
THIRD ACT VT

JUNE 2024 NEWSLETTER

“This is a tender time in our lives, on this planet, with no time to waste.”

—Anna Goldstein,
Third Act Advisory Council Member

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Elders’ Day Report from Summer of Heat on Wall Street

Six members of Third Act Vermont were joyfully arrested on June 13th Elders’ Day, during the first week of Summer of Heat on Wall Street. In total 60 people were arrested that day for disorderly conduct while blocking the entrances to the world headquarters of CitiBank. CitiBank has become the largest funder of new fossil fuel infrastructure since the [Paris Climate Agreement](#) was signed on December 12, 2015.

You may be surprised that I used the word “joyful” to describe the arrests. However, those of us involved were well-prepared, clear about how we would work together, knew we had more than adequate support for our action, and were convinced that mass action is called for at this time.



Third Act Vermonters marching boldly on their way to block Citibank’s doors

Elders' Day Report from Summer of Heat on Wall Street

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As an organization and as individuals we have asked bankers to stop funding gas, oil, and coal projects. We have asked nicely. We have written letters and made personal visits to bank managers. Many of us took part in the one hundred coordinated events across the U.S. on March 21 last year, fondly known as 3.21.23. We are now taking action in the street. Wall Street, that is.

We are taking nonviolent direct action, also called civil disobedience. As a group, we agreed ahead of time to act without violence and that we would be very civil in our disobedience.

When the police officer came to arrest me, he and I treated each other with the utmost courtesy. Because I needed two canes to walk, it was clear that he couldn't put my hands in zip-tie handcuffs. I suggested that my two TA VT buddies could be handcuffed on either side of me thus allowing me to walk with the canes. The officer had to confer with his superiors to decide what to do.



When he returned, the officer told me he was concerned for my safety and offered me a rocking chair to sit in while we waited for the crowd to clear a little. My buddies were put in handcuffs and led away. Then he helped me to stand up and escorted me to the paddy wagon with only the slightest touch of his fingertips on the center

of my back. I walked proudly and with confidence, using my canes of course. When we neared the line of protesters waiting to be put in the paddy wagons, I thanked him for his kindness.

I spent two interesting hours in a jail cell with a young ecologist who had been jailed the day before during the Scientists' Rebellion (also part of the Summer of Heat on Wall Street.) She had decided to return to support us during Elders' Day and was arrested again.

I am pleased to have acted with moral integrity. Being jailed seemed insignificant in the context of resolving the climate crisis. My only regret was that a hundred more willing souls from Third Act Vermont had not joined me.

The good news is that you can have your own chance to participate when we return to New York City for actions during Elders' Week on [July 8](#) and 10th. Please let me know if you might be willing to go with me in July.

Bill McKibben said, "This was a moment when elders began to show their real power. It won't be the last!"

—Laurel Green, Facilitator

Third Act VT Rendezvous: A Great Success!

Two dozen members and guests of Third Act Vermont gathered on June 8 at Allis State Park in Randolph for an inspiring day of camaraderie and action.

The evaluations at the end of the day showed that folks who attended loved meeting in person and being at a state park, enjoyed that there was a variety of activities as soon as they arrived, appreciated the activity time with several topics to choose from, noted that the small group discussions were important for connecting, found that the short video of Bill McKibben drew them in, and were inspired by hearing of other people's hope and commitment. Many people commented that meeting others, the camaraderie, and sharing were the highlights. A majority said they felt more engaged and inspired at the end of the Rendezvous.



We learned a lot from doing this experiment, so some changes for next time include: have more concrete next steps, and report back to the whole group after the breakout group conversations. One person suggested that next time everyone bring 10 friends!

A great big THANK YOU to Catherine and Steve who organized the day and to Dalia and Jud who did the original brainstorming. Thanks to Tom for bringing the audio visual equipment and documenting the day with photographs. Thanks to our special guest speaker, Leif

Taranta from the Climate Disobedience Center for their slideshow and talk about Nonviolent Direct Action and for leading a listening circle on the same topic during the activity time. The Third Act Vermont Rendezvous was made possible through a Base Building Grant from Third Act. We appreciate everyone's support in making this important event happen!



