

## Letters to the Editor

MAY 17, 2012

### Airport Noise Effects – From The Environmental Impact Statement

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) covering the present basing of F-16s and the possible change to F-35s outlines many benefits and also several adverse effects which are largely born by the cities of South Burlington and Winooski and its residents. Some SB effects follow:

1. Approximately 1/5th of all Mayfair Park Homes and almost all Chamberlin district homes are currently “incompatible . . . for residential purposes due to noise.” (See map, page BR4-20)

This includes all of us living on: Williston Road, the eastern half of Woodbine Street, the most northern part of Victoria Drive, the most northern part of Elsom Parkway, and almost all Chamberlin District streets.

2. At peak afterburner take-off F-16s presently generate 101 decibels. F-35s are expected to similarly generate 118 decibels. (Table BR3.2.1 – page BR4-18). On average, a person perceives a doubling (or halving) of the sound's loudness when there is a 10-decibel change in sound level. Thus the F-35 peak noise is expected to be 17 decibels higher, or approximately a tripling of current peak F-16 takeoff noise. (page 3-7).

3. For comparison purposes, normal conversation (at a distance of 3 feet) is approximately 60dB (decibels), loud speech is approximately 70dB . . . and at approximately 120dB, sound can be intense enough to induce pain, while at 130dB, immediate and permanent hearing damage can result. (page 3-8)

4. The above facts suggest a host of important issues for us to evaluate relating to: long term hearing loss risk issues; need for homeowners to disclose that our homes lie within the area “incompatible . . . for residential purposes due to noise.” “HUD, FHA, and VA recommend . . . written disclosures to all prospective buyers or lessees of property within a noise zone.” (Volume II, Page C-47); potential legal liability if we don't; the effect on fair market value of our affected homes; and whether South Burlington should reduce assessments on affected homes and the resulting loss to South Burlington's tax base and revenue.

5. To read the EIS go to [www.acclanning.org](http://www.acclanning.org) or call 757-764-9334 to receive a hard copy (takes 2 days).

*Rick Hubbard, South Burlington*

### Council Meeting - May 21 - EIS

The EIS, which the Council will discuss Monday, May 21, raises many questions.

1) The Noise Exposure Map is dramatically different from the 2006 BTV NEM and shows current baseline conditions (demarcating incompatibility with residential land use) extending past Chamberlin School, further into Country Club Estates and Mayfair Park. How does this impact the City's current home-purchase agreement with BTV?

2) Given the “unavoidable adverse environmental impacts” for BTV regarding “noise,” “land use” and “environmental justice”— i.e., effects on “minority and low-income populations”—why was BTV selected one of two preferred sites? For the second, Hill AFB in Utah, the comparative analysis charts show either no statistically significant change or improvements in these categories. Same for most other bases.

For BTV scenarios, the affected low-income population increases 7–11%. Though unstated, the 89 to 93 % representing middle-class populations would also be exposed to these impacts.

The BTV scenarios would increase the affected households 65–100%. The first two Hill scenarios decrease them 17–50%. Percentage of affected residential land area around BTV would increase 52–80%. At Hill it decreases 24–56%.

What are potential impacts on City's property tax and sales revenues?

3) The required military power take-off (with or without afterburners) of F-35As to “conduct airfield operations for training and deployment” exposes people near the base to 115 decibels, or 4x louder than the F-16Cs (94 decibels). The result? Though not stated: inner ear damage.

4) The new IZ Bylaw cites the decrease in affordable housing “located near schools, parks, shopping centers and public transportation” as a compelling argument (voted by Councilors Greco, Dooley, and Engels). VT Statute allows a municipality to “protect the public health, safety, and general welfare and provide for orderly physical and economic growth.”

The 2009 Council letter re: BTV's Vision 2030 opposed further loss of single-family homes through the home purchase program.

How will the Council respond to the data in the EIS? Attend the Council meeting May 21 to find out.

Send your comments by June 1: Mr. Nicholas Germanos, HQ ACC/A7PS, 129 Andrews St., Suite 332  
Langley AFB, VA 23665-2769

*Meaghan Emery, South Burlington*

## **SB Solar Farm produces enough electricity for 450 homes**

In reply to thoughts from RH about Dubois Drive solar farm (May 10). The solar farm does make enough electricity for about 450 homes.

The solar farm is rated at 2.2 Megawatts (power), and it produces about 2.91 Megawatt-hours (energy) per year. According to VT Energy Atlas (<http://www.vtenergyatlas.com/>), the average South Burlington home uses 6,600 Kilowatt-hours of electricity annually. That's significantly less than RH's assumption of 12,000 kWh per year.

$2,910,000/6,600 = 441$  homes. Pretty darn close to 450. And according to the Vermont SPEED website (<http://vermontspeed.com/>), the farm is outperforming the estimated 2.91 MWh of production.

The most affordable electricity is that which is not used, so the first steps to energy affordability are conservation and efficiency.

*Keith Epstein, South Burlington*

## **Book Sale Thank You**

The Friends of the South Burlington Community Library wish to gratefully thank all of the wonderful citizens who assisted us in putting on our latest successful book sale. We appreciate all of the donated books, the foundation for our sale. When we needed physical help, there was Nick, who came on Friday afternoons, and then every Saturday morning; the young ladies doing their community hours for SBHS; the several Library Trustees and their spouses; the mother bringing her boys to the library and spontaneously joining in to carry bags of books, and the list goes on. Our special thanks to Booska movers, who provided a half dozen strong men to get those boxes up the stairs. It was like having the cavalry coming to the rescue.

It takes a community to make a successful used book sale, and we thank all those who donated books, transported books, and shopped at the sale.

Because community members stepped up when we asked, we are forging ahead with plans for the next sale, date and time to be determined. Donated books are again being accepted at the library for the next sale,

*Marjorie Westphal, Book Sale Committee Member  
Friends of South Burlington Community Library*

**MAY 10, 2012**

## **Proposed Bed Down of the F-35 at VTANG**

I thought I might be able to ask some pertinent (and impertinent) questions at the May 14 public hearing but the Air Force will only entertain questions relevant to the DEIS. So, my first question would be:

Why bring the F-35 here at all considering that . . . 1) it is the most expensive procurement program in Pentagon history; 2) it will be almost 10 years late; 3) costs have already exceeded the 2001 baseline by more than 75% (the average cost projection per plane has risen from \$69 million in 2001 to \$156 million in 2011 and will continue to rise); 4) military spending has to be cut by at least \$400 billion by 2023. Guess where Secretary Panetta will look first; 5) it faces possible cancellation or at the very least a severe reduction in the number produced, possibly from close to 3000 planes to less than half that number, further pushing up the cost; and 6) the Marines' STOVL version is already on probation due to technical problems and may still be cancelled altogether.

And here is the most telling question: Is the F-35 already obsolete considering . . . 1) improved missile capabilities of countries like China mean that US aircraft carriers must operate from beyond the 600-mile range of the F-35; 2) the future belongs to remotely piloted drones and cruise missiles, which can better handle most of the job the F-35 was designed to do—the F-35 will probably be the last manned strike fighter built by the West; 3) unmanned planes are more efficient (don't need to carry all the gear) needed to keep a pilot alive; are less costly and no one dies if one gets shot down; 4) the F-35 will probably be the last manned strike fighter built by the West.

Which brings me back to my first question. Why base the F-35 here at all? Let the Air Force take the F-35 to Hill, Utah where they already have the noise and air quality issues of a major Air Force base.

*Michael Mittag  
South Burlington*

## **Legislature Penalizing Self-Employed Vermonters With Higher Property Taxes**

Two years ago the Legislature began penalizing self-employed Vermonters with higher property taxes by taking away their deduction for retirement plan contributions in calculating their property tax adjustment. Because the property tax adjustment system is so complicated it is difficult to readily measure the increase in property tax for self-employed Vermonters resulting from this unfair legislation. In essence it means employees with W-2 wages who qualify for a property tax adjustment pay a lower property tax than self-employed Vermonters with the exact same income. This is because the Legislature allows employees a deduction for retirement contributions as high as \$16,500, or \$22,000 if age 50 or older while self-employed Vermonters get a zero deduction for theirs.

For example:

Two taxpayers, one an employee, one self-employed, identical incomes. Both made contributions of \$15,000 to their respective retirement plans. Property tax bills for both taxpayers were identical (before any credit). Employee received property tax credit 14.5 times higher than the self-employed taxpayer (\$1,873 vs. \$129)

This is one example, but every self-employed Vermonter who contributes to a retirement plan and is eligible for a property tax credit is discriminated against with higher property taxes under this law. It even eliminates some from the program altogether because without the retirement deduction their income is above the maximum to qualify.

Good tax policy, like good government should be transparent and fair.

Unfortunately Vermont's property tax credit system is neither. It is unclear why the Legislature thinks it fair to single out one group of working Vermonters for higher property tax. Self-employed Vermonters deserve the same treatment under this system as any other working Vermonter. Investigated far enough you will find that the Legislature often makes these types of decisions based not on considerations of equity and fairness, but on their impact on tax coffers.

Hopefully enough exposure will convince legislators to correct this discriminatory legislation. Then we can move on to address how the law enables someone to live in a \$500,000 home, pay their money manager \$10,000, and have 75% of their property tax paid by other taxpayers.

*Robert Rich  
South Burlington*

**APRIL 26, 2012**

## **Veterans' Memorial at Dorset Park (up-date)**

I thought I would take this opportunity again to give everyone in our community an up-date on where we stand in our efforts to build the Veteran's Memorial at Dorset Park in which our fund raising has been underway for a while. We have had very good response from our citizens of this community and even people from outside our community. Even though we have had a good start, we still need your help in order for this Veterans Memorial to be built. Keep in mind that there are no tax dollars being spent on this project and 100% of all contributions go towards building this Memorial. Our goal is to start building the Memorial this summer if possible provided funding is complete for this project. We owe it to our Veterans of this community to have a place of honor, for them and for their families.

Again, here are some of the ways that we are fund raising. We have drop-boxes located at business around the City of South Burlington: Dunkin Donuts, Quiznos Subs, Al's French Frys, Aviation Deli, Arcadia Diner, Jiffy Mart, Marco's Pizza, Aubuchon Hardware, Pizza Putt, and Heritage Toyota.

If you wish to make a larger donation, then please make your checks payable to The South Burlington Veterans Memorial Fund. Please mail your donation to the South Burlington Recreation Department, 575 Dorset Street, South Burlington, VT. 05403. If you would like more information about the Veterans Memorial at Dorset Park, you may call the South Burlington Recreation Department at 846-4108 and we will send you our brochure about the Memorial.

The Veterans Committee will be very appreciative of any contributions that you are willing to make for this Veterans Memorial and again we cannot build this Memorial without your support and help. The committee would also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you of have already contributed to this memorial fund.

Thanking you in advance for all your support.

*Jay L. Zaetz  
Chairman, South Burlington Veterans Committee*

**Thanks to the Staff of Cairns Arena**

In early April, I had the pleasure of attending the Women's World Hockey Championship, co-hosted by Cairns Arena. If you had the same pleasure, you would have enjoyed the fact that the Arena promoted and managed a major international sporting event that brought hundreds of athletes and spectators from all over the world to our small city. Aside from the obvious immediate economic benefit realized by local hotels, restaurants and retailers, the tournament spotlighted our city and state in ways that can only have a positive future ripple effect.

The people that deserve our thanks are the staff at Cairns Arena, particularly Bob and Laurie L'Ecuyer. Bob, Laurie and their crew created an incredible atmosphere at the Arena which drew the gratitude and respect of USA Hockey, participants and hockey fans. They worked hundreds of hours to make the tournament a success—all of which benefited the City and its residents. Without them, this tournament would never have come to the Burlington area.

The City Council should take special note of these efforts and commend the Cairns staff for their efforts. A job very, very well done.

*Rick Kozlowski*  
*South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning**

It is obvious that newly elected to the City Council Pam Mackenzie has not lived in this City for very long as she weighs in on the Interim Zoning issue, believing that “developers have been kept at arm's length (by the Council) for far too long.”

This assertion is in stark contrast to the facts, as presented on the following page of the same issue of *The Other Paper* (April 5, 2012), which reveals that South Burlington is allowing for a lot of building, more than any other municipality in Chittenden County this year (400 units, versus 240, 150, 140, 130 and 120 units respectively for Essex, Milton, Colchester, Williston and Burlington).

Facts can sometimes be very inconvenient, especially when they conflict with “beliefs”.

*Bob Mann*  
*South Burlington*  
**APRIL 19, 2012**

## **Working Lands Bill (H.496)**

The Vermont House of Representatives has passed the “Working Lands Bill (H.496) and this bill is now in the Senate. This is about our present and our future needs. We will support Vermont farmers and foresters, and we will be eating healthy local food and using local forest products. The bill creates a fund and an infrastructure to support our food and forest businesses, including the value added products that people love to buy from Vermont. The bill will assist both new and expanding businesses, coordinating the economic development of working lands. It's been said that Vermont is on the cusp of an agricultural renaissance. Thank your representatives for this support of our land, our heritage, and write your senators to ask them to follow the lead of the House.

*Sophie Quest*  
*South Burlington*

## **Angel Fund Yard Sale Planned**

The Angel Fund is having a spring Yard Sale on May 4th and May 5th at 80 Kirby Road, South Burlington, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day. Our fund is down because of the many financial requests we have received since the start of 2012.

The yard will be filled with children and adult clothing, household items, jewelry, small furniture, books and other items. Donations for the sale are welcomed.

Come and shop. There are great prices and it is a great way to help those in need.

*Anne Corley & Jane Stickney*  
*South Burlington*

**APRIL 12, 2012**

## **Funding For Education**

Higher education needs a bigger slice of the pie. With the number of jobs waning, college education is becoming more and more important, but also more and more expensive. At a time when higher education is so important, the amount of funding for higher education is much too little.

The higher education funding is divided up into grants, loans, and support for colleges in the state. Vermont has the highest per capita number of higher education institutions in the country. This being said, in FY2010, Vermont had the lowest amount of state funding for higher education in the country. Only 12 percent of the state budget went to higher education.

Being a high school senior who is attending college next year, this issue is very important to me. When picking a school for next year, one of my biggest concerns was money. I ended up finding a school in Pennsylvania, that I am going to attend, that will cost less for me to go to out-of-state, than it would cost for me to go in-state to the University of Vermont. Vermont's public two-year and four-year colleges have the highest costs in the country. This combined with the lowest amount of funding going to higher education, is a big problem.

*Stephanie Carmichael*  
South Burlington

## **Labor Relations Decision**

I read, with interest, *The Other Paper* article on the South Burlington labor relations decision and have decided to respond.

I was not involved with filing the complaint but support the School Board's decision because it was made in the best interest of the community.

It is difficult to serve on the School Board. The current School Board is outstanding and has done a fantastic job of serving the community, holding the line on spending, developing a long range facility plan as well as adopting a more effective and transparent policy of governance.

I have followed negotiations for many years and School Board members have been accused of many things. Because of the process, they are not able to respond adequately, the community is disengaged and Board members lack support they need. I have been involved in two negotiations and have learned much. The process is difficult and Board members work hard to balance the needs of the teachers and the community, they deserve respect.

Last year the evening before Town Meeting Day I mentioned to a few people that a disturbing email had been sent to the chairman of the School Board. They were disinterested so the conversation ended quickly. Kathy Buley and Rich Wise approached me at the polls the next day telling me that the union had nothing to do with that email. Several people witnessed the encounter and asked about it, then asked me to share it at the labor relations board hearings. The community needs to be kept informed and efforts to do so are not intended as an attack on anyone's integrity.

*Agnes Clift*  
South Burlington

## **Thanks to *The Other Paper* and the Library Staff**

As a member of The Friends of the South Burlington Community Library, I need to thank everyone at *The Other Paper* for their enthusiasm and support of our efforts to grow the organization so that it may actively aid and advocate for our Library. I am pleased they are so willing to raise awareness as The Friends plans for National Library Week April 8-14. This is a good time to remind the community to stop in at the Library and thank the staff there for all of their good work. They do a remarkable job with inadequate space and resources, and deserve our community support. (Friends has a few treats for them, but public support is the best treat of all.)

I know I speak for many of the members when I say we look forward to continuing to work with *The Other Paper* as we strive to develop a library space of which we can be proud.

*Marjorie Westphal*  
South Burlington

## **Call-in Number for Legislative Forums**

I would like to ask our representatives to make available a call-in number for their monthly Legislative Forums. I am often on travel and unable to attend as I have to work extra hours to ensure I have enough money to support my family (if taxes were lower then I might not have this issue). I'm sure I can't be the only one who would like to call in. With the tremendous waste in the Vermont budget, I challenge them to trim some of that waste and find a few of my already confiscated tax dollars to make this happen. Heck, there are even free conference lines they can use if they spend 5 minutes to research it. I've made this request via email previously to no avail. All I can assume is that they are only interested in hearing from a select group of their constituents (i.e., those that agree with them).

*Allen Roberts*  
South Burlington

## **Green Up Day 2012**

Green Up Day is a state-wide effort in which Vermont community members pick up trash that has accumulated over the winter and tidy up the more hidden corners where items may have been dumped over many years. This is a great event on several levels: it beautifies roadways, allows us to take

pride in and show care for our communities, in some cases removes dangerous or polluting debris from woods and streams, promotes community-building. AND it's fun! Work groups, families, civic organizations, churches and individuals can all be involved. The more participants the better!

Last year South Burlington topped all other Chittenden County communities by collecting 6.1 tons of trash, 46 tires and 2.5 tons of scrap metal, for a grand total of about 9 tons of material. Chittenden Solid Waste, City trucks and Clean and Green help with hauling the material. The central drop-off location is the parking lot at the Municipal Building at 575 Dorset St. The date is Sat. May 5 from 8 am to 3 pm. There will also be displays, food and the opportunity to win prizes.

The South Burlington Land Trust is again organizing the event, with help from City departments such as Planning and Zoning, Storm Water and Public Works. SBLT organizes the prizes for MOST TRASH collected and MOST UNUSUAL item. The prizes come from local businesses. Special trash bags will be available from the Planning and Zoning office closer to the event. Meanwhile, direct your questions to SBLT Board member, Tricia King, who is the main organizer (7lakeview@gmail.com). Please email her to tell her where you will be collecting trash or to ask for suggested "hot spots" that need attention. We make a big effort to cover most of the City.

Please visit the Land Trust website (sblt.org) to learn what else we do and to look at some great photos of So. Burlington natural spots. The website is new and updated. We welcome new members at any time.

See you on Green Up Day on May 5.

*Sarah L. Dopp*  
SBLT President

**MARCH 29, 2012**

## **Complete Streets**

I cannot believe the City Council approved the Complete Streets program for Williston Road. What were they thinking? Those of you living along White Street, as well as connecting streets, get ready for an increase in traffic from those trying to escape jam-ups on Williston. The first time an accident in front of Kinney Drugs, backs up traffic through UVM to Main Street Burlington, or a problem at Dorset backs up to Industrial, I would hope that this foolishness would be brought to a quick halt.

