

November 29, 2018

Unfunded Debt - A Story That Lacks Holiday Cheer

A recent VT Digger commentary (Nov. 8) by Tom Pelham (former Dean administration finance commissioner and Douglas administration tax commissioner) stole from me what little hope I have left for politicians to act in a way that demonstrates they know it is time to stop kicking the can down the road. One table in particular is informative.

The table focuses on pre K-12 education in Vermont. Between June 2000 and June 2017, the following statistics are noted:

Student enrollment in Vermont public schools decreased by 17.3 percent (18,111 students), or 1.1 percent per year.

The number of teachers decreased by two percent (206), or 0.12 percent per year.

The number of retirees and beneficiaries increased by 147 percent (5374), or 5.47 percent per year.

The actuarial asset valuation (AAV) increased by 71.5 percent (\$742,126,348), or 3.23 percent per year.

AAV: The State of Vermont owes teachers who retire a pension. So Vermont, like all states, sets aside money to pay beneficiaries but, like most states (and the federal government!), does not set aside enough money to cover projected costs... with the result that the unfunded actuarial liability increased by 999.7 percent (\$1,365,832,449) or 15.1 percent per year.

So liabilities are growing much faster than assets and this is just teacher pensions. There are also shortfalls in State of Vermont employee pensions as well as retiree health care costs. As of June 2017, Vermont had \$4.5 billion of unfunded debt obligations. In a state whose entire yearly budget is about \$6 billion, that is a big number.

So what to do? Tell elected officials to stop digging a gigantic financial hole that Vermont's children and adult taxpayers will get stuck in. Although we have a governor who is a fiscal conservative, voters recently created a veto-proof Democratic majority Legislature that refuses to accept that there is a disconnect between pre K-12 spending, student enrollment, learning outcomes, and long-term unfunded debt. There is only one entity that can demand informed sustainable spending: engaged (enraged?) citizens.

Will you raise your voice or kick the can down the road?

*Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington*

November 15, 2018

Thank You For Your Vote

Thank you very much to the voters of Chittenden County for returning me to the State Senate for a third time. There is much work to be done and I am anxious and ready to get started immediately. I would welcome hearing from you at any time with your thoughts and concerns. I also want to extend my sincere appreciation to all the other candidates who worked so hard and ran a totally positive campaign throughout.

Thank you again.

*Sen. Michael Sirotkin
Chittenden County*

Thank You, Voters

Thank you for my re-election to the Vermont Senate. It is an honor to serve you and I appreciate your confidence in my work. I look forward to work on health care, water quality, education, affordable housing, energy, jobs, and others. I will continue to take a balanced approach toward problems facing our county. I look forward to working on many issues critical to our welfare and sense of community.

Thank you again. Please stay engaged in civic activities and contact me with your comments, concerns, and questions.

*Sen. Ginny Lyons
Chittenden County*

Polling Places Present Danger, No Security

Sadly, when I went to vote on Election Day at Tuttle Middle School, I thought, what if some crazed individual decided to get into the school and start shooting students?

Food for thought — why are we opening up our students to this potential danger in this day and age? There was no security and no police presence at all.

Secondly, every police department in the state and nation should be built next to schools for rapid response. Let's face it, we live in a violent world, unfortunately.

No school today should exist without constant protection.

Steve Graves

South Burlington

November 8, 2018

Interim Zoning

I am writing to express my reasons for opposition to the interim zoning bylaw proposed by the city council, and to be discussed at a special meeting Nov. 13. Council has asked for feedback on the proposal, and so I am sharing my thoughts here.

Chittenden County has a housing shortage. In 2016, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission announced the "Building Homes Together" campaign with the goal of increasing housing in Chittenden County by 3,500 more homes in the next five years. Restricting development is not the appropriate response to that.

One of the first stated aims of the City's Comprehensive Plan is to provide Affordable Housing. Is it not therefore more appropriate, as was recently proposed by the Affordable Housing Committee, to consider mandating more affordable housing in every new development, rather than restricting development, which will inevitably lead to higher prices?

The City's Comprehensive Plan is a deep and insightful document; a lot of time, research and thought went into it. Any proposal to change it or suspend it should be subject to the same level of thoughtful consideration; it should not be abrogated or abridged on a whim.

I remain concerned that this process has been created in response to a group of residents opposed to a specific housing development. I believe a wholesale halt to all development is an over-reaction to that concern.

Stuart Mowat

South Burlington

Time to Abandon the Titanic

Some of us didn't want our friends and family members to think we didn't like or respect them. We kept our mouths shut when in their presence. We kept keyboards silent when we read their postings. Why rock the boat over political differences?

But now sinking-ship fear replaces boat-rocking fear. I'm hoping that all of us — Trumpsters and non-Trumpsters — now feel the water lapping at our feet. Can we avoid seeing the slowly slanting horizon line of coffee in our level-held morning cupful as theme music from "Titanic" swells above "America the Beautiful"?

What will unite us? Mutual love of our neighbors, no matter our political stripes, trumps whatever Trump has meant to us. We can be proud that we voted our conscience in the last election, no matter which imperfect candidate we favored. Heck, with America's pathetic history of voter turnout, we actually voted in a country with democracy as its worthy target, however flawed our aim might be.

But given America's divisive history, can we fault our current president for championing his "righteous/better-us" versus "undeserving/less-than-us" culture? History is on his side.

Can 21st century Vermonters side with that culture? How can we Trump supporters "stay with our man," even though he says what we would be afraid to say, who projects a power that makes us feel powerful, an umpire who calls it like it is even as the instant replay shows us that it isn't and wasn't?

Can we fail now to choose the objective replay? Can we fail now to see the president as revealed in replays of his words—and, by doing so, reject the lying, bullying, denying, persecuting, harassing, name-calling, and scapegoating that he proudly asserts?

The Titanic sank because humans put their faith in a captain and his hubris: "I will defeat the icy reality of the North Atlantic in winter."

Can any of us, no matter our political stripes, choose to stay aboard our president's Titanic, his flawed ship of state, and follow it — without its captain, of course, who will abandon ship — to the bottom?

*George Volland
South Burlington*

October 25, 2018

A Time for Rejoicing

At a time when many in South Burlington are deploring the loss of cherished open space, there is a new piece of conservation news to celebrate! On Oct. 5, an agreement was signed among Bread and Butter Farm, the Auclair Family, the Vermont Land Trust, and Dirt Capital Partners, to acquire and conserve 376 acres of the former Auclair Farm on three sides of the Cheese Factory Road/Hinesburg Road intersection. The City of South Burlington has been key to the project with an authorization of \$600,000 from the Open Space Fund. City staff and councilors who supported this are to be commended. They were wise enough to discern the many benefits to the city, among them protection of a substantial rural corner for continued agricultural purposes, using organic practices; saving the taxpayers from the cost of public services for hundreds of new homes; conservation of key riparian and habitat areas; provision of public recreational opportunities (trails and vistas); and encouragement of local food and farm workers.

This will be a continuation of Bread and Butter's nine-year record of making their farm a truly community resource. The South Burlington Land Trust has made a modest contribution of practical and financial support so far and intends to stay engaged with the project. I applaud all who have made this happen. And special thanks to all the people of the city who fund Open Space protection here. There will be lots of work ahead, but what a great cause!

*Sarah L. Dopp
President, South Burlington Land Trust*

City Center and Taxes

City Center Phase II has already increased your taxes and, if approved as currently proposed, will likely further increase your taxes. For the past 10 years, the City of South Burlington has increased the City property tax rate on average by three times the rate of inflation. As a result, the City property tax rate has increased 48 percent while inflation has increased prices by only 14 percent over the last 10 years (our property taxes in South Burlington are divided into City property tax and Educational property tax — for comparison, the South Burlington Educational residential property tax rate has increased by 14 percent, at the same rate as inflation, over the last 10 years).

The City's claim that the new City Hall "project will not require an increase in property taxes" is misleading. We have had substantial tax increases already. In fact, our City property taxes would be 20 percent less if we only had tax increases in line with inflation over the last 10 years.

The assumptions used by the City to justify the comment of "no additional tax increases" are questionable. The City's assumptions, presented on Sept. 4, 2018, include a \$100 million increase in taxable assessed value in the City Center TIF district. To be clear, because the community center is a city-owned property, the over \$20 million investment in a library, senior center and City Hall will have a taxable value of \$0.

The reason we need to vote on Nov. 6 is that, if there is not a sufficient increase in taxable property values in City Center, we, the voters, are responsible and must pay the debt.

"No new tax increases" also assumes lower interest rates than are currently in the market. The higher rates currently available will make the current allocation of \$750,000 per year to City Center insufficient to service the debt.

Therefore, if we as South Burlington commit to this new City Hall, it appears the reality is that either other currently funded South Burlington projects and needs will go unfulfilled, or we will need tax increases to finance this new debt.

*Fritz Burkhardt
South Burlington*

John Killacky Deserves Our Support

We are very fortunate in District 7-3 to have an outstanding candidate to succeed Helen Head as our State Representative. John Killacky has shown his outstanding leadership qualities as head of the Flynn, where he inaugurated new programs to enhance education, outreach, and inclusive participation.

John is an energetic and hardworking public servant and deserves our strong support in the November election.

*Maurice Mahoney
South Burlington*

#They're Back!

A phenomenon wildly popular between 2009-2012 disappeared for a couple of years... but as of Oct. 1, it's back! What is it? Trillion dollar annual federal deficits! (Trumpets and coronets loudly proclaim the royal announcement.)

Who, the reader might ask, is responsible for these mind-numbing deficit levels? Democrats? Yes! Dems never met a social welfare program they did not like spending massive amounts of borrowed money on!

Republicans? Yes! Reps never met a tax cut nor an income deduction (mostly for the wealthy) they could not pass fast enough!

Independents? Yes! Whoa! Not Independents like Bernie. Say it isn't so!

The left-leaning Urban Institute studied Bernie's Medicare for All program in 2016 and concluded costs would exceed income by \$16 trillion dollars over a decade!

Ok, so they are all big spenders, but the economy is booming, the stock market is up more than 300 percent since 2009, unemployment is low, and consumer confidence (AKA shop until you drop because you can never have enough stuff) is high.

All true, but aggregate federal debt is now \$21.6 trillion dollars, growing by more than \$3 billion per day, and interest on federal debt is projected to exceed \$900 billion dollars per year in 2028!

Not scared yet? Medicare's Part A Trust Fund (hospitalization) will exhaust its reserves in 2026, while the Social Security Trust Fund will exhaust its reserves in 2034. Unfunded debt obligations to future beneficiaries range from \$60 trillion to more than \$100 trillion dollars! (The blaring of trumpets and coronets is replaced by the somber and mournful wailing of tubas and bassoons).

The optimist declares no need to worry because Uncle Sam will save the day. The feminist says time is up for Sam and Aunt Mary will now run the government. The millennial says Siri has the answer as she knows everything about everything and smartphones rule the world!

The geneticist recommends scanning the human genome to find out if genes that promote fiscal responsibility and common sense exist but have been inactivated. If found, a crash program to re-activate them is urgently needed.

*Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington*

Support for City Center Project with Parking in Mind

As chair of the South Burlington Business Association as well as a long-time South Burlington business owner and resident, I have followed the 30 year evolution of the South Burlington City Center development. I am pleased that the build-out is beginning to happen and am encouraged with the progress to date. The progress includes approval for the Tax Increment Financing District (TIF), construction of Market Street and a new City Center park, new rental and senior housing projects, and a reserve fund setting aside a portion of municipal property taxes for designated City Center projects

On Sept. 4, 2018, the South Burlington City Council approved a resolution for a community to vote for bonding and related usage of TIF financing for the construction of a community Library/City Hall/Community Center in City Center.

As chair of the SBBA, I support the vision of a mixed-use urban development of City Center, including commercial, residential, public and recreational uses. I believe that the construction of a Library/City Hall/Community Center would be consistent with this vision, subject to a guiding principal that an adequate permanent parking strategy be developed for not only this project, but also to spur future development. This strategy could entail public or public/private partnerships. TIF funding should be prioritized to assist in meeting the need for permanent parking as this is fundamental to the ultimate success of the South Burlington City Center.

*John Burton
SBBA Board Chair*

September 27, 2018

Protect Wildlife Corridors

I would like to share my thoughts about the bear sightings in South Burlington as I am studying this topic in my environmental science class. I think it is wrong that people are trying to kill bears which are trying to survive in diminishing habitats.

It was their land first, and we keep popping up more housing developments and communities and these bears have no place to go. Their families are trying to survive and are separated because they are being chased out of communities and hunted. I find that very sad.

Their beautiful meadows and fields are being mowed down and replaced by genetically modified corn that is poisoned with pesticides and fungicides. Our footprint is becoming bigger and bigger and the natural spaces where our wildlife friends live and raise their families is suffering.

These bears are not a threat and we should just let them be and, in the meantime, give some serious thought to protecting our natural areas. I live in the wildlife corridor of the South East quadrant, and it's one of the last natural areas in South Burlington. When we moved here nine years ago, we used to see a myriad of wildlife including fox, duck, turkey, coyote, bobcat and deer. We don't see nearly as many after corn was planted on the property south of us. A lot of these animals probably ate the corn. It's not necessary to use all of these pesticides to grow food.

We need to think about the perspective of these bears. How must the mama bear feel? She's only trying to find her cubs that got separated from her. The big problem is that the people don't think about the bears and how they must be suffering. This family is only trying to survive and find something to eat. They must be so scared when someone is chasing them with a gun. They're probably thinking: What did I do wrong?

The real question should be what are we doing wrong as a community?

*Hannah Parker
South Burlington*

Vote Yes for City Center Project

I have read and heard about the City Center project for many months. It has gone through many twists and turns before arriving at its present status. The "wows" that were in past proposals have been eliminated. However, it did not get my real attention until I read about the approximately \$20 million price tag and the fact it wouldn't make my real estate taxes go up. (Other factors may cause property taxes to rise, but not the City Center project.)

I was very skeptical.

So I watched the city council meetings on Channel 17, personally attended a few meetings, obtained the financial analysis and related material supporting the project, and met and corresponded with some of those who had input into the project.

Based upon my review, I very much endorse the City Center project. I urge my fellow citizens, if they have doubts about the project, to study the material. I believe after you've reviewed the analysis, that you'll agree with me and vote yes for the project.

Are there risks? Yes. But we face risks every day — everywhere we go. We always have to weigh the risks versus the benefits. In this case, I believe the benefits — a new library, new city hall and a senior center — outweigh the risks.

Another item I was curious about was why we spent money renovating city hall and now propose a move? I was told the present city hall wasn't a safe place to work — there was mold to be removed, many areas needed painting and, unfortunately in today's world, a new security system needed to be installed.

For the record, I've never been associated with municipal or school government or a member of any committee. I'm just a very interested taxpayer and I urge you to vote yes for the City Center project in November.

*John C. Stewart
South Burlington*

UVMCC Contract Negotiations: A Classic Plot

Whether you work the overnight shift, write computer code, teach children, deliver babies or Amazon packages, you know the classic plot all too well. "Folks with money and power make top-down decisions. Power and money folks have PR time and resources to fight front-line workers who question those decisions. Workers cave. The folks with the power and money win."

But don't blame University of Vermont Medical Center healthcare industry executives for following the plot when they do what corporations always do: aim for efficiency, stability and financial gain. Don't blame hospital execs for paying themselves salaries at the high healthcare industry standard. They follow the plot. They want rate increases and victory at the negotiations table. It's about money. Again. Always.

But, you, medical center workers, don't want to follow the classic plot. You want your employer to embrace critical changes for the better. Can they afford not to?

What would we hear from you if you had the execs' dedicated PR-time and resources? How about the pay cut of \$25,000 per year that a nurse had to accept after moving horizontally (same position) from Dartmouth Hitchcock to the UVM Medical Center?

How about executive decisions that place you and patients at risk, like eliminating the dedicated teams of "turners" whose task-specific skills carefully repositioned ICU patients every two hours? How about the increased accidents and injury to patients and nurses since that cutback?

How about the inability to foster and maintain a strong, cohesive community of care due to the hospital's policy (at great financial cost and increased risk to you and patients) of contracting out care to nurse travelers who come and go in 13-week waves?

We know that you're telling us the truth about the need for quality salaries and quality, on-the-floor support if you're to realize your mission: quality, 24/7 care by dedicated, front-line, real people who help us stay safe, alive and recovering — or dying well — when options for life have run their course.

We support you in your determination to do the right thing. We will support your employers when they do the right thing: write a game-changing new ending for this tired classic plot.

*George Voland
South Burlington*

Officials Need to Stop Unchecked New Development

Many residents of South Burlington who attended a recent city council meeting are alarmed by the rate and nature of development in South Burlington. All agree that there should be a pause in new construction and a review of current zoning regulations. They are especially concerned about the loss of open spaces and the destruction of natural settings.

New developments are being built on small tracts of land very close to busy roads. This hodgepodge development is unattractive and poorly planned. The rationale given for constructing homes as close to the road as possible is, according to one city employee, that it will slow down traffic.

There seems to be a disconnect between the vision of the citizens of South Burlington and the city council, appointed officials and city employees. In fact, some board members and commissioners are dismissive of the opinions of their fellow citizens.

I learned at development review board and planning commission meetings that the planning and zoning departments intend to fill every open space with housing at the densest possible rate and as close to roads, such as Dorset Street, as possible.

In 2017, South Burlington had 19,141 residents. If growth follows projections, South Burlington will have nearly 22,000 residents by 2025. Irreversible and poorly planned decisions for accommodating this population are shortsighted and do not take into account that Dorset Street may need to be widened due to population growth and resulting traffic.

I realize that today the price of South Burlington houses is high, but if all the approved housing units are built, there will be a glut of new homes flooding the market and prices will fall. For senior citizens like myself and many other South Burlington residents, their home is an important part of their financial security. As we know from the present tax rates, taxes do not decrease when the population grows, since new residents require more city services and schools.

The city council must act soon to control new development. By not deciding to resolve these problems, the council is, in fact, making a decision with real consequences.

Denise Olsky
South Burlington

September 20, 2018

Ecological Armageddon in South Burlington

Traveled around South Burlington lately?

Whether you are on Dorset Street, Hinesburg Road, Old Farm Road, Kennedy Drive or Market Street, Mother Earth is under attack.

Where City Center will soon exist, trees that took decades to grow disappeared in minutes, consumed by monster-machines that cut through bark like a hot knife through butter. I thought I heard the trees crying out in protest against the blind brutality of humans who believe that conquest of nature is destiny and who live by the credo of “build, build, build.”

The City’s “visionaries” tell us growth is good. South Burlington has to have a City Center just like its neighbor Burlington, which is currently building Vermont’s first mini-Empire State building. Keeping up with the Jones’s is iconic America, no matter the level of ecological destruction to the environment that sustains us both physically and spiritually.

But wait. Isn’t South Burlington a city that says it is concerned about global warming? Did the city leadership not do its homework and realize when you cut down trees you are taking away a major repository for atmospheric CO2, not to mention those same trees are a primary source of oxygen that humans need to survive.

And what replaces the trees? Buildings created with great quantities of concrete, whose production releases prodigious amounts of CO2. And then there is the asphalt for the new streets. Asphalt captures, retains and then releases heat (at night) like few other substances, so if you thought this summer was hot, rest assured the city is doing everything possible to become a “heat island” that will ensure even hotter summers in the future.

The new houses and buildings will no doubt be filled with lots of new “stuff” that requires great quantities of CO2-releasing energy to manufacture, not to mention the energy needed to heat and cool the buildings.

Vermont is known as the Green Mountain State but the moniker of South Burlington has become “City of Hypocrisy.”

*Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington*

Traffic in South Burlington Just Keeps Getting Worse

I am a school bus driver for South Burlington. In the past ten years, I’ve seen a big increase in traffic as a result of the city’s overdevelopment, particularly in the southern parts of the city. When I started driving for South Burlington in 2009, I could drive north on Dorset Street from Swift Street to the school in a few minutes, and only had to wait once at the light at Dorset Street and Kennedy Drive. Now, traffic on Dorset is backed up about a half-mile and it usually takes three or more light changes before I can go through that intersection.

The increase in traffic is because there are thousands more people living here than there were 10 years ago. This has consequences, some of which jeopardize the safety of our children. Some buses now start their routes earlier and children sit on the bus longer because it takes longer to navigate the traffic, and because there are more housing developments to pick up from.

The increased traffic is resulting in more aggressive and rude drivers, some of whom drive dangerously. Every single day, I see speeding cars on the roads, and every single day I see cars disregarding the school bus stop arm and zooming past the stopped school bus. This is very dangerous.

As traffic increases, so does driver impatience and rudeness. It was not this way 10 years ago. We moved up here from the Washington D.C./Maryland suburbs where driving in traffic was very stressful. It was a relief to come to an area where drivers took their time on the road and were polite. Vermont drivers allowed others to merge into traffic and they didn’t blow their horns. That has changed. Sometimes driving on the roads in South Burlington is just like driving on the roads in Maryland.

South Burlington is turning into the place we escaped from. It’s obvious from the traffic and roads that we have way more houses and people than we can take care of. I’m asking our elected officials to stop this bad situation from getting worse.

*Higley Harmon
South Burlington School Bus Driver*

Vote Yes on Library, Senior Center, City Hall Bond

An article on the Nov. 6 ballot for South Burlington will request authorization for the city to borrow \$20 million to finance the construction of a proposed Library/Senior Center/City Hall building off Market Street. No new tax or increase in the property tax rate will be needed for this project.

How is this possible? It is possible because the city has been planning a major keystone project like this for many years, and has been laying the financial groundwork for it in two ways: (1) by establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in the proposed downtown area, which has been accumulating money for several years; and (2) by setting aside money every year in a City Center Capital Improvement Program Reserve Fund.

The library board is also undertaking a capital campaign to provide support for the building project.

The bottom line from this careful planning is that the city is not asking for additional tax money from voters, nor does it intend to do so. But the city is required to ask the voters for permission to borrow money up front to launch the project.

The proposed building will provide an attractive, spacious and flexible home for our library, meeting a need that has been sorely obvious for decades. It will also provide a senior center to help meet the social and recreational needs of our growing and chronically underserved population of seniors, as well as a more functional and welcoming base for city government.

This is a complex project, with many moving parts. I look forward to seeing a lively and well-informed discussion of it between now and Nov. 6.

I hope you will join me in voting yes on this article.

Glenn Sproul
Member, South Burlington Recreation and Parks Committee

Support Market Street Municipal Building in November

Our Nov. 6, 2018 ballot items for a new municipal structure at 180 Market Street offer an opportunity to realize a dream for our City Center that has been envisioned for over 40 years, and has involved the work and planning of many citizens and city staff. I strongly support the plan for this municipal building, and I urge people to vote yes.

The municipal building addresses the long-standing needs for city facilities, and will provide an anchor for City Center to serve our community for the next 100 years. Our city staff and the staff of library and recreation and parks department serve us well and offer great programs, but lack of adequate facilities has greatly limited our city offerings. Imagine the possibilities for our near future.

Included would be a public library, including children's, adult, large print, periodical, and audio/visual collections, activity-specific spaces for story-time, a digital lab, along with areas for quiet reading or active presentations and events, with an outdoor reading space.

There would be a recreation and senior center, with a large activity room, a living room and kitchen for recreational use, including, but not limited to, daytime programming for older adults including on-site meals, social events, exercise and arts and other enrichment activities, and evening programming for all ages.

The City Hall would house the city clerk, planning and zoning, finance, city manager, human resources, and customer service, as well as administrative offices, public meeting rooms, service counters and a land and vital records vault.

There would be also be an auditorium.

Two questions people ask are, "Will this project raise my taxes?" NO, this project will not raise our taxes.

Also, "What will happen to the current City Hall?" The South Burlington School District has an option to lease City Hall under an agreement reached on Wednesday, Sept. 5, to the benefit of both city and school.

The city website has excellent information.

We are a great, engaged, dynamic community. We value community and connection. Imagine how many interesting and enriching activities will be possible for us in 2020. Please vote yes.

Jennifer K. Kochman
Chair, South Burlington Recreation and Parks Committee

September 4, 2018

Time to Wake Up

The South Burlington Land Trust (SBLT) has been watching the development explosion in the past five-plus years, especially along the Dorset, Hinesburg, and Spear corridors. Most of this is occurring within the Southeast Quadrant (SEQ), the area which our Comprehensive Plan has long identified as our preferred open space preservation area. In 2014, SBLT reported in this paper that nearly 1,100 housing units were in some stage of permitting, building or recently built. Since then, an additional 500 have joined the list and work continues on the others.

We are rapidly eliminating our remaining precious open space. Of course, there is plenty of development occurring in other (better suited) areas of the city, notably Shelburne Road and City Center, which was supposed to take the pressure off the SEQ and other rural areas.

Our population has grown by 6.6 percent since 2010. Our Comprehensive Plan (2016) anticipated a growth rate of 1-1.5 percent and a leveling off of the population at 18,310 in 2025! But the population in 2017 was already 19,141! If one projects a 1.5 percent rise from the current figure, we will reach 21,885 in 2025 (20 percent more than anticipated). The latest wake-up calls have come from development projects proposed to add another 300 to 400 more units in especially sensitive wildlife habitat. The pace has been relentless.

It is time we all wake up and speak up before South Burlington is fully paved over. Continuing on this path not only destroys our environment and quality of life but is already overtaxing all city services and our ability to pay for them.

Sarah L. Dopp
President, South Burlington Land Trust

August 30, 2018

A New City Hall

You know, I'd like to vote for a new city hall, but I think we need to solve some other problems first, like are we really going to keep an elementary school right there in the heart of a downtown South Burlington? What about the noise at Chamberlin? Is the school down the road going to want to bond for new schools? What about next year's school budget, how much is that going to affect taxes? The cost of \$20 million for city hall seems excessive and maybe we could do something less elaborate and get the cost down.

Don't get me wrong, a new city hall would be nice, but until we do something about the cost of our schools, which keep sucking up all our tax dollars, I think we need to step back a little. Let's wait until March to vote on this. Maybe by then we can get a better cost analysis on this and also see what the schools will want for money as well. After all, taxes in South Burlington are very high and until we do something about school spending we need to be more careful with taxpayer money.

Scott Bronson
South Burlington

August 23, 2018

Great Decisions

I had the opportunity to attend an evening meeting of the Great Decisions program at the South Burlington Public Library in June. Developed by the Foreign Policy Association (FPA), Great Decisions is the United States' largest discussion program on world affairs. Preparation for each session involves reading a report from a Great Decisions briefing book, which can be purchased or there is a library copy that can be read at the library prior to attending each session. Eight topics of the most critical global issues facing the United States today are selected for the calendar year by the FPA. Background information and policy options are provided for each topic for discussion.

At the Great Discussion session I attended on June 7, 2018, I was very surprised to learn that 72 percent of the Turkish population considers the United States to be their number one security threat! We learned why this has happened and discussed what options the United States has to change these perceptions.

I highly recommend this program at the library. It is an opportunity to obtain great insight into what is happening in our world and to meet a terrific group of people who are actively involved in discussing and trying to understand our ever-changing world.

Please check out the library website for more program details and meeting times. Their new season begins this September. At the very least, you will have a most interesting evening!

*Kathy Mackin
South Burlington*

Concern Over News Quality after Merger

It is with some concern that I read today of the merger of *The Other Paper* with The Stowe Reporter Group. *The Other Paper* (a genius name, by the way!) is the unique source for all South Burlington news, especially the news that comes from the city council and its boards, including the development review board and the planning commission. It is also the primary source of news for the South Burlington School Board and our state elected members. No other source - South Burlington city web site, Front Porch Forum, Facebook - comes close. Where else can we read of the recent proposals for Dorset Meadows, for example?

Having seen the effect on *The Shelburne News* and *Charlotte Citizen* as they became part of the group, I am concerned that *The Other Paper* will now become just another generic small newspaper, losing its South Burlington focus, and fed by outside sources like VT Digger. VT Digger is an excellent news organization but is not local enough to deliver the information residents need, and anyway is available online to anyone who chooses. A move to have *The Other Paper* become more like the *Shelburne News*, in particular, which has negligible coverage of the council proceedings unless there is some controversy, would be disappointing.

While I can see the advantages to the organization of sharing marketing and advertising, the news is what concerns me. Can you give us, the readers, an assurance that the detailed coverage of our city, its council and its boards and committees will continue, and not be lost in the merger?

*Stuart Mowat
South Burlington*

Thank You

Thanks to all of the Chittenden County voters in Tuesday's primary. I was very glad to see the pundits proven wrong in that the turnout was far greater than predicted.

Obviously, I am also thankful for the support I received from so many of you in my bid to be re-elected to the Vermont State Senate. I am eager, should I be re-elected in November, to hit the ground running to continue with my work in promoting and protecting the interests of Vermont consumers and working families.

Thank you, again.

*Sen. Michael Sirotkin
Chittenden District*

August 2, 2018

Re-elect Debbie Ingram

I am pleased to recommend Debbie Ingram for re-election as our senator from Chittenden County. I have supported her election in the past, and she has not disappointed in her first term. She has been successful with her contributions on principle issues that matter deeply to me: expansion of telemedicine, which is especially helpful to seniors and rural residents, establishment of gun safety laws to protect the lives of our children, plus reauthorization of the Child Poverty Council. She is an attentive senator who consistently works for her constituents, and for the needs of less fortunate citizens, as in programs to mitigate racism, and keeping immigrant families together.

In these strange times for all, when most of us become poorer, and the very wealthy disappoint us by their often unscrupulous pursuit of more wealth, we Vermonters can be particularly proud of our senators who hold the future of this wonderful state in their hands. Debbie Ingram will continue to preserve our values of good education, (education funding reform) health care universal primary care, maintaining the beauty of our state, (cleaning our water ways) and jobs with wages that allow us to buy homes and raise our families (raising the minimum wage). I support Debbie Ingram's re-election because of her intent to pursue these values.

*Hope Lindsay
South Burlington*

Penny for Paths

I've spent 35.5 percent of my 76 years in South Burlington, first off Dorset, south of U Mall, then, after some time in the Adirondack woods, in the Orchards. When I returned from the Adirondacks to suburbia, I knew I would miss walking into the woods from my backdoor.

However pleased I was with my renewed proximity to the airport. I was delighted when I discovered that my new home in the Orchards came with a convenient pedestrian cut-through to the South Burlington Rec Path just a few houses away. I've used the rec path regularly ever since and consider it a "value added" feature of my home.

Moving through space contributes largely to my physical and mental health. Aerobics work for some folks, but I find that using my bipedal self to move through space is far more soul-cleansing and restorative.

Our path system offers many opportunities for a healthier community. Not only can we commute, we can just walk, walk and meditate, walk and converse with a friend, chat with a stranger, gather wild foods, observe wildlife, appreciate the changing seasons, and perhaps ponder the impact of our civilization on Earth's surface and atmosphere.

However, to be safe for all users, I agree with the Penny for Paths initiative that important aspects of our path system need improvements, specifically safety at intersections and filling dangerous gaps. These issues would be addressed by voting yes on Articles I and II on the August 14 ballot.

In terms of community, I believe the safer the pedestrian and pedal options are the more they will be used for errands now done by vehicle. The less we use vehicles for in-town errands the lower our carbon footprint and the healthier our community becomes. This is an opportunity for both individual and collective benefit.

Please join me in voting yes on August 14 for a more walkable and bikeable path system and greener, healthier South Burlington.

Barbara Waters
South Burlington

Another Penny?

I wholeheartedly support expansion of the city's recreational paths for all the reasons the path's supporters have put forth, and more. We should not, however, need another tax to support the effort.

Some years ago, the city decided to add a penny to the state sales tax, arguing it would save us money because out-of-towners would pay it too. I know the state keeps about a third of the proceeds, but local receipts must be reaching an all-time high as our Legislature continues to expand the list of taxable items. Every time I buy a gallon of unsweetened tea, for example, the city gets a few cents. I asked my representative why their recent "soda tax" should apply to tea. She replied, "Why shouldn't it?" Sometimes I think our legislators fancy themselves as Robin Hood when they're actually behaving like the Sheriff of Nottingham, but I digress.

I recently noticed I'm paying the local option sales tax on portions of my monthly phone, cable, gas, and electric bills, for storing files in the cloud, when I stream a movie, and even on the tax software I download to do my taxes! We're now paying 10 percent rooms and meals tax when we buy a single bagel, sushi, or a roasted chicken at the grocery store, and the city gets a tenth of that too. So many pennies for the city; we should be rolling in dough!

Yes to recreational paths, but the city should use the money it already has.

Jeffrey Pascoe
South Burlington

An Initiative in Support of Community

The recreation paths in South Burlington linking residential neighborhoods to each other and to the Burlington Waterfront and Island Line Trail were important positive factors influencing our decision to take a job in Vermont and make South Burlington our home. When my husband, Sam Swanson and I visited Burlington to explore in September 1997, we were enchanted with the network of paths, the beauty of the lake west to the New York Adirondacks and east to the Green Mountains. We moved to South Burlington, an appealing community with its rich calendar of events, mix of diverse residential and commercial areas, and proximity to the many attractions in other towns and rural Vermont.

We have been walking and riding our bikes for 20 years on these paths, greeting neighbors, and strangers in early morning to late afternoon hours. The paths connect us with the community around us, and we have seen additional miles added to the South Burlington network for which we are grateful. Along with families, children, and dogs we cautiously cross Spear Street as we head over to Dorset Park and the library and young children head to school. We try to avoid the intimidating crossing of Shelburne Road to Queen City Parkway to reach South End City Market, then to Oakledge Park and downtown to stores. We worry about anyone trying to use the paths to get to their destinations due to some gaps or dangerous crossings. For this reason, I will vote yes on both Articles I and II of Penny for Paths – Help Close the Gaps ballot initiative, and I encourage you to vote yes too.

You and I have a chance to create safer and more robust communities through this program because the additional penny on each \$100 property assessment is going to be used for safety improvements, additions to paths, signs and paths to close gaps in the network. Voting can be easy by asking for an absentee ballot, going by the city hall to vote early starting July 27, or voting on August 14.

*Joyce Gallimore
South Burlington*

Public Benefit in Penny for Paths

I write as a South Burlington resident in his 80s who has been bicycling as well as walking since childhood. From my perspective there is a significant public benefit for the Penny for Paths initiative on our August 14 ballot.

We older, but not old (!), folks are less and less willing to endure the increasingly unsafe gaps interspersed along our usual routes on our wonderful bike-pedestrian path. These gaps are impacted by traffic-heavy streets such as Spear, Dorset, and Hinesburg Road. I now plan my rides for low traffic times of day but can't always schedule outdoor activity within these lower traffic times.

I am less tolerant of the increasing speeds that vehicles travel on these roads and the number of well-intentioned but distracted drivers found on all roads, despite the fact that I am attired in bright colors, not necessarily matching, from head to toe.

Like some other neighborhoods in South Burlington, my neighborhood has no safe way out of the neighborhood for walkers. As pedestrians, we dart across speeding traffic on Spear Street to the grassy strip on the other side of the road winter or summer. Often the wait is significant and the road slippery.

I shall enthusiastically vote for Penny for Paths on August 14.

*Joseph Frank
South Burlington*

A Win for All

The Penny for Paths proposal makes sound sense for our city. Each of us would donate 0.01 percent of our home's assessed value annually for the next 10 years, to a fund which would cover the cost of recreation path expansion and maintenance. The cost for the average single-family homeowner would be about \$34/year, for a condo owner about \$23/year.

The small expense would be more than offset by the benefits to all of us of the improved and safer rec path, and by the likely associated boost in our property values.

Okay, it's a tax, but a great idea! Let's all vote for it on August 14!

*Mike Scollins
South Burlington*

Economic Case for Investing in Bike and Ped Infrastructure

We're having discussions in South Burlington about whether we should spend more on bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvement. I contend that not all spending is created equal. Some spending is just that, money going out the door. Painting a city building is probably necessary, but it certainly won't boost our economy. On the other hand, there's investment spending – money that yields a return on the initial outlay. Money spent is not the same as money invested. In my opinion there couldn't be a better example of a positive return on investment than money used to create or upgrade our bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

In doing research on this topic it has become clear to me that communities that make these types of investments are not only more connected, safe, and livable; they also see significant economic growth as a result. Studies show that property values for homes near path systems are up to four percent higher. The data also show that about 20 to 30 percent more jobs are created by bike and pedestrian construction compared to road-only projects. Even more compelling, studies done right here in Vermont show that biking and walking trails create thousands of jobs and bring tens of millions of dollars into the state every year. The Burlington area attracts thousands of tourists every year from all over the world. A robust and connected system of paths, bike lanes, and pedestrian crossings would not only make our city safer for its citizens but would also increase the draw to our region as well as the likelihood that tourist dollars end up in the registers of South Burlington retailers, restaurants, and hotels, ultimately reducing the tax burden on residents.

Let's turn South Burlington into a truly walkable, bikeable city. We won't just be building a safer, better place to live, we'll be growing our economy in ways that benefit all citizens.

*Shawn Goddard
South Burlington*

Please Vote Yes for a Penny for Paths

I had the opportunity to attend the SoBu Nite Out event Thursday, July 26. It was great to see how much fun everyone was having, and I got to meet a bunch of new residents and to catch up with old friends. I was amazed at how many families arrived on bicycle. In fact, so many people rode their bicycles that the folks working the Local Motion bike parking racks ran out of rack space.

Wouldn't it be great if all residents felt safe to be able to walk and ride to Veterans Memorial Park? Due to gaps in our recreation path and crosswalk infrastructure, some residents do not yet have safe bicycle and pedestrian access to Veterans Memorial or to schools, stores, and other parks throughout the city due to the many gaps that exist. One mother I met said that she will never let her children ride to school because there are presently no crosswalks at Eldridge Street, Old Farm Road or Tilley Drive on Hinesburg Road. There is a need for crosswalks in many other areas of the city.

Please help close the gaps by voting yes on the two Penny for Paths ballot articles on or before August 14. Early voting at city hall and absentee ballots are available now. Thank you for helping South Burlington be a truly safe, walkable and bikeable city.

Dana Farr
South Burlington

A Change in City Government

I agree with Thomas Chittenden's opinion (Councilor Corner, Growing Beyond Our Tale of Five, *The Other Paper*, 7/26/2018) that South Burlington should consider increasing the number of elected city councilors. I want to take it one step further and suggest that we include a mayor as an elected official, rather than an appointed city manager. Mr. Chittenden appears to be alluding to this in his examples of city government in Burlington, Barre, Montpelier, and Vergennes where there are elected city councilors and a mayor.

The number of elected city councilors should increase to better represent the growing number of South Burlington residents, and Mr. Chittenden's suggestion to change to a mixture of ward and at-large seats is an excellent idea. Additionally, an elected mayor, chosen by voters, would represent, and be accountable to, both residents and city government. It's time for a City Charter change.

Laura DeMaroney
South Burlington

July 25, 2018

Vote for Ingram

I hope you will join me in voting for our State Senator Debbie Ingram on August 14 or earlier! I have been friends with Debbie for years and have admired her in her role as the executive director of Vermont Interfaith Action and as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Now, as a state senator, she has done an amazing job advocating for the people of our county.

During her first two years, Debbie compiled an impressive record of successful legislative action. Here are the highlights of legislation that passed this year: Debbie sponsored legislation to expand telemedicine, giving patients improved access via secure video links to health care providers. This expansion of care is especially helpful to rural residents and seniors. She sponsored legislation that establishes a systemic racism mitigation board to collect data on racial injustice within government, to identify where improvement is needed, and to promote best practices. She sponsored legislation that allows the public defender's office to provide advice to their clients on matters of immigration, navigating federal laws and keeping families together. She sponsored legislation to re-authorize the Child Poverty Council to monitor progress in eradicating child poverty and propose legislation to improve economic opportunities for families.

In addition, Debbie co-sponsored legislation to establish universal background checks and voted in favor of other gun safety laws, including removal of guns from domestic abusers, and those threatening harm to others. She co-sponsored legislation to increase the number of, and training for, nurse examiners to provide better care for sexual assault victims. Also, the health and welfare committee, on which she serves, sponsored SNAP and REACH UP bills to protect these federal programs for food assistance and aid to needy families.

Debbie will continue to work for issues that are close to her heart, including universal coverage of primary care, paid family leave, raising the minimum wage, clean-up of our waterways, and education funding reform.

Please join me in voting for her in the primary August 14, or anytime at the town clerk's office.

*Julie Cadwallader Staub
South Burlington*

Beyond Beauty

The sacrifice of our dwindling rural open spaces in South Burlington goes beyond the loss of beauty. I am not in the least bit discounting the magnificent vistas, rolling grasses, stately trees, running waterways, countless critters - deer, coyotes, bobcats, wild turkeys, songbirds of all types, turtles, raccoons, opossums, rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, bees, and more - that grace us with their mere presence. Their disappearance goes far beyond the loss of their physical beauty. When we lose them - and we are at a fast rate - we are losing resources that feed our souls and our bodies.

For too long, we have thought of land only in terms of its monetary value: how much money we can make from building on it and how many tax dollars it will provide. Rarely do city planners assess the emotional, environmental, and economic costs that we incur when we lose the land. Planners usually neglect to consider the multiple benefits that land - open, undisturbed land - provides.

The soil provides nutrients for growing food. Trees filter and clean our air. Unpolluted water keeps everything alive. The land sustains us. Yet, rather than preserving these gifts, we bulldoze the land and kill the animals to build houses. Houses belong in city centers, not in pastures. We need open lands, good soil, trees, and animals to live. Houses do not keep us alive. Fertile land, clean water, and fresh air do.

Current zoning is allowing the destruction of open spaces in order to build, build, build. We can't build any more birds, or deer, or clean air, or fresh water, or land. The land and animals have no voice in our mutual destruction, but we do. In the circle of life, as we destroy the land, we destroy ourselves.

Please tell our city officials to take immediate action. They have the tools for this. We have the power to demand they use them. Email the council and/or come to a meeting and tell them to stop the current destruction of our open spaces. Our health and the survival of our children depends on it.

*Rosanne Greco
South Burlington*

Proposed Pennies for Recreation Path

Make no mistake, this is a 10-year obligation to every home owner in South Burlington and will raise well over three million dollars.

Its stated purpose is to fill existing gaps on the recreation path. However, the first selected project is to build a path where one already exists. The picture of the path that is being presented on the city website leaves out Dorset Heights, so there appears to be a gap. Published maps of the recreation paths in South Burlington indicate that Dorset Heights is a part of the path, connecting the paths along Cider Mill Drive, Old Cross Road, and along the VT National Golf Course.

I can't support a misleading ballot item.

*Steve DeMaroney
South Burlington*

Elect Legislators Who Don't Support Big Tobacco

Should Vermont raise the age to buy cigarettes to 21? This spring Burlington voters supported it by a two to one margin. I'll bet the rest of Vermont feels the same. At age 18, many kids in high school buy cigarettes for their younger friends, which keeps the cycle of addiction going.

But surveys don't change things. You have to elect legislators who support it. In the Democratic primary there are two highly qualified candidates for Chittenden County Senate: Steve May and Val Carzello. Both support raising the age and are capable leaders. Also running are four incumbents: Phil Baruth, Debbie Ingram, Ginny Lyons, and Michael Sirotkin have supported raising the age.

Two candidates not to vote for are Tim Ashe and Chris Pearson. They took positions favoring the tobacco industry by voting against the bill (S.88) that would have raised the age. If Vermont is going to break the pipeline of nicotine to kids, these two need to be replaced by senators who are willing to stand up to Big Tobacco.

*Alex McHenry
South Burlington*

Crystal Clear or Clear as Mud

In a recent article in *The Other Paper* on the community of South Burlington's right to have a referendum on school mascot name change, Superintendent David Young is quoted as telling the school board it had become "crystal clear" to him that the Rebel identifier was "interfering with all students' ability to feel safe and included" in city schools.

As seekers of truth who value living in a democracy let us ask a two-part question: Is the superintendent's statement factually correct while at the same time hiding a much larger truth?

Superintendent Young conducted a survey asking high school students a single question: "Please describe how comfortable or uncomfortable you are with your school's continued use of Rebel as a nickname."

39 students, or 8.14 percent of the student body, who took the survey (4.3 percent of the high school student population) responded they were uncomfortable. An additional 71 students (about 14.8 percent of respondents) answered "they don't care either way."

What about the other 77 percent of students (aka the "majority") who did not declare they were uncomfortable or ambivalent? Their exact thoughts are unknown as Superintendent Young refused to release their comments.

In aggregate, do the survey results provide crystal clarity with regard to the concern that students felt the Rebel identifier was an impediment to safety, inclusion, and (possibly) student learning in city schools? The obvious answer is no.

However, the insightful reader appreciates that the use of the word "all" by the superintendent is key. It allows Mr. Young to make a correct statement ("all" students do not feel included if one feels excluded) while subjugating what is an equally, if not more, important truth about the opinion(s) of the majority of students (who at a minimum were not uncomfortable or ambivalent).

Is this "much ado about nothing"? Absolutely not. Except in very unique cases, no matter how noble the cause, any time the majority viewpoint is marginalized or ignored, it represents a dagger into the heart of a democracy, and too many dagger thrusts will be fatal.

Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington

July 19, 2018

Immigration Crossroads

Current immigration is capped by Congress at one million per year. Our population will double to 625 million by 2100 if two million immigrants enter our country a year. What we accept for immigration reform today will determine what our country will become in less than a generation.

This country can't absorb everyone. According to Ned Ryan's report "How to Solve the Immigration Crisis," we're currently spending \$130 billion a year for illegal immigrants. It's not realistic to solve other countries problems when we have pressing needs like Social Security, interest, Medicare and Medicaid obligations that, according to the Peterson Foundation, already consume close to 70 percent of our federal budget.

Our current immigration mess results from political stalemate. Democrats seek political votes from immigrants and some Republicans want short term business gains through cheap labor. Taxpayers are being sold out, threatening our country's future. If nothing happens, taxpayers will revolt against funding an overstressed welfare system with illegals who will find ways to join our voter checklists and support candidates that promise them more. Democrats and activists have staked out that political agenda. Just listen to their emotional rhetoric.

It's important to support candidates who will protect our borders and accept immigrants on merit like Canada and Australia. We need to keep yearly immigration at one million, e-verify all employees, allow limited temporary work visas, and end chain migration. Vetted DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] children could earn citizenship but need to apply like other immigrants.

We must preserve the sovereignty of our country and our borders. The next election will determine the direction we will be taking. We get what we accept.

Frank Mazur
South Burlington

Recommending Brown for Assistant Judge

I would like to recommend Suzanne Brown, Esq. for assistant judge of Chittenden County. She is the only attorney running for that office. Her opinion may be sought in cases involving the establishment of parental rights and responsibilities, parent child contact, parentage cases, relief from abuse, in addition to spousal support and division of the marital estate.

Her other assets include practicing family law for over 30 years and receiving high ratings in legal ability and ethics from peer reviews of lawyers in Chittenden County. I have no doubt she is highly qualified for this office.

Annette Zeff
South Burlington

No to Penny for Paths

My parents own the place where I live because I cannot pay the extreme high rent in the county. They are both retired; my mom retired two years ago and my dad last year. I'm voting no because I think this one cent increase in property taxes is not the best idea. I hear the complaints in the city from my friends about the one cent tax increase. They are leaving because they feel like this city is squeezing them for every last cent. The spending in the city is out of control and it needs to be curtailed big time. I think Penny for Paths is a big time scam because I think the money will get sent someplace else and not used for that purpose. It happened before in this city and it will happen again, trust me.

Scott Miller
South Burlington

A More Walkable and Bikeable Community

What does it mean to be a truly walkable and bikeable community? It's not just about having sidewalks and making sure people can cross the road, but it is more about having a connected network that makes everyone feel safe. If we build our walking and biking network so that an eight year old or an 80 year old feels comfortable, safe and empowered to walk or bike, then it will likely feel safe for everyone else in between too.

After having children, I now notice more and more how difficult it is to navigate safely around our city. I now notice missing crosswalks such as at Prouty Parkway, a street that connects 44 households to Hinesburg Road, where the sidewalk ends at Hinesburg Road with no way to cross to the other side safely. I notice when "bike lanes end" with nowhere to go but into a busy intersection.

As my five and seven-year-old started snowboarding this year, they were obsessed with trail maps. They asked, "What are the blue, green, and black lines squiggling down the mountain?" This continuous network of trails gets the user safely from top to bottom based on their level of skill. Our bike networks should be the same but are not labeled as such. There is no such thing as an easy "blue" run if there is a "black diamond" section in the middle where the "bike lane ends" because of an intersection or because the recreation trail ends, sending users out onto a road with no shoulder such as the situation on Dorset Street right now. We need to connect the gaps so that the entire trail is navigable by users without danger.

This is where the Penny for Paths initiative is so important. By voting on August 14 to fund closing the gaps, we can make our streets safer for ages eight to 80. By voting to allow bonding, we can get this done sooner, rather than later. Please join me in voting yes on August 14 for a more walkable and bikeable South Burlington now.

Nic Anderson
South Burlington

July 12, 2018

Voting Yes for Penny for Paths

I walk on the South Burlington Recreation Path almost every day, all year round. I love being able to be outdoors, close to nature, getting lots of healthy exercise, and interacting with neighbors of all ages who also love the path.

"Penny for Paths – Close the Gaps" is a plan to add new links in areas that don't have a path, to make crosswalks safer, and to improve the path, trails, and bike lanes. The current city budget allows for maintaining the existing path but not for expanding and improving it. Penny for Paths will make our city safer and will enhance the connections between our neighborhoods. You can read more about it at the city's website.

I plan to vote yes on article one and article two to support Penny for Paths. Article one authorizes an additional penny on the annual city tax rate for a period of ten years to support expansion and improvements. Article two allows the city to issue bonds to get the work started right away.

Election day is Tuesday, August 14. Please mark your calendar to go to the polls. If that doesn't work for you, you can vote early at City Hall. Early voting started Thursday, June 27. It is easy to vote at city hall during their regular business hours. You can also request an absentee ballot. Thanks! See you on the path!

Marga Sproul
South Burlington

June 28, 2018

Another POV

Here is a broader view of the immigrant crisis at our border. The tiny Central American countries, including Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and others have been poor and repressed for most of their existence. They have also been manipulated by our government, and for the most part, they're unknown and ignored by the general public here. Only a few decades ago, the Reagan administration sponsored covert military strikes from inside Honduras. Remember the Iran-Contra scandal? Then, right wing, ruthless dictators practiced genocide. In some cases, their armies were trained and influenced by our own notorious School of the Americas. What was left behind were violent legacies copied by MS13, among others, and straw-man governments. Flight is the only option for poor families and young people who do not want to be co-opted by drug and sex-trade traffickers or murdered for political reasons, such as Berta Caceres of Honduras, who promoted human rights and environmental protections.

But there is a larger issue. There are 65 million refugees worldwide, now. This is the real problem, because refugees will continue to seek survival, however and wherever they may. What is happening at our borders is not personal, it is a phenomenon. Imagine then, if Mexico, Canada, and the U.S, united to sponsor refugee settlements with shelter, food, and medical care? Jordan has done this for Middle East refugees, as has Kenya, with United Nations assistance. While not a perfect solution, it is much more humane than walls or arrests, and more to the point. Refugees are not our enemies, they are seeking their right to exist.

Believing we have an "illegal immigrant" problem is too narrow a focus. The world has a problem of tens of millions of impoverished, homeless human beings in search of respite from war, persecution, hunger, environmental catastrophes, and violence. Surely, we Americans should have insight into solutions, because we are also partly responsible.

Hope Lindsay
South Burlington

New City Hall

I was reading *The Other Paper* today (June 21, 2018) and the story about the new civic building. To me, it seems way too big, but I will withhold judgement until we actually see what it is going to cost taxpayers. Seems like maybe Christmas is coming a bit early, but also, I do think something needs to be done with city hall, just not sure it needs to be this big, and also the new taxes to pay for this. Every year, the schools eat up more and more of our taxes and city hall does get the short end of the stick here, but until we can control our spending we might not be able to afford such an elaborate civic building. But again, I will withhold judgement until we see some costs; but we really need to do something about the out of control spending on schools.

Scott Bronson
South Burlington

Why I am Voting

Yes August 14

When we were relocating to the Burlington area 25 years ago, we had five criteria for our new town/city: 1. an excellent school system; 2. its own high school; 3. local colleges; 4. access to a body of water; and 5. recreation paths and sidewalks. After living in a town in Connecticut with few areas to walk safely, especially with a toddler and infant, being able to do so was very important to us. We found it all in South Burlington.

The recreation path system that has developed over the years has become such an integral part of our community. For our kids to be able to visit friends in other neighborhoods via the paths not only saved countless hours of car time, but it also fostered independence. I clearly remember the excitement of each of our three children when they were old enough to safely cycle to elementary school with friends.

As an avid walker, I use our path system nearly daily. Not only do I get to enjoy the beautiful and varied scenery, but I also get to connect with neighbors along the way. I also love being able to do errands without having to get in my car.

Our Department of Public Works is fully committed to maintaining existing roads and paths, but there isn't money in the budget for path and crosswalk improvements. The Penny for Paths initiative will provide funds to close gaps in our path system, add and improve crosswalks, and provide more bike lanes.

Please join me in voting Yes on Articles 1 and 2 on August 14.

Joan C. Britt
South Burlington

June 21, 2018

Existing Rec Path on Dorset Street

I'm responding to Bob Britt's [South Burlington Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (SBBPC) member] Commentary in the May 31, 2018 edition of *The Other Paper* regarding gaps in South Burlington's Recreation Paths. It is indeed possible to get from Dorset Farms to Veterans Memorial Park, the middle and high schools, and the future City Center using an existing recreation path. I ask you to view the map of South Burlington and Burlington Recreation Paths, which can be found at the trailfinder.info website. It clearly shows, and I'm sure that Mr. Britt realizes this, that the Dorset Street route is in place for people who choose to use it.

Referring to the inability to safely get to the Mill Market and Deli from the Dorset Links development, residents are able to cross Dorset Street and go south for a short distance in the designated bike lane, which is marked with a white stripe. This bike lane also allows those residents to get on the recreation path that intersects Cider Mill Drive.

As a member of the original Recreation Path Committee, our goal was to create a network of paths to connect the two largely residential sections of South Burlington. Over the years, this network has grown. Developers include recreation paths in new developments, striving to connect to the existing paths. If one wishes to ride or walk on a recreation path or in a designated bike lane, it is possible to safely get to most places in South Burlington. I feel we are lucky to have this network and the support it receives.

Instead of spending time and effort trying to add short spurs to the existing paths to benefit specific small neighborhoods and businesses, I ask that the SBBPC focus its efforts on Hinesburg Road and Spear Street, where long sections exist without recreation path accessibility. Thank you.

Laura DeMaroney
South Burlington

June 14, 2018

Does a Dog Park Serve the Neighborhood?

At age eleven, I finally got a puppy whom I named Geni. For almost four years now, I have taken care of her. In my endeavors to provide Geni with quality exercise, I especially enjoyed the dog park which used to be located on the Kirby Road extension. Not only did it give her a spacious place to run, but also, it brought our community together. Unfortunately, that park had to be closed and we miss it.

I am not asking that Jaycee Dog Park be re-opened. I am not asking for the biggest dog park possible. I am not asking for a specific location for a new dog park. What I am asking is that accessibility to a new dog park be a top priority. I believe that a neighborhood location is of the utmost importance for a successful dog park.

Twice a day, I used to bike 0.9 miles to the Kirby dog park with my dog, and after letting her play, I would bike the 0.9 miles back. I am not averse to having to go further than just next door for a dog park, however having to bike a roundtrip of 8.2 miles to the small dog park at Farrell Park or a roundtrip of 5.4 miles to the proposed location of Veterans Memorial Park is not possible for me to do.

I am trying to balance high school, family, extra-curricular activities, and time with my dog; it would be significantly valuable for me and other community members to have a dog park in the Chamberlin area. If a dog park were put somewhere like Veterans Memorial Park, I would not be able to take Geni to a dog park, except for the occasional times that my parents might be able to drive me.

I understand the numerous concerns that go into the decision of a dog park, but I am asking you to help me find a way to properly exercise my pet. We need a dog park in the Chamberlin neighborhood.

Madeleine Plourde
South Burlington

May 31, 2018

The Lexicon of Race Issues: Opinion Versus Fact

Vermont has an abundance of intellectual capital, yet I continue to be dismayed at how often opinion and fact (verified truth) are considered synonymous, even though they most certainly are not synonyms.

It is not uncommon these days, in Vermont and elsewhere, to hear that because of something called “white privilege,” (? all) white people are racists (an opinion), even if they do not know it. There is no documentation (demonstration of fact) for this assertion in any peer-reviewed publication that I know of, yet I hear the assertion most times issues of race are discussed.

Wait. Doesn't “implicit bias” demonstrate that white people are racists? Implicit bias refers to nonconscious prejudices in which one group is favored over another group. People think and act against others, even if they aren't aware of their prejudice. The concept is reportedly demonstrated in a lab test known as the Implicit Association Test (IAT).

The test-retest reliability (repeatability) of the Race IAT is 0.42-0.44, which falls well below the psychometric minimum standard of 0.7-0.8. Four separate meta-analyses of 46-167 individual studies found that IAT scores are poor predictors of actual behavior (“lack of validity”).

Unfortunately, since so many respected individuals and institutions frequently refer to implicit bias to justify accusations of near-universal racism, it has become accepted as true. This unfortunate reality follows the tragic paradigm that if you tell a lie 100 times, it becomes the truth for many individuals.

Moreover after six million years of the evolution of the hominid brain, an organ of incredible complexity and almost incomprehensible abilities, it is sobering to realize society has acquiesced to the belief that the human brain cannot understand what the human brain believes.

To be clear, the evil of racism does exist in our society and worldwide, but it is absurd to argue that because of something called “white privilege” white people are racists. Let's remember that hundreds of thousands of white Americans gave their lives fighting the most malevolent racists humanity has ever known: the Nazis of Hitler's Germany.

*Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington*

May 17, 2018

Local Green Up Day

You'd never think of whipped cream containers as being the most items found on our new-improved Market Street, however it's true for this regular Green Up Day volunteer! My concern is that kids are using them “to get high.” Ugh. Please talk to your kids - and the neighborhood kids - about the dangers of such habits.

Thanks, from a native Vermonter.

*Ceal Moran
South Burlington*

May 10, 2018

Rewrite Zoning Regulations for Airbnb

During certain times of the year, the greater Burlington area has a lack of lodging space available. May is the most critical month because of college graduations here. Almost every Airbnb, B&B, and hotel room for the weekend of UVM graduation has been booked for weeks.

It is evident that more lodging space is needed sometimes, but do we build more hotels or encourage Airbnb? Building hotels creates more concrete parking lots and high-rise buildings, adding to the construction and traffic problems. We already have lodging that is hidden and visually appealing. More important, with Airbnb, the profit is going to South Burlington residents, not to some hotel corporate giant located out-of-state.

As far as the guest experience, would you rather wake up and look out the window at parking lots and traffic or wake up to birds singing and have your coffee on a backyard deck with views of garden flowers and wildlife? Would you rather ask a stranger what to do in the area or a local host who cares about the quality of your stay and will show you how to get to bike

paths and sunset views? One of the most impressive things about our town is our friendly, gracious people, and our Airbnb owners act as ambassadors!

Airbnb covers liability of every guest during every stay up to \$1 million. You can choose to only host guests whose identity has been verified and have good reviews from other hosts. The review goes both ways, so the guest has an incentive to follow house rules and be respectful.

But like most town decisions, it all comes down to money. Airbnb pays its town taxes immediately after the guest checks in. Most visitors would rather stay in the South Burlington or Burlington area, so they can be close to the airport, town events and UVM, but they will be forced to travel further while those towns take in the lodging revenue.

Airbnb is part of the new sharing economy that is taking the world by storm. It's time to rewrite our zoning regulations to reflect today's technology.

Cindy Kleh
South Burlington

May 3, 2018

It Was Intentional, It Was Your Agenda, You Own It

Pat Nowak was my friend. She was brave, fun, smart - she was courageous.

These are statements made by her brave, funny, and courageous daughter Alison Cossette at the South Burlington City Council meeting April 16, 2018, as the council attempted unsuccessfully, to explain their plans to trash Pat's work on behalf of the Vermont Air National Guard, in the same meeting they purported to honor her after her untimely death:

"My mother, as your resolution points out was an exemplary public servant and woman of incredible grace and class in an environment that was not often conducive to doing so. And I just want it to be known that I find the timing of your vote to join Winooski and Burlington in the F35 [resolution] completely undermines anything you have said in the previous moments and I find these actions extremely disingenuous. On behalf of my mother, I know that if this situation were reversed and she were still the chair of this council, she would never choose to set the agenda the way that you have this evening."

"An agenda is intentional; it is a very conscious decision, and so I think it is something you need to own."

"If you meant to honor my mother, you would have opened it to a public vote as they did in other cities and you would honor the people of this town and this city the way that she would have wanted to."

"So that, three or four of you will decide for the entire community, something that other cities were allowed to vote upon." - Alison Cossette, proud daughter of Pat Nowak.

If you are interested in watching this meeting, or any of the South Burlington City Council meetings, go to CCTV, Center for Media & Democracy, you can watch online.

Pam Mackenzie
South Burlington

April 26, 2018

Inappropriate Action by Council

I was so upset to read that the South Burlington City Council passed a resolution without any public input on the basing of the F35. The council's action was so inappropriate at so many levels. First, there is a tremendous amount of support for the Vermont Air National Guard and the F35. How the council believed that they represented the residents of South Burlington is beyond belief. The basing of the F35 went through a lengthy process of public engagement. South Burlington joined in an *amicus* brief and the opponents of the F35 lost. This is a last ditch desperate effort by a few South Burlington residents. Lastly, the disrespect the council gave Pat Nowak by passing this resolution on a night that they were honoring her long and proud service to the council, the Vermont Air National Guard and the basing of the F35 was in total poor taste. We need an apology and a public meeting on the council's action.

Elizabeth Goldberg
South Burlington

April 12, 2018

In Support of a New Library

Google will give you a hundred thousand hits. Your librarian will give you the right answer. The technical businesses and people we want to attract know this and care about it. I know because I am, and I do.

Now we have an opportunity to make an innovative, example-setting library. Our schools are already the best. A matching library will be a shutout.

So how do we stack up right now? In terms of raw square footage, we are a bit behind St. Albans, at two-thirds of Barre, Montpelier, and Brattleboro, half of Rutland, and one-quarter of Burlington! And that's counting our high school and community libraries. In terms of square footage per resident, we're in the dust. Burlington, Rutland, and Williston residents get just shy of twice as much library as we do. St. Albans, Barre, and Montpelier do have fully twice as much as we do. And Essex Junction and Brattleboro residents enjoy two-and-a-half times as much library.

I won't settle for this. I hope you won't either. And yes, I got these numbers from my librarian (Vermont Public Statistics Spreadsheet FY 2016). Thanks.

Jake Jurmain
South Burlington

Powerful Leadership

I want to thank and acknowledge Police Chief Trevor Whipple, Fire Chief Doug Brent, Deputy City Manager Tom Hubbard, and City Manager Kevin Dorn. Their tremendous leadership was evident as they shepherded through an agreement for the development and operation of a community outreach program that will work with rescue and law enforcement. The new partnership with the Howard Center to provide additional supports and interventions in non-criminal situations often related to mental health or substance abuse is a powerful and important step for our community. We should all be proud of their efforts to bring this program into our community. Kudos to them all for their leadership.

Patrick J. Leduc
South Burlington

April 5, 2018

I Am Asking

So I am asking? Why is it our local representatives seem to have a need to pass gun control legislation just to pass something?

Let's be very clear, this is not about safety for our schools and our children. This is about government control of the private citizens' rights as granted by the constitution.

I am an avid hunter, gun owner, and conservationist. We allow Vermonters to hunt, fish, hike, and ride ATV's on our land. Mr. LaLonde seems to have a "need" to pass some type of gun legislation just to say he passed something and to be involved in "historic" gun control. Mr. LaLonde has introduced about every measure of gun control available in hopes of doing something, anything, even at the cost of infringing on Vermonters' values and traditions.

Age: If we deem the 18-year-old mature enough to vote, get married, buy a truck, have children, enlist in the military, how can we not trust them to purchase a rifle. There must be a way to get certification prior to age 21.

Magazine limits: Many pistols and long rifles come with standard magazines that exceed ten rounds. I guess the logic is, yes, we are allowing you to own a gun, but we are telling you how many rounds you are allowed to have. Gee, thanks government! As written, even state and local enforcement see little practicality of this amendment.

Background checks: I support the expansion of background checks and closing the gun show loophole.

Private sales should remain private.

I understand the emotion, but why is it that people move to Vermont or better yet, South Burlington, for safety, schools, community, and as soon as they get here, all they want to do is change what we have to what they left?

And a side note, last week, my neighbor's house was broken into, in broad daylight, and was trashed as the perpetrator was looking for money and prescription drugs. I live on Brewer Parkway, so don't think it can't happen to you.

Michael Rozzi

South Burlington

March 22, 2018

Healthcare Reform

The U.S healthcare system faces many challenges that clearly indicate the urgent need for some reform. While attention has been rightly focused on the millions of Americans who are uninsured, and the many insured Americans who are facing rapid increase in premiums and out of pocket costs, we need to look at ways to change.

Reforming our healthcare system to improve quality and value of care is essential to addressing the escalating costs, poor quality, and the increasing number of Americans who don't have health insurance. There is always an ongoing debate about the ability of various delivery system reforms to increase value, there are aspects of different approaches to reform that are more likely to improve health and slow the cost. The first goal to fixing this is access to health care. What people need are clinics that are convenient to where they live. Ideally, the government would establish these sorts of clinics for poor neighborhoods or could offer subsidies to the private sector to provide these services.

Health care quality is an issue in the United States. Something that can be done about quality of healthcare is to gather and analyze information, including information on how outcomes of procedures vary by hospital and by doctor. The problem of restraining health care costs is critical. It's virtually impossible to see any progress in dealing with access or quality without doing something to address cost. Our healthcare system is essentially the Titanic headed toward the iceberg of unfunded liabilities. The individual insurance market is a disaster, with some families who do not get insurance through work or government electing to remain uninsured.

We would be best served as a country by having the government focus on policies like clinics in poor neighborhoods and better information on the effectiveness of services and the performance of the providers. In the end, this isn't about the politics. It is about America's future and whether we'll be able to look back and say that we did all we could and made the changes we needed.

