



# ADVOCATE

Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

## VRPA PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Melissa Cate, CPRP,  
VRPA President

I recall so fondly when my kids were young, how wonderful it was to see the world through the eyes of a child – everything was new and exciting, whether it was discovering that lizard tails come off when you catch them, trying lobster for the first time or just watching them meet new people and make new friends. It is a truly special experience to be able to see things from another person's perspective.

That is one reason why our recent search for a new Executive Director to lead VRPA in the coming years was so enjoyable to me. When the Executive Committee posted this job, we had no idea what to expect for candidates and we were absolutely overwhelmed by the quality and variety of the 53 resumes we received. Narrowing this group down to a manageable number was no easy feat but we agreed upon nine finalists and then the fun began!

> continued pg. 3

**76<sup>th</sup> Annual VT  
Conference  
on Recreation  
October 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>**

22

## In this Issue:

VRPA Calendar	2
Message from Executive Director	6
Personal Profile	7-9
Around The State	10-15
Program Spotlight	16-17
Facility Feature	18-21
VRPA 2019	25-29
Renewal Application	34

## MEET VRPA'S NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

From a candidate pool of more than 50 applications, Massachusetts resident Jessica Brodie rose to the top and was the unanimous choice of the Executive Committee to become VRPA's next Executive Director. Jessica and her family will be moving to their new home in Woodstock, Vermont just in time to assume her new role.

Jessica has served in parks and recreation leadership roles for the past ten+ years, including her most recent former position as Director of Recreation in Wayland, Massachusetts, and previously as Director of Parks & Recreation in Clinton, MA and Assistant Director

> continued pg. 7

## CONFERENCE KEYNOTE



VRPA Executive Committee Officers

<b>President</b> Melissa Cate, CPRP (Burlington)	865-5399
<b>President-Elect</b> Ally Vile, CPRP (Essex)	878-1342
<b>Secretary</b> April Cioffi, CPRP (Rutland)	773-1822
<b>Treasurer</b> Jenn Turmel, CPRP (Colchester)	264-5643
<b>Past President</b> Scott Hausler, CPRP (Hartford)	295-5036

Executive Committee Members-at-Large

Rob Peterson (Vt State Parks)	279-8329
Matt Frazee (Stowe)	253-3054
Brett Leonard, CPRP (South Burlington)	846-4137
Drew Pollak-Bruce, CPRP (SE Group)	735-2370

VRPA Office

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VRPA Newsletter

The VRPA Advocate is published three times a year by the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association. Contributions to the newsletter are welcome, including commentary on subjects of interest to Vermont's recreation professionals and volunteers.

**Editor:** Betsy Terry

**Next issue submission deadline:**  
August 15, 2019  
Send to: Jessica@vrpa.org or by mail to:  
VRPA, 721 Main St.  
Colchester, VT, 05446



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2019/2020

July 20	VRPA – SJA State Track Meet St. Johnsbury
July 23	Executive Committee Retreat Seyon Lodge
September 24-26	NRPA Conference Baltimore
October 10 & 11	76th VT Recreation Conference Lake Morey
November 21	Performance Showcase Lake Morey
December 5	Quarterly Meeting Location TBD
January 7-9, 2020	Northern New England Recreation Conference, North Conway
March 24-25, 2020	Certified Pool Operator (CPO) Course South Burlington

For full descriptions of upcoming events & trainings visit, vrpa.org

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VRPA President's Perspective

Melissa Cate, CPRP, VRPA President



It was truly delightful to learn what applicants did (and did not) know about VRPA and why they were interested in leading our organization. It was clear, through these conversations, that our organization is one to be proud of and that there was a strong interest by a broad range of candidates in becoming involved in the parks and recreation community in Vermont. Furthermore, while sometimes exhausting, the interviews themselves were FUN – which, in my opinion, embodies our organization.

We are all about fun and we even make conducting interviews fun and filled with laughter! I am so appreciative of the time and effort that both Betsy and the Executive Committee put into this important search. I am thrilled that the hiring committee unanimously chose Jessica Brodie to lead VRPA as we enter the next chapter in our organization. (Read more about Jess in the spotlight on her in this newsletter.)

It is amazing to think that Betsy has been at the helm of VRPA for 18 years! 18 years ago I had 1 and 4 year old children – and I was definitely exploring the wonders of life through the eyes of my kids. Now, as Betsy transitions into the next exciting phase of

her life, I am the mother of two college kids who are also transitioning into a new phase – and they too will have to begin to look at the world from a new, adult perspective.

I am certain that Betsy must feel, as I do, that those 18 years have flown by. And though I am sure that Betsy will maintain a close connection with VRPA and many of its members, I do want to take this opportunity to wish her the best – the best experiences, the best travels, the best food and, yes, the best fun!

When I think of Betsy, I always conjure up an image of her smiling and can hear her wonderful giggle – which is very likely why, when people think of VRPA, they think of fun. Let's all commit to carrying on Betsy's legacy by continuing to make our organization a place where people want to work and volunteer and participate...for the FUN of it!

