
THIRD ACT VT

JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER

“The Summer of Heat team is so disciplined, so strategic, and so prepared. Days later, I still feel the effects: of love, of hope, of gratitude, and of confidence in the change we can make collectively.”

—Cynthia Maltbie, W. Newbury
Third Act VT Member

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Fresh from the Summer of Heat on Wall Street Street

Eight Third Act VT members took part in the Summer of Heat on Wall Street protest on July 8, the second time we’ve participated in the series of events. This time, seven of us were arrested.

At the Citibank world headquarters in New York City, there was a somber tone. The protesters’ speeches were like eulogies for all the people and life on Earth that has already been lost due to climate disasters. There was a procession led by a bagpiper, and a graveyard was set up where each gravestone showed a person’s name and the story of how they died from a climate disaster. Then, one woman sang a lamentation for the Earth. Eight Lamenters, dressed in sackcloth with ash on their faces, stood in solemn reminder of the perils of burning fossil fuels. We held a “die-in” at the main doors of Citibank, and many people laid down on the pavement in the noonday sun. Oddly enough, this was the action for which we were arrested. As we laid there a gong rang and facts about recent deaths were read in testament to the destruction that Citibank’s business plan has brought about.

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Fresh from the Summer of Heat on Wall Street

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A common question people ask about such protests is “does such an action make any difference?” Bill McKibbens’ short answer is that *everything* we do makes a difference. Third Act VT Facilitator Laurel Green believes “the place where it makes the most difference is in my own mind and heart.” She and four more Third Act Vermonters shared what was most significant for them about participating in Summer of Heat on Wall Street.

“The action we did on Monday, July 8, was a funeral, but for me it was also a renewal. A renewal of hope, of energy, and of connection. The Summer of Heat team is so disciplined, so strategic and so prepared. The trainers and organizers were honest and upbeat. The event leaders designed an event that was both complex, with many interlocking parts, and simple in its impact—as simple as the single strain of bagpipe music that led our cortege. The jail support team prepared us, celebrated us, and took great care of us. Days later, I still feel the effects: of love, of hope, of gratitude, and of confidence in the change we can make collectively. My deep thanks to those who are leading us forward.” —Cynthia Maltbie, W. Newbury



Third Act Vermonters marching in Summer of Heat on Wall Street in New York City, June 2024

“My decision to take actions that put me at risk for arrest was made early this spring. When I laid down at the feet of the Lamenters, just outside the main doors of Citibank, I felt humble and at the same time determined. I felt vulnerable lying on the ground looking up at the noonday sun. The people on my right and left agreed to hold hands together. When the first gong sounded, I listened as one person read about the 1,300 heat deaths this year at the Hajj, an annual outdoor Muslim religious gathering. When the second gong sounded, someone read about the 30 thousand acres of forest burned last year in Canada. With the third gong and another reading, the words piled up on me like waves pounding the shore. Tears welled, and I sobbed over the destruction of the precious life on our planet. Both people next to me squeezed my hands. We were in this together. I felt baked by the sun and tested in my determination. Yet I persisted until I was arrested.” —Laurel Green, Bellows Falls

“Experiencing the heat in a setting where I had no ability to control or escape it, limited as it was, felt like a small gesture of solidarity with the billions of people now experiencing it daily. As well, I felt united with our grandchildren who will suffer it soon if we are not successful. I also felt humbled and activated by the wonderfully articulate reminder of the indivisibility of all the justice issues plaguing our time and our people. Venceremos! We shall overcome!” —Péter Mihaly, Chester

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Fresh from the Summer of Heat on Wall Street

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“The nonviolent direct action we did on July 8 was special in that it made an opening for climate grief. Many of our other actions have been boisterous, loud, demanding. By comparison this collective act of civil disobedience was quiet, slow, and meditative. I found this a challenge in some ways, as it was hard to discipline my own mind to stay steady in that space of acceptance. By acceptance I do not imply that we would cease to fight, but that we will continue the struggle even while we attempt to acknowledge all that we've lost and all that we are likely to lose in the future. I actually feel inspired to work harder now that I am consciously holding a space for all the people, animals, plants, species, and habitats that have perished in this hotter world, and I am determined to prevent as many future climate deaths as I can.”

—Steve Crofter, Bellows Falls

“I think all of us involved in this work have to some degree a well of despair, loss, pain, fear, anger. It brushes us at odd moments, and we turn away, move on. It's so hard to face grief.