Emily Dickinson
South Burlington

UVM Hypocritical with Forest Loss Concern

I was astounded to see on page four of the most recent *Vermont Quarterly* magazine that the University of Vermont (UVM) is concerned that Vermont loses 1,500 acres of forest annually. UVM, the concerned land steward? Disingenuous at best.

UVM was given a large parcel of old growth forest land bordered by Swift and Spear Streets, promising to steward it. They just sold the parcel to a developer. Rather than serve as the land steward they promised when the land was donated to UVM, they enter into a deal with the devil. Spare me the plea that UVM is helping to create much needed housing. Spin it ... but it reeks.

Build housing on any of the vacant, already stripped and paved over lots that dot South Burlington. Instead, this wildlife corridor, home to the few remaining old growth trees in south Burlington, will be cleared to crowd animals out and people and cars in. The developer and UVM conspire to "donate" another - much smaller, deeply ravined, adjacent - parcel to preserve. This new parcel will be bordered by the chaos of human activity and is no substitution at all.

The now forested acreage sits in the Potash Brook Watershed. Housing and paving and cars will not only decimate the critical forest, wildflower and wildlife habitat, it will contribute to the run off from all the development on Spear Street that that already pollutes Shelburne Bay.

Spare me the false editorial concern, UVM. If UVM cared at all about this horrible loss of forested land, they would not be so quick to contribute shamelessly to it. I am very sad every day when I drive by those trees. I am sadder yet that UVM can be so hypocritical.

The South Burlington Land Trust has argued to UVM that this last large forest parcel in our town is critical habitat. They have asked South Burlington zoning and city councilors to refuse the requested zoning changes that would rubber stamp this natural area devastation.

Please speak up.

Lynn Vera
UVM 1976
South Burlington

March 15, 2018

Thank You

Thank you, voters, for the trust you have put in me over my eight years of service on the South Burlington City Council. I welcome the opportunity to serve the community and represent the public interest in a fifth term. When I first ran in the spring of 2008, my primary goals were the same: protecting South Burlington's available open spaces and the quality of life in our neighborhoods, promoting the development of City Center, and maintaining the quality of city services all with an eye to affordability and financial sustainability. As always, I am running on the platform of open, transparent, and accountable government and of increased dialogue with our neighboring communities.

A believer in Vermont's tradition of citizen meetings and participatory government, I am committed to dialogue and aim to make policy through thoughtful deliberation where all sides are represented and heard. When the public is invested in their government, there is give and take, knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and everyone benefits.

I am grateful to be able to play a direct role and propel this city forward as the public's vision currently takes shape, from our City Center - its open, shared-use streetscape and park - to the library, our next up-and-coming project. I will continue to support policy that sets our energy-saving goals ever higher and recuperates savings to fund investments in more renewable, carbon-free energy. I will seek to use our tax dollars in ways that pay it forward but also give our residents immediate tangible benefits: in more paving and striping for our "complete streets" so that commuters and recreational cyclists can cruise along safely; in recreation programs and community events that bring us together and keep us at play; and in the upkeep of our parks and beautiful natural areas.

We are really on the cusp of something big for South Burlington and I look forward to further conversations with you all as we move forward. Thank you again for giving me the honor to be able to serve our community again in an official capacity.

Meaghan Emery
South Burlington City Councilor

New Discovery

I discovered a resource that I did not know even existed - right here in South Burlington. It is the English Conversation Class that happens every Monday, 6:30 p.m., in the conference room at the new home of the South Burlington Public Library. I met fascinating people from Brazil, China, Ecuador, Siberia, and Turkey. These folks had gathered to improve their fluency in conversational English with the guidance of Tricia Griffith. The participants have realized they need/want to be able to converse easily for their work, for their communication with new friends, and to be able to ask questions when confused.

Ms. Griffith has had the group read the first section of "Tuesdays with Morrie" by Mitch Albom. The discussion for the evening started with the philosophy of the characters in the story. It did not stay there. We talked about making difficult decisions, our own family dynamics, different physical environments, and different cultural beliefs.

I recommend that anyone who wishes to increase their knowledge of conversational English as a second language to join this group on Monday evenings. Contact the South Burlington Public Library if you have questions.

Linda Darlington
South Burlington

Supporting Grant Portability

Deciding whether and where to go to college is difficult for all students. For some, staying close to home is the best choice. For others, leaving their home state is ultimately the better option. I'm concerned the Vermont Legislature, which has a 50-year history of supporting grant portability, is considering eliminating it. The grant program provides vital financial aid to low and medium income Vermonters, like I was. Without the grant program, Logic Supply, the company I co-founded, would not exist today. So I'd like to share my experience.

I knew I wanted a degree in International Business and a career in IT. With a Vermont State Grant, I attended an accredited American college in Switzerland and Northeastern University (NU) in Boston. While at NU I did a co-op in Paris at Alcatel and in Amsterdam at AT&T. After a stint in Tennessee, I relocated to The Netherlands where I worked for WorldCom and met my husband Roland. All told, I speak three languages fluently and have nearly 20 years of international business experience working with my customers who were Fortune 500 companies from Philips to FedEx. All thanks to VSAC (Vermont Student Assistance Corporation) and grant portability.

As a result, I was well prepared to start and grow Logic Supply. In choosing our headquarters, like many Vermonters, I wanted to come home. And I knew that Vermont was ready for our high tech business. Today we are a rapidly expanding global computer hardware manufacturer with offices in South Burlington, The Netherlands, and Taiwan. We employ more than 100 Vermonters, with a total global workforce of 130 people and we continue to hire. Without my years studying and working abroad, Logic Supply would simply not exist.

Should we legislate limiting learning opportunities in order to keep our taxpayer dollars at Vermont colleges and universities? I say no; instead we should be creating opportunities and great jobs. In 1990, my father Charlie told my mother Sue, "If we tell Lisa she can't leave, she'll resent us later and probably leave Vermont anyway." With this in mind, we ask the Legislature not to force financially disadvantaged students to stay if their educational interests lead them elsewhere. Economically disadvantaged Vermonters face enough hurdles already. Instead of adding more barriers, let's feed the fire that is driving them towards a college education. Our state economy benefits from the varied skills and talents our students acquire when attending their chosen academic programs in their preferred environment. When students are happy, they're more likely to succeed academically and contribute to the Vermont and national economy.

My mom and dad always kept the porch light on when they knew I was on my way back. As I pulled into the driveway in Barre after a long trip, I used to look over the city and take a deep breath; I was home. I'm asking the Vermont Legislature to support our students, even if they leave and "keep the porch light on" so they can find their way home again too.

Lisa Groeneveld
South Burlington
Logic Supply Co Owner/Co Founder

March 8, 2018

Gun Control

As soon as I was old enough to understand, my ears had been filled incessantly with the preaching of education. At 7, I knew I was going somewhere special. Wonder-filled pairs of brown eyes looked upon my figure poised in front of the first grade classroom where I naively announced I would be going to 'M̄y', where I was to study hard and get a good education. 'M̄y' was America.

Among the many possibilities instilled in my mind and the advancements I dreamed of as a child, I would have never imagined America to come to this. I feel pangs of fear after each headline flashes, speaking of yet another homicide. I can only imagine what my 9-year-old sister is feeling. She knows fear as being lost in a grocery store or forgetting her stuffed animal at school. I hope that for her, that is as broad as fear can be defined.

I've noticed that there is something peculiar that happens after a mass shooting. Support is garnered, protection is placed, but on the shoulders of those who should be held accountable, and not the victims or others at risk. This sends a message -intentional or not- to the youth of the country, that the losses of their lives will never be insurmountable to prompt any action in managing this domestic threat.

Those who yearn to have their minds cultivated by the knowledge in the world should not be barred because they cannot protect themselves in a learning environment. Our parents did not make life-long sacrifices to their livelihoods and security for this. I don't speak as a daughter of an immigrant, and we do not merely speak as young adults, but as scholars and activists. We speak as Americans, as your future.

No matter the location, sustaining an education is hard enough. The riches of countries around the world lie in its youth, not the fiscal degree or the bounty of weaponry it commands. There is a choice to be made here, and we hope you choose common sense. We hope you choose the future.

Trang Do
South Burlington

Kudos to our EMTs

I recently suffered a very painful accident that required transport from my home to the emergency department. The professionalism and caring shown by the South Burlington Fire Department and UVM Rescue was outstanding.

We don't acknowledge the job these folks do every day and how lucky we are as a community to have them a phone call away. Thanks, guys. You are awesome!

Ken Horseman
South Burlington

Public Health Approach to Gun Violence

The tragic massacre in Florida and Vermont's own "near miss" in Fair Haven emphasizes that we continue to be caught up in an epidemic of gun violence. Over 33,000 people die in firearm related incidences in the U.S. annually. In Vermont, 420 people died from gun-related violence in the period of 2011-2016, with many being the result of domestic violence and suicide. And yet, the same pattern repeats every time a tragedy occurs: Groups retreat to tired talking points that are created and promoted by vested interests.

What if we changed our perspective and moved this debate out of the political realm? What if we thought of gun violence in terms of a disease?

With disease related epidemics, a public health approach has proven effective. This method determines the cause of the issue and implements evidence-based prevention strategies, using public education, thoughtful public policies, and regulations. This approach has worked over generations to minimize illness and death associated with traditional epidemics.

The Vermont Public Health Association believes we can and should use these same strategies to reduce the injuries and deaths associated with the wide availability of guns.

Thus, the passage of the bills now being considered by state legislators are part of a solid public health process. These bills address several weaknesses in existing law by strengthening background checks and enabling police to remove firearms in crisis situations. We now have a real opportunity to make commonsense changes that will increase public safety by going beyond the charged political debate.

*Burton Wilcke
South Burlington
Board Member, Vermont Public Health Association*

A Thought for our Times

“The theory of democratic government is not that the will of the people is always right, but rather that normal human beings of average intelligence will, if given a chance, learn the right and best course by bitter experience.” During these frightening tragic times, I take to heart this cogent quote from W.E.B. Du Bois. We must pursue peaceful forums for continued dialogue and resolution in overcoming the dark human tendencies toward bias and violence.

The peaceful protests against gun violence by youth around the country displayed courage and conviction and showed they are agents of change in society. As we age, many of us tend to settle into hardened routines of duty and survival. Society is good at pressuring us to see life as a struggle; success being that sacred finish line of personal achievement. I am 62 years of age and have known that feeling all too well.

But I believe that America’s youth are living at a very special time. They can be our teachers, opening our eyes and changing our minds. They can help my generation move out of our stagnant worlds of complacency, contentment, and personal security. With powerful and seamless modes of communication at their fingertips, they can help us bring the world together. With fresh outlooks, they can instruct us to learn from our bitter mistakes. They are making history already, the whole nation has taken pause and is listening. We are hearing a sea-of-change coming from their voices that we can do better, that humankind must conquer all forms of violence and discrimination by seeking peace. And they know this can only be accomplished by continual peaceful appeals for collaboration and direct dialogue.

I believe that change is reached through outreach, collaboration, and dialogue with every part of our truly incredible pluralistic society. Let us be persistent, but also exhibit the virtues of patience. Let us take heed as a community and follow the examples of peace that were set before us. The change that matters most comes about slowly, reflectively, but does arrive to move humankind toward lasting enlightenment and progress.

*Jacques-Paul Marton
South Burlington*

Common Sense Gun Reform

Being the daughter of two Pakistani immigrants, school has always meant a lot in my household. For my parents, my education is why they came to this country. To them, a quality education is an essential step to achieving the American dream for themselves and their children. To me, it’s gaining the knowledge I need so I can form my own informed opinions about the world around me. And while we may have our differences in belief, my parents and I both agree that school should always be a safe place. We, students, should never have to fear for our safety in a place we are meant to learn, but time and time again, we are faced with the terrifying reality. Whether it be the tragic events at Sandy Hook or at Parkland, we’ve been forced to repeatedly discuss what it means to live in America, to live in Vermont, right now. It means living in a place where universal background checks haven’t been instated, and a place where law enforcement can’t remove a gun from a dangerous or domestically abusive situation. It means that the most terrifying part of school isn’t AP Chemistry or finals, but, rather, if we’re really safe.

In these past couple of days, I have been shocked to hear once again the opposition to implementing common sense gun reform. In the classroom, I have been taught to find creative solutions for the problems around me and to think outside the box. In this situation, the problem and the solution are obvious. History and recent events have shown that America is in desperate need of gun reform. It is time for the Vermont Legislature to pass common sense gun reform measures.

*Kiran Waqar
South Burlington*

March 1, 2018

Support Afterschool and Summer Learning Programs for Vermont Youth

I believe every Vermont community and family should have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs for their children and dedicated state funding for afterschool and summer programs is a great step toward this goal.

At the recent Afterschool and Summer Learning Day at the State House, 50 adult advocates and 65 youth ambassadors came from across the state to share how and why afterschool programs matter in their lives. They are fortunate to have opportunities for learning, healthy snacks, physical activity, and socialization during the out-of-school time hours – and, unfortunately, 22,000 youth and children in Vermont don't have these same opportunities. The lack of high-quality afterschool and summer programs is a significant challenge for many working families, and leaves kids vulnerable to risk and crime.

Many of Vermont's quality after school and summer programs place a strong emphasis on building skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) - all skills that are important to the future of Vermont's workforce.

With President Trump's recent 2019 budget zeroing out all funding for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which in turn funds afterschool programs in Vermont serving almost 6,000 Vermont youth, now is the time for a state investment in afterschool. I ask that legislators support state funding of \$2.5 million in the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund to ensure that all kids in Vermont have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs. Expanded learning opportunities are an integral part of Vermont's education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized and sustainable in all communities.

*Barbara Russ
South Burlington
Chair, Vermont After School, Inc.*

Let's Do Something - Please

I write this letter with sadness of the recent loss of so many innocent lives at the hands of a broken individual with a gun. As these events continue to occur, I am realizing that I'm feeling more anger than sadness, which really bothers me. I'm an empathetic person, so why is anger now my go to emotion when I hear of another mass shooting?

An in-depth and emotional conversation with my wife about gun control reminded me that I'm a pessimist by nature and she is an optimist through and through. In this particular conversation, we both struggled to come up with a solution on how to protect our children in school and the greater community. She would make a suggestion and I would point out how that's not possible. Optimism and pessimism at work! I realize my pessimism stymies forward movement. Further, optimism leads us to see what we want, but there is no underlying plan.

In these times when we have to do something to make a change, optimism and pessimism are fueled by emotion. In these moments, realism can be a way to peel out the emotion and get to thoughtful and practical solutions.

Now is the time to talk about how to make our schools and community safer. We need to meet as a community and respectively have conversations. We need to listen to all sides and accept all ideas. We can't let emotions overpower the conversation and we need to come up with realistic solutions that the community can be proud of.

I'm not an organizer who can rally people, like many of you reading this, our strength comes from working as a team to move a project/idea/solution forward. We are concerned about our children and the community but don't know what to do. To those that are leaders, organizers, motivators, and/or drivers of change, I'm asking ... begging ... you to bring me and the community to the conversation that can make real change. Let's do something. Please!

*Chris Jarvis
South Burlington*

February 22, 2018

Support Rozzi for School Board

I am writing in support of Mike Rozzi for school board. I am a native Vermonter that has lived in the community for many years. I am a former student of South Burlington schools and a parent of South Burlington alumni with strong ties to the community. I have been a steadfast supporter of South Burlington schools having served as PTO president with countless hours of volunteering under my belt.

This past year was a difficult one that resulted in two failed school budgets. It took the current school board three attempts to present a budget that the taxpayers could support because the budget increase was too high. It is not the time for a status quo

school board that was unable to control spending and did not represent the taxpayer. It is time for a change. It is time for transparency. Mike Rozzi has long-standing ties to our community and has the skills and fiduciary knowledge to represent the part of our community that has not had their voices heard: the taxpayers. He has experience serving on various boards and has strong financial skills.

Every year, the school budget continues to increase. I have attended school board meetings and have educated myself on the current spending guidelines that are coming down from the state level. The years of constant high budget increases are unsustainable and, if we aren't careful, we will tax our longstanding residents right out of town. I believe in quality schools, but I also believe having a school budget that is sustainable and affordable for all of our taxpayers is critical.

Please join me in supporting Mike Rozzi for school board. Mike Rozzi is a welcome change that this school board needs. Vote for fiscal responsibility, transparency, and sustainability. Vote for Mike Rozzi.

Allyson Milot
South Burlington

Conflict of Interest

South Burlington voters should understand that the current school board race presents a serious problem. Two candidates, Laura Williams and Tyler Samler, are public school teachers in other school districts, Essex and Burlington, respectively. No doubt both candidates intend to improve public education in our community. Unfortunately, the election of either candidate would create conflict of interest issues.

The heart of conflict of interest policies in general, and of the South Burlington School District's Policy [www.sbschools.net/Page/674] in particular, is that no public official should participate in a matter in which the official would personally benefit or be harmed by the official's own decision. As teachers represented by the VEA-NEA, Williams and Samler have a financial interest in the outcome of South Burlington teacher negotiations.

The VEA-NEA has a statewide collective bargaining negotiation strategy. Its most frequent argument for increased teacher pay and benefits is the comparison of one district's compensation package with that of another. Such comparisons often drive fact finding reports and settlements.

An increase in teacher compensation in South Burlington would provide a powerful bargaining tool for comparable increases in Essex and Burlington.

If elected, Williams and Samler would either act on matters in which they have a personal interest or disqualify themselves from collective bargaining. On a larger board, disqualification might be workable. Our five-member board would be handicapped if even one of its members were unable to be involved in negotiations. Overall, board members spend more than half of their school board time and effort on collective bargaining.

I support teacher collective bargaining. But I cannot support the right of teachers to sit on both sides of the bargaining table.

South Burlington voters do not have to allow this. Two effective and well-qualified board members - Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt - are running for reelection. With their board colleagues, they have led our schools through difficult times.

I urge my fellow voters to reelect Fitzgerald and Burkhardt.

Richard Cassidy
South Burlington

Cassidy served on the South Burlington School Board for 12 years, and as chair of the board for six years.

Support for Rozzi

I strongly support Mike Rozzi for South Burlington School Board. Rising budgets and fiscal responsibility for the residents of South Burlington is critical. Mike has the credentials and the desire to be an advocate for transparency. Mike is and has been an involved parent supporting not only his children, but others as well, in various athletic programs at South Burlington. We all highly value our schools and the future of our children. I believe it's time for some change on the school board. Join me in voting for Mike Rozzi.

Keith Wright
South Burlington

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Keith Wright
South Burlington

Burkhardt and Fitzgerald for School Board

Please join me in reelecting Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald to our school board. Bridget and Elizabeth have demonstrated thoughtful leadership on the complex issues facing our district, and have always advocated for what's best for our children's education. They are committed to finding real solutions to ensure our schools stay strong, our teachers are fairly compensated, and all of our children receive an excellent education - in a fiscally responsible manner. They are experienced, dedicated, intelligent, and have earned my trust and confidence as school board members! Please vote for Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald!

Abby Crocker
South Burlington

South Burlington School Budget Vote

Having attended citizen advisory and school board meetings, I know the significant amount of work that goes into preparing the school budget. The superintendent and business manager have done a herculean job crunching the numbers, the school board has done their due diligence of critical analysis, and the teachers and staff in the school system have generated high quality educational outcomes.

Accordingly, it would be neither fair nor reasonable to vote against the proposed school budget. But I will also not vote yes.

South Burlington depends on the State of Vermont for much of its school funding, and the State of Vermont depends upon the federal government for between \$100 to 250 million of its K-12 education. The next obvious question is what is the fiscal condition of the federal government?

Aggregate federal debt is now \$20.5 trillion dollars. The government is projected to run trillion dollar plus annual deficits every year during the next decade. Interest on the federal debt in 2027 is estimated at an almost incomprehensible \$818 billion dollars. Federal debt held by the public in 2027 will equal the entire value of the US economy.

Who will pay for all this debt? Probably not most of the adults in South Burlington who will vote on the school budget. No, it is the students in the school system today that will ultimately pay the price for adults who have acted in a fiscally reckless manner.

When the music stops, and it is clear the emperor is wearing no clothes, Washington will say to Vermont the state has to do more with less, the state will say to communities like South Burlington, it has to cover its own expenses, and South Burlington will say to its residents it needs (a lot) more money.

Because society at all levels continues to ignore fiscal realities, I will not vote yes on the school budget. It is my way of saying there are stormy seas ahead, and pretending we can wait to have a conversation until tomorrow that needed to happen yesterday is a bad paradigm to exhibit for South Burlington students.

Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington

Fitzgerald and Burkhardt: Responsible Choices for School Board

I'm writing to encourage the South Burlington community to vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt for school board Tuesday, March 6. As current members of the board, Elizabeth and Bridget have demonstrated an impressive depth of experience and breadth of knowledge. If reelected, I trust that Elizabeth will continue to provide steady, calm and reasonable leadership at a time when there are many ambiguities facing the education system in Vermont. Bridget has proved time and again that she comprehends and takes seriously the complexities of a school budget the size of South Burlington's. I completely trust her intelligence, seriousness, and abilities. Elizabeth and Bridget are serious women who are exceptionally qualified to continue to guide the South Burlington School District.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt are the right and responsible choices for school board, and they have my vote!

Alesia Clear
South Burlington

Fitzgerald and Burkhardt for School Board

I am writing to share my support for reelecting Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the school board.

This past year has been very challenging for our community regarding our schools. Throughout this, I have observed our school board members acting in a way that is even-handed, open-minded, well-informed, and respectful. They have always, from everything I've seen, had the best interest of our kids and their education at heart. At one particularly contentious school board meeting, I admired the way Chair Elizabeth Fitzgerald calmly and professionally handled the meeting, allowing everyone their say, gently bringing closure when speakers exceeded their time limit, following board process, and maintaining decorum befitting a public meeting. That is the kind of leadership we need to continue going forward.

I may not agree with every decision the board makes, but I believe they work hard on our behalf and do an outstanding job. Through the budget process, union negotiations, and the myriad responsibilities of the school board, they are fair, conscientious, experienced, and most importantly, focused on quality education for our children. Please join me in supporting Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt for school board.

Sally Borden
South Burlington

Reelect Fitzgerald and Burkhardt

I support reelecting Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the school board. We've been through some very difficult times as a community this past year. No one knows this more than they do. They have been in the heart of the troubles and they have not wavered. They have stood against racism and bigotry and for the taxpayers of South Burlington.

Contrast this with their opponents who are pretenders. Two union teachers from other school districts who live here are running. How they would participate in union negotiations is unknown. They have not been involved in any of the school issues that have transpired and now suddenly they are candidates.

My guess is that the other candidate was recruited by the Rebel Alliance, which has worked to defeat the school budgets, and that when he votes on Election Day he will vote for himself and against the budget.

Now is not the time for radical change from the left or right. Ignore the smooth talkers and vote for the budget and for the incumbents.

Paul Engels
South Burlington

Vote Fitzgerald and Burkhardt March 6

I moved my family to South Burlington nine years ago. Our decision to move here was based largely on the quality of South Burlington's schools. My eldest graduated from South Burlington High School a year and a half ago, earning a scholarship from the university which was at the top of her list. My other two children are thriving in the same South Burlington schools their sister attended and are clearly getting the same, well rounded education that's reflected in their standardized test scores. What is more, the South Burlington schools have instilled the importance of physical fitness, the arts, and other extracurricular activities, as well as a strong sense of community in all of my children.

Through many of the years my children attended the South Burlington schools, those schools operated under the watchful eyes of Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt. Both Elizabeth and Bridget have demonstrated their commitment to providing our children with a solid, well rounded education that goes well beyond the covers of our children's text books. They have been instrumental in seeing that our children develop the problem solving skills and other tools they'll need to succeed in an ever changing world.

Elizabeth and Bridget have displayed thoughtfulness and commitment in their dealings with the community, along with a willingness to give their full time and energy to their work on the school board. They have also shown professionalism and poise in their management of the crisis near the end of the previous school year.

Given what has transpired over the course of the last year and what is already underway, continuity on the school board will allow it to function most effectively.

I hope you will join me Tuesday, March 6, 2018 in reelecting Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the South Burlington School Board.

Mark Coel
South Burlington

Support of Burkhardt, Fitzgerald and Budget

I am writing in support of Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald for school board as well as in support of passing the school budget.

Both Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald have shown enormous commitment to our schools and community at countless School Board meetings over the past year, totaling well over 100 hours. They have done well navigating a difficult and complex state funding system and proven their expertise. They have been calm and professional throughout all those meetings regardless of the topic at hand.

Burkhardt has frequently used her detailed analytical abilities during her first term, often asking for more information or clarification from the administration, and not taking information provided for granted. If she's not satisfied with an answer she receives, she pushes back until the information is satisfactory.

Fitzgerald's breadth of experience serving on the school board is an asset she is able to share with the newer members, providing them guidance, and making her an excellent board chair.

In the face of increasing enrollment, the board has proposed to the community a budget that offers a modest increase while continuing to provide the services we have come to expect from our schools. They have delved into the intricacies of the budget in numerous meetings, exploring a range of options to keep costs contained and offer the community the best value.

So that our schools can continue their great work, I will be voting for Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald for school board as well as "yes" on the school budget.

Steve Woodward
South Burlington

Student Representative Endorses Burkhardt and Fitzgerald

As a South Burlington School Board Student Representative, I encourage the community of South Burlington to reelect Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald for school board member and chair, respectively. Since joining the board in 2017, I have had the pleasure of working with both of them and seeing first hand their enthusiasm and commitment to the South Burlington community. In the face of last year's challenges and assorted viewpoints, they dedicated time and effort into addressing all perspectives, engaging in dialogue both in person and online with community members and students alike.

Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald encouraged student input, creating a platform for youth voices to be heard and considered. Providing the opportunity for young people to share their perspectives empowers students like myself to get involved in local politics and join discussions about decisions that directly affect us. Their awareness and efforts to do the best for all students is exceptional, inspiring me to join the school board as a student representative last year.

Furthermore, Elizabeth Fitzgerald's 12 years of experience on the school board is evident in her extensive knowledge of procedures, board management, and in the wisdom she's imparted.

Bridget Burkhardt has also been very supportive in involving the student representatives in board discussions. Her financial training and experience has assisted me in understanding and contributing to a variety of board decisions, including the complex process of constructing a school budget.

For these reasons, I endorse Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald as school board members. I encourage my neighbors in the South Burlington district to reelect both Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald March 6 at the designated polling locations.

Alex Escaja-Heiss
South Burlington School Board Student Representative

Rozzi Brings Fresh Thinking

I had the opportunity to meet Mike Rozzi recently for the first time. We talked a lot about his run for the school board. He was very impressive. He knows and understands the budget. He has a high regard for quality education balanced with fiscal responsibility. I left feeling that my voice would be well represented on the school board and that Mike's leadership qualities would serve us well. I believe he will bring some fresh thinking to the South Burlington School Board.

Candice Wakeling
South Burlington

Support for Burkhardt

I am voting for Bridget Burkhardt. Bridget has proven she is dedicated to our schools and community. Her dedication goes beyond being at board meetings, I see her volunteering in the elementary schools every week. She has a strong understanding of our schools, how they operate and how they can improve. Bridget makes thoughtful, mindful, data-driven decisions for our children, tax payers, and teachers. Please join me in voting for Bridget Burkhardt!

Erin Sutherland
South Burlington

Rozzi for School Board

I'm a South Burlington resident, I have lived here my whole life, a South Burlington alumnus and a parent of a current South Burlington student. I support Mike Rozzi for our school board. Mike has lived in South Burlington for 40 years. He has a Master's in Public Administration and has been heavily involved in donating his time and skills to our hockey, basketball, and soccer programs. His children are and have been educated in our South Burlington schools. All of this hands-on experience and long institutional-knowledge will serve us well. It's time for some new voices and new blood representing us on the school board. Mike is the perfect guy to accomplish these goals.

Sharon Sanborn Patno
South Burlington

Support for Burkhardt

I moved to South Burlington two years ago from southern Vermont where I spent a total of 20 plus years on school boards and served 10 years in the Vermont Legislature. I met Bridget soon after moving here and attending local school board meetings out of curiosity. There are some things about the way the South Burlington School Board operates that I would like to see change, but I soon became impressed with the careful thought Bridget gives to her opinions along with the great amount of time and effort she puts into her board work. I was also very impressed with the strength and courage she has displayed by casting, at least on one occasion, a lone dissenting vote on a board that seems to value unanimity.

I will be marking the box or circle or whatever beside the name of Bridget Burkhardt on March 6. She has earned our support.

Wendell Coleman
South Burlington

February 15, 2018

Reelection to the School Board

I am writing to support the reelection of Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the South Burlington School Board. I have watched Elizabeth during her five terms on the board deal with complicated issues which affect our students and me, as a citizen and taxpayer in South Burlington, in a deliberate and fair manner. Bridget has successfully navigated a steep learning curve in her first two years on the board. Both these candidates have the experience to continue to deal with challenges facing the delivery and funding of public education and provide needed continuity on the school board. They have listened to all concerned parties in our community - students, taxpayers, and teachers - and have provided balanced, thoughtful leadership. I have witnessed their respectful, calm, and fair demeanor under both normal and trying circumstances and believe they are great role models for elected representatives and for our kids.

Elizabeth and Bridget both bring financial background to their roles, while appreciating that providing a solid education is key to the next generation of citizens and future taxpayers.

There are many issues facing our district that will have a long-lasting impact; we need school board members who understand all sides of the issues, who already understand the budget and budgeting process and are willing to ask the tough questions and make informed decisions on our behalf.

Please join me in reelecting both Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the South Burlington School Board on March 6.

Bonnie Mallin
South Burlington

Supporting Fitzgerald and Burkhardt

Over the past several years, I have been involved in the School Visioning Task Force, the South Burlington Business Association School Committee, and with a group trying to better understand Vermont State School funding. I have met with school board members both one-on-one and presented to the board as a whole. What I can tell you from these efforts is that, first and foremost, any effort or change in our schools, no matter how small, creates a highly charged issue and requires great patience and care to navigate.

Second, I know with absolute certainty, after dozens of hours of research, that local school funding is a byzantine complexity of standards, practices, and blue-sky guesses rolled up into a local document which is then applied to an equally bizarre state system. And I am usually one of those guys people turn to for understanding of the numbers.

Third, our schools and our community are constantly in a tug-of-war between budgets, which are predominantly (80-ish percent) labor and benefits, and the quality we want in our kids' education. And if that wasn't hard enough, the strongest union in the state always has South Burlington in their sights.

I am supporting Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt in their reelection to the school board. I have known Elizabeth as a bright light in chairing this board. She has a phenomenal depth of knowledge in local budgeting and state funding, in operations and capital requirements, and in union discussions, and we are very lucky to have her service, her patience, and her understanding leading the city.

I know Bridget Burkhardt less well but have been impressed with her two years on the board. Bridget has a business education and background, which may allow a little of the "real world" to enter the school budget discussions, none-the-less tempered by her two young children and the reality that her family will be a direct benefactor of the decisions she makes.

I ask that you vote to re-elect Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt to the South Burlington School Board on Town Meeting Day, March 6.

John Wilking
South Burlington

Reelect Burkhardt and Fitzgerald

I am writing in support of the candidacies of Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt for reelection to the South Burlington School Board.

Bridget Burkhardt's strong background in finance is an important asset for the school board as it faces increasingly difficult budget and monetary restrictions. She has demonstrated her ability to consider and evaluate conflicting points of view prior to casting her vote. She has a genuine concern for the welfare of the community and the children who attend South Burlington schools.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald has served on the school board with distinction. She provides stability to the board with her experience and historical knowledge of how schools function in Vermont. In her most recent term serving as chair of the board, during a tumultuous time, she demonstrated strong leadership skills with calmness and grace.

We are fortunate to have each of the members of the school board willing to continue to serve the community. Please vote for Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald March 6.

Bob Walsh
South Burlington

Experience Counts

The past several years have been a difficult and challenging time for all of us in South Burlington who value the excellent education our children receive. A lot of folks deserve credit: our outstanding teachers, administrators, school volunteers, and the students themselves. I would like to highlight two people who deserve a lot more credit than they receive, school board members Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt.

The school board, under Elizabeth Fitzgerald's leadership and Bridget Burkhardt's stewardship, has calmly and inclusively navigated the district through very difficult circumstances including the Rebels name change, two budget defeats, and contentious teacher contract negotiations with successful outcomes for each.

Elizabeth has served South Burlington on the school board for 12 years. With potentially massive federal budget cuts on the way, the next two years will be very challenging. Experienced, professionally and personally, in a variety of issues facing public

education, Elizabeth's institutional memory, experience, and diplomatic abilities are exactly what South Burlington needs to maintain the high quality education the district currently provides.

Determined to enhance educational opportunities for all of the community's children, Bridget's thoughtful leadership on complex issues, while balancing the needs of all stakeholders - children, families, taxpayers, teachers, and staff - is impressive. An active volunteer in the schools with children in the system, Bridget brings an analytical, data-driven approach to decision making, a valuable resource for the board and our community.

Bucking the statewide trend, enrollment is increasing. People want to move to South Burlington because of the quality of our schools. This keeps our community vibrant, our tax base growing, and home values rising. The steady, inclusive leadership of our school board deserves much credit.

As we are seeing on the national level, hot rhetoric and false promises solve nothing. Hard work, experience, sharp-eyed cost controls, and dedication to students and educational excellence is what South Burlington needs.

For the sake of our current and future students, as well as fiscal accountability, I urge my fellow South Burlington residents to vote for leadership, experience and dedication by reelecting board chair Elizabeth Fitzgerald and board member Bridget Burkhardt.

Michael Albertson
South Burlington

Support Burkhardt and Fitzgerald for School Board

I'm writing to recommend your vote be cast for Bridget Burkhardt and Elizabeth Fitzgerald to continue as members of our school board.

Our public schools are a most important part of South Burlington's assets. Their long history of excellence brought many of us here and continues as a primary reason we make our homes here. The district school board has the responsibility to continue this legacy. It sets district governance policy and goals, oversees actions of the district's administration, approves and seeks voter approval for budgets, and holds frequent public meetings to inform the public of district actions and status and to seek public input. Its task is to assure the safety of its students and staff, prepare our students for their entry as contributors to society, and be prudent stewards of the district's assets while being responsible for the use of our tax monies. Doing this demands capable people who are committed to sustaining the district in meeting these challenges. Burkhardt and Fitzgerald are the capable and committed persons needed to keep South Burlington schools our valued asset. As one who regularly attends board meetings and has served as a member of the board and Citizens Budget Advisory Group I have witnessed their commitment, capability, and data driven approach to balancing the disparate demands put upon the board. Simply stated they do the job well.

Your vote counts – join me in voting for Burkhardt and Fitzgerald.

Dan Fleming
South Burlington

February 8, 2018

Fitzgerald and Burkhardt for School Board

I am writing to express my support for Elizabeth Fitzgerald for re-election to the three-year school director seat and Bridget Burkhardt for re-election to the two-year seat. Now more than ever there are uncertainties facing education in Vermont. School boards take on enormous responsibilities on behalf of their communities. They are charged with leading school districts to achieve the ends, or outcomes, which communities expect, at a cost which the community can afford. They must accomplish this when education financing is under scrutiny, the funding formula for school budgets is highly complex, and many legitimate needs compete for funding.

Having spent four years serving on the South Burlington School Board alongside Elizabeth, I have seen first-hand her commitment and her professional approach to the work. She is one of the most intelligent and competent leaders I know. And, while Elizabeth and I did not always agree on the issues before us, a tone of mutual respect was ever present under her leadership and a richer dialogue prevailed because of it. While I never served with Bridget on the school board, I did have an opportunity to work directly with her on the Citizen's Budget Advisory Group before she joined the board two years ago. Bridget was always well prepared and asked pertinent questions about the budget and programs.

As someone who attends school board meetings on a regular basis, I have had an opportunity to frequently observe their work and interactions with the public. Elizabeth and Bridget have had to make decisions some in our community have agreed with and others have not. They have had to handle very emotionally charged situations at school board meetings. They handled these

situations with composure and respect. The work of school boards is not just a few evening meetings per month and requires commitment to other work tasks between meetings. Elizabeth and Bridget have the experience and are proven leaders.

Elizabeth and Bridget have my confidence - and my votes - as we move education in South Burlington forward. Please join me in voting for them for school board on Tuesday, March 6.

Diane Bugbee
South Burlington

Support for Burkhardt and Fitzgerald

I urge South Burlington voters to go to the polls on Tuesday, March 6 and support Elizabeth Fitzgerald and Bridget Burkhardt for school board. I had the pleasure of working with Elizabeth for six years on the school board and have always been impressed with her reasoned approach to difficult issues. Elizabeth brings a tremendous amount of business experience to the table along with twelve years of experience sitting on this board. I am grateful that she is willing to serve again as I believe that under her leadership the district will continue to move forward.

Bridget and I worked together for two years and during that time she was especially diligent in learning about the district's finances, a large and complex task. The learning curve for this job is steep and anytime we can retain bright, dedicated, board members it represents an advantage for the community that they serve.

I thank both Elizabeth and Bridget for their service and encourage you to vote for them.

Julie Beatty
South Burlington

January 25, 2018

Concern for Loss of Green Spaces

Yes, I agree with Rosanne Greco, and thank her for sharing her concerns (*The Other Paper*, opinion section, January 4, 2018). I am concerned as well for the continual loss of green spaces in and surrounding our City of South Burlington. The reasoning behind it all, i.e. more "affordable housing" is a joke, if one would call to inquire the cost to rent one of these new units, they would only discover they're not affordable for the average working Vermonter. Yet, every week we read of additional "developments" being approved.

I am a native Vermonter and have enjoyed her beauty and natural clean air and water for decades. Unfortunately, that is diminishing, as more and more developments spring up that threaten Vermont as we've known her. Look at the levels of pollution in our beautiful Lake Champlain. Look at the congestion on the roadways. Will we too have flood concerns in our inner city boundaries because green space doesn't exist? Will our air quality be history because mandatory commercial transportation will be required due to overpopulation? Will the retiring population be forced out of Vermont due to inability to afford increasing costs of our resources? We can't make more land. We can, however, stop filling it up with cookie cutter, look-alike buildings that deter from the once held beauty of a neighborhood.

People come here from out of state because it's a beautiful place – a gem, if you will, compared to a lot of other places. Pristine beauty can be appreciated because one can see it – it is unaltered. However, if the developers continue to have their way, eventually Vermont will become just another overloaded housing venue, with not much else of interest.

Bunny Myrick
South Burlington

The Science and Nons[ci]ence of Anthropogenic Global Warming (aka Climate Change)

In 2017, this paper published numerous articles by several authors (Lalonde/Barritt/ Kosnitsky/McGinnis) with thousands of words asserting the "reality" of Anthropogenic Global Warming (AGW). *The Other Paper* refused to publish my 1000-word fully-referenced critique. So much for fairness and balance.

AGW is a scientific hypothesis, a proposed explanation as a starting point for investigation, based on computer models that have been falsified by observed facts - global average temperatures have not increased for 20 years. One modeler secretly admitted that "we can't account for the lack of warming." This warming "pause" has led proponents to rebrand "global warming" as "climate change," which conveniently explains every undesirable natural phenomenon as human-caused.

In the wake of the Little Ice Age (LIA), the earth did warm in the last 150 years, primarily from 1910-1940 and 1978-1998. The LIA followed the "Medieval Warm Period" (MWP), several centuries warmer than now. Another warm period occurred in Roman times. Since both the MWP and the RWP preceded industrialization by centuries, we know the earth can warm without our help.

Further, rising CO2 has historically followed warming by several centuries, raising the question of how rising CO2 causes warming that preceded it.

The supposed AGW consensus among scientists is mythical. Hundreds of scientific papers published in 2017 alone cast doubt on climate models and the hypothesis. A number of eminent climate scientists are skeptical, as scientists should be. Look them up: Singer, Spencer, Curry, Lindzen, Michaels, Happer, and Christy, as well as Weather Channel founder/veteran meteorologist John Coleman and Greenpeace co-founder Patrick Moore. AGW remains an unsubstantiated hypothesis, not fact or "reality."

Sheldon Katz
South Burlington

January 11, 2018

Library Visioning Workshops

On January 18, the city along with the Library Board of Trustees will be hosting information and design workshops to develop a concept for the proposed new public library and city hall on Market Street. These workshops are specifically structured for community input and discussion and I encourage everyone to try and attend a session, which will be offered twice, once on a Thursday evening and once on Saturday morning, January 20. These structured workshops will be led by the architect we selected to design this new space, Dennis Humphries. Dennis and his firm have vast experience in library design and will focus on making sure the final plans truly fit our community.

We know that not everyone will be able to attend an in-person session, so we've also made sure online feedback opportunities exist, targeted to be available January 12. Look for an ad in this and upcoming issues of *The Other Paper* for more information and how to provide online feedback.

I look forward to seeing you at one of the first rounds of visioning workshops held at city hall next week.

Patrick Leduc
South Burlington
Vice Chair, Library Board of Trustees

January 3, 2018

Do You See What I See

I was dismayed to see the ribbon cutting on page three of *The Other Paper* (12/14/17) touting yet another new housing development in South Burlington: the O'Brien brothers first phase of 118 housing units. People were celebrating the removal of hundreds of trees and the pouring of concrete in their holes. And many more housing developments are planned for South Burlington.

Who among us doesn't treasure our remaining green spaces? Who isn't refreshed just by looking at the majestic mountains, colorful trees, and swaying meadowlands that we can now see from our city. But they are fast disappearing as more houses are being built.

All the while we are fed the falsehood that growth - population and housing - is needed. The reality is that housing growth is harming us. More people and housing mean more fossil fuel use, more pollution, and accelerated climate change. For years, people have been led to believe the myth that more is better, that growth was good. Before the industrial age that was true. Now, however, growth is killing us both in body and spirit. As a medical friend reminded me, uncontrolled growth in the human body is called "cancer."

Please, if you care, speak up. Respectfully tell our city leaders that this unsustainable and irresponsible growth must stop. Instead we should focus on cleaning up our natural resources of water, air, and soil, and repairing, improving, and maintaining our infrastructure rather than continuing to make our predicament worse by growth. We have enough. We are enough.

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

Rebel/Wolves Name Change

This community really blew it when they changed the Rebel name to the Wolves. We should have changed it to the Yankees. I say we put it to a vote. So far, we have Rebels - 0 and Yankees - 1. Who's with me? Let's do it!

Happier next year everyone!

Tom Grocki
South Burlington

December 14, 2017

Dog Park Closing

Regarding the closing of the dog park, I agree that the site was a poor choice being in a residential area and it should be moved to another location. As a dog owner who considers my dogs part of my family, I was deeply offended by Councilman Tim Barritt's statement that "dogs don't pay taxes" (*The Other Paper, Jaycee Dog Park Closed, 11/30/17*) inferring, in my opinion, that it really doesn't matter because they aren't important. Would you close a playground because your children don't pay taxes?

I think Wheeler Park would be a perfect choice for a dog park because you would have the option of letting them run off leash in the enclosed area or put them on leash and walk the beautiful trails offered there.

As to Mr. Barritt's statement, I would say to him that yes, dogs don't pay taxes, but their owners do and we also vote.

Thank you for letting me voice my opinion on a topic dear to my heart.

Carol McDowell
South Burlington

Don't Rezone Forest Land

I am very concerned about the proposed sale of a large forested tract in South Burlington, now owned by the University of Vermont, to be developed into residential housing by a private developer. The land is currently zoned for educational and agricultural use, and the finalization of the sale is dependent upon rezoning the parcel. I strongly oppose this project for the following reasons.

First, forested tracts such as this are becoming more and more scarce in South Burlington. They are extremely valuable as habitat for woodland creatures and as connecting corridors for wildlife that needs large forested areas to survive.

Second, this tract borders Potash Brook, whose watershed drains more than half of South Burlington. These forest lands help control erosion, moderate flooding, and absorb nutrients, sediments, and other pollutants that would otherwise flow into the brook and then into Lake Champlain.

The South Burlington Comprehensive Plan calls for major new development to be located in corridors that are served by mass transit and located near services. This proposed development undercuts the aims of our existing plan and would cause unnecessary sprawl, increased dependence on car travel, exacerbate traffic issues, and add to environmental impacts mentioned above.

I urge the appropriate South Burlington bodies that are charged with looking at this proposal to put the overall long-term goals of our planning efforts above the short term financial needs of the University and the short term financial benefits to the developer.

Yes, we have to look at creating affordable housing in our community, but this proposal is in the wrong place and would result in the degradation of resources that protect our wildlife and our water.

Fred Kosnitsky
South Burlington
Vice President, Voice for the Potash Brook Watershed

November 30, 2017

Growth vs. Development

A few weeks ago, Rosanne Greco wrote a letter to the editor entitled "Preserving Paradise" (October 26, 2017). I certainly support her main theme, but wish to couch it within the terms of growth and development, both of which are often used synonymously. Thinking primarily of South Burlington, I would like readers to think of growth as more. Most people think first about more jobs, though they needn't be higher paying ones. But also, along with that job growth comes more people, more rush-hour traffic, more air and water pollution, more crime, more construction, more trash, more pavement, more crowds, more litter on the

streets and in the woods. Little thought occurs when poorly planned growth is urged without taking these costs into full consideration.

Development, on the other hand, implies something being made qualitatively better. An abandoned building is rehabilitated and made useful again to the community. Cars are made more efficient and use less fuel. Small companies do not merely grow, but they develop greater efficiencies, and higher quality products that will sustain us many years into the future. Yes, development is more complex than mere growth, and it requires true commitment from city and business leaders and residents, for the sake of our children and future generations. Development is sustainable, if we do it well. Growth is not.

Tim Hess
South Burlington

November 16, 2017

Peg Picard's Legacy

It was with shock and great sadness that I came across the obituary for Peg Picard in *The Other Paper* of November 9. Peg's passing deserves more attention, especially to our newer residents who did not know Peg and her importance to the South Burlington community.

I knew Peg as a friend and colleague for many years. She helped countless residents of our city, and many a customer of the city clerk's office while maintaining her humor, calm, and always respectful attitude. Peg oversaw the growth of our community through accurate property records and the conduct of impeccable federal, state, and local elections. She professionalized the city clerk office and made it the best in Vermont.

Peg's legacy is the current exceptional operation of our city clerk's office as they carry on her tradition of service.

Chuck Hafter
South Burlington

November 2, 2017

No One Ever Tore Up A Parking Lot To Plant Trees

This is in response to Rosanne Greco's thoughtful letter to *The Other Paper*, published October 26. She is 100% correct in her observations. I resigned from the Development Review Board in South Burlington because I could see firsthand, our city being chopped up into tiny and not so tiny increments by developers. They can do this legally as long as they adhere to the written criteria. However, without an overview, there is no comprehensive control over the final outcome.

The closest South Burlington came to such oversight was during Ms. Greco's term as city council chair. We had interim zoning, where each project was judged by the council on its own merits as part of the grand city plan. There has to be a mechanism in place for the people to say enough is enough.

For those of us who have visited the magnificent Wheeler Property, you can see the vital necessity of preserved open spaces. They enrich all of us, not just a select few whose only motive is profit. There is one fact that is incontrovertible. No one ever tore up a parking lot to plant trees. Once they are gone, they are gone forever. At our present rate of destruction, a few decades from now, suburban sprawl will have completely overtaken our city. Instead of being in harmony with nature, we will have destroyed it. Only the glimpse of the faraway Green Mountains will remind us of the beautiful environment we used to have.

What can be done? Insist that large portions of undeveloped land be set aside for all to enjoy. Let the Wheeler Property be our guide. I realize it's impractical for the city to buy every available tract of land, but we should gladly support tax efforts to secure as many parcels as possible. We can also pass legislation on the local level that limits growth and increases the amount of open spaces. If we don't act now, when will it be a good time? The chainsaws are roaring.

Joe Randazzo
South Burlington

Question for the City Council

So whose brilliant idea was it anyway, to move the town library to the mall? Talk about user-unfriendly - don't even bother to unpack the books.

A better solution would have moved the city offices instead and let the library have a permanent home across the street from the high school. Since the offices are ultimately headed for the new City Center anyway, the decision on who to move should have been a no-brainer.

Just saying.

*Constance Kite
South Burlington*

The State of Youth Football in South Burlington: Can We Do Better?

It was my privilege to travel to Hartford recently as an assistant coach for the South Burlington Dolphins grade five-six team. We gratefully accepted the opportunity to play an end of season game in Hartford because of the strong reputation of the football program in that community, at both the youth and high school level. Hartford has won the Division 1 high school championship in six out of the last 10 years, and is highly seeded in 2017.

The youth program in Hartford is closely aligned with the high school program. The success achieved by their high school program is no surprise given the high quality of coaching, organization, and commitment to player achievement we witnessed in their youth program. The contrasts between the Hartford youth program and the South Burlington youth program we observed are both stark and enlightening. Hartford fielded a much larger team of solely sixth grade players, as compared to our five-six team. Hartford achieves this higher level of player participation despite having roughly half the population of South Burlington. With the Hartford youth and high school programs sharing facilities, a common philosophy, and common playbooks, youth players are provided a ready path to success as future high school players.

Sadly, there is no connection at all between the South Burlington Dolphin program and the high school program. I was surprised and disappointed to learn this when I moved into this community a few years ago. With a youth program that seems, in my opinion, to be more focused on its own survival, rather than the long-term success of its players, while suffering slowly eroding participation levels, it is difficult to envision how South Burlington High School will achieve the level of success it has had in the past.

I am hopeful that the football community in South Burlington can find a way to bridge this unfortunate gap and create an environment in which there is greater interest and participation in youth football, coupled with a focus on long-term success of those that choose to play the great game of high school football.

*Andre Bouffard
South Burlington*

October 26, 2017

Our City's Library

As the library looks toward its move to University Mall in December, I would like to thank the community for sharing your thoughts about the decision. I regret that it took residents by surprise. Confidential lease negotiations hindered the ability of the Library Board of Trustees to communicate early on, and we have been working since to ensure communication can be more timely going forward.

Our community library is separating into a school library and a public library, and our board oversees the public library. With a proposal for a new public library expected to be on the ballot in March, I understand that communication and transparency will be critical to the library's future.

The board supported the temporary move for reasons that included new concerns about security protocols after the school lockdowns in the spring as well as for longstanding issues, such as inadequate staff work space. Many of the conditions thought important in the proposed move, including sufficient parking, were met. The move does not use any gifts that have been given to build a new library.

While the mall site does not have all that is wanted or needed in a separate library, it is a much-needed beginning. And our dedicated library staff will make this interim space all that it can be.

This step will allow us to assess what is needed in our new library. The collection is being separated, enabling staff to identify ways to optimize the community collection. The interim move also will provide an opportunity to better track who is using the library and determine how to best address the needs of various populations.

Our library will remain a welcoming community gathering place, and it will continue to offer a variety of services and events, whether it's a computer for research, compelling guest speakers, or assistance finding just the right book.

I welcome your input as plans come together for a new library in City Center. Our goal is to create the library you envision for South Burlington.

MargaretAnn Cross
Chair, South Burlington Library Board of Trustees

Preserving Paradise

I've written a number of letters in the ten years I've lived in South Burlington, yet writing this one is especially hard. My heart is breaking as I see how we are destroying the paradise which surrounds us. We are paving over our open lands and wooded areas with unwise and unsustainable housing developments.

Although our rural lands are magnificent and feed our spirits, it's not just aesthetics. Trees, fields, woods, and wildlife are essential for our wellbeing. Together they keep nature in balance. Trees clean our local air, filter our water, and prevent soil erosion. Yet almost daily, trees are being ripped up in South Burlington to build housing. Even though we have done more than our fair share of providing housing for the region, developments continue to be built, and more are planned. Housing, even affordable housing, does not supersede our need for healthy air, water and soil.

How many houses are enough? As a strategic military planner, we started by defining the end state. Have we ever identified the number of houses we need/want/can sustain? Many of the houses in South Burlington cost more in city services than they provide in property taxes. Despite expert predictions about the dangers of uncontrolled growth, and despite being warned years ago by Smart Growth Vermont that we were not developing wisely, South Burlington continues suburban sprawl.

Sometimes, we unthinkingly continue 'business as usual' without realizing that 'business as usual' is what caused climate change and now engenders our health and our children's futures. I believe that we have caring leaders in our city who will take action if we speak up and urge them to change course. We need to keep our trees, meadows and waterways and not pave them over. We need a city which understands the value of open lands and prioritizes preservation.

If you feel the same, please contact our city leaders - email, or attend city council or planning commission meetings - urge them to preserve our open and wooded lands through zoning. If enough of us say "enough" we have the power to save paradise.

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

October 19, 2017

Library Move to Mall

I am still trying to understand why we would move all of the community library books to the mall before we build a new library which apparently we need to vote on. What if the vote is similar to the school budget vote and is turned down several times? What if the students need some of those books? Will the library want to buy new ones? Because we are removing the rent paid to the school library, does that mean that we will have to replace that money another way?

And I seem to recall that UMall is in financial difficulty so we may have a problem there if they fold. I think this move is called putting the cart before the horse.

Mary Blair
South Burlington

October 5, 2017

Sad Day for South Burlington Community Library

I am disgusted that the South Burlington City Council has decided to move the community library from its current location to the University Mall. This seems to have been done in a very sneaky and underhanded manner with no community input. For the 20 years that I have lived in South Burlington, I have supported the relocation of the community library to its own purpose-built building. Now I find out that the library will be moved to the mall. I can hardly imagine a more bizarre or inappropriate location for a library. To add insult to injury, the library collection and space will be smaller than what is on offer at the current location. Not to mention the fact that this move is supposedly temporary, and the library will have to

move yet again in the future. Good job South Burlington City Council for unnecessarily moving our library from a bad location to a worse location and charging the tax payer for your folly.

Elizabeth Llewellyn
South Burlington

Archery Site Interest

Having been interested in target/plinking archery for many years, I am curious to know if there are any community places in the South Burlington area, indoor or outdoor ranges, for people to enjoy and practice the sport of archery. Except for a very short archery instruction course with the South Burlington Recreation and Parks Department in the summer each year, there seems to be nothing available. And for those who attend the South Burlington Rec course, there is no local site for them to improve their skill. Is there interest in the South Burlington community for an archery site? I welcome your thoughts and ideas.

David Arnold
South Burlington

Is South Burlington Growing Sustainably?

A My Turn column in the *Burlington Free Press* (September 29, 2017), written by former Burlington mayor Peter Clavelle, discusses the sustainability of Burlington. A sustainable community, he writes, is one that is “economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient.” He suggests that we look at community through a “sustainability lens.”

Recently, UVM sold 44 acres of forest and open land, reportedly to be adjoined with another 22 acres of property, located along the northern side of Swift Street from East Woods to Spear Street. The land backs up to the Potash Brook watershed. It was sold with the proviso that it be developed for residential housing. The property is currently zoned as institutional/agricultural and will need to be rezoned if it is to be converted for residential housing.

During the 27 years that I have lived in South Burlington, I have observed our open land and rural spaces be eaten up piece by piece with development. Travel down Spear and Dorset Streets. See how many developments have arisen, are in construction, or have been city approved for future construction.

I ask the citizens of South Burlington, are we creating an “environmentally” sustainable community if we denude all our natural and open spaces and replace them with house after house, condominium after condominium, etc.? Do we really want South Burlington to be sustainable?

Our Comprehensive Plan, City Center, and the appointment of a Sustainability Officer would suggest that we do want such a community. However, if we continue down the current road - lined on every street by housing and retail, we will be destroying our environment. Our community becomes unsustainable.

I encourage all to look at the property along Swift Street. Imagine the additional traffic and need for sewage capacity, the expensive rise in school population, the loss of animal and plant life, tree canopy and potential damage to the watershed incurred (research shows an increase in taxes is a myth with the additional expenses required) by rezoning this acreage to residential. My conclusion: the rezoning of this property needs to be reviewed through the “sustainability lens.”

Karen Ryder
South Burlington

In Support of Our Library

Having served three terms on the Library Board of Trustees starting in 2008, I would like to share my perspective on the upcoming changes now in motion for the South Burlington Community Library. Even before I joined the board, there were rumblings from many quarters on how the missions of neither the high school library nor the community library were being properly served. Numerous studies and visioning exercises have taken place, some before I joined the board and some during my tenure. Every single one revealed a desire from the citizen participants for separate facilities. Copies of these studies are available at the library.

There are many reasons to support a separation of facilities that affect both institutions: the aforementioned differing missions on how each library operates; inadequate space for meetings and programs both large and small; inadequate space for staff to do the many tasks that keep a library running from day to day; lack of areas for proper display of collections; insufficient places for quiet study and contemplation; serious security issues revealed in recent lockdowns of the high school where community members could not leave the library including small children; differing electronic use protocols for the public v. students; alas, even just one bathroom for everyone – adults, students, staff, and small children.

Change is never simple or easy, but I believe we will eventually come through these necessary steps to a true centerpiece for our community in City Center. The vision is a place where we can all gather to learn, engage with one another and show that we, once again, are one of the outstanding cities in our region. Those who use the library regularly probably don't need convincing. But, if you are not a library user, I invite you to visit or attend a program – especially during the day when students and community are sharing the facility. Experience for yourself what is currently in place. Speak with the staff of both institutions and ask questions. I hope by doing so, you will come to embrace what will surely make our city stronger and better.

*Nancy Simson
South Burlington*

September 28, 2017

Mental Health a Priority

My wife Diane and I attended the South Burlington City Council meeting on August 21 because our son, who recently graduated from high school, would be speaking about his experience being a part of PACT at the high school. As parents, we were both excited for him and proud to be there in support of him.

We were also pleased to be at that meeting for another reason. Mental health was part of the agenda – as an update in the city manager's report, and as a dedicated agenda item to discuss mental health resources for city employees. We believe we are living in a time when there is a lot of criticism out there and people don't take time to note the good work that is happening. I am writing to take note and to say thank you to our city leaders.

As a specific agenda item on August 21, Police Chief Whipple and Fire Chief Brent talked with empathy and compassion about the mental health needs and resources available in the context of the traumatic nature of the calls their first responders receive. A representative from EAP discussed the various resources available to all city employees. Councilor Barritt emphasized the importance of getting this information out to employees regularly.

Recognizing the impact that mental health related concerns were having within the South Burlington community, City Manager Dorn and Police Chief Whipple convened a group of Chittenden County stakeholders to identify issues, resources, and apparent gaps in the mental health system. As part of his city manager's report, Mr. Dorn provides updates to the city council on the progress of this group, which meets regularly. How can city managers, chiefs of police, mental health providers and others work together to create real change in the system that would have positive outcomes for individuals and communities? How can the right resources be provided to people at the right time – you may have seen Chief Whipple speaking in a recent television interview about the potential to have a mental health clinician available to respond to certain calls rather than law enforcement.

Starting a dialogue about how to address mental health issues is not easy – and achieving consensus may seem insurmountable. Yet the dialogue is happening and our South Burlington city manager initiated the conversation. We can't help but feel encouraged when we hear discussions like the one that took place at the 8/21 city council meeting – and are appreciative of the efforts that Mr. Dorn and Chief Whipple are undertaking to include mental health in the scope of their day to day work.

“There is no health without mental health.” This is all of us. When we both create, and embrace opportunities for open dialogue, we help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and with seeking assistance when necessary. I am grateful to live in a community where this is a priority.

*Doug Bugbee
South Burlington*

What Are Unions for?

South Burlington teachers, under the auspices of Noah Everett et al., have made a compelling case for requesting contract negotiations. Put simply, teachers feel slighted by their imposed contracts and want to solve the problem collaboratively; a fair statement by most standards.

Likewise, the school board provides a perfectly cogent perspective. Some of those key points: compensation/benefits remain competitive, teachers receive over \$1,600/year in raises, senior teachers remain highest paid in state, and contracts give savings to tax payers.

The school board is poised to argue, “It's hard to improve much upon ‘highest-paid’” (my words), but some teachers maintain that this “highest paid” meme is a red herring with respect to contractual principles.

That both camps provide fair analysis of the problem should give us pause. Perhaps the issue is larger than the teachers and the school board themselves. This debate is tough for all involved. If it's not resolved soon, a teachers' strike is conceivable.

If teachers strike, what will happen to hourly student support staff? Their (low) median hourly pay falls somewhere on the order of \$40,000-\$50,000 below that of median teacher rates; will they be paid or will they be forced to sacrifice their already low wages?

What happens to community members expecting their children receive quality education? One South Burlington woman told me she makes minimum wage and won't be able to afford childcare if she cannot send her children to school. What happens to taxpaying stakeholders who may have once benefited from the school board's promised tax savings? Most importantly, what impact does this have on students?

To be sure, unions are important. They give teachers a voice on policy and decent working conditions. However, I fear our union has power to change the emphasis of the school in the favor of teachers and to the detriment of children, taxpaying parents and support staff making low wages.

To be sure, we have to deal with the issue at hand. But once settled, I suggest beginning a robust public conversation about maintaining the well-being of all community stakeholders.

Zach Rhoads
South Burlington

Looking for Sense Behind the Library Move

I have read everything I have been able to find about the South Burlington Community Library's transitional move to the UMall with the hope of finding something, anything, that would help me see any sense - any sense at all - in the move. I find nothing.

What I have learned is that we will force the library staff to undertake two moves, set up temporary and ultimately final library spaces, and disrupt the collections of both the community library and the SBHS library (three years before it's absolutely necessary) - all while causing confusion for patrons, turning a library visit into a mall experience, and we know there's nothing as uplifting to the soul as a visit to the UMall, and hoping that we might escape the library before our children notice they're just steps away from the Golden Arches.

The argument that the city will save money because the mall will charge less for the space than we're currently paying the school district is specious at best. We're getting less space for one thing and we're adding to the school district's budget woes by redirecting library funds from the school to the financially struggling mall. Oh, and we will also face extra setup costs as we equip the mall space and then the permanent space.

Of course, this all assumes that the (semi) stand-alone library plan clears all the hurdles that stand before it and that we don't have to extend the mall lease or, I hate to mention it, move the library yet again.

Finally, that city leaders assumed the Blanchette fund could be used to cover some of the costs of the interim move - this looks unlikely at best - and that school district leadership was apparently left out of the preliminary discussion makes me wonder how much forethought, if any, went into this idea.

This all feels like a bad novel.

Steve Brooks
South Burlington

September 21, 2017

Community Library Doesn't Belong in the University Mall

I want to thank David Wilbur for sharing his thoughts and information about moving the South Burlington Community Library to the University Mall. ("Outrage at Library Move", *The Other Paper*, September 14, 2017) I completely agree with him. How can our South Burlington city officials feel justified in spending money to rent commercial space in the mall, and hire additional staff to cover both the high school and community library in the mall, without public input? Do they honestly think that residents will go to the mall to visit the library? Will the library be open during all the regular mall hours and days? Will the resources be available to all mall shoppers? Perhaps most disturbing is the disregard of the Blanchette fund for a new library, not a relocation to the University Mall, and suggested use of these funds to help pay for the move. How can they have the audacity to make this decision? Why will people set up funds and donate money for specific purposes when our city officials can try to disregard those intentions? Having the community and high school library in the same space isn't ideal, and I agree that they should be separated. Moving the community library to the University Mall is clearly a ploy to make a library building in the proposed City Center a high priority. We are being manipulated without transparency of the city council.

Laura DeMaroney
South Burlington

Solves None; Creates Several...

The news that the South Burlington City Council, with little to no public input, has chosen to abruptly vacate the Community Library's well established co-presence at SBHS comes as a surprise and disappointment in our civic process. It is not at all clear what problem has been solved, but that it has created several unnecessary ones is clear.

Why an interim library location was at all considered escapes me. As a frequent user of the library, the UMall location strikes me as far less convenient than the present location and brings no compensatory benefit that I can see. Meanwhile, the school district has been encumbered with unanticipated issues that could have been avoided, at least mitigated, with sufficient opportunity for district and public input. The district now faces at least covering the loss of some \$60,000 in the city share of expenses, coping with the absence of shared resources, unknown effects on academic and co-curricular programs, and an as yet un-quantified need to augment its reference and book inventory.

While the reality is that the city council and school board are independent entities they both serve the same community. It is very disappointing to see actions taken by one body that negatively affects the other taken without adequate notice, public input, and discussion.

Dan Fleming
South Burlington

The Lexicon of Teaching Excellence and Compensation

I thought it was likely to happen at some point, but I was still a bit dumbfounded when it actually occurred. The SBEA (teacher's union) has played the gender card. It seems the school board has imposed terms on teachers that may threaten gender pay equality by changing salary structure. In comments detailed in *The Other Paper* (September 14, 2017), the SBEA states that "... Salary schedules (referring to those in existence for 50 years) ensure that women are paid the same as men. . ." No surprise that the SBEA offers no evidence that the new salary structure will discriminate against women.

The SBEA continues their criticism of the imposed salary structure by implying it may fail to treat all teachers with a similar (identical?) pedigree the same: "and that teachers with similar education, experience, and loyalty to the district are compensated the same."

As a professional (university level) educator, I have learned there is one and only one two-part criterion by which an educator should be judged: how well does the educator facilitate learning and long-term retention of what is learned (note: learning includes content, critical thinking and character development). All other criteria are pure sophistry.

It does not matter if the teacher has an X and a Y chromosome in all their non-germ cells, or two X-chromosomes. It does not matter if their skin color is black, white or any of the other colors of the "diversity rainbow." It certainly does not matter if they have been teaching for two years or 20 years. When students leave a teacher's classroom, are they the most knowledgeable and best prepared they can be to live their life to the fullest, and to be the most productive and contributory members of local, national and global communities as is possible.

Teaching is a privilege. The community respects and applauds the work of those who are responsible for the education of society's children, but teachers need to respect those in the community who understand the importance of economic sustainability.

Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington

Rethink

I urge members of our school board to rethink. Our teachers are a central reason all five South Burlington schools rate among the very top schools in Vermont.

The long-standing pay index worked to attract and retain highly qualified and experienced teachers to South Burlington. The needless and arbitrary changes the school board proposed and imposed are not grounded in evidence. We have no reason to take chances. Irresponsible tampering risks losing some of our terrific experienced teachers.

As for health insurance, the problem is not that our teachers have had relatively decent coverage. The problem is that millions of non-union members do not. But that problem will not be addressed by degrading the health insurance of our teachers. We need all people covered with such good insurance, not fewer.