Wishing all of our members a summer full of fun and opportunities to see and experience something new! ■

Melissa Cate

Melissa Cate, CPRP  
VRPA President (2018-2020)





**NRPA 2019**  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

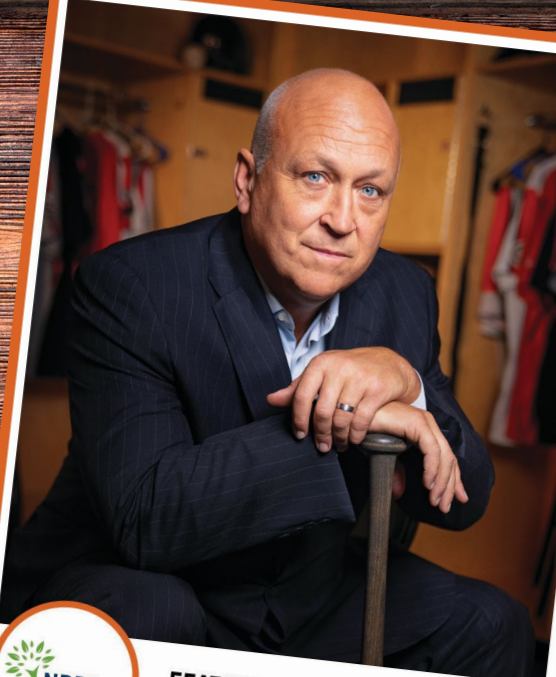
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**FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER:  
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**60**  
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# Message

from the Executive Director

I recently registered for a free women's bicycle program called Wellness Revolution that was co-sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont and Terry Bicycles, a Burlington company that for 30+ years has been dedicated to making cycling a more comfortable experience for women. I needed a nudge to get back onto my bike and this was perfect. When I arrived for the first class, I was introduced to 29 other women who were there for a variety of reasons – they had taught their children to ride a bike and now needed to get back on their own, they were looking for other women to ride with, they used to ride regularly but hadn't been on a bike for 20+ years, or they were like me and about to retire and looking to get motivated to start riding again for fun and for fitness. We met once a week, had a session on bike maintenance, did short weekly rides along the Burlington bike path and on the last Saturday we biked as a group either 5, 10, 15 or 20 miles. It was awesome to see all those women, dropping what they would ordinarily have been doing on a Saturday morning, to take time to go for a bike ride.

Usually I am organizing events and this time I was a participant. It was so obvious to me that this program was changing the lives of the participants and it was a clear reminder of the importance of recreation programming – of course I know this but feeling it first hand was delightful. It made me proud to be a recreation professional and so appreciative of the two program sponsors and of all of you who are providing similar opportunities month after month and year after year. Thank you.

Approaching retirement has caused me to ask myself all kinds of questions...I won't bore you with any of them here. Equally importantly, it has confirmed for me just how lucky I am to have chosen a career that has been so meaningful and connected me with so many wonderful people.

When I followed George Plumb as VRPA's second Executive

Director, I didn't give it much thought how many years I would do this job. I started work two hours after my daughter, Hanna, entered first grade. She has now graduated from college and is just completing the second year of her own professional life. As I contemplate the last 18 years, I am convinced that this is what I was meant to be doing.

Together, we have worked hard and created amazing events. We have grown the association, successfully diversified revenue streams and achieved financial sustainability. We have continued to welcome new members, strengthened committees, and inspired people to participate in all levels of leadership.

You have accepted me as your "glue", as someone recently described my role as executive director, and you have shared your time and your talents freely with me and with your professional association. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

It has been so much fun and it thrills me to hear different people say that what makes VRPA special is that we make things fun. My time as VRPA Executive Director has convinced me that you can absolutely work really hard and have a lot of fun at the same time.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve as your Executive Director. I look forward to watching the association continue to thrive under the leadership of Jessica Brodie and pledge my support to continue to be an engaged VRPA member as a retiree.

Keep up the great work and I hope you have a wonderful summer! ■

*Betsy*

Betsy Terry, CPRP  
VRPA Executive Director (2001 – 2019)



# Meet

Jessica Brodie,  
CPRP

## VRPA's Next Executive Director

of Parks & Recreation in Dover, MA. She has a vast background in parks and recreation administrative functions including fiscal management, strategic planning, and leadership. She has a proven background of establishing community partnerships to accomplish goals and objectives, and developing new ideas. She has worked extensively under the direction of a volunteer commission, alongside several other boards and committees, and recognizes the importance of excellent communication and customer service in all aspects of an organization.

A graduate of the University of New Hampshire's Recreation and Management Policy program, she has since achieved her Certified Parks & Recreation Professional (CPRP) certification, and in 2009 and 2010 attended and graduated from the 2-year National Recreation and Park Association Director's School in Wheeling, West Virginia.

Jessica has been an active member of the Massachusetts's Recreation & Park Association (MRPA) for more

than ten years, served on the MRPA Executive Board and as an Education Branch representative, as well as having been a member of their conference committee. In 2012, she was awarded the "Massachusetts New Professional of the Year Award."

Jessica Brodie will join the Vermont Recreation & Parks Association on July 1st. She and the current VRPA Executive Director, Betsy Terry, plan to overlap for the entire month of July to ensure a smooth transition. In mid-July, Jessica will be travelling to Grand Prairie, TX to represent VRPA at the summer meeting of the Council of State Executive Directors.

Jessica wanted to share this...

"I want to thank everyone that I have already worked with so far on the VRPA Executive Board for welcoming me into the organization. I am beyond excited to meet and work alongside all of the other amazing professionals throughout Vermont. I look forward to hearing from Association members what their goals are for the organization and working hard to make those a reality. I hope to

be a great leader by listening, learning, and working hard to best serve the Association and everyone that is a part of it."

"I am a mom of three young kids, a wife, a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a friend, and someone who loves to smile and work hard. I am a die-hard horseback rider, Eventer, turned die-hard all mountain skier and ski coach, turned peak-bagging 4,000-footer mountain climber, and turned road & cyclocross bike rider. I care deeply about the parks, open space, and agriculture that make up our communities. I have lived my life in all aspects of Parks & Recreation, and I am so excited to help you all in any way that I can - whether that be in a State House meeting room or on a muddy trail!"

