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Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
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Founded in 1974 by Chris Braithwaite,
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Editorial

The course of human events

The United States of America is approaching 2026, the two-hundred-fiftieth anniversary of its Declaration of Independence. That document has inspired people all over the world to break free from those who would rule them from afar.

Nevertheless it's written by men whose thoughts were more lofty than their actions, slaveholders who spoke of liberty for all, but excluded women and those they purported to own from those noble sentiments.

In short, our nation was founded and envisioned by people who were imperfect, as are we all. Despite their inability to see their flaws, they wrote a document that in the eyes of later Americans, offered the seeds of a better, more just polity. One that remains out of our grasp, but is still worth reaching toward.

It is important to recognize the errors and mistakes of the Founders without discarding their work. And, likewise, it is important in a place where self-government is an ideal, to be understanding that we all have blind spots.

Those who are elected to public office in our communities, like those who cast the ballots to put them in their places, want to do what is best for their town or city. That wish is central to the idea of democracy, but it must come with an understanding that it is impossible to achieve perfection.

Everyone makes mistakes.

Recognition of that universal truth, brings with it a need for understanding and forgiveness. Nothing is gained by harsh language and mockery.

Independence Day is the time to realize that we are independent together, not from each other. If we work together we can do great things. If we work against each other we can accomplish nothing.

Maybe this can be the year we resolve that fireworks should light up our skies in celebration, not fill our meeting rooms with noise and smoke.

JIG

Letters to the editor

Final public meetings on wake boat regulations

To the editor,

The public meetings for the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation/Agency of Natural Resources' (DEC/ANR) proposed wake boat regulations are now set for August 1 in person in Montpelier, and August 3 virtual.

It is important that those of us who favor wake boat regulations, which will reduce erosion, damage to docks and docked boats, disturbance of shore birds including loons, interference with non-motorized vessels (canoes, kayaks, stand-up boards, sailboats), and swimmers, attend and speak at these meetings to ensure the state hears our concerns.

The present DEC/ANR proposed regulation includes keeping wake sport activities at least 500 feet from shore. The present science shows that at least 600 feet and up to 973 feet are actually

required. The DEC/ANR needs to know that the public supports 1,000 feet from shore.

Wake boat waves are getting larger and more powerful. For the sake of future generations, the state should err on the side of caution, given the wake boat industry's historical progression of larger and more powerful wakes.

Please consider signing up to speak at either the in-person meeting (and attend in person) in Montpelier on August 1 or the virtual meeting on August 3.

The future of our pristine lakes depends on each of us. Additional information is available at the responsiblewakes.org website.

Thank you,
Virginia Lawless and John Wooten
Lake Parker
West Glover

About letters, editorials, and opinions

The Chronicle welcomes letters from our readers from all points of view on the political spectrum.

The deadline is Monday at noon. Letters may be dropped off, mailed, e-mailed, or faxed. Letters on paper must be signed, and all letters must include a telephone number for confirmation. All letters must include the writer's town.

We will not publish a letter that has been sent anonymously to this office. In rare and extreme circumstances, we will publish a letter without the writer's name.

Please keep your letters brief. Length aside, we reserve the right to edit letters for content.

Letters should be about public issues, not personal gripes. We will not run letters that are libelous, racist, or contain personal attacks. We welcome robust debate but won't print letters

that, in our opinion, are merely offensive.

Letters should be directed to readers of *the Chronicle*. We will not run "open letters" to politicians or other public figures.

The letters section is intended for the free expression of opinion, not the arbitration of competing claims of fact. We reserve the right to reject letters that are based on claims of fact that are demonstrably false and potentially damaging. Examples would be that people of color are genetically inferior, or that global warming is a scientific hoax. Internet citations are not, in themselves, sufficient to prove such claims.

Thanks for your help making these pages thought-provoking, lively, and interesting.

Editorials are initialed by the author and reflect a consensus of the editorial staff of *the Chronicle*. Opinions and letters are the opinion of the author.

Letters to the editor

The battle of Coventry

To the editor,

Recent news that DUMP, Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity, has been joined by the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF) and Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) in their appeal of a wrongful decision by the Agency of Natural Resources has raised the bar in the ongoing effort to protect the Memphremagog watershed from landfill contamination.