The fixed-cost-for-teachers health insurance premium scheme has no evidence to support it, and it is far out of line with the successful shared-cost program that attracted and retained excellent teachers in South Burlington, while providing good value to taxpayers.

The lasting damage the board's pay and health schemes are likely to create may be the reasons the independent fact finder did not support them. The board wantonly established two strikeable issues. To top it off, the board's decision to impose work terms on teachers inflames conflict. I hope the board will calm down and rethink.

The board should consider that its approach is methodically pushing our teachers to go on strike. The board should end its boycott of talks and return to negotiations to replace imposed work rules with a fair and reasonable agreed-upon contract. Our teachers deserve admiration for their outstanding achievements with our children—and strong support from students and community at this time.

James Marc Leas
South Burlington

September 7, 2017

Acts of Kindness

In these times of constant news of war, vitriolic politics and global environmental catastrophes, it may be the little things and acts of kindness that save our sanity.

After reading the August 31 South Burlington Police Report in *The Other Paper*, I would like to recognize and appreciate the unknown resident who cared enough to alert the South Burlington Police Department about the small kitten placed in a plastic bag and thrown in a dumpster. I would also like to thank Officer Sarah Bellavance who took charge and immediately searched the dumpster and rescued the kitten. I hope the two sad individuals who threw the kitten in the trash receive the just consequences of their cruel action.

It is indeed a small thing, but I will hang on to the hopeful outcomes from those who truly care about each other.

Charles Hafter
South Burlington

Class Sizes Leave Some Questioning 'Yes' Budget Vote

One of the primary reasons that our family decided to put roots in South Burlington was due to the stellar reputation of our educational system. While the most recent budget and contract negotiation discussions were heated at times, I was happy to observe the passionate debates occurring between all of those involved. After all, dialog indicates investment in an issue, and invested community members are vital to any democracy.

Although it took a few tries, the majority of the community voted "yes" for the South Burlington School budget. As a whole, we value education, and we want to see our children succeed. We also want to see our teachers fairly compensated for their hard work.

While there were certainly issues that the SBEA and the school board disagreed upon, one topic of agreement was the need to offer competitive compensation to our teachers so that we may retain the top talent in the state. However, I would argue that retaining our teachers goes so much deeper than compensation.

My son's fourth grade class at Orchard School currently has 27 students, a handful of which have significant special educational needs. The class is so physically packed that it is difficult for our children to move comfortably around the classroom. There are only two fourth grade teachers for 53 students. While the fourth grade teachers are experienced and exceptionally qualified, we cannot realistically expect any teacher to provide individualized education to 27 elementary students adequately.

South Burlington School District has policies to deal with several matters, including Policy G6, which addresses class size. For grades four and five, the optimal average range is 16 to 20 students and the policy states that the maximum average is not to exceed 25. The policy states, "The superintendent shall stay within the minimum and maximum guidelines."

A contingency teacher is allocated in the budget for precisely this reason. Many of us voted “yes” upon seeing that teacher added back into the budget. Now is the time to use it. Our children and our teachers both deserve a fair chance at success.

Sheramy Tsai
South Burlington

Unconvincing Ad

One expects “A message from your teachers” to be grammatical, well-composed, and correctly spelled. Their ad (*The Other Paper*, Aug. 31, p. 5) fails.

First sentence: “Bargaining is a challenge, but . . . those challenges can only be resolved at the bargaining table.” So, a single challenge suddenly becomes several, which must be resolved by bargaining - which is the identified challenge. Hmm.

Line 7: “Disingenuous” isn’t a word. I think disingenuous is meant. A teacher would presumably know that, but a literate proofreader would certainly correct it. It stands out.

Third paragraph: “This is what they are not saying: The board is proposing . . . “ Non sequitur. One expects to read what they are not saying. Not what they are saying.

Last sentence: “It is time to bring this cycle of negotiations to a close, . . .” How? By returning “to the negotiation table [committed] to doing so.” If “this cycle” means “negotiations to date,” that ought to be stated. Never mind. The idea is to halt negotiations by negotiating to do so.

A teacher who writes like this is not one I would trust to teach my child how to write a decent book review in sixth grade, let alone an intelligent essay. The ad is simply unconvincing. But then, its actual message is, “Let’s negotiate, as long as we keep our ancient contract basically unchanged.”

Enter Donna Leban (Opinion/What Do SB Teachers Really Want?, *The Other Paper*, August 31), who makes an engaging, coherent argument against being “stuck in yesterday’s rut.” She wonders about innovation, new programs, magnet schools, STEM curriculum. In other words, a teaching establishment bubbling with energy and ideas, not one defending a half-century contract, which is argument enough right there for not renewing it.

Fred G. Hill
South Burlington

August 31, 2017

What Do SB Teachers Really Want?

Wouldn’t we all be better off if everyone followed Lao Tzu’s advice to “act without expectation?” First and foremost, act in the interest of best student outcomes. Improve, not just maintain, student outcomes, and pay and benefits should be expected. If not, something has to give.

The statement from the South Burlington teacher’s union leadership in the August 24 issue of *The Other Paper* left me scratching my head in disbelief. I finally decided that this was written with the sole purpose of assuring teachers that the leadership was working very hard to not compromise with the school board. Evidently, the union leadership doesn’t care what taxpayers who voted down two school budgets think.

Yes, I get that the most highly paid teachers like Mr. Wise may not like younger teachers starting to close the large pay gap with him, even if it is a minor improvement for teachers starting their careers. Maybe Mr. Wise would prefer to have South Burlington teachers keep their extraordinary wage and benefits over other Vermont teachers, and reduce the number of aides and support staff instead. More money with the expectation of more work - a fair tradeoff. Or perhaps they’d like to have more kids in every classroom, or have kids learning more of their lessons from computer software. Maybe we need to think farther out of the box and create more specialized magnet schools. I’m sure many parents would love to send their kids to a public school that ranks in the U.S. top 100 for STEM curriculum. For all the money we spend, we don’t have any of those in Vermont.

It seems that Vermont schools are stuck in yesterday’s rut. Every other successful business model has found ways to increase productivity and outcomes with fewer people and more innovative approaches. OK, teachers, what creative solutions do you have to offer?

Donna Leban
South Burlington

August 17, 2017

Photo Garden

Recently, I saw on TV news that PhotoGarden at the Barnes and Noble plaza in South Burlington is closing its doors. The news shocked me. How can it be, now that the City Center is on its way and South Burlington is expanding, that such a valuable place is shutting down? It was the only place in Burlington where I could still get prints from my old Olympus camera that uses film. It was also in a convenient location, easily accessible by bus. I visited the store on Monday, August 7, to find out why they are closing down. The manager told me the lease is up, she already sold her equipment and the store is not going to open at another location. Sadly, I walked out, thanking the personnel for their excellent service during the years.

Although I recently bought an old model of digital camera, I don't want to give up my old cameras that use film for prints. I prefer having prints rather than storing photos on my laptop. Some years ago I had to give up my old Smith-Corona typewriter, as Staples stopped carrying ribbons. Just because we have computers and digital cameras, doesn't mean we don't have to use the good old equipment, such as electric typewriters, film cameras, Walkman, etc.

I am a senior, but I am sure there are many people like me, regardless of age, who still like to use the old technology. After all, we really cannot become totally dependent on the new technological devices, as they sometimes break down and then we lose everything we stored on them. I am sure there will come a time when the old technology will be in demand again.

Therefore, I am thanking the PhotoGarden for doing such a good job with my prints and hope that a similar photo shop will open in South Burlington soon.

Vesna Dye
South Burlington

August 10, 2017

The Dog Park Decision

My name is Madeleine Plourde, I'm fourteen years old and I have a four-year-old Labrador mutt whom I adore. Since before Geni was even a year old, I've taken her to the South Burlington Dog Park twice a day, year-round. That is until the park was closed June 1. I was sad to learn that the dog park was closing as it was both spacious and close by, though I do recognize that drainage was an issue at the park.

Now we have a new, small dog park at Farrell Park, and the promise of another dog park coming to Jaycee Park. I think the new arrangement for the dog parks is unwise. Because I live next door to Jaycee Park, each day I see that every part of that park is used. Adding a dog park at Jaycee would not be a good fit since it would take away space from an already busy park. Jaycee is an important space for South Burlington families.

I appreciated the size of the old dog park and after seeing the size of the new dog park at Farrell, I was disappointed that my large breed dog couldn't fully run and play like before. I fear that the Jaycee dog park will be just as small. Dogs need space to play. The new dog park might be sufficient for small dogs, but for my dog and other large dogs, it is inadequate. Overall, I am upset about the change.

I ask that the city reconsider the new dog park location. I would be pleased if public discussion could be held regarding the dog park size and location. I loved the old dog park. It was a real benefit to South Burlington dog owners. I am sad to see our large park become not much more than a fenced in backyard. I recognize that sometimes things need to change, and I appreciate the quality of the new dog park at Farrell, but I think we can do better to give our big dogs a place to run.

Madeleine Plourde
South Burlington

A Teacher's Perspective on the Salary Schedule

I have been employed by the district since 2011, and am honored to work at SBHS in the student support services department. I moved to South Burlington in 2006 from New York with my young family, mainly because of the excellent school system. Before I moved here, I knew South Burlington had no problem attracting and retaining high quality educators. I believe this is in part because of the existing salary schedule, so I am curious as to why our school board seems intent on dismantling something that is working so well.

In 2006, I had 12 years of teaching experience and a master's degree, and accepted a job in a neighboring school district. As often happens when educators move between schools, the neighboring district did not recognize all my years of experience on the salary schedule, but I was satisfied with their offer. During my five years working there, I returned to graduate school and obtained my Director of Special Education license. With this additional qualification, I was able to pursue my current leadership

position. When I was offered this position, I was again placed lower on the salary schedule than my actual years of experience, but I gladly accepted. The pride and joy I felt as a newly hired South Burlington educator, in my dream job, was a great feeling.

A teaching career includes ongoing professional learning to support changing student needs. Using years of teaching experience and education level may seem like a simplistic approach when determining pay, but there is value in both. In my six years at SBHS, my experience has made me a more effective and thoughtful leader, and I have continued to take classes as well. As an experienced teacher, who began at “Step 1” long ago, I know South Burlington’s salary schedule and hiring practices to be fair and comparable to other districts. If South Burlington has a “problem,” it’s that too many teachers like me want to come here to work, not for the money, but because of our high quality schools and staff. Is that really a problem worth fixing?

Sayre Ludlow
South Burlington

Perspective on the Salary Schedule

I was hired to teach social studies at SBHS in 2010, when I was 24 years old. As a young teacher hired by the SBSD, I was made aware of the salary schedule and my placement on the index. The school board’s ad last week in regard to the salary schedule suggested a state of mind among young teachers that I’ve never experienced. Their attempt to rationalize problems within the salary schedule did not make sense to me.

When I was hired, I was ecstatic to have been offered the job. My priorities were focusing on my students, learning from my more senior colleagues, and working hard to improve my skills and knowledge. It never crossed my mind that my colleagues were doing the “same job” for more money. Senior teachers, in most cases, are decades more experienced and tens of thousands of dollars more educated. Their compensation reflects their years of experience and education. I understood that then and certainly now.

I’ve grown as a teacher the past seven years, from experience and ongoing professional development and education. I’ve taught most classes offered by the department and all SBHS grade levels, coached, advised clubs, been on hiring committees, worked as part of steering committees, and spent countless hours delving deeper into the content areas that I teach. I know more now than I did then, and my students are better for it. Additionally, I now hold a master’s degree in special education. The salary schedule provided a secure future for me in South Burlington, and incentivized me to become the best professional possible. It is the difference between teaching being a job and a career, and I’m grateful for it.

This past fall I moved back to South Burlington with my family. I plan to stay and teach here for the foreseeable future. The salary schedule is an integral part of that decision and will continue to be. It’s simply not true that the salary schedule makes it difficult for the SBSD to attract and retain good teachers. It’s a major reason the district is able to do so.

Andy Samara
South Burlington

Proud to be a South Burlington Teacher

I am writing in response to the school board’s ad in *The Other Paper* concerning the salary schedule. As a teacher at South Burlington High School, I am proud to serve the community of South Burlington. It is with pride that I have built my career as a public educator within this system for the past 18 years. This district invested in me as I worked to achieve my master’s degree. It continues to see the importance of continuing education as the goals and needs of our students have changed. My growth as an educator has been realized due to that investment. I can truthfully say to the South Burlington community that I am a better teacher today than I was 18 years ago. I am honored to have built my professional career in South Burlington with the support and investment of our community.

Kim Watkin
South Burlington

August 3, 2017

Why Economic Development is Failing

Representative Helen Head’s recent column on economic development legislative initiatives is another litany of what appear to be substantive policy actions that in reality will do little to truly move Vermont in ways that will create jobs and improve our economy.

I retired two years ago as Senior Economic Development Specialist in the Vermont Department of Economic Development. My job was to visit companies around the state and help them stay and grow in Vermont. When I retired, I was the last staff person with those responsibilities. There are none today.

Legislature after legislature, and governor after governor, miss the mark. They pass what appear to be meaningful initiatives – and many do some good. Our legislators are well intentioned, and they work hard. But I still see the lack of a sincere investment mentality so critically needed to move Vermont forward. True initiatives that businesses want are deemed to be “corporate welfare.”

If a business is considering Vermont, it’s not rocket science to think that they call and check in with someone in their industry and learn firsthand whether to consider Vermont. The more we strengthen our existing businesses, the more likely we’ll have others moving here – IF there are trained workers.

One software developer I met with some years ago, when asked how he was doing with recruiting new workers, said, “Great.” When I asked how he was doing that, he reported hiring 70 contract workers in Hungary, a nation that made the effort to train their workforce to fill the global void with great success.

Vermont can do likewise. Invest in workforce training. Incent programs at state colleges that meet the needs of Vermont business. If we have trained workers, they will come.

There are other ways to address the concerns such as tax policy and permitting – but let’s stop deluding ourselves that these “around the fringes” policy initiatives will make any real difference and get serious about investing in ways that will really help us grow our economy.

*Ken Horseman
South Burlington*

Protect Families Living in Airport Noise Zone

Burlington’s most recent airport noise map shows Chamberlin School and 976 families living in the airport’s noise danger zone.

The FAA says that homes in such a noise zone are unsuitable for residential use. Dangerous airport noise is the reason the FAA provided \$57 million in grants to demolish 200 South Burlington homes.

A World Health Organization report shows that nearly half the children in an aircraft noise zone, equal to the one in which those 976 families live, suffer cognitive impairment: concentration, attention, learning, reading, and memory degraded.

After months of investigation, Burlington’s own Board of Health concluded in 2013 that “noise has been associated with the following health effects: hearing loss, stress, sleep disturbance, heart attacks, hypertension and stroke, and delayed reading and verbal comprehension.”

Fortunately, Burlington also demonstrated how to raise the tens of millions of dollars needed to block noise and protect children. Burlington uses its ownership of the airport to impose \$19 million in fees each year on such airport operations as enplanement, landing, car parking, car rental, and concessions. Burlington uses this money for much less vital purposes than protecting children.

Under a federal regulation the municipal government in which the airport is located – South Burlington – can impose similar fees on airport operations if used for such airport purposes as noise mitigation, including to properly sound-insulate Chamberlin School, and the 976 affordable homes, build protective walls and berms around the airport, and install sound measuring equipment throughout the neighborhood. Measures any responsible municipal government must take to protect its people.

To take advantage of the federal authority, South Burlington needs to amend its city charter. Stay tuned to find out how you can help our South Burlington City Council and our legislative representatives make this happen to protect our Chamberlin School, our 976 South Burlington families, and our affordable housing.

*James Marc Leas
South Burlington*

Suggestions for the Mall

I am a resident of South Burlington and have been for 16 years. The University Mall was a fun place to go for years. As I drive past now, I see the police there a lot. I have noticed an uptick in crime, such as car break-ins, theft, vandalism, and drug dealing. I

think security is lame; they don't do anything and they harass disabled people like me. I don't feel safe going there anymore. I suggest turning the site it sits on into housing and a movie-plex and a fun park for kids.

Scott Miller
South Burlington

July 26, 2017

Two Roads Closed

Whoever decided, approved, voted for, backed, planned, and/or agreed to closing Hinesburg Road and Market Street at the same time, if in elected office, should be voted out next election.

Dan Parks
South Burlington

Hinesburg Road Traffic

Please pass this on: Yes, Hinesburg Road (Route 116), between Williston Road and Kennedy Drive is indeed closed to everyone who does not work, live, visit, or have some other reason to be in that area. It is completely closed and the road is torn up, so that means that there is no way for through traffic to make some sort of sneak through the barriers. Please pay attention to the very obvious signage on Hinesburg Road! Furthermore, our Deane Street/Woodcrest Drive neighborhood is not some sort of magical portal that will get you where you want to go. It is a square, making it basically a dead end. Please do not use it to turn around because you did not read the signage on Hinesburg Road. And please do not drive through the neighborhood as if it's the Indy 500. Posted speed is 25mph. Thank you.

April Richards-Bradt

South Burlington

Response to "A Message from Your Teachers"

Regarding the recent SBEA teachers' union advertisement (*The Other Paper*, 7/20) and the ongoing contract negotiations with the school board, I am reminded of why, although I support the concept of unions, in practice I have found, more times than not, unions make unreasonable demands leading to short and long-term economic harm.

The SBEA ad reads, "Teachers want to teach, and South Burlington students deserve a year free of disruption created by adults in the community." I believe the adults the SBEA is referring to are those members of the community who are responsible for paying their salaries and benefits. The position of the SBEA appears to be that the primary role of South Burlington citizens is to write checks, not to practice their constitutionally guaranteed right to express opinions. Talk about chutzpah.

What is SBEA's negotiation "position"? They initially asked for 100 percent of both their health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket expenses paid for during the next three years; a 403b retirement program in addition to the pension they receive from the state when they retire; average salary increases of 4.89 percent for each of the next three years (inflation is currently less than two percent); and an extra float holiday. The latter would be in addition to multiple holidays they already receive, the multiple week vacations they receive when school is not in session, and the two-month summer vacation they get. Teachers work about 180 days per year.

To all adults in the community, please raise your hand if you get a compensation package like the one just detailed.

To South Burlington adults, I ask do you see yourself as troublemakers who "create disruption in the community" by expressing your basic right to free speech?

If the community wants to offer students a real-world lesson in economic sustainability, they should encourage the school board to not agree to any and all demands by the SBEA that will lead to both short and long-term unsustainable economic burdens on both the community and the State of Vermont.

For details on the urgency of economic sustainability, see my May 31 commentary at vtdigger.org.

Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington

July 13, 2017

“Water, Water, Every Where, Nor Any Drop To Drink”

The above title is a direct quote from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a famous piece of literature almost everyone in my generation had to read in high school. Do you remember it? Unfortunately, the truth of that statement today is frighteningly accurate. The tragedy in Flint, Michigan is only one example of this country’s water crisis. Lake Erie’s toxic pollution and Washington’s Puget Sound are other examples of those crises we know about because of critical toxic levels. These tragic examples of the profound neglect of our environment and infrastructure are all connected to one undeniable truth: This nation’s clean water regulations are under attack and we all will eventually feel it!

The 1972 Clean Water Act, one of the most vital environmental laws, is assaulted by corporations and our negligence for decades now. In 2015, the EPA and the US Army Corps of Engineers attempted to refurbish the act by issuing the Clean Water Rule which served as a guide as to how, where, and when the Clean Water Act should be used to protect US waters. Special interests and their political pawns successfully weakened the rule by excluding many waterways from protection. This was just one example of the attack to save our precious resource: water. Once the rule was finalized, those same entities further destroyed it by unleashing a number of attacks, to stop the rule’s implementation altogether! Now, battles to protect our precious resource against corporate agenda are taking place in courtrooms across the country. Hopefully, these may eventually reach the Supreme Court where, hopefully, justice and the public good will be successfully defended and protected.

Everyone now and for future generations has a right to clean healthy water! Since all waterways are ultimately connected, in order to protect one water source, we must protect them all! We must take a stand now as our wellbeing and those you love depend on it, get involved. Stand with others who engage, like Lake Champlain International, at mychamplain.net. Another, be a voice for clean water! Call Governor Scott’s office and your state and Washington D.C. senators’ offices.

Dr. Steven E. Handwerker
South Burlington

June 29, 2017

Intolerance Not a Vermont Value

In a letter entitled “Move Forward Together” by State Senator Debbie Ingram in the June 22, 2017 edition of *The Other Paper*, Ms. Ingram called more than 2,000 South Burlington residents “disrespectful” and “backward-looking” in the same paragraph she expressed hope that we will “model for our children the Vermont value of respect and dignity for all.”

As a lifelong Vermonter, above all I value honor, integrity, sincerity and civility, including from our elected representatives. Therefore, I must reject the demoralizing, divisive language of Sen. Ingram’s letter as being harmful to our community. There can be no value in insulting and attempting to marginalize thousands of South Burlington residents, and you cannot claim to promote respect and dignity for everyone in the same paragraph that you publicly insult and shame others.

The overarching theme of Sen. Ingram’s letter is that everyone is deserving of respect and dignity, except those who think and vote differently than she does. This is known as intolerance, which is not a Vermont value and has no place in our government. I hope voters who are committed to civility and democracy will consider this in the event Ms. Ingram seeks reelection to our legislature.

Perhaps Sen. Ingram hasn’t been a resident of Vermont long enough to truly understand our values.

Robert Rich
South Burlington

June 22, 2017

Move Forward Together

I would like to extend congratulations to the voters of South Burlington for approving the most recent version of the school budget (“Third Time’s a Charm School Budget Passes,” *The Other Paper*, June 8, 2017). I believe the school board and many interested residents worked hard to make revisions to the budget that will keep property taxes down while also preserving the high quality of South Burlington schools. It is important that voters recognized the results of their efforts favorably.

It is also important that the voters did not allow the budget to continue to be held hostage by those who oppose the changing of the mascot name from Rebel to one that is more respectful of all South Burlingtonians and that accepts that times have changed and we too must move forward. The intense and uncalled-for pressure placed on this community by those who have been disrespectful and backward-looking, many of whom drove their anti-mascot and anti-budget campaign from outside the state, unfortunately has created bad feelings that must heal in one of our county’s best and brightest municipalities. As an elected representative of South Burlington and most of the rest of the county, I fervently hope that we can move forward together and model for our children that treating others with respect and dignity is a Vermont value that we all share.

Debbie Ingram
State Senator, Chittenden District

Should South Burlington Be Bothered About Nuclear Weapons?

Amidst concerns about our high school mascot, taxes, healthcare, and other things affecting our future, do we in South Burlington have time to look outward and examine events that may have even greater impact on our children – in particular, the threat of nuclear weapons?

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists recently moved its doomsday clock to 2.5 minutes to midnight, indicating their expert opinion that the danger of nuclear holocaust is greater than it was at the height of the cold war. The belief that nuclear weapons keep us safe through “mutually assured destruction” may not be warranted because the risk that they will be used is increasing in three ways.

First, in my opinion as a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility who has followed the progress and effects of these weapons for 37 years, not all leaders of the nine nuclear weapons states are perfectly rational all of the time, and any of them could begin the process of ending the world as we know it to no one’s surprise. Second is the growing reach and sophistication of terrorist groups who are getting closer to buying or stealing a weapon from the 15,000 in existence, or building one from the hundreds of tons of fissionable materials stored, or floating, around the globe. Finally, there have been hundreds of accidents in the last 70 years including some that came close to causing nuclear explosions, or brought us to the brink of full scale war. Human beings and their machines are never infallible. There are no second chances with nuclear weapons.

The good news is that most nations of the world recognize these realities, so that 130 of them will be meeting at the United Nations over the next few weeks to finalize a convention (treaty) banning nuclear weapons, as we have banned chemical and biological weapons. A few of us in the Burlington area will be lobbying for this treaty in New York this week, and would like any chance to discuss this threat and current events surrounding it.

John Reuwer
South Burlington

Covfefe

I’ve deciphered Mr. Trump’s Tweet. COVFEFE: Covert Operation. Vladimir Fooled Everyone. Fake Election.

Monica Farrington
South Burlington

June 15, 2017

A Rose by Any Other Name Would Smell Just as Sweet

Life has been interrupted by the issues surrounding the Rebel name, but several things have become clear over these past few months. First, there is a strong sense of community and history in this town. People love their town, they love the school, and this love has translated in a strong desire to resist any change. Second, the Rebel name is one that incites a great deal of emotion. For many, it represents the pride they feel being from South Burlington. For many others, however, it incites feelings of fear, injustice and marginalization. The word “rebel” is a complicated one. Clearly, it is associated with a dark time in this nation’s history as it relates to the confederacy. It also, however, represents many positive things such as “going against the grain.” I am currently reading a book to my daughter called *Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls*, which is about 100 inspiring women who have made history by being “rebels.”

One thing is clear, however; our world is currently filled with fear, hatred and prejudice. People are fleeing from their countries because of racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination. People, including children, are being killed in terrorist attacks while doing everyday things like going to work, church, a concert, a marathon, an airport, etc...

As a community, I would think we would want to provide a safe place for our children to grow up. Our children deserve to feel accepted by others and to be accepting of others. The debate surrounding the Rebel name has undercut these goals. People do feel unsafe in their own town. They feel unsafe both because the Rebel name incites a time of hatred, and also because of the fervor and hatred that has ensued surrounding the discussions.

A name alone should not represent the history of the school; rather it is the character of the people, the experiences, and the relationships that should represent its history. Let’s focus on this while we increase awareness about the dark history that marks our country, and the current inhumanity that invades our world. Let us try to be better.

Alison Fitzgerald

South Burlington

Speak Up for Love and Against Hate

Dear South Burlingtonians, first, thank you for turning out in such record high numbers to approve the school budget. I am additionally writing in response to numerous messages I have received expressing concern over threatening phone calls and hateful comments under online articles, social media posts, and now a hate crime. Hate has perpetuated its way into our discourse and into our everyday lives to the point where many of us do not recognize our community anymore. Many of us feel assaulted and - because hate causes divisiveness - estranged from our neighbors.

From all I have heard, we are unanimous in denouncing the racial slurs and vandalism that amounted to a hate crime committed on our high school turf field. I have to believe, too, that we all personally denounce hate. But do we know it when we see it? And do we call it out as we should? Do we respond with love when our emotions get the better of us?

My neighbor made me aware of a community guide for combating hate. It's provided by the Southern Poverty Law Center at splcenter.org, under the "Resources" tab, search "Community Response Guide."

This guide gave me solace by listing steps to overcome the uneasiness caused by hate, which is often legally allowable but no less pernicious than a hate crime. If you feel that you are the target of hate, reach out to your loved ones and report incidents to the authorities. Hate can often lead to harassment and criminal behavior. When you suspect that speech goes over the line, respond to the victim, report incidents to the police, and speak up. Tell your pastor or priest, tell your local officials, find ways to build a caring network of people joined in a common cause to restore love and the feeling of safety and community.

Silence heals no wounds and certainly does not counter hate. I challenge this community and have faith that we will continue to speak up and resoundingly speak through our words and actions for peace and love and unity.

Pass it on!

Meaghan Emery

Vice-Chair, South Burlington City Council

Thanks from South Burlington School Board

On behalf of the South Burlington School District School Board, I write to thank everyone in our community who took time to engage in the school budget process this year. We appreciate all who came out to vote, and as a board we are grateful the budget passed on June 7. The energy present this year made clear that our schools continue to be a valued part of our South Burlington community. We recognize the importance of listening to our community, and we will continue to do so moving forward. We encourage community members to remain involved and attend our meetings as we address issues raised during the budget process. We are proud to serve as your school board representatives and value your involvement so that together we might best serve all students in our schools.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald

Chair, South Burlington School District School Board

Poor Donald Trump

Everyone is being unfair to poor Donald Trump. No matter where I look, my computer, newspaper, television, people in the media are roasting him at every turn. For instance, take his late night Tweet, "covfefe."

The poor man was trying to communicate, but his fingers slipped on the keyboard. "Covfefe" was obviously a typo. I checked my keyboard to see what he probably meant to say. I looked at all the possible letters around the v and the f since the vowels are most likely correct. What President Trump meant to say was "Coxhehe."

Hope this helps.

Joe Randazzo

South Burlington

From the SBEA

Recent claims on social media asserting that Vermont-NEA (National Education Association) and the NEA contributed "thousands of dollars" to the YES campaign ("VOTEYES2017") are completely untrue, and deserve correction.

Neither the South Burlington Educators' Association (SBEA), Vermont-NEA, nor the NEA made contributions to the YES campaign, which is a registered Political Action Committee. The SBEA took out a single ad in *The Other Paper* in support of the school budget. It should come as no surprise that your teachers and support staff are in favor of students and education. This ad was paid for by the SBEA, clearly identified as such, and paid to *The Other Paper*, not the YES PAC. Not a penny was given to the PAC by any of the aforementioned organizations.

Individual teachers contributed to a cause they believed in, just as individual members of the Rebel Alliance did the same. Whatever cards they carry in their wallet does not prevent them from exercising their democratic rights. It is a very different thing to say “members of the SBEA donated” than to claim that thousands of dollars were donated by the organizations.

Strong emotions may continue to surface in the coming months, but civility and accuracy will help lead us to a better place.

*Greg Wolf,
Crisis Chair
South Burlington Educators' Association*

How Come We the Taxpayers Are Ignored?

I have lived in South Burlington for 44 years and have always believed in the democratic process. My three sons went to school in South Burlington and played sports under the Rebel name. About eight years ago or more, my wife and I set out on a mission to change the charter to allow taxpayers of South Burlington to be able to vote on their city and school budgets. For years prior to that, since 1971, we were not allowed to vote on either budget. We went out with a petition and got enough taxpayer signatures. There were many public meetings on this issue. The city council voted in favor of having a city wide vote on this charter change although some council members were personally against it. This city wide vote took place, the charter change was voted in, and the rest is history.

My point is to say to the school board and administration, why was the recent petition of the 740 plus taxpayers' signatures ignored requesting a city wide vote in regards to keeping the Rebel name. This school board and administration, in my opinion, has been one sided and manipulative in not allowing the democratic process for its taxpayers of South Burlington. Keep in mind, we the taxpayers have ownership; in other words, we pay the bills for our city schools and we should all have a say.

Although the school budget has passed and a new mascot has been named, the school board took it upon itself to make this decision with some students' input. The bottom line is the school board really owes the 740 petition taxpayers a city wide democratic vote on the Rebel name.

*Jay L. Zaetz
South Burlington*

June 8, 2017

South Burlington High School Nickname

I am a recent arrival to Vermont and South Burlington. My wife and I relocated two years ago from out of state. I've been following some of the discussion about the current high school nickname, the Rebels, and wondered if there are any compromise names, bridging nostalgia with a new focus. One notion, “The Rebellious Ones,” would keep the core of the current name but shift the focus from its historical context to how we challenge to the future. Another notion is using the French, “Les Rebelles,” again to shift the focus, this time linking to Vermont's French roots; the explorer Samuel Champlain, our lake's namesake, and the French appellation for our mountains, “les Verts Monts” (the Green Mountains). Just some food for thought.

*Marc Hurwitz
South Burlington*

Forum on Heroin: A Follow-Up

May 11, at the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, South Burlington residents met with a panel of experts to discuss harms of opiate use and misuse. Much good came of the meeting, including community connection and shared resources. Unfortunately, in my opinion, misinformation was delivered as well, including claims about medications called Naltrexone and Vivitrol (opioid antagonists, short and long acting respectively).

I commend and respect all members of the panel. Nonetheless, I feel responsible to correct what I see as substantial errors when the consequences of being wrong could be fatal. The claim quoted in *The Other Paper*, “A Call to Action,” 5/18/17, “... having the ability to introduce it (Naltrexone) within four days has proven to be good. The recommendation is...six months to a year on Vivitrol.”

The problem? If there is substantial evidence of these drugs effectively preventing addiction and/or death-rates, it is the first of its kind. In my opinion, there is simply no significant evidence to back the claim. If we have data from Vermont facilities, then the public needs access to this information quickly.

Why is my concern here more than just splitting hairs? The following quote is from a conversation I had with bestselling author and addiction expert Maia Szalavitz, and can be found as part of an interview on my blog at blogtalkradio.com/youngjustice:

“We have decades of evidence showing that long term use of methadone or buprenorphine (Suboxone) cuts mortality by at least half and is better at reducing relapse and blood-borne disease compared to any other strategies. While Vivitrol may be useful for some patients - and everyone should have all FDA-approved medications available to them to treat this condition, like any other - it does not have any data showing that it is superior to alternatives. Moreover, there is good pharmacological reason to believe that when people stop taking Vivitrol, they are at extremely high risk of overdose death and there is no data on long term effectiveness. For that reason, if I were choosing treatment for myself or a loved one right now, I would go with the proven options.”

*Zachary Rhoads
South Burlington*

Time to Move On

A famous photo of a protest that took place on June 18, 1964, at the Monson Motor Lodge in St. Augustine, Florida shows a group of black and white people swimming in a whites-only pool and the manager of the property pouring muriatic acid on them. The photo is arresting, to say the least, and for me, anyway, it gave me a second to think, do I ever want to be associated with anything like this or anything that allowed this to happen? We humans can so easily turn into monsters when we fear people who look different from us and or who have different traditions. We often perceive difference as bad, rather than good, and as a threat to our own existence. And we all have these reactions to various situations. It's something we all need to be aware of in ourselves.

That our community's school has had up until today a team name that was used to celebrate segregation, lynchings of black people, and a time when anyone who stood up against segregation risked and often gave his or her life, and when a black person in a pool would be subjected to a cruel assault like that of June 18, 1964 is appalling to me. It's important and time to incorporate this part of this story into the whole story. This change is long overdue.

*Kathryn Nugent
South Burlington*

May 25, 2017

Support for Our School System

Recent events in South Burlington have elicited very personal responses to events that continue to unfold. I have been a resident of South Burlington for 39 years. I have been a teacher in the South Burlington School system for 38 years, and have taught in all three elementary schools.

The abiding culture in South Burlington is and always has been one of excellence, and a belief in the limitless potential of every student. I have worked beside teachers who inspire me, students who challenge me, an administration that has motivated me, and all within a community that has believed in and supported the importance of our collective work.

When my son left the South Burlington school system to go out into the world, he did not go waving the flag of his high school mascot. He went with the strength of character and integrity that had been instilled in him throughout his thirteen years of schooling in South Burlington. He left with the skills necessary to build a successful career.

Today, those values remain alive in South Burlington. Our students, however, are changing, and becoming more diverse. We should not judge the past nor condemn the present. We do nevertheless have the same ongoing obligation to ensure environments where each student will flourish. That philosophy leads us to accept, and even embrace, change. We change our curriculum and teaching methods for a single purpose - to better meet the needs of our students.

Over the years, every mission statement has come back to the same core beliefs - that South Burlington is a community that values education, and seeks to create students who are both educated, and ready to enter the world with character and integrity. While we may disagree on how to get there, we should never lose sight of this goal.

I hope that we will listen to one another and respectfully find common ground. In the meantime, I hope we will all remember that South Burlington's most important legacy, truly, is our school system, and deserves our continuing support.

*Kathy Buley
South Burlington*

Disappointed and Encouraged by the Team Name Fight

I am a new resident of South Burlington and arrived here as the fight over the team name was taking off. So I know some people, particularly those opposed to changing the name, may suggest I stay out of this fight. But as a South Burlington taxpayer and father of a future South Burlington schools' student, it's now my fight as well. This is not just a fight over a team name among longtime South Burlington residents; it is threatening the viability of the excellent South Burlington schools.

I've been disappointed by this fight. The opposition to the team name has gotten out of hand, poisoning and dividing this community. My family has been welcomed by nearly everyone we met, but now I worry about even speaking up on this issue and being attacked. At the same time, I am encouraged. I am hearing other residents, some of whom were upset by the team name change, suggest it is time to put the children first and approve the school budget, instead of allowing it to be held hostage to this fight.

I hope the latter group continues to speak out and organize, and I hope this community turns out on June 6 to vote for the new school budget. I will.

Peter S. Henne
South Burlington

Move Forward

Let's move forward. Let's support our schools. Let's receive a tax decrease. Let's vote yes.

Steve Woodward
South Burlington

Join Me in Voting Yes

On June 6, South Burlington voters will be presented with a third school budget to vote on. Voters can also participate in early voting at the city offices. I will be voting yes on this budget. This budget keeps our high-quality education system intact and results in a tax decrease for taxpayers.

As our third and last child graduates from South Burlington High School, I think about how we did not arrive at this place alone. Three kids, three sets of teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, programs, coaches, advisors, and staff helped us. It is important to me to support the students who follow my kids with the same opportunities to prepare them for their own next steps.

Our schools are hubs of educational, social, and recreational activity in South Burlington. When our schools thrive, we all thrive, whether we have students in the school district or not. Like robust city services, a strong educational system is foundational to have a thriving community.

Our community also faces very difficult issues like any other city. Addiction, mental illness, poverty, homelessness. In the last few months, we have seen that our community can mobilize significant energy around causes important to them. My hope is that this energy can be re-directed so that we can work collectively to make real social changes that impact on the lives of our South Burlington residents. To do that, we need to have a school budget.

Please join me in voting yes on June 6, for our students, for our community, for our future.

Diane Bugbee
South Burlington

Reject the Revised School Budget

Nothing new, nothing ventured. The budget being presented to us is a rehash of what we have rejected twice. It represents a failure to recognize what we as voters have been trying to convey to our school district and its administrators. That message is stop the usual budget maneuvers and start planning for a major reorganization of how our school system is run.

For example, according to a VPR.net 4/6/15 story "Declining Enrollment, Part 1," student enrollment has dropped across the state, and while ours seem to be stable, I believe we will eventually see a drop. Start to plan, and begin by increasing teacher to student ratios. Having three elementary school buildings when consolidation is needed is fiscally irresponsible. Savings in maintenance on old buildings, fuel costs, and staffing levels alone would be significant.

Educational outcomes in our district do not support teacher pay levels or current class sizes. U.S. News and World Report 2017 ranked Stowe, Montpelier, and Mt. Mansfield high schools ahead of us in graduation rates [Stowe - 100 percent, Montpelier - 96 percent, Mt. Mansfield - 98 percent, SBHS - 90 percent] and college readiness [Stowe - 64.5, Montpelier - 50, Mt. Mansfield - 45.9,

SBHS – 45]. Our elementary schools ranked second, sixth and ninth, while our middle school ranked tenth in test scores according to a Schooldigger.com September 2016 report.

Until these issues are dealt with, we are simply rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic. We want major changes and I for one will continue to vote no until we get them. Vote no with me and perhaps we'll see the positive changes we deserve.

Ed Fischer
South Burlington

Voting Yes

Our family moved to South Burlington over 15 years ago, and my wife and I have three kids in three of its schools. South Burlington has many things going for it, but the reason we chose to live here over all other towns is the excellent school system. I know many families who moved here for the same reason we did. I've also come to know many people who graduated from South Burlington, went away to college and moved back to town to raise their kids because they know, firsthand, the value of an education received in South Burlington. I'm committed to doing what's best for my kids and all of the kids in South Burlington, and that's why I'll be voting yes for the school budget on June 6.

Tim Clear
South Burlington

Strange Days Indeed

These are perilous times for the community of South Burlington. The repeated decision by voters to reject next year's school budget has put not just the health of the school system at risk but that of the entire community. Thriving schools mean a thriving community, a community in which people want to live. But the refusal to fund schools leads to the decimation of the community, creating an area where no one feels at home. Once the schools start on a downward path by shedding good teachers and eliminating programs, there is no turning back. And once a school system ceases to be viable, the community that it serves ceases to be an attractive place to live. I fear that this is the direction in which South Burlington is headed. I encourage everyone with a stake in the viability of South Burlington as a community to vote yes for the new school budget and help to head us back in the right direction.

Todd McGowan
South Burlington

Continuing a Proud Tradition

I was raised in South Burlington, and attended our schools from Orchard elementary through high school graduation in 1990. I received an excellent education here, and am grateful to all the teachers who helped lay the foundation for what would be my own career as a scholar and educator.

After graduation, I left the state to attend college and graduate school. When I was offered a teaching position at UVM, I was thrilled for the opportunity to move back home so that my children might experience the same wonderful community and education that had shaped my own life. I now have a sixth-grader at Tuttle and a second-grader at Orchard, and my husband and I couldn't be happier with our choice. The teachers have been caring and innovative, the schools have become like second families, and our kids have thrived.

In fact, in at least one important way, my children's education has been superior to my own. The schools are now more culturally and linguistically rich, more inclusive of kids with special learning needs, and overall more supportive of diversity than they were when I was a student. Although the services needed to support this diverse student body - ESL instruction, classroom aides, teacher training and support - are costly, I see this as an enormously positive and valuable change. Alongside literacy and math, our kids are learning tolerance, empathy, and respect for multiple perspectives. Anyone who has spent a day in these classrooms, or attended any performance or sporting event, understands how much our kids are learning from one another, as well as from their teachers.

Fellow parents and community members, please join me in voting yes on the budget. Allow the schools to give our kids the education and services they deserve, an education that upholds the tradition of great education that many of us received here. If we can't come together to pass a budget, then much of what we have to be proud of - excellence in education, dedicated teachers, a commitment to inclusion and, yes, our sense of community - will be compromised or lost.

Kathleen Scollins
South Burlington

Vote Yes on School Budget

I am a seventh grade student at FHTMS on the Why Not? team. I believe that the time has come to put to rest the strife that has torn our community apart over the last several months. I ask you to vote yes on the school budget to ensure a brighter future and a great, high-quality education for myself and my peers. I would also ask those who would continue to shoot down the school budget over the Rebel name, is a high school mascot really worth your children's education and future?

Matthew Vigneau
South Burlington

Vote Yes

I will be voting yes on the school budget on June 6. I will vote yes for my child; he is getting a great education that includes an incredible array of extra-curricular opportunities. I will vote yes for all of our children; they benefit from a school system filled with experienced and dedicated educators. I will vote yes for our property values; real estate agents consistently tout South Burlington Schools as a top reason to buy a house here. Please join me in voting yes for all of us.

Kathleen Murphy
South Burlington

School Board's False Premises

At its meetings, the school board has explained that its proposed five percent budget hike is justified because, it says, our schools outperform (measured by NAEP scores) most Vermont school districts. The board asserts that more money translates into better schools, but U.S. Department of Education data (<https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/>) show the board's assertion is false. If you graph average state scores for white students (all interstate comparisons segregate by race) in grades four and eight reading and math against per-pupil spending, as I did, you will find no correlation. Higher spending does not translate into better performance.

How does Vermont fare in interstate comparisons? As UVM professor Art Woolf has been pointing out for years, not so great. Vermont is the nation's sixth biggest spender (per Census data) but an also-ran performer, ranking (per DOE data, above) between 15th (G8 reading) to 38th (G4 math). I compared the average scores for Vermont, which spends \$16,988 per-pupil (54% above national average) with four other states, all of which spend far less: Texas (\$8,593), Minnesota (\$11,464), New Hampshire (\$14,335), Nebraska (\$11,726). With two very minor exceptions (by one point) out of sixteen comparisons, fourth and eighth grade students in these lower spending states equaled and in most cases outperformed, sometimes considerably, their Vermont peers in math and reading.

South Burlington schools have many fine teachers, and our schools do relatively well within Vermont, but that comparison is meaningless because, as the DOE data show, Vermont schools are in the middle of the pack and cost far more than schools in states where students are doing far better. As the board tries for the third time to pass a sizable budget increase, voters going to the polls should consider whether the board is delivering a favorable combination of cost and quality. The DOE test score data and Census spending data suggest the answer is no.

Sheldon Katz

South Burlington

May 18, 2017

Support Our Schools

The recent attacks on our school system have left a negative imprint on our community. The South Burlington schools are the heart and soul of our city, making the community an attractive place to live and thus maintaining the property values of our residents. The discussion of retaining the old school nickname is over and it is now time to move on and restore order and harmony in South Burlington. If the students can move on, then the adults should follow.

The two recent defeats of the budget have already meant reductions and services cut. The irony is that many people who are so passionate about the nickname will be causing cuts in activities and athletics if we cannot pass a reasonable budget. The budget for the June 6 vote actually will reduce property taxes, and Vermont has property tax rebates for incomes up to \$140,000.

We need to come together and show the students of South Burlington how much we support them. There has been more than enough disruption this year. Support our schools. Please vote yes on June 6.

Maurice Mahoney
South Burlington

Legislating Social Values

At a recent legislative forum with South Burlington representatives, some difficult topics came up that very much need to be discussed. Our legislators are to be commended for giving local citizens a chance to voice their opinions on a range of issues before the Vermont Legislature and a few that are national issues as well. However, it takes more time than we have on the last Monday evening of each month during the Vermont legislative session to find common ground on issues that don't affect everyone in the same way.

One topic of discussion involved social values and whether laws that protect the rights of minority individuals from unwarranted stops by police are needed. This didn't seem like a controversial topic to me, as each of us experience life in our own skin, and appearance does affect the way we are treated by others. Haven't we all experienced negative bias or bullying in some form by the time we reach the age of 25? Have you ever traveled to places where you were the one who looked different, spoke a different language? Perhaps having empathy for those who are different, rather than experiencing fear and anxiety, may only be learned through experiencing bias ourselves.

Can laws create empathy? Who knows, but I doubt it. There are role-playing workshops that can help people understand what it feels like to misjudge an innocent person because of their appearance or circumstances. I have taken such a workshop, and I imagine police officers have as well. Maybe there should be an empathy test for police?

Police officers, however, live their lives seeing acts of violence, dishonesty, and cruelty that most of us don't, at least not as often. Fearing for one's safety can make people do irrational things. Maybe experience and police training, along with consequences can change this. I guess that's why we need a law.

Lots of good questions, and so many more.

Donna Leban
South Burlington

Not an Easy Challenge

Today I read with dismay the list of utterly meaningless options that South Burlington High School students will have to choose from to select their new mascot. Is a mascot simply an image on a flag? Or an icon stitched onto an athletic uniform? No, it is much more than simply a visual cue to help identify a group of people. Mention of the mascot name must bring recognition of the community of people that the name represents.

The name "Rebel" has long been associated with the SBHS community, and is widely recognized throughout the state. From Merriam-Webster, one of the many definitions of "rebel" is: a person who opposes a person or group in authority. Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys, the rebels led by Princess Leia, and the rebels in Syria fighting for a better future are all examples of this use of the word. And, unfortunately, the idea of rebel is also associated with the rebellion of the South in the American Civil War – the Confederacy. It was this association that led to the "Rebel" name being condemned and sentenced to death by the South Burlington School Board.

Whether you agree with the "Rebel" name or not, what it means to be a rebel and the identity associated with that cannot be denied. So if the "rebel" identity is to be done away with, then it needs to be replaced with something that is at least equally meaningful. The current list of twelve proposals contains nothing that fits this bill. If I call someone an "Avalanche" what exactly am I saying to them?

So I am recommending that all members of SBHS student and faculty community reject all twelve proposals and start over again from the beginning. Don't just try to come up with something ubiquitous and devoid of meaning and identity in an attempt to please everyone. Think long and hard with your heart as well as your head. What characteristic uniquely defines the SBHS community and also identifies you as an individual person? It is not an easy challenge, but not impossible either.

Mike Hennessey
South Burlington

Time for a Single Payer System

I have witnessed and felt the impacts of the healthcare system's many manifestations over the course of my lifetime. My parents spent nearly two decades paying off medical bills from my younger brothers' stints in the hospital with infant asthma. I was forced to put off graduate school for several years after breaking my collarbone and using my savings on the subsequent costs. My wife and I will be paying off a \$5,600 tax bill for the foreseeable future after trying to navigate and utilize Vermont Health Connect. The Affordable Care Act was inadequate, and the version being crafted now will certainly be worse. It is a cruel joke to call our system the best in the world, when the market-based, pay-to-play format benefits the wealthy and insurance and pharmaceutical companies over regular people. I am a proud member of the Vermont Workers Center and stand with all citizens who recognize that the time for a single payer system is now. The state Legislature must fulfill the promise of Act 48.

Mike Leonard

South Burlington

School Budgets

I abstain from voting on school budgets nowadays. I think they're exorbitant, but neither do I want to impose my opinion on those with children in school. They're sometimes split, though: one for facility maintenance and one for everything else. Maintenance is sensible, the costs reasonable, and I vote for them. And education-wise, South Burlington schools are good, but I think they cost too much, largely because teachers' salaries rise too quickly and regardless of individual incompetence.

As for the Rebel name, Rebel is a title with much that honors us, and the Confederate iconography is gone now. The Green Mountain Boys were rebels, and aren't we all, too, sometimes and in some circumstances? I rebel against the over-specific interpretation of common words.

Fred Hill
South Burlington

Support South Burlington's Students: Vote Yes

I am a South Burlington resident, a parent of three children in our schools, and am honored to be a teacher at SBHS. This is my sixth year working in the district and I love everything about our schools. I have seen my children thrive at every level, kindergarten through high school. Going to work each day at SBHS is a true joy; it is an oasis of student-centered positivity, and a refuge from the toxic political climate that surrounds us. Our kids are learning and supporting each other in ways we do not see in our broader society, which I am very grateful to experience.

I have worked in another Vermont district similar in size to South Burlington, and believe that our taxpayers comparatively get a huge payoff for every penny they spend. My experience elsewhere was one of chaos, lack of leadership, widespread frustration, and lesser outcomes. We are a highly competitive district because people know the South Burlington schools are well run, offer great programs, and have talented leadership teams. Other districts struggle to achieve what usually comes naturally to South Burlington.

Our students at the high school continue to thrive, with the same school spirit as always, regardless of its name. It is the spirit of all that is good in a young person's life; vitality, passion, and the growing sense of individuality and freedom that comes with the age. I am lucky that I get to enjoy this positive energy every day, and wish that others in the community could also experience it firsthand.

We need to support our students and do whatever it takes to keep South Burlington among the best schools in Vermont. I fear we are destroying the thing that unites most of us. I would like our administrators, superintendent, and board to know that there are many people in the community who support them, even though there is vocal opposition. I also encourage our community to vote yes on the upcoming budget, to support our current programs and thriving schools. The alternative is simply self-destructive.

Sayre Ludlow
South Burlington

Failure of Democracy

Vermont law is clear, when the citizens disagree with a ruling body they can petition for a city wide vote. "Once found to conform, a special meeting shall be warned within 60 days of the receipt of the petition by the clerk. 17 V.S.A. §2643(a)" The school board disregarded the statute and denied the voters the right to voice their opinion on the Rebel issue. It's a disgrace.

Joe Finnigan
South Burlington

Live to Debate Another Day

Let me start by stating I do not agree with how the name change was handled. It would have been more thoughtful, respectful, and professional to offer constituents more time to address the situation and debate the merits of the issue. Unfortunately, the school board and administration did not allow us this chance. Nevertheless, I am not okay diminishing my kids' opportunities of a quality education and other aspects of school life that they undoubtedly deserve, because of this issue. In order of importance, it is not even close. Education and opportunity has to be the priority. The fight over the name change is just not worth the consequences to our children's education.

I have also read that there is issue with spending decisions and priorities within the budget that are not dealing with the name change. I am sure there is merit to many of these concerns. I want to pay as little in taxes as I can and also want our schools to be vigilant in their spending priorities and maximize learning potential while being as frugal as possible. Not an easy task, I am sure of that.

It is my opinion that we have to pass the next offered budget. We need to give the administration and the board the ability to move forward with a plan for next year. We may not like everything about the next budget, but would we ever? Compromise is not a dirty word, at least it shouldn't be. The desire to monitor the spending priorities does not have to end with passing this next budget. If we continue to be engaged citizens and monitor the priorities of the school board and administration, then we can voice our opposition or support for the future of our schools planning and budgeting priorities. There are future elections and budgets. At this point, we have entered into the possibility of greatly reducing our kids' ability to have some of the opportunities they deserve.

Michael Benoit
South Burlington

May 11, 2017

Yes for Budget

To everyone who lives in South Burlington who is considering voting no on the next school budget vote in protest of the name change...please think again.

I have worked as a public school teacher in another district for 25 years; one with a history of not passing school budgets on the 1st or even 2nd vote. It is stressful to work in a district without a passed budget. Much of the work being done systematically this time of year is planning for next year. Without a passed budget, that cannot happen. The work load doubles and triples as original plans, contingency plans and then contingency plans to those plans need to be made. The stress becomes palpable and the energy becomes frantic and frazzled.

I can only imagine (with dread) the stress the teaching staff at South Burlington is under at this point. The ripple effect of potential cuts is so disheartening. The tone of the school building changes. It is unfair and shameful even, to have to say "At this point it is unknown...", "I cannot answer that due to the budget situation...", "I wish I could plan for that but I can't..." at meetings to parents and students - particularly frightening to say to the parents of children with disabilities and special needs.

It is easy to be angry with an administration that you disagree with; however a protest vote will do nothing to change the current matter. That, has been made clear. One thing that a protest vote *will* do is continue to put a huge amount of stress on a teaching staff who work very hard for our children. Teachers are the most important aspect of schools. Without them there would be no learning. Teachers work best when they are able to teach for tomorrow and know what the future holds and the work needed to get children there.

Please be thoughtful and respectful to the people who spend their lives teaching to make the future a better place and consider voting YES for the next budget so that they can continue doing their jobs.

Jennifer Knowles
South Burlington

SB School Budget Vote and Mascot Name Change

Recently a group of students at Middlebury College granted themselves the right to revoke the First Amendment of the US Constitution because they did not like the thinking/writings of an invited speaker. Similarly, in South Burlington (SB), the democratic foundational principles of one person-one vote and majority rule were recently placed in abeyance as a result of a well-intentioned, but nonetheless flawed, process involving changing the school's mascot name.

Individuals have a right to disagree with the opinions of others and it is certainly appropriate for a school administration to respond to students who have a grievance. But if the end result is an undermining of democratic principles, and I believe in both cases it was, then what is lost is far greater than what is gained.

A conflict resolution paradigm in which the grievance(s) of a small number of individuals is placed in a position of greater dominance than the views of a much larger group of individuals fragments an already polarized community and nation.

However, the vote on the third SB school budget proposal should *not* be a vote on mascot name change. They are two very separate issues.

SB by all accounts has an outstanding public school system, and it most certainly does cost money to build a great school system. But from that basic truth it does not necessarily follow that no amount of money is too much when it comes to education funding.

I believe there are significant long-term economic sustainability problems both with the SB school budget and with statewide spending on public school education in general. Unfortunately, these problems cannot be fixed in a short time frame.

Accordingly, residents must educate themselves to the details of the third proposed budget and then make an informed decision on how to vote. There are real consequences to a NO vote (job cuts) and real consequences to a YES vote (ongoing unsustainable spending is dangerous and “kicking the can down the road” is not a plan; never is and never will be).

This is an important vote. Whatever your position, make your voice heard.

*Gerry Silverstein
South Burlington*

Rebel Name

The term rebel goes much further back than the Civil War. One of our country's first rebels was Crispus Attucks, a black patriot shot dead at the Boston Massacre. Later at Lexington, it was Major John Pitcairn of the Royal Marines who yelled at the Minutemen "Lay down your arms, you damned rebels." Attributing "rebel" as a racist term is disingenuous at best and a slap in the face to our founding fathers. "Rebel" has more positive attributes than negative. Let's leave things be and move on.

*Ray Michaud
South Burlington*

May 4, 2017

No More Rebels

Being a rebel is a terrific way to live. But Rebel as a school nickname is no honor to South Burlington.

Just since January major opportunities to be rebels arose. To rebel for women's rights, inspired by the gigantic Women's March in January. Or to rebel with those who participated in the massive March for Science on Earth Day. Or to rebel against global warming, as did Bill McKibben, Bernie, and hundreds of thousands of People's Climate Marchers last Saturday. Or to rebel for the rights and dignity of migrant workers on May 1.

Our students can also be rebels with the ongoing Black Lives Matter movement. Or they can revitalize the Occupy Wall Street rebellion to restore power to the 99%.

We have more opportunities to be rebels in South Burlington. We can be rebels against poverty-level minimum wage jobs right here in our town. Rebels against trillion-dollar student debt. Rebels to make health care a human right. Rebels against developers who give money to politicians. Rebels against killing or being killed in illegal, immoral, and unjust wars based on lies—like the war in Iraq.

We in South Burlington can be rebels against Burlington for letting its tenant base F-16 -- and soon, far more dangerous F-35 fighter jets at the airport in a neighborhood of affordable homes in our city. If we fail to rebel and demand that Burlington tell its tenant to get quieter equipment, sorrowfully, parts of South Burlington and most of Winooski will end up with a crisis like Flint Michigan: in this case, not caused by lead, but by noise so loud the brains of half our children permanently damaged.

Southern States flipped the meaning of the word rebel in nicknaming their army to uphold slavery. They were upholders, not rebels. The actual rebels we Vermonters can be proud of were the abolitionists, who stood up to and defeated the slave system.

Now is the time for South Burlington to abolish the Rebel nickname. Time, instead, to be rebels—joining millions of people rebelling for human rights, life, dignity, equality, and justice.

*James Marc Leas
South Burlington*

The Rebel Name Controversy

It is with great sadness I continue to read about the controversy over the Rebel name change. It is hard for me to understand that the people of my community are struggling to understand how hurtful it is for many of our students to have a name that represents the Confederacy and our shameful history of slavery and ongoing racism. When my son played sports in the late 90s, there was a Confederate flag in the locker room until I called to have it removed. That is not so long ago. For me that would be like having a swastika hanging there, while people were telling me to get over it; it doesn't have a bad meaning anymore.

And if, in fact, as has been said, the school budget has been defeated twice because of this issue, I would say shame on those who are holding our students hostage to the desires of some to hang on to an outdated and harmful name. We need to come together as a community in all of its diversity, and move forward to understand each other and grow.

Mindy Evin
South Burlington

We Are All Rebels

Let us not kid ourselves, the school board and the administrators thought nobody cared if they approved then disapproved the Rebel moniker. The fact that part of the budget was to change the school moniker allowed people on social media to scrutinize the budget and for the first time realize that a large part of the voting population was sick and tired of absurd increases in the budget.

We were told, as a result of the second budget, the property taxes were reduced by a fraction. They didn't tell us that the budget was still growing at an unsustainable rate. The reduction was accomplished by deferred maintenance. As we all know, deferring maintenance just means it will cost you more when you finally get to it, hence much higher taxes are in our future. The teachers of South Burlington are pushing for an outrageous increase in salary and benefits hence more taxes.

If nothing else, the Rebel controversy is sending a message that we have finally started to question the school budget. I feel that for the past 25 or 30 years, the school has rid itself of any association with the Confederacy, which had no place in Vermont. A minority of outsiders has decided we in this city are racist and or ignorant. They tell us children of color feel threatened. How wonderful if changing a school moniker would end racism and fear!?

We are all Rebels; historically we live in one of the most rebellious states in the union. Newcomers to our state should realize that being rebels is in our DNA. The longer the controversy goes on, the more the residents and people who used to be residents, feel it is ridiculous to equal "rebel" to us wanting to perpetuate racism and hate.

I suggest we vote on whether the word rebel should be expunged from the dictionary, losers will promise to drop the subject.

Shohreh Eckhardt
South Burlington

April 27, 2017

Building a Proud Tradition

The recent defeat of two South Burlington school budgets has forced us all to reconsider our financial and philosophical commitments to our students and the South Burlington educational community.

"Building a Proud Tradition" relative to our students and school community requires a strong yes commitment to pass our third school budget.

To quote Rick Marcotte, distinguished South Burlington educator, during previous tough times in education, "We have lost our way – it is now time to find our way back!"

Dominick A. Marabella
South Burlington

Name Divides the Community

In considering the appropriateness of changing the South Burlington High School mascot from the Rebels, think of the principles that should guide the choice.

A mascot should be a name the community can rally behind. Rebellion led to the creation of the U.S. We honor this rebellion, cherish our right to speak out and petition our government. The problem isn't simply the Rebel name; rather, at SBHS, it has been indelibly associated with the Confederate legacy of slavery, segregation, and discrimination. Many community members cannot rally behind such a name.

A mascot name should be inclusive of all community members. It should not threaten any student's sense of belonging or well-being. For any child of color and any child of European heritage who seeks to be a part of a broader community, the Rebel name is problematic. A child of color is likely to feel less than welcome in the high school community and may feel less than safe because of the association with the Confederate legacy.

Choose a mascot name that is welcoming to all children. "Rebel" doesn't have this effect. Every child matters in our increasingly diverse population. Our sensitivities should reflect this. That Rebel has been the mascot for years doesn't sway me. A long-term mistake is still a mistake; one we can readily rectify. I lived in the south and remember separate water fountains and racist language and ideas being freely and threateningly spoken, school lines drawn to effect segregation, and the local farmer who insisted African-Americans knock on his back door. The U.S. isn't post-racial. The national legacy of discrimination is reflected in statistics tracking high school and college completion rates and financial success, disparate health outcomes, racial profiling. Around the country voter ID requirements, location of voting sites, voter roll purging, and disparate incarceration rates rob many people of color of a basic civil right: the right to vote. There is more.

Even if you have a sentimental association with the Rebel name, understand many of your neighbors cannot avoid the negative associations. The name divides the community unnecessarily.

*Shirley Bergert
South Burlington*

Rebel Name Change

I would like to weigh in on the issue of changing the Rebel name. This issue is just another example of political correctness run amuck. I attended South Burlington High School back in the mid-1980s and do not recall seeing or hearing anything mentioned about the Confederacy. This is Northern New England and not the South. The Rebel name always meant to me what the name implies; to fight for what you believe in, be an independent thinker and doer. The definition of a rebel is a person who stands up for their own personal opinions despite what anyone else says. A true rebel stands up for what they believe is right, not against what's right.

Changing the name minimizes all the sports achievements in the past and makes us feel we were part of something wrong. I suspect most students did not even know the original origins of the name. Why should a few people force the rest of us to have to pay to have the name changed when I've found most people I talk to want to keep the name. If they want the name changed then they can fork over the money. If those that do not like the name they always have the option to send their kids to another school. There are plenty of families that would like to live in South Burlington and have their kids attend a highly regarded school system with a great sports program.

This issue should be on the ballot and voted on so this decision is made democratically by the whole community and not by a few people making an issue out of something that wasn't one in the first place. In my opinion, the school budget shouldn't be approved until this issue is voted on. Enough time has been wasted on this issue when we should be discussing more important issues regarding our schools and town.

Let's all continue to be Rebels and resist changing the name.

*Mark Wagner
South Burlington*

Appeal to Neighbors to Vote Yes

My family and I moved to South Burlington because we heard the schools here were fabulous, and we have not been disappointed. The recent rejection of both budgets put forward for the South Burlington schools, however, threatens to render this reputation obsolete and to undermine what was the city's strength. If we continue on this path, we will destroy all the things that make the schools superb and ultimately destroy what makes South Burlington such a unique place to live.

I would be devastated to see South Burlington lose great teachers, sports teams, music organizations, or other academic programs. I don't want to see my neighbors fleeing South Burlington because they feel like their children can't receive a proper education here, and that, unfortunately, will be the result of continued rejections of the school budget I have previously lived in an area where citizens routinely rejected the school budget. The result was incredibly poor schools, a tattered community, and falling property values. I don't want to see this future for South Burlington. The foundation of what makes South Burlington successful and welcoming is the outstanding school system that is at the heart of our community.

In these uncertain political times, we don't know what kind of cuts may be coming on a federal or state level in the next few years. I, for one, hope we can protect the first-rate education that our school system has to offer. Let's celebrate our school system that allows our students to become well rounded, engaged citizens of South Burlington. I have noticed, as my children have gone through the school system that the schools' emphasis on community building has also been impressive. They work to address the problems that are dividing students in order to teach the students how to live and work together. In this way, diversity and excellence go hand in hand in South Burlington. For all these reasons, South Burlington's strong schools make our community strong.

Please join me by voting responsibly and voting yes for our children, yes for the community, and yes for the future of South Burlington.

Hilary Neroni

South Burlington

Community Opinion Counts

I want to share my views with the community I have been a part of my entire life. My children and I have attended the South Burlington schools.

I believe no one group of people, hired administrators, teachers or students, should have the power to change the history or identity of our community. It should be determined by all members of our community and not by a select few who think they have the power or right to change our identity.

The school budget is out of touch with reality! Teachers are no different than the rest of us working hard to make it through life. They should have to contribute to their insurance just like the rest of us. Although I have the highest respect for teachers and staff they are no better than the rest of us.

David Young, his staff and school board, have failed us. As a community, we need to pull together and fix this; hire a forensic accountant, clean up our books, and find out how our money is spent. Once this is achieved, we can start with a clean slate and control where the money goes with no confusion.

I will support the teachers and staff when they are being treated fairly with pay raises and insurance contributions to match the average person in our community. As for the Rebel name, this is not for the school board to decide! Stop bullying the citizens of South Burlington with this issue. Get this off the table now. Clean up the books and deal with the teachers' union. If they continue to want all or nothing, let them strike. Hire new young teachers who will be thrilled to teach in one of the best school systems in the country.

Do not think we are not watching. People have spoken and the school board continues to move forward with their own agenda. I strongly urge the school board and anyone else involved to clean up the books and work smart. If things keep going as they are, I see lawyers and court dates in our future.

Daniel Girard
South Burlington

A City United

We all want great schools, great extracurriculars in our schools, a friendly, welcoming city, lower property taxes, increasing home values, trust in our elected officials, and city and school budgets that are realistic and cover our needs.

Supporting the current school budget will help us maintain great schools, help us maintain great extracurriculars in our schools, decrease our property taxes and allow us to begin to work on returning to being a friendly, welcoming city. It will allow us to show continued engagement with our elected officials so that all can learn of the positive work they do, building trust over time. All of these will contribute to stable home values.

When all of these come together, we will naturally see a rise in tuition students that want to attend a friendly, welcoming city with excellent schools. And we will see that businesses are growing and thriving in South Burlington. These are two easily identifiable ways to grow our tax base, which in turn will reduce the burden on the property tax payers.

Voting yes on the school budget is instrumental to the economic health of our city!

Katie Langrock
South Burlington

Teachers' Negotiations

As a South Burlington resident and graduate of South Burlington High School, I have nothing but respect and admiration for people who are and want to be teachers. My mom was a teacher for 22 years in South Burlington and you wouldn't find a more dedicated person who would care for the students in her class. Often times, she would spend her own money for items she needed for her class.