It is quite clear that Jessica is a person with a lot of energy! Within weeks of being offered this position, she and her husband John had found a house (with a barn) and were planning their move to Vermont. We so look forward to her arrival – please join us in welcoming Jessica to the Green Mountain State! ■



# Candice Holbrook CPRP

Recreation Program Manager, Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront

*Editor's Note; As is always the case, it was a pleasure to talk with Candice and to share with you a bit more about one of Vermont's rising young stars in the parks and recreation world. Candice is currently serving her third year as a member of the VRPA state conference committee. In her first year, she took on the conference brochure and at meetings, she often has the answers to questions being asked and commitment from people to help before the end of meetings...she knows how to maximize the use of her cell phone!*

## What influenced your decision to choose the career you did?

"While in high school, my track coach encouraged me to be a lifeguard for our city's outdoor pool in the summer months. After high school and during college, I started lifeguarding and quickly became a pool manager at the local park district's indoor pool. My supervisor, whose title was Aquatics Coordinator, encouraged me to earn a BS in Recreation Administration. Once I began to take classes for my major, I fell in love with the career and never looked back."

## What positions have you held so far in your career?

I just have to list this one first – Candice was a Corn Detassler in the Illinois Corn Fields...not sure that any other VRPA member can say that! Wow, Candice Holbrook has been on a tour of the country pursuing her work. In Illinois, she worked as a lifeguard, pool manager, basketball coach and referee, and recreation program manager. In Colorado, she completed an internship as an Assistant Adventure Camp Director and in Texas, she was a recreation aid and teaching fellow. Here in Vermont, Candice is the Recreation Program Manager at Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, the Girls B Team Basketball Coach at Edmonds Middle School, and a soldier in the Vermont Army National Guard.

## What do you consider your greatest career accomplishments?

"My greatest accomplishment is having the ability to oversee a team of individuals who mentor, lead, and coach seasonal staff each year. I see a huge difference in professional confidence from

the beginning of the summer to the end of the summer in these seasonal staff. It's especially noticeable in the high school and early college students. Last summer while riding my bicycle in Burlington from camp to camp, I heard a camp counselor yell to me as I approached, "If not you, then who?". I share my favorite quote with the seasonal staff during the week long staff training at the beginning of each summer, "I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that, then I realized I am somebody." I summarized that quote to, "If not you, then who?" so that staff can remember it. It's great to see staff continue to carry and use the things that I teach them."

Serving on the Council that distinguished the Rock River, a tributary to the Mississippi River that flows from Wisconsin to Illinois, a National Water Trail was also a highlight of my career.

"I am very proud to be a Soldier in the Vermont Army National Guard, currently training in the Officer Candidate School."

## What have been your biggest professional challenges?

"At about the half way point of every summer, morale in part-time and full-time staff is tested. I take this time to make more of a presence in all programming and camps. This summer, instead of having end of summer parties, we are going to incorporate parties and staff outings in the middle of summer to give a boost of mid-summer energy. Hopefully this will improve morale in staff, which in turn will help improve morale for the campers and participants."

## Do you have any professional advice from lessons you have learned?

"The other day I was talking to my father on the telephone; he lives in Illinois. I was telling him about the many duties and tasks I needed to accomplish in the following days, and he said to me, "Sometimes the hardest part is showing up. Everything flows from there." He is right. So, my advice is to show up and be present. Show up to the office. Show up to that program that your colleague took the time to plan, program, and execute, even if it's for five minutes. Show up to the meeting. Show up to your workout. Show up and help clean up. Show up. "

## What are some of the benefits you value most as a member of VRPA?

"The VRPA meetings and networking opportunities

not only allow different organizations to bounce ideas off of one another, but they allow professionals to come together to help our state continue its mission: to help create community through people, parks, and programs. Not being a native Vermonter, VRPA has helped me learn about the state's recreation opportunities by connecting with state and local organizations at meetings."

## Candice, what are your personal recreation interests?

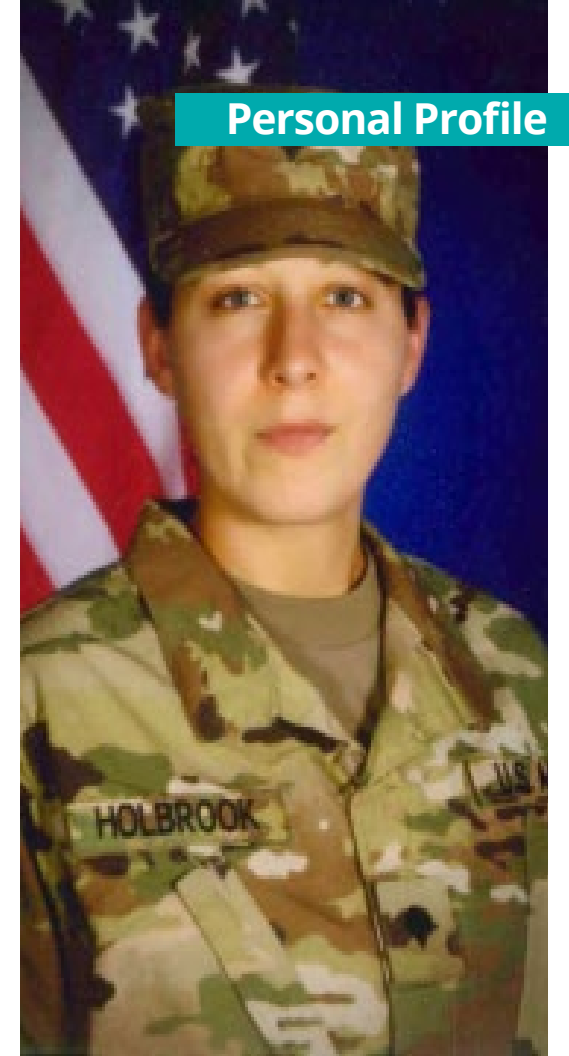
"Hiking, biking, running, reading, traveling, and watching Grey's Anatomy."

## Tell us about your family.

"I am very close with my family, who all live in Illinois and Texas. My partner, Kimberly, recently moved back to Vermont after completing a one-year contract with the State Department. She works as a Physician Assistant at the UVM Medical Center in the Emergency Department.