Afterglow from Third Act Northeast Convergence

“This is a tender time in our lives, on this planet, with no time to waste,” said Anna Goldstein at the start of our two-day gathering of Third Act Working Group leaders from ten northeastern states.

Each geographical Working Group introduced itself, and the affinity-based Working Groups presented on their contributions and resources they have developed. Networking and building relationships was at the heart of all we did at the convergence.

B Fulkerson, the national lead organizer and great support person for working group leaders, highlighted that “all change is based on relationships.” B went on to say that TA Working Groups are like homes where elders get to build relationships and take action together. Our emotional connections with each other build our identities and the movement. To have fun while we are doing things will help us center joy and trust.

We divided into smaller groups based on the major campaigns of Third Act: Fossil Free Finance, Power Up Communities (PUC), and Up Lift Democracy (Elections and Voting). Third Act members with decades of experience achieving change in these areas led the groups in strategizing future actions.

Bill McKibben made a surprise visit and appreciated the good work of Third Actors, who are shifting the narrative and spreading our work to more people. He said we need to point out how Donald Trump is entirely outside of the behavioral norms for a presidential candidate. We can also note that Joe Biden is a very decent human being and is using his years of experience to make policy that is good for everyone. Bill hinted at big events coming at the summer solstice next year, so save the dates for a year from now. He also talked about how important it is to connect our hearts with our minds through art and music and use these as a way to multiply our leverage. Of course, Bill said much more, too.

Our own Catherine Kidder summarized the event by saying, “I am in awe of the depth of commitment, creativity, urgency, and community shared at that meeting. I learned that it's cool to be old, and, sure, we may be old, but we got to hear the *really good bands*. *And that, like mycelium, we are all interconnected, all needed, and can all contribute.*”

Third Act Vermonters at the convergence were: Catherine Kidder (Orange County Regional Group Organizer and TA VT Rendezvous); Jud Lawrie (Up Lift Democracy Liaison, Climate Action Team, and Voter Action Team); Steve Crofter (former Divestment Action Team and TA VT Rendezvous); Beebe Potter (Franklin County Regional Group Organizer and former Coord Com member); and Laurel Green (Facilitator and Advanced Fossil Free Finance Liaison).



“Survivor Justice II” by Favianna Rodriguez
(from Third Act national’s Facebook page)

Postcards for Democracy Update

We have continued to meet on the first Sunday of each month, as we partner with other Third Act Working Groups to help protect and defend a democracy at risk: ours! Details about the activities are available and current on the Third Act VT website [here](https://thirdactvt.org/postcards-for-democracy/), at thirdactvt.org/postcards-for-democracy/.



We have sent out 8,000 cards so far. We're trying hard to break through the 10,000 mark in July. You can help us do that! Please join a local group or attend virtually. Shaun Deane is developing details about another short daily effort to get cards out and keep the numbers up through the summer vacation season. A handful of people doing just two cards a day will help us keep the cruise control locked in. We still want to send 20,000 cards by Election Day. We can do it!

During the June 2 event, a film crew from NHK, Japan's public media entity, visited our Burlington group. They have been especially interested in the partnership forged between Vermont and Pennsylvania (a key battleground state). They interviewed Third Act VT's Ed Cremo primarily about the presidential race and a couple of House races in PA, with a few questions on the political lay of the land. The NHK crew spoke about the postcard project. The focus of their piece is on the election process in PA; they became interested in bringing Vermont into the conversation upon learning that we (of TA VT) were assisting Pennsylvania. When the piece is finalized, we'll let TA VT members know.

In June we offered support to other battleground states, and in July we intend to return with a very strong focus in PA. Our Sunday sessions include partners in D.C. and Massachusetts, too. Please consider joining us. It's concrete, hands-on work and a great way to connect with Third Act members in our own counties and with folks in other states. You do not have to join an existing in-person group and can participate from the comfort of your own home or at a neighborhood site you might feel inclined to organize. Full details are available [here](https://thirdactvt.org/postcards-for-democracy/). Any questions? Please contact Shaun Deane at shaun@thirdactvt.org

Voting Action Team--Phone Banking

In last month's newsletter I described the formation of our new Voting Action Team (VAT). I noted several things we will be doing to help the critical November elections go our way, such as text banking, phone banking, postcarding, and writing letters.