I remember back in late 70s, teacher salaries were far below that of any profession and far below that of the average wage earner in Chittenden County. South Burlington voters made a commitment to the teachers and have lived up to that every year, though times have changed and now teachers' salaries far exceed that of the average wage earner in Chittenden County including benefits.

The latest teacher contract negotiations have stated that the teachers want almost five percent each year for the next three years and the district to pay 100 percent of their health care. Nobody wants to deny the teachers what they want, but it is at the

breaking point for many property tax payers in the city. It is time the union comes back with a more reasonable and fair offer. South Burlington residents deserve better after all we have done over the years for teachers.

It's a shame that more and more people who grew up in South Burlington have to leave South Burlington because taxes are so high. South Burlington teachers are among the highest paid in the state, yet every year it seems like it's not enough. Teachers are a dedicated bunch of people but where does it stop? If it's only about salary and benefits, when you're the highest in the state, people start to wonder about that dedication. Please rethink your demands, otherwise I fear more budget rejections. Believe me, it's not all about the Rebel name. It's about being able to live in South Burlington.

*Scott Bronson
South Burlington*

Commit to Voting Yes

The school budget debate did not develop organically. It was created by a group of people, The Rebel Alliance, led by two alumni who no longer live here, with a very specific goal - keep the Rebel name. One clear and often repeated strategy of this group is to reject the budget, no matter what, until the name is retained. After the most recent school board meeting, with even more suggested reductions to the budget, this remains true.

I know that many people have said they are not concerned about the name change, but are concerned about fiscal responsibility. They have seen this as a wake-up call to analyze the budget and scrutinize the school administration. And I have to say, there is good in getting involved, and in knowing what our taxes support. But misinformation and ill will has spread like a virus, especially online. For anyone who doesn't attend school events, or talk with students and their families, it would be easy to assume the worst of our schools.

These sentiments fly in the face of reality - that South Burlington schools are ranked in the top 10 in the state, with great teachers and a track record of excellence. Do a Google search and see how many articles are about our students' achievements. Despite our adult bickering, our children are getting a great education.

Reducing our budget means reducing teachers. There is no way to make the budget significantly smaller without cutting positions. And if next year is anything like last year, our elementary schools will need all of our teachers, and maybe a few more.

I know that I'm not changing any minds. The people who want a lower budget will continue to vote for it. But I am begging those of you who believe in our schools to commit to voting yes in this next election. Our students, our schools, and our community need to move forward. And we need your help.

*Gin Ferrara
South Burlington*

April 20, 2017

Invest in Our Schools

I am so proud of the accomplishments of students in the South Burlington school system. Most folks in South Burlington are aware of sports success like the multiple state championships for varsity field hockey, but did you know that recently a sixth grader at FHTMS became the first female champion of our state's annual Geo Bee competition? Or that a FHTMS eighth grader is making news for composing music? The FHTMS Mathcounts team has won the state championship for seven of the past nine years! And two SBHS students are part of the slam poetry group Muslim Girls Making Change, now nationally recognized.

Beyond academic and athletic wins, our students excel in music and art, and are champions in community engagement. Six out of every ten SBHS students are involved in various work or volunteer programs. SB Mentoring, a unique program with caring adults paired with students at every school in our district, has been operational for the last six years and continues to grow. And our district has been offering programs in resilience/mindfulness to the entire community since before most folks knew what the terms meant.

This success is not without cost - no individual excels without the help of many others. So, people of South Burlington, please recognize and support the positive learning environment and culture that our schools provide. Take the time to learn what is happening in the schools, and act upon that information by providing constructive feedback to the school board and administrators. Volunteer when the schools need help. Be respectful and kind, and serve as a role model to these kids. In short, conduct yourselves as though your children are watching.

While I am disheartened by recent community disagreement on issues of budget, teacher value, school mascot, etc., I can sleep at night because I know our students are being served well, and I am confident that we are all capable of resolving these issues as mature adults through frank and deliberate discussion. I look forward to continued success in local education - there is no better investment for any community!

*Brenda Balon
South Burlington*

Support for Schools and Mascot Name Change

I am heartsick about the continued push back against the superintendent and unanimous school board decision to retire the Rebel nickname due to its original connection to the Confederacy and what that symbolizes for many in our community. While not everyone will agree, I had hoped most would have empathy for others and recognize that their attachment to the name cannot possibly trump the fact that to some of our neighbors it will always be associated with the terrible and enduring legacy of slavery and segregation. I understand some have other concerns about the proposed budget, but to hold the budget hostage to this issue and to disparage the superintendent and school board for being "spineless," and worse, feels destructive and divisive. As my friend Diane Bugbee put so articulately in a post on her Facebook page, "Our school district - our Superintendent, the School Board, our teachers and staff - must implement policies and practices that meet the needs of every student. The decision to retire the Rebel name should NOT be an opportunity to disparage the leadership of our school district and the employees who show up, day in, day out, to make a difference in the lives of our students."

We need more residents in our community to stand up for an inclusive, mutually respectful future. Our kids are watching.

*Melissa Pasanen
South Burlington*

Support for the School Board

I write to express my support for the school board, the superintendent, and the budget. As the parent of three children in the South Burlington school system, I'm grateful for our exceptional schools and the opportunities afforded my children. If you're a parent, you know that each child is different. One will excel in math, another will thrive in organized sports, another will need more individualized attention. Luckily, we've been able to have the needs of each of our children met within the South Burlington school system. Our kids love their schools, their friends and their teachers. They're challenged and excited about all of the offerings at South Burlington schools. As parents, the wonderful school system is the main reason we love our town!

Recently, the superintendent and the school board made the very courageous decision to retire the Rebel name. I thought they managed this in a measured and respectful manner. It was obvious to me that the superintendent and board had been reflective in their process and that the decision had come about only after much self-education and contemplation about what would be best for all of our kids. I was very proud to be represented by them.

My hope is that the board will continue to be clear in its intentions regarding the Rebel name. It's my impression that many people think if they keep voting our budget down, the board will back down. It's important that the board make clear that this will not be the case.

*Alesia Clear
South Burlington*

Please Vote on the School Budget

The school board is currently revising the school budget again after it was voted down for a second time with a turnout of just 25 percent of the registered voters in South Burlington. Fiscal responsibility is clearly on the minds of many residents and I trust the school board will respond with a budget that will deliver high quality education for our children, while respecting the community's financial limits. The thing is – the school district needs a budget to function. According to SchoolDigger.com, our five schools are all currently ranked in the top ten in Vermont. Orchard is number two, Chamberlin is number six, and RMCS is number nine among elementary schools, while FHTMS is the number ten middle school and SBHS is the number two high school in the state. These rankings give parents peace-of-mind and help promote the safe and thriving community we enjoy here in South Burlington. Our schools make South Burlington a highly desirable city to move to, which in turn keeps our property values high. Supporting our schools by approving a working budget that also offers residents a tax decrease is an easy choice to engender a healthy future for our city.

For these reasons, I respectfully implore you to review the budget when the school board presents it, decide if you believe our schools and city are worth the proposed amount, and vote at the polls or early at City Hall. Residents and students deserve to move forward from the current divisive environment we've found ourselves in. There are a number of residents who have openly stated their plan to continue to vote down the school budget in retaliation to the school board's decision to retire the Rebel name. Residents have the right to vote for whatever reasons they choose, but because of these reactionary "no" votes, the children need more community members to support them by going to the polls. Please take the time to vote on the school budget so our school's faculty and staff can return to their valued job of tirelessly fostering the curiosity and growth of our youngest citizens.

*Emilee Hoffman
South Burlington*

Voters Should Decide

The April 13 meeting of the school board raised the issue of who should decide whether a name change is needed, the board or the voters. One board member, Mr. LaLonde admitted that the board has no greater expertise on the issue than the voters, but asserted that the school administration does have that greater expertise. Based on that administration's expertise and recommendation, he said, the board voted to drop the Rebel name.

The name change issue requires no expertise, at least not the kind the administration has to offer. The administration was not elected, and while board members were, they were not chosen to be a rubber stamp for the administration's wishes. If that were so, an elected school board would be unnecessary. Further, as recollection serves, no school board member campaigned on the name change issue.

The school board's action, as explained by Mr. LaLonde, is tyranny of the "expert." Voters are fully competent to consider whether a name change is necessary. The issue should be put to a vote by the people.

*Sheldon Katz
South Burlington*

Equality and Justice

The reaction to retiring the rebel name has been horrific. A group called the Rebel Alliance has formed on Facebook and locally. Members of that group ran as write in candidates to the school board but lost. Their 700 votes did succeed in voting down the school budget in protest of the name change. They have succeeded in voting down the budget a second time and are now demanding that the school board have a vote of no confidence in the superintendent. They have also gathered signatures to get a referendum on the ballot to retain the Rebel name. It is my understanding that the organizers of the Rebel Alliance Facebook page are not residents of South Burlington. Both have directed the no votes and petitions from afar.

According to the Vermont State Archives, there were 14,000 dues paying members of the KKK in Vermont in the 1920s. South Burlington High School was opened in 1961. The name Rebel was chosen ostensibly because we were "South" Burlington and not "North" Burlington. 1961 was also the year the Freedom Riders in the Civil Rights Movement desegregated the national transportation system. Medgar Evers was killed in 1962. Here in South Burlington confederate imagery was prevalent in our high school.

Now in 2017, those of us for racial equality and justice in South Burlington are being called 'Politically Correct Liberals' and worse. We are told that the only reason for the Rebel name change is political correctness. We are told that PC liberals and the NEA are the cause of the school's problems.

If you want to support racial equality and justice in South Burlington, speak out loudly and clearly in public forums, in the newspapers, and at the ballot box. Talk to your neighbors. We have had enough of hatred and bigotry.

*Paul Engels
South Burlington*

Negotiations

I am writing in response to the parallel arguments put forth by the school board and the teacher's union about the current negotiations. I am writing as a parent of 2 kids who went through the SB school district. They are proud of the education they received and so am I. In full disclosure, I am also the wife of a teacher in another school district and mother of a teacher in another state. I am writing because every time a town wrestles with similar negotiations, the bigger points are often missed. The first point is that the reason we have arguably the best school district in the state is because whenever there is an opening in SB schools, we are flooded with an overwhelming number of excellent qualified master teachers. Not every town comes close to that embarrassment of riches. It is because the salary is enviable. The second point is that the responsibility of helping to create responsible educated adults from the children in our diverse society is huge and difficult, and we don't thank teachers enough for what they do. Even now, without my own kids in the system, I can think of no better return on investment than having an excellent school system. The last point is that teachers' salaries are about the only salaries over which we tax payers have direct control. We feel compelled to debate the fine points of the contract, simply because we do have control. We don't get to decide what doctors, lawyers, and other professionals in our lives earn. Let's try not to micro-manage a contract that isn't really broken. I trust both sides of this debate to negotiate in good faith. I lived in a town in Vermont that had the longest teacher's strike in Vermont history. It's the reason I moved to South Burlington before my oldest entered school. I also worked (as a school nurse) in a different Vermont town that walked the picket lines for nearly a month. We know what strikes do to a community. Let's bring this debate to a satisfying end.

Liz Heun

South Burlington

April 13, 2017

Unsustainable School Budgets – The Main Culprit

While I can't say why most people voted against the South Burlington school budget, many of us realize that the main cost driver is staffing levels, salaries and benefits. These account for roughly 80 percent of the budget. A less understood mechanism called the salary grid is the major driver of yearly cost increases.

This relic of decades ago that brought teachers' salaries out of the basement, now allows new teachers, for instance, to achieve a 21 percent increase in income in three years (averaging seven percent per year) by taking additional courses to achieve a higher pay column on the salary grid. This is according to Robert Letovsky of St Michael's College in an article published in *The Burlington Free Press* (1/18/15) and reprinted by VT Digger (2/3/15). This doesn't necessarily mean that kids have better teachers. That would involve pay raises based on merit, which the SBEA abhors.

So, when lead South Burlington Educators Association negotiator Eric Stone, stated in *The Other Paper* (03/23/17) that "It doesn't serve the teachers or taxpayers of South Burlington to dismantle our salary schedule," he is wrong. This would greatly benefit taxpayers. I know of no other profession where a seven percent annual salary increase is possible merely for doing continuing education, the cost of which may be reimbursed by the school district. What a deal! Yes, professionals all need to continue to educate themselves throughout life. Most of us, however, do this to sustain our careers and are not guaranteed such generous returns.

*Donna Leban, AIA LC
South Burlington*

Focused on the Wrong Part of the Name

I'm sure we're all tired of this topic, but I think the passion for the Rebel name is misplaced. I'm not from South Burlington, but I wouldn't care if my high school decided they needed to replace the team name. I was a successful athlete, had many friends, and wonderful experiences that I still cherish 20 years after the fact. My pride, then and now, was based on where I was from, not the designated mascot. When we competed in sports events, I was proud of our team, school, and town. Whatever is chosen as the new mascot won't change the pride that past, current, and future students feel for being part of the South Burlington community.

*Derek Poirier
South Burlington*

Rebel Name Change

A 40-member committee and a process that rivals a UN resolution. What an embarrassment. All involved should be ashamed of themselves. I say we put this to bed once and for all and vote on it. Wait, we can't do that because it would fall flat on its face. You want a name/mascot change? Form a committee to figure out how much each person who supports this foolishness has to chip in to cover the cost.

*Glenn Medeiros
South Burlington*

Get to the Polls

Twenty five percent of registered voters voted on the school budget. Where were the other 75 percent? Shame on you! Imagine if we lived in a country that was ruled by a dictator and you were not allowed to vote. Whether you vote yea or nay you need to get to the polls.

*Edie Robenstein
South Burlington*

Public Indecency Ordinance

With the recent federal ruling against the city of Fort Collins, Colorado and their ban on women being topless in public, I hope that the South Burlington City Council will take note. The city's public indecency ordinance, forbidding "the showing of the female breast with less than a fully opaque covering of any portion of the nipple" is inherently and blatantly sexist in nature. That I could be out in public shirtless, while a woman would be fined, is not only discriminatory but unconstitutional, violating the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. I would hope the council would consider remedying this as the city is currently in a very actionable position.

Nick Pain

Our Community is Our Shared Identity

I am writing today, April 6, hoping for the school budget's passage and painfully aware of the division in our community. People in our schools back in the 1960s, when they chose the Rebel name along with all the Civil War symbols (Captain Rebel, the Confederate flag, Dixie, ...), I'm sure that never would they have imagined that we would be here today. Never had they fully grasped the ramifications of their choice, linked to the legacy of the rebellious South and history of slavery. Nevertheless, here we are today, inheritors of a name that divides us.

I am spending this year writing a book based in part on Albert Camus's essay "The Rebel." It explores the moral urgency and refusal felt by many in Camus's generation, the "greatest generation," in the face of Nazi ideology and the regimes that supported it. Rebellion grew from a feeling of refusal against state-sponsored hatred and totalitarian assault on the democratic and humanist principles of Europe's leading democracies.

This morning I saw signs dotted along Williston Road: "Be a Rebel and Vote NO on the Budget April 6." Thinking back to Camus's work, I recall not only his and others' intellectual and physical resistance against a hate-filled ideology and regime, but I am also struck by its central message in a move to restore normalcy and democracy. After the initial refusal – the NO –comes the work of rebuilding. Rebuilding community by recognizing our shared values and the neighbor in each one of us.

Our shared quest for community, an inclusive identity, for a place that brings us together, in our foreseen City Center, for instance, or in our schools that we value so highly – this grows from our community values.

Whatever the outcome of our vote today, I hope that we might move beyond the refusal of rebellion and remember what counts most of all, which is a shared sense of community, inclusion, and the values that unite us, and rebuild on those.

*Meaghan Emery
Vice Chair,
South Burlington City Council*

March 23, 2017

The Hypocrisy with the Rebel Name Change

With the recent decision by the school board to move forward with a name change, they must also push for purging of the display cabinets. To do otherwise, would be hypocritical of the current position that the Rebel nickname, which has not had a representative image in more than 20 years, is offensive. The governing body cannot decide and tell the community that Rebel can no longer be used to represent the community schools and then decorate and glorify our past in the interior. Many opposed to the use of Rebel signed a petition where it stated that redefining the meaning of Rebel would be confusing, no more confusing than condemning a word without representation and allowing it to be viewed publicly.

It is a confusing decision, given that the NAACP has precedence in endorsing the use of Rebel for schools and the large number of positive examples of the use of Rebel. If emptying the display cases and removing the year books causes hesitation or reservation, then there is instinctual doubt that this is the correct decision. You are not ready to accept responsibility for the emotional wage. The dichotomy cannot exist. One cannot state that our history, despite correcting ourselves along the way, is offensive and wrong while openly displaying it. If you believe this to be wrong, it means that this decision was not properly vetted where people's assumptions were validated through investigation. Instead, emotions and opinions and not validated learning lead to this decision.

I do not agree with this decision. However, if the school board, administration, and community are going to go through with a name change they must have the resolve to do so fully. In 1997, I was inducted in the VT Football Hall of Fame as a Rebel and that achievement was on display. I request to have that memory back. All alumni should put in requests for their memories as they serve the future school no purpose. If you question this, then there are more discussions to be had and assumptions to test to find the right solution for our community.

*Paul Frail
1997 SBHS Graduate*

Naming Without Name Calling

Our family is proud to call South Burlington home. Florida natives, we were looking for a better quality of life than South Florida had to offer - a more inclusive, tolerant community with an exceptional school system. We regularly give back to this community that has welcomed us wholeheartedly. Our children attend SB schools; two are at the high school, one plays on a sport team.

We've been following the Rebel "controversy" with great interest, empathizing with both sides of the argument. Having grown up in the south, we are all too familiar with the ill feelings created by the use of the rebel name and/or flag. We also understand the strong ties some folks have to the hometown moniker. We've been most impressed that Superintendent David Young, Principal Patrick Burke, and the school board have listened to the opinions of school and community members. They took into account what has been learned locally and nationally about the effects of racial bias on children, including studies from the Pew Research Center and the American Academy of Pediatrics. At every turn, the discussions have been inclusive and respectful.

But it's important to have all of the facts about how the new name will be chosen. The superintendent's office is currently taking applications from community members interested in joining an oversight committee that will ultimately make a recommendation to the school board. Anyone interested in having input can visit the SBSB website and click on "Rebel Name."

I was more than taken aback by an opinion piece run in the March 16 issue of TOP. I don't question the right of all residents to voice their opinions, nor do I question TOP's right to publish opinions on all sides of the argument. What I, and many others in the community, have a problem with is the use of name calling as part of the expression of an opinion. At a time when truth and respect are in short supply in our national discussions, it is up to us to "do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)

Deb Coel
South Burlington

Vote Yes

On March 7 South Burlington residents voted down the school budget. By voting "no" many of us chose to register our anger and disapproval, mainly with school budget increases and the Rebel name change. The school board has recognized the message sent by the voters regarding increasing taxes and has responded with a budget that is a decrease in the tax rate without cutting anything that directly affects students.

The school board however, has shown no indication that continuing to vote down the school budget would result in a reversal in the Rebel name change. While the school board was able to spare students from a direct impact in this new budget, it is unlikely they would be able to maintain that commitment if the budget fails to pass on April 6.

South Burlington is known throughout the state and nation for its leadership in education and the quality of the programs delivered to its students. Families move to South Burlington for its schools, and we also attract many paying students from other towns. However, due to rising class sizes, many of our children have been subjected to overcrowded classrooms. My own children and others are saying it's harder to concentrate and learn in these bigger classrooms. Research shows the same thing. Another "no" vote will further downgrade the quality of the education our children receive. We have other tools available to register our dissent and effect change that will not punish our children.

I care about our kids' education. If you do as well, then please make the effort to vote YES on the school budget. School budget votes can be decided by a handful of voters. You, the person reading this right now, can make a difference. Vote early at City Hall if you can't make it on April 6th. Thank you.

Steve Woodward
South Burlington

March 16, 2017

Leave the Name Alone

I would like to start my opinion with the definition of rebel; to fight or refuse to obey an established government or ruler – resist authority, control, or accepted behavior. This to me is teaching the students to form their own opinions or decisions and not be brainwashed by anyone. The name Rebel as it pertains to South Burlington High School (SBHS) means a chance to put forth maximum effort to better one self.

I had a son who graduated SBHS, became an Eagle Scout and troop leader. A grandson who graduated, became an Eagle Scout and is now in Special Forces in the military. I have a great grandson who was looking forward to going to SBHS next year, but is now rethinking this goal. He isn't looking forward to being one of the SBHS Sissies (oops Snowflakes).

Colchester Champs, Essex Hornets, Milton Yellow Jackets, CVU Red Hawks, Rutland Raiders, MMU Cougars, Rice Green Knights, and Burlington Sea Horses, all have proud action and power names for their schools and teams. For the authorities in South Burlington to take this away from the past as well as future students at SBHS is sacrilege as well as humiliating.

To take a proud academic and sports record away from the alumnus as well as future participants at SBHS, brands them sissies (oops snowflakes), and is so wrong on all levels. Just picture a sports page picture with the names of other high schools' Cougars, Hornets, etc. played the SBHS Sissies (oops Snowflakes). Humiliating. No incentive to really fight to win when they are made a laughing stock. These are teens who need a proud name to defend.

Leave the name alone or at least come up with something like "Badgers" or "Beavers," something that at least fights for survival like the Rebels. This school board sounds like a lukewarm group that won't defend the SBHS needs, they fold like a wet noodle.

Roxie Allen
South Burlington

Thank You South Burlington

After an election a candidate has many things to be grateful for. And I certainly do! So this is to thank my incredible team of supporters who made calls, stuffed envelopes, got signatures, did sign waves and in very cold weather stood for many hours at the polls...because they cared and believed in me.

I want to thank each resident who also believed in me and my dedication and integrity to represent them for the next two years. Thank you for taking the time to get to know who Pat Nowak really is. Thankyou for asking me questions when we met. Thank you for knowing that social media is only one means of hearing about a candidate and that meeting them face to face or phone calling can help clarify many misunderstandings.

I promise you that I will represent you in a fair and honest way. My integrity and your best interest will be foremost in my mind, and though we may have a few challenges we have so many more opportunities for greatness in South Burlington. It is an exciting time!

And what I ask in return is that you contact me when you have a concern. I pledge to help you in any way I can. Thank you again.

Pat Nowak
South Burlington City Councilor

March 9, 2017

Rebel Name Change

The issue of the Rebel mascot and team name at South Burlington High School (SBHS) has been simmering for many years. Indeed, it was an issue for some residents even at its inception. I was a member of the third class to graduate from SBHS ('64) and I remember the opposition of my parents when the name was chosen. It never felt "right" to have the confederate flag around the school, but I admit to not having been personally "activist" enough on the subject at the time. I wish we had gone in another direction from the start, but we can't change that now. What we can do is learn from this experience, as individual community members, as alumni, as a school. Hopefully our thinking about diversity, inclusion, and the value of all persons, can mature over time. Especially in these days when black shootings, xenophobia, immigrant-bashing, and fear are flaring up!

I believe that schools should be places where our best selves are modeled and cultivated. The time has come for South Burlington to let go of the Rebel name; it is past time. I applaud the students and school board who brought about this decision. This doesn't mean that we might not be sad about the loss of school identity. For me, it is somewhat like the UVM decision to drop the "Kake Walk." There were many enjoyable aspects to it and many were sad to see it go. But there was no longer a defensible reason to perpetuate a festival based on racial stereotyping and injustice. The same is true for the Rebels. It is possible to be sad and supportive of the decision to evolve into a new identity at the same time. I am a bit sad, yes, but I am more glad that our motto, "Building a Proud Tradition," just moved a bit closer to fulfillment. How about "The SB Pride" for a new team name?

Sarah L. Dopp
South Burlington

Congratulations

I just wanted to extend congratulations to the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School girls gymnastic team and their coaches for their first place finish at the state meet recently. They turned in sterling performances and made their community proud of their team and individual efforts. Way to go, girls!

Fred Kosnitsky
South Burlington

A Remarkable Community

As I read about Facebook groups and school board write-in candidates in response to the current school board's decision to retire the Rebel name, I find myself curious about what generates this passion. For many, I expect this reflects a powerful affiliation with their school and community, an affiliation I would guess came from formative and likely transformative experiences with peers, teammates, teachers, coaches, and counselors.

While we are now a more diverse community, in many ways we are the same community. Teachers care deeply about their students, team members are incredibly loyal to one another, actors and musicians come together to create extraordinary productions - many of us feel the same strong affiliation with this remarkable community.

And sometimes, students need to lead the adults. It is students who have been saying that while the Rebel name may not bother me, it does bother me that people I care deeply about, my friends, are offended by this name. Why would we not change? And faculty, who themselves have long identified as Rebels, also understand the importance of a school environment that is respectful and encouraging of all of our students, not just the simple majority. And it is because of these kind of voices that the school board and the superintendent were encouraged to look again at our moniker.

Certainly, it is the superintendent and school board's job to make a final decision about any change. This they have done. And it is our job, those of us who work in the schools on a day to day basis, to promote and provide an environment that invites young people to think deeply and speak out in ways that are challenging and respectful. We have been blessed in the past with these kinds of students, just as we are now, and we as faculty, students, and members of the larger community are better for it. I am proud to be a Rebel and shall be equally proud to be a soaring eagle, a mighty bear, or whatever else our community decides we shall be in our next generation.

Tim Wile

SBHS Director of Guidance

Thank You from The Angel Fund

Jane Stickney and I would like to give thanks to the community from the Angel Fund Holiday Gift Shop. Due to a recent illness, I am late in expressing our sincere thanks for your continuous support of the gift shop. Once again, it allowed many children to wake up Christmas morning with a smiles on their faces.

Your generosity as a community is much appreciated and it will allow us to help people who have financial needs during the 2017 year.

Anne Corley

South Burlington

February 23, 2017

Chittenden for City Council

I am writing to support Thomas Chittenden's bid for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. Tom and I share a profound sense of gratitude for having been raised in South Burlington and for now having the privilege of raising our own families here. Tom's city council service is an expression of that gratitude. He has served as an advocate for the best traditions and values of our community. He has proven himself a level-headed and thoughtful critic of proposed development. In short, he is committed to enriching our vibrant community while preserving its character. As a parent, as a homeowner, and as a neighbor in South Burlington, I give Thomas Chittenden's candidacy my highest endorsement.

Thomas Ahern

South Burlington

Chittenden for City Council

As a local business owner, I place a high value on understanding the economy of the city, region, state, and beyond. Without new economic development opportunities such as City Center, there is no room in state or local budgets to grow important social and infrastructure programs such as bike paths, roads, sidewalks, and a new library. Thomas Chittenden understands the importance of the economy and sees South Burlington as an important driver of the economy. His approach these past two years on the council has been consistent, thoughtful, and considerate of the importance of business in South Burlington. Thomas

understands the importance of our Vermont Air National Guard and supports its mission here in Vermont, which keeps hundreds of jobs in South Burlington that generate millions of dollars in economic activity. Tom has selflessly served the community and is always willing to meet with anyone who wants to sit down and talk about the issues facing our city; he wants to hear what is on our minds and he wants to represent our issues. Tom Chittenden has earned my vote this March and I hope that he earns yours as well.

*James Mount
South Burlington*

In Support of Chittenden

South Burlington is a wonderful community with many active and engaged residents who are willing and interested in serving on our city council. Thomas Chittenden is one of them. At a time when South Burlington is wrestling with what the future of our city will be and look like, his knowledge and experience as a current city councilor will be invaluable. I have seen him actively seek out the thoughts and opinions of multiple residents in order to better understand the diversity of perspectives that our residents hold. Growing up in South Burlington and now the father of three young children, he also understands the importance of maintaining the quality of life that makes South Burlington a city where families want to bring up their children.

I invite you to join me on March 7 in re-electing Thomas Chittenden to the city council.

*Ann Pugh-VT House of Representatives
South Burlington*

Leas for City Council

Very briefly, I endorse Jimmy Leas as the best candidate to be our next city councilor.

*Jim Maloney
South Burlington*

Re-elect Chittenden to City Council

I'm writing to urge South Burlington voters to re-elect Tom Chittenden to the South Burlington City Council. Tom is a native son whose family roots run deep in South Burlington for several generations. Tom grew up here attending South Burlington schools. He now resides on Dorset Street with his wife and three children.

Tom has the deepest interest in the future of our city, and is thoughtful and open minded in his decisions. He has the greatest concern that our citizens' rights and futures be protected. We have known Tom for many years and believe that our city will continue to benefit from his enlightened and "down to earth" approach to the many issues facing us in the future. Please support Tom with your vote.

*Gail Lang
South Burlington*

Support for Thomas Chittenden

Please join me in supporting Thomas Chittenden for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. Thomas is a collaborative leader committed to transparency in our local government. I have been impressed by Thomas' willingness to listen to community concerns and work toward solutions that benefit the residents of South Burlington. I urge you to vote to re-elect Thomas Chittenden on March 7.

Laurie Eddy

South Burlington

Supporting Tom Chittenden

Since he was first elected to the South Burlington City Council, Tom Chittenden has fulfilled his commitment to represent all residents with integrity, understanding, and advocacy. His excellent listening, communication, and leadership skills are evident with Tom's presence at various community meetings, school board meetings, task force meetings, and in his capacity as a city councilor.

Whether it be navigating the nuances of the TIF District, City Center, affordable housing, open space and school/city partnerships, Tom always seeks to hear and learn from his neighbors and others committed to making South Burlington a welcoming and vibrant community. Tom is committed to having a positive impact on our community. He is a contributor to our community at a personal level, a person who rolls up his sleeves to keep South Burlington a great place to live. You will find him working at City Fest, Green Up Day, and volunteering at fundraisers to benefit others.

We are fortunate in South Burlington to have many wonderful, dedicated, and committed people willing to run for elected office. We are also fortunate to have Tom Chittenden with his proven leadership. He has earned my respect and my vote for re-election. Please vote for Tom so that he may continue to provide the guidance and stewardship we need to keep South Burlington one of the best places to live in Vermont.

Bruce Chattman
South Burlington

Vote for Chittenden

Thomas Chittenden has shown himself to be a valuable member of our city council. He listens to questions and concerns, and responds appropriately. I urge you to vote to re-elect him so that he can continue his commitment and hard work for our city. Thank you.

Laura DeMaroney
South Burlington

Langrock Excellent Choice for Council

We are indeed privileged to have in the running, a fully qualified, excellent candidate for our city council, Katie Langrock. I have known Katie since she moved in next door to me 23 years ago.

I know her to be honest, intelligent, concerned, and a community-service involved person. In addition to raising two outstanding children to mirror these same qualities, Emily and Peter Camardo who are well-known South Burlington High School athletes and scholars, she has an outstanding work record.

For the past four years, Katie has been chief operating officer at Commando, a design/manufacturing garment business based right here in South Burlington. Before that she was with Vermont Teddy Bear for 16 years, rising through the ranks to vice president of operations.

Katie has served as a volunteer in various capacities at Spectrum Youth and Family Services, CSB Youth Hockey, and as president of the Charlotte/Shelburne Rotary. She's a native Vermonter which adds to the depth of her love and understanding of our community.

Katie is seeking the three-year seat on the city council. I'm delighted to support her because I trust her. I know the exceptional level of dedication and commitment she'll bring to the job. She supports renewable energy, sustainable job growth, responsible development of our City Center, and she is an advocate of open space conservation. She's fully qualified and eager to serve.

With all her experience, expertise, and a desire to serve us, Katie Langrock is my choice for the three-year seat on the South Burlington City Council. I hope you'll vote for her too on March 7, or in early voting. Thank you.

Monica Farrington
South Burlington

Mission of Peace and Friendship

When I served in the Peace Corps several years ago (RPCV, Cameroon, West Africa 1989-1990) I was shown respect, no discrimination, and I was welcomed as a foreigner. You may believe this is a stretch because we Americans were asked to live in other countries and share our abilities with them. However, in the same manner, Vermonters will embrace the mission of peace and friendship when we finally can welcome foreigners here again.

With respect and humility, I am pleased to see the determination of Vermonters who speak up on behalf of the refugees with an open hand. Thank you for your efforts.

Nancy Smith Tracy
South Burlington

Nowak for City Council

I have known Pat Nowak for many years and watched as she has served our entire community unselfishly for the past four years. She has been dedicated and made a big difference in how our city has operated. She is fiscally responsible, an advocate for smart growth and a watchdog for our tax dollars.

I have seen Pat work to help neighborhoods across our city, from Butler Farm to University Terrace to the Orchards and the Chamberlin area. She is a strong supporter of City Center which will be a jewel in our community. Its future vision includes housing, a new library, park space, and new additions to our grand list. We need Pat on the South Burlington City Council. We need her leadership, good judgment, and straightforward, no nonsense approach. I urge you to vote for Pat.

Pat Nowak is the choice.

Jay Pasackow
South Burlington

Reflections on the Rebel Name

Probably no one is more connected to the Rebel name and what it represents than me and my family. In the 70s, even our dog was named Rebel by our sons. I coached SBHS teams for many years and my wife, Barbara, originated and coached the Rebelettes marching team and the gymnastic team.

Arriving in 1969, we had no part in the original choice of the name. We set out to create a sense of healthy competitiveness and pride in school and community. We tried to establish that Rebel stood for integrity, that our teams would be well-trained, prepared, and handle victory and defeat with grace and equanimity. We were not perfect, of course, but we tried to discourage connections and references to Confederacy. No one officially connected to any of our teams ever carried a Confederate flag leading our football team onto the field. I have a DVD of a Rebelette performance which shows our 1970 team's pregame entrance; there is no flag. We naively thought that by changing the words to be acceptable, we could play "Dixie" as a lively entrance song. We soon were advised of the error of our ways and we stopped playing it. The emphasis was on developing sterling character in our players and living up to the tradition printed on the front of our school, "Building A Proud Tradition."

In looking at the picture of my 1986 football team, I remembered that they personified the Rebel spirit and way of being. They didn't have as much talent as some of their predecessors, but they carved out a winning record and got every bit out of themselves possible. They, like many SBHS athletes, paid a physical and emotional price to perform at a demanding level. These former athletes value that price they paid and the word "Rebel" is part of their identity. That's why they don't want to give up the name. As for myself, I don't pretend to know what's right or wrong. Since many opinions have come forth from people who only recently took up residence here, I thought my reflections might be useful.

Paul K. Jordan
SBHS Coach of Football and Softball, 1969-1990

Leas for City Council

I am writing in support of Jimmy Leas for South Burlington City Council. I have known him for many years, and I know he has put his energy into good causes over the years. In this case, he is being his usual honest and forthright self, and letting you know exactly where he stands on an important city issue before election. How many candidates actually do this?

South Burlington, along with Winooski and the greater Burlington area, is losing a big chunk of the few affordable neighborhoods we have. Some of us, who can least afford it, are losing the monetary value of our homes, as well as the value of investing years in our home, our neighborhood, and our community. How can we quietly let that happen to our neighbors and how could that possibly be in our city's best interest?

Lani Ravin

South Burlington

Support for Chittenden

I met Tom Chittenden in September of 2014 while volunteering together. He arrived, jumped onto our team, and proceeded to outwork us all. And that's Tom - energetic, strong, smart, and determined.

The next spring Tom ran for city council, perhaps "sprinted" would be more apropos. Unlike any other candidate I have ever seen, he was determined to knock on every door in the city – and must have reached nearly everyone. You would find him at the dump on Saturday mornings, at the DRB meetings Tuesday night gleaning all he could, having coffee with city department heads to learn their needs, serving spaghetti to the Cub Scouts, and more. Tom won the seat, and has never stopped working just as hard. Tom is absolutely dedicated to the city.

What you need to understand is that Tom works this hard with everything. Ask him how he feels about a subject and you are likely to get a position paper. Tom is an academic and lecturer at UVM, and he attacks everything with a profound desire to learn. If he is new to a subject, he'll approach a dozen people to get their viewpoints, he'll read all that's been written, and he'll grow his own approach.

Tom is dedicated to "service above self," so it's appropriate that he's a key member of the South Burlington Rotary. He lives this way and breathes community service, and his re-election to city council is selfless, rather than a need for power or position.

I encourage everyone to try to meet Tom Chittenden before the election. Make up your own mind. South Burlington is best served by Thomas Chittenden remaining on the city council.

*John Wilking
South Burlington*

In Support of Nowak and Chittenden

Two qualities needed to be a successful city council member are the ability to understand the issues affecting our city and the willingness to listen to the concerns of our residents. Pat Nowak and Tom Chittenden possess these qualities, among many others, which gives me nothing but confidence in their ability to serve South Burlington as city council members.

During my recent run for the House of Representatives, I developed a great respect for both Pat Nowak and Tom Chittenden. When meeting with them last fall, it was clear that they have a deep understanding of the major issues affecting South Burlington and I am confident that they will work for what is best for our great city.

I have no idea if either of them voted for me in November, but just the fact that they took time out of their busy lives, with work, family, and responsibilities to the council, to discuss the issues with a first time candidate, shows that they are dedicated and really care about the city and its future.

I encourage the voters of South Burlington to join me in supporting Pat Nowak and Tom Chittenden for re-election. We need these knowledgeable and qualified individuals on our council in order to continue the great work they do for our city.

*Sam Handy
South Burlington*

Support for Chittenden

The purpose of this letter is to support Mr. Thomas Chittenden for his re-election to the South Burlington City Council. I have known Thomas as a friend and a colleague at the University of Vermont for the past 10 years. Mr. Chittenden has solid integrity and work ethics. He has been of great value in important municipal discussions including city ordinances and budget planning. He is a good listener to the needs in our community. As a resident of South Burlington, I would like to have such a devoted community leader to continue serving in this important role. Please join me in voting for Thomas Chittenden.

*Kevin Chiang
South Burlington*

Vote for Langrock for City Council

I have known Katie Langrock for almost 20 years, she is a loyal, smart, energetic, and patient woman. We first met volunteering and the entire group was very thankful for Katie's ability to organize and implement a dependable system for us to follow. She led with dignity and we have all remained friends to this day. I cannot think of another person that I would so highly recommend to make decisions regarding my hometown and tax dollars. Please vote for Katie Langrock, she is a person of intelligence and reason, she is the right choice for city council!

*Phyllis Bartling
South Burlington*

Support for Nowak and Chittenden

I am writing this letter to support the re-election of Pat Nowak and Tom Chittenden. Pat and Tom support the balance of government which supports good growth and the concerns of the citizens all while keeping a tight fist on the spending. We all remember the council of the past and the problems we had in our city. With the problems we face like City Center, I want Pat and Tom on the council to be our voice. I like the direction of the council presently and I hope you will vote for the re-election of Pat and Tom in March.

*Tony Cairns
South Burlington business owner*

Leas for City Council

I am supporting Jimmy Leas for South Burlington City Council. My hope is that all members on the South Burlington City Council could work as a cohesive group in the best interest of South Burlington. It is healthy to have fresh council members who bring new ideas to the table and are not stuck in negative agendas, F-35, airport, etc. Jimmy has the skills and will be an asset to the council.

All councilors should be thanked for their service to the community.

*Rose Godard
South Burlington*

Support for Nowak

I would like to thank Pat Nowak for her relentless and honorable years of service to our city. I will be voting for Pat again. She has been the voice of reason, logic, and a true representation of the majority. She has been positive, kind, and respectful in the face of unjust and unfair attacks by other members of the council, as well as other individuals, including her opponent. She's always come out on top and has made a difference in our city. She never plays dirty politics. This city needs the voice of reason and common sense. Please join me in voting for Pat, such a wonderful human being as well as a top notch councilor who gets things done.

*Edith Hurer
South Burlington*

In Support of Chittenden

It is my pleasure to support Thomas Chittenden for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. During his tenure, Thomas has demonstrated a balanced perspective on the most important discussions in our community. He is transparent, open, and honest in both his communications and relationships, and strives to create a more collaborative decision-making process on the council. Thomas has earned my respect and, I believe, the confidence of the community to serve another term on the council.

*Lisa Ventriss
South Burlington*

Chittenden for Re-election

A friend for 12 years, I know Tom is kind, generous, thoughtful, and passionate about family and life in Vermont. I've found that he is reasoned, thoughtful, logical, and eager to engage in discussion on any issue he tackles. He is also approachable and willing to lend any insight or assistance.

I have been proud to have him represent all of the residents of South Burlington, myself included. And I believe Tom will continue strongly representing us and to be a fair and mindful advocate for all. I will cast my vote for Tom and invite you to join me.

*Jamieson Goodwin
South Burlington*

Re-elect Chittenden and Nowak to City Council

I have been a city resident for just over 20 years. I have been in city politics for 17 of those 20 years. I originally got into city politics after watching Pat Nowak work tirelessly morning, noon, and night on boards within the city, within the state, and in Montpelier. I watched her affect change and work tirelessly to the benefits of every city resident. It was her dedication that energized me to enter city politics five years ago.

I began working with Tom Chittenden. Again, I saw the same aspect; Chittenden working morning, noon, and night, board meeting after board meeting. Tom works on behalf of this city and its residents to every possible waking moment. I know all of this sounds absolutely amazingly over the top, but it's true. I have worked side-by-side with these people and saw for myself the dedication that a politician should have. I have seen for myself the intelligence and the emotion be put into every decision. It is my firm and learned opinion that Tom and Pat need to be returned to serve again on our city council

Dr. Patrick M. Benner, Sr.
South Burlington

Chittenden Goes the Extra Mile

It is heartening to see committed young people willing to expend enormous time and effort to be involved in local politics. I have long known Thomas Chittenden and have admired his character and commitment to family and community. He is always willing to go the extra mile to help others.

At the University of Vermont, Tom is a mentor and role model as well as a stellar professor. He has been voted Teacher of the Year by the students in the School of Business and currently serves as co-chair of the Faculty Senate Student Affairs Committee.

Although his schedule at the University and on the South Burlington City Council is demanding, Tom's first commitment is to his young family. Whether it's a South Burlington parks or community event or a UVM Catamount home hockey game, you'll probably see Tom in attendance and his three young children in tow.

Tom represents the best in our community. He stands tall in stature and character. On election day, return Thomas Chittenden to the South Burlington City Council for a second term.

Anne Averyt
South Burlington

Langrock for City Council

Please support Katie Langrock in her bid for city council. I have had the pleasure of serving with Katie on a non-profit board in South Burlington as well as interacting with her in her role as an active business leader in our community. She is always looking for an opportunity to give back to our community. Katie exhibits a strong work ethic and consistent dedication to the task at hand. She is a thinker and a listener with an ability to handle the logistics in a calm, efficient, and thoughtful manner. Her background and personal attributes, combined with a fiscal awareness, make her well suited to serve as councilor. As Katie is an avid outdoor enthusiast, I know she will work to support and improve South Burlington's parks and recreational paths. Please cast your vote for Katie Langrock for city council.

Ellery Perkinson
South Burlington

Re-elect Chittenden for City Council

I have attended several city council meetings over the past year and I can attest to Tom's passion and commitment to listen thoroughly to all speakers and his great insight to issues concerning to the residents and business of South Burlington. Tom has demonstrated integrity, fairness, and a steadfast resolve for the furtherance of this city. When it is warranted, Tom will conduct on-site visitation to gather additional information pertinent to the issue at hand.

Jack C. Kearnan
South Burlington

Thanks, Tom Chittenden

For the past three years, my business partner and I have owned and operated the Church Street Tavern in downtown Burlington. Now that we have opened our second location, Tavern II on Shelburne Road, Tom Chittenden's work on the city council gives me confidence and faith in the future of this city. I appreciate his energy, honesty and practical way he approaches the city's complex needs. Tom is a hardworking family man and a true community leader. Tom has earned my vote on Town Meeting Day.

Stephen Parent
South Burlington

Vote Langrock and Leas

Every once in a while, something really fortunate happens and we all must act. This is the case with our upcoming city council election. We have two new faces running against incumbents who have proven to be blockers and are not looking out for the citizens of South Burlington.

Pat Nowak has managed to place herself on/in every committee possible as she promotes herself as a representative of the people. But in her work as representative to the airport commission, I believe she withheld important information to our city council. Why is she promoting home buyouts rather than working with her fellow city councilors to bring about noise mitigation solutions such as sound walls, berms, noise deflectors, etc.? I am so tired of her saying that she lives in the neighborhood, yet she sides with the airport and its expansion plans at every turn. Jimmy Leas would be a representative of the people. He has a record of advocating for we residents and our investments in our homes and ways of life. Vote for Jimmy Leas.

Tom Chittenden, in my opinion, never takes a stand on anything; he prefers referendums to making clear statements on where he stands on issues. He blocks, insults, and repeats the same mantra when solutions/resolutions are presented to the council, "Bring it to the people for a vote." Really?

Katie Langrock is a strong, decisive candidate who will go to bat for us. She realizes that people are the backbone of the city, as well as the businesses, and without a strong community of residents, we are nothing. Vote for Katie Langrock.

Vote Jimmy Leas and Katie Langrock in to get our city refocused on what really matters, the people!

Carmine Sargent
South Burlington

City Council Needs Langrock's Business Experience

When assessing someone running for city council, I ask, "What added value would this person bring to the council?" With Langrock, her experience managing local manufacturing businesses, that produce products you and I actually buy, stands out. No current city councilor has this experience. Councilors are a retired nonprofit executive, two university-level teachers, an engineer, and a financial services/insurance specialist. Also, Langrock's business experience is well matched to her priorities and the city's needs.

Katie wants to grow our tax base, not our tax rates, by helping South Burlington attract the kind of businesses that will enable young families to come here and stay. Plus, the businesses she wants to nurture or bring here must pay livable wages, provide good benefits, be good for the environment, and lead in energy efficiency. With her extensive experience as a leader in local manufacturing firms, Katie has the know-how the council needs to help make this happen.

Another Langrock priority is to bring housing costs into line with folks' incomes. Again, she knows firsthand how the high cost of housing locally makes it difficult for companies to thrive and grow. She has been unable to hire folks at firms she managed once the prospective employee learns the high cost of housing. She will use her many connections, proven talent, and notable work ethic to address this situation.

We need Langrock on the city council. Please join me in voting Katie early or on March 7.

Sandy Dooley
South Burlington

Support and Re-Elect Chittenden

I am writing this letter to encourage all residents of the South Burlington community to re-elect Thomas Chittenden to another term on the South Burlington City Council. He is strongly committed to the South Burlington community and the quality of life that we enjoy as a community. I have always found Tom to be accessible and quick to respond to a phone call or email. He believes in compromise and collaborative decision making but is not reluctant to speak to an issue when it does not serve the best interest of the South Burlington community.

Tom has been a champion in my opinion for key issues such as the City Center, protecting green spaces, city budget considerations, and fostering a working relationship with FAA and Burlington International Airport and the review of city ordinances making them practical and acceptable to the community. He considers the transparency of the actions of the city council a must in order to maintain the trust and confidence of our citizens.

Tom has been a strong voice for support of the Vermont Air National Guard and the basing of the F-35 aircraft a real key to the long range success and mission of the Vermont Air National Guard. I have been impressed by his thoughtful and informed

decision making on all issues and I am confident that when re-elected to the city council he will continue to serve the community with the same vigor and professionalism. Please vote for Thomas Chittenden for city council on March 7, 2017.

*Ken Boyd
South Burlington*

Vote for Tom Chittenden

I have lived in South Burlington for over 40 years and during those years I've seen many dedicated city council members. It's refreshing to see a motivated person like Tom Chittenden continue that tradition of devoting so much of his energy to our community.

Tom has taken time out from his personal life to attend and support numerous community events. He has also done the same to help our citizens. For example, he took the initiative to address the concerns of the citizens living in the area of East Terrace. Their quality of life had been dramatically changed due to family homes converted into apartments for college students. Those changes caused negative impacts on the neighborhood. Tom impressed me when he took a leadership role as a city council member by organizing a committee to focus on the problems associated in-part with East Terrace. He held multiple meetings including a panel discussion with our chief of police, UVM officials, Burlington officials, and South Burlington professionals to discuss improvements to our city nuisance ordinance. Tom went one step further by getting involved in a yearly walkabout project to meet with some of the college students in the area of East Terrace. He encouraged them and some of the property owners to do their part to improve the quality of life for the neighborhood.

In closing, I must say that I'm extremely proud of Tom Chittenden, who I found is willing to go out of his way to listen to our citizens and value their opinions. I hope that on March 7 you will join me in voting for Tom Chittenden so he can continue his second term of serving our community as a dedicated member of our city council.

*Leo Nadeau
South Burlington*

Support for Chittenden

I will be voting for Thomas Chittenden again this March as he has proven to be a professional, dedicated, hardworking, and one of the best city councilors yet. I thank him for his admirable dedication and resolve. He has always been on the side of the people. He is a top supporter of our Green Mountain Boys. In such negative circumstances as there have been many this past cycle, he has always taken the high road and has come out on top with positivity and common sense. The city needs Thomas. Please join me in voting for Thomas Chittenden.

*Faruk Hurer
South Burlington*

Langrock for City Councilor

I will not vote for Tom Chittenden on March 7. In my opinion, City Councilor Chittenden has exhibited unseemly behavior in his role as councilor, unjustifiably discrediting the city lawyer for bias when a discussion was not going the way Chittenden wished during a council meeting. That was the worst of it but he verbally abused others without cause out of the same frustration. As a spectator in the audience, I actually felt embarrassed by such inappropriate and unsettling behavior. I do not think he has the temperament to continue as a city councilor where collegiality is of paramount importance when having difficult discussions.

Furthermore, Chittenden is too wishy-washy, indecisive, in council meetings that I have attended. Instead of stepping up to the plate to make decisions he wants to have a public referendum on most everything. What a cop-out for a person elected to make decisions for South Burlington citizens.

My bet is on Katie Langrock, who has the experience, stature, and steadiness as a former Teddy Bear Company COO and as current COO of Commando women's wear, to make a good councilor in these difficult times.

*Ray Gonda
South Burlington*

In Support of Chittenden and Nowak

I am writing in support of Thomas Chittenden and Pat Nowak for city council. Tom Chittenden is a thoughtful and committed council member. He cares about our community and will continue to provide open and fair representation. Pat Nowak is also

committed to our city government and those who live here. I am particularly disappointed in her opponent's approach to campaigning. Mr. Leas has brought a negative atmosphere to this campaign and filled it with half-truths and innuendos.

Peter Taylor
South Burlington

Chittenden for City Council

I support Tom Chittenden for city council. I went to South Burlington High School with Tom, Class of 95, go Rebels! Tom and I have been friends for as long as I can recall. I can tell you he is a good man who works hard and cares about this city. He is putting the time in on the council listening to residents and working to help find solutions to make our community a better place. Please join me in supporting Tom Chittenden on March 7th!

Constantinos Michaelides
South Burlington

Vote for Jimmy Leas

It's clear to me that Pat Nowak has failed in her duty to represent South Burlington and report the information she is privy to in Airport Commission meetings regarding the home buy-outs, information we are all entitled to know. Personally, I'm tired of listening to her excuses.

She's been investigated by the state for violating campaign finance laws. Turns out, that South Burlington voters didn't know about Nowak's 2013 violations in 2013 or 2015, but it's 2017, and the truth is known. She settled with the state instead of contesting the decision. She must have really wanted that seat, but what is she using it for?

What we really need is leadership that shines a light on what's going on with the airport's land grab, but there is a choke hold on the truth that starts with Pat Nowak. It appears that she doesn't represent the people who put her in the city council and instead is hiding the information we need to know. It's time we woke up.

Vote for Jimmy Leas. He is running for her seat, and I for one am ready for a change. Vote Jimmy Leas because we need someone on the Airport Commission who will finally tell us the truth, before they turn South Burlington into an airport parking lot.

Robin Burton
South Burlington

February 16, 2017

A Vote of Confidence for Chittenden and Nowak

Election season is upon us. Many are still reeling from the outcome of the presidential election and the new administration's policies. On any given day I experience a range of emotions from concern to anger to fear and shock. What a scary world we live in. How did we get here? What can we do about it?

We'd like to think we're different. These behaviors would never be our behaviors! In most cases or normal circumstances, we are civil and respectful to one another, but who remembers what "normal" is supposed to be like? When the time comes for us to "walk the talk," how do we handle our differences and reconcile them to achieve productive outcomes?

In our small city we have the opportunity to interact directly with our elected officials. You can talk with them and if you listen, understand clearly what their opinions and positions are. We don't tolerate third parties providing "alternative facts!"

I've always found Tom Chittenden and Pat Nowak to be attentive listeners who communicate honestly. They work tirelessly. Council meetings are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the time they invest on our behalf. The only "agenda" they have is serving our community to make it better!

This is not an issues oriented letter. It's a character assessment. I trust Tom and Pat. With trust you can sleep easier and accomplish a great deal. I encourage you to vote for Tom Chittenden and Pat Nowak!

Michael Simoneau
South Burlington

Change is Progress

I am extremely disheartened to witness the backlash against the school board's decision to retire the Rebel name. Other schools have changed their school's nicknames and survived just fine. It comes down to a "would you rather" question. Would you rather insist on maintaining a school name because it represents a fond tradition or would you rather make the small sacrifice to enable everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in their own school? It seems like a no-brainer to me. Moreover, the idea that this decision should be up to the voters seems wrong-headed to me. We elect the school board members to do what is best for the kids. And besides, history has taught us the dangers that can come from a "tyranny of the majority." Let's move on already and work on creating a cool new mascot and name!

Kathryn Fox
South Burlington

Langrock for City Council

I wish to share with you my thoughts about one of the candidates for city council, Katie Langrock. I am very impressed with her background as a successful business woman at the Vermont Teddy Bear Company and now Commando, a local South Burlington apparel company. She has excelled in leadership positions at both businesses.

Katie has also been active in our greater community serving as board president for Spectrum Youth and Family Services, a wonderful organization that supports youth at risk or who are experiencing homelessness and addiction. She served as president of the Charlotte Shelburne Rotary as well as board member of both Danforth Pewter and SunCommon.

Many of you may know her as a past vice president of Chittenden South Burlington (CSB) Youth Hockey's board of directors and her active participation in all things hockey at Cairns Arena. Her two college aged children, Emily and Pete Camardo, kept her active and involved in Orchard, Tuttle and South Burlington High School activities.

What appeals to me most is her ability and experience in making deliberate and thoughtful decisions throughout her working career. As I have thought about the qualities important to a fully functioning city council, her confidence and skill to make tough decisions would be a tremendous addition to the council.

I hope you will join me and vote for Katie Langrock for city council on March 7.

Ted Riehle
South Burlington

St. Michael's College Exit Poll Survey

The question about switching to a mayor in the St. Michael's College Exit Poll survey was constructed incorrectly. It asked if we would prefer a mayor or the current city council. That is not the issue at all. The choice is not between the city council and a mayor. All cities that have mayors also have city councils. It would be odd to have a mayor and no city council. The actual choice is between a mayor and a city manager. We currently have a city manager form of government where the city council hires the city manager and the city manager hires staff and manages the city.

If we were to switch to a mayoral form of government the mayor would have to be a resident of South Burlington and would be directly elected by all the citizens of South Burlington. We would still have a separately elected city council who would still set policy for the city. The mayor, like the city manager now, would be responsible for the day to day management of the city.

We might consider expanding our city council and electing them by wards as Burlington and many cities do. Currently our five-person council is elected citywide. Representing wards or districts would keep them more in touch with their neighborhoods and make election and re-election much less costly and stressful than it is now.

Having a mayor has advantages. Currently, with our city manager form of government, our city tends to be directed by a professional class who work for the city manager and essentially have their jobs for life. They advise the city council on policy and the citizen volunteer council usually takes their advice.

A directly elected mayor could bring in their own staff, as mayors often do, and chart new directions for the city that the citizenry would determine with their vote.

I was hoping the exit poll survey would open this discussion and we could express our feelings about it. Unfortunately, it missed the point and the opportunity for measuring community opinion was lost.

Paul Engels
South Burlington

Re-elect Nowak

I wanted to share my experience working with council member Pat Nowak during city council meetings regarding the BTV Airport Home buyout program in the Chamberlin neighborhood. For a lot of people, this is a challenging and complex situation. Through the process, Pat has been supportive, passionate, thoughtful, and genuinely concerned for each person's circumstance. Pat's strong commitment as the city representative to maintain a productive relationship with the BTV Airport Commission is critical. I appreciate the collaborative approach and respectfulness Pat has shown, and I believe this will continue if she is re-elected.

Kim Gaboriault
South Burlington

Support for Langrock

I am writing in support of Katie Langrock for South Burlington City Council. I have known Katie for many years and can think of no one who is a better advocate for employees and families than Katie.

As COO at Vermont Teddy Bear, Katie was an enthusiastic and inspiring leader, which I witnessed firsthand when I worked as a seasonal warehouse employee. As the COO at Commando, Katie has provided jobs and mentored young people, including my daughter, who has worked there during summer breaks and school vacations. As a board member of Spectrum, Katie has shown her deep commitment to the youth of Chittenden County. Katie has raised two amazing children who were outstanding members of the South Burlington High School community and who clearly respect her and share her commitment to improving the world around them.

Katie is a fair-minded thinker who makes fact-based decisions, and she knows how to balance a budget and read a financial statement, qualities South Burlington needs right now.

Please join me in voting for Katie on March 7.

Frank "Guyer" Geier
South Burlington

Re-elect Nowak

I write to encourage everyone to vote in the March 7 election. Voting ensures that your voice will be heard on matters that are important to our city. To that end, I recommend you consider Pat Nowak for South Burlington City Council. Pat is an experienced, thoughtful, and dedicated public servant. Her agenda is limited to serving the citizens of our city to the best of her abilities. She is an advocate for expanding our non-residential tax base to balance the Grand List. Her support for City Center, University Mall redevelopment, and other opportunities in the more urban areas will bring the smart growth the city needs. She has been strongly in favor of a new library and city measures to encourage housing that working families and younger residents can afford. Above all, she has been unafraid to question new proposals and to be cautious about unintended consequences of cost. In a fast moving, challenging environment of change it will be important to keep Pat's experience working for us.

Nancy Simson
South Burlington

Re-Elect Chittenden

Councilor Tom Chittenden works tirelessly for our city and deserves your vote for re-election. His drive, commitment, and openness to our residents, our civic boards, and our process allows him to find thoughtful, practical solutions drawn from these many sources. He listens and contributes positively, understanding the most basic functions and concerns of our citizen-led boards/committees.

For example, he tackled the student-rental problem within the East Terrace/Spear Street neighborhood. In September, he introduced himself to each group of students, to welcome and discuss their neighborhood responsibility. He held forums to work with the parking problems and to hear residents' concerns about the housing changes.

This diligence is a small measure of how he gets out and listens to all sides, working to craft and implement sound policies rather than reacting reflexively from afar or with pre-conceived views. South Burlington's image is heightened through his thoughtful and reasoned approach. He is selfless and honest with the utmost integrity for bettering South Burlington, its place and its people. He is steadfast in demanding the same of his fellow councilors and commissioners, too. Knowing his family, his character, and his widely respected work at UVM, we could not elect a finer representative. Thank you, Tom, for working so effectively and wanting to continue your service!

Chris Shaw
South Burlington

Vote Langrock for City Council

I am checking the box near Katie Langrock's name on the ballot for South Burlington City Council and you should too. When you check the box, you are voting for a solid candidate, like her name suggests.

For 11 years, I worked side by side with Langrock at Vermont Teddy Bear Company. She rose to the top in that organization, eventually leading as chief operating officer. She did it by listening, caring, working hard, and coming to the table prepared. I sat in hundreds of meetings with Langrock on budgets, planning, construction, employee benefits, etc. I can tell you she arrives with her homework done, she's attentive, can look at all sides of solutions and does this with energy I personally admire. She's fit. I can see her working side by side with community members like you, schools, airport, transportation, open space, zoning, employers, any group with ease. She's a quick study and is tireless, two attributes essential to a member of the council. One time she gave me this advice at work "You should walk around a number of times a day, so you can find out what's going on over there." Langrock will do that for South Burlington. She will walk around getting to know you and what your needs are, and bring it to the council. Vote for Langrock, and help the City of South Burlington move forward. Thank you.

Anita Germain
South Burlington

Chittenden for City Council

This letter is in support of Thomas Chittenden for South Burlington City Council. Thomas has a high degree of integrity, cares about the future of our community, and is a good voice for the importance of quality education. His willingness to listen to citizens and act on their behalf is an admirable quality and his strong family connections to South Burlington will always guide him to the right decision. I strongly recommend that he be re-elected to the South Burlington City Council.

David Rice
South Burlington

February 9, 2017

To the Editor

Mr. Leas' formal announcement contains misinformation regarding my actions on the City Council and I want to make sure the record is set straight. I won't allow his misinformation to be regarded as true.

On May 16, 2016, a vote taken at the airport commission meeting was regarding the acceptance of a grant that would complete a buyout for 5 previously designated and approved property purchases. These properties were part of the original home acquisition list and not "yet more homes" as Mr. Leas claims. Mr. Leas further claims that this property acquisition was not shared with the city council by me. In fact, as the minutes and the recording of the May 16, 2016 meeting clearly show, I did inform the council of this action during discussion of outstanding home acquisitions. The entire council was in attendance that evening and therefore were reminded of this scheduled purchase on the very day of the vote in question.

I am seriously disappointed that during this campaign, mistruths are being published in various formats that are misleading and misinforming the good and honest people of the City of South Burlington.

Pat Nowak
City Councilor

Support Langrock for City Council

My wife, Martha, and I have been neighbors with Katie Langrock for 23 years and our kids all grew up together. She is from a wonderful, community active family and grew up in Cornwall, Vermont. Katie is a fantastic business executive, an independent thinker, decision maker, a fiscally responsible individual, and will serve our community well. Katie and her family have hosted great, memorable neighborhood gatherings through these 23 years in South Burlington. Please join us in supporting Katie Langrock for South Burlington City Council.

John Akey

South Burlington

Cast Your Vote for Chittenden

Please support Tom Chittenden in his re-election bid for South Burlington City Council. Tom has worked tirelessly to understand the many aspects of our city government, attending meetings to learn. He has been intricately involved as a councilor with improving ordinances, representing South Burlington on the CCTA/GMT board to improve service to South Burlington, specifically Tilley Drive. His opinions are clearly expressed and he is always open to conversation about them. Please cast your vote for Tom in the upcoming election, he will continue to serve us well.

*Liz Robitaille
South Burlington*

In Support of Chittenden

I am writing in support of Tom Chittenden to the three-year seat on the South Burlington City Council. Tom is a fair and balanced member of the city council who looks out for the interests and needs of all residents. His work in the past years has been solid and has helped the city make progress on CCTA service and the City Center while doing his best to keep the city affordable. I also appreciate the way he listens to the concerns of all citizens and applies good common sense to all issues - from our nuisance ordinances to the airport issues. Please consider giving your vote to Tom.

*Michelle Cannon
South Burlington*

City Council Debate

On February 22, there will be a debate between the four candidates for two seats on the City Council: Tom Chittenden, Katie Langrock, James Leas and Pat Nowak. It will take place in the cafeteria of the high school from 7:00 to 9:00p.m.. It is sponsored by the SBHS Debate Team and I have agreed to moderate the forum.

Unlike the tone of the recent Presidential debates where “no holds barred” personal attacks seemed to be the rule, these city debates are always characterized by civility and courteousness. Candidates for local office and residents alike are sensitive to the fact that serving our community as an elected official is often a demanding and thankless task and every courtesy and benefit of the doubt is accorded to candidates willing to serve. Negativity in these campaigns can be especially destructive in a small community and so the focus of these debates is on the candidate’s positions on the central issues facing the city.

If you have suggestions for questions for the four candidates please submit them to Brandon Lee and William Wong of the Debate Team at: sbdebatequestions@gmail.com. We shall select 4 of these for “starter questions” before we open the floor to the public for their questions.

Please attend!

*Vince Bolduc
South Burlington*

Support for Chittenden

I came to know Tom Chittenden when I was appointed to the South Burlington City Council in 2014. I recognized his unique talent and sincerity. Since his election in 2015, he has shown that he is well-prepared and well-tempered for the work on the council. He has been a voice of compromise which is often needed on certain topics. I am voting for Tom Chittenden. He’s been a firm supporter of our efforts to bring more affordable housing to the city and preserve what we have for our working families. He is an advocate for a new library in City Center. Thanks to him our City Center is moving forward. The TIF district he has helped shape is a low-cost, low-risk method to fund these improvements. There is now private sector interest in development that will help pay for City Center public improvements. With the added potential for a community performance center in a redeveloped U Mall there is much that will require Tom’s wise stewardship. I also trust his commitment to keeping our property taxes in line.

*John Simson
South Burlington*

South Burlington’s Bernie

Like Jimmy Leas and many other Vermonters, I too have been inspired and energized by Bernie. We need good people in government, and that’s why I’m supporting Jimmy for city council.

I personally know both individuals who are seeking the two-year council seat: Jimmy Leas and Pat Nowak. I was on the city council with Pat, and I worked alongside Jimmy doing social justice activism work. Their positions differ greatly.

Jimmy is our “Bernie.” He puts people first, and is not afraid to speak truth to power. For Jimmy, ethical behavior is paramount. We need integrity and courage now more than ever.

Jimmy shares my passion for protecting our natural environment and being proactive in combating climate change. He is committed to reducing our energy consumption, and replacing fossil fuels with solar power.

Jimmy shares my concern for the people trapped in the military jet noise around the airport. The people take priority over airport wants. It is irresponsible to ignore the impacts that military jets have on us, which will only get worse with the F35, and do nothing to stop it. Jimmy knows it can be stopped. He believes we best support our military members by keeping them in Vermont, and supplying them with equipment that is safe and does not harm neighborhoods.

Jimmy sees running for councilor as a patriotic duty. Patriots question and challenge and oppose injustices. Patriotism is not blind obedience to government pronouncements.

I'm voting for Jimmy Leas. I hope you will as well.

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

Langrock for City Council

I write today in support of the election of Katie Langrock for the South Burlington City Council. I have had the pleasure of knowing Katie for more than a decade. In those years, I have seen many different sides of Katie, each of which exemplify an important trait that makes Katie stand out as the number one candidate for a seat on our city council. In many of her positions in our community, Katie has been a role model of leadership. I saw her ability to lead as she served as vice president of CSB Youth Hockey, an organization that I was a part of for ten years. Today she models excellence in leadership as she successfully serves as chief operating officer of Commando in South Burlington. Katie will be an excellent councilwoman for South Burlington's small businesses of which we are proud.