## Anything else?

"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." ■



**"Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it."**  
– Ferris Bueller



# AROUND the STATE



## Around the State



### Tennis in the Parks

**By Karen Didricksen**  
**Vermont Service Representative, USTA**

Need help starting up a tennis program in your town?

Many communities in Vermont have tennis courts but no tennis programs. It can be hard to find instructors, curriculum and equipment that's needed. This is where the new USTA Tennis in the Parks' comes in!

USTA (United States Tennis Association) is partnering with recreation departments across the country to provide an accessible, inclusive, and affordable program that is engaging and fun for youth players.

USTA-VT will hire and train tennis coaches to deliver a one-hour session for 6 weeks for each age group, in your park. In addition to the instruction, each player will also receive a t-shirt and racquet! The target ages of players are 6-14 years. Tennis racquets are sized for each child with red, orange or green training balls being used. Participants start where they can have success and progress to the next size court and color ball as they improve.

USTA's Net Generation Curriculum is designed to offer playful and fun games while learning the basics of tennis. In partnership with USTA, the recreation departments in Randolph and Barre will be launching Vermont's first Tennis in the Parks this summer!

Interested in learning more? Want to be trained to teach the Net Generation tennis to kids? Reach out to Vermont's TSR (Tennis Service Representative) and she will go over this terrific new program! ■

**Karen Didricksen** | [didricksen@newengland.usta.com](mailto:didricksen@newengland.usta.com)





By George Moltz  
Games Coordinator, Vermont Senior Games

The Vermont Senior Games (VSG) recently announced that Elizabeth McCarthy and Thomas “Tim” Hogeboom of Walden will be leading the Vermont contingent in the Parade of Athletes at the National Senior Games in Albuquerque, New Mexico on June 19, 2019.

A married couple, McCarthy and Hogeboom also represented the Green Mountain state at the National Senior Games two years ago in Birmingham, Alabama, and expressed great excitement in accepting the responsibility. “We feel really honored we were picked,” Tim admitted. “Vermont has such a history of great athletes, and the Nationals is such a special event.”

The Vermont Senior Games selected the couple because they vividly represent what the organization is about, promoting athletic excellence and dedication while emphasizing participation and the fun in playing sports. They have chosen to make the VSG a central part in their active, healthy lifestyle.

Elizabeth McCarthy was working as the caretaker of an Appalachian Mt. Club cabin at Upper Goose Pond in the Berkshires in 1984 when a shaggy-bearded Tim Hogeboom ventured in to find a night’s lodging on his trek along the Appalachian Trail. They hit it off immediately, and in 1987 were married in a ceremony at the summit of Mt. Mansfield. Tim is very familiar with mountain summits, being one of only 396 individuals who have been awarded the American “Triple Crown” of hiking the Appalachian Trail, the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Continental Divide Trail!

Trying to find affordable housing, they found what they were looking for in 1989, purchasing five acres and a farmhouse in remote Walden for a mere \$26,000. McCarthy and Hogeboom have been fixing it up ever since, raising a family and commuting long distances to work.

Elizabeth stayed home with their son Forrest and daughter Ali for a while, then began working in the schools as a paraeducator. Eventually, she went back



to school herself and worked as an Educational Technology / Digital Learning teacher for the Washington Central Supervisory Union before winding up her career as an online instructor for CCV.

Meanwhile, Tim spent many years as a television camera-man and a documentary filmmaker, then changed careers to become an environmental scientist for the state of Vermont. His final job was serving as a laboratory technician for the physics and chemistry programs at VTC in Randolph.

Both Hogeboom and McCarthy qualified for multiple events at Nationals, but competition rules limit how many events each individual can do. As a result, the couple decided to forego their track and field options in Albuquerque in favor of the 5K and 10K runs, and the golf tournament.

Elizabeth modestly states, “we try to do a lot of races,” and the couple has deservedly earned numerous honors. Tim won the 65-69-year-old age group title at the prestigious Stowe Ten-Miler in 2017, and Elizabeth matched his feat in 2018. Furthermore, Elizabeth earned ribbons for finishing in the top 8 in three events at the 2017 Senior Nationals in Birmingham.

“At Nationals, in most events the top three athletes are amazing, and I’m not really competing with them,” Elizabeth commented. “But what’s so nice is that while they are competitive, they are also willing to help and encourage everyone. We try to do our best, but our expectations are realistic.”

Tim added, “if I can finish in the middle of the pack at Nationals, I’ll be happy.”

The couple has ramped up their training in preparation for Albuquerque despite the mud and challenging weather of the Vermont “spring.” “My

goal is to run 55 miles a week,” Tim claimed, “which is more than I’ve ever done.” For her part, Elizabeth raced half marathons in April and May.

Golf, however, is more of a fun challenge for the couple. Tim admitted that “with golf, our goal is not to embarrass ourselves. We are trying not to finish last.”

McCarthy and Hogeboom are very much looking forward to their Albuquerque trip. “We made the decision to go early,” Elizabeth mentioned, “so we were able to get a nice Airbnb for the whole stay.” And although they are a bit concerned about the elevation, both are mostly hoping to avoid a repeat of the heat and humidity they faced in the competition in Birmingham two years ago.

Best of luck to this intrepid couple and all the 66 Vermont senior athletes competing at Nationals! ■

## Vermont Senior Games

The 2019 Games Season Continues through October  
Back home in Vermont, competition in the 2019 Vermont Senior Games (VSG) state championship events continues through October with competitions in the following sports: track & field, pickleball, triathlon, golf, tennis, 5K and 10K road races, and basketball. For event details and registration information, go to [vermontseniorgames.org](http://vermontseniorgames.org).

The VSG enjoys a number of partnerships including with Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, Colchester Parks & Recreation, and Shelburne Parks & Recreation. These collaborations allow the VSG to offer a broader selection of high-quality events with strong competitive fields and often with athletes of all ages, which enhances the events and increases the fun and fellowship. If you haven’t been to one of the VSG events, you really should stop by sometime, they are inspirational.