I would also hope that our police department develops procedures to quickly combat grid-lock along this street during the trial period, as it is sure to happen.

I would wish drivers that have to negotiate this road, good luck during this trial period, they are going to need it.

*Carl Carlson*  
South Burlington

**MARCH 22, 2012**

## **Dear Supporters, Volunteers, Friends & Fellow Candidates:**

First to the folks who helped me decide to run, helped with my campaign, and voted for me: Thank you so very much. The hard work has started, we are all buckling down and getting to doing the City's business. I will give you my best.

To Tracey Tapley and Chris Shaw - thank you for being so smart, hard working and nice. Our community was very well served by your participation in this campaign.

*Pam Mackenzie*  
South Burlington

## **Former Players Give Back to Little League**

All too often, teenagers are more concerned about their phone, Facebook status, or friends, than anything else. That wasn't the case, however, for four young men who volunteered at the SB Little League softball and baseball evaluations. Recent Little Leaguers themselves, residents Devin Hebert, Henry Cunningham, Jacob Trombley and Jake Mann, each worked throughout the 7-hour day to help execute the annual event. Jake and Jacob caught for the 40+ girls who went through the softball pitching station, and then Devin and Henry took over to do the same for the 100 or so young boys who participated in the baseball portion of the day. While one set of boys repeatedly popped up and down out of the catcher's crouch, the other two were helping at the batting station to shag balls after each participant's turn.

The league thanks Devin, Henry, Jacob and Jake for their time. Their volunteer efforts were the ultimate definition of sportsmanship.

*Tim Kaczmarek*  
President, SB Little League

MARCH 15, 2012

## City Council Chair to Change

With exemplary leadership and support from staff, your City Council can look back on many accomplishments during the past year. They include a record high number of applicants for City boards, commissions, and committees; the eight-plus million dollar bank loan that led to a squeaky clean pension plan bill of health from our actuaries, decisions on former City Manager's pension benefits request; a well attended, well received, and visionary workshop on the future of City Center; voter approval of two Charter changes and a complex land exchange proposal to settle a longstanding lawsuit; adoption of an Interim Bylaw whose purpose is to produce congruency between our updated Comprehensive Plan and South Burlington's Land Development Regulations; remarkable progress in addressing our fiscal challenges; and voter approval of the proposed fiscal year 2013 Budget by a large margin. Many have contributed to these accomplishments and to all I convey my heartfelt gratitude.

Meanwhile, during the past few months, I have experienced heartbreaking losses in my personal life—the death of my favorite uncle; a dear friend's loss of life to breast cancer less than four months after diagnosis; and the sudden death, overseas, of the son of close friends. In addition, another dear friend experienced a massive stroke and yet another recently learned she has cancer. I dare not add up the “stress tabulation” of these losses. Moreover, I have come to recognize that my own recovery and the process of providing support to those most directly affected by these losses take time, space and energy.

Thus, on Wednesday evening (March 14), it will be my honor and pleasure to nominate Rosanne Greco for election to serve as South Burlington's next City Council Chair. Rosanne has assured me she will accept this nomination. Her election is virtually assured. Please join me in welcoming her to this leadership position. I am confident she will serve us all well in this role.

*Sandy Dooley*  
*City Council Chair*

## Thanks to South Burlington Voters

Many thanks to all who voted last Tuesday and I especially appreciate the opportunity to, once again, represent the community for the next three years on the school board. I am excited about continuing our work to preserve quality programs, continue to demonstrate financial responsibility, and encourage innovation within the District. I serve with dedicated and hard-working colleagues and also appreciate their support during the recent election. Please check the District website at [www.sbschools.net](http://www.sbschools.net) for upcoming agendas and feel free to provide me direct feedback at [efitzgerald@sbschools.net](mailto:efitzgerald@sbschools.net).

*Elizabeth E. Fitzgerald*  
*South Burlington*

## South Burlington Residents

Thank you for re-electing me to another term on the South Burlington School Board. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to represent you, appreciate your support for my Board colleague, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, and appreciate your support for our school budget.

When I say that I have served on our Board for 10 years, people often comment that being on a school board is a “thankless job.” In our community, that has not been the case. Many of you have thanked me and my colleagues for our service, and more important, when asked, are willing to freely give of your time and talents to improve our schools.

If you have suggestions, thoughts, or concerns about our district, feel free to share them with any member of our Board or at any Board Meeting. We typically meet on the first and third Wednesday of each month at 7 pm. Contact information for Board Members, our agendas and our minutes can be accessed through the District Web page at: <http://district.sf.sbschools.net/>.

Finally, thanks to *The Other Paper* for the excellent coverage it gives to education issues in South Burlington, and for the forum it has provided and provides for comment on school issues.

*Richard Cassidy*  
*Chair, South Burlington School Board*

MARCH 1, 2012

## South Burlington Community Library

In the article about the library last week there was one sentence that I believe says it all... “The South Burlington Community Library is a source of enrichment for the whole community.”

We in South Burlington are so lucky to have our community library. We have a forward thinking librarian and a dedicated staff. Yes, a library is a place for books, but as the article states ours is so much more and is continually looking to the future relative to serving the needs of our entire community.

The Community Board of Trustees strives to help make the library a place of pride for our city.

We look forward to continued growth and enhancements at the South Burlington Community Library.

*Jay Pasackow*  
SBCL Trustee

**FEBRUARY 23, 2012**

## **Airport Noise invasion**

Thank you George Maille. Finally someone is speaking up about a real issue that can no longer be denied. The noise from the airport has gotten completely out of hand. From flight schools using our skies to buzz back and forth all day, to the ground support equipment that seems to run around the clock. It's our city people and we need to have a say. Peace and quiet is almost a foregone commodity in our city. Take a look around and see how many homes are for sale. When I moved to town 28 years ago it was common knowledge that after 11 PM the airport was silent. The only exception was our military's practice runs. Over a year ago I spoke of this with the airport manager. "Oh yeah," he replied. "That was just a gentlemen's agreement. There was never anything on paper about that." Well friends, I think it's high time there were some hard and fast rules about it. With all windows and doors shut for the winter there is no mistaking the constant onslaught of noise from the Burlington International Airport. Just because they pay rent in our fair city does not give them carte blanche to be loud, intrusive neighbors around the clock.

*Ken Allen, South Burlington*

## **Support Elizabeth Fitzgerald for School Board**

I am writing to encourage your support for Elizabeth Fitzgerald for re-election to the South Burlington school board. As a parent of children in the South Burlington schools, I have gotten to know Elizabeth both as a parent and as a school board member. She is a conscientious, thoughtful, fair and balanced leader, who provides strong support for our educational system, and who brings a unique compassion for students who do not walk the traditional "path" toward educational goals. Elizabeth has supported School Board's policy governance approach—including working to ensure that we have a foundation to support the success of all students, whether their goals after high school include college, vocational training, or the work force. She has prioritized maintaining the high quality of education, while not shying away from the difficult decisions our school board members have faced. Elizabeth is someone I trust in this important role in our community. I urge you to join me in voting for her.

*Sally Borden, South Burlington*

## **Vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald**

I am very honored to be writing in support of Elizabeth Fitzgerald for re-election to the South Burlington School District School Board. I first met Elizabeth in 2005 when our children were in the same class at Rick Marcotte Central School. I was struck immediately by Elizabeth's respectful, compassionate way of being in the world, a style she brought to interacting with children and teenagers as well. I found then, and have found since, that Elizabeth models grace under pressure and that she is a person filled with thoughtful integrity. On more than one occasion I have sought her counsel and learned from her way of looking at issues without personal judgment. I am appreciative of her business expertise, but perhaps what I celebrate most of all is that she meets children and teenagers where they are and works to honor that individuality in each of them. In fact, my own letter's content was deeply inspired by the courage of Carly Hall and Caitlyn Bishop (a senior and recent graduate of South Burlington High School, respectively) who spoke their eloquent truths in support of Elizabeth in their own Letters to the Editor [*The Other Paper*, February 16]. I thank Elizabeth for inspiring that kind of response in our young people. I invite our community to join me in voting for Elizabeth Fitzgerald for re-election to the School Board.

*Susie Merrick, South Burlington*

## **Citizens United - Let your voice be heard March 6**

On March 6, Town Meeting Day, South Burlington citizens will have the opportunity to vote on a resolution that addresses the 2010 Supreme Court decision in the case of Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission. The Court's decision in favor of Citizens United held that free speech rights constitutionally assigned to individuals are intended for corporations as well and that money equates to speech. Consequently, the decision opened the floodgates for corporations and wealthy individuals to donate unlimited amounts of money to individual political candidates. We are already seeing the results as donations of millions of dollars by these entities enrich the current Presidential hopefuls' campaigns through Super PACs. These funds are often funneled into campaign advertising that is non-issue oriented or, worse, patently untrue. With eight months to go, the 2012 Presidential campaign is on track to be the most expensive in our nation's history largely due to Citizens United.

The City Council has given South Burlington citizens a unique opportunity to take a step toward returning us to the democratic process that the Citizens United decision undermines. A “yes” response will urge Vermont’s Congressional delegation to propose a Constitutional amendment for the States to consider that would nullify the idea that corporations are people and that money equates to free speech.

Let your voice be heard on March 6.

*Karen Ryder, South Burlington*

## **Thoughts on the Election**

Greetings South Burlington Citizens. First, I thank all of you for electing me to the City Council in 2009. I have appreciated your support and kind words throughout my term. We faced some challenging times together and found good solutions to difficult problems.

I invite you all to come to the Town Meeting on Monday, March 5, to meet the candidates for City Council, to hear the presentation on the City and School Budgets, and to discuss other matters on the ballot.

Speaking for myself, I believe the proposed budget is worthy of your approval. Since the last budget vote the City has adopted measures that fundamentally improved the City’s financial condition. This proposed budget continues to strengthen the overall financial health of the City and, most importantly, restores services that were reduced in the last budget while we worked on the City’s uncertain financial future. For example, this proposed budget restores funds to the Library that will improve services and provide for more hours of operation. In addition our administration found sufficient resources to add over \$144,000 to the budget for re-paving roads next year. We have added money to fund a minimal contingency for unexpected expenses. This budget represents a fair and reasonable balance between the services that you expect and a reasonable cost for those services. If you agree, please vote for the budget.

On a separate topic, and speaking for myself, I recommend that you vote for Pam Mackenzie for the two-year seat on the Council. I have spent some time with Pam discussing the state of affairs in the City and the issues that will affect the City. I find that she has an excellent outlook and a strong desire to serve our community. I believe that her experience at the United Way and as a business executive will bring important skills to the Council. I know that Pam is a strong supporter of open and collaborative government and a process that will hear of all citizens in setting important policies for the City.

Thank You, Please Vote

*Jim Knapp, South Burlington*

## **In Support of Phil Soltau for School Board**

I have known Phil Soltau for over twenty years as a parent and a businessman, and feel that Phil would be an excellent choice for the South Burlington School Board. As a parent of two daughters who went through our school system, and as a former administrator, Phil has an intimate knowledge of the many complex issues that face education in South Burlington and Vermont. Additionally, Phil is an independent thinker, and would bring a fresh perspective to the Board.

My experience is that Phil Soltau is a thoughtful, considerate person who has demonstrated a keen interest in keeping South Burlington a community that values excellence in education, and will work with an open mind and sincerity of purpose to see that this tradition is maintained.

*Rebecca P. Davis, South Burlington*

## **Phil Soltau for School Board**

On Feb. 9<sup>th</sup>, on Channel 17, there was a candidate forum for the contested 3-year term for School Board. I watched it. A gentleman by the name of Phil Soltau had thrown his hat in the ring and was challenging the 3-term incumbent. His answers to the questions reflected a deep understanding of School Board issues and it was evident that Mr. Soltau had attended many School Board meetings over the years. I had some questions and I called him at home. Mr. Soltau is past principal of Rice High School, and past assistant principal of CVU, and has lived in So. Burlington since 1983. His varied educational background is an asset. I found him to be matter-of-fact, yet humble. It was obvious that he has a passion for education. Do we really want to re-elect the incumbent to a 4th term? I do not think so. Mr. Soltau would be a great addition to the School Board, and I think a fresh set of eyes looking over budgetary issues behooves us and is very appealing to me. Mr. Soltau has my vote on March 6<sup>th</sup>, how about you?

*Mark A. Dickinson  
South Burlington*

## **Vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald**

I have served the last two years as a member of the South Burlington School Board. In that time, I have seen firsthand the dedication and intelligence Elizabeth Fitzgerald has brought to her service on the Board. She understands the details of the District’s finances, is willing to listen to and consider different viewpoints, and quickly homes in on the important aspects of issues before the Board.

I have not always agreed with Elizabeth. Indeed, last spring we were on different sides when the Board imposed contract terms on the teachers' association. Although I arrived at a different conclusion, I felt she had arrived at a reasoned decision after careful deliberation. Elizabeth stood behind a considered position, believing that her decision under the circumstances was in the best interest of the community she serves, and I respect her for that.

After the contract terms were imposed, the situation evolved. The community elected two new Board members. The Board Chair recused himself from participation in contract issues. The disruption of a teachers' strike loomed. Facing this situation, Elizabeth led the Board in reentering negotiations that resulted in a 3-year settlement for the District and averted a strike. She exhibited both strength and flexibility, assets that she would bring to another term on the Board.

In addition, Elizabeth has helped manage the Unfair Labor Practice case that the Board brought last summer against the VT-NEA and the SBEA. After the Board imposed contract terms, the head of the Vermont NEA, with SBEA endorsement, threatened the Chair's business interests if he did not return to the bargaining table, which led to his recusal due to an apparent conflict of interest. The Board unanimously brought the ULP in order to uphold the interests of the community in retaining their elected representatives in negotiations. It has been a worthwhile investment of the District's resources, and Elizabeth's support of the effort should be viewed favorably.

Elizabeth Fitzgerald deserves the community's vote for an additional term. Please vote for her on March 6 or in early voting.

*Martin LaLonde*  
South Burlington

## **Vote Fitzgerald for School Board**

The announcement in *The Other Paper* by Philip Soltau and subsequent comments made by Mr. Soltau in the candidates forum on Public Access Television should be of concern to citizens of South Burlington.

Mr. Soltau's comments imply a very close allegiance with the teachers union. Given his initial career as a teacher/principal and second career an agent/trainer for Horace Mann Insurance, an organization "Founded by Educators for Educators" which is aligned with the National Educators Association, this should be of no surprise to people.

Mr. Soltau clearly states his opposition to the decision by the School Board last year to impose a contract after countless months of negotiating at the bargaining table. I have often been involved in collective bargaining during my 40-year career as an educator, including 12 years as Superintendent in South Burlington. Not once in all these years did a School Board enter into a decision to impose a contract except as a last legal recourse, similar to the union's last legal recourse of voting to strike. In either situation, these decisions are not rendered lightly by either party and cause great stress to all concerned. For School Board members, however, to enter into collective bargaining without an acceptance/willingness to utilize their final legal recourses if ultimately necessary will only embolden the union's already strong position at the bargaining table.

Individuals should not run for the school board with an anti-union platform. Neither should an individual run for the school board on a pro-union platform. With 80 percent of the school budget already being expended on employee pay and benefits, Board members need to insure that the needs of the students as well as the resources of the community are given due consideration, not only in the budget process but also at the bargaining table. Board members need to be able to bring a balanced approach with regard to competing priorities to collective bargaining. Elizabeth Fitzgerald has demonstrated the ability and courage to do so and will receive my vote for the South Burlington School Board on March 6.

*Bruce Chattman*  
South Burlington

## **Support for Chris Shaw as City Councilor**

I am writing to express my support for Chris Shaw as City Councilor. I have known Chris personally for many years, and we currently serve together on the SB Planning Commission. Personally, Chris and I were both hockey dads, and have been friends with two daughters that played together for years in youth hockey, then on to SBHS where the team went on to the state semi-finals and finals in their last two years of high school together. Fond memories.

Chris will bring to the City Council the very important knowledge and experience of serving our city for the past 12 years—6 years on the Planning Commission, and 6 years on the Natural Resources Committee. He has recently been the chair of the Planning Commission, and he demonstrates a "compromising approach" to business. He is an active listener, and maybe most importantly, he has the ability to put the public and members of the Commission at ease during important deliberations to solve problems. Chris will not bring an "agenda" to Council business. His actions and decisions for upcoming important city business will be based on facts and science, and he will do what is best for the city for it to grow and prosper.

*Bob McDonald*  
South Burlington

## **Chris Shaw for City Council**

South Burlington has 3 good candidates for the 2-year city Council position. There are a myriad of issues this Council will be addressing but 2 of the most pressing are our future growth and the careful planning of City Center. Chris has a wealth of experience and knowledge having served on the Natural Resources Committee and most recently as Chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission. As a fellow member on the Planning and Zoning I have experienced firsthand his enormous knowledge, dedication and fairness as its chair. I hope you will join me in supporting his election.

*Ted Riehle, South Burlington*

## **Support Chris Shaw for City Council**

South Burlington is facing numerous challenges as we as a city consider our future, and we are fortunate to have so many talented citizens who have dedicated their time and energy to this work and who are willing to do so in the future. With two seats on the City Council open for election, it will be important that the newly elected councilors have knowledge of the city and how it runs, an understanding of the diversity of perspectives and opinions that the residents hold, and the skills to digest complex issues as well as the ability to help bring the community together. Chris Shaw will be getting my vote on Town Meeting Day as he has all those qualities.

I have known Chris Shaw and his family for more than ten years and seen his demonstrated commitment to our city not only through his active support of his three children and their academic and athletic pursuits at South Burlington High School but also through his service to the community on the Natural Resources Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Board of Civil Authority. I have appreciated the way that he doesn't jump to conclusions but rather thoughtfully considers all the data and evidence before forming his opinion on the issue at hand. I believe that he will bring an important voice and perspective to the City Council and will be an asset to their work. Please join me in supporting Chris Shaw's candidacy for City Council.

*Ann Pugh  
South Burlington*

## **Elect Chris Shaw to City Council**

I am writing in support of Chris Shaw's candidacy for the South Burlington City Council. Chris and I have served together on the Planning Commission for six years. We do not agree on every policy issue, but Chris has always displayed a willingness to listen to and consider various points of view while working productively and cooperatively. Chris will bring a wide range of experience to the Council from his time on the Planning Commission and the Natural Resources Committee as well as the Board of Civil Authority and the Board of Abatement. With the perspective of a parent whose three children have graduated from SB schools, Chris understands the interests and concerns of South Burlington families.

I am confident Chris Shaw will be a positive addition to the City Council and endorse him whole-heartedly.