I see her genuine desire to help others as she serves as the board president of Spectrum Youth and Family Services, an organization with a mission to empower young adults to reach their full potential. She has participated in every Spectrum Sleep Out event, a testament to her longing to better our community. In my years at SBHS, I got to know Katie even more, as she could often be found lending a hand to the SBHS men's hockey team and supporting a variety of school clubs.

What stands out to me the most is Katie's ability to instill these important traits of leadership and service in myself and others. I have had the pleasure of serving with her children, Emily and Peter, in various ways at SBHS from athletics, to student council, and beyond. She has taught us the importance of taking action to build a better community. Katie knows what is best for everyone in our community and she knows the hard work it takes to get it done!

There is no doubt that Katie Langrock will make a great addition to the South Burlington City Council. I am looking forward to voting for her on March 7 and I hope you will too!

Adam Weinheimer
South Burlington

Langrock - Rock Solid

I have known Katie Langrock as a friend and neighbor for over 20 years. Our kids were close friends growing up and I have witnessed, over the years, Katie's kind and committed approach to all she is involved in. Whether it is the neighborhood food drive, running a multi-million international business, or competing in our Vermont City Marathon, Katie goes above and beyond to accomplish her goals.

Having worked with the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce for over 25 years, I have seen what our businesses and our residents love about Chittenden County and Katie embodies it all. The South Burlington City Council will be made stronger and more independent with the experience Katie brings to the table. She is stable, smart, and balanced and knows what it takes to make our community thrive. I look forward to her thoughtfully and respectfully addressing the issues and working collaboratively toward solutions.

On the lighter side, my favorite moments with Katie are when we meet on the bike path or in our parks. She is truly one who appreciates the recreational life we SBers cherish. From improving our bike and pedestrian accessibility to building strong relations between our businesses, airport, and residential communities, I'm confident she will bring great results for South Burlington.

Katie Langrock has the drive and the heart and soul it takes to be a successful city council member. Please join me in voting for Katie Langrock for South Burlington City Council on March 7.

Lisa Quinlan
South Burlington

South Burlington Needs Chittenden

Tom Chittenden is my choice for South Burlington City Council. He has done an outstanding job on council for his past term. He is smart, hardworking, fearless, and persistent in finding the best solutions for South Burlington residents. I remember him as a volunteer firefighter and now he is a business school instructor at UVM. He has always volunteered and sought to serve his community, colleagues, friends, and family. If you know Tom, I am sure you have been affected positively by his joy and genuine interest in you. South Burlington is fortunate to have his effort and experience. Please vote to re-elect Tom Chittenden.

Elizabeth Goldberg
South Burlington

Support Chittenden

I have known Tom Chittenden for several years since he joined the South Burlington Rotary Club. I can attest to Tom's commitment, sense of service, and the value that he provides to our community. Tom is a great supporter of Rotary's mission to our community and has worked hard to make events such as the CityFest celebration a success. I view him as a very dependable individual who recommends thoughtful actions and processes to achieve goals, a must for a city councilor. He is creative, technologically savvy, and process driven, and has no agenda other than to make South Burlington a great place to live and work. Please support Tom in the upcoming election.

Michael Keller
South Burlington

Langrock for City Council

It is my absolute pleasure to recommend my friend Katie Langrock for city council in South Burlington. I have known Katie for five years. Our children, Kayla Gilding and Peter Camardo first introduced us and we have been good friends ever since.

I truly admire Katie's ambition and her ability to see the best in everyone and every situation. She is an extremely loyal and dependable person. She is not limited to a specific political agenda in running for city council. When asked why she is running, her answer was simple, "I want to give back to our community for all that I have received."

Katie would bring a fresh outlook to the council to help solve difficult situations. She is not afraid to try new things and experience new adventures and she has the unique ability to engage others and bring them out of their comfort zones to find solutions. Katie truly listens to others and is compassionate to their needs. She is a proven business leader in the community and knows how to accomplish the goals she sets. If Katie says she is going to do something, she does it.

Please join me in voting for Katie Langrock on March 7.

Lori Gilding
South Burlington

Re-elect Chittenden

I am writing to urge you to join me in re-electing Tom Chittenden to the South Burlington City Council on March 7. He is dedicated to the city which he grew up in and is hard-working, driven, and honest. While serving on the city council, he has given his time and perspective in a collaborative, transparent, and open manner. He has an open mind and is not afraid of compromise. Over the last two years, Tom has been involved in important discussions on the budget, the city center plans, caring for our open space and more. He was involved in all recent ordinance reviews making them more sensible and citizen-friendly. If re-elected, I believe Tom will continue to commit to pursuing long-term solutions to the on-going airport issues, focus on what can be done to ensure healthy competition for trash collection, and advocate for more affordable living in South Burlington. He will continue to serve on the city council with commitment in a transparent, honest, and open manner. Please vote for Tom Chittenden on March 7.

Debbie Ruppel
South Burlington

Chittenden Has Earned Another Term

I have never written a letter to the editor before. This is to express my support for Thomas Chittenden for South Burlington City Council. He has children in the schools and family ties to South Burlington for generations. I believe that his diligent work and voting record are all for the betterment of South Burlington, with no ulterior motives. I also strongly agree with him to not use taxpayer funds to fight the F-35. While we have become friendly, Thomas is always a gentleman, and a man of his word. I can think of no reason to vote for change for his seat on the city council.

Howard Weisburgh
South Burlington

Chittenden for City Council

I grew up on Dorset Street with my cousin Tom Chittenden and can tell you he is good for South Burlington. He is good for business. He is good for families and he is good for balanced discussion and decision-making by council. Tom keeps his eye on the ball and head in the game. He is results oriented, collaborative, hardworking and he works to serve the greater needs of the city. As a South Burlington business owner, I value his dedication and commitment to listening to the community and working to solve the problems our city faces with a friendly and optimistic attitude. On a lighter note, who else shows up to Rotary meetings at 7:30 a.m. to talk about the town's needs? This guy does. He's dedicated. Please vote for my cousin Tom Chittenden on March 7.

Robert Chittenden
South Burlington

Re-elect Chittenden for City Council

I am writing in support of Tom Chittenden for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. He always puts the best interests of the South Burlington residents first. He is a champion of due process and will fight against those who try to take advantage or impose their will on others. He has a vision for South Burlington and will work in a collaborative and thoughtful manner to accomplish this. Tom was dedicated, dependable, and accessible in his first term and will continue to be if re-elected. He is a true Vermonter with real Vermont values. I urge you to please join me in voting for Tom Chittenden for South Burlington City Council on March 7.

Diane Zeller
South Burlington

February 2, 2017

Vote for Langrock for City Council

I am writing to endorse Katie Langrock for the city council. I had the pleasure of working with Katie on the Chittenden South Burlington (CSB) Hockey Association where she served as vice president for many years. She was a consensus builder and someone who did the homework to understand the details of the organization. Katie always worked to put forward the best interests of CSB and was open to the entire CSB community as their ice scheduler.

Katie has also volunteered for Spectrum Youth and Family Services as well as the Rotary, all while raising two terrific children, Emily and Peter Camardo, who were leaders in their respective classes and teams at South Burlington High School. And her full time work was being chief operating officer of two successful local businesses, Vermont Teddy Bear and Commando.

Katie will bring reasonable discourse on sustainable job growth and housing; issues that will attract and keep young people and families in town. Also on her list of priorities: pedestrian and bike access and safety, open space conservation, and budget investments that support tax-revenue growth. Lastly, Katie will direct a City Center policy that is pro-people, pro-environment, and pro-business.

I am confident that Katie will create a better South Burlington just as she has done in her work as a strong business and community leader. Katie will be an independent candidate who will invite stakeholders to the process to achieve balanced solutions. I have witnessed her effective work ethic: work hard, dig in to the details, understand the multiple sides to the issues then openly discuss the issues, the implications, and the costs, all while treating everyone professionally and with respect.

I hope you will join me in voting for Katie Langrock to be part of and, likely lead, the city council.

Robin Hall
South Burlington

What Is It Going to Cost Us - Again?

I am again frustrated to see that our elected leadership and administrators, year after year, continue to have increases in both the city and school budgets in South Burlington. It should be the responsibility of our leadership to look at what we have in the

budgets and weed out and cut out those items that are not cost effective, and not just to continue to add to their budgets year after year. I realize there are fixed costs, however the fact remains school budgets, in my opinion, have been out of control for many years past. What needs to be done by those in charge of our budgets is to look at what works and keep the city and school budgets under control. What our elected leadership and administrators need to do is to present a level funded city and school budget for a few years and give us taxpayers a break.

Inflation this past year is virtually zero, but yet we are looking at almost three percent increases in the city budget and an over 2 percent increase in the school budget. This does not sound like a large increase, however, when our budgets are in the millions of dollars, it simply is.

In my opinion we need to send a message to our leadership. Again, what is it going to cost me year after year with increases in both the city and school budgets?

Jay L. Zaetz
South Burlington

Re-elect Tom Chittenden

I'm glad that Tom Chittenden is running for re-election for a seat on the South Burlington City Council. Tom has advocated for transparency in local government and helped ensure compliance with "open meeting" regulations in regard to airport issues and other local matters. In addition, he has helped streamline, clarify and fine-tune local ordinances.

Tom also represents South Burlington on the Green Mountain Transit Board. In his capacity as vice chair, Thomas has secured expanded bus service to parts of our city.

Tom's hard work during the current term has made South Burlington a better place to live. I urge South Burlington residents to vote for his re-election on March 7th.

Bill Embick
South Burlington

Re-elect Tom Chittenden

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Tom's hard work during the current term has made South Burlington a better place to live. I urge South Burlington residents to vote for his re-election on March 7th.

Bill Embick
South Burlington

Support for Nowak

I live in the Country Club/airport neighborhood of South Burlington and I'm very troubled by how some of the South Burlington City Council is pushing these resolutions telling the airport and FAA what to do, in a hostile manner. The FAA has programs that will bring millions of dollars into our community for home improvements for those of us who love the neighborhood and will choose to stay here for years to come. I want to thank Pat Nowak for sticking up for residents here and being a champion for a healthy relationship with the airport. She also has been firm about making sure the airport is held accountable. I think the council's resolution is "questionable" at best and that residents should take a hard look at what's driving this effort.

Walden Rooney
South Burlington

Support Reelection of Chittenden

Friends and neighbors of South Burlington, I am writing to support Tom Chittenden in his efforts to seek re-election to the South Burlington City Council in the upcoming election. I had never met Tom until I reached out to him when he first ran. Since then, I

have found Tom to be a man of tremendous integrity as he sought to serve the residents and businesses of South Burlington as a whole. Tom has never brought a personal agenda to his position, and always tries to fully understand the concerns brought to him by members of the community. Tom understands that while a subject may seem trivial to others, it was obviously significant enough to the person who brought it forward. He researches the issue in order to try to resolve it to the satisfaction of the concerned party. Tom has an eye of the future of South Burlington. His vision includes one of progressive growth yet includes one of financial responsibility. I urge you to join me in electing Tom to another term in South Burlington's City Council. Thank you!

Robert Wheel
South Burlington

Ask Legislators to Support Tax Cuts

I have been raising the ever-worsening plight of Vermont taxpayers to our South Burlington representatives, Ann Pugh, Helen Head, Maida Townsend, and Martin Lalonde, for at least 10 years. Numerous times each year I send our representatives emails requesting both income and property tax relief. And I attend their monthly state representative meetings as often as my work schedule permits, where I again make the same requests in person. But to no avail. I ask them to support income and property tax cuts, to introduce bills to cut taxes, to work within the budget process to support tax cuts, and to cut spending. They politely "listen," but they never take any action. At the most recent meeting on January 23, I asked them to answer "for the record" whether they would support tax cuts this session for hard working Vermonters. They answered only reluctantly, and each representative expressed opposition to any tax relief. In addition, Mr. Lalonde added that he was against everything I stood for. As I stand for tax cuts for all Vermonters, I found his apparent lack of concern for Vermont's taxpayers, clearly shared by the other representatives, to be very troubling. After all, Vermont taxpayers have contributed more to this state than any legislator ever has. Vermont taxpayers have been funding Democratic supermajority pet programs for years, no matter how questionable the program and no matter the impact to our families and communities.

Now it's the taxpayer who needs help. Our representatives' opposition to tax relief needs to end. They need to recognize the damage their tax and spend policies have caused and are causing every taxpayer. Help make Vermonters' wallets great again, and tell your South Burlington representative to reduce spending and cut taxes. We are going broke.

Allen Roberts
South Burlington

In Support of Chittenden

I was pleased to have been informed recently by Thomas Chittenden that he will seek re-election to the South Burlington City Council and I wanted to offer my voice in support of his continuation in this role.

In the last year, there have been a number of important discussions involving budgets, ordinances, CCTA and the vision for the future and Mr. Chittenden has been a strong contributor to these discussions in a manner that reflects how well he listens to different voices in the community. This comes as no surprise to me since I have interacted with Mr. Chittenden for years on the UVM campus and he has a strong reputation as one who builds consensus in search of outcomes that deliver the greatest benefit to the community.

Douglas Dickey
South Burlington

January 26, 2017

Re-elect Chittenden

I've lived in our great City of South Burlington for more than 50 plus years. I've known the Chittenden family my whole life, and Thomas for the last year on a personal level. I believe Thomas has always put the best interest of the South Burlington residents first. I will support Thomas Chittenden for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. He is a true Vermonter, with true Vermont values. Please support Thomas for re-election.

David Duell
South Burlington

Expanded Learning Opportunities for All Vermont Youth

I believe every Vermont community and family should have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs for their children and dedicated state funding for afterschool and summer programs is a great step toward this goal.

According to the Afterschool Alliance report, America After 3 p.m., there are more than 22,000 Vermont students who would be participating in an expanded learning opportunity today if they had access to one. This means that there are more than 22,000 chances for bad choices, dangerous behaviors, or falling behind each and every day, especially between the hours of 3 to 6 p.m. It also means that there are more than 22,000 lost opportunities every day to help these children and youth reach their full potential. The need is high for expanded learning opportunities for our youth in Vermont, and the cost of doing nothing will be even higher than the cost of providing these programs.

It is my hope that all Vermont legislators will support an appropriation of \$2.5 million to the Expanded Learning Opportunities Special Fund. Vermont has a strong base already in place for doing this work. We have a vibrant and valued statewide afterschool network, a strong 21st Century Community Learning Centers program serving many communities, and support for quality initiatives and professional development. Expanded learning opportunities are an integral part of Vermont's education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized and sustainable in all communities.

Barbara Russ
South Burlington

Support Chittenden for City Council

I am writing to endorse Tom Chittenden for his run for South Burlington City Council. I first met Tom in September 2014 at the Central School community-build day for their new playground structure. Even though rain had been forecast for that day, a great group of folks from all over our city came out to help. Soon after that meeting I was fortunate to spend time getting to know Tom as members of South Burlington Rotary. In the years that have passed since then I have known Tom to embrace, and live his life in accordance with the Rotary four-way test. Of the things we think, say, and do: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

We only need to look around to see how fortunate we are to live in this beautiful city. Tom understands the importance of high quality schools, promoting quality employment opportunities, our excellent recreational venues, and maintaining a safe environment for our families to grow. As a parent Tom understands how important these resources are to our families and world. I have seen him speak up and intervene when he is concerned about people circumventing due process, taking advantage, or trying to impose their will on others. Tom represents a voice of compassion, empathy, and balance. He has worked very hard to be the leader that South Burlington needs and deserves. Please join me in voting Tom Chittenden for South Burlington City Council this March.

George Donovan
South Burlington

January 12, 2017

School Budget on the Rise

After just getting my copy of *The Other Paper* I was stunned to see that the school board is looking at a budget that is \$2.4 million more than last year. I urge our school board to fix this now. This is an outrageous amount and needs to be fixed now.

Scott Bronson
South Burlington

December 15, 2016

Understanding Who?

The fact that Ms. Greco (*The Other Paper*, December 8, 2016) would only reach out to Trump supporters to learn how they think and feel leads me to believe that she has already concluded that he and his deplorable supporters have led to what she describes as a "loss of hope for humankind." I hope it makes her feel better to know that the Trump supporters I know are hard working, respectable people, that are kind and compassionate. May I suggest she also reach out to Clinton and Sanders supporters who include groups like Black Lives Matter (who advocate violence against police officers and whites) and the thousands of rioters, I mean "peaceful protesters," who burn the American flag, destroy property and advocate violence against Trump supporters. Hopefully like some, she does not feel like this deplorable behavior is justified. Talk about a loss of hope for humankind. It is a

very, very weak and nonsensical argument to say that Trump supporters would have reacted in the same disgusting and pathetic manner if Clinton had won.

I could not agree more. "Let peace begin on earth and let it begin with us." Just as long as we are all able look at things objectively and call it like it is.

Glenn Medeiros
South Burlington

Sanctuary City

The December 7, 2016 article in the *Burlington Free Press* regarding the South Burlington City Council considering the sanctuary city issue was informative and well written, but left me perplexed. The article reads that Councilor Pat Nowak thought former South Burlington City Councilor Rosanne Greco was the one person driving the agenda, instigated through an email. I disagree. I suspect the majority of our neighbors are interested in a thoughtful, respectful, and informative conversation about this important issue. Our neighbors in Burlington and Winooski, through their city councils, have overwhelmingly supported this sanctuary city idea.

I trust most of us are aware of the outstanding efforts by our South Burlington schools, particularly South Burlington High School, regarding the many and diverse issues around education equity for our young people. I am confident the majority of our council members will embrace this idea and encourage a meaningful dialogue.

Brian Hanbridge
South Burlington

Empty Spaces with Potential

I was hopeful about the possible opening of a shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the former home of MP103.3 radio station on Dorset Street. Several empty locations in South Burlington stand out as spots that could be utilized by socially conscious businesses or community spaces that inspire connectivity, inclusion, and social awareness in our community. The new City Center could be trans-formative for our city. This vision should involve critical thinking about who calls South Burlington home. Our city will benefit from keeping an open mind about creating spaces that are accessible to and serve all people.

Claire Marton
South Burlington

December 8, 2016

Understanding

For many months I have been experiencing what we used to describe in the convent as "the dark night of the soul." It meant that one lost hope in God. My feelings are related to a loss of hope for humankind. The tumultuous presidential campaign and election prompted my emotional reaction. Even had Hillary won, the animosity unleashed during the past year would have continued to infect us.

That's the bad news. The good news is that respect, understanding, kindness, and compassion can change not only my feelings, but also the current toxic political environment. Many conflicts have been caused by simple misunderstandings. We can start national healing with genuine respect and understanding for one another.

And, this is why I am writing this letter to South Burlington Trump supporters. I want to meet with you to learn how you think and feel... and why and how you formed your views. I'm not looking for a debate or a discussion. All I want to do is listen to you. I won't offer my opinions unless you ask.

The written word sometimes adds misunderstandings as it is difficult to convey intent and emotion that way. So, I think a face-to-face meeting is essential. You pick our meeting spot, and if you choose a place that serves food or drink, the tab is on me. You can reach me at rosanne05403@comcast.net.

Let peace begin on earth and let it begin with us.

Rosanne Greco

South Burlington

December 1, 2016

Thank You

On this Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2016, no one invited me for a celebration. In the morning, I called a friend of mine, who lives in the neighborhood. Apologizing for bothering her on this special day, I asked her to drive me to Sweetwaters.

“It’s not just for a free meal, I also need a new jacket as the zipper broke on my old one,” I explained.

She picked me up at 10 a. m. We drove through the snow to downtown Burlington, which was already decorated with Christmas lights. It really felt like Christmas more than Thanksgiving. She parked opposite Sweetwaters, saying she’d pick me up in 10 minutes. I hurried to the coat rack. There were a few jackets hanging from the rack, but only one size large. It was purple, not my favorite color, but I took it as I had no other choice. Inside the restaurant, I explained to the staff that a friend gave me a ride and my housemate was at home sick. The nice waitress placed an order for 3 meals. Suddenly, the place started to get crowded. “Please, hurry up,” I pleaded, “my friend is in a hurry to get to a Thanksgiving party.”

After about 15 minutes of waiting for the meals, I gave up. “I can’t wait any longer,” I said, “I have to leave.” As soon as I walked out, the waitress called my name, carrying 3 meals in a plastic bag. I was overjoyed. In spite of crowds of people waiting for their meal, the friendly Sweetwaters staff hurried up and made sure I got my meals.

At home, my housemate was very happy to have her Thanksgiving turkey. We ate early, watching the snowflakes from the living room window.

Thank you, Sweetwaters for taking care of those of us who don’t have family in this country or are lying sick in bed.

*Vesna Dye
South Burlington*

November 23, 2016

Time to Retire the Rebel Name

Since the day after the election, my teenage children have been dismayed and disheartened by their Twitter feeds exploding with examples of racist incidents happening across the U.S.

The Southern Poverty Law Center reported on NPR that it has received a dramatic rise in racial incident reports. And we’ve even seen incidents here in Vermont. Earlier this fall during a diversely attended high school soccer game in Middlebury, I witnessed a pickup truck noticeably parade slowly past, with a confederate flag larger than the truck itself, flying high.

I hoped that as a society we were past this, but clearly we the people are not. Racism is blatantly running rampant in our society and we can no longer turn a blind eye to it.

No matter how we choose to see our locally revered public school nickname “Rebel,” it is a racist symbol. The term Rebel is connected to those who fought during the Civil War to maintain the slavery of human beings. Since then it has evolved, along with the Confederate flag, into an actively used symbol of hate. Continuing it as our publicly funded school’s nickname is a reflection of every resident and I for one do not want it associated with me any longer.

As our young adults face a changing political landscape, it is important that our community clearly demonstrate that hate is not welcome here and that peaceful solutions make a powerful difference. Retiring the Rebel name is such a solution.

South Burlington has a proud and strong tradition of community and no one need look back on the name negatively. But given where we are today, it is paramount that we move forward positively demonstrating that South Burlington is a city of love and inclusion.

As Dr. Martin Luther King wrote, “The time is always right to do what is right.” The time is right for us to retire the Rebel name.

*Monica Ostby
South Burlington*

Thank You for Your Support

Thank you for your support of my re-election to the Vermont Senate. Your confidence in my work to represent you is greatly appreciated. Critical challenges face us during the coming legislative session. These include cost of living related to health care, education, good jobs, and energy. I will continue to take a balanced approach, to use common sense, and collaboration when finding solutions to problems facing our county. I look forward to working on many issues critical to our welfare and sense of community. Thank you again. Please stay engaged in civic activities and contact me with your comments, concerns, and questions.

Ginny Lyons
Senator, Chittenden District

November 17, 2016

Thank You Residents

Thank you, residents of Chittenden 7-3, for your votes in the November 8 election. It is inspiring and humbling to have your support for another two-year term in the House. I am now fine-tuning my understanding of several issues that the Legislature will face in order to hit the ground running in January.

As I walked around our neighborhoods this fall, you shared your ideas for the upcoming legislative session and beyond. Please don't stop. The pre-session legislative forum will take place on November 28 at 7:00 p.m. at the Library. In 2017, forums will continue on the fourth Mondays, January through May. I look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Head
State Representative

Thank You

Thank you to the voters of South Burlington for supporting my re-election to the Vermont Senate. It is truly a privilege to be one of six senators representing the Chittenden District in Montpelier and I very much look forward to getting back to work with a new administration come January. We have many challenges ahead and, as always, I welcome hearing your thoughts and concerns.

Michael Sirotkin
Senator, Chittenden District

Sincere Thanks

I want to sincerely thank the people of South Burlington for your support in the election. Since becoming your senator eight years ago, I've done my best to represent each Chittenden County community with the same enthusiasm as my own hometown. I bring the same enthusiasm today that I did when I was first sworn in. As always, please contact me with your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions.

Tim Ashe
Senator, Chittenden District

Thank You to 7-2 Voters

I want to thank the voters in South Burlington District 7-2 for welcoming me at your doors and for re-electing me as your State Representative. It is indeed a great privilege to be one of South Burlington's four state legislators and I am humbled to have to have earned your support as a voice for South Burlington in Montpelier for two more years.

And to those who didn't, I continue to take seriously my responsibility to represent you as well. As I prepare for January, I look forward to reaching out and speaking with everyone in our district and beyond about all of the things we can accomplish by finding common ground and working together. If you want to be in touch, please don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas about how to continue moving Vermont forward. I am happy to meet for coffee too.

Please also consider joining me along with Representatives Head, Townsend and LaLonde along with Senator Michael Sirotkin at our monthly community legislative forums. In preparation for the upcoming session, we're holding one Monday, November 28, at 7p.m. in the South Burlington Community Library. I hope to see you there.

Thank you again for your trust and confidence.

Ann Pugh
State Representative

November 3, 2016

The Importance of a Viable Dog Park

The plan to relocate the South Burlington dog park one block from its present location, which is almost on the airport runway, to a very nearby spot is not a good plan. Dogs react poorly to loud noises like airplane sounds and so do their owners. A block or so removed from the runway doesn't really solve the problem. A more convenient location more central to town would be an enormous improvement for all concerned. Possibly near the City Center could be an excellent choice.

Dog parks provide a wonderful community gathering place. People at dog parks actually talk to each other and get to know each other on an ongoing basis and the dogs as well. With so many pets in South Burlington, this sort of facility would benefit a large population of South Burlington citizens.

South Burlington is an excellent town with many fine facilities. Providing a dog park that is convenient, comfortable, and well-planned would be a fine addition to all of its many town resources. I am sure many residents agree with me.

Sharon Glick, MSW, LCSW
South Burlington

The Homework Dilemma

Recently, Orchard, one of the South Burlington elementary schools, created a no homework policy. There are different sides of the debate, and I am on the same side as Isaiah Hines (Orchard's No Homework Plan, *The Other Paper*, October 6, 2016). Homework should have a limit and have a purpose, not be eliminated completely.

As a part time sixth grader at Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School, the South Burlington middle school, homework is not my favorite thing. In fact, I don't think it's the majority of people's favorite thing. Though despite that, I think it's important for elementary students, first grade and up, to have homework. I believe that kindergartners should not have any homework because they need time to be kids and to get used to full time school. The best way is for the teachers to assign limited and purposeful homework on Monday and ask for it back on Friday. This makes sure students have more flexibility and time to get the work done and helps them prepare for middle school homework. I hope the school principal will reconsider the decision.

Hanna Gustafson
South Burlington

October 27, 2016

Ann Pugh is Good for Business

I am encouraged to see such interest in the race for the Vermont House District 7-2 seat. The incumbent, Ann Pugh, brings a history of service to South Burlington by assuming a state leadership role for decades. Sam Handy promises business development and lower taxes, in my opinion, erroneously implying that the incumbent's support of health, education and human services is mutually exclusive of job growth.

Real job growth comes from new businesses and technologies as Vermont has successfully attracted. Businesses choose Vermont for its unique values that make it special. Supporting our values of caring, compassion and support for education and human services is truly an "investment" in long-term growth. Reducing desperately needed services to lower taxes is a short-term strategy and, as in business, you can't shrink your way to growth by endless cost cutting. This would be a short-sighted oversimplification of the challenge.

Ann Pugh is supportive of economic and job growth in a way that confronts the complexity of social issues through bi-partisan and collaborative decision making. As the highly respected Chair of both the House Human Services Committee and the Child Protection Oversight Committee, Ann leads our state in managing its most complex human issues and costs in health, drug addiction, work force development, and child care.

Ann understands that sustainable growth and our ability to attract businesses with skilled and well-educated employees begin with a strategy of maintaining Vermont's values. She has dedicated her life to ensuring that Vermont not abandon what makes Vermont attractive to businesses choosing our state for the special place it is. It is our collective "why" we are all here. A vote for Ann Pugh is an affirmation of who we are and aspire to be.

I agree with our many neighbors who stand by Ann Pugh so that she can continue the important legislative work that she has done with such perseverance. As a former business owner and a professor of business and innovation, I appreciate the opportunity to re-elect such a trusted and dedicated leader.

*Don Haggerty
South Burlington*

Handy Understands Small Business in Vermont

Sam Handy running for state office gives hope to small business owners, like me, who are trying to make a living in Vermont. This state has many great qualities: the scenery is to die for, the majority of people are nice and willing to go the extra mile to help their neighbors, and when it comes to starting a business here, Vermont ranks really high in supporting entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, starting a business, and keeping one open and profitable, are very different things.

I read an article recently that said Forbes named Vermont one of the 10 worst states to do business in, stating that business costs here are 13 percent above the national average, and that if things didn't change we would likely be the third worst state in the country within the next five years. I wish these statistics sounded off base, but they don't, and that doesn't sit well with me.

Montpelier needs someone who understands the ins and outs of running a business and can bring that knowledge to the table when discussing policy. I believe Sam Handy is that person. I think our system could be improved greatly by having someone at the table who keeps business owners in mind, asks for our opinions, and listens to our concerns, when making decisions that could potentially hurt our livelihood.

I've spoken with Sam about his priorities and it was very encouraging to hear that he wants to see Vermont's climate become more business friendly for current and new businesses. He has the right experience and knows the stress and responsibility that comes with running a business: meeting payroll, balancing budgets, providing employment to those in our community, to name a few.

Running a business is hard work as it is, having a state that imposes impossible regulations and financial burdens makes it that much harder. I'd love to see our legislature working with us, not against us, to make a positive change. I think Sam is the first step to making that happen.

*Daniel P. LeClair
South Burlington*

Question about Solar Panels

Regarding the article on installing a solar panel array at the former South Burlington dump (The Other Paper, October 20, 2016), it probably is a good use for an area that has little other uses, but I do have one question that needs to be answered. Has anyone considered the problem of reflected sunlight from these panels? At certain sun angles, the reflected sun would bathe the approach path of aircraft on final approach to runway 15, blinding or otherwise distracting the pilots. Is there any way of shielding the panels to avoid this problem? This needs to be looked into before the panels are installed.

*Carl Carlson
South Burlington*

Cast Your Votes for South Burlington

On Tuesday, November 8, you are being asked to make your voice known on City Center and on representation at the state level and federal level. The campaign season has been long and it has challenged and perhaps shaken our faith in the political class and our government. In this time of uncertainty if not outright suspicion, strong moral leadership is needed as never before to steer us to calmer waters.

I have come to know and love South Burlington as a "can do" place. As residents we share a commitment to solution finding to secure our future vitality, and we have long benefited from smart, effective legislators who take initiative on our behalf. Representatives Helen Head, Martin Lalonde, Ann Pugh, and Maida Townsend have worked closely with our city and school district in order to create policy that benefits Vermonters and South Burlington residents. They have tackled contentious and difficult problems thoughtfully and concertedly, and I know first-hand that the city relies on their partnership at the state level. Helen and Ann are experienced, effective policy makers and champions on issues. They have gained the respect of their colleagues and state agencies who highly value their work. Maida, serving my district, has joined their rank, as has Martin. By listening to our concerns and then keeping us apprised of the status of proposed legislation as they press forward – knowledgeably, sensibly, effectively – they are working to maintain the integrity of our representative democracy at its finest, which is always key but especially now.

Helen Head, Martin Lalonde, Ann Pugh, and Maida Townsend embody the very best of our city. I thank them publicly for their service, and I encourage you to go to the polls and vote for them with the confidence that you are voting for South Burlington.

*Meaghan Emery
South Burlington City Councilor*

Support for Sam Handy

I'm supporting Sam Handy for the Vermont Legislature. We must have a change. In South Burlington, we're not immune to the costly spending of legislative action in Montpelier. While many in our community enjoy a prosperous lifestyle, that is not necessarily true for all. Taxes and fees have gone way out of control for Vermonters and law making has become something our legislators have felt entitled and compelled to do, with seemingly little regard for the consequences.

Sam Handy can bring a fresh voice to Montpelier. He's young, smart, is a businessman and is a family man. He knows the real world and the struggles many are facing. We have to turn things around! Sam is a fresh start and a great beginning.

Cassie Dimmick
South Burlington

TIF Support

Please join me in support of Phase I of the City Center public infrastructure development including Market Street Reconstruction and City Center Park – Dumont Park. This vote will put into action many steps the planning commission has taken over the course of many iterations and years. We hope you also support our vision for City Center and vote YES on Article 1 on November 8.

City Center was first referenced in our city's Comprehensive Plan in 1974 and has been included in every update since that time, but little has been developed and much of the land is privately held. The time is now to vote in support of major first steps in implementation. The planning commission and city council have put in place zoning rules to ensure we get what our community has decided through years of significant public outreach. Extensive public input has influenced place-making in order to create the public space that we want. The November 8 vote will approve reconstruction of Market Street in order to ensure we have the safe, attractive streetscape that has been visioned and a park to provide open space and a destination for citizens. Other TIF projects would need another future vote.

The TIF is an important tool for the city to achieve goals and build infrastructure without raising taxes. It enables projects that benefit the city, in this case the Market Street infrastructure and streetscape and park, to be built using money that would otherwise leave our community and go to the State Education Fund. Voting yes allows our city to take advantage of this special opportunity to keep state taxes in our community for projects we choose. By voting yes, we will pay for these valuable projects with money that would have otherwise gone to state taxes, money already allocated in our current tax structure, impact fees, income from buildings already built in the TIF, and money the city has already set aside, with no increase in taxes. Please help implement the vision of our community.

Jessica Louisos, PE
South Burlington Planning Commission Chair

The November 8 Vote is Crucial for South Burlington

We will be asked to vote on Article 1, \$5 million of City Center TIF District Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for Market Street reconstruction and City Center/Dumont Park improvements.

City Center has been the dream of many South Burlington residents for decades and now we finally have the chance to realize that dream. This is a once in a generation opportunity to finance and build public infrastructure in City Center. To keep the TIF District, we must approve Article 1 on the November 8 Ballot.

The City Center "Smart Growth" Plan will concentrate development around Market and Garden Streets and lessen the need and justification for development of our precious remaining open spaces and productive farmland.

Many residents have asked whether approval of this article will cause their property taxes to increase. This is an unfounded fear. Property taxes will not increase because the city will finance City Center infrastructure by 1) keeping a portion (75 percent) of the property taxes generated by new development in the City Center District, 2) using impact fees collected from developers, and 3) using the City Center Reserve to cover temporary needs or any shortfall.

Tax Increment Financing will allow South Burlington to create future public facilities, upon voter approval, such as our much-needed public library in City Center by using funds that would otherwise go to the state. If the city does not have authorization from the voters to incur TIF District Debt, we will lose the TIF District, which could be a main funding mechanism for a new public library and other City Center public infrastructure.

City Center will bring to the South Burlington community the benefits we have desired for so long: a focal point for community identity; a safe, walkable and bike friendly urban neighborhood; a place where residents can gather to socialize, live, work and play; development density that will facilitate efficient public transit; development that will reduce urban "sprawl;" and a central park for recreation and the enjoyment of nature for residents of all ages.

Please vote yes for Article 1 on November 8.

Michael Mittag
South Burlington

Ann Pugh My Preferred Candidate

When I vote for state representative in a few weeks, Ann Pugh will have my support. She is interested in topics which are of great importance to me. As someone in the medical field for nearly 50 years, I appreciate Ann's expertise in the field of social work. She chairs the House Human Services Committee and the Joint Child Protection Oversight Committee, where she has been instrumental in advancing protections for children and also for social workers within our state system. She has been a voice for addressing the opiate crisis. Another important topic for me is the protection of the environment and the working landscape. She has been a champion for our forests and wildlife habitat, especially endangered and protected species. She has supported language to ensure the perpetuity provisions of conservation easements. She believes that land use planning needs a strong component of local and regional input on renewable energy siting as well as other appropriate uses. The Vermont Sierra Club has endorsed Ann's candidacy. She is also a member of the South Burlington Land Trust. And she was on our South Burlington Planning Commission when the land for Overlook Park was purchased. Ann has the kind of experience and track record that we need in Montpelier.

Sarah L. Dopp
South Burlington

Vote for Ann Pugh

Please join me in re-electing Ann Pugh as our State Representative for District 7-2. Ann focuses on the big picture, on the important issues and, by listening to diverse perspectives, forges solutions that are good for all Vermonters. I have known Ann for many years and value her bipartisan approach to find solutions to complex issues. As a member of the planning commission, I particularly look to how candidates address issues of land use and the environment. Ann understands the importance of the environment to our quality of life and our economic development. Her support of environmental issues has been recognized by environmental groups who have endorsed her re-election. Just one example of her legislative work benefiting the city is Act 99 which allowed for up to 5 megawatts of solar siting on the City's landfill. This will provide South Burlington with a unique and invaluable opportunity to utilize an undevelopable piece of property, while securing considerable value for the city's taxpayers in the future. Her clear leadership and experience is what we need in Montpelier.

Ted Riehle
South Burlington

Join Me in Supporting Sam Handy

I don't usually write letters of support for anyone, until now. I'm voting for Sam Handy for the Vermont Legislature. He came to my door and we talked about concerns I have. He listened carefully and in a short amount of time, earned my vote and support. I think he will bring reason, common sense and knowledge to the Legislature. Please join me in supporting Sam Handy.

Lindsay Mott
South Burlington

October 20, 2016

Reach Every Mother and Child Act

In our current election cycle, it seems that everyone is in disagreement. With one of the most tense elections, it can be refreshing to hear about agreement. This is especially true when it comes to Congress.

What many of us aren't hearing about is the unity Congress has shown for the Reach Every Mother and Child Act, aimed at saving lives of moms and kids. As residents of the United States, we have a duty to end their senseless deaths. We can do this with one bill, but we need Congress to step up and take leadership.

Thankfully, according to Congress.gov 201, members of the House and 26 Senators have sponsored the Reach Every Mother and Child Act. This bipartisan piece of legislation will focus on ending preventable maternal and child deaths by 2035 without even raising government spending. As a high school student, I know that my generation is the future, but how can we advance, when according to recent UNICEF data, globally 5.9 million children die each year before their fifth birthday? In order to solve global problems, we cannot stand idle while these visionaries lose their lives.

Even though tremendous action has already been taken, the fight isn't over. Representative Welch has already shown Vermont values by cosponsoring this bill, and our senators, Senator Leahy and Senator Sanders should do the same. As part of RESULTS

Burlington, I am asking them to sign onto and move forward this crucial piece of legislation to both disprove the popular narrative of Congress wrong and to save millions of lives.

Kiran Waqar
South Burlington

Why I'm Supporting Sam Handy

I write this letter in support of Sam Handy for the Vermont Legislature. Over the last several years, taxes in Vermont have gone up dramatically. I wish no ill will towards Ann Pugh, I like her as a person, but I do feel that her "yes" vote for major tax bills is something I don't feel we can sustain. Ann has been in Montpelier for a long time and overall we need a new look and fresh perspective to what has become an insider environment with a lot of special interest legislation.

Sam Handy is a businessperson who will bring a fresh voice to Montpelier. Sam was raised in our community, he knows the school system and the local business community as he owns and operates multiple restaurants in Chittenden County and he understands the need to put Vermont's fiscal house in order. He's a father, husband, good neighbor, and a compassionate man who is ready to propose change for the benefit of many generations to come. Please join me in voting for Sam Handy for Vermont State Representative.

Brittany Melvin
South Burlington

Vote No on Election Day

South Burlington wants to make Market Street a downsized Dorset Street with professional offices, retail, and will probably, at some near future date, ask us to approve a bond issue to build a new city hall there.

Don't we already have all this on Dorset Street? It would be so much cheaper to rename Dorset Street Main Street and put up a sign "Welcome to the City of South Burlington." Oh, we wouldn't get TIF money for this and the city smells money the way Montpelier smells money in legalizing pot. I say let the developers do the developing and the city to keep their hands out of it.

Vote no on Election Day.

Ed Steele
South Burlington

Pugh is an Exceptional Candidate for House of Representatives

I have lived and worked in Vermont since 2008. My work and volunteer activities have required that I spend a good deal of time in the legislature. I have survived two governors, and have worked for Comcast, Greater Burlington YMCA, and volunteered with United Way, Vermont Telecommunications Authority, Vermont PBS, Howard Center, and Mercy Connections. Working with each of these organizations helped me understand the importance of engaged and informed representation in our legislature. It has never been more important than with this new session. We will see a new governor, administration, lt. governor and more than a few new senators and representatives.

Here in South Burlington we are fortunate, we have the opportunity to return an exceptional member to the House, Ann Pugh. I have worked with Ann in her role in the House, while she was leading her committee through making tough decisions about affordable, safe, quality childcare - a significant issue for the state's economic development success. She is tough, but fair, and holds herself to a very high standard of performance for the residents of our state. You don't hear her name frequently, because the work she does is not about Ann - it's about us. Ann collaborates. She doesn't dictate, she doesn't grandstand, she finds ways to work together for us.

I am proud to work with Ann on her campaign for re-election, and urge you to vote to return her to Montpelier. She knows what she is doing, listens to our concerns, and works very hard for us. Thank you for your service, Ann.

Pam Mackenzie
South Burlington

I Heartily Support a Free Standing Public Library

I do not think it is appropriate for Adam Bortz, as a representative of the Friends of the Library (FOL), to take a political stand on the TIF vote (*The Other Paper*, October 6, 2016), which is the only thing on the ballot this November - not a new library.

The powers that be are holding a free standing library hostage to further development on Market Street, which is so inappropriate. How can the president of the FOL, support a city government that would do that to us, the citizens, the taxpayers? He could have written his letter as a private citizen, but to write as president of the FOL is so inappropriate. I no longer want to be associated with such an organization. I have resigned from the FOL.

Everyone is entitled to his/her point of view. I do not support Adam using his position as president of the FOL to infer that the entire membership supports the bond on the ballot for the upcoming election. I venture that his actions are not garnering support for the SB Community Library or the FOL in my opinion. He has alienated me and I'll venture to say other former or current members of the FOL.

Patty Sheridan
South Burlington

Debbie Ingram for Senate

Debbie has an extraordinary breadth and depth of experience that will serve our county well. Some highlights:

She has served as a member of the Williston Select Board for several years, showing perseverance and determination to advocate for the good of the community overall, with a particular focus on affordable housing and on city planning.

As the former small business owner of a communications firm and film production company, she knows the difficulties and joys of running a small business. This experience informs her work on behalf of affordable housing and health care to support Vermont's workforce.

As the executive director of Vermont Interfaith Action, Debbie is very involved with the issues faced by everyday Vermonters. Especially significant at this time in our nation's history, Debbie has a history of working effectively and collaboratively with Jews, Muslims and Christians, as well as those with no faith affiliation, in order to advance social justice for all people.

She is an ordained minister in a progressive Protestant denomination, the United Church of Christ, and has been a steadfast advocate for women's rights, for people of color, and for the LGBTQ community, as a public servant, a nonprofit leader, and as a minister.

She understands the need for fair taxation, but she knows that one of the best ways to increase Vermont's tax base is to have living wages for employees. She's also an advocate for sustainable energy and supports the idea of communities choosing their own best means to sustainable energy resources.

All of these experiences make her uniquely qualified to represent Chittenden County in our legislature. She knows the county well, both rural and urban, and has already proven herself to be a smart, tireless change-maker for the people of Vermont.

We would be lucky to have her serve on our behalf. Please join me in voting for Debbie on Tuesday, November 8.

Julie Cadwallader Staub
South Burlington

Reelect Ann Pugh

As a neighbor and friend of Ann's for over 20 years, I'm writing this letter in full support of her reelection. Energetic and involved are two words that aptly describe Ann. She has been active in South Burlington as well as the state, outspoken on many issues in the legislature, and a leader in developing reasonable solutions to tough issues. We need her spirit and dedication in the Vermont House of Representatives. I invite you to join me in voting for Ann.

Carol Goodrum
South Burlington

Enough of Ann Already

Of note lately are numerous letters in support of yet another Ann Pugh State House bid. Predictably they heap praise and accolades upon her. Yet I could not disagree more.

Representative Pugh is one of many legislators in the lopsided majority who are doing their best to ruin Vermont's economy. Incessant, enormous tax increases, relentless, oppressive regulation, a \$200 million health care exchange that doesn't work. Of

course, this relentless confiscation of our earnings is sold to us as an “investment,” but the end game is everything for the state, nothing for the individual, a.k.a. statism.

The mismanagement of our state by the Ann Pughs, Helen Heads, and Maida Townsends of the Legislature is monumental, and Vermonters are paying the price dearly with a terrible economic outlook, alarming lack of good jobs, and the exodus of affluent taxpayers to states with sane tax policies.

Recently Kiplinger’s rated Vermont the worst of 50 states for tax-friendliness to retirees. And as we all know, the appetite Ann and her supermajority friends have for our earnings is extended to all Vermonters, not just retirees. In the last two legislative sessions alone, they’ve increased taxes and fees by more than \$92 million (source: Ethan Allen Institute). Their appetite for spending is insatiable.

If you pay attention to facts and value reason, it is impossible to rationalize sending Ann Pugh back to Montpelier to punish us for another two years. Remember, sooner or later, even the Vermont Legislature will run out of other people’s money.

Vote for Sam Handy.

Robert Rich
South Burlington

October 13, 2016

Ann Pugh for State Representative

Support Ann Pugh for Vermont State Representative (7-2) on Tuesday, November 8. Ann has worked hard for the children and families of Vermont as the Chair of the House Human Services Committee and the Chair of the Joint Child Protection Oversight Committee. She represents South Burlington to the finest in Montpelier, bolstering our respect and influence on important matters. She has enacted legislation last session that focused on prevention, education, and treatment of opioid and drug addiction – confronting a state crisis. She has strengthened our support for DCF (Department for Children and Families) with its care for children in the wake of overwhelming caseloads and staff threats. These investments in prevention and treatment save us time, money and productive lives in the long run – strengthening Vermont and our humanity. I work with some of these disadvantaged children every day, and Ann is at the forefront of keeping them and their families on a positive trajectory. She deserves your support in her efforts and in upholding such basic Vermont values.

Chris Shaw
South Burlington

If You Build It, They Will Come

I am writing in support of approving Phase I of the TIF District Financing. As a chief financial officer or financial consultant of various companies, I know that it is necessary to invest upfront in a new business in order to make it a long-term success. I feel the same way about the city investing in building City Center Park and Market Street. With these investments, I believe the desired development by landowners and others will occur to help make our City Center a bicycle and pedestrian friendly center of activity that offers entertainment, shopping, affordable housing, services, and a gathering place for the community. After attending a recent TIF information meeting, I am confident that our city government has done a great job in planning this infrastructure investment to leverage non-city taxpayer funds. According to the information distributed at the city’s information session held at the library on September 26, by using nearly \$5.5 million of Federal funds and the incremental property tax funding that otherwise would be sent to the state, this project has been carefully planned to use very little additive city funding and to not increase our property taxes. Please join me in supporting Phase I of the TIF District Financing.

Bob Britt
South Burlington

We Can’t Afford Ann Pugh

I’ve noticed the recent letters supporting re-electing Ann Pugh. So let me try to set the record straight for them and anyone else thinking of voting for Ann Pugh.

Ann Pugh has been in the Legislature since 1993, and I recently reminded her at a monthly state representatives meeting that her legislative voting record shows she voted for tax and spending increases for every one of those 24 years. She did not deny it or even try to defend it. I often wonder how much better my family’s life would be if my family had those 24 years of tax increases back in our bank account.

Some citizens suggest we vote for her because of her “willingness to understand”. Yes, she’s always willing to listen, but it never translates to any changes in how she votes. I have predicted with 100% accuracy her votes on issues that impact every Vermont taxpayer –she can be counted on to always vote for more taxes and more spending.

Ann Pugh voted to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars on the failed Vermont Health Connect, an insecure system that puts your identity at risk, still does not work correctly, and whose premiums continue to increase at an unsustainable rate. She ignored numerous warnings, and now we have a \$200+ million fiasco that our “leadership” are afraid to tackle.

She supported allowing illegal aliens to obtain a Vermont driver’s license. She put their interests ahead of your safety and that of your family. I find this inexcusable.

I could write pages about why she is unworthy of our trust. Don’t reward her failures in judgment with another term. If you do, you may as well give her your wallet when you finish voting.

Allen Roberts
South Burlington

In Support of Sam Handy

I am writing in enthusiastic support of Sam Handy’s campaign to represent District 7-2 in the Vermont House of Representatives. I believe in Sam as a person, and as a young, active and positive member of our community who will work hard on our behalf, and whose fresh perspective will help bring about change in Montpelier.

Sam’s platform around making Vermont more business-friendly, finding ways to reduce the tax burden on young families, and focusing on education are shared by many, and will help improve our wonderful community. But, as much as I believe in the political goals that are central to Sam’s candidacy, what is more important to me is my belief in his character, values, work ethic, and his love for our community and our state.

I hired Sam as the JV boys basketball coach at South Burlington High School, where his positive impact as a leader and advocate for students was profound. I see in his coaching, qualities that make me confident in Sam as our representative. Sam has a passion for coaching, he communicates effectively, he is humble yet self-assured, he has a tireless work ethic, a desire to learn and improve, and he brings infectious enthusiasm and joy to his coaching every day. He cares about his players, and is an important role model for impressionable young student-athletes. This is the type of young leader we need in our community.

I have known Sam Handy since our paths crossed years ago through baseball and I believe his background as a competitive athlete will also serve him well as he fights for us in the legislature. As a young business owner he is aware of the economic challenges faced by many, and as a lifelong South Burlington resident, he knows our community very well. Sam is running for office because he cares, and because he believes he can make a difference. He is a newcomer on the political scene but he is passionate, motivated and qualified, and I am pleased to support his candidacy.

Ed Hockenbury
South Burlington

Support for Sam Handy

I’m writing today to express my support for Sam Handy’s run for the Vermont House of Representatives for Chittenden district 7-2. I’m not here to labor the issues. I’m here to talk about the kind of person we need watching out for us in Montpelier, and I strongly believe that person is Sam Handy.

Sam has been a constant in my life since we were young. He has always been there for me and I am proud to be there for him as he takes on this new challenge in his life. Sam takes his relationships, both personal and professional, very seriously. He is a man of good morals, someone who is sincere and transparent when it comes to his intentions. That is something I have always admired about Sam and something that I think would be of incredible value in our legislature.

Sam is a businessman at heart. He is good with money and knows how to prioritize things that need to be done in order to keep things moving forward. But, even more than that, Sam is good with people. He knows that Vermont residents, both individuals and businesses, are struggling to make ends meet in our community. He can see where things have gone astray in the current administration and I know that with support he can make positive changes.

I know he will have my support on election day, and I hope you will consider giving him yours as well.

Don Johnson

South Burlington

Vote for Ann Pugh

If you are engaged at all with what's going on in our world and in our country, you probably experience some anxiety about our future. I have two children entering the "real" world and wonder how they are going to handle the numerous challenges it presents. What can they/we do to have a constructive and positive outcome on the world in which they/we live?

One thing we can do at the local level is to elect people who embrace and model the values that we cherish. Hard work, sacrifice, giving, and compassion are among them.

You may wonder what this has to do with improving the economy or reducing taxes or making our community a better safer place to live? Ann Pugh's values and passions have led her to serve our community and state for many years. She is the Chair of the House Human Services Committee and also Chair of the Joint Legislative Child Protective Oversight Committee. These are extremely important leadership positions. Basically, these committees determine how to invest in, nurture and enhance our most valuable resource: people!

Want to improve the economy? Invest in affordable child care so we can grow our work force. Invest in early childhood education so our workforce has the skills for modern world jobs. Invest in caring for those, and there are many, who need support so they may add value to our community and state.

These are long term investments. The return comes over time, and it presents itself as a safe and caring and affordable community that we call home. In many ways, that's what we have now, and Ann Pugh has had a lot to do with that.

Want to sustain and enhance the great quality of life we enjoy in South Burlington? Vote for Ann Pugh.

Michael Simoneau
South Burlington

Join Me in Voting for Ann Pugh

This November, I'm voting for experience, proven leadership and legislative know-how. I'm voting for Ann Pugh. Ann has served faithfully in Montpelier stewarding our tax dollars with compassionate yet prudent common sense.

Ann has proven her support for our schools and for Vermont public school educators. She understands property taxes are high in Vermont and is earnest in looking for ways to lower the education cost curve but she hasn't translated that pressure into careless policy that would lower the priority on our public school system.

I know that when Ann is representing me in Montpelier, she is representing me as a resident, me as a teacher, and me as a parent. I also know that she is representing my children and is committed to policy that won't lower our academic standards, our educational outcomes or our Vermont values of shared responsibility.

South Burlington needs her leadership and experience over the next two years, so I encourage you to join me in voting for Ann Pugh this November.

Kim Chittenden
South Burlington

In Support of Ann Pugh

I am writing in support of Ann Pugh for State Representative (South Burlington District 7-2). I could fill pages of this paper listing the details of Ann's accomplishments, the organizations she supports through volunteer work, and her proven leadership roles. However, in a time where it really matters "who" the person is representing us in state government, I want to write about Ann's qualities, qualities that we can count that will, without question, guide Ann's work in the legislature regardless of the topic.

First and foremost, Ann is a person with immense integrity and intelligence. She has a record of working collaboratively on behalf of not only our most vulnerable citizens, but all of us in her district. She is kind and fair. She is not impulsive or self-serving. She is someone you can count on to think through things from many angles, someone who will ask your opinion, someone who will talk with you face to face about the complexities of the world we live in and assure you that she is working to make things better. Ann is, without a doubt, someone who truly does care about the future of our city, our state, and beyond. I, for one, want to know that our seat in the House is filled with a confident, curious, and caring individual, and that person is Representative Ann Pugh.

Please join me in voting for Ann.

Wanda Audette

South Burlington

October 6, 2016

A New City Center Library

After years of little activity, we finally have the opportunity to build the South Burlington Library that we want. The November 8 vote on the City Center Project involving the use of the TIF is the next step. Approval of that vote will be followed by a separate vote for the library.

Many South Burlington residents have met to determine what they want in a public library, finding that the current library falls short, and has for many years now.

The vote on the City Center with the TIF will enable us to have more library than we could otherwise. Note that I have been informed by Ilona Blanchard, City Program Director, that the city will provide the site, plus 1/3 of the construction cost (without an additional tax increase). The Library Trustees are tasked with raising another 1/3. The TIF income will provide another 1/3. This means that we can build a fine library that truly meets our needs, and costs South Burlington 2/3 less.

Access to the library is important. Having it in the City Center will ensure that it is central and has bus service. I think that our residents would have the opportunity to do many errands more conveniently.

As president of the Friends of the South Burlington Community Library, I urge South Burlington voters to come out on November 8 and vote "Yes" so that we all can watch our new public library progress to fruition, and be proud.

Adam Bortz

President, Friends of the South Burlington Community Library

We Need Ann Pugh

I write today in support of Ann Pugh, in her reelection campaign for State Representative for Chittenden 7-2. In response to a question I emailed her prior to the primary, she suggested we get together for coffee some morning to discuss more completely. Over that coffee, she offered to help me and the company I work for, Kaleidoscope Communications, when I told her about a problem we were having getting a decision out of the Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL). Nine months after our original appeal hearing with the state, and our repeatedly ignored attempts to get a ruling, and only after Ann's assistance, did we hear from VDOL.

Without her continued efforts, which she wasn't even asked to do, we would still find ourselves stonewalled by VDOL. It is so refreshing to have an elected official who works hard to make Vermont a fairer place to live and work. We need more of them, and we certainly need Ann Pugh.

I eagerly look forward to voting for Ann, and encourage others to do so.

Jon Isaacson

South Burlington

Airport Noise Intrusive

Since the demolition of homes along and around Airport Parkway, noise from the airport seems to have become more intrusive in life at home, both inside and out. With some sound reflecting structures removed (demoed homes), sound at higher levels is traveling further into the community. My question is what's the Airport/Sound Mitigation Committee going to do to address that? Planting trees, putting up alternative reflective structures? I understand military aircraft are loud, but I don't understand how the actions thus far carried out around the airport benefit the community as far as actually managing sound impact.

Chris Darul

South Burlington

Return Ann Pugh to the House

We are all fortunate that Ann Pugh is willing to run for yet another term in our House of Representatives. She has served admirably for many years, and I am grateful that she plans to continue to work for us.

I have had the opportunity to see her in action, as I've testified on several occasions before the House Human Services Committee which she chairs. She is extremely effective, courteous, knowledgeable, efficient, and highly regarded by her committee members, indeed widely respected throughout the House and Senate.

As a physician, I appreciate and admire her grasp of medical and social issues, and her ability to translate her understanding into effective action. She's a gifted legislator, and we're fortunate to have her.

I applaud Sam Handy for his willingness to run, but Ann's is not the seat to challenge. She's too capable and experienced, and we need her in the House!

*Michael Scollins
South Burlington*

September 29, 2016

City Center is the Perfect Site

I am writing to say how disappointed I am concerning ideas expressed by individuals who are suggesting that the Wheeler Nature Park property is a suitable site for a new, modern city library. None of the individuals in favor of this site make any mention of how much more it would cost the city to put it there. We would be leaving one third of whatever it might cost on the table if TIF funds are not utilized to help pay for it. And it would leave much of the city's population far, far away from their library. City Center is the perfect site within easy access for everyone, no matter their neighborhood.

Citizens may not know that research has already been done on whether the Wheeler Nature Park building was suitable for a library. It was found that, given its age and structure, the building was totally incapable of withstanding the weight and technological requirements of a modern library. So, if the present building were to be incorporated in some way, extensive gutting and reworking of it would likely mean a significant expense beyond what it would cost to create a new, technologically modern, energy efficient building for the 21st Century in our new City Center. And the cost of changing the building does not even take into account what land would be taken up to provide sufficient parking and bring other infrastructure changes to satisfy building code and ADA requirements for a public space.

Finally, we should recall that when our South Burlington Police Department was looking for a new home, there was an enormous outcry from the citizens against changing the intent of the Wheeler property's use. This letter should remind people that the purpose of this land is that it would remain an open, available to everyone, beautiful site with lovely views and recreational opportunities. Let us leave it as it was intended to be.

*Nancy Simson
Former Library Board Trustee
South Burlington*

Recreation and Parks Committee Vote of Approval

September 19, at our regularly scheduled meeting, the Recreation and Parks Committee voted unanimously to support approval of the November 8, 2016 Debt Authorization vote on TIF that will allow Phase One development of City Center's Market Street, Dumont Park, and related expenses. Eight of nine committee members were present (and our remaining member endorses).

City Center will bring great benefits to South Burlington: a sense of identity, a community gathering place, economic benefits, and a walkable environment in which to live, work, and enjoy life. Of special interest to Recreation and Parks is that the City Center plan allows concentration of development in City Center, lessening the pressure on our precious open space.

The Phase One projects, Market Street and Dumont Park support the pillars of Recreation and Parks: conservation, health and well-being, and social equity. We are especially supportive of the plans for Dumont Park, which were developed with the participation of many residents, including neighbors of the Park. According to city management's spreadsheet, Dumont Park's development costs of \$1,275,000 are 95 percent eligible for TIF financing! Our amazing downtown park will allow people of all ages to enjoy a place to enjoy and learn about nature.

We understand that approval of Phase One is a necessary first step in realizing the dream of City Center, which has been in the planning for decades. According to city council member Meaghan Emery, approval of Phase One will not increase residents' property taxes. We hope residents will vote to approve the City Center Ballot Item November 8!

*Jennifer Kochman, Chair
Recreation and Parks Committee
South Burlington*

Support for Ann Pugh

Ann has served us very well, I think, exercising leadership in chairing the House Human Services Committee and the Child Protection Oversight Committee. She has demonstrated her ability to work in a bi-partisan manner. She has the experience and

in-depth understanding of the needs of our community and our state. She believes in and has supported investments in people as a keystone for economic development. That support includes: affordable, safe, quality child care; addiction programs; and post-secondary education in all forms.

Please join me in supporting Ann and reelecting her to the Legislature.

John Dinklage
South Burlington

Why My Son is Right for South Burlington

I am incredibly proud of Sam and everything he has accomplished in his life thus far. He is a college graduate, local business owner, and maybe most importantly, a supportive husband and father. That is why I am honored to be able to write this letter in support of him, as he makes his run for the Vermont House of Representatives.

Sam and I haven't always seen eye-to-eye when it comes to public policy, among other things, but we do agree that the financial health of our state and our residents should be at the top of Montpelier's priority list, which does not currently seem to be the case. It is clear that our economic climate is in trouble, young people continue to leave the state to seek better job opportunities, even if it means leaving their families.

My husband and I are lucky to have Sam and his younger brother here in Vermont with us, but we desperately miss our daughter, Jacklyn, who has moved out of state because of a job opportunity that she couldn't find here.

Jacklyn spent 20 plus years in Vermont before pursuing a Bachelors of Social Work degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She returned home and hoped to find a job serving those in our community, but unfortunately was unable to find work that matched her education and would also allow her to live comfortably. She decided to return to get her Masters, but after graduating, realized that if she wanted to stay in that line of work, the cost of living in Vermont would be too great.

Social work is not for the faint of heart. Though very rewarding, the stress of the job can be high, and as her mother, I agreed that adding unnecessary financial stress could have long-term negative effects on her health and wellbeing. For that reason, she took a job in North Carolina. Young people should have the choice to stay here if they want to. Leaving should not be the only option. It should be a choice and right now it is not.

Pamela Handy
South Burlington

It's Not About a Library

Opinion letters in recent issues of *The Other Paper* have encouraged people to vote against the bond vote on November 8 for several reasons. The library, its potential cost and location, have been a central theme. This vote has nothing to do with committing the city to anything related to a future library. The vote will only allow the city to borrow funding that will be paid back with TIF income to be realized by projects already completed or way along in the permitting process and other currently available sources. It will not require any city taxpayer funding that has not already been budgeted, and a major portion of it collected.

A positive vote will result in a much needed reconstruction of Market Street, design work is nearly completed, and the creation of a city park that will be of benefit to all of the citizens of the area. A positive vote will not commit the city to any other projects at this time. Should other projects (library, city hall, etc.) be desired, they will require extensive public involvement and authorization by additional voting.

The questions raised concerning the location of a future library are excellent issues to be raised and resolved but this vote provides no commitment relative to this issue or any of the other projects previously mentioned with regard to the City Center development.

Vote Yes on November 8.

Lou Bresee
South Burlington

September 22, 2016

Patients Deserve Courtesy Too

This note to appointment-driven offices, namely medical service providers, is a long-time coming. Providers and their staff have just as much responsibility to give their patients the courtesy of notification when their schedule becomes delayed as we do when we are unable to keep an appointment. Case in point, a few months ago, I left work to give myself time to deal with usual traffic and arrived a little early for an appointment across town, only my second with this office, and checked in

with the receptionist. I sat for 15 minutes past my appointment time. Frustrated at being ignored and given no explanation, I approached the receptionist and said, "So, I left work early so I'd be on time." Without even a hint of an apology, she completely missed the point and asked me if a later time would work better. She said the delay started about an hour before my appointment, but was silent when I pointed out that was a half hour before I left work and a call would have let me finish my work day or given me the option to reschedule. I walked out and haven't been back. Had it been my primary care provider, I would have felt obligated to wait.

If medical service providers see themselves and/or their staff reflected in this letter, please give your patients the same courtesy you require of us. Some offices impose a fee if we're late or miss an appointment. That's legit and compensates for otherwise lost revenue. On the other side, we have no recourse for this treatment, no way to punish inconsiderate behavior and make up for time away from work.

A few days after being snubbed at the chiropractic office, I received their welcome-to-the-practice letter. Ironically, it reads, "And don't worry about waiting for your appointment; we make every effort to be punctual because your time is very important. As long as our patients arrive early or on time, we are able to stay on schedule." Not so much, eh? Oh, and there's been no outreach from them to make up for their gaff.

Jennifer Smith
South Burlington

Please Vote for Ann Pugh

I have lived in South Burlington for over seven years now. I am a single parent, with two beautiful daughters. I have a good job, and love living in Vermont.

My career and my contributions to the economy in Vermont are a direct result of my ability to participate in the programs that Ann Pugh has worked on during her entire tenure in the Vermont Legislature. Without quality child care, pre-k care, and afterschool programs, I could not keep my job.

Affordable, safe, quality, child care is an economic development issue.

I don't live in District 7-2, but the first question I want answered from my representative in the House or Senate is, "What have you done to help keep me in Vermont, working, contributing, and planning a future?"

Ann has an amazing track record working across the aisle with no regard to party affiliation to ensure that people with skills, jobs and children have one more reason to stay in Vermont. Thank you, Ann.

Alexis Buckel
South Burlington

Another Library Vision

Having read Louise Murphy's letter in the September 8 issue of *The Other Paper*, I have to respond. I have the greatest regard for our former South Burlington Community Librarian and share her enthusiasm for a tasteful, new, vibrant library in a stand-alone location, which would serve our community better than the current arrangement. But, I emphatically oppose the suggestion of siting it in the Homestead at the Wheeler Nature Park. There are at least two reasons for my opinion.

When the citizens voted to purchase the Calkins (later named Wheeler) property in 1999/2000, it was in direct response to city master planning, which had identified the dangers of sprawl and the need to protect remaining open spaces. In 2009, this core motivation was challenged with an attempt to locate a new police station on this land. This was soundly defeated by voters. Another, far more suitable location was found. Now we have a similar idea surfacing. Our natural area is no place for a library either. An active public building with lighting, increased parking, and constant human activity is incompatible with the passive recreation values of these precious 100+ acres. That's reason number one.

Reason number two is that a library (and possibly other municipal buildings) have been a centerpiece of City Center visioning by the people for many years. Our planning has identified that increased growth should be concentrated in the "core" of the city, not on the margins (especially not in the southeast quadrant). I do not want to see a City Center that is merely another shopping district, but I would be enthusiastic about a multi-use, walkable "center" incorporating residences, small businesses, a central green, and public gathering spot. Crucial to this would be the magnet of city services including the library. To remove the library from the City Center plans would eviscerate that vision.

Sarah Dopp
South Burlington

Undecided in a Pivotal Race

When I moved to South Burlington, the lack of candidates for state representative was quickly apparent. Through three election cycles (2012-present) we have seen one challenger in 2012, none in 2014, and now in 2016 we have only one contested race. I am one of the lucky citizens who gets to make a decision on November 8 which really matters: reelect a 22-year incumbent in Ann Pugh or let Sam Handy earn my vote.