Volunteers are always needed and welcome! Contact VSG Games Coordinator, George Moltz, at [gwmoltz@gmail.com](mailto:gwmoltz@gmail.com) for more details.





By Joanna Turner Bisceglia,  
Weston & Sampson

One of the most popular programs my (very creative and fabulous) sister has led at her local church in Ohio was a Couples' Road Rally. It sold out. It was not only a blast for the participants, but it also built community and a new network of friends. The general gist of the fun competition is as follows – grab your partner, meet up at the Rally's start for instructions and clues, then proceed to zoom all around the town doing all sorts of creative requirements – all the while staying within all road rules of course. Creative Requirements? These Rally "tasks" or "challenges" could be anything in the realm of the imagination that are (obviously) safe and appropriate for the group's dynamics. A golf ball shot, completing one piece of a puzzle, jumping jacks or push-ups, a cheese tasting station,

a small garden stop, a historic fact from a building...the choices are endless and the resulting spectacle is amusing! You may be wondering how this event concept applies to Vermont's local and state parks?

During a recent discussion at one of our Conference Committee meetings, I shared the concept – and how it could be applied to parks throughout the region to encourage community and learn about parks people may have never visited. Picture this... road rally participants meet up at your recreation center or school on a Saturday afternoon and at the designated start time, teams consisting of a family or group of friends, head out to the first of six different parks and playgrounds or "pit stops." Once they arrive at the rally site, they receive a clue about their task, for example to identify particular natural features, try various playground equipment, find a trailhead and

photograph the sign, collect a required object, hit a tennis ball, learn a bit of park history or usage fact from the "pit stop" attendant, create a new parks and recreation logo with sidewalk chalk, build a sand sculpture on the beach, etc. Once the challenges are complete, the team heads back to the Rally's destination for snacks and drinks, socializing until the teams are all present and various categories of winners are announced. Pre-printed team certificates and a (donated) local item such as a gift card to Ben & Jerrys are presented. If you plan it well, it could easily become an annual tradition, and former Rally participants would be a natural fit to help Recreation staff host future rallies! ■

For more details on the Rally my sister organized, visit [viewarts.org/events/past-events/road-rally-scavenger-hunt](http://viewarts.org/events/past-events/road-rally-scavenger-hunt)

## A Road-and-Trail Guide for Your Town? Here's How

By Robert Gillmore

In 2015, the Montgomery Recreation Board published *In the Middle of the Mountains: Scenic Roads & Trails in the Montgomery-Jay Peak Area*. Illustrated with color photos and printed on coated (glossy) paper, the pocket-size paperback offers detailed descriptions of eight road tours, seven "easy walks" and 15 hikes, all leading to the most interesting and beautiful scenery in the far-northern Green Mountains.



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Printing a trail guide is a good idea for many reasons including to raise money for worthy local

projects, to advance tourism in your area, to provide a valuable service for residents and visitors alike, to add a feather to your community's cap and to help bring much needed detailed, high-quality road-and-trail guides to Vermont.

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quality local guidebooks can be overcome. Based on what we've learned, we've written a 2,500-word primer—a short how-to manual—on how to successfully publish a high-quality local travel book." ■

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*By Brittany Malmgren, Program Director  
Rutland Recreation & Parks*

Gritty Girls originated in April of 2019. Based out of Pine Hill Park in Rutland, VT, Gritty Girls is led by strong female volunteer influences. This all-girls mountain biking club was created to encourage and promote confidence, knowledge and basic mountain biking skills in a supportive team environment. With a structured curriculum, Gritty Girls are educated in proper strength training, stretching, nutrition and more. Shelley Lutz, April Hayden and Peggy Shinn spear-headed the plan to create an all-girls mountain biking program and called it Gritty Girls. Gathering volunteers, with

the help of some participants from their Women's Mountain Bike Clinic, Gritty Girls is supported with ten+ volunteers. With an ample amount of excitement, Gritty Girls is made up of 31 girls and counting.

Gathering on Sunday afternoons for two hours, these girls are visited by local nutrition and fitness moguls to be educated on improving their overall health and wellness. Volunteering their time, Tyler White from iSport and registered dietician Anna White, are able to share their knowledge and experiences for the next generation of athletes.

Gritty Girls was privileged to have a logo created by art designer David Jenne. This amazing logo has been placed on t-shirts, water bottles and backpacks that volunteers and Gritty Girl participants receive. Program sponsors that have made Gritty Girls possible include the Rutland Regional Medical Center, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont, Darn Tough, Mountain Bike Vermont, Alpine Bike Works and Remax Summit. ■





# Facility Feature

## The C.O.R.E. Center in the Old North End Community Center Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront

*The C.O.R.E. Center received a Facility of Merit Award at the recent VRPA Annual Meeting. This article was written from the information provided in their award nomination.*



### Facility Feature

In the autumn of 2016 the Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department (BPRW) entered into a partnership with Champlain Housing Trust, committing to establish a recreation and community center at 20 Allen Street, formerly St. Joseph's School. Their commitment to lease the second floor of the building enabled Champlain Housing Trust to secure the financing possible to purchase the property from the Catholic Diocese of Burlington and to begin renovations to the former school. The second floor of the building houses the gymnasium and the school administrative offices, along with 10 classrooms.

The timing was perfect. The City of Burlington had committed to establishing a recreation and community center in the area of the city referred to as the Old North End based on demographics and community need. The two elementary schools located in this area of the city have the highest percentage of Burlington families living below the poverty line. Additionally, this area of Burlington is also the most ethnically and racially diverse neighborhood in the city. The C.O.R.E. at the Old North End Community Center represents the first city-managed indoor recreation space in the Old North End. Additionally, for the first time in the department's history, they have full-time programming staff based in this section of the city.