*Tim Duff  
South Burlington*

## **Tracey Sounds Terrific**

Let's go visit City Council candidate Tracey Tapley at the library on Saturdays, Feb. 25, or March 3, 10-noon. If you go to her website, you'll meet a really interesting woman, with good ideas for South Burlington. She wants affordable housing so that the people who work in South Burlington's many businesses, will be able to afford to live here. She wants to study our remaining prime agricultural land to see how we can preserve it for a future in which local food is necessary. She wants to be part of a City Council that takes thoughtful time to plan for a better South Burlington for all of its citizens. I think we need her dedication and energy in our Council. Go to the library and talk to her.

*Sophie Quest  
South Burlington*

## **Please Vote and Vote "YES" on the City Budget on March 6<sup>th</sup>**

Your City Council and City staff worked hard to present a 2012-2013 budget that balances the level of services we believe City residents value with a funding approach that is fair, prudent, and future-oriented. The total proposed City budget is \$28.4 million; \$11.2 million would be raised via property taxes. I suggest you review the budget booklet you received in the mail, go to the City's website, [www.sburl.com](http://www.sburl.com), or contact a City Councilor, the City Manager, or Deputy City Manager. In the end, I hope the proposed budget merits your "YES" vote.

The budget funds nine more hours at our Library and makes the Children's Librarian position full-time. Dollars for highway paving increase 46 percent over last year. It includes money to resurface the high school tennis courts and almost \$400,000 in new revenues that do not come from property taxes. It incorporates fiscally sound practices addressing future needs like structural capital improvements; funding to replace police, fire, and ambulance vehicles; and modest "savings accounts" for contingencies and unforeseen disasters.

What is the bottom line? Your stormwater rates are unchanged from last year. The owner of a "typical" condo (\$224,000 assessed value) will pay \$58.83 annually, or \$4.90 monthly, for the combined City property tax and water and sewer fee *increases*. A 10-piece order of Chicken McNuggets costs seven pennies less (\$4.83). The owner of a "typical" detached single-family house (\$322,000 assessed value) will pay \$79.41 annually, or \$6.62 monthly, for the combined City property tax and water and sewer fee *increases*. A 10-piece Chicken McNugget Meal costs 74 cents more (\$7.36).

We believe your City tax and utility charges represent good value—in return you receive reliable and professional fire, ambulance, and police services; highway and street maintenance, plowing and paving; increased library access and services; parks and recreation facilities and programs; and planning, zoning, city clerk, water, sewer, and stormwater services.

This “budget” is a financial management plan that takes into account current circumstances and needs, and anticipates and plans for the future. Please vote “YES” on the City Budget on March 6<sup>th</sup> or beforehand.

*Sandy Dooley, Chair*  
*South Burlington City Council*

## **Money is Tight**

Taxpayers. Demand that your money is spent on education—not sports. If towns want us to accept these budgets, then provide the true curriculum budget and a second non-curriculum budget and let us be the judge of how our money is spent.

Other school districts in other states have made the choice of physics over football and biology over basketball. Keep teachers and courses. Eliminate coaches, venue maintenance, bus travel, insurance, etc. Don't accept the Governor's view that obese kids need these programs—obese kids aren't on these teams. Two periods a week of gym is their one exposure.

*J. LaBonte*  
*South Burlington*

## **Reverse Citizens United**

Were you dismayed when in 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the Citizens United case that U.S. mega corporations would essentially be allowed to finance political campaigns with unlimited resources through so called “Super-Pacs”? I contend that federal elections should be determined by individual voters, not by deep-pocketed corporations who strongly influence their selected candidate(s). We are currently experiencing the adverse impacts of this decision. Projections are that many billions of dollars will be expended in this fall's general election by approximately 300 “Super-Pacs.” If you agree that this Supreme Court decision should be reversed please support the South Burlington March 6th ballot item urging our VT Congressional delegation, and US Congress, to support a Constitutional amendment that corporations are not persons. Seldom do individuals have the opportunity to attempt to “reverse injustice,” so please exercise your vote in favor of this resolution.

*Eleanor Smith*  
*South Burlington*

## **Support for Phil Soltau**

I am writing this letter in support of Phil Soltau as a member of the South Burlington School Board. I believe the best interests of our community and students will be served by someone with Mr. Soltau's skills and experiences. As a businessman, Phil understands the challenges faced by many in our community. As a former educational administrator, he knows how school organizations work. As a retiree, he will be sensitive to the needs of this segment of our population. Additionally, Phil approaches problems with a positive and collaborative manner, and I believe that is what we want our school board to model for our children. I am impressed with his commitment to demonstrate respect and fair-mindedness in his role as a school board member. I hope you will join me in supporting Phil Soltau in the upcoming election.

*Valerie Kuentzel*  
*South Burlington*

## **The Case for Overturning the Citizens United**

The case for overturning the Citizens United (CU) decision by the U.S. Supreme Court via an Amendment to the Constitution has been well-stated in many venues since its passage in 1/10. The current debacle of Super-PAC-funded non-constructive negativism in the ongoing Republican presidential race provides convincing testimony to the need for grass-roots action. In her eloquent letter of Feb. 2, Maida Townsend made the case for all of us to express our objection to CU at our Town Meeting Day by voting “yes” to the proposed petition, thereby reversing the ongoing damage to our democratic process of freedom of speech and “one person, one vote.”

As pointed out by Ms Townsend, we owe our gratitude to our City Council for putting the issue on the ballot. In addition, thanks should be offered to Rick Hubbard and his 43 helpers for their successful efforts in initiating the petition in the City of South Burlington. Also thanks should be offered to other communities in VT for their efforts to the same end, and to our representatives to Congress, most notably Sens. Sanders and Leahy, Rep. Welch, and State Sen. Ginny Lyons.

So where will the action go post-Town Meeting Day? The ultimate plan, as we understand it, is to initiate a Constitutional Amendment to overturn CU. At a time when there is such a partisan divide in Congress, this will be a tall order. Nonetheless, it is incumbent on those of us who believe in the tenets of the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights and subsequent Amendments thereto, that we pursue what might become the 28<sup>th</sup> Amendment which, in effect,

will be to re-establish the full meaning of the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights protecting freedom of speech (and in no way implying freedom of corporate speech in the form of unlimited money).

A good primer re the subject proposed amendment can be found in the following links: <http://democracyisforpeople.org/> and <http://movetoamend.org/amendment>. See you at the polls.

*Irv Goldman*  
*South Burlington*

**FEBRUARY 16, 2012**

## **Supporting the candidacy of Elizabeth Fitzgerald**

I write in support of the candidacy of Elizabeth Fitzgerald for re-election to the South Burlington School Board of Directors. I served with Elizabeth for several years on the Board and found her to be intelligent, caring, and insightful. Not only has she the best interests of the students and the entire District in mind, but she also carefully and constantly weighs the costs of any initiative upon the community's ability to pay. She has served well and honorably.

I will vote for Elizabeth's re-election in order that she may continue to serve honorably, with wisdom, and with discernment in meeting the needs of the District and the community.

*Ted Manazir, South Burlington*

## **Dear Citizens of South Burlington,**

It is an honor and privilege to serve the South Burlington community on the School Board. As a school director, one of the benefits is getting to know who our students are. Did you know that thirty-four languages or dialects are represented among our student body? That at South Burlington High School, students consistently perform higher on the SAT than the Vermont and National average? That NECAP scores are consistently higher than the state average? That students are involved in community service activities at every school in the district? That over thirty science awards were received by South Burlington students at last year's state Science Fair? That drama and music productions are performed at the elementary, middle, and high school levels? That a South Burlington High School student is a page in the U.S. Senate this year? This is an impressive but not all inclusive list of the many achievements of South Burlington students. We are very proud of their accomplishments and the dedicated professionals who support them as they prepare for their next steps.

On March 6th, you will be asked to vote on a 3.74 percent increase in spending over the current year's budget. This means an increase in education taxes of \$122/year for a \$322,000 home, before income sensitivity. Citizens may remember that over the past two years, the respective increases which were approved by voters were less than one percent, at 0.93 percent and 0.72 percent respectively. This year, in order to maintain quality programs for students, and to proactively plan to meet our pension obligations, an increase of 3.74 percent is necessary.

The goals of the South Burlington School District's Ends Policy are Disposition for Lifelong Learning, Personal Development, Academic Achievement, and Citizenship. We believe that the proposed budget will continue to support our students to achieve these ends. We hope that you will too.

*Diane Bugbee, for the South Burlington School Board*

## **Support for Philip Soltau**

I write in support of Philip Soltau, candidate for the three-year seat on the SB School Board.

I first met Mr. Soltau years and years ago, when he was the agent assigned to help me and others in his district with our insurance issues. Without fail, Mr. Soltau helped me through various questions, and he was assiduous in checking in to see if all was well. He was thoroughly organized, gave great attention to detail, listened well, and acted promptly. He was the consummate professional. These are traits which I believe will serve him well as a school board member.

Equally important to me is his personal background in education, and his being the father of children who clearly have understood the importance of education. Mr. Soltau's on-going personal commitment to education is underscored by, not only his candidacy, but also by the time he has already put into attending School Board meetings. He is ready for the issues before the School Board; there will be no need for a steep learning curve.

Last and far from least, I have known Mr. Soltau to be a person of principle, a person with a strong moral compass. He is not afraid of hard decisions. He expects everyone to treat everyone else with respect. He is skilled at bringing people together, at helping to find solutions to the potentially thorniest of problems.

In his announcement for the seat on the school board, Mr. Soltau asked for voters' support. He absolutely has my support. I hope that he will also have yours.

*Maida F. Townsend, South Burlington*

## **An SB Grad Supports Board Candidate**

I pride myself in growing up in the school district of South Burlington, from kindergarten to graduation. I did not fully appreciate the extent of dedication and time that the School Board devoted to our district until I was elected as student representative my junior and senior year. On my first day, I met Elizabeth Fitzgerald. She was kind, welcoming and eased any reservation I had. It was over the next two years I realized the degree of loyalty and outstanding work ethic of Elizabeth that left me inspired.

Every meeting she would come prepared with thought-provoking questions. When it came down to it, she was prepared and willing to make the difficult decisions to help improve our district. Her work with policy governance, “preparing every student for their next step,” did not stop at the school board level. She is a mentor and a role model to many students and graduates. After graduation, I was unsure of what I wanted to pursue in college, but Elizabeth was there to help guide me. The personal attention she devoted to me demonstrates her motivation in helping the community. The time I have spent with both the South Burlington School Board, and Elizabeth, leaves me confident in believing the reelection of Ms. Fitzgerald will be extremely beneficial to our district.

*Caitlyn Bishop, SBHS Graduate*

## **Reelect Elizabeth Fitzgerald to the School Board**

I'm writing to support the reelection of Elizabeth Fitzgerald to the South Burlington District School Board. As a student representative to the School Board for the last two years I have witnessed that Elizabeth makes her decisions based on the best interest of our community. She always comes prepared with insight from many perspectives. I have been impressed with her critical thinking and articulation on the many different issues the board faces. Elizabeth has handled the additional responsibilities of being clerk with professionalism. Her calmness and clarity brings balance to the Board. I hope you'll join me in supporting Elizabeth Fitzgerald in continuing the proud tradition that is the South Burlington School District on March 6, 2012.

*Carly Hall, Senior at SBHS*

## **A Voice For Prime Soil**

Without offering an opinion on IZ, I do wish to offer my support of City Councilor Rosanne Greco's stated interest in sustainable agriculture. Her comment that most of S.B. sits on prime ag-soil is important. I believe water and soil will soon cease to be commodities, if not already so. I don't know the best solution to address low income housing, development in general and the need as well as desire for open public land and private ag reserved land. Thank you for seeking options and thank you for helping be a voice for strategic consideration in maintaining ag usage of our prime growing soil-a resource that I think will become more sought after and desired while becoming more depleted in a very short time frame.

Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax* spoke for the trees. Rosanne speaks for the soil and our pastoral legacy (so we may continue to have one).

*Bernie Paquette, Author of Green and Clean, South Burlington*

## **Community Plea**

To my neighbors in Butler Farms and Oak Creek: This is a respectful request to please be responsible pet owners. I have been repeatedly charged by the same loose dogs, from three separate houses, while walking my own on leash. Sunday I was charged on one block, turned around, and another dog had been let loose on the next block. While not someone easily rattled by dogs, it is still upsetting to be charged by a snarling, teeth-baring dog. Regardless of how well-behaved your pet is, when its “territory” is perceived as threatened, it may become aggressive and attack. Much smaller dogs have charged me and I've had to hold mine up on his hind legs while the little one jumped and scratched up both my legs trying to get to my dog. I held mine up because he could have snapped the smaller dog's neck. Bigger dogs cause more concern. I know my dog will react to protect me. I will then be caught between two fighting dogs with the very real possibility of an injury. There are some of you who walk your dog off leash. This is a huge problem and is against the law. Again, your dog may normally be very friendly. Mine is, too, but I acknowledge the very real possibility that there may a perceived threat that sets off an aggressive response. When faced with unfamiliar dogs, yours may become aggressive, charge, and you will have no control whatsoever of the potential, harmful outcome. I can't enjoy my own neighborhood and walk my dog because I'm afraid of being charged again and again. I *always* walk mine on leash. Please do the right thing. If the freedom to roam is wanted, then build a fence or take them to the SB dog park if they are socially well-behaved. Above all, always leash your dog for the safety your neighbors and their pets.

*Tracey Hiatt, South Burlington*

## **Gratitude for the service of the City Council**

Every citizen in S. Burlington should attend at least one City Council meeting in order to appreciate the time and energy that the councilors dedicate to our community. I have attended several meetings that dealt with Interim Zoning (IZ). I went not wanting to “demonize” those who were more concerned about economic development nor did I want to be “dismissive” of those more concerned about taking the time to assess the environmental impact of over development, those concerned about preserving green space, affordable housing and form based codes.

I regretted a headline of John Briggs that appeared in the *Burlington Free Press*: “A Divisive Push to ‘Restrict Growth’ Nears the Climax.”

IZ is not about restricting growth; it's about encouraging responsible growth. Happily Briggs quoted Joe Randazzo, a member of the City's Development Review Board, saying that the proposal for IZ is a grand overview that is sorely needed. It looks at the big picture not at the pros and cons of individual developments. It simply is an effort to buy time to plan the correct plan for development. Randazzo believes that IZ is necessary if we don't want to see what is left of So. Burlington devolve into a haphazard construction.

I find an interesting parallel with what is going on with the proposal for IZ and what is at happening on a federal level regarding the environmental impact of the Keystone XL pipeline, the 1700 mile oil pipeline that would run from the tar sands of western Canada to refineries on the Gulf coast . Besides extracting oil from tar sands being a dirty process, there's a good chance it could also threaten the water supply of several Midwest states. The federal government is telling Big Oil “not yet,” time out. That's basically the message of Interim Zoning.

*Roddy O'Neil Cleary, South Burlington*

## Does Money Grow on Trees?

Of course not. But *food* grows on trees; and people make money by *growing* trees, and bushes, and plants. Many people assume the best way to make money from the land is by building on it. The reality is that a decent living wage can be made from growing crops on land, even on small family farms. It's happening across North America.

A 52-acre family farm in Ontario is grossing \$49,000 from selling 93 Community Supported Agriculture shares. In Maine, a farmer grossed \$120,000 on an acre and a half. Local farm managers in Hardwick earn \$33,000 to \$50,000 a year. In the Intervale, 130 acres produce \$1.3 million dollars in yearly revenue.

Cities also make money from farming land. Hundreds of “cost of community services” studies across the U.S. show that residential development results in fiscal losses to cities; while *working and open lands* result in fiscal gains to cities.

And while landowners can make a lot of money selling their lands to developers, they get the money only once. Were they to lease their land for farming, they would receive money for years to come—not to mention the long-term “gift” they would provide to future generations, who will eat because of their choice. When fossil fuels are depleted (most of our food is transported over thousands of miles) food scarcity will become a reality for those who have no farming land nearby.

Between 1982 and 2007, 41,000 acres of Vermont agricultural land, including 11,000 acres of prime soil, (the cream of the crop . . . as dirt is evaluated) was converted to development. Most of South Burlington land is prime agricultural soil. Unfortunately, much of that land now has tons of steel and concrete on top of it. But, we still have some open space left.

The future of our food system is intimately connected to development and land use decisions made at city and county levels. Fortunately, we're starting land use discussions here in South Burlington. Come join us in our Sustainable Agriculture study group. What we choose will determine our destiny. The time is ripe with hope.

*Rosanne Greco, City Councilor, Chair, Sustainable Agriculture/Food Security Study Group*

## Vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald

It is a pleasure to make known the reasons I feel it is important for you to vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald, who is seeking a three-year term on the South Burlington School Board.

After six years as a respected member of our School Board, Elizabeth wishes to continue her service for another three year term. Her grounded and wise participation on the Board will allow her to continue her work on key initiatives in the District without interruption. Importantly, her presence will also provide continuity on the School Board at a time when there is relatively new District leadership.

Elizabeth, with two children in the school system, is excited about the Board's approach to preparing every student for their next step, whether it is college, vocational training, or the work force. She and her colleagues have demonstrated strong financial stewardship for the District. Under her leadership, they have made some tough decisions that balance the needs of the community, students and teacher while keeping the focus on the quality of programs we offer here in South Burlington.

With gratitude for the service she has already given to our community, and in support of her grounded, clear vision going forward, please join me and cast your ballot for Elizabeth Fitzgerald. Elizabeth! She's there for all of us!

*Pam Heinrich MacPherson, South Burlington*

## Fitzgerald for School Board, no Soltau

I am writing this letter in enthusiastic support of Elizabeth Fitzgerald for the 3-year School Board seat. As a former member of the South Burlington School Board (I completed a 3-year term on the Board last March), I had the privilege to work with Elizabeth and found her focus and interest to be centered on quality educational programs while being a voice for fiscal health and stability. I am convinced that she is the best person to continue to marshal the educational outcomes the Board and community developed while I served, within the community's ability to pay.

Also, while I encourage and respect our electoral process, I am very troubled by the thrust of Mr. Philip Soltau's announcement of his candidacy for the Board (*The Other Paper*, February 2, 2012).

Mr. Soltau's consistent message is that our Board was wrong to impose a contract last year. Certainly, that was a matter of judgment, but it is critical to recall that when the decision was made, the Board had been negotiating with the Union for 14 months without substantial progress, and we were only 4 months from the expiration of the old contract. If the old contract had expired without a new contract or imposition, Union members would have received salary increases and negotiations would have continued. About two-thirds of the ultimate settlement would have passed to the Union side of the negotiating table, without any real compromise or negotiation.

I agree, and my Board colleagues agreed then, and I believe agree now, that collective bargaining agreements should be resolved by reasonable negotiations. My decision not to run for reelection was a personal one and had nothing to do with the collective bargaining process. I was and still am committed to collaborative and reasonable negotiations and I know from my work with her that Elizabeth Fitzgerald is committed to the same. Unfortunately, Mr. Soltau has positioned himself as a candidate who is not.