As the incumbent, Ann has represented our district commendably by making it a point to tackle and resolve social issues in our state. A letter in the September 15, 2016 issue of *The Other Paper* endorsed Ann, and frankly the reasoning baffled me. Had the reasons been a social agenda, there would be no argument, but the writer discussed the “declining population, revenue shortfalls, ... and our youngest-best educated residents leaving after graduation” as reasons to keep reelecting her. These epidemics have all existed while she has been in office, and they are getting worse rather than better.

The revenue troubles are widely driven by the new taxes that are needed to drive the social agenda; taxes which drive the wealthy from our state. Representative Pugh has not actively opposed these tax increases, and in many cases she voted in favor of them.

This year will bring fresh faces and ideas to Vermont’s governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general offices. It is really exciting to see a fresh face in District 7-2 as well in Sam Handy. Sam is a long-time South Burlington resident and a fellow business owner. He would definitely bring a fresh perspective and breathe new life into our state’s fiscal policies if he is elected. I guess I have seven more weeks before I have to choose one over the other, but I am really glad that this year I finally have a choice!

*James Mount
South Burlington*

Thoughts from a Senior Citizen

I would like to share a few thoughts on this year’s state election from a native Vermonter and a senior citizen. I believe this election is crucial to Vermont’s future and here is why.

First, there has been very little job growth in Vermont, resulting in little increase in state revenue. This has caused Vermont to fall behind in many areas, including building and repairing the infrastructure of our roads, waterways, and water treatment facilities; in meeting the financial needs of our social programs; and in the ability to adequately fund our schools. Lack of job growth also affects the ability for our youth to find quality jobs, forcing them to seek jobs outside Vermont. I speak from experience, as two of my three sons left the state to seek better job opportunities.

Second, the Legislature continues to budget expenditures over state revenue, resulting in a constant need to increase taxes and fees to offset added expenditures. The Legislature is causing Vermont to live beyond its means, this is not what we as individual Vermonters have an option to do.

Third, the high cost of living in Vermont has caused many residents to change their residency to another state. And many more, including myself, are considering such a move.

For these reasons, and many more, Vermont needs a new direction and that includes a change in the current administration and Legislature. I am supporting Sam Handy to be our State Representative from the Chittenden 7-2 district. Sam is a native Vermonter and has been a resident in South Burlington for almost his entire life. Sam is a local business owner and knows what it takes to open and run a business, and to meet the financial needs of a weekly payroll. And, possibly the most important, he knows what it takes and to support and raise a family in South Burlington.

I think Sam will help set Vermont on a new path, one that encourages and enables job growth, assuring Vermont lives within its means and enables our youth and senior citizens to remain living in Vermont.

p

September 15, 2016

Support for Library at City Center

I was dismayed to read the letter from Louise Murphy (September 8, 2016) suggesting that the new South Burlington Community Library be built on the Wheeler House property instead of at the proposed City Center. As a relative newcomer to South Burlington, I'm excited about the prospect of a beautiful new library in a real town center.

When my husband and I chose to relocate here from Addison County it was because we saw South Burlington as a growing and vibrant community. Indeed, it's a town where people like me, a woman with no children in the public school system, can feel safe and comfortable. But I long for more; I long for connection.

As we all know there is no center to our town. There is no hub for downtown events and celebrations. Having the ability to meet and interact with my neighbors in the center of town, at locally owned businesses, while doing errands, and while taking advantage of all that our wonderful community library has to offer, is one of the great selling points of the South Burlington City Center project. A new library located in our soon-to-be-created town center is something that many of us: singles, childless couples, retirees, and families with children, are looking forward to. How nice to have all types of people gathering in one central space that's been designed especially for community and for connecting!

To suggest that we eliminate the centerpiece of a new City Center seems misguided. The thought of placing the library anywhere but in the new hub of activity, modernity, and conviviality that the City Center project promises is antithetical to the goal of the City Center itself.

The Wheeler homestead is admittedly a lovely place. It should stay that way. Just as the new South Burlington Community Library should be at the center of the remarkable town which we call home.

Leora Dowling
South Burlington Community Library Board Member

Library Next to Wheeler House

This idea of a City Center is an old idea that goes back more than twenty years and in that time we have all done quite nicely without it.

I fully agree with Louise Murphy's opinion in *The Other Paper* on September 8. The library should be in the lot next to the Wheeler House, at the corner of Dorset and Swift Streets, for the reasons she stated and more.

Imagine sitting in a new library, reading a book and looking out a wall of windows at Mount Mansfield and the ever changing sky above. South Burlington's library would be the envy of every Vermont town and the enjoyment of our towns' citizens.

Yes, the view would be preserved (public's favorite scenic views in the city) and on cold winter days, even hot, humid ones, it could be enjoyed from inside your new library.

Ed Steele
South Burlington

Let's Start Building

It's time to get something done in City Center. We have studied it to death and it's time to start doing something. An elementary school in middle of this is absurd. Let's sell Central and build a new school with that money. Let's start developing this area with retail, offices, and apartments. Let's move now and actually do something. There will always be someone opposed to anything that will be done. Let's start building and get this area on the tax rolls and stop with all the talk. Let's get something done, we have waited far too long.

Scott Bronson
South Burlington

We Need Change Now

It is truly remarkable to watch young people who have passed through my football program go on to succeed both on and off the field. I've been a coach for almost 50 years and I'd like to think that I have played a small part in their successes. Sam Handy is one of my boys. Sam was a standout when he played for me, and now more than 20 years later, he continues to impress me with his work ethic and sheer determination to make something of himself.

An exemplary athlete from the start, Sam was always eager to learn, wanted to get better, and determined to thrive. He took constructive criticism and advice with ease and immediately put them into action. These are the qualities we need in our state's leadership.

With a focus on our state's economic prosperity, Sam practices what he preaches on a daily basis. As a local business owner, Sam knows firsthand what it's like to have people's livelihood dependent on him. He is on the front lines of job creation and is well versed in the demands and pressure that come with working within a tight budget, dealing with burdensome taxes, and the stress of having to make payroll.

Rising costs and lower incomes have made it hard for middle-class families to make ends meet. More than 50 percent of the children who play for me are unable to pay their entrance fee. Our young people are leaving Vermont to find jobs, and once they do, they rarely return.

Montpelier is in desperate need of someone who knows what it's like to be on the other side of the swinging pendulum. I have great faith that Sam will be the balance that our legislature needs. We need someone who has built a business, maintained payroll, and most of all developed a budget and balanced it! We are at a point where Vermonters are being driven away by the insatiable appetite for increasing taxes. Enough is enough. We need change now.

Rene LaBerge
South Burlington

Vote for Ann Pugh

Soon after I moved to South Burlington from Waterbury, I met with Ann Pugh to determine her positions on a number of issues important to me. We did not agree on everything, but I was struck by her willingness to understand and accept my thoughts. I learned then that she is the Chair of the House Human Services Committee and Chair of the Joint Legislative Child Protective Oversight Committee.

I have met with Ann several times over the past year. I continue to hold her in high regard not only for her work ethic, but her ability to work in a bi-partisan manner to address very complicated issues. She is smart and thoughtful. Early this summer, she walked through our neighborhood collecting signatures for her placement on the re-election ballot.

Our state is facing some very difficult problems, declining population, revenue shortfalls, opiate addiction crisis, and our youngest-best educated residents leave after graduating.

Ann Pugh is the person I want to represent me this coming year. Her thoughtful, results based, unbiased approach to problem solving has served us well in the past – and will continue to do so in the coming years. She will be working with new leadership both in the governor's office and Vermont State House, and, frankly, they need her.

Ann has a solid base of accomplishments in work force development, child care, addiction programs, and post-secondary education dual track programs. There is much more work to do in our state, and we deserve the best. I urge you to vote for Ann Pugh on November 8.

Brian Harwood
South Burlington

September 8, 2016

The R.A.D. Program

I'd like to commend our South Burlington Police Department (SBPD) for offering its R.A.D. program to the public. R.A.D. stands for Rape Aggression Defense and is a system of self-defense for women that aims to broaden available options in case of attack. I recently participated in a program along with 11 other women ranging in age from 13 to 67. We learned skills of risk awareness, risk reduction, risk recognition, and risk avoidance plus physical maneuvers and strategies for survival and escape in extreme situations.

Without a doubt, every woman in the program came away with a heightened awareness of her physical capabilities, a sense of empowerment, and a specific toolkit of options for self-protection.

The SPBD offers this program three times a year free of charge. It is an invaluable community service worth its weight in gold. It is taught by certified R.A.D. instructors who are members of our community's police force. When next you see an officer of the SBPD, please thank them for providing this wonderful opportunity. Women—consider signing up for this program!

Lois Price
South Burlington

Let's Use What We Have

The current plan to place the new South Burlington Public Library in the projected City Center should be reconsidered. The library will be inaccessible during high traffic times such as rush hour and holidays. The city does not own any land in the

projected city center location and would have to purchase or lease land for a new library. A library in City Center would not have any natural outdoor space, and parking is likely to be in a parking garage.

Many residents that I have talked to oppose City Center development. They question the need and benefit for it, they are concerned about increased traffic in an already congested area, and they recognize the development of city center is a high risk to our taxpayers if no future investors come forward to pick up the debt that we will incur if the \$5,000,000 bond vote is approved in November.

Why should we place an additional burden on our taxpayers to purchase expensive land when the city already owns an ideal location for a new library at the city-owned Wheeler Homestead? It is central; it has spectacular gardens, walking trails, and mountain views. A well-designed library would not put the natural areas in jeopardy. It would maximize the potential for more residents to enjoy this city treasure, not just the able-bodied walkers and gardeners. Transportation could be expanded to include Dorset Park [Veterans Memorial Park] and the Wheeler Homestead. A new library at this site could include outdoor space for children's programs and outdoor concerts, for gardening, for science and environmental exploration, and for a tranquil reading garden to feed the soul.

A public library at the Wheeler Homestead would be more closely aligned with South Burlington residents' love and appreciation of natural spaces than the library planned for City Center. A new library at Wheeler could be a community gem and one that everyone could take pride in and enjoy.

Shouldn't this option be seriously considered and discussed, at the very least, before a decision is made where to place the new library?

Louise Murphy
South Burlington

September 1, 2016

Vote No on \$5 million City Center bond issue.

The city staff and city council have had five years to do something in City Center and they haven't done much - Trader Joe's, Pier One and some row housing. Now they come to us for a required ballot item which will allow them to continue with the Tax Increment Finance district to provide infrastructure development to support the private development of City Center.

I say we vote No. Why should we trust the city to do something with an additional \$5 million when they haven't done anything with the \$5.5 million they already have?

When I was on the city council in 2012, we approved an almost \$5 million federal earmark from Senator Leahy for the reconstruction of Market Street, which was supposed to have been done by now. Instead there has been nothing but a series of studies, consultants, meetings and a quick paving job. We should have an accounting of the money that has been spent, not a vote for more.

Proponents of City Center say they need the extra \$5 million if they are to complete Market Street. They say their vision of a new library, town green, city hall and community center are contingent upon the completion of Market Street. Those projects will require larger bonds in the future.

Under the TIF, 75 percent of the property taxes paid by future private development are used to pay off the municipal bonds. So far the city has fumbled the ball with private developers.

A \$100 million proposal that included free space for a library and park but required the sale of Central School was presented. Rather than negotiate with the developer to have the project without selling the school they handed the problem off to the school board, which in two years, has still not made a decision. The school board will no doubt recommend a very large school bond for us to vote on in March.

The bottom line for November is that if we approve this \$5 million bond and no other developers appear, we the tax payers will be responsible for paying off this debt.

Paul Engels
South Burlington

August 18, 2016

Thank You

I want to thank the voters of South Burlington for the strong support given me in the August 9 Senate Democratic primary and for coming out to vote in such large numbers. With 11 qualified candidates, it was indeed a competitive and positive primary. I look forward to continuing to earn your support in November and, hopefully, will be honored and privileged to again represent Chittenden County in the Vermont Senate. Thank you.

Senator Michael Sirotkin
South Burlington

August 11, 2016

Why Can't We Look Over Overlook Park?

Is anyone else frustrated by the fact that 50 percent of the gorgeous view from Overlook Park towards Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains is blocked by tall evergreens planted and placed on land owned by the City of South Burlington?

Those trees defeat the objective of Overlook Park, which is patronized by South Burlington citizens every night at sunset, from high school teenagers to senior citizens. They are a contradiction to the park's purpose, and nightly produce expressions of dismay because they block the view of the lake and mountains.

I have no doubt that when the trees were planted, they were intended to block the view of the private home on the other side, but now, that home has its own trees shorter in height which perform this function.

I am grateful for the hard work of the South Burlington Public Works Department, and happily support the work of its arborist with my tax dollars. But these are trees whose time is over. Can't they be taken down? Wouldn't it be nice to really be able to look over Overlook Park?

If you agree, please contact South Burlington's Director of Public Works to express your opinion. Thank you for your consideration.

Sam Carlson
South Burlington

July 28, 2016

Lisman's True Colors

I have known Bruce Lisman for well over 50 years having been classmates at Burlington High School and the University of Vermont. I have found him to be an extremely intelligent, thoughtful, and ethical individual. Bruce is passionate about Vermont and, since retirement, has dedicated his time and energy traveling throughout the state, and meeting with Vermonters in order to ascertain exactly what impacts them on a daily basis and makes their lives in Vermont troublesome and less than adequate.

Vermonters are proud, hardworking individuals who find it increasingly difficult to maintain an adequate standard of living in order to provide for themselves and their families. Vermonters are faced with high taxes and fees, an economic environment that is less than beneficial to small business, a health care system that is complicated at best, and a severe lack of government accountability for the problems that face Vermonters on a daily basis. Seniors living in Vermont on reduced incomes are further impacted by excessive Social Security taxes and being faced with inadequate income that impacts their health and well-being.

Bruce has my vote because he has a sound plan for dealing with the economy and tax issues that face Vermonters, for an audit of the Medicaid system in Vermont in order to improve Vermont's overall physical health and mental health services, and for an adequate hourly wage in order that workers can maintain an adequate standard of living in order to support themselves and their families.

Bruce Lisman is a problem solver. He listens to Vermonters without simply smiling and nodding. Once he listens, he then sets about developing plans to reduce or ameliorate those problems that are negatively impacting Vermonters on a daily basis. Bruce is for the people of Vermont. Bruce is a do-er and I will be proud to call him my governor.

Eleanor Hobbs Jenks

South Burlington

Zuckerman Understands Vermont Families

What I love about Vermont is the people and the many residents who are committed to quality of life: protecting our environment, nurturing our children, improving our schools, helping everyone thrive, and creating a sustainable future for the next generation to enjoy.

The three candidates for lieutenant governor agree on the issues Vermont faces and that the lieutenant governor's job is to bring people together from inside and outside the State House to create sustainable solutions. They are all friendly, caring people. They are all intelligent. They all have experience in the State House and politics. So what's the difference? David Zuckerman is working full time as the owner and farmer of Full Moon Farm; serving as a Vermont State Senator; and raising a family. He is much more than a politician and he consistently shows this to all of us with his work inside and outside of the State House.

I fully support David Zuckerman as I know he is running for only one reason — to bring Vermonters together to solve our state's challenges so everyone can thrive. He is clear, he is consistent, and his ideas are in the best interest of our future. He steps ahead of the mainstream world with vision and passion. He knows how to bring people together. Please support quality of life for all Vermonters and a sustainable future for our children and grandchildren by voting for David Zuckerman in the August 9th primary.

*Tricia Gustafson
South Burlington*

Sirotkin an Effective Advocate

Sometimes party politics don't matter with endorsements. Such is the case with my fellow Senator Michael Sirotkin. I have had the privilege of not only seeing his hard work and dedication as a senator, but also as an effective advocate for the right causes over and over again for many years.

Two nation leading efforts come immediately to mind. When I was Chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, I teamed up with Michael, who was representing mental health consumers and providers, to pass the country's first mental health parity law. Around the same time, Michael took on the tobacco industry and was instrumental in the passage of Vermont's clean indoor air act and smoking in the workplace legislation - both of which led the national debate.

Michael's hard work and effectiveness continues today. Just this year alone he championed successful bills related to opioids, farm to school, paid sick days, dental therapists, utility ratepayer advocacy and financing opportunities for downtowns.

Michael Sirotkin clearly stands out in very crowded field of senate candidates. I am very pleased to support him once again.

*Helen Riehle
Chittenden County State Senator & South Burlington City Council Chair
South Burlington*

Re-elect Sirotkin

I have known and respected Michael Sirotkin as a highly effective, trusted advocate for Vermont consumers and working families for over thirty years. He has repeatedly taken on some of the most powerful interest groups – tobacco, insurance and drug makers – and scored impressive legislative victories against them.

As chair of the Labor and Housing Committee in the Vermont House of Representatives, I have seen Michael's work close up. He has led the fight for working Vermonters, affordable housing, and preservation of Vermont's unique working landscape. It is a pleasure to observe Michael put his decades of State House experience to work for Chittenden County and know how effective he has proven to be. In this session alone, he successfully championed combating opioid abuse, expanding farm to school, improving ratepayer representation in utility matters, and creating significant new financing options for downtown Burlington redevelopment.

I am also pleased to see how Michael, the only Senator who lives in South Burlington, seeks input from his constituents and replies to their questions and concerns.

Michael clearly stands out in a crowded field. Please join me in casting one of your up to six votes for the re-election of Senator Michael Sirotkin.

*Rep. Helen Head
South Burlington*

July 21, 2016

Re-elect Michael Sirotkin

I am writing to encourage South Burlington voters to re-elect Michael Sirotkin to the Vermont Senate. Since taking his seat, Michael has demonstrated an unusual ability to sponsor legislation that actually becomes law. His successful efforts on combating Opiate Abuse and the Farm to School program are two specific examples.

Communicating with constituents is a basic responsibility of a senator. Michael excels in this area. His emails updating us on what is transpiring in Montpelier are both timely and informative. He responds to individual correspondence. His answer may not be what the writer hoped for, but it will always be a thoughtful and reasoned response.

Michael Sirotkin is a man of integrity and experience. He is exactly the type of individual we need in the Vermont Senate.

Robert L. Walsh
South Burlington

Sirotkin is the Clear Choice

Senator Michael Sirotkin is the clear choice for South Burlington voters. Of the 11 Democratic candidates running in the August 9 primary for the six senate seats from Chittenden County, Michael is the sole candidate who resides in our city. That is not the primary reason I support his re-election, however.

Sirotkin tops my list of qualified candidates because of his years of experience in improving Vermont's laws in his role as an advocate for vulnerable Vermonters. He has represented senior citizens as well as consumer, environmental, housing, and working family organizations in his previous career as an attorney at his governmental and public affairs law firm. As a senator, he was the lead sponsor for the earned sick leave law and for a bill that combats opium abuse, addressing the problem on multiple fronts. He has also played a vital role on the Senate Finance Committee.

Senator Sirotkin is a strong advocate for South Burlington and Vermont. He listens to constituents and keeps us informed. He has represented us well and is smart, deliberative, and effective. He has my vote and I hope he has yours. Please stop by the city offices to vote early, or vote at your local polling station on August 9.

Martin LaLonde
South Burlington

July 12, 2016

Vermont Needs Lisman

My name is Baba Gee and I am probably one of the most-anti Republican folks you'll ever meet, but Bruce Lisman has my full support for governor of Vermont. Bruce has my support because he is the first Republican to actually display compassion for the human condition. I am a disabled cancer patient and have great fear for our future. In my opinion, we have a rising heroin epidemic and a failed health care system that has sunk us \$300 million in the hole. Our young people are leaving our state and we are at risk of losing local control of our education. Bruce is one of the first businessmen that I have seen that has an eye for how to handle our funds, but also an eye on the needs of Vermonters. Bruce is just the kind of person Vermont needs and I am confident to say that he is the best choice for governor.

Baba Gee
South Burlington

Vermont Democrats Vote Early

The Democratic primary is happening now through August 9! Vote early at the city clerk's office. Stop by anytime Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. You can also call (846-4105) and have a ballot mailed to you. There are a huge number of Democratic candidates. They need your vote to make it onto the November ballot.

Ordinarily, I would urge you to vote only for Michael Sirotkin for State Senate, as our sole senate candidate. I dislike diluting my vote within the six-seat Chittenden County senate district that has been engineered to favor Burlington. However, two open seats in the senate make at least two more choices essential.

The South Burlington Democrats held a recent candidate forum, and I was favorably impressed by Faisal Gill and David Scherr, both great attorneys with a passion for affordable housing and addressing income inequality. Their sharp legal minds and compassionate hearts are a needed combination and have earned my vote. There are 11 Democratic candidates. Your votes will make the difference.

We have equally good choices for lieutenant governor: Shap Smith, Kesha Ram, and David Zuckerman. And, of course, Sue Minter and Matt Dunne are vying for the governor's office. Who's your choice? Get out and make it count. Your neighbors are voting now.

*Chris Shaw, Chair, SB Democrats
South Burlington*

June 30, 2016

Sirotkin and Sherr for State Senate

Michael Sirotkin, a South Burlington resident and an incumbent state senator, is well-known and well-respected. His work, as example, on opioid addiction, paid earned leave, ratepayer advocacy, and farm-to-school food security programs garnered much praise this past session. His longstanding support of rank-and-file workers as well as the most vulnerable among us continues unwavering. He is a stand-out in a crowd of candidates.

David Scherr is also a stand-out, but not yet so well-known. He is committed first and foremost to social justice, not strictly from an intellectual perspective, but from his daily work practicing juvenile, family, and criminal law; his daily work representing people who are struggling just to get by. He understands, first-hand, the role poverty plays in landing people in our criminal justice system and the role poverty then plays in exacerbating the obstacles to reclaiming a productive life once out of the justice system. His work ethic combined with his expertise and fresh voice would be an important addition to the Senate.

We have six votes for Chittenden County State Senator. Two of my votes in the upcoming August 9 Primary Election will go to Michael Sirotkin and David Scherr. I hope that you will consider giving your support also. (And do be aware that early/absentee voting is an option beginning June 24.)

Maida F. Townsend
South Burlington

City Attorney's Resignation

In the last edition of *The Other Paper*, incomplete facts were presented using conjecture that would lead a reader to believe that Jim Barlow resigned because of my line of questioning at the June 13 City Council meeting on the topic of Councilor Emery's involvement in the 'Stop the F-35 Coalition' (plaintiff in the private lawsuit the city has just joined as *amicus curiae*). What the article didn't report is that his letter of resignation was turned in just minutes before the start of the June 13 meeting.

I don't know why exactly Jim Barlow resigned but I know that my line of questioning on Councilor Emery's personal interest in this private lawsuit was not out of line. I know that asking an attorney to render an opinion on a council member he ultimately reports to introduces a power differential that could sway anybody's impartiality. I know that immediately after hearing of his resignation, I reached out to him asking what I could do to change his mind because I hold him, his integrity, his thoroughness and his professionalism in the highest regard. I don't know if he was bothered by being asked to work on this controversial resolution outside of the public's eye from May 27 to June 3 but I know I was bothered by him being asked to do so. I didn't resurrect this F-35 Lawsuit controversy he

was tasked with working on over the weeks leading up to his resignation; the new majority on council did.

Thomas Chittenden
City Councilor
South Burlington

Thank You for F-35 Coverage

Thank you for your in-depth coverage of this issue (“Council Grapples with F-35 Lawsuit,” June 16, 2016, Volume 40, No. 24.) Well-informed citizens can respectfully disagree and your paper helps illuminate both sides of the question.

Lee Freeman
South Burlington

Response to Misleading Green Ribbons ads

Green Ribbons for the F-35 [GRF-35] has paid for full page color ads in local papers which I believe to be fraught with lies and distortions that need responding to.

GRF-35 calls the lawsuit “frivolous.” The lawsuit is a serious attempt to get information from an intransigent USAF concerning the real impacts on noise and safety in South Burlington.

GRF-35 says this action is contrary to the wishes of a majority of Vermonters. Our freedom as a people is guarded by our constitutional republic, which is designed to protect the minority from oppression of the majority. Chamberlin neighborhood property owners are clearly an embattled minority.

VTANG has a safe flying record, but I have lived to see 2 military jet crashes in South Burlington. Crashes really do happen. Our community members and first responders need to know what we are getting into.

The EIS for the F-35 was published in May of 2013, which in my opinion was based on faulty data skewed to obtain siting.

GRF-35 claims once again that “the community has built up around the airport.” This is a gross distortion of the facts. VTANG is a USAF installation. On Feb 1, 1951, VTANG was activated into the USAF. VTANG’s first HQ was in the old Eldridge one room schoolhouse. At every step, the the USAF and the airport have taken more and more properties. In 1951, when the landing strip was extended to accommodate jets, 68 parcels of land totaling 199 acres where taken, and 17 families had to move their homes or have them torn down.

Heavy-handed tactics by GRF-35 seek to crush opposition voices by establishing themselves as the majority opinion in a community of which only a very few are even members.

Taking a hit in property values without compensation and the possible closing of our neighborhood elementary school due to a change in military hardware is reason enough to ask questions.

Linus Leavens

South Burlington

June 16, 2016

Chamberlin is an Exceptional School

I oppose closing Chamberlin School. The proposal is not justified by educational or financial criteria and is in conflict with our values of environmental responsibility and sense of community. I live in the Chamberlin neighborhood. Having children and an excellent school in the midst of our neighborhood is an incredibly positive part of living in our area.

I attended several meetings regarding the South Burlington Schools Master Planning and Visioning process. The overwhelming number of people who spoke at the public sessions were against closing any schools.

I am pleased that citizens care deeply about our schools. My neighbors had a lot to say, to me, and to each other. Some, like me, attended meetings. The proposal to close Chamberlin School has caused a lot of angst in our neighborhood. There seem to be no clear goals, objectives and data guiding the process (other than a poor offer from Saxon Partners). I suggest that our common South Burlington community and educational values be clearly articulated in a prominent position on the school district web site. This can be a foundation for proposals in the future.

Our South Burlington communities think highly of our schools. We are fortunate to have many talented, empathetic and highly professional teachers. Let's not make a change for the worse. To be successful in this rapidly changing world we need to know what we have and be thoughtful and prudent about what we want.

Loretta Marriott

South Burlington

May 26, 2016

VTANG Closure Concerns are Unfounded

In the March 3, 2016 issue of *The Other Paper*, retired USAF Colonel Richard Murray implies that opposition to the F-35 being based at the Burlington International Airport could cause the Air Force to pack up and take away the F-35s as they leave. He further tries to make a case by association that VTANG would close and our area would go through the equivalent of a local economic recession.

In the first case, in my opinion, it would be the best outcome for South Burlington, to not have the F-35s based here for all-too obvious reasons, including one option proposed to the school board to close Chamberlin School partly for noise reasons. In the second case, his attempts at implying economic recession belie his claim to be an expert on these matters. The implication is that VTANG would shut down shop. This is just plain nonsense.

September 18, 1947 is considered the Air National Guard's official birth, concurrent with the establishment of the United States Air Force as a separate permanent branch of the United States military with 1947ts in each state and several territories under the "National Security Act of Air National Guard uni" signed by President Harry Truman. (See Wikipedia.org and search "Air National Guard.")

Also see U.S. Code, 32 Title, 1 Chapter § 102 - "General Policy," which states, "In accordance with the traditional military policy of the United States, it is essential that the strength and organization of the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard as an integral part of the first line defenses of the United States be maintained and assured at all times. (Aug. 10, 1956, ch. 1041, 70A Stat. 597.)"

Thus, it is apparent to me that it is a matter of national law and national military policy that there will be an Air Guard unit in each and every state. No guard station has ever closed down for reasons for lack of mission though many have been temporarily disrupted to join war efforts.

Ray Gonda
South Burlington

Planting Ideas for City Beautification

My thanks to South Burlington City Manager Kevin Dorn and the city council members, particularly Tom Chittenden, for public recognition of South Burlington residents who participate in litter clean up on Green Up Day and/or throughout the year.

I request the city council keep city beautification in their work plan and include in its scope the following: more street benches, public trash and recycling containers, public and business-located bike racks, improvement of city signage and lighting, "sense of place" enhancements, encouragement of business and private street-side landscaping and gardening, and an exploration of sidewalk improvements and options (pavers, accents), as well as repairs and colored curbs.

In addition, the city council could include the possibility of artist displays within the city in both public spaces and business buildings and properties. Other possibilities include exploring ways to celebrate individual neighborhoods, taking a more active and yearly role in promoting South Burlington's Green Up Day and Adopt-A-Block program and working to create a business/school district/city partnership towards beautification of a clean South Burlington.

A business partnership might begin with a litter survey in the business district. The suggested intent is to define the amount, type, and quantification of litter along business storefront districts, then compare year-to-year actual results vs. targets. I have provided the city council with a litter survey format for consideration.

Many of my ideas lend themselves to a specific city council work plan and defined milestones. I request the city council give them such consideration. Like seed selections in early spring catalogs, these ideas may all look enticing; however, it takes public support to help them germinate. Contact your city councilor or join a committee to support any specific city beautification effort. South Burlington can be the cleanest city in the nation; it's a proud status for us all - businesses and public alike. Let's make the South Burlington strategy, "Think clean city, speak clean city, act clean city."

Bernie Paquette
South Burlington

May 5, 2016

Gill for the Vermont Senate

Faisal Gill is a new face on the Vermont political scene. The Winooski resident has announced his candidacy for the Vermont Senate. In this time of misinformed rhetoric and fear, Gill's candidacy offers the voters of Chittenden County an opportunity to elect a senator who understands diversity and is a member of the Islamic Society of Vermont. His candidacy could not come at a better time.

Faisal Gill brings impressive qualifications to his candidacy. A lawyer by profession he was appointed to the Vermont Medical Practice Board by Governor Shumlin and has chaired the Winooski Community Service Commission for two years. Prior to arriving in Vermont, he served on active duty as a Lieutenant Commander in the U. S. Navy. On completion of his active duty, he worked in the White House as Assistant Counsel for Homeland Security.

Faisal Gill is the father of two adult sons and a teenage daughter. A moderate democrat, his political interests focus on balancing the budget and higher education. College affordability and student debt are of particular interest as is his desire for college graduates to be prepared to meet the requirements Vermont's workforce.

I am glad Faisal Gill is offering to serve in the Vermont Senate. I hope we elect him in November.

Robert L. Walsh
South Burlington

Proposed Site for New Dog Park

I was hopeful, then dismayed when I saw there's a proposal for a new site for the South Burlington dog park. I go to the Shelburne dog park almost daily, avoiding the South Burlington dog park due to the volume of the F-16s. It's more than twice as far for me to go to Shelburne, but both my dog and I can't take the volume of the F-16s at the South Burlington dog park.

We're both fine with the volume of the commercial jets, but when those F-16s take off it's completely different - *way* louder. My dog completely freaks out and runs around in terror, then trembles for 15 minutes afterwards. Now, at home she trembles when we hear the F-16s in the distance. I am 66 years old, and when the F-16s take off when I'm there, the pressure in my chest is scary. Plus, I have tinnitus and the F-16s are like ice picks in my ears, and the ringing in my ears increases for a few days.

I tried going for a while, hoping to avoid the F-16s taking off, but there's no regular schedule that I can find anywhere, and I've missed a few times. It's just not worth it.

I looked at a map of where the new dog park is proposed to go. Isn't that near houses that have been torn down because of the noise of military jets? Given how loud those F-16s are and my understanding that the F-35's will be louder, I don't see that there would be much of a volume reduction at the proposed new site than at the current site. I guess I will continue to go to the Shelburne dog park.

I may be the only person who has this experience and concern.

Ellen Powell
South Burlington

April 28, 2016

School Consolidation

I attended the recent meeting of the South Burlington School District and appreciated the opportunity to hear what was being proposed and what the district consultants had to say. It is laudable that the school district is weighing all options and has sought input from those who have

expertise in real-estate development, however I believe the district also needs to listen more closely to the views and concerns of South Burlington residents.

Schools are an intricate part of what makes up a community. They contribute to the communities both as educational centers but also as anchors for community engagement. In many respects, they give a neighborhood its sense of community.

As a member of the Vermont Public Health Association I am a strong proponent of always viewing our community assets and making our community decisions and changes with an eye on the impact these decisions may have on the health of the community and its children. Community-based elementary schools provide an opportunity for families and children to feel a strong connection with their schools. They provide a rare opportunity for children to walk to schools or for parents to walk their children to school. They provide a gathering place for community activities, both social and recreational. In short, community-based schools positively contribute to the health of the community and its residents.

It is my understanding that the Vermont Department of Health has offered to conduct a Health Impact Assessment for the South Burlington School District regarding the proposed school reconfiguration plans. Health Impact Assessments have been strongly supported throughout the U.S. to help local governments make decisions that take into account the impact of those decisions on the health of their communities. I understand there would be no cost to South Burlington for this assessment. Before the School District proceeds further on this matter, I strongly urge them to accept this offer in the spirit of making decisions that will serve the best interests of the health and wellbeing of the children and citizens of South Burlington.

Burt Wilcke
South Burlington

April 21, 2016

Ingram for Senate

Debbie Ingram is a perfect and delightful candidate for Vermont State Senator. To me, Debbie personifies the meaning of “social justice.” She is fully committed to fairness for the least of us while understanding the burdens of small business. She has experience in her own communications business and she’s director of Vermont Interfaith Action, a fairness advocacy program composed of Burlington area churches and synagogues. She is a community representative as a Williston Selectboard member and sometimes she puts on another hat as an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ, a caring and inclusive denomination.

I have been a witness to each of these venues and I admire her intelligence, leadership, and compassion. She is a bright graduate of Stanford University but equally at home in Vermont’s small communities. She also is a voice for minorities and individuals such as the elderly, LGBT, and survivors of abuse. She puts these values together to create a view of our ideal future, which will require initiative and practicality, leadership and collaboration.

Few people achieve balance as Debbie has, plus she has a great sense of humor, too. Please join me in casting your vote for Debbie Ingram for State Senator of Chittenden County district.

Hope Lindsay
South Burlington

March 31, 2016

Getting to the Root of the Problem

What's missing from this picture? *UnSlut: A Documentary Film* [film and discussion presented at South Burlington High School March 31] is a film that asserts to be about the laudable goals of creating awareness and preventing bullying. The question, however, is not, who is saying what about whom, but rather, why do we have so many young people caught up in such unpleasant circumstances?

One of the movie's goals is to lessen the disparity in the societal view of men versus women regarding sex by, according to the website, "promoting gender equality, sex positivity, and comprehensive, age-appropriate sex education for all." Surely, we want to cultivate a healthy and appropriate attitude toward sex amongst both our men and our women. It is not cool to have loose sex, regardless of whether you are male or female. No one is a hero, no one is a slut. Perhaps everyone is just confused about what is good?

Why are we as parents, teachers, coaches, and mentors not promoting an understanding of sexuality as a higher act; something to be engaged in with discernment and caution; something to be shared with reserve and respect; something to be considered with self-control and in light of consequences? Why are we not holding a higher bar for sexual behavior? Why is the educational establishment not minimizing the sexual spotlight? Instead of the current incessant onslaught of 'sexual questioning,' we should be calling our students, our children, to focus on their personal development, and how they might serve others rather than preoccupying them with all things sexual. Surely, they are embroiled in a battle with hormones, but why not esteem them to hold off on sex until such time as they can more fully understand the magnitude of the impact sexual activity has on their bodies, minds, and souls.

Certainly, we want to respect every individual, but do we really want to promote predictably precarious behavior? I can think of a whole train of four letter words besides 'slut' that could be beneficially eliminated from our vocabulary, but we all know that until we correct the attitude and behaviors, changing the name won't make the problem go away.

Deanna Plourde
South Burlington

March 24, 2016

After-school and Summer Learning Need

I believe every Vermont community and family should have access to quality after-school and summer learning programs for their children and dedicated state funding for after-school and summer programs is a great step toward this goal.

According to Afterschool Alliance.org, there are more than 22,000 Vermont students who would be participating in an expanded learning opportunity today if they had access to one. This means that there are more than 22,000 chances for bad choices, dangerous behaviors, or falling behind each and every day—especially between the hours of 3 to 6 p.m. It also means that there are more than 22,000 lost opportunities every day to help these children and youth reach their full potential. The need is high for expanded learning opportunities for our youth in Vermont, and the cost of doing nothing will be even higher than the cost of providing these programs.

It is my hope that all Vermont legislators will support an appropriation of \$2.5 million to the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Special Fund. Vermont has a strong base already in place for doing this work. We have a vibrant and valued statewide afterschool network, a strong 21st Century Community Learning Centers program serving many communities, and support for quality initiatives and professional development.

Expanded learning opportunities are an integral part of Vermont's education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized, accessible, and sustainable in every community in Vermont.

Barbara Russ
South Burlington

Wheeler Nature Park

Some people have noticed that trees at our Wheeler Nature Park have been removed and have asked what is being planned there. I spoke with Andrew Noonan in South Burlington Public Works. The trees that they removed were buckthorn and honeysuckle, both invasive species. They also removed box elder, a swamp plant of no value; these were rotted. They will put in a pathway from the lower parking lot to the house. Then the city arborist will transplant trees from the city nursery on the property to the area (where invasives were removed). They want to improve the aesthetics.

They have plans to cut some other trees to open the view looking east, one of the most beautiful views in the city, if not the county! They will install some picnic tables, and plant wildflowers, especially native plants and pollinator-attracters. They have been studying the monarch butterfly plight, and want to plant some milkweed. They want to put in a shed for the Burlington Gardening Club to tidy up the tool collection. Andrew suggested that Dan from the Burlington Garden Club can always use volunteers!

Our Wheeler Park is a treasure and, because we will have the funds available from approval of Article III, we will see other improvements coming in the future.

Jennifer Kochman
South Burlington

Marijuana—A Growing Problem

There is a growing tragedy worldwide, which has been with us for centuries. That “growing problem” is now a multibillion-dollar business that has contaminated, and poisoned (sometimes with death) a wide cross section of people, from the innocent baby in the womb to doctors, lawyers, senators, and zookeepers. The world has not been able to stop this horrendous conflict and for good reason. The world is infested with undesirable people, with ruinous corrupt prostitutes. Illegal drugs—this is what needs our attention! The eradication of this killer. I do not think cancer kills as many people! Eradication of illegal drugs must be our priority, not adding to the tragedy.

Stupidly and foolishly, some people are attempting to legalize an addictive poison! That is just what our young people need. In my youth, tobacco smoking led to alcohol, another pitfall. If the government authorizes its use, it must be harmless, same as tobacco!

Scrutinize the total illegal drug issue and eradicate all offending the law. The eradication of illegal drugs would propel our future - to better brain expansion, better health, better parent/child relationships, etc., and our children into prosperous well-beings with healthy minds and constructive living.

At this time, from the federal government down to city and town governments, enormous amounts of energy, time, and money frivolously are spent on negativity rather than a positive open mind that looks at the complete issue that is in need of resolving. A ship does not sail on yesterday's wind.

Our future and our children need progressive thinking that will improve their well-being. Marijuana does not improve your wellbeing. It is distractive, destructive, and addictive.

I do not write this opinion without prior knowledge that was gained by a family member some 35 years ago while in high school using illegal drugs. That ended with good results, thank God.

Leonard F. Brown
South Burlington

March 10, 2016

Thanks and Congratulations

Thanks to the many voters (51%) who turned out and engaged on Super Tuesday. Thanks for approving our city budget, the Open Space/Natural Areas enhancement loan and choosing your council candidates. Congratulations to Tim Barritt as your newest councilor, and thank you for the privilege of serving as city councilor these last three years. "Yoooge" thanks go out to my family, friends, and supporters who made campaigning a joy. The city has made great progress - hard work and exciting opportunities lie ahead. I am lucky to stay involved through my other appointed and elected roles, and hope our recent energy will motivate others to serve the city and help build positive community.

Chris Shaw
South Burlington

Thanks to Elizabeth Fitzgerald

Elizabeth has served the South Burlington community and school district as chair of the school board for three years prior to the March 2 board meeting where she thoughtfully took on a new role on the board. Over her 10 years on the school board, Elizabeth has contributed much and I know that will continue. As a community, we must thank her for her leadership, thoughtfulness, and willingness to push beyond the surface of issues so that we can confront the challenges of our systems.

Elizabeth, thank you for your contributions to date and for your continued commitment to our community and students.

Patrick Leduc, Chair
South Burlington Board
of School Directors

Heartfelt Thanks

Thank you for taking the time out to educate yourselves and vote in such high numbers! It is a busy life we lead, but taking this time is truly a benefit to our community. On Election Day, I was very moved to see the steady stream of people despite the cold, including people driving their neighbors, parents, and friends who otherwise would have had a difficult time getting to the polls.

I am also grateful to the contributors and sixty volunteers to my campaign. Grassroots action can do so much!

Finally, I am very honored by the trust voters placed in me and will work to earn the trust of all voters and residents. As promised, public dialogue and thoughtful deliberation are my goals for the council. I will strongly advocate for fiscal responsibility, citizen input, and transparency overall and, more specifically with regard to upcoming policy decisions, smart growth, open space conservation, and quality of life for our residents.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you for a fourth term.

Meaghan Emery
South Burlington

March 3, 2016

UVM Arena Could Anchor City Center

Last Tuesday's announcement of the South Burlington/UVM collaborative feasibility study is exciting news!

Many South Burlington citizens have been engaged in the City Center discussion for what seems like forever. One of the primary discussions which has occurred is what will it take to make the vision a reality. We've seen numerous images and most, if not all, assume lots of people being drawn to City Center; but what would draw them?

Retail anchors have often been cited as the key along with municipal structures that could include a City Hall, library and a community center. Most agree that whatever combination of uses occurs, it needs to create a sustainable economic environment. The TIF is predicated on this. Not many imagined that UVM's much needed new athletic facility could or would consider our City Center as a viable option, and I can't recall the possibility ever being discussed.

I'm not sure how or who started this conversation, but at this early juncture UVM and South Burlington seem to be a great match. There are a lot of concerns and questions to be asked and assessed. Both partners will need to confirm that this relationship will benefit both, and that the impacts of a high traffic generator like this can be dealt with, but hasn't City Center always contemplated and needed this traffic to become a sustainable reality?

I'm sure the entire South Burlington community will be engaged in this process. It should be exciting to see how it works out. What could be better? Sorry, don't say a Target! Go Cats and go South Burlington!

Michael Simoneau
South Burlington

The Perspective of a Retired USAF Colonel

The purpose of this letter is to give an expert opinion on the F35 noise issue. I am a retired USAF Colonel and was on the Air Combat Command staff during the 1990s in charge of reducing our fighter force by 40 percent after Desert Storm. This reduction in our fighter force corresponded with the Base

Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC), which reduced the number of military bases throughout the world.

Remember Plattsburgh Air Force Base? I do, as I flew FB-111s there in the 1980s. Well, the FB-111 had dual 20,000 LB engines, with approximately 50 percent more noise during takeoff in full afterburner (AB) than the F-35. The weight of the FB-111 was three times that of the F-35 and we had three times the operational aircraft of the VTANG, thus the use of AB over Plattsburgh resonated at least twice as long per takeoff and three to five times more frequently than that of the VTANG.

I will not go into the detailed economics of losing a military base, but have seen examples. Depending on the strength of the local economy, it would certainly either create a decade long strain on this economy during recovery, or perhaps, result in the situation in Plattsburgh where they are still reeling from the effects of the base closure 25 years later.

During my time on the military staff, I noticed that one key criterion used to determine the location of fighter assets is the connection between that military base and the surrounding community. Is this connection supportive or disruptive? It makes the General's recommendation to close a base and transfer assets easy when this criterion is disruptive.

Say what you will about the increased noise from the F35 engine that will last perhaps about five minutes twice a day. If you asked someone who lived in Plattsburgh since 1985 if they would like to have the F35s over there, they wouldn't give it a second thought - yes!

Richard Murray
South Burlington

February 18, 2016

Shaw Support

South Burlington is fortunate to have so many dedicated residents committed to serving our community as city councilors. I've had the pleasure of knowing Chris Shaw and his wife and 3 children (now young adults) for more than 12 years. He has served our city diligently over that time, doing quiet, continuous and thoughtful work on various citizen boards/committees. Chris is a literacy instructor for a local non-profit where he skillfully guides young students in a caring and considerate manner in overcoming their reading challenges so they can experience greater success in the future. He brings these qualities to his work on city council.

As a former planning commissioner myself, I also appreciate the knowledge and experience from his service on the South Burlington Planning Commission that he brought to the city council. He has been an invaluable asset as the council considered such items as the City Comprehensive Plan. In recognition of his skill and experience in these areas, the council appointed him its representative to the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. In these and other ways, he has helped South Burlington shine. Chris has earned my support and I invite you to join me in voting for Chris Shaw as one of our city councilors.

Ann Pugh
South Burlington

Barritt Endorsement

I have known Tim Barritt for the 20 years that I have lived in the Eastwoods neighborhood. Tim is a former Peace Corp volunteer who has more than 30 years experience working at the IBM/Global Foundries facility in Essex Junction as an engineer.

Tim combines his engineering skills of being detail oriented with a personality that listens, engages, and works to develop a true consensus. The challenges that South Burlington faces are difficult, so developing a common vision is not easy. The best solutions will come from leaders who thoughtfully engage our community. Tim's professional experience, personal disposition, and his long service on the South Burlington Development Review Board make him very qualified to serve on city council.

*Paul Demers
South Burlington*

Vote for Emery

I am writing in strong support of Meaghan Emery to remain on our city council. She is the quiet and persistent voice of informed opinion on many city issues. She strongly supports badly needed affordable housing in South Burlington. As a 20-year volunteer for Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, I am distressed to know that only one of the 60 affordable homes, built by that group in this area, is in South Burlington.

Meaghan works to enhance our lives with a public library independent of the high school. She works to promote and protect our recreation and open space programs, and favors establishing conservation easements on our city parks that have questionable futures without perpetual protection, easements that were promised months ago.

She has supported families in the Chamberlin neighborhood where she lives, and she has stood up for the residents of East Terrace and upper Spear St. where absentee landlords continue to earn big dollars as several of them defiantly refuse to obey the city ordinance which limits the number of unrelated renters to four per household .

When you vote on March 1, you will do well to vote for Meaghan Emery.

*Barbara Bull
South Burlington*

Support for Emery

I hope you will join me in voting to reelect Meaghan Emery to the South Burlington City Council. I have been privileged to serve with her for the past two years. During that time, she has shown a dedication and willingness to go the extra mile to better serve our residents and community. Meaghan ably researches and gathers ideas from many other municipalities across the country in a way no one else on the council does, myself included. Her efforts provide us with proven options and fresh ideas that help us tackle local concerns. Her efforts make a huge difference in our discussions and ability to make thoughtful decisions based on data and best practices. We need her energy and insights on the council.

I particularly appreciate and value her forthright yet diplomatic approach to all issues. Meaghan does not play any political games or hold a hidden agenda. She tries her best to represent the residents and take their concerns to heart. Can all of the concerns be immediately resolved? No.

But you can be guaranteed that she will always respectfully and compassionately listen, bring them up later for further review, and find reasonable solutions.

The bottom line is another core principal for Meaghan. She asks tough and clarifying questions throughout the budgeting process as well as at the bimonthly disbursement and budget updates. She makes sure the city makes prudent fiscal decisions.

Please vote with me March 1 for Meaghan Emery.

Helen Riehle
South Burlington

Reelect Emery

I urge my neighbors to vote in this next election and, especially, to vote their support of Councilor Meaghan Emery for re-election. She offers true representation for the best interests of our city and residents on all its major issues. She is and will continue to be a hardworking, intelligent advocate for transparency and cooperation, much needed qualities on the current council.

Lee Griffin
South Burlington

Donovan Support

I totally support George Donovan for election to the South Burlington City Council. George and I go back a few years having worked together for the Vermont Army National Guard.

I know George as being a very dedicated member of our community and as an employee of the National Guard. As a member of the council, he will provide leadership needed to ensure a balance of our community growth and how the cost to our taxpayers happens.

George has provided many hours of voluntary time in the past to the city and the Chamberlin School system. He will be a hard working member of the council. We need people like George to provide a common sense approach to South Burlington's future dealings. For what it's worth, George has my vote on Town Meeting Day.

Lou Lertola
South Burlington

Support for Emery & Barritt

I am supporting Meaghan Emery and Tim Barritt for city council. Meaghan Emery has been a strong, thoughtful, truly independent voice for all South Burlington residents in her six years as a city councilor. Tim Barritt has served six years on the library board and four-plus years on the South Burlington Development Review Board, which he currently chairs. Both are committed to including all stakeholders in city business, in sharp contrast to the developer-driven process favored by current city leadership. Please re-elect Meaghan Emery and elect Tim Barritt to bring balance, transparency and resident advocacy to South Burlington's City Council.

Duncan Adamson

South Burlington, VT

Ballot Article III

On March 1, South Burlington residents will be asked to vote yes or no on Article III, Borrowing and Application of Conservation Fund Levy. A majority yes vote will authorize the city council to borrow up to \$1.3 million to pay for enhancement projects in city-owned open space and natural areas, and to pay off the loan over a 10-year period by using not more than 50 percent of the existing annual Conservation Fund tax levy.

If you use Red Rocks Park and Wheeler Nature Park from time to time, you probably have noticed that several aspects of these precious city resources are way overdue for maintenance. The two excellent Management Plans completed recently for Red Rocks and Wheeler Parks outline a number of recommended improvements, including the management of buckthorn and other invasive plant species, and adding appropriate signage and other upgrades to the trail systems there. And now we have the former Underwood property at Spear Street and Nowland Farm Road, which needs its own Master Plan.

\$1.3 million will not pay for nearly everything we would like to do in these natural areas, but it would give us a great start on the projects that are determined to have the highest priority, without costing taxpayers a penny more than they would pay if the Article were defeated. Your city council thought this was a deal the city could not refuse, and supported the Ballot Article unanimously.

Please join me and other members of the Recreation and Leisure Arts Committee in voting yes on Article III. Our natural areas are crying out for our help.

Glenn Sproul
South Burlington

Support Shaw & Donovan

Paul Engel's letter in *The Other Paper* (February 4, 2016) missed some very important facts. A vast majority of the voters who elected Chris Shaw and Pat Nowak 3 years ago did so for a very good reason, in my opinion. South Burlington City Manager Sandy Miller was conducting business in a way that many people felt was out of control. Our own Cairns arena was under attack by Miller and the council. I can tell you first hand that the council at that time was considering taking Cairns Arena by eminent domain. Only when the citizens of South Burlington rose up did the council back off.

A strong business community is a key component of keeping our taxes down and our schools healthy. Engels wants to blame his loss on South Burlington residents showing their support for Nowak and Shaw. In my opinion, he owes the loss to the actions listed above. I hope the voters realize that we need to keep Chris Shaw and vote for George Donovan to ensure we don't revert back to the old days of South Burlington government. I believe South Burlington government is working just fine. Let's keep it that way.

Tony Cairns
South Burlington

Vote Emery for City Council

Our city is undergoing a process that means big change as City Center gets under way. It is critical that our city council reflect the desires of the South Burlington community. I believe that most of us want our city to accommodate both growth and green space.

As we watch more and more development spreading along the Spear and Dorset Street corridor, I fear for the open space we need to support plant life, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and an inviting landscape.

I am voting for Councilor Meaghan Emery because she has demonstrated a clear and balanced view of the need for both the growth and green to ensure a healthy community. Please join me and give another two years to City Councilor Meaghan Emery on March 1.

Karen Ryder
South Burlington

Barritt for City Council

I hope you will join me on March 1 in voting for Tim Barritt for city council. Our family has interacted with Tim on many occasions because his children and ours attended the same public schools (Orchard, FHTMS, SBHS), and also because our sons played in a band together.

Tim Barritt cares very much about our community. He has served both on the library board and now on the South Burlington Development Review Board, which requires that he interact with and take into account the interests of both businesses and residents.

Perhaps because Tim is an engineer (who works for Global Foundries, formerly IBM), he seeks and invariably finds solutions for problems that are both practical and cost-effective.

Because of these attributes and his experience, I am confident that Tim Barritt will be a terrific city councilor for South Burlington.

Markus Thali
South Burlington

Emery for City Council

I supported Meaghan Emery for city council two years ago and I support her again in her bid for reelection this year. South Burlington has been in the process of developing a number of initiatives to benefit the city in the past few years. To the city's credit, these have involved the work and voices of many: staff, city committees, non-profit groups, and importantly, the public.

What will be decided or enacted in the next few years? Development of City Center, creation of proposed municipal spaces (city hall, library, recreation indoor space, community center(s)), creation of a Parks Master Plan, creation of affordable housing, attention to neighborhood livability, and preservation/enhancement of open space, to name a few.

I believe that Meaghan is well acquainted with these issues. She is diligent in studying every issue in depth, and she is sincerely interested in listening to different points of view. Meaghan has a balanced approach to her interest in enhancing quality of life and her concern for taxpayer affordability.

The visions created for South Burlington by task forces, committees, staff, and the public are exciting. I believe that South Burlington can become a city even more livable, vital, and attractive to residents

and business. We need Meaghan Emery in city council contributing her energy, diligence, and commitment to the process of going forward.

South Burlington will benefit from her leadership.

Jennifer Kochman
South Burlington

Vote for Barritt

My wife Carol and I have known Tim and his family for many years. I served on the library committee with him and have watched his activities on the Design Review Board, which he now heads. He is very bright and conscientious and works hard for our city. On the major issue of development and the proposed City Center, I know he will work toward solutions that will benefit the people of South Burlington and not simply developers and real estate interests. I do not have this same confidence in other council members and candidates. I urge support for Tim Barritt for city councilor.

David Wilber
South Burlington

Barritt in Action for the City

Tim Barritt, a candidate for the three-year seat on the city council, offers a fresh perspective. He comes with development review board experience, having served on the board for four years, including as Chair. He is therefore deeply knowledgeable about our land development regulations and, as I personally witnessed as a member of the design review committee, sought early on to set high quality design standards for our nascent City Center when Trader Joe's was first being proposed.

Trader Joe's proposal to install a store on Garden Street came with a store design matching its national standards. Tim was then a member of the DRB and a strong voice in getting the best building at the entrance to our future City Center.

The first draft presented by the design firm was not accepted by the DRB. Tim and the team clearly listed the items that did not meet the criteria. The second draft missed these expectations. Convinced of the importance of this cornerstone project, Tim and the DRB kept demanding a best outcome in spite of strong push back. His encouragement helped the team to build a consensus around essential requests by both the city and Trader Joe's. At this point in the negotiations, Trader Joe's even hired a different firm and in a month produced a final design matching its business requirements and the city's guidelines.

Thanks to Tim's vision, drive, and leadership we now enjoy a new successful and popular business in South Burlington, both in terms of aesthetics and function, which sets high standards for our upcoming City Center. Tim's kind of creative problem-solving, team-building, and can-do attitude on the council would be a boon to our city at this critical juncture, just as City Center development is taking shape.

Jean Sébastien Chaulot
South Burlington

Vote for Emery

Please join me in voting for Meaghan Emery for city council. For six years, I have found her to be the sensible, clear, intelligent voice on the council. A mother of three children in South Burlington schools, she works to include all residents in planning how to protect our neighborhoods' quality of life and our excellent schools.

Sophie Quest
South Burlington

Barritt for City Council

I am writing to voice my support for Tim Barritt's candidacy for South Burlington City Council. I have known Tim for the past 20 plus years as a neighbor and as an advocate for the people of South Burlington. Through his volunteer work serving for 6 years on the city library board of trustees and most recently for 4 and one half years on the South Burlington Development Review Board, Tim has demonstrated that he has a deep understanding of some of the most important issues to our city. Tim is genuinely respectful of diverse voices and the points of view of our fellow community members; he will seek to find common ground and workable solutions.

Tim has a great respect for the needs of the business community as well as a concern for the preservation of open spaces in a densely populated community. He understands that while our city must be economically viable, it must also preserve neighborhoods, both new and old. Finally, as a member of the council, Tim will advocate for an open and inclusive discussion, as well as a development plan, for our school re-organization strategy.

When there are so many important issues up for debate, we need someone like Tim who is respectful and inclusive. I hope you will join me in voting for Tim Barritt on Tuesday, March 1.

Andrea Houlihan
South Burlington

Barritt and Emery Hope for the Future

Tim Barritt and Meaghan Emery stretched minds and hearts of the senior residents at Harbor View, when they spoke as candidates for city council. They spoke knowledgeably and with passion about issues of deep concern to our South Burlington community.

Their sensitivity and regard for seniors stood in sharp contrast to the experience of several of us two years ago. Myself and three other women went before the council to express our concern regarding their dismissal of a report by medical experts about the proven impact of noise on children's learning. Chris Shaw was recorded on CCTV at the end of the meeting maligning me and the other three women as "troublemakers." He went on to imply that I had been part of a demonstration on Church Street in which I had no part.

I have asked for an apology in public, in print, and in person. On this last occasion, I was told dismissively that the apology was not forthcoming and furthermore I ought to be "ashamed of myself." I'm still hoping for a reconciliation. Clearly, Chris Shaw has another side to him. I just feel that by virtue of my age and gender, it is incumbent upon me to speak out about bullying.

Roddy O'Neil Cleary
South Burlington

Emery - Voice of the
People

Over many years of being an active South Burlington citizen, I have seen members of our city council who fight for us and express our will and others who seem to act as if they know better than we do, what is best for our city. Meaghan Emery is solidly in the former camp, a true representative of the people. Her actions over her tenure suggest that she is a civil servant of the highest caliber. Ms. Emery acts on our behalf, regardless of her own personal convictions. She is an unwavering conduit for the will of the South Burlington citizenry. We require our elected leaders to have our needs foremost in their minds in the performance of their duties. Meaghan Emery has shown the necessary personal strength to fulfill that obligation in the face of opposition and competing interests.

If we desire city council members whose actions truly reflect the will of South Burlington citizens, never bowing to external pressures, then we must vote on March 1 for Meaghan Emery and all who share her dedication to us.

Jeff Deslauriers
South Burlington

Support Barritt

I am writing to support the candidacy of Tim Barritt for city council. I have known Tim for more than 20 years and have worked with him on issues to keep our Eastwoods neighborhood safe, such as diminishing the unbelievable 2000 cars a day that used to travel through our neighborhood. Tim is a smart, friendly, and civic-minded individual who has spent six years on the library board and four-plus years on the South Burlington Development Review Board. Although Tim has supported many common-sense site plans and in-fill projects as chair of the DRB, he is also interested in preserving green space in the city and protecting our environment from overdevelopment. Most recently, he has become concerned about green space in the developing City Center and how the city will use school district lands around the Rick Marcotte Central School. He hopes to ensure a more exhaustive study of the tangible and intangible value of these 11 acres. As a city councilor, Tim Barritt will listen carefully and work diligently on behalf of all citizens. Please lend him your support.

Elise A. Guyette
South Burlington

Emery is an Advocate for Us

I have read the airport commission minutes, watched city council meetings, read many endorsements of candidates on social media, and have seen troubling yet subtle language choices intended to discredit Council person Meaghan Emery and her diligent work.

Emery has been a strong voice for community members concerned about their homes, schools, and livelihood. She has spoken up when others demurred. She should be lauded for her dedication and courage.

Often it requires a strong voice to be heard when raising an opposing opinion. Sometimes this becomes uncomfortable for those who do not agree. This is not a personal attack - this is the honest practice of democracy. And we as a city are better for it.

I support Meaghan Emery.

Gin Ferrara
South Burlington

Support for Emery & Barritt

I contact you to offer my support to Meaghan Emery for re-election to the South Burlington City Council. I also feel Tim Barritt would be an outstanding addition to our council. Both Meaghan and Tim bring strong leadership skills, a passion for community involvement and a common sense approach to good local government. They both have accrued years of outstanding service to South Burlington families. I find Meaghan and Tim to be refreshingly honest in their dealings with city government issues, policies and procedures, and effectively dealing with various city departments and staff. Please join me in supporting Meaghan and Tim as they encourage sensible growth and development while advocating for active participation by residents in the decision making process.

Brian Hanbridge
South Burlington

Donovan & Shaw

I am writing in strong support of city council candidates George Donovan and Chris Shaw. I have known both for several years and can attest to their high ethical standards, integrity, and commitment to the residents and businesses of South Burlington. Their unwavering and unbiased commitment to the vitality of our great city is exactly what we need today and in the months and years ahead. Please join me in voting for George Donovan and Chris Shaw for city council.

Larry Michaels
South Burlington

Vote for Emery

For thirty-five years, my wife Mary Anne and I have considered ourselves extremely fortunate to have lived in the same home, where we raised and educated our children and worked together in a solo legal practice representing neighbors. We love South Burlington.

We strongly believe in public service, not as a stepping stone to power and better paid higher public office, but as a means to give back, to repay our family's debt for fine neighbors, friends, schools, and other city services. During the past four and a half decades, I've served six plus years as a deputy and elected Chittenden County State's Attorney, South Burlington's City Councilor [5 years] and school board member [4 years], two periods as president of our homeowner's association, Vermont's first Lottery Commission Chair, and member of the Lund Home's Board of Directors.

I was honored to serve with Meaghan Emery on city council and observe first hand her many excellent judgments and accomplishments. Here are a few. Meaghan's strong, effective council work was pivotal to help negotiate South Burlington's noise agreement with the airport; resolve our community's serious financial shortfall; protect our Chamberlin School neighborhood; and secure community support and funding to acquire our 21st century police station.

She really cares without airs about everyday people like you and me. She is a great person and councilor because she possesses a sweet soul, steely confidence, and a great, humble, self-deprecating sense of humor. It is never about her. It is about those she serves. Her day jobs are UVM's faculty, and mother working with her husband to raise three beautiful children. As our councilor, she works hard, listens fairly to all sides, and exercises a high degree of intellectual courage, integrity and judgment to define and resolve issues in a pragmatic, reasonable, judicious, manner without a hint of undue influence from moneyed interests.

I am grateful for Meaghan's dedicated service. We are fortunate she is willing to serve. Her reason for continuing is also pay back to our community. Please vote, and re-elect Meaghan Emery to continue as one of our best city councilors.

Francis X. Murray, Esq.
South Burlington

Emery & Barritt - Integrity & Inclusion

With the pressures placed on our city council, including decision-making on big changes affecting all taxpayers, it is critical that we elect Meaghan Emery and Tim Barritt. Here's why.

As co-author of the Master Planning Task Force's Minority Statement, I experienced what it takes to hold your ground when you are outnumbered and feel the dogged pressure to go along with the majority. It's not easy. One must prepare thoroughly, constantly seek expert opinion and community input, and be persistent.

Meaghan and Tim demonstrate these important attributes time and time again. Meaghan impresses me with her diligent research and understanding of the changes the Chamberlin neighborhood and all of South Burlington face. Even when I disagree with a position she takes, she is able to support where she stands with logic, facts, and common sense, so I understand the merits of her position. She consistently demonstrates that she learns from every conversation as she advocates for what is best for our city. Her persistence has proven to pay off on our behalf, the latest example being the airport director's shift in position to now include residents in its noise mitigation committee. We need Meaghan Emery on our city council.

Tim Barritt impresses me with his smart and common sense "engineer's" way of solving problems. On the DRB, he is relied upon to defend our zoning rules in a fair way that also produces the best outcome for South Burlington, and his leadership is respected by his peers on the DRB, who selected him as Chair. (Ask him about his experience in the permitting process for our awesome Trader Joe's.) Tim clearly values community members' involvement. He works tirelessly to encourage residents of affected areas to share their voice, to reach a result, which balances residential wants with important business and development needs. I trust Tim Barritt to serve us well on the city council.

I first met Meaghan and Tim years ago during our service to our elementary PTOs. They represent the best of South Burlington. Please join me in voting for Meaghan Emery and Tim Barritt on March 1.

Monica Ostby
South Burlington

Barritt for City Council

Tim Barritt is an excellent candidate for the South Burlington City Council. He is intelligent, kind, fair-minded, thoughtful, calm, and fair. He will work hard to represent the best interests of our residents.

As the former library director at the South Burlington Community Library, I felt fortunate to have Tim serve on the library board of trustees for many years. He is an active library user and has advocated for a freestanding public library for many years. I was impressed and grateful for Tim's ability to bring a calm and thoughtful perspective to discussions, with consideration for all participants and with good humor. With respect for everyone's point of view, he often sought to find common ground when there were differences of opinion.

Serving on the South Burlington Development Review Board, Tim did not hesitate to question and explore the impact development decisions would have on the entire community. He is an advocate for a livable community with open space, recreation areas, and carefully considered development.

South Burlington is at a critical crossroads in our history, with decisions to be made about open space, city center, school consolidation, development, and land use. I am pleased that Tim is running for city council because I feel confident that he will guard against special interests determining the direction our city will take. He will seek input from community members on how we envision the future of our city and will strive to achieve the best approach for carefully planned development that will meet the needs of our community.

If you are interested in having a voice in the direction our city takes at this critical time, Tim Barritt deserves your vote. Please go to the polls on March 1 and take a stand on how our city government approaches the future of our city.

Louise Murphy
South Burlington

Vote for Emery

Please vote for Meaghan Emery on March 1. Her reelection will greatly benefit our city. Meaghan has proven to be an indispensable advocate for the residents of South Burlington.

I have had the pleasure of being Meaghan's friend and neighbor for 14 years. She is an amazingly kind, intelligent, thoughtful, fair, broad-minded, "big-picture," solution finding, and collaborative individual. Meaghan contributes enormous intellect, integrity, balance, and compassionate concern to the council. She is articulate, steady, very well researched and informed, and, above all, courageous.

Meaghan deeply cares about people and community. She has great hope and vision for our city and will serve diligently, as her record shows, to advocate for intelligent growth and development that benefits all residents. Again, please vote for her on March 1.

Margaret Palombo
South Burlington

February 11, 2016

Support for George Donovan

Nancy and I are pleased George Donovan is running for city council. In addition to his great work with the Chamberlin School PTO, I have observed George on Rotary projects like Nightmare Vermont where he did a masterful job for years of organizing and leading a complicated admission process over two weeks of chilly nights. I have discussed South Burlington's issues and opportunities at length with him. I find him open minded and committed to representing all neighborhoods to ensure the whole city gets the best planning, needed capital improvements, and professional services it can while keeping the budget and property taxes under control. He will be respectful and civil in his discourse with the public and his fellow councilors. Please make the effort to meet him and get to

know him. You will be glad you did.