I won't belabor how important the November elections are to the future of our planet and democracy. In this newsletter I want to focus on phone banking. It's effective and easy. You'd be joining many other Third Actors around the country doing the same thing.



Here's information from Third Act Central about how to get started: <https://thirdact.org/act/call-for-our-climate-phone-bank-with-third-act/> If you need any help or just have questions, please let me know at jud@lawrie.com. Thanks very much.

—Jud Lawrie

Divestment Action Team Update

The Divestment Action Team (DAT) is discussing using the Vermont Pension Investment Commission's (VPIC) Decarbonization Plan Proposal as a bill. Our team will wait until after the veto session to reach out to legislators and environmental groups to gauge their interest in such a bill.

We also met in person for a wonderful potluck dinner at Beth Sachs' home!

Changes Ahead - Third Act Vermont Revitalization

Third Act Vermont has been going strong for two and a half years, and we have accomplished many things. It has been a wonderful experience working with so many amazing people.

Now is the time to re-energize our leadership team. Three members of the current Coordinating Committee (aka the Coord Com) are carrying the load for running Third Act Vermont. It's clear that we can't continue that way. We decided to put our cards on the table and ask for help.

As with any organization there are roles for internal management, communications, outreach, and coordination with the national Third Act staff.

Ideally, we would like to see a dozen new people sharing these responsibilities. There are job descriptions available for each role on the Coord Com. Every role could have coleaders with the work shared by a team of people. The experienced current members of the Coord Com are willing to act as mentors to help new leaders grow into the roles.

The Coordinating Committee meets for an hour twice a month to harmonize all the efforts within Third Act Vermont.

During this time of revitalization, some activities will continue: Summer of Heat, the Voter Action Team, the Legislative and Divestment Action Teams, the Regional Groups, Postcarding, Newsletters. There is ongoing internal maintenance work that needs to continue, as well.

We are planning meetings for all TA VT members who want to be part of this revitalization to brainstorm how to move forward. We will use the Statewide Meetings on Thursday, July 18 and August 15, to take on this revitalization process. We will create a plan to fill the twelve seats that are vacant or need a replacement. Everyone is welcome to participate in this process.

If you are considering taking a more active role, please call Steve Crofter at 802-275-4646 and think together about what you might do in Third Act Vermont.

Thank you.

Laurel Green, Facilitator

laurelplanet@gmail.com

Statewide Meetings for Revitalization this Summer

On Thursday, July 18 and August 15, from 4:30 to 6p.m., we'll use our Statewide meetings to review the leadership roles needed to help our Third Act VT function well. We will also think together of how to fill those roles while not over burdening anyone and providing support for new people as they step into leadership. What an exciting time to be taking action on climate and democracy!



June Statewide Meeting

Please join us for our next statewide meeting on **Thursday, June 20, from 4:30 to 6 p.m.** During the first half hour we'll talk about the basics of Third Act Vermont and answer your questions. We'll also share highlights from the Statewide Rendezvous and Elders' Day from the Summer of Heat on Wall Street. And we'll get a preview of all the excitement coming this summer. Join us at 4:30 to meet other folks in Third Act Vermont; and then from 5 to 6 for the main program. See you on Zoom!

Here is the meeting [link](#).

Meeting ID: 839 2382 1289

Passcode: 089568

Third Act Vermont Handout

This is the latest [TA VT handout](#) in PDF form. Feel free to print it and share it with friends, distribute it at community events, post it on grocery store bulletin boards, etc.

Print it on 8.5 by 11-inch paper on both sides. You may have good luck with a local print shop that can print the sheets double-sided, then cut them into four quarters. We recommend using light card stock, not plain paper. You may want to print 10 sheets and cut them into quarters, which gives you 40 handouts and should be relatively inexpensive. If you have any questions, please contact Jud at judlawrie@mindspring.com.

Thank you for being a member of Third Act Vermont!