I support both a quality education and our community's ability to pay. Vote for Fitzgerald on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

*Janine M. Allo, South Burlington*

**FEBRUARY 9, 2012**

## **SB Leadership Needs To Change Their Ways**

Within the past year or more there has not been a week that has gone by that our City of South Burlington has not been continuously in the news due to controversial actions taken by our City Council and City Manager. Just look at the number of negative situations they have put us in. The attempted taking away of Chuck Hafter's retirement benefits, a complete takeover of the Cairns Arena—(DPSA) the Dorset Park Skating Association, the Burlington International Airport over fees, the pay-out of a year's salary to Cpl. Jack O'Connor, and now again with the Interim Zoning By-Law.

In my opinion, it is apparent that some members of our City Council and our City Manager have used their position for their own personal agenda. This has got to stop. When are we going to see a positive approach from our leadership that really represents the needs of the people of South Burlington? Why is it that our City Manager continuously uses the excuse of "accounting abnormalities left by the previous administration?" Has this present city leadership shown us any stability over the past few years? Quite frankly our leadership has been headed in the wrong direction. We cannot keep going on with these on-going Witch-Hunts.

We must take into account how much of the taxpayer's money our leadership has spent on legal fees; it must be a bundle. This situation will continue as long as we allow our leadership to lead. Our City Council members especially have been ill-advised and simply out of touch with the real concerns of our South Burlington citizens. Now our leadership [apparently] is asking for a 6% increase in our city budget; certainly there is a lack of trust and vision to keep cost down. It is now time for all members of the City Council and the City Manager to either change their ways or step-down.

The bottom line is that our City Council and City Manager need to know that in the future they will be hearing from the citizens of South Burlington on Election Day.

*Jay L. Zaetz  
South Burlington*

### **Dear South Burlington Voters,**

At our January 11, 2012, meeting, your School Board voted to propose a budget totaling \$42,106,183 for Fiscal Year 2013 (starting July 1, 2012). This represents an increase of 3.74% over the current budget, and, if our estimate of the state property tax rate proves correct, would result in a residential tax rate increase of 2.75%. This relatively modest increase follows two years in which we reduced the tax rate by .07% in 2012 and 2.7% in 2011, in recognition of difficult economic times and thanks to one-time Federal subsidies.

For a taxpayer who does not qualify for income based residential property taxes, the increase equals about \$38 on each \$100,000 of their home's assessed value (the average assessed value in SB is \$322,000, so the approximate average increase in tax is \$122).

Our budgets are driven primarily by the cost of salary and benefits for our employees, which together equal 80% of our expenditures. Our other operating costs would decrease by about 3% under this budget. Decreased spending is planned in transportation and custodial services resulting from improved efficiencies.

The proposed increase is necessary for continuation of quality programs and to meet rising costs for our existing commitments. Those costs include increased compensation levels resulting from negotiated contracts. Healthcare expenses are rising 3.5%, but are being offset by increasing employee

contributions. The proposed budget includes a \$150,000 increase in contributions to our staff retirement plan, needed to chip away at what our actuaries project as a significant shortfall in plan assets. It also provides funds for a planned expansion of our One-to-One Laptop technology initiative, and to maintain and improve our buildings and grounds.

Our budget is complex and this brief letter cannot begin to answer all the questions that could be asked about it. We hope it will serve to introduce the issues to you. More information is available through the District website at: <http://district.sf.sbschools.net/>.

We plan to provide more information before you are called upon to vote on this budget on March 6, 2012.

*Richard Cassidy*  
*Chair,*  
*South Burlington School Board*

## **Vote for Elizabeth Fitzgerald for School Board**

Few members of the public regularly attend South Burlington's School Board meetings. I am one who has. It is there that one gets a real sense for how this body works, what the issues are that confront it, and who leads the way to progress. To appreciate the importance of this work, you should know that over 75% of the local taxes paid in South Burlington go to support education. Said another way, South Burlington taxpayers are asked to pay three times as much in local taxes to run the City's schools as to support City operations including police, fire, public works, recreation, municipal offices, and library. The South Burlington school budget exceeds \$40 million; it is a big deal. This level of spending has been supported in recent years by substantial federal support; support that will not be continuing.

Championing topnotch school programs while containing the pressures to increase school district expenses is getting more difficult. We need Board members who are up to this challenge. Elizabeth Fitzgerald has proven she is that person. I've found Elizabeth consistently on top of the issues, inquisitive, approachable, open to others' opinions, and acutely aware of the implications of the Board's actions. She is a leader in the School Board's efforts that have maintained support of our excellent education system in constraining economic times. Calmly and deliberately, she is not afraid to make difficult calls to balance conflicting interests. I urge you to support her continuation in this role by voting for her in the upcoming election on Tuesday, March 6<sup>th</sup>. Your vote will make a difference in how South Burlington's School District copes with the future.

Mark your calendar for the 6<sup>th</sup> and mark your ballot for Elizabeth Fitzgerald for continued service as School Board member.

*Dan Fleming*  
*South Burlington*

**FEBRUARY 2, 2012**

## **Interim Zoning**

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I thought the reason we have a development review board is to stop overdevelopment and issues that the interim zoning proposal would do. Do they not have the ability to say no to a development that is too much for our area. I just think each case is different and should be decided as a case by case.

*Carol McDowell*  
*South Burlington*

## **Support for Interim Zoning**

I would like to comment on my impressions of the Interim Zoning public hearing I attended January 17<sup>th</sup>.

It became quickly apparent that it was "stacked" as far as attendance is concerned, with developers, builders, real estate agents and allied business people socially interacting for 30 minutes prior to the opening as if it were Old Home Week.

They were all there only to represent and protect their narrow economic self-interest. This powerful united group sat in lockstep shoulder-to-shoulder in the first ten rows. In front of them sat three suits together in the front row, directly opposite and facing the Council members. I assume they were attorneys for this "endangered" group.

This was indeed an intimidating environment for anyone to vocally express opposition to this group by endorsing the Interim Zoning proposal. Some did (Sarah Dopp of the SB Land Trust, for one), and I admire their courage under the circumstances. I didn't remain until the conclusion of the hearing but became convinced to express myself at a later date.

From the hearing, one would surmise that this vested interest group is the majority, however in reality they are a very tiny (but very powerful) minority, [determined] to develop what few acres of open and rural land remain in South Burlington, especially the Southeast Quadrant. South Burlington is already known as Condo Canyon to residents of Shelburne, Charlotte and surrounding areas. There are already over 700 building permits approved

with construction not yet started. What do these developers want? What is the basis of their fear? They remind me of Chicken Little, substituting the economy for the sky.

I wish to express my appreciation and thanks to Council Members Dooley, Greco and Emery for properly and courageously representing the great majority of South Burlington citizens.

They're thinking of our future, as well as that of our children's and grandchildren's. This is a very serious and significant issue, and it won't be settled until it's resolved by a full referendum decided by the citizenry. Let this vocal minority feel the full force of Vermont democracy. The sooner, the better.

*Robert Mann*  
*South Burlington*

## **Restore the Power of the People**

On the Town Meeting Day ballot, with thanks to our City Council, every South Burlington voter will have the opportunity to voice his/her opinion regarding the U.S. Supreme Court decision known as Citizens United. In that decision, the High Court held that money equates with speech, speech protected under the First Amendment, and additionally that corporations have rights constitutionally intended for individual persons.

This has led to a flood of really big money into the electoral process. We have all witnessed the havoc wreaked in the current Republican presidential race by super-rich individuals and Super PACS, havoc enabled by Citizens United. The need to correct this situation cuts across party lines, across individual philosophical and political differences. Big money in the electoral process, big money from any source, must go.

Please, I encourage us all to think about and to discuss the impact which Citizens United has had, and will continue to have, on our lives if change is not brought about. On Town Meeting Day, I hope that you will join me in supporting that change by voting "yes" in support of restoring the power of the people to the heart of our electoral process.

*Maida F. Townsend, South Burlington*

**JANUARY 26, 2012**

## **Support for Interim Zoning**

Ain't this a very old argument? I recall from when I lived here 1970-75, that it was largely about the southeast quadrant. Developers seem to have had their ways, and now the area has more condo aggregates and palatial houses than I would have expected. Still, it's not ugly, just mind-boggling. It all seems to fit nicely into the city. I just hope the tax revenues are satisfactory, and barely resent those who can afford to live there.

After 1975, I lived for 35 years in Burlington and recall the dispute continuing to pop up now and then, like measles. I was glad to be out of it and didn't follow it. Now I'm newly a South Burlington homeowner and feel as if I had never left. I had measles three times as a child, but not since.

The arguments by both sides are old and tiresome, but the dispute is endless and I guess ought to be. I don't think many of us, even developers, want South Burlington to become as densely built as Burlington. The problem is that, like all business owners, developers are focused on immediate business possibilities. What they seem to want now is to cram housing into every nook and cranny, and that's bad. When every square of foot of land is built up, they'll complain about height regulations. So, I support a moratorium.

It does seem unjust to continue to tax them on property bought with the expectation of developing it, so maybe we should waive those taxes for the time being.

But, guys, there's no rush to develop. There's time to sit back and ponder now and then. Short moratoria are nothing to the centuries. If our city gets a reputation for being unfriendly to developers, you can bet they'll rush back the minute opportunity affords.

*Fred G Hill*  
*South Burlington*

## **I support the use of Interim Zoning**

I attended the January 17 meeting of the City Council at Orchard [School] about Interim Zoning but left before the end. In my opinion, there were too many loud, and in some cases rude, opponents who dominated the meeting. Some of these people do not live in our city and have only a profit motive in mind. I support the use of Interim Zoning at this time because there is a great deal at stake in South Burlington. I have lived here since 1986 and experienced dramatic increases in traffic as well as seen the loss of much of our open space and agricultural land. We have community forums where we discuss and come to a consensus about these issues, but then end up with ambiguous regulations that don't serve us well. At a time when we have had the highest growth rate in Chittenden County, it seems reasonable to stop and consider not only what our vision of South Burlington is but how best to accomplish our goals. The opportunity to protect our quality of life is slipping away.

*Susan Clark  
South Burlington*

## **Why I favor Interim Zoning**

Planning Commission and DRB [Development Review Board] members past and present have said we need more specificity in certain LDR's [land development regulations] to provide the tools needed in evaluating developments, particularly residential. The Comprehensive Plan has involved great thought toward re-visioning South Burlington's future. That future is different from what we are used to and envisions transportation alternatives, incentives for local agriculture, cleaner waterways, a compact mixed-use City Center, new housing types and patterns, proximity to jobs and services. It will be a large body of work for the Planning Commission to adjust the zoning regulations to reflect the new Comp Plan. Developers should be there to help us shape this new future, in which they can do business but in a way that the City's citizens want and need. Part of this would involve allowing the volunteer boards the time to do this important work without the pressure of constant new building applications. This is why I favor Interim Zoning (not a moratorium). Successful businesses have to be willing to look forward to new "products" and new ways of meeting the needs of their "customers," not clinging to old practices and old paradigms. There is only so much land and development potential left in South Burlington. Let's steward it wisely so that South Burlingtonians 100 years from now will still be able to say this is a great place to live, close to amenities and services, with houses for all incomes, and thriving businesses, yet providing ample riches of open space, farms and gardens, recreation paths, beauty and cultural offerings. These are all things that people noted on last spring's citizens' survey. Once the remaining land is gone, that will be the end of the development business here, as well as the end of the type of City we enjoy today.

*Sarah L. Dopp  
President South Burlington Land Trust*

## **In Support Of Interim Zoning**

At the 12/19/11 and 1/17/12 City Council meetings, Chair Sandra Dooley and Rosanne Greco outlined compelling arguments to establish interim zoning (IZ), which would likely slow, but certainly not stop, development in the City in the next 2 years.

As expected, many business people and developers cautioned that IZ would be economically harmful, burdensome for the City Council, and greatly polarizing, and their presentations were eloquent and persuasive.

The discussion contrasted the consequences of a mild building slowdown over the next 2 years, with those of allowing unwanted or sub optimally planned developments, which cannot be undone.

Many on both sides acknowledged that the present land development regulations and Comprehensive Plan are in many places ambiguous or conflicting, and that updates regarding waivers, transfer development rights [TDRs], energy-efficient building codes and related renewable energy features, are needed.

[Councilor] Jim Knapp argued for the status quo, claiming that the Planning Commission [PC] and DRB [Development Review Board] can deal with these issues without intervention. He ignored the fact that 2 PC members and 2 DRB members have supported IZ, explaining that it would give them the chance to clarify and update regulations, the revision of which will otherwise likely take 5 to 10 years.

It would be nice if an ad hoc committee could be charged with expediting this update, and obviate the need for IZ, but this probably is not feasible. Alternatively, the IZ resolution could be narrowed to focus on residential housing, where most of the problems have been identified.

The Council has shown foresight and courage in raising this delicate but pressing issue; we should provide input by January 31, 2012, and support their subsequent decision.

*Michael J. Scollins  
South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning**

The developers have done a great job of infiltrating City government on both the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board (DRB). I suppose they got there by virtue of their knowledge and experience in the field. That's understandable. It's also understandable that their profit motive is stronger than their desire to benefit the broader community.

On the one hand, the Planning Commission has succeeded in neutralizing the zoning regulations, especially with the advent of TDRs (Transfer Development Rights). Other communities around the U.S adopting TDRs for the purpose of increasing density have limited the increase typically to a maximum of 40 percent accompanied by other rules softening the impact on adjacent properties. The fundamental purpose of zoning laws is to protect property values. We had a good zoning law but it now seems virtually ineffective in the face of TDRs.

In the Southeast quadrant the planning commissioners have seen fit to allow increases of up to 233 percent (4 units per acre compared to 1.2) with no tapering of density or any other mitigating rules except at the DRB's discretion. This is clearly not in the best interests of those of us living in existing neighborhoods or those who will occupy the developing properties. They did include a vague admonition to "encourage residential use...compatible with existing neighborhoods," leaving the door open for the Design Review Board to protect property values in such areas but the DRB members deny both the responsibility and the authority to do so.

I applaud your motivation to do something about this sordid situation, appreciate all the effort you're putting into it and wish you success.

Many thanks for taking this initiative, please stick to it.

*John Gersbach  
South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning Proposal Should be Withdrawn**

I have been a resident of South Burlington since 1978 and a proud one for all that South Burlington has done in preserving open lands and creating public spaces. The current interim zoning proposal, while perhaps well intentioned, is ill advised for a number of reasons and should be withdrawn.

The proposal creates a perception that South Burlington is "anti business" in a down economy. Such unnecessary changes as the interim zoning proposal (which is functionally a moratorium on development) will immediately threaten future economic growth in our city. The fact that this conversation has gotten this far has already had a chilling effect on business owners in South Burlington.

The problems with the proposal are much more significant than whether or not South Burlington is pro or anti business. The proposal is being instituted without a thorough study and understanding of its likely financial impacts on the City and its taxpayers. Neither the City Council nor the City Manager have adequately defined the nature, size and scope of the alleged problems that they are attempting to solve with the interim zoning proposal. The proposal may also create a significant reduction in the grand list since owners of undeveloped land will be able to reduce their assessed values to reflect the fact that their land is not capable of being developed during the period of interim zoning. Municipalities have very limited sources of revenue: it is either coming from residents or commercial/industrial taxpayers. If the latter source is cut off, then the burden of meeting increased municipal expenses rest on the shoulders of the residential taxpayers.

The proposal usurps the powers of the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board. It allows the City Council to decide development applications on a subjective basis. It is also poorly drafted leaving open many questions which will in turn lead to increased appeals and litigation.

Finally, and not insignificantly, the proposal's application is too broad since it unduly restricts modifications to existing commercial and residential buildings.

For these reasons, the proposal should be withdrawn as soon as possible.

*Christopher L. Davis, Esq.  
South Burlington*

## **The Real Interim Zoning Issue**

As a member of the Development Review Board, I've seen first hand what is happening in South Burlington. It's the same thing that's happening in the rest of America. The real issue here is whether or not we citizens, the 99%, will let a 1% group of developers dictate how our city will look 25-50 years from now. A 1% Vermonter is a person whose annual income is approximately \$350,000. Most of the developers fit this profile. If given the opportunity, they'll usually maximize their investments at the expense of the environment. How is this done?

In my DRB tenure, I've seen developers stretch the envelope as much as possible. If the regulations state that a maximum of 20 housing units can be built, for example, they will often try to get waivers or purchase Transferred Development Rights (TDR) to build more. In many cases, they will plan for enough open space only if forced by our regulations, and/or by the DRB's insistence. It is seldom voluntary. Our Land Development Regulations, as used by the DRB, cannot protect the city from unwise construction. We can only judge individual projects, not look at the big picture. That has to come from a higher authority, the City Council.

Every project must be reviewed from a perspective other than profits and jobs. The number of jobs that will be lost by this freeze has been vastly overstated. There are more important criteria. Once land has been paved over it's gone forever as a natural area. We need space for people to enjoy Vermont's beauty as has been done for centuries, space for sustainable agriculture, space for people to gather in a setting that celebrates the environment that has been created. Our remaining natural world is in danger of being sliced, diced, paved, and ruined.

South Burlington needs a time-out. That's what Interim Zoning will give us. What kind of city do you want your grandchildren to inherit? Do you want ugly urban sprawl, or a beautiful city with a balance of green space, homes, and clean industry? It's time for the 99% to speak.

*Joe Randazzo*

JANUARY 19, 2012

## Conflict of Interest Allegation Is Groundless

Ralph E. DesLauriers' letter (Jan. 12, 2012, TOP) alleges I have "a significant and ongoing conflict of interest" regarding the Council's Interim Zoning proposal. Based on June 20, 2011, and January 17, 2012, analyses by City Attorney Steven Stitzel, DesLauriers' allegation is groundless.

Stitzel (2011): "*Council's action to develop and adopt interim land development regulations involves performance of 'legislative' duties on behalf of the voters of the City. . . . When acting in a 'legislative' capacity, Council members are not subject to the constitutional due process requirements of impartiality and ex parte communication that apply when they act in a 'quasi-judicial' capacity. They also are not subject to the limitations that apply when the Council acts in an 'administrative or executive' capacity*". In a 2000 Court of Appeals of Indiana decision "neighbors challenged adoption of a zoning ordinance amendment" based on their claim "that a council member whose wife owned a one fifth interest in property in the vicinity of the re-zoned property had a conflict of interest. . . . The appellate court disagreed stating:

*' . . . Appellants challenge a legislative, not an administrative determination based on fact-finding. In the legislative arena, there is no constitutional due process requirement of neutral decision makers. Instead, the check on the process is the ballot box.'*

*Other reported decisions involving strictly 'legislative' actions are in accord."*

Stitzel (2011): "*The fact that Ms. Dooley has been engaged in litigation with the developer of the property that adjoins hers over a period of years does not alter this analysis. It is our understanding that this litigation concluded in April of 2006.*"

Stitzel (2012), "*we find nothing in Attorney Murphy's January 6th (2012) letter that alters the analysis or conclusions expressed in our June 20th letter.*"

DesLauriers' allegation regarding communications with City staff about Cupola projects is also groundless.