*John Simson
South Burlington*

Shaw for South Burlington

Serving on the South Burlington City Council requires time, patience, and an open mind. The behavior of our city councilors are reflections of our community and the leadership style of our councilors set the tone for how our city communicates. This is why I support Chris Shaw for city council. Chris Shaw has exemplified positive, effective, and dedicated leadership through civil, informed, and collaborative conduct in his service.

Chris Shaw has served this city for 16 years as a volunteer on our Natural Resources Committee, the planning commission, and on our city council. Chris Shaw is deliberative, thoughtful, and dignified in his service. He thoroughly considers the implications of city planning for our current and future residents while maintaining the broader perspective on the role South Burlington has in our region. He doesn't have a personal agenda or single issue distorting his lens on the issues before the council; he is solely focused on giving back to the city we all love by working to get things right for all SB'ers. He's focused on getting the best value for our taxes while infusing our community with a sense of identity and pride. He has worked hard to capitalize on the private-public partnerships that mean affordable housing that continue to make South Burlington a great place to work, live, and play.

Chris Shaw has earned my vote and I hope he earns yours on March 1st.

*Thomas Chittenden
South Burlington*

Emery for City Council

Meaghan Emery has been an unwavering voice, clear and strong and thoughtful, on behalf of the residents and the neighborhoods of our city. She has remained steadfast in her commitment to the inclusion of all stakeholders, helping those who might otherwise be voiceless to be heard. Protecting our open spaces, enhancing our quality of life, promoting City Center, maintaining our outstanding city services within the parameters of affordability and sustainability . . . these have been and continue to be among her goals. In her insistence on transparency and accountability, she is a personification of integrity. I will be voting to maintain her good work and her advocacy on the city council. I hope that you will consider doing likewise.

*Maida F. Townsend
South Burlington*

Support for Emery and Barritt

I am supporting Meaghan Emery and working as her campaign treasurer because I believe she is very dedicated and has served our city well for 6 years. She has the operational knowledge, experience, and focus our city council needs. She has integrity and is the voice of measured reason on the city council. She is honest, hard working, focused, patient, respectful, gracious, and well studied on city topics. Meaghan is not only a voice for the people in the airport neighborhood but for all South Burlington residents that are interested in the future of our city and the direction the council has been heading for the past year.

I am also supporting Tim Barritt because I believe his experience on the Development Review Board has given him great insight into development, growth, tax and school issues in our community. He

has volunteered so much time in the school system over the years that he has a great perspective on all of these issues.

Please join me in voting for Meaghan Emery and Tim Barritt on March 1.

Mary Jo Reale
South Burlington

Re-elect Meaghan Emery for City Council

Meaghan Emery has my vote for city council in the March election. She is not motivated by ego, power, or financial gain. I believe she is motivated by what is best for the people of South Burlington.

Anna K. Johnston
South Burlington

Proud of Chris Shaw

A number of years ago I paid for four ads supporting the candidacy of Chris Shaw for city council. All of the advertisements were positive and listed the names of hundreds of like-minded supporters from our community who willingly signed on. Chris is running for re-election this year. He continues to have my support. We don't agree on every issue - that's the kind of candidate I want. Chris cannot be led around by the nose, and he will always be his own person. He brings an exceptional intellect, curiosity, and unique personality to everything he does.

That said, his strong leadership has helped preserve the elected city clerk and strengthened South Burlington services; restored trust and confidence in South Burlington; helped choose a highly competent city manager; continued prudent fiscal accounting, improved the planning process and advocated for South Burlington interests as the regional planning representative. When he disagrees with you, he stays at the table to work with you - he has proven that with over 16 years as a volunteer for our city.

Finally, nearly 70 percent of the turnout voted for Chris in 2013. The folks who lost that election want to blame it on 4 advertisements with hundreds of South Burlington residents' endorsements. So, go for it. Actually, I think it's because the voters in South Burlington are very smart, and they realized that Chris Shaw would represent them with integrity and honesty - and he has certainly done that!

In the immortal words of Mahatma Gandhi, "The future depends on what we do in the present." Please vote for Chris Shaw and keep South Burlington the positive and desirable place it is to work and live.

Pam Mackenzie
South Burlington

Two Steps Forward - Thank You Meaghan Emery

Councilor Meaghan Emery has worked tirelessly to investigate and introduce our community and city council to the work that other airport communities around the country are doing to create vibrant dialogs that respond to citizen concerns.

At the February 1st meeting, a letter by Director of Aviation, Gene Richards, expressed his desire to develop a sound committee to include city managers/officials, aviation/national officials, and city/neighborhood representatives from affected towns . . . thank you for listening Mr. Richards!

Kudos to Councilor Emery and Councilor Riehle for actively encouraging our local government to

stand up to the sometimes-intimidating tenor of those who want to squash the public discussion. Thank you for disseminating excellent information!

Kim Robison
South Burlington

Donovan for City Council

George Donovan is a positive person who cares for South Burlington. As a proud native Vermonter, he understands that economic progress can help all of South Burlington, but that tax increases can hurt families. When he was president of the Chamberlin Parent Teachers Organization, many of you met him and saw his results. Service on the South Burlington Recreation and Leisure Arts Committee and with the South Burlington Rotary show his willingness to serve the community. George has also been involved in our school mentoring program. The family has been involved in scouts and school activity programs. It all shows that George is a person who wants to help our community.

I have known George Donovan for over twenty-five years. He is a gentleman who is consistently polite and civil to all. As both a government employee and youth leader, he willingly devoted the time required to do any job he took on. When we worked together, his recommendations always were logical, positive, and looked at problems from the long-term viewpoint. This is an ability that we want on our city council. The Donovan children have been or are in our city schools. Many of us know him and his family.

We will have a better city council if you join me and vote for George Donovan.

Tom O'Donovan
South Burlington

Emery a Trustworthy Representative

Meaghan Emery has served the city as a councilor for 6 years (3 terms at different times). Her only "agenda" is thoughtful consideration of what is best for her neighbors in the whole city. She advocates for citizen input and involvement in city decisions. She is honest, straightforward, hard working, and does her homework. Recently she has respectfully held her own when her actions in an airport meeting were wrongly characterized in public (as many of us present at that meeting can attest). She turned an unfortunate circumstance into an opportunity for the public and airport officials to come together for renewed dialogue.

Meaghan is an authentic and trustworthy representative of the people. She is honest in expressing her positions and in stating when she needs more information. I value all these qualities in a public servant and I will be voting for Meaghan again.

Sarah Dopp
South Burlington

Emery for City Council

Meaghan Emery is running for reelection to the South Burlington City Council. I will be voting for her and ask that you do the same.

My wife, Paulette, and I have known Meaghan for several years. We find that she listens to her neighbors, does her homework, and stands up for their interests. She has shown herself to be a strong and effective voice for the Chamberlin School neighborhood. That is not always easy to do.

Recently, the Chamberlin Neighborhood had been rocked on its foundations. Current noise levels generated at the Burlington International Airport have led to massive destruction of housing and threatens the health and property values of those who remain. The noise levels are expected to rise and must be checked. The city council must act on this issue in order for the neighborhood to survive, but they have been reluctant to do so under the current leadership.

Meaghan's advocacy of this issue has placed it squarely in front of the council. It would not be there but for her determination.

Gordon Lawrence
South Burlington

Miss Your Voice

At the March 2015 South Burlington Town Meeting 2,701 ballots were cast by 23 percent of registered voters. Of the 8,900 plus other registered voting citizens I ask, "Where were you?" Are you missing a connection to your community? We sure missed YOU!

In preparation for March 1, 2016 town meeting, folks are baking many home baked delights and the greeters who check your name on the voter list are sharpening their pencils and warming their smiles. Your friends and neighbors will be there on March 1 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Use your voice, sing it out strong, come into the fold, and join us at town meeting.

The ballot preview is available on the South Burlington website. Consider attending one or more of the city council candidate forums.

Demonstrate and renew your connection to your South Burlington community. To paraphrase Bernie Sanders, if thousands of people who previously did not vote, if these people become informed of the candidates positions and the ballot articles, and then vote - WE win. If there is a low turnout - we lose. Fellow residents, Let's win.

Honor veterans with your vote. Redeem Vermont town meeting style democracy with policy discussions and your vote. Express your concerns and aspirations for your neighborhood and your city, with your vote. Influence local decisions with your vote.

At the polls, I will say hello. Hello, my good friend, hello. It is good to see you at our town meeting. It makes me feel good to see you voting. It is a beautiful noise to hear your voice through your vote.

If I miss you in the scattering of chatting neighbors, I extend virtual hugs to you. Welcome back, we missed you!

Bernie Paquette
South Burlington

Donovan for Council

I have known George Donovan for 15 years, since our college-aged daughters were in kindergarten at Chamberlin School together. He has always been a strong supporter of the school and of the Chamberlin neighborhood. George's involvement in the community has been marked by interest in the needs of both individuals and the community. He is a great listener and pragmatic problem solver.

George simply is not the type to involve South Burlington in needless battles with the Dorset Park Skating Association and the National Garden Association. He will look for common ground with the airport in a very difficult situation. George will work for the interests of the airport neighborhood and

South

Burlington.

Please join me in voting for George Donovan for the 2-year seat on the city council. George will openly and actively listen to varying points of view. His voice will be reasoned and rational. He will represent us with grace and distinction.

Mark Boucher
South Burlington

Emery for City Council

I am writing to encourage South Burlington voters to reelect Meaghan Emery to the city council.

As a member of the city council, Meaghan has demonstrated her willingness and ability to represent all the citizens of South Burlington. She is familiar with the complex issues facing our city and is willing to research each issue in depth in order to bring an informed perspective to public discussions. A good example is her participation in discussions concerning the Chamberlin Neighborhood and the airport.

Her years on the council, and as a member of the Channel 17 Board of Trustees, give her depth of experience and knowledge in the areas of board operations, budget review, and open meeting laws. She has not been reluctant to take a position on controversial issues and has won the admiration of not just her supporters, but her opponents as well.

It is important for the council to have balanced representation. At present, the majority of the members represent the business community. There is nothing wrong with that; however we must ensure all segments of the community have a voice. As a citizens' advocate, Meaghan will provide the balance necessary for constructive deliberations.

I urge you to vote for Meaghan Emery on Election Day.

Robert L. Walsh
South Burlington

Support Shaw

As a former city councilor and long-time citizen of South Burlington, I have been very pleased with the work that Chris Shaw has done on the council. He has done a good job working to find common ground and positive solutions that benefit all of us in South Burlington. Chris' service to the city has benefited us all and I appreciate all of the time and efforts he has put in to make our city a better place.

I heartily endorse Chris for re-election to the city council.

Chris Smith
South Burlington

Emery for City Council

I am voting for Meaghan Emery and encourage others to join me. Meaghan is enthusiastic and energetic. She listens respectfully, understands concerns and responds to questions with clear explanations. I have observed her at several South Burlington City Council meetings and find she has a keen understanding of good public policy. Meaghan's integrity is impeccable. She advocates for constituents even at political risk for herself.

Please vote and please consider voting for Meaghan Emery.

Steve Marriott
South Burlington

February 4, 2016

Donovan for City Council

As a long-standing community volunteer and resident, George Donovan has developed a wonderful skill set and leadership style that will serve our city council well, and I hope you will join me in voting him into office.

Whether the issue is related to our schools and the education community, neighborhood relations, planning for growth, or the future of the airport, George's steady manner, respectful demeanor and thoughtful approach to problem-solving have earned him a very positive reputation among those who have worked closely with him.

George will represent all of us, not just some of us, on city council. I encourage you to support him.

Lisa Ventriss
South Burlington

Shaw Support

Chris Shaw served with me on the South Burlington Planning Commission. I had the privilege of watching and working with him as he so ably served and continues to serve our community. He is running for reelection and I could not be more pleased.

Shaw has served as a calm, steady presence on the city council, especially with regard to reviewing the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations as they come from the planning commission for approval.

He has a positive, balanced approach to service and understands the collaborative approach we need to serve our city.

Please join me and vote for Chris Shaw.

Marcel Beaudin
South Burlington

City Councilor Meaghan Emery

I would like to publicly thank Meaghan Emery for her eloquence, grace, strength, and resolve in representing the citizens of South Burlington, as well as our Chamberlin neighborhood. I am filled with admiration for her poise and gratitude for her service.

Paula Miller
South Burlington

Vote for Emery and Barritt

I am pleased that Meaghan Emery is running for reelection and that Tim Barritt is running to replace Chris Shaw on the city council. Meaghan and I were on the city council together. There is no one who is a stronger fighter for the people of South Burlington and for the people in her Chamberlin neighborhood than Meaghan.

I recruited Tim to volunteer for the Development Review Board when I was a councilor. He is now chair of the DRB and is widely accepted and respected as a smart, fair, levelheaded leader. There is not a better person to be on the city council in South Burlington than Tim Barritt.

His opponent, Chris Shaw, was first elected to the city council in 2013 in an election that violated Vermont's campaign finance laws. I know because I was the victim of those violations. Both he and current chair, Pat Nowak, accepted \$4,500 from Pam Mackenzie's PamPAC to take control of the council that year and make Pam chair. They did not declare this contribution on their reports to the Secretary of State.

People must realize that there is a political struggle going on for the future of South Burlington. It is between people who are heavily financed by business leaders and developers and those of us who have had enough of ever more airport noise, condos, apartments, office buildings, and housing developments.

Tim and Meaghan give those of us from the neighborhoods the opportunity to take back our city council. Since 2013, the big money people have been financing their own candidates. A city council seat now costs them \$10,000. It can be said that we now have the best city council majority that money can buy. They have used their three-person majority to stifle dissent and to have things the way they want.

I urge everyone in South Burlington to vote for Meaghan Emery and Tim Barritt. We need them to bring back integrity, honesty and openness to our city council.

*Paul Engels
South Burlington*

Vote for Emery – Advocate for Affordability

Meaghan Emery grew up in a family of modest means; her father needed loans to go back to school. He was a United Methodist minister and later a lawyer, working as an Assistant State's Attorney before going into private practice. Her mom worked for "Ma Bell" and later as a teacher, her original vocation. While in high school, Meaghan waitressed in a retirement home and, during college, volunteered at a nursing home. She and her husband bought a home in the Chamberlin neighborhood, one of the few places in South Burlington with affordable housing.

As a city councilor, Meaghan consistently advocates for the protection and expansion of affordable housing in South Burlington. She strongly supports the Housing Trust Fund and Form-Based Code regulations, including Inclusionary Zoning rules, for City Center. She is also a proponent of public transportation and uses the local bus system to commute to work at UVM. For her, City Center's success depends on it being affordable and welcoming to people of every income level, and including a variety of businesses, housing, eating and entertainment establishments, and stores - locally owned and units of national chains.

Meaghan works to protect small business. As a rookie city councilor, she championed zoning changes, making it easier for childcare providers to operate here. The need for these changes was brought home to her by a neighborhood childcare program, Giggles Family Childcare and Preschool.

Having an array of childcare options, including home-based childcare, is critical to attracting young families to our city.

Meaghan's platform focuses on (1) creating the conditions that support development in South Burlington, especially City Center, that will generate new revenues for the city and make it possible to enhance our quality of life through a new library, and preservation and enhancement of our recreation and parks facilities and programs; (2) respecting residents' ability to pay when making budget decisions; and (3) increasing all stakeholders' opportunities to have input into policy initiatives affecting our economy, infrastructure, environment, and community.

Please join me in voting for Councilor Meaghan Emery on March 1.

Sandy Dooley
South Burlington

Support for Donovan for City Council

We are fortunate to have four really good people who are running for the two city council seats. All of them are concerned about airport noise and the future development of the city. The challenge is to work collaboratively, especially with the airport and with our neighboring communities, to achieve good results. The question is not one of intent, but of effective outcomes.

The city still suffers, I believe, from a council that sometimes does not work in a congenial and collaborative way. George Donovan would change that in a positive way, I believe. He has demonstrated his collaborative skills while serving as President of the Chamberlin School PTO (Lay Family of the Year – 2012), serving on the South Burlington Recreation & Leisure Arts Committee, and by his service in the Rotary and as a student mentor.

Please join me in supporting George Donovan for the 2-year seat on the city council.

John Dinklage
South Burlington

Fellow South Burlington Residents

I am a life-long Vermont resident. Recently my wife and I relocated to South Burlington. We were encouraged by the active, vibrant community, solid city government, proximity to the airport and University of Vermont Medical Center, support for the valuable services of the Vermont Air National Guard and hard working volunteers who serve on the city council.

This is the first time that we will be voting in a South Burlington City Council election, and we have been so favorably impressed by the quiet, steady leadership that Chris Shaw provides – he is our choice for the 3 year seat.

An unassuming gentle man, appointed by Governor Jim Douglas as a Justice of the Peace, he has given over 16 years of service to the city in various roles – natural resources, planning commissioner, and city council.

He has clearly demonstrated that he cares about making South Burlington a forward thinking city with great community events and a sense of identity a destination for the county, state – and relocated life time Vermont residents like us.

Thank you for your service Chris, you have our vote.

Brian Harwood
South Burlington

January 28, 2016

The Other Paper Needs to Exist for All Residents

I want to express my concern about the insert that you [*The Other Paper*] allowed to go out with the January 21 issue of your paper.

I know that it is usually not the intent of the paper for advertising to reflect the views of the paper, but allowing such a large insert on a politically explosive issue to be in your paper last week was not appropriate. It appears that *The Other Paper* has taken a stand with the Vermont Right to Life committee.

Greg Weaver
South Burlington

Editor's Note:

The Other Paper was one of 29 local and statewide newspapers across Vermont to carry the Vermont Right to Life flyer as a paid advertisement last week. The Other Paper checks advertising for obscenity, hate speech, and basic legal standards, but does not take a position on social or political messages, nor does it censor, or selectively choose advertising based on its message. Advertising reflects the views of the advertiser, not the newspaper. Unless unpopular speech is as protected as popular speech, we do not really have free speech.

Donovan for City Council

George Donovan is a terrific guy and should be elected to city council. Today I want to tell you about two of his qualities that lead me to support him.

First, George is a tireless worker for city and local causes. He and I worked together on the Central School playground, Nightmare Vermont, and CityFest, the South Burlington birthday party this past year. Saying we worked 'together' is unfair. George took on major roles in CityFest and Nightmare, and without him, these events likely would not have occurred.

George single-handedly controlled the ticketing of Nightmare for as far back as I can remember. Ticketing is a month-long operation requiring coordination of on-line sales and organizing time-specific tickets for thousands of patrons on two weeks of shows. And did I mention he's also there setting up tents and helping with sets? And yes, George has a day job with the Army National Guard.

With CityFest, George and John Buechler, President of Rotary, took a vague idea from concept to reality over eight months in 2014/2015. Again, force of will and hours of dedication provided the city with a fabulous, daylong 150th birthday party.

Second, George loves the Chamberlin neighborhood. As we all know, the Chamberlin neighborhood has seen more than its share of strife as homes have been lost and families have moved on. And while some have called the neighborhood 'uninhabitable,' George is a steadfast champion of Chamberlin neighborhood and school.

George and his wife have raised three terrific kids from his Kirby Road home. George was PTO Chair at Chamberlin, and remains a resolute promoter of the Chamberlin neighborhood. George sees opportunity for the neighborhood, strong and happy families in Chamberlin school, and wants this loving neighborhood to improve, rather than fold to external pressures. George will work to make sure that the future of Chamberlin, both school and neighborhood, remain strong, positive, and thriving.

In short, George Donovan will work hard for all of us, and I encourage you to support him in his bid for city council.

John Wilking
South Burlington

Nowak vs. Noise

In my opinion, Pat Nowak's position on the Airport Commission is a conflict of interest with her position on the city council. She should recuse herself in any discussion of airport noise. Better, she should resign one position or the other, preferably the council. She is simply an apologist for the F35s. Her eyes light up, and those of her councilor gang of three, at the prospect of federal dollars flowing in.

We live at the old 60-db level, at 30 Davis Parkway. Between here and the airport is a half-mile of trees, houses, and commercial buildings. We seldom hear even a murmur from the commercial planes. An F-16 takeoff, by contrast, drowns conversation in our backyard and disrupts it even indoors with the windows closed. The sound doesn't come through the trees; it comes over them and then continues when the plane is in the air.

No complaint; we're used to the F16s by now/ I'm also proud of the National Guard – glad to have it here. What we dread is the three-or-four-times greater noise from the F35s. The Air Force has other viable locations.

“Noise abatement” is an empty idea. No barrier, no home insulation, can insulate better than a half-mile of trees in leaf, which will still be too little for the F35s. Nowak encourages it because she expects it to abate mainly our complaints. If a committee is at work, we'll think, “something is being done” and keep quiet. The committee, however, will be misled. “Something” won't and can't be done. Tremendous noise flies free, and there will be no “living with it.”

Fred G. Hill
South Burlington

Let George Do It

I am writing in support of George Donovan's candidacy for the South Burlington City Council. A year ago, I didn't know George personally, but I had heard his name mentioned in connection with his presidency of the Chamberlin Elementary School PTO and his involvement with the SB Mentoring Program. Also, I've attended events organized by our great South Burlington Rotarians, which I understand George has been involved with for seven years. More recently, I have had the pleasure of serving with George on the SB Recreation and Leisure Arts Committee. He's always prepared and is the first to step forward and volunteer for tasks that need to be done.

I'm sure you can see a pattern here. George is a "doer!" All of this volunteer activity, all of this service, all of this giving! Not to be forgotten, George's greatest achievement is his family, wife Robin and three daughters who have all attended Chamberlain and South Burlington High School.

I want to note one character trait that I feel makes George unique and will help him be a great asset to our city council and community. He's polite, considerate, and respectful. We all aspire to be the same, and perhaps most of the time we are, but a busy life with lots of responsibilities causes many of us to fail at times. I've never seen George get "bent out of shape," even when circumstances might justify it. There are many challenges facing our community that can create pressure and frustration. A calm head in the midst of a storm can often be the key to finding common ground and moving forward.

George's energy and demeanor will serve South Burlington well! I encourage others to learn more about him and to hopefully vote for him in March!

Michael Simoneau
South Burlington

January 21, 2016

Re-elect Meaghan Emery

Meaghan Emery has brought a much-needed fresh voice and independent perspective to the South Burlington City Council and in my opinion fully deserves re-election to the council.

I worked closely with Meaghan for two years (2013-2015) on the Executive Council of United Academics, the UVM faculty union. Meaghan is hardworking, thoughtful, and conscientious in everything she does. She and I sometimes disagreed on policy, but Meaghan always listens carefully and respectfully to everyone's views and presents her own in a calm and well-reasoned manner. She strongly believes in, and practices, democratic principles of governance and encourages broad and meaningful dialogue to solve difficult problems. These are the qualities we need on the South Burlington City Council.

Councilor Emery cares deeply about preserving (and enhancing) the quality of life that we enjoy in South Burlington. Among many other issues, she is concerned about our environment, public safety, and yes, noise abatement, particularly in the airport neighborhood. I hope all South Burlington voters will take the time to study the candidates' positions, attend forums to meet the candidates, and cast an informed vote on March 1.

Denise Youngblood
South Burlington

January 14, 2016

Thank you, Dan Fleming, and Thank You, South Burlington School Board

Dan Fleming's announcement that he does not plan to run for re-election to our school board heralds the end of his effective and loyal service to our community in that capacity.

During Dan's service, the board has faced many difficult challenges. Some were to be expected; some could not have been predicted. Surely, not every member of our community agrees with every decision the board has made, but board members operate in good faith, approach their work in organized and thoughtful fashion, carefully study the relevant information, seek public input, and examine all of the district's options. The board's decisions deserve our respect.

Throughout it all, the board, with the calm and steadfast guidance of Board Chair Elizabeth Fitzgerald, and the wisdom of each of the members, has provided capable leadership to the district. That stewardship has maintained a framework within which a committed faculty, staff and administration have continued to provide a strong public education for the children of South Burlington, at a reasonable cost. We all benefit from quality of our schools.

I know I speak for many in our community when I say thank you to Dan, and to the entire board.

Rich Cassidy
South Burlington

Concerns About the CNAPC

I applied to serve on the CNAPC, Chamberlin Neighborhood-Airport Planning Committee, in South Burlington at the urging of my neighbors and was very happy to have been appointed to my first-ever involvement in local government. I represent two neighborhoods immediately adjacent to Chamberlin, which are now are right on the edge of the new, expanded airport noise boundary contours, a very disturbing development. At the same time, I have become more and more concerned about the proceedings of this committee.

The CNAP committee was formed by the city council to recommend a variety of improvements that the airport might be able to contribute to what is left of the Chamberlin community. While we were imagining parks, pools, and senior centers, etc., we learned that no such improvements are permissible because the land made available by the home demolitions is, in fact, restricted to airport use only! Not only that, but once the consultants are paid, there will be virtually no funds left for any meaningful improvements in the remaining neighborhood. Finally, the whole picture will change dramatically if and when the F-35s arrive, currently slated for 2020. It seems there is little sense in thinking any further than four years out and sitting on this committee has been feeling more and more pointless.

I think the homeowners on this committee want to focus on noise mitigation more than anything else, yet it now seems that the city council has threatened to disband the committee if we continue to insist on this tack. This is very disturbing as a key part the charge to the committee - issued by the city council itself - says we were to "develop a vision and strategy... for noise abatement," among other things. I am quite perplexed at how such a key provision of our project objectives could be forgotten or misunderstood, as it is clearly the most worrisome and concerning issue before us. I can't help but wonder why we were seated at all.

Linda Brakel
South Burlington

Airport Issues

I have grave concerns about what is happening in this political season. In my opinion, the draft minutes of the Burlington Airport Commission meeting of December 15, 2015 show disregard for truth and an effort to smear Meaghan Emery.

It is stated in the minutes that Meaghan Emery attended the Chamberlin Neighborhood Meeting of

November 9, 2015 to lead a small vocal group speaking against the F-35. Meaghan never mentioned the F-35 and attended the meeting as a representative of the Chamberlin community and the city. Any comments made by her were in this context. She conducted herself with grace and integrity. It [draft]further states that Pat Nowak apologizes for the behavior of one of “their” city councilors and pledged to work with VTANG and the community on collaborative ways to mitigate noise.

Was I at the same meeting? Yes, but this is crazy-making behavior by Richards and Nowak. These statements are totally inaccurate, untrue and can only be playing politics with us all. The Noise Map shouldn't have been unveiled to the public if officials in charge of its creation don't have skin thick enough to take public comments. Obviously, many people in the audience were displeased with what was being shown and were voicing their concerns. Let's not blame one person, Meghan Emery, for a meeting gone awry. Since it was a public meeting, the public was free to attend from any community.

At the above noted Airport Commission Meeting[draft minutes], Pat Nowak states that the CNAPC Committee is to address transportation and visual effects, not deal with sound issues. This too is false, for the Project Objectives in the Grant state that the committee will address “noise abatement” along with land use, development and transportation. As the chair of the committee, I want to clarify that the committee is to deal with noise.

Since Meaghan Emery is up for reelection, I can only conclude that a campaign is taking place to besmirch her integrity and her efforts to represent the people of her community. Let's focus on issues and truth. And remember that the real power in politics is in the voting booth.

Carmine Sargent
South Burlington

Thank You Councilor Emery

South Burlington City Councilor Meaghan Emery has been performing a very important public service in exhibiting superb leadership for the citizens of not only South Burlington but for the surrounding communities - doing what she was elected to do - often against some reluctance or at least complacency of some of the other council members - especially the chair. The videos of the council meetings mentioned below clearly demonstrate that. Although it has been an uphill struggle it appears that she is seeing success.

One of the biggest issues facing the communities surrounding the airport is noise generated by the airport. It has an effect on housing values, nearby residents' health, community disintegration, and tax base integrity. Because of this, beginning in 2010, Emery has been researching, then advocating within the city council for the formation of a noise abatement committee (NAP). The NAP members would be drawn from elected officials of the city councils, ordinary residents of each community who live in the “noise zone,” airport officials, the Vermont Air National Guard (VTANG), and the Army National Guard. The communities would be those most seriously impacted by the airport noise - likely South Burlington, Burlington, Winooski, Colchester, and Williston.

Her advocacy resulted in five officers of VTANG attending a city council meeting on December 7 to answer a number of questions about airport noise. When presented with the NAP concept they were very receptive to the idea. Council chair Pat Nowak makes the comment in the third video mentioned that this is the first time the VTANG has shown interest. Councilor Emery has also polled a few councilors in other communities about this proposal and has had a positive response.

The videos of the city council meetings are accessed by visiting www.cctv.org, search South Burlington's listings. The relevant minutes in the November 16 city council meeting are 8:45 to 27:45, the December 7 meeting, minutes 137-185, the December 21 meeting, minutes 3:20 to 5:30, and the January 4 meeting, minutes 25:30-66 and 280-291. The videos speak volumes more than I can in this short letter about her leadership.

Ray Gonda
South Burlington

Call For Residents to Attend Next City Council Meeting

I am writing with good news. After an unusually strong conversation in the last council meeting, councilors have agreed to add to the next meeting agenda a council discussion of the proposed noise abatement committee and resident involvement on it. Please come and listen to the discussion Tuesday, January 19, 2016, 6:30pm, at the S.B. Police Station Conference Room.

It has been a bumpy road getting to this point, but it is clearly important for our community -- especially as big town-changing conversations are going on, from city center development to possible school consolidations and closings.

As you know, one of my passions as your elected representative is to do my part to increase citizen involvement and input into the city council's work in setting policy. I believe that policy decisions that directly impact our economy, infrastructure, environment, and residents are enhanced by active citizen participation and dialog among stakeholders, which promote buy-in and mutually respectful outcomes.

Regarding noise abatement committees, they exist elsewhere to ensure best outcomes for residents and airports. They are recommended by the Federal Aviation Administration and here at home by the VT Department of Health as seen in the 2008 FAA Part 150 NCP Agreement and the 2012 Public Health Review of the F-35 basing. As seen throughout the U.S., their membership generally includes elected officials, residents, noise experts, airport representatives, and, where applicable, Air Guard personnel. They are usually chaired by an elected official representing the impacted area, and through quarterly meetings they address citizen-reported noise impacts, recommend mitigation strategies, and pursue federal grants.

It is an exciting time in South Burlington, though not always easy and smooth. I am heartened to hear the council responding to residents' input in the last meeting with these key points: 1. The Chamberlin Neighborhood Airport Planning Committee (CNAPC) can and should consider noise mitigation with the council's support. 2. The current draft minutes for the December 15, 2015 Airport Commission meeting will be 'corrected' by our chair to ensure they accurately represent her advocacy of South Burlington.

I hope to see many residents attend the next meeting.

Meaghan Emery
South Burlington City Councilor

January 7, 2016

National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring Month, and structured mentoring programs across the country, our state, and in South Burlington are celebrating the power behind this simple and effective program. In South Burlington, we have the SB Mentoring Program that started slowly in our elementary schools, deliberately expanded into our middle school and is now making plans to grow into the high school.

Students, mentors, school staff, and families all sing the praises of this program and what it has done not only for the students, but like any other relationship, how it's has "filled the buckets" of the mentors as well. You see, mentoring programs like ours are genius in their simplicity. First, look for caring adults that have the time to connect with a young person; perform the due diligence needed to confirm they are a suitable match; provide coaching, support, and training; but most importantly allow them to build a relationship with the student. An hour a week - that is all it takes for a caring adult to impact the life of a young person. An hour to listen, to ask questions, to help that young person find their "spark". I know, not only because I've read the research, but because I've been involved in mentoring programs for the last 20 years. It's simple, fun, and anyone can do it!

Want to know more or help celebrate and sustain the great programs in South Burlington? Come to the Winter Gala on Saturday, January 16 – Tickets include dinner and a silent auction. Call Susie at 238-1054 for ticket price and information.

Patrick Leduc
South Burlington

Healthy People, Healthy Communities, Healthy Airport

I have reviewed the Burlington International Airport 2015 and 2020 draft Noise Exposure Map Report. Also, I have researched noise mitigation practices at other airports, some in communities similar to South Burlington.

Successful programs have many components in common. They are multi-modal and continuously evolving. There is much to learn from their experience.

Due to the complexity and the changing nature of airport noise as it interfaces with surrounding communities, I feel that it is imperative that a permanent noise mitigation committee be formed. More than simply creating a committee, this body needs an effective structure to be successful.

A successful noise abatement committee requires an ongoing commitment of financial support (a budget), access to information (including a permanent noise monitoring system), and a dedication to community involvement. It will be worth the effort.

Loretta Marriott
South Burlington

Airport Noise Mitigation

I am concerned about the addressing of noise mitigation by the S. Burlington City Council (SBCC) for the F-16s and eventually the much louder F-35s.

Councilor Meaghan Emery has done lots of research on how other communities deal with mitigating noise from commercial airports that share with the military. At a recent SBCC meeting, Ms. Emery reported on how well one group made up of citizens, city councilors and airport officials was doing at working together to find money for noise mitigation for people living within the 65 DNL (FAA's too-

loud-for-residential-use) contour. She wants the SBCC to be proactive in creating such a group, including membership from other affected communities. Me, too. She pointed out at the 11/16/15 meeting, citing numbers from the new report issued by the airport on newly impacted households since the last report in 2006: 605 single family homes, 352 multi-family homes, and Chamberlin School (over 2230 people, and well over 10% of South Burlington's population) now live in the too-loud noise zone.

I was dismayed to watch SBCC Chair Nowak's response to the idea: uninterested.

According to a recent *VT Digger* article, Gene Richards (head of the airport) stated he wouldn't participate in such a group that includes citizens. However, he is interested in input from Greater Burlington Industrial Corp. and Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce.

I've learned that Ms. Nowak also sits on the Airport Commission. Apparently that isn't a conflict of interest. In my opinion it should be.

None of this bodes well for people living within the 65 decibel contour.

I'm asking SBCC Chair Pat Nowak, Chris Shaw, and Tom Chittenden to join Meaghan Emery and Helen Riehle to help make the noise abatement committee public. They should step up to the plate to ensure that the committee's formation, drafting of by-laws, etc., remains transparent and entirely within the public process. I mean, they are supposed to be representing the people, right?

Ellen Powell
South Burlington

December 23, 2015

Check Out My Books

Just wanted to make a public thank you for a recent honor given to me for my service on the South Burlington Community Library Board. I retired from that role after eight years on the board. It is the board's custom to match the interests of the retiring board member by placing a book in their name into the library's collection. In my case, they chose two books that have delighted me. The first is *Classical Music for Dummies* and as is the tradition of the *Dummies* books, they tell you everything you could possibly want to know about classical music from every angle. It is fun to read and even the most scholarly musicologist will find some new information I am sure. The second is for young readers, *Can You Hear It?* It portrays, in the book and accompanying CD, how to listen for various instruments and what the composer is trying to convey via twelve pieces of music and beautiful artwork that is sure to intrigue youngsters.

This is just another example of what a terrific library we enjoy here in South Burlington and I hope you will all stop by soon to check out "my" books. Thanks, library board!

Nancy Simson
South Burlington

Taxpayer Beware

In the late afternoon of Nov 23, I retrieved my mail and was caught off guard by a letter from the city stating, "Delinquent Tax Notice"!

Startled, I reached for where our statements are kept and was mortified to see that our payment notice was still there. Early the next morning, I ventured over to City Hall to submit our now five-day late tax payment. Feeling somewhat embarrassed, I began to explain to the staff person receiving our payment, that in the thirty-four years we have been residents here, not once was a payment missed. I stated honestly, "I had forgotten."

I was also informed that an \$81.97 penalty had been added to the tax bill. I was taken aback by this – five business days late? I inquired as to whether there are no prerecorded messages or perhaps a courtesy reminder call to let folks know when they are late. I was informed that this simply is not done, that if I wanted to appeal the penalty, I could submit a "waiver" request. This is exactly what I did before I even exited the building. I stated honestly that the payment had been overlooked / forgotten, but that I was hopeful that our good payment record over the course of those past 34 years would speak for itself.

Unfortunately, just this past week, we received a letter explaining to us that the penalty could not be waived as the city is bound by certain charters, etc.

Disappointed? You bet. Surprised? Not really. There may be many who read this and may think "Ah well... it (blanks) to be you."

I can do nothing but accept it and move forward, however – I've gotten it off my chest and can only hope that no other South Burlington residents are caught off-guard like I was.

Bacon .Diane K
South Burlington

December 17, 2015

What is it Going to Cost?

At this time of year many taxpayers who live in South Burlington will be wondering and asking, what more is it going to cost me in regards to steady increases in both our city and school budgets?

Many of us are on a fixed income and our buying power has seemed to decrease slowly over the years with very little, if any, cost of living increases in our income. How can we, on fixed incomes, keep up with the pace with steady increases every year? Yes, in my opinion, there are many of us who live in this community who fall in this income bracket.

These are my concerns. The city and school budgets need to reflect true operating costs and level funding. Year after year, we have seen steady increases in both the city and school budgets. When you travel around our city of South Burlington over the last number of years and have seen many new commercial and residential construction projects, you wonder why our taxes still increase over the years. When we hear every year that the populations of our schools are going down, again you wonder why our taxes always increase. The school board may be looking to build a new school in the future. The city is looking to develop a City Center. Ok now, again I will ask, "What more is it going to cost me to live in South Burlington?" I have a simple solution to this problem, "Cut back!"

Jay L. Zaetz
South Burlington

Intent Not Needed for Racism

Many people claim that there was no racism at South Burlington High School when they chose Confederate symbols for their new high school. However, intent is not needed for racism to rear its head.

When the students were choosing an identity, area hotels had an unwritten agreement to reject blacks. Mayfair Park residents had a written covenant to not sell their homes to people of color. In 1965, Governor Philip Hoff proposed a bill to prohibit racial discrimination in housing sales and rentals. It failed. The students and their supervisors were surrounded by racism but they could not see it because they and their families could rent at any hotel, buy a home anywhere in the city, and read the history of their people every day in school.

When they chose Confederate icons, they unthinkingly chose symbols that represented the nation's enemies, who started a war that killed hundreds of thousands to keep people enslaved and, later, foisted a new reign of terror on blacks who dared to fight for a better life. While the students were choosing the Confederate flag as their symbol, people of color who tried to register to vote were being lynched in the South under that same hateful banner. To choose such symbols was racism, pure and simple. Intent is not needed for racism to occur.

To be a racist, according to modern popular thought, is to be a violent monster. While there certainly are violent racists who hate people of color, there are also very nice people, with no animosity toward blacks, who unconsciously buttress a cruel system. The people who chose these symbols may not have been personally prejudiced, but they had the power to choose symbols that damage people's psyches, then and now. This is institutional racism.

Today we have one symbol left from the 60s, the 'Rebel' name. I hope that the school will revisit this issue, divest themselves of this last remnant of these hurtful symbols, and find another name that does not harm people but is inclusive rather than divisive.

Elise A. Guyette
South Burlington

December 10, 2015

Double Blessing

To the fellow who gave a ten dollar bill to the clerk at Price Chopper on Hinesburg Road to give to me, thank you. Though you did not want thanks, or to be known, I hope you read this so you will know it was a double blessing, as the clerk told me she had never, in her 40 years of service, seen anyone do that. She proceeded to tell the fellow behind me as I left the checkout.

While the money was greatly appreciated, it was more of a blessing to hear those words from that clerk. So thank you again for your kind and generous gesture. I will pay it forward and hope others who read this will be blessed by this one intended act of kindness turned into two, and possibly more.

Bunny Myrick
South Burlington

December 3, 2015

Limit Education and Municipal Spending Increases for Health Insurance Costs

I hope that many who read Martin LaLonde's legislative update in the November 12 issue of *The Other Paper* noted that an anticipated health insurance spending increase of 7.9 percent will likely push South Burlington Schools over the 1.7 percent cap above which our community will be penalized for excessive growth in spending. The only options discussed in the article are cutting educational programming and repealing the allowable growth rate provision of Act 46.

Yet, health care spending is what is driving costs over the limit, and other Vermont communities are discussing ways to rein in this spending. I think it is time for South Burlington residents, and not just those who are members and friends of the teachers union, to weigh in on the very generous health care benefits and low premium contributions paid by South Burlington schoolteachers and staff.

What other employees or those of us on Vermont Health Connect enjoy \$5 co-pays, \$200 single or \$400 total family deductible, and \$500/\$1000 out of pocket limit as stated on the South Burlington District website? Is it too much to ask school employees with secure and respected positions in the community to share more equally the burden of health care costs with taxpayers? Since these are considered "Cadillac plans" by the federal Affordable Care Act (Obamacare), and will soon be subjected to a federal excessive benefit tax, the message that these benefits are unsustainable is loud and clear.

If this issue were to gain as much attention as the Rebel name change debate, we might actually subvert another teacher's union strike, which as you recall from last year was largely waged in support of retaining these gold-plated health care packages. Representative LaLonde has also correctly argued that mediation is not the solution.

Donna Leban
South Burlington

November 19, 2015

Do the Right Thing

Veterans Day has come and gone. Among those veterans were thousands of Vermonters who fought in the Civil War against slavery and to preserve the Union. Many of them were wounded or died fighting against self-styled Southern Rebels in places like Antietam and Gettysburg. Imagine their reaction were they to come back today and find that a school in Vermont has fashioned itself as "The Rebels". Our community should not dishonor the dedication and memory of those brave Vermonters by the use of this term. Please reconsider "Rebels" as the nickname for our High School. In Lincoln's words, the "better angels of our nature" will admit that this is inappropriate for SBHS.

John Thanassi
South Burlington

November 12, 2015

Do We Really Need a City Center?

City-run workshops and developer-sponsored surveys report that our citizens pine for our own downtown. We are told that we suffer from an identity crisis and out-of-state consultants are hired to help us relieve our angst.

Our real problem, however, is the fixation on this enterprise which has shifted attention from meeting real community needs such a separate library, a community center and a real senior center. Intense development next to the busiest intersection in the state will benefit developers and real estate interests while further eroding the quality of life for the rest of us. We will be asked to pay higher taxes for the police, fire and public works required. While our current sense of community lies with our neighborhoods and our schools, proponents desire that we abandon local schools to meet the needs of a contrived “downtown”.

We have never been given the opportunity to vote on this scheme but when we are, we need to carefully consider the costs and benefits to each of us.

David Wilber
South Burlington

Missed Opportunity

I was sorry to see that the South Burlington School District decided to keep the “Rebel” name. I understand both sides of the issue, but when I read about how sad it made some people feel, I wish I had been there to speak up. It may be easy to write off the name change to “political correctness” when you are part of the majority who did not suffer from the legacy of the Confederacy. If changing the name could make everyone feel more welcome, why would we not do that? It seems to me that we missed an opportunity to take a stand and have a teachable moment by denouncing even the vestiges of slavery and to demonstrate our willingness to make sacrifices to be inclusive. Even if most of us do not associate the name with that horrible part of our past, some people clearly feel marginalized by the board’s decision. Personally, I am now ashamed of the Rebel name.

Kathy Fox
South Burlington

Neighborhood Schools Need to Stay

My name is Noah Hoffman and I moved to South Burlington because of the quality of its neighborhoods and their schools. I have three kids who go to Orchard School, with a fourth on the way. My greatest concern is that we have elected city officials who would like to consolidate our elementary schools to make way for commercial development in the Market Street area.

The options being considered for a land swap/school consolidation plan do not directly address an educational need for our children. The potential impact of school consolidation on the character and quality of our neighborhoods has not been adequately discussed. It is certainly not being driven by a real and expressed need that has been verified by the greater community. I can’t imagine there is broad public support for closing neighborhood elementary schools in exchange for a new, vaguely defined, commercial development on the Central School property, and a huge, consolidated, expensive-to-build, elementary school in the southeast quadrant of town.

I have attended several public meetings to voice my views on this issue, and what I have repeatedly learned is that our city is moving forward with a concept that in my view has no clear rationale other than incentivizing business development. Outside consultants are being hired to evaluate a concept

that, in my view, shouldn't exist because it attacks an essential quality of our town: its thriving neighborhoods and their schools.

There is a wealth of current, evidence-based "21st Century Learning" research data to support keeping small neighborhood elementary schools. There are other ways to save money and promote economic growth. The schools shouldn't be on the chopping block. Many of us are trying to make our voices heard and find out how we can be involved in the city's decision-making process, and I thank everyone who has taken time away from their families to engage in public discourse. However, it is time for our city officials to notice that they will meet huge public opposition to closing our neighborhood elementary schools, and that moving forward with this agenda undermines our confidence.

Noah Hoffman
South Burlington

Our Own High School

I was the student vice president of the first senior class at South Burlington in 1961-1962. Until then we attended Burlington High School, as did many students from surrounding towns. We were excited to "break away" and now have our own high school. Student committees were formed to discuss many of the issues that needed to be decided upon in a new school. We had teacher advisors in these meetings. We were called upon to decide the school mascot, school motto, school colors, logo for the class ring, and the name for the yearbook. A vote was taken for some decisions and others were decided by a contest.

Since we were "South" Burlington and breaking away from Burlington, the Rebels name was chosen. The theme followed, logically to us, to select Columbia blue for the school color, and a confederate soldier with a musket on the yearbook called the Sentry. Again, the confederate flag seemed a logical element within the theme.

There were no racists in our class or in our school. None of my friends were racist. We were innocent 17-year old school kids from good families. It seems that some of the teacher advisors might have noticed if we were pursuing a racist theme.

Now in the modern political climate, it is fashionable to attach a racist label to the school. Institutional racism? Really? This is an attempt to rewrite history, to fit a modern political point of view, by some who believe in greater moral authority to judge their fellow citizens. I resent seeing South Burlington High School being labeled by institutional racism. I resent the suggestion that I might be clinging to a "shallow" tradition, because of "white privilege" or my "cultural ignorance." Clearly, these are modern political talking-point terms. Hopefully the school administration will be able to re-educate today's students about the real history of the school mascot and resist allowing a minority of modern day activists to rewrite history, and indoctrinate our youth to perpetuate a modern racist narrative that did not exist in South Burlington in 1962.

Tyler Hart
South Burlington

November 5, 2015

A Letter Commending the South Burlington School Board

I want to commend the South Burlington School Board on its decision to retain the Rebel name. As an SBHS class of '86 alum, I have always been proud to be a Rebel—and still am. My pride flows not just from my experiences in the classroom or on the football field, but from something much more deeply rooted in the community.

I started in the South Burlington school system in 1978/1979. It was the time of the revolution in Iran and the seizure of the U.S. embassy. I remember watching on the news in 1979 as Iranians in this country were spit on and beaten.

Having been born in Iran and starting in a new school system with few friends, I wondered how I would be treated. I remember cringing when my fifth grade teacher at Orchard School asked me to explain to my class what was happening in Iran and why. I dreaded the reaction I might receive from my class mates.

Yet the reaction I received, both before and after the taking of the hostages, was one of sympathy and compassion--there was no issue of bullying, white privilege, racism, or intolerance. No need for cultural competencies.

The children accepted me and treated me as one of them. I developed friendships that continued through South Burlington High School and were strengthened through our Rebel bonds. Those friends are still some of my best friends today.

I went on to serve as an Army paratrooper, graduated from UVM, spent years working at the Pentagon and in the Middle East, and now work for Congress. To this day, I credit South Burlington for having provided me with the acceptance and sense of community that allowed me to flourish--acceptance that didn't come from some multicultural program, but from a sense of decency that has always been a hallmark of the community.

So please do not ever accept an assertion that South Burlington, or its symbols, reflect intolerance, racism, or exclusivity (except maybe to Seahorses and Hornets). To do so would be to sacrifice a truly proud tradition on the altar of political correctness.

Very respectfully,

Kiya Batmanglidj
SBHS Class of 1986

October 22, 2015

No to Consolidated School

Tear down our award-winning, walking-distance neighborhood schools and build one gigantic elementary school at a far-out location requiring fossil-fueled car or bus transportation all day every day? No, No, No! Absolutely not!

Monica Farrington
South Burlington, VT

Walters' Legacy

Vermont and Chittenden County have a legacy in their midst. This past Friday, Dick Walters, surrounded by family, exercised the choice he fought so hard for under Vermont's Death with Dignity

law. No individual had more to do with bringing this critical choice and right to all Vermonters –from initiating the idea 15 years ago to seeing it passed into law 2 years ago and, perhaps most importantly, in the interim, refusing to give up when it became too controversial for most legislators. Dick was so proud Vermont was the very first state legislature to give suffering terminally ill citizens this important end of life choice, and he was absolutely thrilled to learn just two weeks ago that California, with its 39 million citizens, followed Vermont’s and his lead. Over time Dick Walter’s legacy will only grow.

*Senator Michael Sirotkin
State Senate, Chittenden County
South Burlington*

October 15, 2015

Opposition to the New Mega School

I would like to express my support and appreciation for the wonderful letter written by Emilee Hoffman (Too Many Unknowns, 10/1). It beautifully represents all of my views and concerns, and I hope it will get the attention of all who share the same opinion so we can stand together with one voice.

*Celeste Forcier
South Burlington*

What’s in a name?

An arbitrary label chosen to identify a person, place or object. The context of a given name creates the spirit surrounding the intent. For some, discomfort and discontent arises with the remembrance for what the name “Rebel” historically represents. For others, it was within this evolution of tragedy where the strength and growth of the American belief in freedom prevailed. Watching my grandchild proudly wear the “Rebel” logo does not reflect his condoning a significant historical event. It reveals a young adult proud of his school identified with a name that emphasizes individuality and spirit.

*Bonni Martin
South Burlington*

Recycle Rebel

I would like to suggest a solution to the Rebel name issue. In keeping with South Burlington’s vision of being green and saving energy and with Vermont’s push to recycling, why don’t we officially drop the Rebel name with all of its perceived negative connotations and then adopt the name Rebel with a positive brand? We can honor the brave Vermonters such as Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys for their rebellion of British rule during the American Revolution. Recycling the name will save time, money, and energy all within the spirit of being a Vermont Rebel.

*Caren Moore
South Burlington, VT*

October 8, 2015

Change the Name

I moved to South Burlington only six years ago so perhaps I have a different perspective on the high school's "Rebel" name than that of a current student or alumnus. However, like many people of my age and background, when I see the word "Rebel" (with a capital 'R') only two images come immediately to mind: James Dean (the rebel without a cause) and a soldier of the confederate army, neither of which inspires even the slightest sense of honor, courage or pride. On the other hand, the moniker "Rebel" is tainted with images of soldiers fighting to defend the despicable institution of slavery in a war that claimed over 600,000 American lives. (I'm sorry but people who have rebelled throughout history against the status quo are not generally associated with uniforms and a battle flag.) I am not alone in wondering why anyone would defend the Rebel name realizing that there are South Burlington citizens who are offended by its historical association. Hopefully our school board will decide to change the name to something more in tune with our values as a community and as a nation.

*Nina Harrington
South Burlington*

Iterative Learning: Life as a Series of Mini Experiments

As a scientist, every aspect of my life has become a sequence of mini experiments resulting in iterative learning. The public discussion over the South Burlington High School (SBHS) namesake Rebels is healthy for the community and requires an open mind to see the growth that has happened since the first experiment that was SBHS. My experience is that first experiments result in the largest number of mistakes but come with maximum learning. SBHS is no different, the early years came with mistakes, but the community has flourished with each year, decade, and generation from those errors. The mistake was not the word "Rebel," which is not limited to referencing the civil war, the mistake was the symbols, imagery, and culture.

SBHS has grown, leaving those mistakes in the past, with the exception of not defining and clarifying what a Rebel is today. Most would prefer to be judged on our actions of the present and not on the actions of our past. Potential experiments for SBHS may be to change the name, or ask is there more to gain by keeping the name. Keeping the name Rebel means you have an incredible teaching point for students, not just on tolerance; connecting with history, the discussion would not stop. Removing Rebels may come with the price of complacency, when the name is removed this discussion ends. People are talking with passion, listening to each other, learning, showing us that the mistakes of the past were invaluable teachings. With resolution, silence may follow, if so this growth will be at a loss.

One lesson learned from history's Rebels is that action is paramount. I taught as an assistant high school science teacher in urban Philadelphia and witnessed a striking contrast to SBHS. The communities I worked and lived in require financing, resources, and people; a school changing their name does not impact them and is not their concern as their life position will not change. Try an experiment, be a Rebel, volunteer in the communities in which people have argued the name change for, and change your life and the lives of other people.

*Paul R. Frail, PhD
SBHS Class of 1997*

Thank you

On behalf of the Green Mountain Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, we'd like to extend our thanks to the South Burlington community members who helped make our 17th annual used bike and sewing machine collection so successful.

Saturday, September 26, we loaded 145 bikes and 55 sewing machines into three FedEx containers. Many of the donors who stopped by our collection site at Faith United Methodist Church on Dorset Street mentioned the article printed in *The Other Paper*.

Although we do not yet know where this practical technology is going, we do know that it will be sent to a self-help project in a developing country, where it will help to make life just a little easier for people struggling to meet their basic needs. In previous years, Vermont donations have gone to Ghana, El Salvador, Vietnam, and Moldova.

Again, our warmest thanks to all those who donated items or helped us spread the word. See you next September!

Joanne Heidkamp and Paul Demers
South Burlington

October 1, 2015

Too Many Unknowns

I attended the September 16 school board meeting to hear Superintendent David Young's recommendation regarding elementary school consolidation. I was disheartened to learn his suggestion to close all three of our beloved community schools and build one jumbo elementary school for our youngest learners. I was also shocked that his timeline has our current schools demolished and a new mega school ready by August 2019. This massive recommendation comes with a plethora of unknowns and an alarming lack of community input or support.

It has been suggested that research and collaboration has been put into this consolidation plan, but somehow we are no closer to understanding the motivation behind this drastic recommendation. The recent need to add an additional 4th grade class at RMCS after the start of the school year has been pointed to as a reason to consolidate, but during the school board meeting, Mr. Young stated that the 4th grade situation was extremely rare. 21st century learning has also been suggested as a motivating factor for consolidation, but while this concept has much to do with teaching style, it has very little to do with the physical building.

The community has largely been shut out of this conversation and when our feedback has been requested, it has been blatantly ignored. We need transparency, community engagement, and concrete reasoning before we are asked to demolish our award-winning neighborhood schools. Central, Chamberlin, and Orchard are the gems of our city and they serve as major reasons young families decide to move to South Burlington. These schools create a human-scale sense of neighborhood community in a city that can sometimes feel disjointed by geography and roads. Asking taxpayers and the State of Vermont to allocate resources towards tearing them down to build one colossal elementary school (8-10 classrooms per grade!) without clear vision or reasoning is obtuse and unnecessary.

Mr. Young's recommendation is available to the public on the SBSB web page and I strongly encourage members of the community, with and without school-aged children, to review it and send questions or comments to the school board.

Emilee Hoffman
South Burlington

My Recollection of the "Rebel" nickname

I attended South Burlington Schools for grades 1 through 12, and then on to UVM. I was a member of the graduating class of 1968 at SBHS and class president in my junior year.

I would like to share the beginnings of the Rebel nickname through my experience. When I was in 7th or 8th grade in 1961 or possibly 1962, the school administration provided for a vote from the student body to determine the Rebel nickname. At the time, I had a female classmate or possibly she was one year ahead of me. I remember she had recently moved to South Burlington from Alabama. This person was the individual who proposed the "Rebel" nickname including the confederate flag. The mood of the student body years ago, in my opinion, was rebellious and a bit cavalier as to the nickname to be chosen. Being a community without racial diversity, the majority of students then, in my opinion, were not aware of the extended ramifications. At that time there was some concern regarding the Rebel nickname and the confederate flag as a symbol of the school, then composed of grades 7 through 12 until the middle school was built a few years later.

Another classmate was from the only African American family with children in the school at that time. I do remember his mother and father attended meetings and were very upset with the school administration for allowing the Rebel nickname. Living nearby, I delivered the Free Press to this family on a daily basis and collected payment once each week. This same family attended the First Methodist Church in Burlington where I attended services with my family. I could see and understand the discomfort with the Rebel nickname and confederate flag as a school symbol. My opinion from years ago remains the same today... it was not right to associate references, names and symbols from the Civil War with our school.

I believe it would be best to now move on to another nickname, carefully considered, and recognize the pain and discomfort the past years caused some South Burlington residents that, in my opinion, still exist today.

Chuck Bolton
South Burlington

September 24, 2015

A Vermont Kind of Rebel

- Ethan Allen in the American Revolution
- The first state to abolish slavery by Constitution
- 1968 law banning billboards
- First state to establish civil unions
- Leading state in renewable energy

Due respect to those who disagree, but being a Vermont kind of rebel is a good thing. We own the positive change agent connotation of the word. Let's keep it - Go Rebels!

By the way, did you see the recent Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium scores? Only 48% of South Burlington 6th graders meet or exceed CSS Math standards (not a critique of our school and teachers – it is a new system and we are higher than the statewide score of 37%.) Let's allow our school board, administration, and teachers to focus their time and attention on that which matters most – which is not the well intentioned effort by a small group of residents advocating to change the nickname of our school. Go Rebels!

David Leckey
South Burlington

Leave the Rebels Alone!

I agree with my fellow Rebel, Jimmy Datillio (*The Other Paper*, September 10, 2015). Leave the name of SBHS alone! I am now and always will be a Rebel. I understand political correctness but this is just ridiculous! Never, in all my years in the South Burlington School system, did I see Captain Rebel or a Rebel Flag at any sporting event (and yes, I participated in Rebellettes and the Gymnastic team as captain)! Even Robbie Rebel didn't exist when I was at SBHS. Some residents of South Burlington sure have stretched the truth about this! Right on, Mr. Jordan!

Debbie Oakes, Class of '76
Rebellette and Captain of the 1976 Rebel Gymmies
New Orleans, LA

A Double Edged Sword

What are young adults learning from this debate? This is absolutely a double-edged sword. I agree that it shows that people are entitled to fight for what they believe in, but it also demonstrates that we live in a society of whiners and crybabies. Many people wish they had lakefront property, but we don't take such strong exception to it and ask Colchester to stop being the Lakers. Nor do we ask Milton or Essex to stop being their respective stinging insects because some of us are allergic. We have taken something that is so simple and demonized it - and for what? To punish the masses for the thoughts or feelings of a few? I don't care who is offended or not, we can't all grab a hatchet and flashlight to try to get the monster every time something happens that some people don't like. Don't we have more pressing issues here? Maybe it's time for those who are losing sleep about something with so many meanings to sit and think hard about the other definitions of REBELS, find some common ground and move on to something more important. If you can't, maybe you should move to a community that caters more to the crybaby demographic.

David Viau
South Burlington

Legacy of the South Burlington Rebels

If the Rebels of South Burlington were attached to Confederacy-tinged symbols on display at school events, then the current discussion about the nickname would be much different. But association with any controversial imagery was retired more than 35 years ago. My six siblings and I grew up in the 70's and 80's attending South Burlington High School. For years, my father, Hal Nolting, was head of the school board. After moving back to Vermont in 2005, our sons passed through the South Burlington schools. In all that time, in the many experiences with students, parents, school officials, and members of other communities, I don't recall one instance of an issue of intolerance tied to the Rebels moniker.

For my family, and I suspect many others, the connection to the South Burlington Rebels has been a proud one. Educators ingrained a sense of being true to oneself and standing up for worthy causes. It was wonderful to recently hear Coach Paul Jordan speak about the ideals of sportsmanship, teamwork, and class he so successfully developed through South Burlington Rebel Football and the greater community after his arrival in 1969. Our sons were honored to continue the tradition, and enjoyed being members of teams and clubs, while also enabled to march to the beat of their own drum.

For those without these memories and experiences, perhaps the continued use of the nickname just makes our town look bad. So how can we dispel any connotation of our Rebels to slavery or anything divisive?

A good start may be forming a group to develop a fitting and positive Rebel image. Good suggestions have already been made. Empower the word to the spirit of those who nobly fought injustices of the status quo or bravely blazed their own trail. Maybe adopt an independent rugged Green Mountain Boy as the mascot. There are plenty of interesting and suitable possible recommendations. The point is there can be a path forward on this issue that respects both the concerns of some of an unnecessary form of prejudice, and the desire of many to keep a name with an inclusive and honorable legacy.

*Tom Nolting
South Burlington
SBHS Class of 1981*

September 17, 2015

Comprehensive Plan Revisions without Conversation

I was surprised to read in the September 3 issue of *The Other Paper* that the Planning Commission is proposing moving forward on revisions to the South Burlington Comprehensive Plan before the community has had a real chance to weigh in on the South Burlington Master Planning Task Force recommendations. The community was promised more conversation from the March 31 meeting and final recommendations, yet this has not materialized. As many of the Comprehensive Plan's objectives and strategies involve the education system, I urge the city council and planning commission to provide the promised opportunity for continued community conversations about the recommendations before revising the Comprehensive Plan.

*Scott Baker
South Burlington*

Rebel Name Change

In my opinion, the Rebel name needs to be changed. The roots of the Rebel mascot refer back to the rebels of the south. People argue that the name Rebel has different meanings; however, the origin of this mascot is directly connected back to slavery. Allowing students to express their opinions is important, however, high school students do not have the education that the leadership hopefully has in the nuances of language and the importance of inclusion. With the recent shootings in the south and removal of the Confederate flag, it seems to me imperative that the Rebels change their name.

People fear change yet it is the one constant in life. In this way, the change can be a model for our children that we are not afraid to change out-dated and racist practices. It is irresponsible not to change the name and to plead ignorance around the way that the mascot may be undermining the school in moving forward in the area of having an inclusive and kind culture.

In the interest of creating an open, diverse, and safe culture in the school where the students develop sensitivity to other's stories, lives, and history, the name change could be a positive step forward, an opportunity.

This quote from Bell Hooks nicely articulates the way in which embracing change could move our community forward, "Dominant culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through fear, finding out what connects or reveling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community." (Bell Hooks 2003)

As a South Burlington parent and concerned community member, I ask that the South Burlington administrators consider the position of privilege they are in and use this position to move the community forward. Considering the feelings and positions of those that are and have been in less privileged positions places the responsibility squarely on us to educate our children in inclusivity, sensitivity, and model positive change.

Emily Miller
South Burlington

September 10, 2015

Proud to be a Rebel

I went to South Burlington High School and graduated in 1976. I was proud to be a South Burlington Rebel. Our baseball team was undefeated under the Rebel name. For all the people that hate the name Rebel, they need to get over it and move on. I don't like to be told what is good for me or to be told what to do just because someone is offended. I was a South Burlington Rebel and I'll always be a Rebel. I think I turned out okay in the community. Leave the name alone, it hasn't hurt anyone after all these years.

Jim Dattilio
South Burlington

Drop the Rebel

I originally thought the Rebel was a fine mascot for South Burlington, but after learning of its tie to the confederacy, I think it's time to give it the heave-ho. Some say that it was enough to drop the southern soldier mascot as it was done 20 years ago, but I think that's no different from someone waving a confederate flag and saying, "heritage, not hate." That is nonsense, and it fools nobody.

Consider what we are as a community: as a town made of suburban ranches, condominiums, shopping malls, and plazas, we might be one of the least rebellious communities in Vermont. South Burlington is wonderful, but it's not rebellious. So to call ourselves the Rebels makes no sense. There is no reason we should have an identity based on our history with some other town. If we do, we might as well call ourselves the "non-seahorses." (Seahorses is the Burlington mascot.)

Since I support dropping the Rebel name, I've come up with a much better idea that I think will really take off. Since South Burlington is home to the airport, we should adopt a pilot as our mascot. It works well for us: pilots are strong, hardworking people with amazing skills, and they command respect. A mascot like that is unique and would be part of the South Burlington identity. Students could get bomber jackets to wear with their varsity letters. We could all wear ray bans, goggles with scarves, and flight helmets at games. Maybe we could even get a squadron of F-35s to fly low over the opposing team's sidelines to deafen them and hinder their play calling. Lastly, our school colors are already custom made for this mascot - sky blue!

Alex McHenry
South Burlington

Cell Service Falls Short

Dropped calls are the worst. So are missed texts. I'm tired of having to reenact the "Can you hear me now?" commercial every time my cell rings at home. Dashing up and down the stairs might be a good work out, but I'd rather be trying to raise bars at a gym than on my phone.

Lack of service is a common problem around the 150+ family Stonehedge Condo Association off Spear Street, and likely in some of the neighboring areas as well. When I lived on a dairy farm in central Vermont I received spotty or absent network coverage about as often as I saw cows in the field. Which is to say, a lot. I never expected that the issue would persist in such a populous area of Chittenden County, which is why I started a petition to improve cell service in South Burlington on change.org.

In my opinion, we live in a community that benefits from a pretty prosperous economy and excellent access to social and cultural opportunities. So maybe complaining about inconsistent cell phone reception is a bit petty. Even so, cell use is now a ubiquitous part of our society, and it really would be nice to be able to rely on it. Until then, I guess I'll just have to keep practicing the cell-service-sprint, and be grateful that even if the number of cell radio waves in the Stonehedge air stinks, it still smells a fair bit better than the dairy farm.

Christina Ensalata
South Burlington

Consider All Options

I attended the August 31 school board meeting. I was alarmed they are considering consolidation of the elementary schools. It will have a direct impact on the culture of our smaller, community schools,

which is why many people move to South Burlington. Our schools are some of the best in Vermont. Are we changing the schools to improve them or to accommodate a City Center?

I urge the school board to dive deeper into all the options before them. Look to surrounding towns with large, consolidated elementary schools and consider redistricting until we know what path is right for South Burlington. It is premature to take what 13 task force members recommended, without doing due diligence, seeing as these two options change the district significantly and at what cost to the children and taxpayers?

South Burlington community, please attend the next school board meeting September 16 at 7 p.m. at the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School library.

Erin Sutherland
South Burlington

September 3, 2015

Rebels Identity Under Fire

Let's be honest. I'm sure there was no ill will intended when naming the Rebels or any other teams for that matter. I'm always amazed at how a few highly sensitive individuals can move mountains. What's next? The Vikings, Saints, Blue Devils or maybe even the Raiders? There are plenty of issues we really need to focus on and this isn't one of them. This is just another example of political correctness running amok. That's what really offends me. Stand firm South Burlington, and don't give in to this junk.

Glenn Medeiros
South Burlington

Rebels have changed the world socially, politically, in science and medicine

Mr. Walsh and Mr. Weaver's points are absolutely true, the SBHS community made a mistake choosing colors and a mascot associated with the Confederacy. Few would object to their comments. During my time at SBHS, 1994-1997, I experienced the removal of the moniker and iconic Confederate colors from uniforms. The Captain Rebel mascot did appear at a 1997 football game; ironically, it was pursued and worn by my African American classmate. I was glad to see the logo go, and preferred the use of "Rebels" and the change in colors.