I volunteered to be one of the silent, downcast, sack-cloth and ashes Lamenters for the July 8 action. It was a walking meditation, encased in silence, seeing only a few feet before me, cut off from the bustle. Walking slowly in the cortege behind the bagpiper, hands turned out, I reached that well of sorrow. I was holding the little bodies of my beloved grandchildren, unable to protect them. I was holding this precious, infinitely beautiful world as it's being brought to ruin by an overreaching, out-of-control species.



Image from Third Act Central's Facebook page

Meanwhile, it was hot. Every bit of shade or passing breeze was welcome. After standing still for so long, it was a relief when the Lamenters chose to lie down on the plaza to add to the arrest count, hot as it was on cement. With eyes closed against the fierce sun, I felt the sun was sending an urgent message: “I'm here, I'm free, I'm all you need. As for fossil fuels, ‘Keep them in the ground!’” Then there was a wonderful breeze, and I realized other protesters were fanning us with paper fans provided by the organizers. In times of sorrow all we need is here: the sun to give us life, our home on this good earth, and people who care for each other and our home. Knowing that is hope, but taking action brings hope to life.”

—Catherine Kidder, W. Newbury

Recent Major Media Stories on Summer of Heat on Wall Street

From *The New York Times*: “[In New York, Protesting the Backers of Big Oil With Die-Ins, Drums and Song](#)”

From the *Philadelphia Voice*: “[Seniors protest Wells Fargo's investment in fossil fuels outside Center City branch](#)”

Volunteer from Home for Summer of Heat on Wall Street

Right now, Summer of Heat on Wall Street (SOH) is ramping up for its **second mass march, on July 27**. (You can sign up to attend the march [here!](#)) What we need at this critical point in our campaign is numbers and a strong outreach game—that's where you come in!

If you'd like to help with turnout for the biggest SOH action of the summer so far, please fill out [this Google form](#) to phone-bank and text-bank with us. No experience necessary! This is open to folks both within and outside of New York City. Once you fill out the form, I'll find a couple of training slots that work for people and give you the run-down either in-person or on Zoom, based on folks' preferences.

Feel free to reach out to me with any questions, and I hope to meet all of you soon!

In Solidarity,
Ezana Demissie (he/him)
Summer of Heat Fellow
ebd demissie@gmail.com

I am Just Like You

I am just like you. My daily calendar is full of doctor's appointments, regular workouts, times I provide childcare for my grandchildren, social activities, town committee meetings, summer trips. Then there is the mountain of emails I come home to after a couple days of camping or visiting family.

One way I may be different from many of you is that I made a decision to put my regular life on hold a few times this summer to take part in the Summer of Heat on Wall Street. I decided to follow my thinking. I decided to make my life show what matters to me. I decided to act as powerfully as I can to push for the future I want to see.

Once I made the decision, everything else came down to a few logistics that could be figured out.

Every email I send ends with this inspiring, life-promoting commitment for elders: "I promise that from this moment on, I will live my life with unabashed delight and confidence, using my full wisdom, creativity, love, and energy to ensure that the world around me proceeds exactly the way I want it to and envision that it can."

By taking a few days this summer to participate in Summer of Heat on Wall Street's Elders' Day in June and Elders' Week in July, protesting at Citibank in New York City, I have acted on my resolve to end the fossil fuel era.

You can be like me and take action on your decisions. I invite you to join me for the final Elders' Day of action in NYC on August 30. Make the decision, and we can work out the details together.

—Laurel Green,
Third Act VT Facilitator

Postcards for Democracy Hits Big Milestone: 10,000 Cards Sent!!

We have sent out more than 10,000 cards so far! We're trying hard to break through the 20,000 mark by Election Day. You can help us do that! Please join a local group or attend virtually. We had the biggest turnout yet, in Windham County—ten people! And other sites continues their solid attendance and production. Our focus in July was on the battleground state of Pennsylvania. We'll be defining August targets shortly, and that detail will go out in a reminder message. Please join us. It's fun!

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 great risk. Details about the activities are available and current on the Third Act VT website here, at <http://thirdactvt.org/postcards-for-democracy>.

Our Sunday sessions include partners in Washington, 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](#). Any questions? Please contact Shaun Deane at shaun@thirdactvt.org.



New Voting Action Team Forming

No matter how the presidential race shakes out, our mission is clear: We must defeat Donald Trump, his MAGA followers, and the Heritage Foundation's *Project 2025*. We have less than four months before the all-important November elections. Not only will this election affect all of us in major ways but also future generations.

Third Act VT is forming a new Voting Action Team. Our goal is to mount a multi-front effort, including text banking, phone banking, post carding, and Letters to the Editor (in other states).

Third Act VT is already doing post carding to get out the vote. I have been doing a lot of text banking (3,000 texts since May). Several people have shown an interest in helping, including phone banking.