DesLauriers' seeks to distract City residents from the substantive issues related to the Interim Zoning proposal. His allegations should have been put to rest last summer when Stitzel sent DesLauriers' lawyer a copy of his June 20, 2011, letter on this subject.

*Sandy Dooley  
Chair  
South Burlington City Council*

## Feeding our Grandchildren

In South Burlington, I know that we all agree that we want our families to be safe and comfortable, with the adults having satisfying jobs and bringing home a sustainable income, with the same excellent schools, and with affordable homes in pleasant surroundings. When I voted for City Councilors, I was hoping I had picked people who would be paying attention to these desires and feeling responsible for making this happen. This is why I feel good about their recent vote to consider Interim Zoning, which will give them the time to be aware of what is happening in the world today and to adjust our zoning to future needs.

We are slowly entering a period in which oil/gasoline will be becoming more and more scarce and expensive. At the UN Climate Conference in Africa recently (<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>), the new entrepreneurs were talking of their plan to buy up as much agricultural land as possible in the world to grow plants and trees that could be processed to become fuel. Transportation fuel is an important piece in bringing food across the countries and across the oceans. Here in South Burlington, we have the opportunity to set aside prime agricultural land where we can grow our own food and eat it when it is fresh. We will not be able to afford California food any more.

I was born in the depression and lived through the fears of WWII. I also have had a life when oil was cheap and plentiful; I'm fortunate. Now I want to make sure that my grandchildren and great-grandchildren will not be hungry. Please, Councilors, take control and zone our agricultural land for food production. This is a necessary step for the future.

*Fran Moravcsik  
South Burlington*

## **The Angel Fund Holiday Shop Thank You**

Because of the many people who gave us new gifts or a monetary donation, the Holiday Shop was a big success. Your participation in this charitable endeavor brought much joy to the people who shopped.

South Burlington should be proud for helping to keep in reality the real meaning of the holiday which is giving.

Thank you sincerely and Happy New Year to all of you.

*Anne Corley and Jane Stickney  
South Burlington  
Angel Fund*

## **Be a Santa to a Senior**

On behalf of the staff at Home Instead Senior Care, I would like to thank everyone who helped with this year's very successful *Be a Santa to a Senior* program.

With support from generous shoppers and many area businesses we were able to collect more than 1200 gifts for local seniors who otherwise might have been overlooked this holiday season.

We also would like to thank the many individuals and agencies who shared their time to identify seniors in need, and help wrap and deliver the gifts to over 600 area seniors who continue to struggle during these tough economic times.

Thanks to ALL those who helped us brighten the holidays for our local seniors and truly making a difference in our community.

*Patrice Thabault  
Home Instead Senior Care  
Business Owner, South Burlington*

**JANUARY 12, 2012**

## **City Council Oversteps It's Boundaries Recommending Interim Zoning**

Six months ago our City Council attempted to impose an Interim Zoning (IZ) Bylaw that would have created a de-facto building moratorium on substantially all residential, commercial and industrial development throughout the City.

Those efforts failed, but apparently Councilors Dooley, Greco and Emery feel that our community is in such a dire strait that they will do what it takes to save us from ourselves, and IZ has been proposed again.

A public hearing is scheduled at the Orchard Elementary School for January 17. A matter this significant, with potentially severe economic impacts for many, should be thoroughly discussed. Information and explanations should be credible and above political or ideological prejudice. The Council must resist the impulse to make law without understanding or being able to justify these impacts.

As the debate continues on yet another divisive issue, a larger problem should concern all of us! Our Councilors are supposed to serve us. They are supposed to take a reasoned approach to problem solving. Unfortunately, the motives for Interim Zoning are ideologically driven, and reason seems to be taking a back seat. Three people have apparently decided to hijack the zoning and planning process that has democratically served us, and taken things into their own hands. Though not perfect, it is based on respect and reason. How can it be so easy for three people to decide the fate of our Community? What issue will they decide next is so compelling that they will impose their views, and perhaps will on all of us?

I appreciate the service that our Councilors are attempting to provide, but they need to take a step back and see the big picture here. Set your ideology aside, or at least subordinate it to the best interests of the Community you were elected to serve.

*Michael Simoneau  
Resident and Business Owner  
South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning Proposal**

As a relative newcomer to Vermont, more specifically S. Burlington, I am really concerned at the City Council's proposed "Interim Zoning Proposal."

Since the recession began in 2008, I have watched as communities across our nation have tried and failed at attracting residential and commercial development projects, in order that their dwindling tax revenues not impact essential services.

I can only imagine what the reactions that Council members in West Hartford, CT (where I moved from) would be to the chilling message that this ordinance sends—not only to taxpayers, service receivers but job creators, and innovators.

It is as if the leadership of the City has decided the only way to solve pressing budget issues is to close the borders, ignore innovation and planned growth.

This proposed ordinance is flawed, not reflective of how a community grows and thrives. If not defeated, it needs serious work for our community to continue to thrive. My opinion, and I am more than willing to help.

*Pam Mackenzie  
South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning**

As a resident of this city for over 30 years, I wish to register my strong opposition to a moratorium on development in South Burlington as currently under discussion by the City Council.

The growth that South Burlington has experienced over the past decades benefits our community in a multitude of ways. That there has been much development here—one of Chittenden County's and Vermont's strongest economic engines—should be no great surprise to people. It is a testament to the City's vision for itself. Our schools, neighborhoods, and community amenities make South Burlington a model for the positive symbiotic relationship that can exist between business development and quality of life.

A moratorium broadcasts a strongly negative message to businesses considering a location or expansion in our city, and unfortunately at a time when we should be sending the very opposite message. For many businesses caught in the Great Recession, they are only recently finding economic conditions changed favorably enough to begin investing again. Additional delays in implementing their growth strategies may be extremely detrimental to their long term viability and to the economic vitality of our community.

One must ask how widely and deeply-held are these concerns? And, one must also raise the question about the manner and timing with which the City Council had scheduled discussion of this important matter; during the end-of-year, busy holiday season when people are distracted or not inclined to turn out for public hearings.

If the public believes that current policies are wrong or misguided, then let us have a vigorous debate benefitted by the full engagement of the informed community. I strongly urge the citizens of South Burlington to speak out at the upcoming council meeting, and for the City Council to thoughtfully assess the short- and long-term effects—both direct and indirect—that such a moratorium on development would bear on South Burlington and its citizens.

*Lisa Ventriss  
South Burlington*

## **Conflict of Interest**

Sandra Dooley, chair of the City Council, has a significant and ongoing conflict of interest in the Proposed Interim Zoning Proposal that she has authored and sponsored. Her continuing conflict involves a variety of litigation matters starting in 1979 and spanning over a quarter century. She and her husband repeatedly tried to prevent Cupola Inc. from developing the 27-acre Quarry Hill parcel adjacent to their house on East Terrace. She has been involved in two Vermont Superior Court cases, the second appealed by the Dooleys to the Vermont Supreme Court. In the Supreme Court case, because of the potential appearance of a conflict of interest, not only did her husband, Justice Dooley, recuse himself, but all other sitting Justices felt the need to recuse themselves.

Over the past thirty years, Sandra Dooley has been in the forefront of the opposition as an individual opponent and spokesperson for the East Terrace neighborhood, consistently opposing each application by attending and speaking out at hearings.

Further, as Chair of the City Council, Dooley has engaged in repeated and ongoing informal and direct communication with City staff related to Cupola's projects.

Dooley as Chair of the Council personally proposed interim zoning, specifically drafted to impact the Quarry Hill project differently than other projects in the City. It appears to be more than a coincidence that the proposal would immediately impact the construction of projects directly behind Dooley's home at a time that applications for the construction of such projects are imminent. As IZ author, she excluded eight separate zoning districts, yet chose not to exclude this 27-acre PUD.

The interim zoning will have a direct favorable personal and pecuniary interest on Dooley and her property by hampering the proper development of the 27 acres. Dooley should not be able use and abuse her power as Council Chair by using it to gain personal advantages she could not gain in court or through the proper permit process. This is a clear and flagrant Conflict of Interest.

*Ralph E DesLauriers  
President, Quarry Hill Club*

*South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning a Quandary**

If the push to Interim Zoning didn't feel so much like NIMBY on the part of neighbors to the proposed Farrell development, I think it would probably get more support. I do support the desire for a form-based code for higher density residential and commercial development, particularly for the Dorset and Williston Road Downtown Development area. It is clear from the Planning Workshops that this type of zoning would result in better quality development.

However, if you look at the drivers of residential development in South Burlington, it might present a picture of where the problems lie. Who decides that 3000 sf+ homes and 2000 sf condominiums is what the market requires? No one surveys the buyer.

When I bought a 1/6 acre lot in a planned neighborhood in 1991 and built a self-designed 1400 sf "cottage" with room for expansion, I went against the grain of standard development. The realtor insisted that building a smaller home would preclude me from easily selling this home in the future. I had to remind the realtor that I was designing this home for my use, not hers. Developers and realtors build homes that suit their profit margins rather than ones that make for great communities. The two need not be mutually exclusive.

As one of the original members of the Dorset Street Design Review Committee, I asked the then Planning Director if it was possible to expand the role of the Design Review Committee to be City-wide. I was rather abruptly told—no. Maybe it's time to reconsider.

The question of whether we institute interim zoning is a complicated one. While most of us don't want to see a reduction in building that would hurt contractors or developers and perhaps drive development costs higher, we also need all developers to be progressive- as some in South Burlington have been. If developers paid attention to forward-thinking planners, architects, and landscape architects to create affordable housing and better commercial centers- as they have for some development, we can together create a more livable city. Will it take interim zoning to do this?

*Donna Leban, AIA, LC  
South Burlington*

**JANUARY 5, 2012**

## **Transitioning into the Future**

As our community works on a new five-year Comprehensive Plan, it's exciting to look at some of the initiatives that are already taking place in South Burlington, initiatives transitioning into a changed future. Common Roots is teaching children how to grow and prepare their own food; the Bread and Butter Farm is both feeding the community and, by their rotational grazing system, creating sustainable soils.

Worldwide, people are meeting together in their communities in a movement called "Transition Towns" or "Transition Initiatives." They are learning skills and developing projects that will increase the resiliency of their community as energy costs rise and severe weather events become more frequent. And they're having a good time doing it because of the creativity and neighborliness that results from their work. For instance, many people are planting fruit and nut trees in their backyards. These are insurance trees for a time when it's too expensive to transport fruits and nuts for long distances. These trees also give people a lot of immediate satisfaction while planting them and watching them grow.

Early in 2012 we'll be having a community meeting to find out who's interested in having a Transition South Burlington. If you have questions, or want to work on initiating this meeting, please contact me at [soburltt@gmail.com](mailto:soburltt@gmail.com). In Transition work, everyone decides what they want to do and how much they want to participate. So there's room for everyone. Let us hear from you.

*Sophie Quest  
South Burlington*

## **Interim Zoning**

I was heartened to see that the City Council has once again brought up the idea of Interim Zoning. It is so necessary today to stop and think about what we are doing. If you read the draft of the new Comprehensive Plan, you see that many new ideas are included to take account of the real world in which we will be living in the future.

We need to be increasing the amount of food that is grown in South Burlington. We need to have transportation that is not auto-dependent. We need to make sure that we keep the open space that contributes to the quality of life that Vermonters take for granted. We need affordable housing that will be available for young families. Interim Zoning is a plan that will give us the opportunity to do real thinking and planning.

Please come to the hearing at City Hall on January 17 to discuss this important issue. Let's not live in the past. Let's have positive visions for the future.

*Kalyn Weber  
South Burlington*

## **South Burlington Interim Zoning Proposal**

The goal of residents, land owners and business people within the City of South Burlington should be to ensure a balanced approach to our community's governance and one that places appropriate value on various objectives such as the health and wellbeing of our citizens, their economic livelihood and ability to earn a sustainable living, the quality of our educational system, reasonable access to housing, and our land use patterns as agreed upon in our Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations (LDRs). I understand that each of these goals is dependent upon the others. Without a quality education system and livable city we cannot attract the growing and innovative businesses that produce tax revenue and jobs. Without tax revenue produced by those businesses and the jobs they create we cannot afford to protect our environment through conservation measures or provide the type of school system that attracts those businesses in the first place. It is a delicate balance that requires thoughtfulness and moderation, not rigid ideology or personal prejudice.

I believe the proposed Interim Zoning bylaw would seriously and irrevocably harm South Burlington's livability and desirability as it would cause widespread economic hardship and brand the city as being demonstrably anti-business; a harmful impression that will certainly last long beyond the proposed two year moratorium on virtually ALL commercial, industrial and residential development and construction. It is my intention as a business person within the community to urge our City Council to take a more reasoned, informed and logical approach to addressing any perceived problems they may have with the current LDRs. There is an existing process already in place for modifying them and I encourage the Council to use it accordingly, as needed. It is the job of City Councilors to do the will of the people. I—and apparently many others—do not believe that by any reasonable standard this emergency Interim Zoning bylaw is necessary “to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare and provide for orderly physical and economic growth.” (From VT Statutes online, see <http://www.leg.state.vt.us/statutes/fullsection.cfm?Title=24&Chapter=117&Section=04415>). In fact it will have quite the opposite effect.

*John Illick  
Managing Partner Technology Park  
Business Owner, ReArch Company of South Burlington*

**DECEMBER 15, 2011**

## **Thank You For Voting On Article I In Regards To Voting On City & School Budgets**

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported Article I in regards to changing the charter to allow citizens of this community to be able to vote on their city and school budgets until they are passed by the voters. Once this charter change is approved by the legislature next term, we as taxpayers will have more control over both the city and school budgets in the future and allow the Democratic process and transparency to occur.

On behalf of my wife, Marlene, and myself, we are very proud to be involved in this charter change process and greatly appreciate all the support from many of our citizens of South Burlington. Enjoy your new venture of Democracy.

*Jay L. Zaetz  
South Burlington*

## **What's your excuse?**

South Burlington had an election this week. That may be news to many as voter turnout was reported to be 8 percent.

I read that tally Wednesday, December 7, on the anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Ironic, don't you think? Thousands died on that day and continue to die so we have the freedoms we enjoy—including the right to vote.

If you voted, thank you. If you didn't, what's your excuse?

*Ken Horseman  
South Burlington*

## **Words of Gratitude**

I write to thank everyone who took the time to come to the polls on such a dreary and cold day and vote, or vote absentee, in the December 6<sup>th</sup> Special Election. While I am pleased that voters approved all three Articles by wide margins, my appreciation extends to all who voted, whether their votes were “Yea” or “Nay.”

I want to take this opportunity, also, to thank City staff, in particular, Director of Planning and Zoning Paul Conner; School Board Chair Rich Cassidy, City Councilors; members of the South Burlington Land Trust; and members of the South

Burlington Natural Resources Committee for their diligent efforts directed toward educating the public about the three Articles on the Special Election ballot.

The Wheeler Nature Park walks organized by the Natural Resources Committee and the South Burlington Land Trust gave folks an on-the-ground understanding of what the Land Exchange and Conservation Easement Article was all about. In addition, many residents got a first-time introduction to this fabulous natural resource located in the center of our wonderful City.

Thank you, again, to all.

*Sandy Dooley*  
*Chair, SB City Council*

**DECEMBER 1, 2011**

## **Public Works Drops the Ball on First Storm**

The decision of PWD not to plow residential neighborhoods after the first storm was a major oversight. While the conditions forecast for 3 days following the storm may have been favorable, and while the morning of the storm may have been somewhat manageable for those going to work, the icy mess that was left in the wake of a freezing night is unacceptable and deserves an explanation. Residential neighborhood roads were icy for one of the most traveled days of the year. Many people need to walk their dog or want to get some exercise in advance of their annual feast. The terrible conditions forced people into the middle of the streets to seek a tiny patch of clear road. There are many people like the elderly woman that lives across the street from me—trapped in her house because she was terrified of slipping on the ice that covered the road near her mailbox. This was a bad job by those making decisions. As one of the most highly taxed areas in VT, we deserve better.

*Don Angwin*  
*South Burlington*

**NOVEMBER 23, 2011**

## **Wheeler Nature Park Highlands/JAM Golf land swap**

First, I should state that this is my personal opinion. Currently I'm a member of the South Burlington Natural Resources Committee.

For the last two years the Natural Resources Committee has been developing a management plan for the Wheeler Nature Park. Nowhere in that plan does it mention trading off 7 prime acres of the park. To some, the trade of approximately 7 acres for 21 might seem like a good deal. What everyone should be well aware of is the fact that the 21 acre wildlife corridor (ranging 100 to 375 feet in width) leads to a parcel of land that has already been approved for development. Also the corner of the Wheeler Nature Park would have 32 to 34 units built on it. That is almost 5 units per acre and the runoff pond for the units would be on Wheeler Nature Park land. Even with the swap Highlands Development will be able to build an additional 54 units on their remaining property. In addition one prime piece of forest on JAM Golf land has already been lost in litigation to development.

Isn't this just another example of corporate greed? If this land swap is approved, every time you drive down Dorset Street you will see a development on the corner of a piece of property that should have remained open. I cannot in good conscience support this proposal.

*Beth Thorpe*  
*South Burlington*

## **Build Community One Piece at a Time**

Walk A Block and Stash the Trash. I seldom collect less than a grocery bag full of littered trash whenever I walk a block in South Burlington, even if I return to the same block a week later. Heavily travelled roads appear the most littered. Many quiet residential neighborhoods also merit the undesirable label-dirtied by errant trash.

Adopt a Street: Corporations, businesses, non-profits, students, residents, adopt one or more of the three hundred and sixty three streets in South Burlington; commit to keeping it clean at least four times a year for a year.

To request a South Burlington street listing, or anti-litter resources, email me at [litterwithastorytotell@yahoo.com](mailto:litterwithastorytotell@yahoo.com). Read about others who clean up their environment one piece at a time on my blog @ <http://www.litterwithastorytotell.blogspot.com/>.

*Bernie Paquette*  
*South Burlington*  
*Author of Green and Clean*

## Smart and Sensible

I'm writing to encourage you to come out and Vote on December 6. The Council has called a special election for three ballot items:

- (1) a charter change calling for a public vote on City and School budgets until they're passed—undoubtedly a more readily comprehensible provision for the taxpayers and for the City and School administrations;
- (2) a charter change aligning a costly and burdensome City policy with State policy regarding real estate appraisals; and
- (3) a proposed land swap with a private developer as a solution to a long legal battle, giving the City more natural open space, strategically located in a wildlife corridor, and at a ratio of nearly 3 to 1 in our favor—with the additional safeguard of preserving the open land through a land trust.