My counter argument is if you take away the color, a mascot, and music, is the word "Rebel" still offensive? We have allowed this word to connect with only one of history's many rebels. Our world, country, and even city have been influenced by rebels; a rebel being a person or group of people that are in opposition to the status-quo because they believe their cause is right and justified for the greater good. The North was as much a rebel as the South fighting for Federalism. From Freedom Fighters to civil rights activists (Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, etc.), to modern day "Black Lives Matter" activists, you are all rebels. The women who fought for equal rights, you are all rebels. The brave people who recently fought the hard fight for LGBT equal rights, you are all rebels. The greatest scientific minds from Galileo to Einstein, they were all rebels. The inventors and entrepreneurs that have changed our lives (Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, Musk and Zuckerberg) are all rebels.

If the school colors were red, white, and blue, with a creed that said "Rebels, fighting for a better tomorrow," and a mascot of a resilient person pulling the world over a hill, would this be offensive?

There is more than one kind of rebel, not all are bad. Instead of changing the SBHS school name, can we retain the name “Rebels” and empower this word correctly in the spirit of those that brought us the amazing city of South Burlington and made it one of the best places to live in the country.

Paul Frail
1997 SBHS Graduate

August 27, 2015

SBHS Rebels Mascot - 20 Years Ago

Using Rebels as a name seems so inappropriate to me in 2015. One of the high schools that I attended was in Mobile, AL. Ironically, Shaw High School had the same mascot name, but that was a white school, in the 60's, in the deep south.

There is a great deal of Vermont history that I missed by not growing up here. But according to an e-mail from the principal of South Burlington High School (SBHS) Patrick Burke, “It is a fact that the SBHS Rebel mascot was at one time linked to the Rebels of the American South during the Civil War.”

Students at SBHS and residents of South Burlington must have debated this subject endlessly about 20 years ago when SBHS did away with their mascot and everything related to this, other than the name Rebels. Had they taken the final step 20 years ago, they should have left their Confederate Rebels to history and SBHS would have found a different name 20 years ago.

Greg N. Weaver
South Burlington

August 13, 2015

Time to Change Rebels School Symbol

In a recent article in *Seven Days*, South Burlington resident Greg Weaver was quoted as suggesting that now would be a good time for the South Burlington School Board to ,considering recent events in South Carolina .the identity name REBELS with something more appropriate consider replacingI applaud Mr. Weaver for initiating this conversation.

Dropping the name REBELS is not a new issue. During the 18 years I taught African American History at South Burlington High School, on at least five occasions, students in my classes initiated petitions to change the name, without success. Their efforts did eventually result in eliminating the South Burlington Mascot, Captain Rebel.

The *Seven Days* article states that some residents suggest the name REBELS is a generic term that could be associated with the American Revolution, the Green Mountain Boys, and Ethan Allen. That possibility would be more plausible had the school district adopted as its mascot a Green Mountain Boy with musket, powder horn, and three-cornered hat. Instead, the district adopted the symbols of the Confederacy.

The following passage from my book, *THROUGH WHITE EYES: Color and Racism in Vermont*, provides some background as to how the name REBELS came to be adopted.

“South Burlington High School adopted the nickname of REBELS when the school was established in the 1960s. Ostensibly the name was selected because the South Burlington school had broken away from Burlington. Until the 1980s the school’s mascot, Captain Rebel, would lead the football team onto the field waving a Confederate flag while “Dixie” blared over loudspeakers. Well into the 1990s, Confederate flag decals adorned the school buses and a caricature of a Confederate soldier emblazoned athletic schedules. Captain Rebel and the Confederate flag have been retired. “Dixie” is no longer played at athletic events. The decals have been removed from the buses. But, every proposal to eliminate the REBEL nickname has been met with fierce resistance.” (p.57)

South Burlington is not alone in struggling with an inappropriate school symbol. Brattleboro High School, in a compromise decision, phased out use of the Kentucky Colonel image on its athletic uniforms and band uniforms. Champlain Valley Union High School changed its name from Crusaders to Redhawks. Rice High School changed its name from Indians to Green Knights. The precedent for changing an offensive school symbol or name has been established. The South Burlington School Board should drop the name REBELS and endorse an appropriate replacement.

Robert L. Walsh
South Burlington

School Choice – Potentially Costly for Taxpayers

High school students in Vermont may attend a high school in another district, even if their district has a high school. The original school choice law stated that a district that had received tax money for a student attending another school would send that student and the tax money to the receiving school to pay for the tuition.

South Burlington High School (SBHS) currently has 13 students who came in under the original school choice law. This law has been revised, effective as of the 2015-2016 academic year. Fortunately, an agreement has been reached with districts that sent these 13 school choice students, stating that tuition will be paid to the South Burlington School District until these students graduate.

However, under the new law, South Burlington must continue to accept school choice students and now the sending schools will keep the tax money for these students attending our high school “with no money following them” (tuition free). For the 2015-2016 school year, the SBHS cap was set to enroll one new student. School choice students have been staying in our high school for four years.

The problem is that South Burlington receives significantly more school choice students than it sends out. This imbalance could be costly for South Burlington taxpayers. In my opinion, the school choice law is unfair to taxpayers because it is not a “wash” (equal number of students coming and going) and we pay more to educate students than most other districts in the State (\$14,923 per pupil).

Superintendent Young and Mr. Burke (principal at SBHS) have testified before the Legislature and have requested that school choice students have “money following them” and pay tuition to the receiving schools.

I have asked Helen Head to have this law revisited in the next legislative session. I think sharing resources could be beneficial for some students, but money needs “to follow the students” to the receiving schools.

Rhonda Paquet
South Burlington

August 6, 2015

Apart ... or ... A part

What a difference a little open space can make! In the words above, the letters and sequence are exactly the same. Yet a little space between the 'A' and the 'P' dramatically changes the meaning.

"Apart" means separation - a disconnection. "A part" means a piece of something, which when combined with other pieces, makes up the whole - a connection.

This word play is an apt depiction of our relationship with the natural environment. A belief that we are *apart* from the environment often results in abuse of the natural world. Attitudes of 'apartness' lead to treating animals, plants, the air, water, and soil as if they were expendable and have value only when exploited or used to make money. Under this model, a tree has value only when cut down. A meadow has value only when something is built on it.

Science and religion tell us nature has intrinsic value, and that we are all connected. We are a piece - *a part* of it. We cannot survive *apart* from it. Trees and meadows are vital for our lives. Their destruction is our destruction.

But, we are destroying our natural environment - even right here in South Burlington, Vermont - at an alarming rate. The continued suburban sprawl in the southern part of our city is rapidly eliminating our open spaces. With every development, we lose another part of the whole.

Just as an open space between words means connection, open spaces of land connect us to the natural environment. Open space is not emptiness or just scenery. It is sustenance for both our bodies and our souls.

Let's work together to preserve the remaining open spaces left in our city.

Saving open spaces will strengthen our natural connection and keep us *a part* of the natural environment.

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

July 23, 2015

Community Meeting Place

I am interested in establishing an independent community-meeting place in the Presto Music Store building located in the Blue Mall on Dorset Street. My vision is that it would be an informal place for people to meet and discuss "open topics," and share ideas and suggestions for activities or hobbies they would like to do with others. Some examples might be stunt kite flying and playing music in groups. Since I have not done anything like this before, this is an open invitation for you to stop by and share your thoughts to see what we can put together. When I have visited with people who go "south" in the winter, they relate wonderful stories of the opportunities in parks and senior centers, way beyond bingo, blood pressure checks, swings, and sports. Sports are great and develop character, but not everyone plays or watches traditional sports. Let's brainstorm ideas.

David Presto
South Burlington

July 2, 2015

Appreciation of Greco's Letter

Rosanne Greco's letter in the June 18 issue of *The Other Paper*, titled 'Do We Matter', was articulate and refreshing. In my opinion, her comments fairly represent the thoughts and feelings of many South Burlington folks. I believe we need Greco back on the city council. Her Air Force and, later, U. S. Military administrative and management experience is needed again.

The Chamber of Commerce and business interests are adequately represented on the current council. I would like Greco's voice of honesty and clarity to re-visit the issues facing South Burlington residents.

Brian Hanbridge
South Burlington

June 25, 2015

Zoning Problem

When is a residence not a residence? When a single family home is purchased and converted to a rental unit, is it still a residence? It is if the dwelling is rented to no more than four unrelated people. Now if you purchase many houses near the college, you have yourself a nice source of income without the hassles of being an apartment owner. Converting single-family residences to multi-person rental units is the new trend.

East Terrace is not the only area that has the problem of single resident homes being converted to multi-rental units. The problem is the owners - landlords - of these units have created a new category. These units are not for single family occupants to rest and recreate from their daily routines. They are clearly units created to earn an income. Doesn't this put the reconfigured rental house into a category other than residence? I think converting a home into a rental unit creates a new category - a rooming house, wherein the renter may or may not provide the furniture.

Do the owners, the landlords, of these multi-rental units have to pass any sort of inspection regarding adequate parking, safety issues, and fire department inspection? How is the property tax determined?

I think the zoning board needs to rethink the rules and regulations regarding homes that are converted to rental units. The present rules and regulations defy logic.

Anna K. Johnston
South Burlington

June 18, 2015

Support of City Clerk

Recently passed legislation will allow same day voter registration in 2017. It will eliminate the ability to verify residency prior to casting a ballot on Election Day by allowing people to walk into any polling location, attest with their signature that they reside in that town or district and vote. No verification/documentation of residency will be allowed.

I am writing to express support of South Burlington City Clerk Donna Kinville. Recently two letters to the editor appeared in *The Other Paper* critical of her concern on the issue of same day voter registration without verification, Michael Scollins, May 28, 2015 and Jim Condos, June 4, 2015.

I have been involved in the election process in South Burlington for many years and believe that Donna and her staff do an excellent job ensuring honest and accurate elections. I was disappointed that Michael Scollins would question Donna's integrity and I want to assure him that, contrary to his insinuation, she is an excellent "bureaucrat" and that she will implement the election process according to whatever Vermont laws are in effect at the time of an election.

I hope that, in order to accommodate the few individuals who would not take advantage of the many ways to register to vote over the months and weeks prior to an election, this change will not leave us open to voter fraud. While there is a right to vote, there is also an obligation to ensure that only residents, as defined by Vermont Statutes, of a town or district vote only in that town or district.

Peter Taylor
South Burlington

Do We Matter?

That's what I was asking myself after witnessing residents express their concerns and wishes for our city on a number of issues...and then watching the city seemingly ignore their pleas. Some issues include the Master Visioning process, South Village development plans, East Terrace/Spear St. neighborhood damage, open space conservation, and city center.

For years, residents have been participating in visioning sessions for City Center. The majority of residents envisioned a Vermont-type area with a village green as its main focus: a walkable place where residents could live, work, shop, conduct business, and where their children could walk to school. Citizens wanted 'a sense of place' in a natural green environment in which to hold community functions and festivals—a place for folks to socialize. They did not want another concrete downtown shopping area.

But that is exactly the image of city center in the current plan: lots of car-centric streets, tall buildings and big box stores, with a token patch of green.

Another major disconnect between residents' wants and city plans involves the lack of preservation of our remaining rural open lands. Like most other Vermonters, South Burlingtonians value the natural environment and cherish open spaces. Yet city plans continue to encourage suburban sprawl with cookie-cutter developments in our open spaces. Developers' requests for expansion of housing and commercial structures routinely get approved over the objections of residents.

Living in a democratic society is a privilege. But that privilege is meaningless unless we participate. We are fortunate to have an engaged citizenry in South Burlington, which is a wonderful demonstration of the democratic process. But persistence is key. This is not intended as a criticism of the city, but rather as an encouragement to residents to keep voicing our views. This is our city. What we want should matter more than preconceived plans or the wants of special interest and moneyed groups.

Our city officials need to keep hearing from us. They need to make the wishes of the residents of SB their top priority.

We matter. Persistence works. But we must show up and speak up to affect change.

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

June 11, 2015

Kinville's Opinion is Important

Our City Clerk Donna Kinville's opinion on Same Day Voter Registration in the May 21 issue is important and valuable to take into account. She is the one in the trenches and holds experience and wisdom of actual logistics. Over reservations of more than one city and town clerk, Governor Shumlin signed the bill into law June 1. There is no doubt Donna Kinville will help us navigate and make it work in South Burlington. That's what she does.

Betsy Bahrenburg
South Burlington

Gratitude to Our Community

As we end another wonderful school year in South Burlington, SB Mentoring extends heartfelt thanks to the young leaders (students), mentors, families, school staff, and supporters involved in building and sustaining the program. We take a village approach: each person plays a valued role in ensuring that SB Mentoring follows a moral compass, addresses challenges as opportunities (to quote one of our young leaders), and honors the vision that adults have just as much to learn from young people as they have to learn from us. It has been a privilege to watch SB Mentoring's young leaders pursue their sparks (their passions and interests) with the support of caring mentors. Thank you all.

Susie Merrick
SB Mentoring Coordinator

Reducing Energy Use

I've been reading Fred Kosnitsky's articles, about the Georgetown Energy Prize and saving energy, with great interest. I'm wondering what South Burlingtonians (besides me) are doing, or have done, toward reducing the amount of energy they use and our winning the prize.

I found that the hardware store, at which I usually trade, had a significant discount on LED light bulbs. So I changed all my lamps and light fixtures to LED bulbs, or to CFL for three-way lamps. A small change, I'm sure, but, hopefully, every little bit helps.

What have you done? Or, what are you doing?

Linda J. Lees
South Burlington

Clean Branding

The city representatives are considering a unique tag line to help develop a brand and to show pride in our South Burlington identity. "South Burlington VT. A Different Place, Altogether." I like the slogan, especially "altogether." We can find many examples in our fine city where we as a community and as a city have cherished attributes and amenities. Together we can grow more.

A brand is a set of strong associations people have with a place. These associations are really expectations people have for that place. The Clean City Standards Ordinance, which I proposed, will set high expectations and set us apart. It is a matter of community pride. Moreover, it is a matter of differentiation for Vermont businesses.

The quality of a city is reflected in the standards it sets. Set the standard then watch as citizens and all businesses, take actions to meet the new clean standard.

Clean City Standards Ordinance Proposal (<http://bit.ly/1AAfYRm>):

South Burlington businesses are to maintain litter free South Burlington storefronts / business properties, year round in order to protect our water, wildlife, and human health. Meaning businesses will make sure that land under their control and to which the public have access is kept free from litter and refuse year round.

Ask all proprietors to treat litter like snow. Pick it up shortly after it falls on the ground.

Send a note to your South Burlington councilors asking them to pass this proposed ordinance. Debate is good. It brings out the best way forward. What is your opinion on setting clean city standards?

Bernie Paquette
South Burlington

June 4, 2015

No Reason to Change Name

In reference to the letter from H. Morse in the May 21 edition of *The Other Paper*: Thank you.

Besides being costly, there is no valid or logical reason to change the name of our town from South Burlington. South Burlington doesn't have an identity crisis and never has had an identity crisis. And for those who aren't happy with the name - move to a place where you like the name.

Proud to live and have grown up in South Burlington, Vermont.

Lisa Yankowski
South Burlington

May 28, 2015

Support for Our Four State Representatives

Donna Kinville's comments in the May 21st edition of *The Other Paper* are harsh and unfair.

She faults our four state representatives for supporting same-day voter registration, which our legislature recently passed. Her objections were typically bureaucratic, and focused in part on the added burden on town clerks.

Our legislators are all outstanding. They are all intelligent, thoughtful, diligent, good listeners, and do a superb job of keeping us citizens informed. That they all supported this bill assures me that it was, on balance, a good step for our state.

Indeed, Speaker Shap Smith cited this bill as one of the proud accomplishments of this session, and Secretary of State Jim Condos, who previously ably served our city as council chair and as State Senator, also strongly supported the legislation. He acknowledged that town clerks had reservations based on implementation concerns, but felt that these could be reasonably accommodated.

I have worked with two of our representatives on several issues, and admired the work of the other two. I respectfully suggest that if all four of our representatives, Ann Pugh, Martin Lalonde, Maida Townsend and Helen Head, scrutinized and voted for this legislation, then Donna Kinville is wrong on this one. I hope she'll accept that, and work with the state to get the new law up and running.

Michael Scollins
South Burlington

May 21, 2015

Thank You from the Angel Fund

The May Angel Fund yard sale was a big success again this year because of community support and the many volunteers who worked at the sale. The yard sale supports the Angel Fund whose main purpose is to help those in need. The semi-annual yard sales have existed since 2003.

As many of you know, this is the last time we will have a yard sale for the Angel Fund. However, we will have the Angel Fund Christmas Shop, which will open the day after Thanksgiving, and we welcome your donations.

Our sincere thanks to *The Other Paper* for their superb ads, and many thanks to all the folks who have supported the sale each year.

Anne Corley
Jane Stickney

What do you think...SoBu?

300 surveys do not speak for the whole town. The survey didn't even allow for a neutral response, but forced a yes or no answer. Signs leading in and out of town are a great idea. But a name change is costly and confusing to visitors. We benefit from Burlington, drawing in business and tourists. We *are* a bedroom community. A name change will *not* change this. As for SoBu, sounds ridiculous!

H. Morse
South Burlington

May 7, 2015

What a Great Idea!

I am very much in favor of Bernie Paquette's ordinance concerning litter around the South Burlington area. We have a great community and I am all for keeping it looking as nice as possible. I do have one suggestion that I would like the councilors to think about. We have two McDonald's, one Burger King, at least two Dunkin Donuts and two Starbucks, plus numerous other businesses that sell beverages. Riding my bike or running around town the one thing I see everywhere are empty cups. Coffee cups, soda cups, every kind of empty cardboard, Styrofoam or whatever kind of cups, everywhere. I propose a tax on any kind of takeout beverage. Make it 2 cents a cup for their cleanup. The city would benefit and so would the environment.

Thanks.

John Eustis
South Burlington

April 30, 2015

Require Solar on New City Center Buildings

Last week a group of UVM seniors presented a program to the planning commission on “Requiring Solar Ready Roofs.” This is a topic especially pertinent to the future building of our City Center. They pointed out that regulations requiring solar ready roofs are being passed in more and more cities, and that the entire state of California now requires this. One California city goes farther and requires that solar panels be installed on all new buildings. The students also reminded the commissioners that Vermont’s goal to have 90 percent renewable energy by the year 2050 is unlikely to be reached given the pace of renewable energy sources being installed. Solar ready roofs add only about one or two percent to the construction costs of a roof and using solar power for heating and lighting saves far more in energy costs in the future. Passing this simple regulation for the City of South Burlington would enable homeowners and business owners to add solar panels in the future, part of creating a sustainable environment for everyone.

After I listened to the fine presentation by the students, I realized that we could do much better than only “requiring solar ready roofs.” We could require solar on all of our new City Center buildings. It works for the airport. Have you seen the solar panels on the parking garage roof? It works for our municipal buildings, which will receive solar power from a new solar array to be built upon our old landfill. It works for several of our businesses, which have created large solar arrays in South Burlington.

Imagine what would happen if our new City Center roofs were completely covered in solar panels? South Burlington would be known as an environmentally responsible city. People would be visiting us from all over the world. We would be hosting all of these tourists. Young families would all want to move here – to such a future thinking, innovative, and affordable city. We would be an example that other cities would follow. We’d be very proud citizens! Let’s do it!

Sophie Quest
South Burlington

Planting the Seed of Tradition

Bring your children to help pick up litter on Green Up Day, May 2. You will be planting the seeds for future generations of Green Up Day participants.

Pick up litter in order to protect our water, wildlife, and human health.

Bernie Paquette
South Burlington

April 16, 2015

Responsible Campaign Spending Caps

It was disappointing to learn of the recent decision by the VT Attorney General's Office that campaign finance violations took place in the 2013 South Burlington City Council elections.

But on a brighter note, I was encouraged that all candidates in the pre-town meeting day panel, including councilors Pat Nowak, Helen Riehle, Meaghan Emery, and Tom Chittenden, all seemed to agree to Sandy Dooley's question about supporting caps on campaign spending.

I hope that our city council can turn the negative experience of these violations into a positive for our community by implementing responsible campaign spending caps. It is in our best interest to ensure that the citizens we elect are done so for their individual qualifications and the good they can do for South Burlington.

Thank you in advance city council, for fixing this problem.

Monica Ostby
South Burlington

City Commons Website Somewhat Misleading

An advertisement promoting the benefits of selling Marcotte Central School ran in the April 9th edition (p.2) of *The Other Paper*. The ad offers for readers to learn more by visiting a City Commons website with poll results run by Saxon Partners, a company offering to buy Central School. The poll is misleading in two regards. First, the sample size used (191) does not meet research standards to achieve the standard 95% confidence level (how "sure" we can be the sample reflects the population with the margin of error stated). 261 respondents would be needed, based on the population used.

Aside from this issue, the website is clearly framed to promote the benefits of selling the school, including many poll questions worded in such a way that of course a majority of respondents would be in favor of selling. One particular question is very misleading. It asks respondents "If a new Marcotte Central School were to be built, would you rather have the school be closer to Williston Road or closer to the city owned park on Dorset Street?"

This question is very misleading as it implies that if Central is sold, these would be one of the two locations for a new Central School. Based on information I received at the community meeting on March 31, there are many options being considered about the future of South Burlington's Schools, and a new Central School at either location is nowhere near the certainty this question leads respondents to believe.

I am not advocating one way or the other concerning the sale of Central School. What I am advocating for is that citizens and parents be very conscientious consumers of information, and I urge you to participate through the City/School Master Visioning Task Force, city council and school board meetings and surveys. Your participation and awareness of all considerations is critical in ensuring that conversations and subsequent plans affecting school organization and buildings are driven primarily by what's best for our children, school system, and community, and not developers' plans.

Scott H. Baker
South Burlington

April 2, 2015

Vermont's Children Need Expanded Learning Opportunities

I believe every Vermont community and family should have access to quality afterschool and summer learning programs for their children.

There are more than 22,000 Vermont students who would be participating in an expanded learning opportunity today if they had access to one. This means that there are more than 22,000 chances for bad choices, dangerous behaviors, or falling behind each and every day—especially between the hours of 3-6pm. It also means that there are more than 22,000 lost opportunities every day to help these children and youth reach their full potential. The need is high for expanded learning opportunities for our youth in Vermont, and the cost of doing nothing will be even higher than the cost of providing these programs.

It is my hope that all Vermont legislators will support the Expanded Learning Opportunities Bill . Vermont has a strong base already in place for doing this work. We have a vibrant and valued statewide afterschool network, a strong 21st Century Community Learning Centers program serving many communities, and support for quality initiatives and professional development. Expanded learning opportunities are an integral part of Vermont's education system; we need to make sure that they are fully utilized and sustainable.

Barbara Russ
South Burlington

March 12, 2015

Thank You for Voting

I'd like to offer a very sincere thank you to all of the people who supported my campaign and I am very excited to serve the public of South Burlington in this role as your newest city councilor. I greatly appreciate the vote of confidence from all four districts of South Burlington and I hope to continue to earn your support going forward.

Civil discourse in municipal governance is the foundation of a strong community and I am looking forward to engaging in important conversations in the years to come. I am very proud that everybody who supported me did so in a very positive and forward looking manner. The power of positivity is truly amazing and I hope future campaigns for city council will note how the South Burlington community values civility in our tone and conduct.

If I didn't earn your vote this election, I hope to earn your confidence in the years to come. I also hope to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me for any reason.

Tom Chittenden
South Burlington

I Urge You To Vote

To all the property owners who did not vote in the March 3 election, I do not understand why you folks don't vote. Is it okay that our property taxes keep increasing every year? Can you afford that year after year? Are you aware that the school budget is \$10M more than the city budget? There are many retired folks living in our city. They don't get yearly increases in their income - any social security increase is minimal and the increase is eaten up by an increase in health insurance. Everyone makes do with what they have. Next year I urge you to vote.

Eddie Robenstein
South Burlington

Beer and State Government

The Vermont beer industry is a thriving business and one of the best beer industries in the country. The Vt. State Legislature ought to keep its nose out of this industry before they ruin it. Wouldn't one think the legislature has more important issues to deal with? Issues like poverty, unemployment, taxes, budgets, etc. should command the legislature's agenda. Well, apparently not as they are now haggling over the state dog. The taxpayer has to pay these people? Really?

Larry Dunham
South Burlington

Thank You

I have had many people stop to thank me for volunteering to temporarily serve out a term on the city council. I, in turn, wish to thank the community for giving me the opportunity. I learned a lot including an appreciation for the great staff of professionals we have throughout our city government.

John Simson
South Burlington

February 26, 2015

Money

Money. That's what I was thinking about as I worked on my taxes over the weekend. Catchphrases popped to mind: "Money makes the world go 'round." "Money is the root of all evil." "Money can't buy happiness."

Regardless of which phrase resonates with you, the reality is that our society revolves around money. Just about every action we contemplate is weighed against its impact on "the economy" or "the market." The GNP (Gross National Product) and GDP (Gross Domestic Product) have become *the* benchmarks for our civilization's progress. We measure our success almost solely in economic terms. What is good for the economy or the market is good for everyone, and shows our progress, or does it?

I was heartened to learn about another measure of civic success called the GPI (Genuine Progress Indicator), which was created to replace or supplement the GNP and GDP. It claims that broader ranges of indicators are truer measures of our economic and social progress. Some of these include the quality of our health, education, and environment; levels of crime, car accidents, and un-and-under-employment; our carbon footprint and resource depletion; the value of volunteerism, and housework and parenting; loss of leisure time, and more.

Wouldn't it be interesting and informative to use the GPI in South Burlington, if only as a way to prompt us to think differently about our success and progress? I'm not suggesting that economic interests are not valid; but rather that they should not be the sole, or most important factor in our decision making. What do you think?

Rosanne Greco
South Burlington

To the Editor:

I was distressed to see in a recent issue of *The Other Paper* that schoolchildren were taken to the film, *Selma*, ostensibly to learn about the Civil Rights movement. The film is historically inaccurate. President Lyndon B. Johnson was key to getting the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act passed. He worked closely on both with Martin Luther King, but it was Johnson who had the political acumen to get these controversial bills through Congress.

The *New York Times* published an editorial February 13 by Jeffrey M. Sacks, a professor of psychology and radiology at Washington University. He is the author *Flicker: Your Brain on Movies*. He states, “studies show that if you watch a film - even one concerning historical events about which you are informed - your beliefs may be reshaped by “facts” that are not factual.”

Why not make this a teaching moment? Go to sources which report how the legislation got passed and then discuss the differences between the film and the reality. It could help students learn to be more discriminating in what they accept as true. Hollywood entertains, but it does not teach very well.

Martha Gazley
South Burlington

February 19, 2015

City Center Commons Proposal

Over three days in November, a “critical poll” of 191 people revealed that 70 percent were in favor of a major sale of Marcotte School for the purposes of developing a retail complex on the site. A retail complex which would add a significant amount of traffic to an already besieged Williston Road. One hundred and ninety-one people out of an estimated population of 18,612 residents. That sugars out to 133 people out of over 18,000, according to the 2010 census. This developer thinks that big ads, using a pie chart to indicate approval, represent a majority of the population here. How can we possibly do business with this crowd?

Secondly, having sold out Marcotte School, there is no guarantee that Phase 2, which is the only part of the picture we really care about, after years of discussing the design of Market Street, will be built. It probably will not. The tenants of the developer will have met their goal. What incentive is there to go further?

Why are we wasting the valuable time of the Master Planning Task Force, who have had a very tight window of time in which to develop its own long term recommendations for a pricey school consolidation proposal, listening to these people?

Let’s all take a deep breath and slow down. We have a long time ahead of us, to pay for our mistakes now.

Karen McCarthy
South Burlington

Dear South Burlington Voters,

Elizabeth Fitzgerald is seeking reelection to the South Burlington School Board. Throughout her tenure she has been a tireless advocate for fiscally responsible excellence in education. She has my vote. Your vote matters; please include a vote for Elizabeth on your ballot.

Dan Fleming

South Burlington

Support Harrington

When Tracey Harrington testified before my committee in the Legislature - General, Housing & Military Affairs - two years ago, committee members were impressed with her articulate presentation. She demonstrated a command of the facts and an ability to express her point of view, in addition to respect for those who held a different perspective. I was not surprised. As a resident of Chittenden 7-3, Tracey has thoughtfully weighed in with me on a number of issues over several years.

Tracey brings those same qualities to her volunteer roles in South Burlington. She was elected by South Burlington voters to serve as Justice of the Peace. In this role, Tracey serves as a member of the Board of Civil Authority and the Board of Abatement. Since 2012, she has been a member of the South Burlington Planning Commission, where she now serves as vice chair. As a member of the Chamberlin Neighborhood Airport Planning Committee, she has engaged in City Center planning. As a member of the JAM Golf subcommittee, she worked with developers and residents who expressed competing interests to develop a set of regulations that work for all involved. In addition, Tracey serves as a board member of her homeowner's association.

Tracey's thoughtful and able involvement in several elected and appointed positions demonstrates that she is ready to represent the citizens of South Burlington on our city council. I urge you to join me in voting for Tracey.

Helen Head
South Burlington

Endorsement for Chittenden

I invite you to join me in electing Tom Chittenden to the South Burlington City Council. Tom represents that next generation of Vermonters with deep community roots, who will bring energy, content knowledge, and commitment to issues that advance our city's economic vitality while enhancing our enviable quality of life. As a parent of young children, Tom has his eye on the long-view effects of the work of the council. Tom's background and leadership in the business and academic worlds, plus his sincere and engaging personality, will ensure a collegial and informed voice around the table. If past is prologue to future behavior, then Tom's participation at previous community meetings on public safety, city energy use, and public transit are good indicators of his intention to be an active, informed and fully engaged public servant on the city council.

Over the last several years, the South Burlington City Council has charted a steady path and achieved meaningful progress on issues that previously divided the city. Tom is a demonstrated leader; an informed, knowledgeable and independent thinker; and will bring a fresh voice and important perspective to the council. Please join me in voting for Tom Chittenden.

Lisa Ventriss
South Burlington

Vote Yes on the
School Budget

As Town Meeting Day and the school budget vote approaches, I encourage every South Burlington resident to read the South Burlington School Board's *Education Funding Challenges Position Paper*. The position paper may be found on the front page of the school district webpage, www.sbschools.net, or by stopping by the superintendent's office in the FH Tuttle Middle School.

This paper is a comprehensive analysis of the many challenges facing not only our school board, but also school boards around the state. It is eye opening to say the least. As I read through the paper I could not help but conclude that what I pay in education property taxes has very little correlation to South Burlington's school budget that is presented to me on voting day. This paper points out the inherent flaws in the way our state conducts business with regard to small school grants, collective bargaining, Act 129, the inclusion of social services expenses in our school budgets, unfunded mandates, and using the Statewide Education Fund for purposes other than what it was, by law, set up to do.

I have often heard that people plan on voting no on the next school budget "to send a message" that they are unhappy with their property taxes. After reading this position paper, it is very clear to me that voting no on the school budget is not the answer to fixing our property taxes. Rather, reform to some of the key issues outlined in the position paper must happen at the state level in order for us to see any property tax relief.

I encourage you to read the position paper, and then, contact the Chair of the House Education Committee, Dave Sharp, dsharp@leg.state.vt.us, and demand that our legislators take a long hard look at the issues outlined in the paper. I plan to vote yes on the school budget on March 3, and I hope that after reading the position paper, you will too.

Lisa Levite
South Burlington

Support Harrington

Last week, I met with Tracey Harrington, a candidate running for city council in SouthBurlington. I wanted to understand where she stood on issues that are important to me both as a SB resident and as a realtor with so much at stake in our town's immediate future.

Tracey itemized five qualities she brings to the table: collaboration on issues; fact based decision making to make informed decisions; total transparency; balance in all things; and a long view of financial viability

Tracey then added these three items that will be at the core before the council in coming months; comprehensive plan for SB; Land Development Regulations for City Center; waste water issues tied to development.

As a realtor and someone concerned about growth and development, I found Tracey to be direct, straight forward, forth coming, measured and deeply committed to charting the very best course for SB in a commonsensical, balanced, reasoned way. It was interesting that I never asked her then for party affiliation and nor does it matter now as I type this letter. She transcends that pigeon hole. Mercifully.

SB is at a crossroads with the evolution and decision making around our City Center. Community input has been strong and needs to be going forward. We need city councilors to be rooted in fact based decision making in a balanced fashion that encourages transparent collaboration with a long term lens toward financial viability and livability for our community. No back room deals!

Others believe "market forces" should rule the development of SB. I can tell you as a realtor in SB without zoning filters, "market forces" will allow those with the deepest pockets to rule. It will not take into account proper and necessary dialogue and input for open space, affordable housing and

walk-ability for seniors and first time homebuyers within City Center, and a commitment to sustainable energy within the City Center.

My vote is for Tracey Harrington. We need her voice on our city council. Vote for her.

Christopher Hurd
South Burlington

Support for Chittenden

I am pleased that Thomas Chittenden is running for the three-year seat on the city council. I know Thomas to be a man of integrity and continued public service. As a fellow South Burlington parent of young children I am confident that his open-mindedness, coupled with his business and technological acumen will serve the city well and be an excellent addition to the council. I am confident that he will be as committed to the residents of the city as he is to his family, students and colleagues. I hope you will join me in voting for Thomas Chittenden, a man whose words and actions are in parallel.

Alison Cossette
South Burlington

Continue the Progress with Chittenden

I have lived in South Burlington for most of my life. I am a single father of two children and I choose to live here because of the education my son is receiving at Chamberlin School (my daughter is still in daycare.) My son is engaged, extremely smart and can't wait to get to class every single day.

I believe that the best chance my son and my daughter have for a great future in this community is to continue the progress that the South Burlington City Council has made over the past several years. I am very excited about the potential for our neighborhood – given the Chamberlin Planning Grant Project. The council's hard work and focus on the future of this area is great. The leadership some members of the council have shown - making sure that the focus is on the future – not past battles is great.

I want that progress to continue, which is why I am voting for Tom Chittenden. He has the same values that I do, and I believe is best prepared to help me achieve the goals I have for my family, stability, living in a safe and affordable community and hopefully buying our own home someday.

Good luck Tom – I think you are the person for this job.

Tyler Darrah
South Burlington

Support for Harrington

I am writing this letter in support of Tracey Harrington to complete the 2 years remaining of the open 3-year seat on South Burlington's City Council.

Tracey has devoted much time and effort to working for the city as a volunteer on various city committees. An important committee assignment has been to the South Burlington Planning Commission. She worked with other commission members to submit grants for Williston Road planning, as well as Chamberlin-Airport neighborhood planning, both of which the city received.

Tracey was appointed by the planning commission to serve on the Chamberlin-Airport Neighborhood Planning Committee. Her interest in this assignment is proof of her recognition of the importance of collaboration and planning if this neighborhood is to heal and emerge better than it has ever been. She will work with other appointees to identify common goals and come up with plans and a vision for the future.

Tracey has a proven record of working with groups from diverse backgrounds. With Tracey on the city council, the airport neighborhood would have an advocate who would look out for the interests of the citizens of this community and see that plans will be solutions, not helter-skelter development with residents out of the loop.

Please be sure to vote on Town Meeting Day and check the box next to Tracey Harrington's name. She will serve us all well and see that people are the first priority.

Carmin Sargent
South Burlington

Tracey Harrington for
City Council

Having lived in South Burlington for the past 62 years, I have witnessed a lot of change in the city's landscape--some good, some bad. What I have not seen is the creation of City Center, a goal that residents first identified in the early '80s and received official recognition in the city's 1986 Comprehensive Plan. Despite my impatience, I am encouraged by the work completed in the past few years toward achieving this goal. Work on new zoning regulations for the City Center district, the paving of Market Street and other projects are signs of real progress.

The importance I place on moving forward on City Center is why I am voting for Tracey Harrington for city council. Harrington will be able to hit the ground running as a result of the diligent and quality work she has performed on behalf of city residents and businesses during her two-plus years on the planning commission, for which she is now vice-chair. This service has enabled her to develop valuable knowledge about our Comprehensive Plan and zoning regulations, and mutually respectful and productive relationships with many city residents and people who do business in the city.

Harrington is pro-growth--growth that is in the best interests of the city. By that she means smart growth (does not add to sprawl), sustainable growth, growth that supports livable wages, and growth that responds to the challenges of climate change.

I hope you join me in casting your vote for Tracey Harrington.

Barbara Bull
South Burlington

Vote for Tracey Harrington

I am voting for Tracey Harrington for City Council.

I've been impressed with her commitment to our city and with her detailed knowledge of city matters. She has spent years on city boards and commissions, and is currently the vice-chair of

the planning commission. As such, she has an intimate knowledge of all of the critical planning that has taken place and is proposed for South Burlington. Clearly, she has done her homework and she is totally prepared no matter what the subject.

Tracey takes a measured, deliberative, and calm approach to every issue. It is quite apparent that she listens and respects the people of South Burlington, and values what we have to say. She never gets ruffled, but rather works collaboratively with everyone.

I cannot imagine anyone more qualified to be our city councilor than Tracey Harrington. Please elect her to help us run our city. Given her involvement and commitment to civic responsibility, she will hit the ground running!

Roddy O'Neil Cleary
South Burlington

Support Tom Chittenden

I am endorsing Thomas Chittenden for South Burlington City Council. I am so impressed with his credentials and abilities. Thomas has an MBA from UVM. He is a UVM lecturer. He has great technology and financial competence that will be an attribute for city council issues including the city budget. He has and is committing himself to public service. He values South Burlington as a great place to live and is dedicated to moving our city forward in a positive way. I like his honesty, openness and his vision. Please join me in voting for Thomas Chittenden on Tuesday, March 3.

Elizabeth Goldberg
South Burlington

To the Editor:

I would like to express my support for Tom Chittenden as our next city council member. It has been my pleasure to get to know Tom as a member of the South Burlington Rotary Club and have seen not only his willingness to roll up his sleeves to work on projects but also his thoughtfulness, maturity and dedication to his hometown, South Burlington. He will bring an open mind and enthusiasm for the opportunities ahead for the city. His perspective as a homeowner, parent and engaged volunteer will serve us well. I am proud to endorse Tom for the city council seat I have had the distinct pleasure to occupy on an interim basis these past four months.

John Simson
South Burlington

A Vote for Tracey Harrington

Tracey Harrington has a record of public service in our city. She has been actively involved in the city for three years. She is vice-chair of our planning commission and, as justice of the peace, and member of the board of civil authority. As someone whose only claim to any measure of success is based in my efforts and stick-to-itiveness, I have to give credit to Tracey. Like me, she is not a natural politician; she is committed to serving the community and has demonstrated this over three years of service. Last year we campaigned together when she was running for the seat currently open, and I saw the level of her commitment in her dialogue with others. Tracey listened thoughtfully and she was thoroughly engaged. She has shown that she is committed to the public process. As vice-chair of the planning commission, Tracey has had a front-row seat on all public discussions pertaining to South Burlingtonians' vision. She and the

other hard-working volunteers on the commission have worked their way through the proposed new set of regulations governing City Center development—which promises to make the community vision a reality. This was no small feat, and Tracey Harrington is to be commended; and she will equally as well make an excellent councilor.

Meaghan Emery
South Burlington

Harrington Will Be an Effective City Councilor

Wanting to know more about Tom Chittenden, I read his campaign brochure as well as his website blog, and found they contain mixed messages. He says he “is a lifelong resident of South Burlington,” however in reality he only moved back to South Burlington in 2013 after having lived in Essex Junction and Colorado. Therefore, he has missed the last ten years of learning what the community envisions for our city.

Although he has been a resident since 2013, I had not seen him at any of the many city meetings I attended on planning for South Burlington’s future until he announced that he was a candidate for city council. What has he done for South Burlington? He only registered to vote in September 2014.

I am going to vote for someone who has lived here for years and who already has a strong record of active participation in city affairs. My vote goes to Tracey Harrington.

She is both an elected official and an appointed official to city commissions and boards. She is currently vice chair of our planning commission, having served on the commission since 2012. She is a justice of the peace, and a member of the Board of Civil Authority. She is committed to transparent, fiscally responsible government and to making the new City Center development a reality. She does not represent any special interest group.

Not only has she been working hard for South Burlington for years, she also has an intimate knowledge of city matters. She will bring her calm thoughtfulness and intelligence as well as her considerable experience to bear on the critical issues facing the city council in the coming years.

Tracey has earned your vote for her dedication and service to South Burlington. Please vote for Tracey Harrington on March 3.

Michael Mittag
South Burlington

I Support Harrington for City Councilor

I am voting for Tracey Harrington for many reasons, one of which is her stance on our natural environment. Tracey has shown respect and concern for our precious land resources. She has actively participated in the planning process to make sure we protect what we love about South Burlington’s open spaces. She also supports *smart growth*; that is, building residential housing, including affordable housing, with commercial and industrial development in appropriate places, such as along transportation corridors and not on our pristine open fields which support the vitality of natural resources areas of our city. The good news is that with Tracey we can have both open spaces and thoughtful development.

Everybody wins!

Please vote for Tracey. We need another voice of smart-growth on our city council.

Carol McQuillen
South Burlington

Tracey Harrington
is the Clear Choice for
City Council

At the February 5 meeting of the South Burlington Democratic Committee the floor was opened for comments from both candidates for the contested city council seat. Tom Chittenden's comments supporting market-driven growth in South Burlington concern me. If, in view of all the farmland elsewhere in Vermont, Tom believes that South Burlington should just be a growth center I am even more concerned. Retaining open space in our town is important to me.

Tom's web site says he moved back to South Burlington as recently as 2013. I am concerned that in this short time he is already running for office. I am concerned that he is campaigning to turn South Burlington over to developers so they can do whatever makes them the most money. Should money rule or should the people rule?

I worry that the work of hundreds of South Burlington residents, including business owners, and landowners could be undone. They have long been meeting together with our city's planning commission and development review board, planning a responsible future for our city, including developing plans for a new city center. Will their time be wasted? That would be the case if the market is the sole decider—not the people.

Tracey Harrington, on the other hand, believes in thoughtful and careful planning that puts the people of our town first, not the developers: She served on the city's planning commission since 2012 and is now its vice chair. The planning commission recently appointed her to the Chamberlin-Airport Neighborhood Planning Committee. Tracey has first-hand experience doing city planning. She respects the process and the people working it. She knows how to get things done. As a proud union member, Tracey is determined to put the people of South Burlington first.

Please join me in voting for Tracey Harrington on March 3rd. She has worked alongside us. She has listened and participated with us as we, the people, plan for our future.

James Marc Leas
South Burlington

Support for Tom Chittenden

I met Tom Chittenden one day last September while volunteering to build the Marcotte Central School playground. He arrived and jumped onto our team, and proceeded to outwork us all. And that's Tom - young, strong, smart and determined.

A couple of months later Tom committed to run for city council. And Tom has taken on the effort like running a marathon. I dare you to find a committee that Tom has not observed over the past few months. I serve on both the development review board and the school board task force for the city, and it is the unusual evening when Tom is missing. If he is missing, he has likely run off to a planning meeting or the bike and pedestrian committee due to a schedule conflict. Incidentally, I have yet to have seen his competitor at any of my meetings.

But this sounds like Tom is pushing hard just to grab a seat on the city council. What you need to understand is that Tom works this hard with everything. Ask him how he feels about a subject and you are likely to get a position paper. Tom is an academic and lecturer at UVM, and he attacks everything with a profound desire to learn. If he is new to a subject, he will approach a dozen people to get their viewpoints, he will read all that has been written, and he'll grow his own approach.

Tom is dedicated to "service above self," so it is appropriate that he joined Rotary last year. He lives this way and breathes community service, and his desire to join city council is selfless, rather than a need for power or position.

I encourage everyone to try to meet Tom Chittenden before the election. Make up your own mind. South Burlington is best served by Tom Chittenden on the city council.

John Wilking
South Burlington

Vote for Harrington

I am writing to express my support for Tracey Harrington, candidate for South Burlington City Council. I have been acquainted with Tracey for several years during which time she has served the South Burlington community as a member of several city committees and organizations. Tracey has listed all of these in campaign materials, TV appearances, forums and other events. If voters are not aware of Tracey's experience and commitment, I encourage them to look for these during the next week of the campaign. Her wealth of knowledge about our city because of her community involvement and demonstrated commitment cannot be over emphasized.

What is equally important to know is that Tracey, in addition to being deeply devoted to the South Burlington community, is creative, transparent, inclusive, trustworthy, a problem solver and a visionary. In addition to experience, these qualities are particularly critical to city governance as we launch into new endeavors such as City Center. Tracey is very cognizant of the need to think about and plan, not just for the present, but also for the future of our city and what we want for our community. Though our new City Center will concentrate retail, office, parks, residences and transportation, there is much more to South Burlington that needs to be considered; additional development, the airport, open spaces, and the flora and fauna, all of which insures the beauty and diversity of our city. Tracey understands that each of these elements is necessary for a healthy and sustainable community.

Please, when you step into the voting booth on March 3 and are marking your ballot for the open city council seats, think about the community you want South Burlington to be, both now and in the future. Then, I strongly recommend and hope that you cast your vote for Tracey Harrington.

Karen Ryder
South Burlington

Vote for Tom Chittenden

I am a single parent living in South Burlington. I work full time, and have chosen to live in Vermont so that my daughter can know her father and his family. I love the fact that my daughter will attend kindergarten at Orchard School next year, we live in an exceptional community.

I want it to stay that way, which is why I am voting for Tom Chittenden on Tuesday, March 3. I have lived here for over 5 years, and have voted in the past three elections. This year we have a candidate

who understands the pressures of raising children, maintaining an exceptional school system and the tax burden I will face if I am ever able to afford to buy my own home, which is my dream.

I want to vote for someone who speaks not just about today, but about our future – what we need to do as a community to continue down the steady path of our current council. The more I have read about Tom, the more I appreciate that he brings a fresh perspective, balanced with long-term values rooted in our community.

I hope you join me, vote for our future, vote for Tom Chittenden.

Alexis Buckel
South Burlington

Why I'm Voting for Tracey Harrington

Let me tell you why I'm voting for Tracey Harrington for city council. First of all, she's a young professional who understands the needs of young professionals in our city. She will work to reach them with the media that they follow, engaging them in the work of planning our city to suit many different ages of people. As a member of the planning commission, she is committed to excellent planning, thinking ahead of how we want our city to look and how it will best serve all of our residents. She will be standing up for renewable, efficient energy practices in our homes, our businesses, and our municipal buildings. This will be saving us money and preparing us for the future. Because many surveys have shown that people want both a thriving City Center with a central green surrounded by municipal buildings and conservation of our Vermont open space, she'll be working towards those two goals. To enhance and preserve the city we love, please vote for Tracey, too!

Sophie Quest
South Burlington

Harrington is Top Pick for City Council

A vision for the future, openness to all perspectives, creative solutions to challenging issues, sensible approaches, a bright mind with fresh ideas are all critical attributes needed on South Burlington's City Council. Tracey Harrington has all these key elements. I have seen them demonstrated as a fellow planning commission member.

A vision for the future: As we worked on the Comprehensive Plan, Ms. Harrington saw the need to plan for growth by looking out into the future, always balancing short and long-term needs. She continually urged that before any decision was made that we fully understand its future impact.

Openness to all perspectives: She has been in the forefront of transparency in government and our decision making through sensible approaches to both solutions and processes. Tracey has demonstrated an ability to listen respectfully to every presenter before making a thoughtful decision based on the information.

Creative solutions: While considering the challenges of the airport's impact on the neighborhood it was her idea to obtain a planning grant to support the critical conversations between the airport, the neighborhood and the Burlington City Council. A great example of how creativity and transparency and openness can intersect in a way that serves our city well!

In short, Tracey has a wealth of experience with the current issues facing our city and she will hit the ground running. I urge everyone interested in the future of South Burlington to join me in supporting Tracy Harrington for city council.

Ted Riehle
South Burlington

February 12, 2015

To the South Burlington Community

The Administration and School Board have worked closely to balance resources and priorities to propose an FY16 budget that limits the growth in per pupil spending (PPS) to 0.2% while continuing to support student preK-12 programs. A summary is shown below. Details are contained in the "City and School District Budgets" booklet available at www.sbschools.net, at the Community Library, and at City Hall.

The proposed budget includes resources to support the District's Physical Assets Stewardship Plan (roofs, boilers, floors, paving, ADA access, etc.). Most notably, this budget continues to provide resources to address ADA improvements to the elevator and lavatories at the high school.

Ongoing cooperative efforts with the City of South Burlington have resulted in efficiencies in the areas of electrical maintenance, drainage projects, vehicle maintenance, and the sharing of equipment and mechanic services for city vehicles and school buses that are included in this budget proposal.

The education portion of the residential property tax rate is projected to increase by 2.61¢ per \$100 of assessed value – 2.02¢ from increases in the value of South Burlington's residences, only 0.33¢ from increase in District expenses, and 0.26¢ from proposed changes to base tax rate parameters proposed by the State Tax department. This equates to an increase of \$27 on each \$100,000 of assessed home value. These projections pend voter approval of the budget and finalization of several parameters by the State legislature.

A public hearing on the School and City budgets will be held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. at the Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School.

Thank you for your continued support of our educational programs.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald,
Chair, on behalf of the
South Burlington School Board

Support Chittenden

This letter is to support Tom Chittenden for City Council. I recently met Tom after hearing about his very generous offer to the City of South Burlington. Tom's family home is on the part of Dorset street where the recreation path doesn't follow along the road (it cuts across the field in back of his house). The Cider Mill is on this stretch of Dorset Street, and it draws a good number of pedestrians and bicyclists, risking the perils of walking along a road (Dorset) with very little shoulder and very high speeds (40 MPH).

Tom and his family support extending the recreation path from its bend just south of his home through his front yard to rectify this dangerous situation. At a recent meeting of the Bike & Pedestrian Committee, Tom made a verbal offer of an easement to the city on the frontage of his land for the purpose of public safety. I asked Tom about this and his response was, "Too often I see kids from Dorset Farms walking along the road in front of my house on a nice summer day or dark fall evening heading to the Cider Mill. I walk along this road as well and must say that is the most dangerous thing I do with my kids – walk along Dorset Street to get to the Mill."

For Tom and his family to welcome this extension of the recreation path for pedestrian safety speaks to his character and deep sincerity for the well-being of South Burlington residents. For this reason, and many others, I support Tom Chittenden for City Council and I hope you do too.

John Dinklage
South Burlington

Tracey Harrington, a Dedicated Public Servant

I support Tracey Harrington for city council because she has already proven herself to be a dedicated, well-informed, hard-working public servant. She is currently serving (or has served) on many city committees, perhaps the most recent of which is her current service as vice chair of the planning commission. I believe she will serve us well on the city council.

Although I do not regularly attend city council meetings, I do attend occasionally. Every time I've gone over the years (yes, years) - without exception - I've personally seen her there in attendance. She is not there for any agenda other than her sincere interest and her desire to inform herself of the issues. She has a respectful, humble and unassuming manner about her, but when she rolls up her sleeves and gets to work, the jobs get done. We need her experience, dedication, sound judgment and already-proven-service-ethic working for us in South Burlington. Please join me in voting for Tracey Harrington for city council on March 3.

Monica Farrington
South Burlington

Tom Chittenden for City Council

Please join me in voting for Tom Chittenden for South Burlington City Council. As a deep-rooted South Burlingtonian, he stands out as a new generation with innovative ideas, sound business training, and an abiding love for our city. He has presented new ideas to enhance public safety, city energy use and public transit. Tom would provide a fresh voice, bringing thoughtful planning, fiscal responsibility and problem solving abilities to our council.

Tom's MBA would bring added skill to the council, helping ensure current business metrics are used to keep city operations accountable and city policies forward thinking. He will work for efficient and effective local government services. His youth and energy are equal assets, and he has proven himself as a university and community leader. Overall, his professional skills and warm personality make him a tremendous representative to help shape a solid future for South Burlington.

Chris Shaw
South Burlington

Harrington Has My Vote

When deciding how to cast my ballot for city councilor, I look for a candidate who has a broad spectrum experience to call upon in addressing the city's needs and making decisions that produce a thriving and vibrant place with an enviable quality of life—a place that welcomes all and is affordable to all. We have a way to go to make this a reality, especially with respect to making South Burlington affordable to more individuals and families.

Tracey Harrington is the candidate for city council who best matches my criteria. She shows an interest in her neighbors, as demonstrated by her service on the board of her homeowners' association; her election to president of this board is testimony to her leadership skills. She shows interest in the well-being of her work colleagues by serving as vice chair of her bargaining unit (part of the Vermont State Employees' Association). And, she shows interest in her community by her service on the city's planning commission (she is currently vice chair) and Board of Civil Authority, and as a Justice of the Peace.

Harrington is passionately committed to bringing a financially viable and vibrant City Center to fruition. She has experience with policy, budgets, and collaborative decision-making. She is dedicated to carrying out all of her public duties within a framework of full transparency.

In short, Harrington brings the skill and experience needed to become an exemplary city councilor. This city is fortunate that she seeks to serve us in this position.

Please join me in voting enthusiastically for Tracey Harrington.

Anne Vera
South Burlington

Support for Tracey Harrington

I support Tracey Harrington in her candidacy for a seat on South Burlington's City Council. Tracey has the experience needed to be an effective member of city council. She has served on the South Burlington Planning Commission for three years, serving as clerk, and the vice chair. For the past two years, the planning commission has been re-writing the comprehensive plan, incorporating the work of citizen-based committees. Service on the planning commission has given her first-hand familiarity with city issues.

Tracey was appointed to the Chamberlin-Airport Neighborhood Planning Committee, and was elected to the South Burlington Board of Civil Authority. Tracey has also served on the Board of Vermont State Employees' Association. This service has given Tracey experience in fiscal and personnel management, and the skills necessary to engage successfully in conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving.

Tracey is a good listener and a hard worker; she can focus on complex issues and consider alternatives carefully. She will bring a positive spirit to the challenges presented to the city for fiscal responsibility, on-going management of city affairs, and planning for development of City Center and use of our remaining open space. I urge you to vote for Tracey Harrington for city council.

Jennifer Kochman
South Burlington

Support for Harrington

It seems to me that any person aspiring to the most powerful elected position in government, such as the city council of South Burlington, ought to have demonstrated a knowledge of the city's workings, opportunities and challenges. The candidate needs some real world experience of achieving results within the city structure. The people, in turn, need to see evidence of the candidate's commitment to hard work, deep reading and study of the issues, ability to work collaboratively, and fitness to serve. The candidate needs an ability to listen, to consider various sides of a matter and to avoid a blind adherence to a personal agenda. Tracey Harrington is such a candidate. She has served as clerk and vice-chair of the current planning commission, on the Chamberlin/Airport Neighborhood Committee, the TDR Sub-committee, JAM Golf Subcommittee, was president of her neighborhood association, a Justice of the Peace and other responsible positions in her career and in the wider region. I have watched her many times, listening carefully in meetings, and speaking less. When she does make a comment, it is always deliberate, well reasoned and marked by the ability to distill the issues and draw a sensible conclusion or advance a common sense way through the complexities. These are attributes we need in a city councilor. Tracey deserves our votes.

Sarah Dopp
South Burlington

Tracey Harrington Has My Vote

Tracey Harrington stands out due to her proven commitment to South Burlington. Her experience is impressive. She has served on the Planning Commission since 2012 and is currently its vice chair. She is also a Justice of the Peace and member of the Board of Civil Authority.

Harrington has shown her commitment to making progress on City Center, while preserving the city's precious natural resources, through her participation in form-based code development and work with developers and residents on the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) subcommittee.

Because I am a resident of the Chamberlin-Airport neighborhood, the fact that the planning commission appointed her as its representative to the Chamberlin-Airport Neighborhood Planning Committee speaks volumes to me. The preservation and revitalization of my neighborhood is a challenge that requires the kind of hard work, smarts, and interpersonal skills that are hallmarks of Harrington's work.

When Tracey possesses this kind of track record, I am not ready to take my chances on a candidate who just does not measure up in comparison.

I urge you to join me in voting for Tracey Harrington for City Council.

Judy Cohen
South Burlington

Tracey Harrington Is the Better Choice

A subject South Burlington's Affordable Housing Task Force studied thoroughly is the city's demographics. We were surprised to learn that "one-person households are the single largest household type in South Burlington, comprising 33 percent of its households." Tracey Harrington is one of these households. At 23, she purchased her first home here in 2004.

In both South Burlington and Chittenden County, the annual growth rate of one-person households from 2000-2010 was higher than that of any other household type (the rate for South Burlington was 3.2 percent).* It is important to recognize how our city has changed over the

years and make sure we include the voice of singles, who were previously one of the city's smaller population subgroups, when establishing city goals, priorities, and policies.

Don't get me wrong—I am NOT asking you to vote for Harrington based on her membership in a certain demographic group. She has earned your vote based on merit and service to South Burlington. She is vice chair of our planning commission and has served on the commission since 2012. She is a Justice of the Peace and a member of the Board of Civil Authority.

As a person, Tracey is a hard worker. Tracey is smart. Tracey is a listener. Tracey is a collaborator. Tracey is brave (ask anyone who has chaired his/her homeowner's association, which Tracey has done). Tracey believes in transparency and fiscal responsibility. Tracey is committed to bringing to fruition an economically viable and vibrant City Center and a proud and thriving Chamberlin-Airport Neighborhood. Vote for Harrington—she will not let you down.

** Data referenced in the first two paragraphs came from report, "South Burlington households and housing needs", by Leslie Black-Plumeau, VHFA, November 21, 2012.*

*Sandy Dooley
South Burlington*

Think Hard about City Center Commons, Schools

I have been following the story about City Center Commons (Master Planning Task Force Narrows Options for School Reconfiguration and Consolidation, 2/6/2015) with a mixture of hope and disbelief. Disbelief that anything the developer has been saying about the proposed project is being taken seriously, and hope that cooler heads across the city will prevail.

As I understand it, a developer has tenants lined up to fill three mid-box stores surrounded by an ocean of parking. The developer expresses a sense of urgency that the city must sell him a piece of public land and reconfigure its school facilities to develop these. The developer even goes as far as to suggest moving the school down Dorset Street to Veteran's Park, taking it out of our City Center, out of proximity to the middle and high schools, and away from transit and the densest part of our city. For retail.

The proposal promises that along with this same-old same-old retail on the school property, the city will also get something it really wants:

Phase 2, with mixed uses, structured parking, and a presence right up on Market Street.

It sounds great, but it won't go that way, and in the end we'll be blamed. Compromises will be made, the boxes will be built. But Phase 2 won't happen. We'll be told that we took too long, we wanted too much for the land, it was too expensive to build to the requirements of the Form Based Code, and that structured parking is a costly luxury. Barring that, "market forces" will conspire to leave us holding the bag.

I'd urge my fellow citizens to look at the project website created by the developer. Empty storefronts in Winooski are referenced as a justification for building box retail as an anchor, and yet every one of the storefronts in the photo is now full, with no "anchor" in sight! We don't need to build more of what we don't want to get what we do want, and we certainly don't need to rework our schools for it.

*Matt Boulanger
South Burlington*

February 5, 2015

Support for Chittenden

I support Tom Chittenden for South Burlington City Council. Tom was a student of mine in at South Burlington High School.

I recently spent several hours talking to Tom about his candidacy for the city council. I was impressed with his detailed knowledge and grasp of the issues the council will address in the coming years.

Tom and I disagree on some issues. I'm not sure we resolved our differences, but I found him to be a person who welcomes listening to and considering different opinions. We need that kind of thoughtful representation on the council.

Tom has deep family roots in this area and cares about the future of our city. He has prepared himself for office by attending meetings of the council, the DRB, Planning Commission, etc. I believe he will provide a "fresh perspective" to the council's deliberations.

Tom has earned my vote. If you haven't met him, please take the time to do so. I think he'll earn your vote too.

Robert L. Walsh
South Burlington

Friends of Parks

I read the recent articles about the planning for City Center and Underwood Parks with mixed feelings. On one hand, I am glad to see preservation of open spaces for recreational and conservation uses. The downside is that I fear that South Burlington is adding parks without adequately funding the existing ones.

I recently resigned from the Red Rocks Park Advisory Committee after gladly serving for 20+ years. I resigned, in large part, from the built up frustration of encountering the city's benign neglect of needed staffing and upkeep. Red Rocks, I believe, is one of So. Burlington's "crown jewels" yet it has been slowly, but surely degraded by increased use and abuse.

I hope that more people will support the quality of our parks by volunteering for "Friends of Parks" activities and by expressing their concerns to the city council that we want more parks only if the quality of our existing parks is appropriately maintained.

Jed Lowy
South Burlington

Harrington's Experience Earns My Vote

I write in support of Tracey Harrington for one of the seats on the city council. She has repeatedly shown herself willing to present herself for service to South Burlington, for both elected and appointed positions. She serves on the planning commission, and is presently the vice chair. She is a member of the Chamberlin Neighborhood Airport Planning Committee. She has been involved with the planning for City Center. She has experience with regulations, financial viability, community outreach, and competing interests. As a justice of the peace, she has the additional experience provided by serving on the Board of Civil Authority and the Board of Abatement.

She has dug in and walked the walk on behalf of the city. She has earned my vote, and I recommend her candidacy for your consideration.

Maida F. Townsend
South Burlington

Chittenden Endorsement

I have had the pleasure of working closely with Thomas Chittenden for the past few years during my time as a business student at the University of Vermont.

After taking three of Thomas' classes, I have seen his unwavering commitment to providing a high quality, engaging, and challenging academic experience to every student. Thomas brings enthusiasm, knowledge, honesty, and an open mind to every classroom, which makes his classes some of the best that I have taken over my four years at UVM. He has also been an integral part of my senior thesis preparation, and makes it a priority to help his students outside of the classroom whenever possible.

Thomas' dependability, passion, and supportive nature make him an ideal candidate for a South Burlington City Council position. As a South Burlington resident, I see a lot of potential for growth in the city, and I believe that growth has to be managed responsibly by capable and caring city council members.

I cannot imagine a better candidate than Thomas Chittenden for this role. I believe that under Thomas' leadership, the city of South Burlington would continue to excel in supporting its community, especially its children, for years to come.

Em Bates
South Burlington

January 22, 2015

To All the Angel Fund and Christmas Shop Supporters,

Without your continuous support of the Christmas Shop, many families would not be able to give gifts to their children and family members.

Thank you again this year, and may 2015 bring you and your loved ones good health and much happiness.

E. Anne Corley
South Burlington

Budget Presentation

With knitting bag in hand, I had the unexpected pleasure of attending the city's budget presentation last Saturday, January 10. It was a morning well spent and I came away with a much better understanding of the ways in which our city departments serve the residents of South Burlington. I was especially pleased to hear on more than one occasion, department heads express gratitude for the improved relationships both within City Hall and between City Hall and the South Burlington City Council during the last several years. The "team atmosphere" between staff and management, the communication between city manager and city council, the tone set by the council chair, and the appreciative inquiry by councilors around important city issues have all led to a better functioning and more effective city government.

As a taxpayer and resident of South Burlington for more than 35 years, this experience was tremendously gratifying. The departmental budget presentations were well justified and defensible, and the inquiries by councilors were fiscally responsible. I thank Chair Nowak and colleagues for holding this Saturday session. And I encourage other residents to take advantage of the opportunity when it's next presented.

Lisa Ventriss
South Burlington

Support Chittenden for City Council

I was pleased to read Thomas Chittenden's recent announcement for the city council.

I do not know Tom that well personally, but I'm impressed with his qualifications. He lectures/teaches at UVM. He is very technologically literate and has a master's degree in Business Administration. So, he finds himself spending time in a dynamic learning environment and he's up to speed on technology and good business sense.

Most importantly for me was that he is immersed in marriage and parenthood. Don't get me wrong; you can be a great councilor or anything you want to be without being married or a parent. However, is there anything that focuses you more than the future of your children? Many of the challenges that face our community have great impacts on the future of our children. These include the quality and affordability of our educational system, responsible and sustainable economic growth, taxes and the cost of housing to name some.

I'm inclined to think that ideology will take a back seat to common sense when it comes to councilor Chittenden's future decisions. What makes sense for the future of a young family will guide Tom's decision-making. I feel very comfortable that this motivation is in our community's best interests!

Please vote and support Thomas Chittenden for city council.

Michael Simoneau
South Burlington

January 15, 2015

From Single Payer to Single Payer?

Let's not despair about Governor Shumlin's decision to abandon, for now, his pursuit of a state-funded single payer health care plan.

Given the complexity of the task, and the up-front cost of such a transition, his pronouncement was inevitable.

The project had been launched in 2011, after the Federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) of 2010 failed to offer truly universal and affordable care, and involved more intricacies than most of us could grasp. The plan to offer affordable coverage to all Vermonters, whether or not they are employed, was noble, courageous and feasible. The single payer concept posed a simple mechanism to standardize coverage and payment, while simultaneously affording a unique means of monitoring and controlling expenses. Unfortunately, the initial costs proved to be formidably high.

All is not lost. The highly qualified and extremely dedicated Green Mountain Care Board has been working very hard to change the ways in which the state's health care is paid for. Rather than fee-for-service, which only encourages more expenditures and rewards wasteful care, the board is working toward a "bundling" approach, in which a lump sum payment will be made for care. This will strongly discourage inefficiency, and inevitably reduce costs—a necessity for which there is no provision in the ACA.

The board will likely first apply this approach to federally funded health care--Medicare and Medicaid--which together pay for more than half of all health care in Vermont, and in the U.S.

It is a small stretch to envision that as savings are slowly realized, the ceiling for Medicaid coverage could slowly be raised as needed. Similarly, Medicare coverage could gradually be moved down to cover younger individuals.

The result would be a single, or at least a "principal" payer system, in which the payer is not the state but the federal government, the entity that logically should ultimately assume this role. Vermont is far along in this endeavor, and could be the leader in a subsequent transition to such a nation-wide coverage system.

Michael Scollins
South Burlington

January 9, 2015

Support for Patrick Leduc

I am writing this letter to show support for Patrick Leduc who is running for the two-year term for the South Burlington School Board.

I have known Patrick for a couple of years and I can certainly vouch for his multi-talented background!

There is no doubt in my mind that the South Burlington School Board would benefit with Patrick Leduc as a member.

Robert C. Wilkens
South Burlington