Our next effort will be to send Letters to the Editor in swing states. A man in Third Act Massachusetts has developed a great AI-assisted way to do this.

We need more people to step up and help! Training will be available. If you can help or want more information, please contact me at judlawrie@mindspring.com. Thanks!



—Jud Lawrie,
Coordinating Committee member

Brief History of Third Act Vermont

Dec. 2021: The national Third Act organization (Third Act Central or TA C) was started, and Third Act Vermont (TA VT) started soon thereafter.

May 2022: Bank action at Chase in Burlington

June 2022: all Coordinating Committee (Coord Com) members stepped aside except Laurel Green. Help was requested from TA C, a survey was sent out, and Laurel used the results to recruit a new Coord Com.

January 2023: Laurel announced that she had to step back beginning in June, and a search began for a new co-facilitator.

March, 2023: Day of Action on the 21st at Chase in Burlington

May, 2023: Robert Small announced that he was stepping back from the co-facilitator role. The search for a new co-facilitator continued.

June, 2023: No new co-facilitators had stepped forward. The Coord Com decided to rotate leadership of Coord Com and statewide meetings and not to tackle the other co-facilitator tasks.



Third Act VT Rendezvous at Allis State Park in Randolph in June

February, 2024: The Statewide meeting failed because of lack of redundancy in who could host the Zoom meeting, then a few Coord Com members stepped off the Coord Com.

March, 2024: Help was requested from TA C, and the Coord Com met with TA C staff member Melanie Griffith to triage the situation. Five avenues to recruit Coord Com members were pursued in full with calls and emails to TA VT members who were on the Legislative Action Team, the Divestment Action Team, the Regional Groups Organizers, Statewide Meeting frequent attenders, and anyone John Woodland flagged during “welcome to TA VT” calls who might consider a leadership role. One person volunteered for a minor role, then stepped back within a month.

June, 2024: At the Third Act New England Convergence, the Coord Com requested a special, in-person consultation with B Fulkerson, the national organizer. B’s assessment was that we need to “surface” new leadership and restart TA VT.

July, 2024: The statewide meeting has been repurposed to initiate revitalization of TA VT.

The next chapter is in your hands!

Statewide Meetings for Revitalization this Summer

On Thursday, July 18, from 4:30 to 6 p.m., we'll use our Statewide meeting to take stock of where we are within our Working Group. We'll talk about key roles to keep us functioning, and then meet in smaller groups to consider how to share the tasks and find people willing to do them. We welcome everyone to join in this conversation.

Willing, active members of Third Act Vermont will meet in the next few weeks to bring a proposal to the next statewide meeting on August 15. If you want to take a more active role, please plan on attending the Statewide meetings. What an exciting time to be taking action on climate and democracy!

Here is the meeting [link](https://thirdact-org.zoom.us/j/83923821289?pwd=hdqHdaAF9qUFCd9gUV8IvyEPUWUwgW.1). Or cut and paste this URL into your browser: <https://thirdact-org.zoom.us/j/83923821289?pwd=hdqHdaAF9qUFCd9gUV8IvyEPUWUwgW.1>
Meeting ID: 839 2382 1289
Passcode: 089568

Third Act Vermont Handout

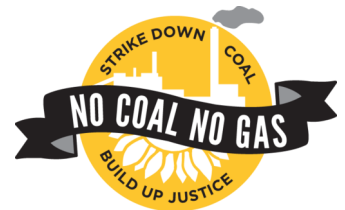
This is the latest [TA VT handout](#) in PDF form. Feel free to print it and share it with friends, distribute it at community events, post it on grocery store bulletin boards, etc. Print it on 8.5 by 11-inch paper on both sides. You may have good luck with a local print shop that can print the sheets 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.

Fossil Free Future Festival

At a park in Concord, NH, to be determined

Sunday, August 11, 1-4 p.m.

Third Act VT is collaborating with [No Coal No Gas](#) to spread the word about this event.



Come celebrate the end of coal in New England with us! Merrimack Station in Bow, NH, is closing its coal operations and transitioning to clean energy and battery storage. We're gathering to celebrate this just transition and to imagine what our future could look like if all the fossil fuel peaker plants in the region transitioned to clean energy. Join us for an afternoon of action, music, and boating on the Merrimack River. Sign up on this [RSVP form](#), and we'll send you more details about the location soon.

The No Coal No Gas campaign formed in 2019 as a regional coalition of affinity groups, partner organizations, and individual humans. It is a direct-action campaign dedicated to ending the burning of fossil fuels in New England.

Thank you for being a member of Third Act Vermont!