Both CLF and VNRC are respected environmental protection organizations. Their support for DUMP's legal effort lends greater weight and adds momentum to the fight to stop further expansion of the Coventry landfill, Vermont's only operating landfill and arguably one of the worst sited landfills in the nation, by permitting a pilot leachate treatment project to be built on site.

The decision by Governor Scott's Secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), Julie Moore, not to require a Federal National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, required by the Federal Clean Water Act for any point source of pollution, is in direct violation of a law designed to protect the health and safety of our environment and the people who live here. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), "If you discharge from a point source into the waters of the United States, you need an NPDES permit."

At issue is the point source, a pipe from what is called Underdrain 3 (UD3) in the landfill, which discharges 4,000 to 13,000 gallons a day of contaminated "groundwater" into the wetlands bordering the Black River, which flows directly into Lake Memphremagog. That discharge contains exceedances of toxic "forever" PFAS chemicals, arsenic and cadmium, all cancer causing and all of which accumulate in the water and do not go away.

Discharges from other underdrains are collected and trucked out of the Memphremagog watershed for disposal via waste water treatment plants in Montpelier and Plattsburgh into the

Winooski River and Lake Champlain. But not UD3, which has been allowed by Secretary Moore to pour its poison into the wetlands instead of being collected as leachate. Claims that it is not leachate are a joke when measurable levels of poisons exceeding safe levels of exposure are present.

New England Waste Services of Vermont (NEWSVT) would have intelligent people believe that DUMP is the problem, that DUMP is sowing confusion and standing in the way of environmental protection. Nothing could be further from the truth. DUMP is "sowing" facts NEWSVT would prefer to keep from the public.

Of course, any discharge from the landfill must be scrubbed of toxic pollutants before being disposed of into our Vermont environment! That has never been in question. The problem is that Secretary Moore, with the Governor's blessing, has basically handed over all decision-making to the landfill owner operator, NEWSVT, including eliminating requirements to comply with EPA standards and permits that are designed to protect the environment.

If Coventry NEWSVT is allowed to build a "pilot" treatment facility on this ecologically fragile site, the way will be wide open to build a permanent facility on site that will likely, eventually, include importing millions of gallons of leachate from elsewhere in Vermont and out of state, increasing the threat to our NEK watershed. We in the NEK contribute 7 percent of the tons of solid waste dumped annually on Coventry landfill! The rest of the state contributes 73 percent, and 20 percent or up to 120,000 tons annually, is imported, mostly contaminated, solid waste. That solid waste generates millions of gallons of leachate annually. Why must we also be the "outhouse" into which this waste is disposed?

Concerns about present contamination are raised by the 25-40 percent of brown bullhead with cancerous lesions found nowhere else in Vermont and only ever in environmentally

contaminated waters. If our Lake Memphremagog (a drinking water reservoir for 175,000 Quebec neighbors as well as habitat for our fish and wildlife and recreational resource and economic base of our region) is to be protected from further contamination, all landfill discharges should be collected and trucked to and treated where the garbage that generated it comes from — down state. Why not near to the Montpelier WWTF that willingly accepts hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to dispose of leachate?

And only if the state of Vermont owns and operates that leachate treatment facility will we be able to ban the potential import of toxic out of state leachate. The same goes for solid waste disposal facilities. Legally, as long as the facility is privately owned, Vermont has no control over what is imported into the state. Maine has taken action to reverse this injustice. Why not Vermont?

The mission of DUMP is to protect the environment and ecosystem of the Memphremagog watershed from landfill pollution and expansion. Right now, there is an Act 250 moratorium on treatment and disposal of leachate anywhere in the Memphremagog watershed. That moratorium must become a permanent ban, and further expansion of the landfill and its infrastructure must also be banned, if environmental protection and justice for the health and safety of our NEK water resources are to be insured.

Water is life for our people, fish and wildlife, as well as for our regional NEK economy which depends for its survival on the splendor and quality of our natural environment and water resources. We in the NEK and all of Vermont must stand together to protect what is ours. Further contamination of our precious and finite water resources will be irreversible.

Peggy Stevens
Charleston

On behalf of the DUMP Advisory Committee

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