The City and Champlain Housing Trust shared a vision for converting the St. Joseph's Parochial School into a hub for activities for community members of all ages and backgrounds. The Old North End Community Center has quickly become this hub. The Association of Africans Living in Vermont (A.A.L.V.) occupies the third floor of the building and the bottom floor is home to both the Janet Munt Family Room and Robins Nest Daycare. Additionally, the cafeteria space on the first floor has been renovated and is being operated by local 501(c)(3) Old North End Studios.

BPRW took on the oversight of the Champlain Senior Center (CSC) in 2016 and moved center operations to 20 Allen Street in November of 2017. The center occupies three renovated classrooms at the C.O.R.E. The CSC is open every Monday – Friday from 9:00am – 4:00pm. The CSC hosts a congregate meals program daily, which is provided by AgeWell, VT and administered by City staff. Each day at the Champlain Senior Center, you can find seniors playing pickleball, doing Tai Chi, Chair Yoga, Bone Builders, and arm chair exercises. Wii bowling, watching movies, playing cards, sewing, jewelry making and walking in the gymnasium are also popular activities at the CORE. Senior adults also participate in various activities

organized by UVM interns that include technology classes, AARP tax help, foot care and weekly field trips. Every Wednesday members of the Bhutanese senior population visit the CSC for meals and programming. This summer, BPRW will begin an intergenerational program with senior adults from CSC sharing meals and doing activities with the youth meals summer programs.

The C.O.R.E. is also home to the largest youth theater organization in Vermont. Very Merry Theatre rents a classroom that has been converted into a black box theater and utilizes the gymnasium and stage for larger performances. The Vermont Hindu Temple Association also occupies dedicated space (a converted classroom) at the C.O.R.E.

Also located in the Old North End (ONE) Community Center, the ONE Youth Center is a collaborative effort between BPRW and AALV, an organization that helps new Americans from all parts of the world gain independence in their communities. The ONE Youth Center focuses its efforts on serving youth of color through a VT Department of Children & Families grant, but welcomes all youth to participate. The ONE Youth Center focuses on safe and fun activities that build life skills, help with homework and provide

**The C.O.R.E. Center is the newest example of how BPRW and the Burlington community are working together to create positive experiences for the citizens of Burlington.**



mentoring for youth. It is a space where youth can fully express themselves as well as accept themselves and be themselves.

The C.O.R.E. Center doesn't have high-tech advancement, such as touch-screen options or electronic schedule viewing, but it does have a sense of community with daily face to face interaction.

If you walk through the building today, you will see pictures

hanging throughout the hallways of the Old North End, taken by local photographers and community builders. You will see a mural on the west side of the CORE painted by seniors, and on the east side you will see high schoolers working with a local artist painting a new mural. You will see art painted on canvas by the seniors. You will hear seniors laughing, students learning, adults playing pickleball. You may hear a

Ted Talk and discussion, or plates and forks clinking as senior meals are served.

The C.O.R.E. Center is the newest example of how BPRW and the Burlington community are working together to create positive experiences for the citizens of Burlington. ■





Network • Learn • Empower

# 76<sup>th</sup> Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation Set for October 10 & 11

*By Rob Peterson, CPRP*

*Conference Committee Chair and Parks Regional Manager, VT State Parks*

The Vermont Recreation & Parks Association is honored to host this year's 76th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation. The Conference Committee has been working diligently each month since last December to develop a conference program that reflects the vast spectrum of recreational diversity in our small state. We promise this conference will not only be stimulating and thought-provoking, but also fun!

This is our association's largest event and consequently your best opportunity to network with Vermont's recreation community in the intimate, picturesque setting of Lake Morey Resort. The conference will feature municipal and state recreation professionals, recreation non-profits, volunteers and commercial partners from throughout Vermont, New England, and beyond.

The secret to our conference's success each year is based on a simple, time-tested formula: An inspiring, thought-provoking keynote speaker, high quality education sessions, ample time for networking with colleagues and exhibitors and finally, Vermont's Finest Silent Auction with thousands of dollars in merchandise, gift cards and products. Last, but not least, the conference features excellent food and entertainment, including a fireworks display!

Time spent in the Conference Exhibit Hall is sure to save you and your organization time and money, and it may win you some prizes.

Chat with 40+ exhibitors and learn all about their latest products and services. Exclusive Exhibit Hall time, while no other conference activities are planned, is scheduled on both days of the conference so that you can attend whether you register for one day or both days.

This year we have a special incentive to boost attendance at our 76th conference—we're calling it the "Push for 150." Our conference means little without you, our recreation community, and to inspire you to come, we'll be giving away a free conference registration package and hotel room for the 2020 conference...if we get 150 registered delegates. Last year we had 125 conference registrations. Will you help us reach our goal of 150 registered delegates? We'll randomly draw

a lucky winner at the end of the awards luncheon out of the total registered delegates (if we reach 150). Please help us reach our goal!



Become part of the Vermont Recreation Community's time-honored tradition this fall and join us at the Lake Morey Resort for the 76th Annual Vermont Conference on Recreation! ■



# Conference KEYNOTE

## The Conference Committee is Thrilled to Announce that Neelay Bhatt is Coming Back to Vermont

Neelay Bhatt's career on five continents includes Disney, The Super Bowl, The Olympics, and several years of consulting, public speaking and training. TEDx, the global platform for ideas, describes him as a business and communications visionary, and his service on the National Recreation and Park Association's Board of Directors is committed to ensuring that 'no child is left indoors'.

Most recently, he was chosen by the Indianapolis Business Journal as one of Indy's Forty under 40 leaders having an impact on the city. As Principal at PROS Consulting INC., headquartered in Indianapolis, he has led 130+ strategic and master planning, sports facility development, customer service training, and marketing and branding projects. These projects have recommended

facility development and infrastructure improvements totaling over \$2 billion USD and are helping to shape a better vision for parks, recreation, and sports all over the world.

