularly good at either.) At one point, an evolving Livia watches as a massive, lifeless, beached whale is washed back to sea by the outgoing tide. "They have to let it go!" she shouts to the winds. "Just let it go!"

I also loved a scene where "an immense black Labrador," "huffing like the respiration of a train," "burst like a cannonball from the darkness of the lawn, bounded onto the deck, and began rushing from chair to chair, panting and wagging solicitously as though in apology for its late arrival. ... The dog "ran slip-sliding around in a circle, dodging everyone who reached for him. The party was on its feet, dancing around calling the dog, wanting to pet the dog, trying to grab the dog."

Morty turns out to be the dog's name (someone gets hold of him long enough to read his tag). Agatha, the most seductive and unstable of the bridesmaids, tries to pet him, but Morty is not interested—"because," her helplessly giggling and perpetually inebriated Aunt Celeste says, "he's neutered."

"From her chair, Dominique (another bridesmaid) said, 'Morty didn't like you. That's all.'

"It's true,' Agatha said, looking hurt and slurring faintly. 'He didn't like me. Oh, God, why didn't Morty like me?'

"He liked you,' Winn said, leading her to a chair. (He is rather taken with this bridesmaid.) 'Of course he did.'

"Dogs don't have to like everyone,' Oatsie (the bride's grandmother) said.

"Livia stepped off the deck and lay flat on her back in the grass. An airplane crossed the sky, and she imagined its interior—people packed in rows like eggs in a carton, the chemical smell of the toilets, pretzels in foil pouches, cans hiss-popping open, black ovals of night sky embedded in the rattling walls. How strange that something so drab so confined, so stifling with sour exhalations and the fumes of indifferent machinery might be mistaken for a star."

See what I mean? Gorgeous writing. A perfect blend of the comic and the deep. This book is a winner. It sings, entertains, resonates and resounds. As *The New Yorker* comments, "a keen-eyed rendering of America's self-invented caste." Highly recommend.

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