This is what the language boils down to for me, and I hope that you'll agree that all three items are smart and sensible solutions for our City. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me ([memery@sburl.com](mailto:memery@sburl.com)) or any of my colleagues on the Council.

Best regards and Happy Thanksgiving!

*Meaghan Emery*  
*South Burlington City Council Vice-Chair*

## Vote YES on All Three 1 December 6 Special Election Ballot Articles

I begin with Article III, PROPOSED LAND EXCHANGE AND CONSERVATION EASEMENT, because it is a bit complicated. The City's Development Review Board denied, in part, an application regarding Vermont National Country Club (Country Club) land East of Dorset Street and South of Wheeler Nature Park, the developer appealed, and the City is presently in Court. The City lost a similar Court case in 2008. The City and developer have defined a mutually acceptable proposed settlement.

The proposal would exchange 7+ acres of Wheeler Nature Park for 21+ Country Club acres. The Nature Park parcel is the least important ecologically of its current land. The Country Club parcel is a wildlife corridor, adjacent to the Nature Park, and would add a net 14 acres. The reconfigured Nature Park would be placed under a perpetual conservation easement, meaning no development and no part sold or exchanged forever. The easement would recognize the lease interests of the National Gardening Association, a current Park tenant. The developer would give the City \$10,000 to enhance the newly acquired land. Please vote YES on Article III.

Article I would eliminate the "two-strikes-and-you're-out" budget voting provision ("you're out" result: prior budget plus COLA) and substitute a vote-on-budgets-until-they-pass process. Should this Article be approved and Budget voting continued into the next fiscal year, the City or School could borrow and expend funds but not exceed the last voter-approved budget. This seems sensible and fair. Please vote YES vote Article I.

Please cast a YES vote on Article II to eliminate the requirement for reappraisals every three years. The 2006 reappraisal had a contract price of \$390,700, with no city-wide reappraisal since. Vermont law has provisions that measure how well municipalities appraise local property. When municipalities fall outside the defined standards, Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) and Coefficient of Dispersion (COD), the municipality must conduct a reappraisal. See TOP election ad for information about CLA and COD. We see no reason for requiring an expensive reappraisal every three years when State law provisions measure our appraisal performance. Vote YES on Article II.

*Sandy Dooley*  
*Chair, SB City Council*

**NOVEMBER 17, 2011**

## In Support of the Proposed Land Swap

I want to echo Sarah Dopp's View Point in *The Other Paper* in support of the proposed land swap. This item is on the ballot for the special vote on December 6<sup>th</sup>. As much as I hate losing open land—much less a nature park—for housing developments, this seems to be the best way to end our legal battles and still preserve some important open space. We have been in legal battles since 2003 with J. A. McDonald's corporations: JAM Golf and Highlands Development LLC. The City lost one lawsuit over these lands because of the imprecise manner in which our land development regulations were written. Unfortunately, we are still in court over the same lands. In order to stop the costs of litigation, the City has reached a proposed out-of-court agreement with the plaintiff to swap some land. Highlands Development would acquire seven acres of the Wheeler Nature Park. In exchange, they would give the city 21 acres of open space adjacent to the Wheeler Nature Park. These 21 acres are where wildlife live and move. The developer intended to build on this land, thus disrupting the animals' homes and transit routes. The seven acres of the Nature Park that the developer would acquire are the least environmentally significant. In addition, the developer would also give the City \$10,000 to develop trails or plant vegetation in the area. But most importantly, the City will then include these 21 acres into the Park and will turn the entire Wheeler Nature Park over to a third party land conservation agency, such as a land trust, to protect it in perpetuity through a conservation easement. This would mean that Wheeler lands would remain a Nature Park forever.

I support this proposal (Article III) on the ballot, as well as the other two ballot items: changing the way we pass our yearly budgets (we vote on it until it passes), and deleting the provision in our City Charter to conduct reappraisals. These appraisals are not legally needed, and they cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars to do.

Please vote.

*Rosanne Greco*  
*South Burlington*

## Land Swap at Wheeler Park—vote Yes

The City of South Burlington and the Vermont National Country Club have reached an amicable and creative agreement for a land exchange that would end eight years of litigation concerning the building of more houses than already approved on land surrounding the golf course, and would avoid an expected adverse ruling against the city by the Environmental Court—should the matter go to court. The city vote on this proposal is scheduled for December 6.

The Vermont National Country Club proposes to give to the city 21.27 acres of land in a 100-ft. -wide strip extending south from the southeast corner of Wheeler Nature Park. These acres provide a valuable corridor for wildlife, and officially designating the land for this purpose would serve the city's stated goal to improve wildlife habitat. The Golf Course would give the city \$10,000 for revegetation and trail construction on those acres.

In exchange for these acres, the city would transfer 6.91 acres at the southwest corner of Wheeler Nature Park, adjacent to the corner of Park Road, to Highlands Development/J.A. Macdonald for the building of 34 housing units there. The city's Natural Resources committee has said that the acreage under discussion is the least ecologically valuable in Wheeler Nature Park, and that the city stands to gain more than fourteen acres overall in an important north-south swath running from Wheeler toward Shelburne Pond for a wildlife corridor.

If voters approve the ballot measure the City would retain ownership of the land transferred to Wheeler Nature Park, but entrust Wheeler's consolidated 119 acres to a third-party land trust for a guaranteed layer of protection in perpetuity.

As one who has strongly advocated for open space and parks in South Burlington for over forty years, my first reaction to this land swap was concern for the integrity of our established parks. A thorough questioning of the details has convinced me it is an overall gain for parks and conservation in our city. I plan to vote "yes" on December 6, and hope others will see the benefits as well.

*Barbara Bull*  
*South Burlington*

## **Vote Yes on Article 1 Changing the Charter in Regard to Voting on Our Budgets**

We have come a long way in the process of approving budgets in South Burlington. Now for the first time in over 40 years there could be no restrictions on the way we vote on our budgets. On December 6<sup>th</sup> the citizen voters of South Burlington will be able to vote on this charter change to allow us to vote in the future on the City and School Budgets until the voters pass each budget separately. This means that the (CPI) Consumer Price Index will be eliminated from the charter and will not force us after two votes to increase both the City and School budgets automatically. This simply cannot continue anymore in the future.

By having this change in the charter, we the citizens will have more control over our budgets and allow the Democratic process to occur, as do other communities. This charter change will become more transparent and accountable in the voting process in the future. Both the City Council and School Board support and approved this Charter Change.

I am very proud of the effort and greatly appreciate everyone's support to change this charter, so please vote yes on Article 1 on voting day.

*Jay L. Zaetz*  
*South Burlington*

**NOVEMBER 10, 2011**

## **Bill of Rights for Children of Arrested/Incarcerated Parents**

The State of Vermont provides wonderful support to its children and families in many ways. We offer education, financial supports, programming, and generally value the families in our communities. It is with this belief that I am writing with strong support for the passing of House Bill 273, an act related to a Bill of Rights for Children of Arrested and Incarcerated Parents. The benefits of passing this bill extend beyond the initial safety of the children.

There is limited information related to children of incarcerated individuals because they are such a marginalized and overlooked population. These children have a higher likelihood of both dropping out of school and/or becoming offenders themselves. One national study estimates that the cost of dropping out of school equals approximately \$292,000. Clearly not addressing the needs of these children can have financial ramifications. They may also struggle more with mental health and behavioral issues, academics, and interpersonal relationships. This does not need to be the case.

With appropriate supports, children can also thrive and hurdle over these issues. With interventions that combine services for both parents and children, this cycle of crime and high-risk behaviors can be broken. This requires collaborative and supportive efforts from various programs and environments. Some have already begun around the state. Recent successes have been noticed coming from the Lamoille Community Justice Project in Hyde Park.

Passing House Bill 273 is a logical next step for setting a standard for program development for children and families that are often penalized for reasons out of their control. As a state that supports so many families, it is logical that we would continue to create opportunities for these children to flourish as well.

*Talia J. Glesner*  
*South Burlington*

## **Veteran's Memorial at Dorset Park Update**

I thought I would take the time to write another article to give the citizens of this community an update on our efforts to build the Veteran's Memorial at Dorset Park; fundraising efforts are currently under way. This memorial will be a place of honor dedicated to all veterans from South Burlington of all wars and their families. As you know by now, the Veterans Committee is asking for donation from the citizens of this community. We need to raise about \$80,000 more in order to build this Veteran's Memorial. Our goal is to start building this Veteran's Memorial at Dorset Park in the very near future. This however will depend on funding through donations, as this is the only way the Veterans Memorial will be built. So, we need your help and I ask all citizens of this community if you have not pitched in, please donate to the Veterans Memorial.

Here are some of the ways that we are fund raising. We have drop-boxes located at businesses around South Burlington. They are at Zachary's Pizza, Dunkin Donuts, Quiznos Subs, Al's French Fries, Aviation Deli, Arcadia Diner, Jiffy Mart, Marco's Pizza, Aubuchon Hardware, U Save Beverage Center, and Champlain Farms.

If you wish to make a larger donation, then please make your checks payable to the South Burlington Veteran's Memorial Fund. Mail your donation to the SB Recreation Department, 575 Dorset Street, South Burlington, VT. 05403.

If you would like more information about the Veteran's Memorial at Dorset Park, you may call the Recreation Department at 846-4108 and we will send you our brochure on the Veteran's Memorial.

The Veteran's Committee will be very appreciative of any contributions that you are willing to make for this Veteran's Memorial. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank those of you of have already contribute to this memorial fund.

Thanking you advance for all you support.

*Jay L. Zaetz*  
*Chairman of the Veterans*

## **Let's Get Out There This Winter**

You may wonder why a seventeen-year-old cares so much about our roads here in South Burlington, but it's actually not much of a mystery. I drive my 2002 VW Jetta every day, all around town. Come winter, I'm going to be using it just as much—but with snow on the ground. I've been warned hundreds of times about winter driving and its hazards. There is one hazard, however, that I cannot control; the City of South Burlington must step up to maintain keeping the roads clear. Last winter I was not satisfied with the city's efforts at plowing the roads. I hope that this winter there will be steps taken to ensure that cars and people can safely traverse South Burlington's roads and sidewalks.

First, plows should use salt when necessary. When I'm driving on a road and see piles of salt and a completely dry pavement, I find it a waste of our money. If this salt could be distributed equally on the roads throughout the winter, I would be a much happier driver.

I will also be satisfied if the sidewalks are plowed in a timely fashion. If there's a sidewalk piled two feet high with powder, the students who walk to school will not be able to use the sidewalk but must resort to walking in the road—an extremely dangerous practice.

Lastly, my number one request to all those snow plows is planning ahead. I look up the weather every night to plan my outfit for school the next day. In this same way, if snow plows are prepared for snow storms and get out early instead of waiting until the storm actually hits, it will be easier for both them and our commuters.

As of today, it has already snowed once. Though that snowfall didn't last, I know there will be much more to come. With that promise of snow, South Burlington must be prepared and active to better combat the debilitations of winter.

*Ashley Frizzell*  
*South Burlington*

**OCTOBER 27, 2011**

## **Wheeler Nature Park a treasure**

Want to go for a short hike, about one or two hours? Don't want to drive or walk or bike very far to get to the hiking area from your home. Want to be in the city but feel like you are hiking in the country and in the woods. Enter Wheeler Nature Park beginning off the dirt parking area on the corner of Swift and Dorset Streets. Laminated trail maps are available at the entrance of the park. Walking the trail on October 23 our

group viewed bluebirds, yellow rumped warblers, red-tailed hawk and other birds. We stopped along the way to admire what may be the largest (in diameter) oak tree in South Burlington, some large specimens of beech tree, and some Junipers loaded like a Christmas tree of ornaments, with purple pea sized berries. The diversity of tree species in the park is impressive, from cedar, birch, various oaks, beech, and many more including the invasive buckthorn. The guided tour was educational in identifying trees, birds, park area history, and viewing the areas involved in the potential land-swap proposal (see 10/20/2011 article in The Other Paper.) For more information on the next guided walk (Sunday Nov. 6 at noon) visit [www.sburlrecdept.com](http://www.sburlrecdept.com) or contact Cathyann LaRose at 846-4106 or [clarose@sburl.com](mailto:clarose@sburl.com).

*Bernie Paquette  
South Burlington  
Author of Green and Clean column*

**OCTOBER 20, 2011**

## **SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT**

Mark Williams (TOP 10/13/11) is entitled to his views on the Council's decisions re former City Manager Hafter's retirement benefits and what a jury might do should these matters end up in Court—though his conjectures regarding damage awards are totally at odds with the legal principles in this area.

What I cannot let pass is his allegation that “Sandy Miller is making more than Chuck Hafter ever earned”. Please note.

1. Hafter's salary—\$115,000. Miller's salary - \$110,000.
2. Hafter's ICMA—14 percent of salary with no personal contribution. Miller's ICMA—10 percent with required personal 6 percent contribution.
3. Hafter—participation in the South Burlington Retirement Income Plan (SBRIP). Miller—participation in the Vermont Municipal Employees Retirement System (VMERS), continuation from Milton. City paid \$13,585 more annually for Hafter's SBRIP.
4. Hafter—\$40,000 interest-free loan to purchase home, \$25,000 forgiven. Miller—no loan of any kind.
5. Hafter—\$1,500 down payment for car lease and \$350 per month for lease payments. Miller—per mile reimbursement (same as other City employees) for business use of personal vehicle.
6. Hafter—one year salary and benefits severance payment, if subject to not-for-cause termination. Miller—same.
7. Hafter—214 days unused Sick Leave (no limit) upon retirement, to use for health benefits. Miller —75 day limit regardless of tenure.
8. Hafter—unlimited compensatory time if used it within 30 days. Miller—upon hire, no compensatory time. After observing Miller spend considerable time during holidays, weekends, and vacations on City duties, Council modified contract to provide for occasional taking of part or entire day off, without use of vacation time, when work involved multiple extended work days.

Only Miller's health insurance costs the City more, because it is a family plan, than Hafter's comparable benefit, which was a two-person plan. Please note that on October 4th, at Miller's invitation, Williams and three others met with Miller and me for an hour. Williams had ample opportunity to check out his perceptions re this subject and failed to do so. This situation troubles me deeply.

*Sandy Dooley, Chair  
South Burlington City Council*

## **Support For Cairns Arena And The Dpsa**

I would like to reflect on the enormous, positive impact Tony Cairns has had particularly on South Burlington and to Vermont in general. I am the founder and football coach of the South Burlington Dolphins youth football program and that is where I met the Cairns' for the first time. They have been supportive to children and have always been there for youth sports and to provide assistance whenever I requested it.

I reflect back to many years ago when some of my football players were also hockey players and I frequently took a group of them to the arena on North Avenue at 4 in the morning since that was the only available ice time for young players. We have progressed significantly because of the foresight, financial and personal commitment of Tony Cairns and his family. Now there are two state of the art arenas right in South Burlington without major expense and impact to the city. Tony Cairns and the Association affiliated with the arenas have put a class of hockey and other ice-based activities in South Burlington on the map. The arenas support hockey, other ice related activities, and public skating at all levels, fits nicely with the hockey popularity at UVM and St. Michael's and now has attracted national attention with women's hockey coming here in the Spring. This endeavor not only attracts attention to hockey and South Burlington but brings in significant supporting dollars by participants attending the cross section of ice-related events at these facilities.

To publicly challenge this positive arrangement with the Association at Cairns arena and to use the words "eminent domain and condemnation" in any text regarding this positive agreement is unreasonable and now this situation has sidelined even further improvements at the two arenas.

Non-profit organizations need a positive cash flow (not the same as profit) to remain solvent and fortunately any financial success they have attained in taking the risk of building these facilities in South Burlington has been put right back into the facilities and programs. Remember that these arenas would not have happened without them.

*Rene D. LaBerge*

*Coach and Founder, SB Dolphins Youth Football and the Dolphins' Foundation, South Burlington*

## **Not Diplomacy**

This letter is in response to Councilwoman Sandy Dooley's "olive branch" letter in last week's edition of The Other Paper.

Councilwoman Dooley began by stating that the Dorset Park Skating Association Board ("DPSA") and the City have been "communicating" over the past 6 months. This communication is better characterized as DPSA defending itself from multiple threats made by Mr. Miller on behalf of the Council. When DPSA approached the City for approval to build the \$1.8 million entryway last February, Mr. Miller responded by making numerous demands, including the payment of \$150,000/year in rent. His threats continued (with the Council's approval), culminating in the demand that DPSA turn over the Arena to the City or face an eminent domain lawsuit—a threat quoted by Councilwoman Dooley in her own "olive branch" letter.

No "olive branch" has been extended by the Council; Councilwoman Dooley's letter is intended to give the appearance of diplomacy. Don't be fooled—the City created issues where none existed and is now pretending to be diplomatic in resolving them. This is really quasi-extortion disguised as diplomacy.

I take offense to Councilwoman Dooley's statement that "when people value a longstanding relationship that has gone asunder and believe common interests may be served by preservation of the relationship, they will engage in good faith efforts to repair the relationship." DPSA didn't change the relationship—the City did. If the Council truly values a relationship with DPSA they certainly haven't shown it. Starting last April, DPSA repeatedly asked to meet with the Council. Those requests were denied and the threats escalated. The Council is wrongfully withholding insurance proceeds for rink repairs made by DPSA without any explanation or basis.

Councilwoman Dooley, where is the good faith in this behavior?

DPSA is committed to the continued success of Cairns Arena for the balance of its lease. The DPSA Board members have an obligation to the people who donated money to the Arena—to promote hockey and ice skating in South Burlington and Chittenden County. The Board intends to fulfill this obligation.

*Rick Kozlowski*

*South Burlington, DPSSA Board Member*

**OCTOBER 13, 2011**

### **Thank You Councilor Greco**

Kudos to Rosanne Greco for her letter last week.

With all the puerile behavior lately, it's nice to hear an adult voice. Of course we want you to speak up—that's why we elect people to be our representatives.

A belated thank you to the Council also for doing what it should have in the first place in giving Chuck Hafter his pension. He earned it.

As far as the Cairns Arena issue goes, let's hope sanity rules here also. We should honor the mutually beneficial agreement we made with a privately funded organization. To have not let them build a needed entryway for the reasons stated and to not let the public speak their minds recently is childish and controlling.

*Rich Pearl  
South Burlington*

### **Angel Fund Thanks**

Sincere thanks to all the people who supported the Angel Fund September yard sale. It was a big success and because of your support, we will be able to help many folks this winter.

Also thanks to the workers—Donna, Cele, Kathy, Gayle, Jane and Iris. A yard sale requires much work to make it productive. Job well done.