Neelay continues to champion the transformational power of ideas while serving as curator and co-organizer for TEDxIndianapolis, TEDxIndianapolisWomen and TEDxCollegePark (MD) and has led a TED Global workshop in Canada, presented multiple TEDx talks and continues to coach TEDx presenters as well.

He is an alumnus of the Harvard Kennedy School and the #1 ranked Sports Management Program at Ohio University, and his keynotes and presentations on empathetic leadership, magical customer service and the art of storytelling have benefited executives, professionals, and students from North America to China and from Europe to New Zealand. ■

## Vermont MAINTENANCE WORKSHOP

Just as predicted, the sun began shining five minutes before the start of the recent Vermont Maintenance Workshop at the Middlebury Recreation Center. There to actively participate in the day were 76 workshop participants, 15 vendors/commercial partners, and 19 speakers and roundtable facilitators.

A VERY BIG SHOUT OUT to Scott Bourne, Dustin Hunt, and Middlebury Parks & Recreation for so fully welcoming us to the Middlebury Recreation Center. It was a perfect way to show off this facility to more of Vermont's parks and recreation professionals, after being recognized as a VRPA Facility of Merit in 2016. If you are planning a recreation facility, this would be a great one to look at –

the attention to detail in this small facility that includes a gym, fitness/dance room, and small kitchen is amazing - it is power-packed with a lot of the things you would find in a bigger facility. It was a perfect venue for the maintenance workshop!

This year's vendors went above and beyond to bring equipment to the event so that participants could get onto machines, drive them, and see them in action. We realize that this takes extra effort on their parts and on behalf of the participants who have been asking for this for years, a special thank you. THANK YOU to all our vendors!

Thank you to everyone involved and to everyone who attended and/or sent your staff! There is never a perfect time of year for park staff to take a day away from

their parks and we'd like to acknowledge the folks who made the commitment to take the day to network with people doing similar work and learn new skills and knowledge on a variety of topics. If all goes as we are currently thinking, this will become an annual event. ■





# ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY STATE TRACK MEET

Set for Saturday, July 20

*By Brett Leonard, CPRP  
Recreation Specialist  
South Burlington Recreation & Parks*

It's that time of year when we turn our focus towards summer programs and events. The VRPA-St Johnsbury Academy State Track Meet is one event that I would encourage you to support by registering a team.

This year's meet will take place at St Johnsbury Academy on Saturday, July 20th and is unlike any of the mini-meets held throughout the summer. Athletes aged 7-14 on August 31, 2019 are eligible to participate in the meet this year unless they were a high school freshman in the 2018-2019 school year.

Over 300 athletes from around the state will converge upon St Johnsbury for the day. Thanks to 802 Timing for their electronic timing services and to Blue Cross Blue Shield of VT for providing each participant with a colorful t-shirt. The atmosphere at this meet is incredibly supportive and inclusive, and the excitement level runs high as each athlete participates in up to 3 events and possibly on a relay

team too. Ribbons are awarded to the top six finishers in age groups for boys and girls.

Teams set up a tent village behind the grandstands to catch some shade, mingle with other participants and rest between events. There's a snack bar with delicious offerings benefiting the St Johnsbury Recreation Department and the St Johnsbury Kiwanis swimming pool.

What may look like organized chaos to the untrained eye is actually an amazingly well-oiled production thanks to the mighty efforts of Joe Fox and an amazing core group of volunteers from St Johnsbury Academy. This event is a wonderful culmination to the track and field season. ■

Commitment forms can be found on the VRPA website or via this link [vrpa.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/VRPA%20Commitment%202019.pdf](http://vrpa.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/VRPA%20Commitment%202019.pdf).



# VRPA Summerama

160 people who will be working in a Vermont camp setting this summer participated in Summerama on Sunday, June 2nd. What a great day it was! A VERY BIG THANK YOU to Stephanie Quaranta and the City of Barre for sharing the Barre Auditorium with us... what a great location for Summerama! It is an honor to be able to offer this full-day training to the wonderful young people who will be running our camps this summer...they got up early on a Sunday morning to drive to Barre and were a very engaged group!

A big shout out to the Summerama Committee members Emily Boek, Kirsten Santor, Jay McDonough, Joe Fox, Todd Goodwin, Katrina Kreschmar, Jazmin Averbuck, Mitch Osiecki, and Arne McMullen and Committee Chair Extraordinaire Jess Booth from Newport. Thank you to all our speakers including VRPA members Jazmin Averbuck (Girl Scouts of the Green & White Mtns.), Lee Barrett (Colchester), Emily Boek (Stowe), Karen Didricksen (USTA-VT), Jess Booth (Newport), Joe Fox (St. Johnsbury), and Todd Goodwin (Williston) – their willingness to take time from their own weekend to make this professional commitment is another good example of how our VRPA members make it possible to accomplish all that we do.

If you haven't brought your staff to Summerama before, you should think about it next year. With a VRPA member registration fee of \$25 (\$23 if you register 10 or more), most people agree that this is a tremendous value for their training dollars. With concurrent sessions all day long, the committee is very mindful to include topics of relevance to all experience levels and interests.

Thank you to everyone who attended and brought their staff to this year's Summerama! ■





# VRPA ANNUAL MEETING

The 2019 VRPA Annual Meeting was held on May 16th in the beautiful timber frame meeting room at the Green Mountain Club headquarters in Waterbury Center. Amy Potter, GMC Visitor Center Manager, welcomed us and shared a bit about the mission and the work of the Green Mountain Club – like many of you, they are about to quadruple their staff with seasonal staff to accomplish their summer projects and caretaking of the Long Trail.

Thank you very much to everyone who came to the Annual Meeting and to everyone who contributed to the success of the meeting! For those of you who were not there, the Annual Report is included in this issue of the newsletter. ■

To review the full annual report visit:  
[vrpa.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/annual%20report%202019.pdf](http://vrpa.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/annual%20report%202019.pdf)

## Meeting Highlights:

- The FY2018-19 VRPA budget finished with a \$342 net balance
- The FY2019-20 VRPA budget was approved
- Adriane Martin won the VIP \$1,000 professional development scholarship
- 3 new Certified Parks & Recreation Professionals (CPRPs) were recognized: Isaac Spivey (Colchester), and Susan Carter & Diana Wood (Burlington)

### 5-year membership awards were presented to:

- 5 Year - Emily Boek (Stowe), Bushway (Quechee), Nicole Densmore (Rutland), Sarah Jennings (Burlington), and Adriane Martin (Essex)
- 10 Year - Jay McDonough (Hartford)
- 15 Year - Matt Frazee (Stowe)
- 25 Year - Melissa Cate (Burlington)

### The Annual VRPA Awards were presented to:

#### Facility of Merit Awards

- Town of Milton - Bombardier Park West Revitalization
- City of Rutland - White Memorial Pool
- City of Burlington - Center for Recreation & Education (CORE) at the Old North End Community Center

Young Professional Award – Adriane Martin (Essex Parks & Recreation)

Unsung Hero – Colchester Winter Carnival Committee

- The afternoon education program included a tour of the recently completed Barnes Camp Boardwalk in Smugglers Notch and a 1.5 mile hike along the Barnes Camp Loop that included a higher than usual creek crossing and a classic New England steep section of trail. It was a great way to end the day.



When we arrived at the Barnes Camp which is located in Smugglers Notch State Park, Green Mountain Club Trail Ambassadors Ira Sollace and Cindy Griffith toured us on the new fully-accessible Barnes Camp Boardwalk – if you haven't visited this yet, you should add it to your list for this summer.



Sherry Winnie from VT FPR acing the water crossing!



The group who accepted the challenge of the afternoon hike on the Barnes Camp Loop.



Adriane Martin, Program Director at Essex Parks and Recreation, shows her son, Keller, her Young Professional Award.



Nicole Densmore (L) and April Cioffi (R) accepted a Facility of Merit Award for the newly replaced White Memorial Pool in Rutland.



The Town of Milton received a Facility of Merit Award for their recent Bombardier Park West Revitalization Project. Milton Recreation Coordinator Kym Duchesneau (L) accepted the award along with John Bartlett and Gisela Alpert.



Migmar Tsering (L) and Gary Rogers (R) accepted a Facility of Merit Award for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront's new Center of Recreation and Education (CORE Center) in the Old North End Community Center.



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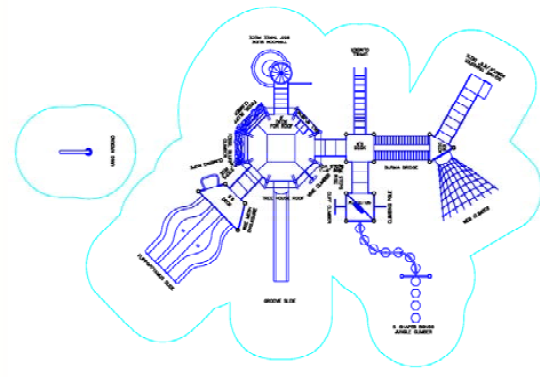
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### Benefits of membership in the Vermont Recreation and Park Association:

- Align yourself with 400+ professionals & volunteers who operate with a shared mission, vision, and values.
- Access tools and resources to position recreation and parks as essential community services.
- Develop strategies to advance and thrive within your profession and as an agency/organization.
- Build your skills and your professional network too.
- Shape our profession today and tomorrow.

### As a VRPA member, you will receive:

- **Recreation Check-In**  
Weekly information and happenings, via email.
- **The Advocate - VRPA newsletter**  
Three issues a year, via email.
- **VRPA Membership Directory**  
Annual directory of member contact information, electronic format.
- **Discounted Fees**  
Conferences, workshops and event registration fees, and advertising rates.
- **Professional Assistance**  
In person and online.
- **VRPA website**  
Access the VRPA website at [vrpa.org](http://vrpa.org).

## APPLICATION & ANNUAL RENEWAL

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

OFFICE PHONE

CELL PHONE

EMAIL

### CLASSIFICATION (See next page for classification descriptions)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agency (check one)	No. of Persons	Membership Fee
<input type="radio"/> 1-4 staff	_____	\$285
<input type="radio"/> 5-10 staff	_____	\$395
<input type="radio"/> 11+ staff	_____	\$510
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Professional	___1___	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/> Board/Commission*	_____	\$115
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial**	___1___	\$190
<input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Friend <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree (check one)	___1___	\$25
<input type="checkbox"/> Honorary Life	___1___	Complimentary

\* (Includes ALL board/commission members)

\*\* (inc. link from VRPA website)

☐ Check enclosed ☐ Payment being mailed ☐ Total amount due \$ \_\_\_\_\_

New memberships received in the months of Nov, Dec and Jan are half price. New memberships received in the last three months of our fiscal year (Feb, March and April) are full price and include the following year membership also.

## MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

Would you like to become more involved with VRPA? Listed below are the various VRPA committees. Please check if you are interested and someone will contact you. Thank you for your interest!

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership   | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter           | <input type="checkbox"/> Performance Showcase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Summerama  | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Track & Field        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awards   | <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> State Conference     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern NE Conference <input type="checkbox"/> Other ways you'd like to help: _____ |   |   |

Is there a VRPA member who influenced your decision to join? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of NRPA? ☐ No ☐ Yes, who? \_\_\_\_\_

**IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY RENEWED YOUR 2019-20 VRPA MEMBERSHIP, IT IS TIME.**

**IF YOU HAVE ALREADY RENEWED, THANK YOU!**

**Online:** [vrpa.org](http://vrpa.org) | **Mail:** send printed application to VRPA, 721 Main Street, Colchester, VT, 05446

**Questions?** Call the VRPA office at 802-878-2077





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Vermont Recreation & Parks Association

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