*E. Anne Corley and Jane K. Stickney  
South Burlington*

### **Reverse The Hafter Decision**

Chuck Hafter is not responsible for the worldwide recession. The City Council should reverse their decisions on Hafter's house equity and long term care insurance. I believe a jury reading the primary documents, and interviewing the previous council members, would vote in Hafter's favor. (My prediction is that if the Council issues an apology the city's insurance company will probably settle out of court for \$250,000, without an apology I estimate \$1 million, and the insurance company will probably drop South Burlington.)

Sandy Miller is earning more than Chuck Hafter ever earned during his 21-year tenure during good economic times (including two retirement benefits).

The reason for this is cited in Miller's new contract: the problems inherited from the previous administration. So, Miller has benefited from making hay.

*Mark Williams  
South Burlington*

**OCTOBER 6, 2011**

### **Silent No More**

When I came into the job as City Councilor in March, I approached it as I have done for most of my military career: accomplish the mission. My mission was to take care of the residents of South Burlington. I am not

influenced in the least by politics, or power, or money. And having been practically raised by nuns, I also view things from an ethical point of view. Both the military and the convent taught me to be honest and open and compassionate in dealing with people.

The manner in which some past City Council meetings have been conducted goes against my personal approach. We have been advised not to speak because of the potential for litigation. Unfortunately, I think we have complied with this to an absurd degree; and this fear of being sued has led to counter-productive behaviors. I think the need to communicate with the residents outweighs the risk of being subpoenaed. Lawsuits shouldn't be the driving force in our interpersonal relationships.

I try my best to get all the facts, understand all points of view, and then do what is ethically, legally, and financially right for the majority of the SB residents. And I also assume we have good intentions; and none of us harbors any ill will toward each other. But, the threatening and abusive emails that we have been receiving, the names we have been called, and the motives which have been ascribed to us is damaging. . . not just to us, but to the entire community. I realize that emotions often cause us to say or do things that we later regret. I hope we can get beyond that, and again treat each other with respect.

We are all neighbors who live in a small piece of paradise called Vermont. It is disheartening to see rifts developing because of lack of and mis-communication. I take responsibility for contributing to this by my silence. But I will be silent no longer. In the future, I intend to take some risks and communicate my personal observations—and then hope I don't end up in court.

NOTE: Everything written here is solely MY OPINION. It does not reflect the views or positions of any other Councilor or City employee.

*Rosanne Greco*  
*SB City Councilor*

**SEPTEMBER 29, 2011**

## **The Fresh Air Fund Thanks Local Volunteers**

This year, 73 New York City children found out once again just how special summer is in Northwestern Vermont. Fresh Air Fund hosts, volunteers and local supporters dedicated their time and efforts to help these inner-city youngsters experience simple summertime pleasures, including afternoons of swimming, fishing at sunset and roasting s'mores over a campfire.

None of this would be possible without Mary Sherman, your local Fresh Air Fund volunteer leader, who works throughout the year to make sure host families and children have the opportunity to enjoy memorable summertime experiences together. I invite you to join Mary Sherman and the local Fresh Air Fund committee to help spread the word about the wonderful opportunity of hosting next summer.

The Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, has provided free summer vacations to over 1.7 million New York City children from low-income communities since 1877. For more information on how you can help to continue this wonderful tradition of volunteering, please call Mary Sherman at (802) 868-2771 or visit [www.freshair.org](http://www.freshair.org).

*Jenny Morgenthau*  
*Executive Director*  
*Fresh Air Fund*

## **Support For Mr. Hafter**

I am truly embarrassed with the way our former city manager has been treated and just wanted to state my support of him. I have lived in South Burlington for 30 years and the city has run smoothly up until Mr. Hafter retired. Since then I have only read negative childish bickering going on and have seen our city services being cut. Something needs to change.

*Carol Mcdowell  
South Burlington*

### **Ongoing Hafter Dispute**

Pity the current City Councilors working to clean up the mess they have inherited from members of a past city government who failed to keep adequate records relating to such a critical issue as an employee's retirement package. Seemingly, they are the ones to whom Chuck Hafter, his family, and the many members of this community rallying to his defense should be directing their wrath. Jim Condos, who now preaches open government in his current role as Secretary of State, would have better served his friend, Mr. Hafter, if he and others had been more open in their record keeping surrounding this critical decision.

Let City Council now take the time and steps necessary to get this issue resolved in the interest of our community, and to put to rest the critics and cronies who have prevailed for too long in this process.

*Moirá Daly  
South Burlington*

**SEPTEMBER 22, 2011**

### **Respect The Decision By Prior City Councilors**

The current City Council appears to have mishandled the issue of Chuck Hafter's benefits. At this point, the continued postponement of a decision whether to grant him his pension benefits and long term care insurance and the Council's refusal to explain their lack of action has the appearance of petty vindictiveness. Either the past Council members who have stated that the benefits were approved are telling the truth and the lack of minutes documenting the action is a matter of clerical oversight (the Council's secretary stated she was regularly sent home before late night executive sessions ended and votes were taken) or they are not. Does the current Council believe that somehow Mr. Hafter gave himself the benefits and the former councilors have joined him in a conspiracy?

Chuck Hafter served the city very well for 20 years. His benefit package is modest by city manager standards. Combining a city pension with the supplemental deferred compensation plan offered by the International City Managers Association is very common in the United States and in fact is how the current city manager's retirement plan is structured. Providing long term care insurance to a city manager is a relatively new benefit but one that is growing in importance for older managers. I for one, respect the decision by prior city councilors that this was a legitimate part of Mr. Hafter's total compensation. The current Council's lack of forthrightness and decisiveness in its apparent refusal to honor its predecessor's commitments is disturbing.

*John Simson  
South Burlington*

### **Remarks Intended To Be Read At The September 12 City Council Meeting**

*Public Comments were not allowed by Chair Sandra Dooley*

I have been a citizen of South Burlington since 1968 and have witnessed the City grow and prosper under thoughtful and responsible leadership. I spent 45 years in business, most of it in South Burlington and have always found a welcoming community supportive of the business segment. We sent our children to South Burlington schools and they all have been successful in their subsequent lives.

I was not asked to attend this meeting nor did anyone know I was coming. I have followed the press clippings of the Council's dealing with our former city manager, Chuck Hafter, with much dismay and concern. I lived and worked in the City when Chuck was hired and have had many contacts with Chuck over the years serving on the Chamber of Commerce Board, attending various committee meetings in the area, participating with Chuck in various City matters over the years and generally observing his performance as

City Manager of South Burlington. I have always had a very high regard for his integrity and his commitment to managing the affairs of the City. I thought he managed the City Budget process with great care and concern over keeping the annual Budget under control.

I am not familiar with the facts [that have]been discussed over his benefits as an employee of the City, but having observed his performance over many years I can't imagine him availing himself of any benefit that was not discussed and approved by the City Council. I can't speak to the record keeping function of the City but it seems that because someone can't find a certain document or minute in a document we are ready to "rush to judgment" of a trusted and loyal City employee for more than two decades. It surprises me that such a normally caring community would tolerate and condone the path of these recent actions.

I encourage you to bring this matter to a close and I recommend we apologize to Chuck Hafter for putting him and his family through an unwarranted ordeal.

*Gary N. Farrell*  
*South Burlington*

## **Sound Off**

I am appalled and deeply concerned by an incident that happened a week ago Wednesday on Church Street.

My 9-month pregnant daughter was doing some shopping and as she was coming out of a store, missed the step and fell onto Church Street. Literally, *fell onto* Church St. Not one person, NO ONE, came to assist her or even show concern for her and the baby's welfare! I have been so stunned by this event, I felt a need to write. This is not the reaction I would have expected from Vermonters; we are better than this, or we always have been in the past.

I ask you, is this the Vermont we are now or, sadly, we are becoming?

Like many, I am a huge fan of Church Street with all of its great activities and tremendous vitality—it is simply one of the best attractions in our beautiful Queen City. However, as this city has grown and continues to grow, will we become a city of strangers that will see a pregnant woman fall and not one person be alarmed into action? I pray not.

It is evident that we can come together for major tragedies as we have with the devastation left by Irene; but let us not forget it is the everyday kindnesses we bestow upon each other that truly sets Vermont apart from other places. We are a state known for its beauty, its values, neighborly actions, and we are revered for the quality of life we enjoy here. I hope this will never change but am concerned it may have already started to. Let's all ensure the quality of life here is measured with kindnesses and concern for each other, everyday and in small ways, and not only shown after significant tragedies.

*Sue Boucher*  
*South Burlington*

## **APPALLED CHUCK HAFTER'S PENSION DISCUSSION**

I attended the September 12 meeting of the City Council, expecting to hear more discussion on the issue of Chuck Hafter's pension. I have attended hundreds of meetings in South Burlington, and I have never seen a meeting in this City conducted the way this one was. The Council came out of Executive Session and announced that they would entertain no comments from the members of the public who had gathered with the expectation that they would be allowed to speak on the issue. The tone from the Council was downright rude and dismissive and I was appalled that such a thing could be happening in my city.

I have sat through dozens of contentious meetings of past City Councils and Planning Commissions, and the Chairs of every board I have ever seen have bent over backwards to allow the public to express themselves, because the board members know that if people have taken time out of their busy lives, the issue is important to them. Board members have done this even if they knew that to do so would mean they themselves would get home much later that night. They've done it even if it wasn't the most "efficient" way to run the city. They've even done it if the item wasn't formally on the agenda, but someone was there who wanted to speak. I've seen City Councils move agenda items with lots of public interest up on the schedule, so as to be more convenient for public input. I've never seen one shut off discussion in such an abrupt way,

and frankly, I'm concerned for my city. To treat a former employee in such a shabby way and to now be extending that treatment to those who have come out to support him seems so foreign to my experience of South Burlington's city government.

It used to be that one could disagree with a position the Council had taken and yet be assured of respectful interaction with the board. That seems to no longer be the case. I am horrified and saddened by it all.

*Catherine Peacock*  
*South Burlington*

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2011**

### **SEPTEMBER 11TH TRIBUTE AT OVERLOOK PARK... AN IMPORTANT TRADITION**

My family moved to South Burlington in 2003 from New York City. There were many reasons, but our experience of living in NYC during the 9/11 attacks was definitely a part of the decision. We arrived in Vermont in August, and were pleased to learn soon after that the SB Fire Department would hold a September 11<sup>th</sup> Memorial at the Overlook Park on Spear Street. It was where they gathered the evening of the attacks, and it had become a tradition that they invited the community to share with them.

It was a peaceful, small, and brief gathering. . . but it was important to us. We were grateful to have had that evening.

Since 2003, we have continued to attend. Over the years the attendance wavered (except of course election year). I'm writing to encourage people to be there this year. The 10-year anniversary of a day of such loss, heroism, and community is an important thing to commemorate. And it is perhaps even more important, show our support to our firefighters and service people who put their lives on the line for us.

I hope many of our South Burlington neighbors, and beyond will attend the memorial on Sunday, September 11, at sundown at Overlook Park.

*Monica Ostby*  
*South Burlington*

**SEPTEMBER 1, 2011**

### **COMMENDING CARE NET**

The many non-profit organizations that are committed to helping those in need are to be commended. It is nice to be able to choose which ones we will support. One organization I support proudly is Care Net. They provide goods and services to expectant women who need help. However Care Net does much more. These caring women also help young families with parenting classes and provide counseling for women. These services are provided free to women who need them and seek them out. Anyone who finds that Care Net is not for them can simply walk out, there is nothing constraining them to stay.

Care Net has a very limited staff because their resources come from fundraising and donations. I know at least two of the women who work there and live in South Burlington. They are both very caring dedicated individuals.

Care Net has been picketed recently by an intolerant organization that misrepresents them. I value the right to express one's views publicly. I have participated myself. That being said I hope that mean spirited, dishonest and hateful rancor will find no place in Vermont which places such a high value on tolerance and civility.

*Agnes Clift*  
*South Burlington*

**AUGUST 25, 2011**

## **HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?**

After reading the article “Retirement Benefits Issue to be Determined,” [The Other Paper, August 18, 2011], I didn’t know whether to laugh or be furious! I chose furious. It seems that every time we read a paper or hear a story about our former City Manager, it has something to do with some other financial benefit that he has received, that we as residents of South Burlington, are STILL paying for. The most recent disclosure of his city paid long term care insurance policy is just one more example of fiscal responsibility being ignored.

I would love to have the city give me the benefits that have been, and continue to be, paid out to former employees. As a Securities Examiner for the state, I have had to accept a 3 percent paycut, as well as the loss of a 2 percent step increase last year, to avoid more state workers from losing their jobs. This year we have had to pay a larger percentage towards our retirement plan. And the last time I looked, unlike the city’s retired bookkeeper, I won’t be getting credit for 10 times the amount of comp time and 4 times the amount of unused vacation time when I retire!

Hey City Council, when does this financial malfeasance stop? How nice of you to agree to do this for her, as well as what you’ve been allowing for the former City Manager. One minor problem. The money that you are handing out, is not yours to hand out! This money is coming from taxpayers in this town, and quite frankly, as one of those taxpayers, I’m sick and tired of you handing out my money in this manner!

As a Certified Fraud Examiner myself, I’m wondering what other “surprises” you may still have in store for us in the future. By the way, are there any openings with the city? Seems like they are the only folks that can retire and live more comfortably than when they were working. They sure have great benefits!

*Woody Carrigan  
South Burlington*

**JULY 28, 2011**

## **CAN’T WE FIND A BETTER PLACE?**

The increased military operations at the airport have been ongoing as forewarned. I appreciate the notices that went out on-line and in the local press. However, I and other residents have again been struck by the incompatibility of military exercises with powerful jets (VTANG’s Block 30 F-16s, F5s, F/A-18As, and CF-18As) taking off from the most populous area of the state, next to densely populated neighborhoods where families with young children, veterans with PTSD, and people suffering from inner-ear disorders reside.

I am grateful for the service of our Guardsmen and women and I fully appreciate the need for national defense and international training operations (the CF-18As belong to the Canadian Air Force), but someone with common sense has got to see that the VTANG base should be located in a less populated area of the state. My 6 month-old infant is not the only baby who has shrieked at the deafening and terrifying noise produced by these jets. A neighbor watching her one-year-old grand-daughter described to me this young girl’s same reaction. And this is not only in the Chamberlin neighborhood. The noise produced by these jets reaches Mayfair Park, the Country Club Drive neighborhood, . . . , even as far as Cobblestone Circle in the Southeast Quadrant. I’m sure that this has affected other communities as well.

This is simply not right. The Canadian Air Force members flying here this past week are normally stationed 3 hours due north of Quebec City, far from densely populated areas. The F5s from Yuma, AZ, are stationed far from densely populated areas. What are we thinking here in Vermont?

*Meaghan Emery  
South Burlington  
Current Vice-Chair of the SB City Council*

## **PAY ATTENTION TO COUNCILOR’S ACTIONS**

Statements by developers and commercial interests to convince us that SB's 20.3 percent growth in the last ten years is not unusual ignore basic facts. Census figures show that 30 percent of the growth the last ten years in Vermont's fastest growing County, Chittenden, occurred in South Burlington alone. South Burlington's population increase constituted 17.9 percent of the increase for the entire state of Vermont. These figures show a clearly disproportionate rate of growth here. The growth is not an abstract statistic but a palpable change in congestion and lost open space.

Policies which have favored developers and commercial interests over those of residents have eroded the quality of life here. Interim zoning means halting this path and taking time to evaluate what is really in the best interests of people who currently live here and how to achieve those goals.

It is important that we place close attention to those on our City Council who support our interests as opposed to those of developers. Letters and attendance at meetings are helpful but our ultimate strength is with informed voting.

*David Wilber  
South Burlington*

### **INTERIM ZONING IS A WISE OPTION**

I believe I may have been misunderstood in my remarks at the special meeting of the South Burlington City Council on July 25.

I am in favor of a period of "interim zoning" for thoughtful reflection about the landscape we are creating. There is something drastically wrong with a system that requires a headlong rush toward building up our land and does not take adequate time for planning in a changing world in which there is growing evidence that business as usual may be creating more problems than it is solving.

Our planning process must include the many relevant concerns of a growing number of professionals about issues like .

- loss of agricultural land and predicted food security issues,
- the difficulty of maintaining clean drinking water while overwhelming our waste water treatment plants with storm water runoff because too much land has been paved over and built up without adequate provision for runoff, in a time of uncertain and more violent weather events,
- the loss of a complex interconnected ecosystem that supports a wide variety of plants, animals and people in optimal health,
- as well as the issues of affordable housing, jobs and a sustainable business climate.

During my time serving in the US Air Force we used to say that inexperienced people were "all air speed and no direction."

In other words, provide an "interim zoning" time period for clear, unpressured thinking. The inexperienced might rush toward only one short-term goal of job creation and housing growth without truly considering the most wise direction to travel and the complete package of consequences. We must address all the issues and manage them well or suffer the significant health and perhaps more significant financial hardships that will result from ignoring them.

We need our City Council to be mature and thoughtful in the consideration of the many aspects and consequences of growth in South Burlington. "Interim zoning" would give the City Councilors the time needed for this thoughtful process and I urge its adoption.

*Barbara Benton, South Burlington  
(Planning Commission member)*



## **Dr. Carew, I have a question**

Reading the nutrition column by Lyn Carew in *The Other Paper* is a true love of mine. Between his research based topics and his sense of humor, what's not to like! I appreciate it even more after researching whether or not Vitamin C is destroyed in the pasteurization processing of orange juice sold in half gallon containers. I sure could use the professor's help on this one. Hint. Hint.

*Betsy Bahrenburg, South Burlington*

**JULY 21, 2011**

### **Interim Zoning - Once land is developed it is gone forever. . .**

Interim Zoning has generated a great deal of negative press and objections from developers. These objections have been articulated as fears of loss of real estate tax revenues, fears of property tax hikes and fears of job losses in the building and allied trades. These consequences of Interim Zoning are not inevitable and no one can claim that they would be permanent.

Developers have a vested interest in the status quo and would prefer a less regulated planning and zoning regime, so it is no surprise that they oppose Interim Zoning, threaten the community with dire economic consequences and threaten the Council with legal challenges.

Interim Zoning is a temporary measure; the dire consequences predicted by developers, if real, would therefore also be temporary. Successful opposition by developers will rob the City of a crucial opportunity to re-examine planning and zoning in line with current public sentiment and to correct existing anomalies. Developers say they rely on the City's comprehensive plan when acquiring land and planning development and it is therefore unfair to change the plan. The acquisition of land based on the City's comprehensive plan is a speculative venture with attendant risks of which developers are well aware. That is not a valid reason for the City to refrain from making changes, which the Council and residents believe are necessary and appropriate.

Our comprehensive plan is changed every few years and zoning is also subject to regular changes. These changes reflect the desires of the community and its changing attitudes to land use and development. The recent Community Survey has shown that SB residents consider protection of open space and natural resources very important, second only to quality schools.

The City Council could not get a clearer message. S B residents want changes in the comprehensive plan and zoning rules to manage development and preserve open land.

I urge this Council to heed this message from SB residents and not to yield to fear mongering and threats from developers. Protection and preservation can be undone. Development cannot. Once land is developed it is gone forever.

*Michael Mittag  
South Burlington*

### **Interim Zoning – Interim perspective**

There were many thoughtful comments expressed at the July 18 Interim Zoning City Council meeting, concerning the environment, housing and jobs.

During the previous Interim Zoning (several years ago) regarding the SEQ, my recollection is that there was buy-in from all stakeholders (the city, homeowners, landowners, developers, et al) in advance of interim zoning. They all had skin in the game and all had a role in its outcome, which resulted in more than 1600 of 3200 acres being conserved in the SEQ while also allowing homes to be built. At the time, there was no

traction to move housing outside of the SEQ but to keep it entirely within the SEQ. To paraphrase Al Gore, we can (and did) have jobs, (housing) and the environment. However, maybe this is the time to consider fewer homes in the SEQ and move them to other districts served by public transportation, within walking distance to schools, shopping et al.

My limited understanding of the current interim zoning is that it may not have been presented with the participation of all stakeholders. Thus for some, interim zoning may feel like it is being imposed. However, as a perennial optimist, I'd like to believe all stakeholders want to save the environment, create/save jobs, and provide housing where appropriate. Currently, there appears to be traction to support housing (including workforce) in neighborhoods that are served by public transportation, within walking distance to schools, shopping, et al. Our shared environment, housing, and job goals are not mutually exclusive, but mutually inclusive.

*Randall Kay*  
*South Burlington*

Editor's Note: Mr. Kay recently completed his term serving as Chair of the South Burlington Planning Commission.

JUNE 30, 2011

## In Favor of Interim Zoning

There are several compelling reasons to implement interim zoning:

1. The application of Transfer Development Rights (TDR's) has introduced design/density conflicts for which we need to devise a fair and legal resolution.
2. The DRB has consistently acquiesced to developers' requests despite neighbors' objections. The Board must adopt a policy to exercise their discretionary power in such issues, or else a separate mechanism must be devised to respect neighbors' interests. "Waivers" should be granted only in extenuating instances, not routinely.
3. A new era of utilization of renewable energy resources is dawning, due to advancing technology and falling costs, as witnessed in the recent All-Earth Renewable Energy and South Village solar projects. It's time for the City's development guidelines to require or at least encourage solar projects. The proposed Spear Meadows, for example, would offer an ideal setting for a solar farm utilizing nearly ALL the available land, and obviate the traffic issues that threaten to violate the character of the Pinnacle neighborhood, rather than an intrusive 70-unit development squeezed into about half the tract.
4. Developers' claims that a building moratorium will be economically harmful, must be viewed in the context of the rampant building and population expansion that have occurred in our City over the past decade, and the fact that poorly conceived or improperly placed buildings cannot be undone.

*Michael Scollins*  
*South Burlington*

## Planning Commission Recognitions

Two outstanding City citizens are completing their terms and leaving the Planning Commission this month. Randall Kay, Board Chair, and Marcel Beaudin should be acknowledged and appreciated for their distinguished service to South Burlington. Both these gentlemen have contributed their time, vision and expertise to the City. Hopefully, they will find ways to continue to serve our community as tremendously as they have.

In addition to serving 15 years on the Planning Commission, Marcel is a renowned architect, who designed the Boathouse in Burlington. As a passionate sailor, his work for the Community Sailing Center there speaks volumes about his commitment to the environment and his vision for helping to remove barriers to everyone's enjoyment of our natural resources. Marcel has served two years as the Chair of the Planning Commission, and most recently has been the City's representative to the Chittenden Country Regional Planning Commission.

Randy Kay has served 16 years with the City from when it had a combined Zoning Board of Adjustment (DRB and PC together) and his historical knowledge and experience have been invaluable in guiding the Commission. Randy presided over the most recent enactment of Interim Zoning as it helped lay out the limits to development in the SouthEast Quadrant of the City. Randy has been keenly responsive to citizen input and has helped map the Comprehensive Plan that lays out the vision for our City. As Chair of the Planning Commission for the last six years, Randy has demonstrated sound leadership and conservatism during a period of sustained growth for the City.

Please thank these two men for their considerable efforts when you get a chance; they have been excellent representatives for the City—open-minded, considerate, and knowledgeable—solid South Burlingtonians! Thank you!

*Chris Shaw*

## *South Burlington*

### Interim Zoning Unnecessary and Harmful to SB

Our City Council is in the process of considering the adoption of an Interim Zoning Ordinance that would prohibit new Residential and Commercial Development in many sections of our Community. This is a matter of enormous significance to many, and I feel it is premature to consider without more discussion and a thorough understanding of the impacts which could occur.

We all see the world through a different lens. Some feel we have a vibrant community with great amenities such as our school system, proximity to workplaces and shopping, and many other quality municipal services. Others see a community overburdened with increasing traffic and development pressures that are taxing the city's ability to provide services and a good quality of life. Some want to preserve more open space and grow smartly, and others resist the congestion that smart growth invites. Some feel we are headed in the right direction, and others feel we are headed for disaster.

Nothing is ever perfect, and you can't make everyone happy. Fortunately we live in a democracy, and when people have differences of opinion they can discuss them respectfully and try to figure out a fair solution. We have been blessed to have many selfless, intelligent and responsible people who have given their time on the Planning Commission and Zoning Board. We have had great citizen participation on the occasions when our Municipal Plan was being updated. Change is constant. Yesterday's vision needs to be updated today, and today's tomorrow. The process has served us well.

The City Council's consideration of Interim Zoning is a knee-jerk reaction to the dissatisfaction of a few which is likely to impose hardships on many. The Council has no idea how extensive the impacts could be; nobody does. The Council should not create law on impulse without understanding what the impacts could be. A matter this significant should be discussed and understood more before it is considered. Why is there a rush to consider a measure so extreme?

City Council Members, please do your homework before making a law with unknown Consequences.

*Michael Simoneau  
South Burlington  
Resident and co-owner of Geri Reilly Real Estate*

### No Interim Zoning for South Burlington

We would like to weigh in on why South Burlington should not enact a moratorium on development.

The 20% population growth in the past decade should shock no one. South Burlington is located adjacent to Vermont's largest city with three major highways passing through it. For fifty years the City has welcomed businesses and residents alike. It has invested in its schools, police, fire, library and recreation—a long list of facilities and services that give the City a top-notch suburban quality of life. It is a popular place to live.

The infrastructure is in place to support growth. The City is in the process of revising the Comprehensive Plan. The final version of the Plan should follow "smart growth" principles and protect the rural land in the southeast quadrant and incent higher density development to "in-fill" lots where water and sewer services already exist.

Nearly 1,000 acres of open space in the City have already been set aside, either by the City or the University of Vermont. These spaces are currently available for active and passive recreation and agriculture. In addition, through such devices as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and the City revenues dedicated to Open Space, paid for by all taxpayers, we can look forward to more.

Let us continue to make sure our revenue base is growing. We should celebrate the amenities and convenience of living in this small city. Do not impose Interim Zoning.

*John Simson  
South Burlington*

**JUNE 23, 2011**

### New Open Space

Since we may be in for a development pause given the proposal for a moratorium, this may be a good time to raise a point about open space.

Wedged between I-89, Patchen Road and Williston Road is a section of forest and swamp which contains a considerable amount of wildlife. It must be at least 20 acres—presumably all private land. It has been surveyed and there are markers apparently delineating the wetland areas abound.

This patch of wildness is rather unique to the town. I have seen whitetail deer, beavers, have listened to fox wail (likely gray fox) and have seen tracks for otter, mink and raccoons. Hawks and mourning doves both roost there. Beaver dams always exist. As one dam decays another is built anew elsewhere in these confines.

This area is a natural adjunct to centennial woods, and is connected to them by a large walk-through culvert under the interstate.

One can cross-country ski or snowshoe along the old logging roads and trails. I would guess there are a total of about 2-3 miles of skiable trails that twist and turn every which way. Skiing is first rate.

For the future, it would be nice to see this area protected in some way to preserve those uses—either as a city park or simply a protected area for wildlife.

*Ray Gonda  
South Burlington*

### News from SBLT

Our Green Up Day totals are in and we were the highest in the County. South Burlington collected nearly 9 tons of all types of trash materials, far exceeding our previous totals! Congratulations everyone.

Visit the brand new South Burlington Land Trust website at [www.sblt.org](http://www.sblt.org).

*Sarah Dopp  
South Burlington Land Trust*

**JUNE 16, 2011**

### Kudos to South Burlington Library

Anyone who questions the level of music appreciation in this town should have been among the capacity crowd in the makeshift auditorium at the South Burlington library on Sunday for the “Emerging Artists” free concert. Three sopranos, three tenors, and a harpsichordist filled the space with glorious sounds of Mozart’s ‘Cosi Fan Tutte’. The singers were winners from the Green Mountain Opera Festival. And the seats were a gift from the South Burlington Library to any town resident.

The response of the audience ended with a standing ovation. Naomi Miller, the library coordinator said that we hope to have them perform again next year. That news prompts one to say “Move over La Scala and make room for South Burlington Library’s annual opera festival.”

*Frank Scanlan*  
*South Burlington*

**MAY 26, 2011**

### ***The Other Paper’s new Website***

Congratulations to Judy and the staff at *The Other Paper* on your online debut. Communication is if nothing else interactive. A vibrant community supports a diverse flow of ideas through discussion. Now our community has a unique resource enabling us to expand our reach in connecting with each other regarding our community happenings. *The Other Paper* not only brings us South Burlington news, it also facilitates giving voice to all who wish to participate in her vibrancy.

*Bernard Paquette*  
*South Burlington*

### **“They Really Hurt Me”**

These were a few of the words spoken by my Mom before she died. She had a procedure done at Fletcher Allen hospital that ended in a failure of a planned action. My mother’s recollection of the events that took place during the exam never changed. However, the doctor’s story changed four different times, leading our family to question the credibility of the doctors involved.

My intent is not to place blame, but, as a healthcare provider, I know I must continually try to improve the delivery of healthcare. All healthcare professionals need to voice their concerns when they identify problems in a system or process. Medical errors are costly not only because a patient may lose their life, but also because the patient loses trust in the system and our co-workers lose faith in one another.

In February and March 2011, I wrote letters to both the Chief Medical Officer and the president of the Fletcher Allen Hospital expressing our family’s concerns regarding the trauma our Mother sustained at their facility and am very disappointed that, to date, I have never received a response.

*Tricia Keefe Smith, RN*  
*(Daughter of Emily Keefe)*  
*South Burlington*

### **“Thank you” to the South Burlington Community**

As many people know, last year my husband Frank Petrosino was diagnosed with ALS, a degenerative neuromuscular disease that has no known cause and no known cure.

During this challenging time, people of this community have been incredibly generous with their support. Because of this, we were able to go on a family trip to Italy. Highlights of the trip included eating gelato at the Trevi Fountain in Rome, touring the medieval town of Volterra, and riding in a gondola in Venice. These are treasured memories that will last a lifetime.



When we came home, we were surprised to find our windows washed, our garage doors painted, our cars detailed, and flowers planted in our gardens. Needless to say, we are well loved and cared for and feel very lucky to live in such a great community. We thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts.

*Heidi Smith  
South Burlington*

**MAY 12, 2011**

### Single Payer Insurance Plan - Why?

I've written a letter to representative Kupersmith and my state senators asking them questions about Vermont's latest attempt to create a single-payer system. I've received one e-mail reply from Senator Ashe and a call in which Senator Miller wasn't ready to answer the questions I had written to her. It has become clear to me that my reps are putting all their faith in the "plan" that has been written for them, and the "board" that they are going to put in place.

Here are some of my concerns. This plan will bring the end to the insurance company that doesn't win the bid. According to a single-payer friendly website ([www.singlepayerforvermont.org](http://www.singlepayerforvermont.org)) over 92% of the state's residents have insurance currently. Vermont also has an income sensitive plan with Catamount Health. Why are we doing this again? When I pressed my representatives they had no answers, other than some "choose" not to pay for Catamount Health. Because 7% of our state "chooses" not to pay for insurance, or "can't afford" an income sensitive plan, the other 92% will have no choice.

When pressed by teachers' unions whether or not they will have bargaining rights under this plan (which they have by law) our reps had no answers at all. Our reps have no idea what they are getting us into. They have no idea what it will cost. It's going to cost us jobs at one of our largest health insurance companies and at our other largest employers. I'm astounded that folks in the 92% are just quietly lining up behind this. Don't you have any questions, and have they been answered?

If the State can't afford to insure 7% of Vermont, how can we possibly afford to insure 100%? Is it not absurd that we have so few without insurance and we are going to completely reinvent the system to try to fix the uninsured problem? If cost cutting is our major concern why aren't we looking at the chronic under reimbursement of our hospitals and primary care providers from Medicare and Medicaid? Why are we letting ourselves get into something that might have a very negative impact on us when so many very basic questions aren't being answered?

*Michael Benoit, South Burlington*

May 14<sup>th</sup>, is Letter Carrier Food Drive Day, The largest single day food drive in the Nation

With more than 1 billion pounds of food donations already collected by letter carriers since the NALC Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive began in 1993, and a record 77.1 million pounds picked up last year alone, branches throughout the country have their sights set this year on another successful effort on Saturday, May 14th to help families in need.

The need for food assistance has never been greater. According to the Agriculture Department's most recent study of food security in the United States in 2009, the number of Americans living in "food insecure" homes topped 50 million, of those, 17.2 million are children. Hunger-Free Vermont, a local non-for-agency reported that 1 out of 5 Vermonter children have experienced hunger.

This letter carrier food drive will also take place in your neighborhood. Participation is very easy: simply place your non-perishable food donation in or by your mailbox on Saturday, May 14th. Your letter carrier will pick all donations up during regular mail delivery. All donations will go directly to your local foodshelf.

*Sandra Sonntag  
National Association of Letter Carriers  
Branch 521 Food Drive Coordinator*

APRIL 28, 2011

## In Support of School Board Chairman Rich Cassidy

As you know, during the recent round of contract negotiations which culminated in a 3-year settlement with the SBEA, our Board chairman, Rich Cassidy, was forced to recuse himself due to a conflict of interest created by a communication he received from a Vermont NEA authority, outside of the agreed upon negotiation process.

Rich recently wrote an opinion piece in the Burlington Free Press regarding his thoughts on improving the collective bargaining process. A few members of the SBEA leadership team have responded to this op-ed piece, some with suggestions that Rich step down from his role as an elected member of the School Board.

Current and former South Burlington School Board members are pro-education and agree that Rich has operated in the best interests of the district throughout his tenure on the Board and in his role as chairperson.

Rich has served with integrity, honesty, and with a constant view toward all the stakeholders served by public education including the community, educators, administrators, staff, and, most importantly, our students. Rich's professional experience and tenure have been invaluable.

Rich does not operate in a vacuum on the School Board. He serves with four other elected members who, among other things, deliberate policy and practice that will advance the outcomes of public education in our city while balancing the community's ability to afford those services. For those who can participate in our meetings, you will see a respectful exchange of ideas, a wide variety of perspectives, open debate, efforts to reach consensus, and a united front once action is taken.

It has been a privilege to serve with Rich, who has volunteered his time and experience for 10 years to the district. It is with great confidence that Julie Beatty, Diane Bugbee, Martin LaLonde, and former board members, Janine Allo, Agnes Clift, and Ted Manazir are honored to have him continue his service in the role of School Board chair and in support of our work together in South Burlington.

*Elizabeth Fitzgerald*  
*Clerk, South Burlington School Board*

APRIL 14, 2011

## Physician prescribed suicide

It is troubling that our state representatives support physician prescribed suicide. Hundreds of thousands of out-of-state dollars were used supporting candidates across Vermont committed to promote this legislation. Is Vermont for sale to any national organization with an agenda and money?

Reasonable and compassionate end of life care is essential. People can refuse treatment that may cause them to suffer unnecessarily. Varying degrees of pain relief along with advice on subsequent effects are available to those in need. Expressing your health care desires in writing to your doctor can help ensure they are honored.

H.274 only offers a specific and complex means to secure a lethal prescription. Certainty that the patient self-administers this prescription and that it is not illegally administered or to ensure that the patient hasn't been emotionally coerced to obtain or take that prescription isn't possible. The proposed legislation purportedly provides this option to people of sound mind diagnosed with less than six months to live. Misdiagnoses could be fatal.

This poor policy could preclude sincere efforts to improve patient care and pain relief. There are more responsible and caring solutions than facilitating and legitimizing suicide (already NOT criminal in Vermont).

The discussion about Vermont's health care crisis revolves around unaffordable health care costs particularly at the end of life. It is troubling, in view of these concerns, that legislation that could encourage suicide as a means of avoiding financial hardship or protecting assets is being promoted.

I listened to considerable testimony last time this was proposed. It was amazing to hear testimony from many who encouraged ending life prematurely primarily because it is uncomfortable to witness death.

The House floor debate was moving as one legislator after another said they themselves found it difficult to be with their loved ones in their final days but that those months, weeks, days and moments were precious, inspirational and irreplaceable.

If this bill is enacted vulnerable people may not be protected at death and many families may miss out on valuable moments of healing and touching love.

*Agnes Clift, South Burlington*

### Changing our Charter on Budgets and Voting

In my recent letter to the editor to The Other Paper I asked citizens of this community for help to change our charter in the future to vote on our city and school budgets. I was simply overwhelmed by the number of positive phone calls I received from people who said they would help. We will begin the process in the months to come by trying to eliminate the CPI (Consumer Price Index) for good and go to a standard of voting on budgets until they are adopted and passed by the voters. We cannot allow our city and the school leadership to threaten and blindside the voters of this community so that if we do not vote 'yes' on their budgets, and then they fail twice, per the charter as it stands now, that our budgets will be increased to the CPI level and our taxes will increase even more. This was done just before the recent budget vote. This simply cannot continue anymore in the future.

The fact remains that between the City Budget and the School Budget the voters passed a total of (\$66,000,000) sixty-six million dollars in budgets with only 19% or more of the registered voters of South Burlington voting. The reason why our voting has such a low turnout is because the democratic process has been taken away and the end result is this automatic CPI after two negative votes. So, no matter how the first two votes are voted on, our city and school budgets, as the charter stands now, are a given every year that we vote. This proposed new charter change will become more transparent and accountable in the voting process, as this is our right to change it.

With the economic climate the way it is and many in this community on fixed incomes or unemployed, we must have more control over our budgets and allow the democratic process to occur as in other communities.

I greatly appreciate everyone's support to change our charter in South Burlington, and if you would still like to help, give me a call at 658-3494.

*Jay L. Zaetz  
South Burlington*