

The Athenian

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Sponsored by Grafton Cares

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What's on Your 2023 Plate?

As we welcome in 2023, and bid a farewell to 2022, what are your aspirations for this new year? It seems there have been so many changes in our world over the past three years, some chosen, some not so. My yoga teacher always reminds us that less is more. There's much good wisdom out there saying that when we slow down and focus on what is really the important stuff in our lives, and that's different for each person, we can reap the benefits of the joy that brings. Is it time in nature for you every day? Quietly sitting with a much-loved pet? Setting aside some of the extra tasks on your plate so you can tune in to what really brings you joy? What's your aspiration for 2023? Maybe it's to write a monthly column for this newsletter. What can you let go of and what will you bring your intentions to? We've got some additional ideas here for you to consider, many of which involve getting more engaged in your community, so read on!

- Sherry Maher



Sunrise on 2023 - Laurie Indenbaum

Select Board Meeting Tidbits

In addition to news in other pieces below, here are a few things from the December Select Board meetings that might be of interest:

- A lengthy discussion occurred prior to the monthly Select Board meeting in the Board of Civil Authority which includes the Select Board to address the question of obtaining a tabulator for handling ballots. Hannah Regier noted that the timing is tight for this coming March election, and appropriate storage is a real concern. Ultimately, the Board agreed to table the discussion for the time being, but continue exploring this option.

- A status conference regarding the matter of Taylor Hill is scheduled for Monday, January 9th at 1:30 in the county courthouse in Newfane.

- Matt Perry reported that all roads are in good shape and he is expecting a state official to visit to check on policies at the garage in the near future.

- Petitions for the Town Report need to be back to the Town Office by the 19th. Ballot paperwork for candidates is due on January 30th. See more below.

- A lengthy discussion was held on the question of cost for appraising two historical documents for insurance purposes. They are irreplaceable and have considerable historic value

to the Town. Possibilities of having copies made for displaying locally, but seeking another entity for long-term storage/preservation of the documents. A motion to proceed with the appraisals was withdrawn, and investigation will continue.

- Harold Noyes reported that the accounting department for the district had not as yet finalized the budget.
- David Bemis reported that the Town has ended its relationship with the Saxtons River Fire Department. A contract has been signed for fire and rescue services from the Grafton Fire Department and Rescue Squad starting January 1st. (See separate article below.) A letter will be sent to the Chiefs of the Saxtons River Fire Department and Rescue Squad, thanking them for their fine service over many years.

- A concern was expressed about multiple requests for more specific information on time cards from the road crew. It is important documentation for many grants, as well general supervision. It was also noted that this would help to provide a record of work done on a road in case it goes out in a storm.

- Sherry Maher

Get Your Ballot Paperwork Now for Town Offices!

Now that all Town officials are elected by Australian ballot, January is the time to decide about being a candidate for one of the offices up for election come March 2023. If you are an interested candidate, you need to complete a Candidate Consent Form and a Candidate Petition with signatures from a minimum of 3 registered voters. Both forms are available at the Town Office and on the home page of the town website www.athensvt.com. These need to be turned in to the Town Clerk by January 30th.

In total, there are 14 seats up for election this year. Now that we have a 5-member Select Board, 3 seats are up for election this March! One will be a 3-year seat and two will be 1-year seats. Running for a 1-year seat is a great way to try it out and see if serving on the Select Board is a good fit for you. Or think about one of the other spots such as Lister, Auditor, Campbell Trustee, Meetinghouse Committee or Cemetery Commission. There will also likely be two school board positions up for election, one for the elementary school, and one for the high school. Lots of opportunities to put your toe in the water!

- Sherry Maher

Grafton Fire and Rescue Now Cover Athens

If you call 911 for a fire or medical emergency there will now be different First Responders at your door than you have seen before. Effective January first the Athens Select Board contracted the Grafton Fire Department and the Grafton Rescue Squad to be the first response units for the Town of Athens. As part of the regional mutual aid system Grafton Rescue and Grafton Fire have responded to various

emergencies in Athens over the years but now they will be the first and primary responding agencies. Golden Cross Ambulance will continue to provide EMS responses and transport per their contract with Athens. Mutual Aid, which interconnects all fire departments and rescue services, will also continue as an integral part of Fire and EMS responses. There is no change regarding burn permits which will continue to be issued by the Athens Fire Warden.

The Grafton Fire Department and the Grafton Rescue Squad are two separate organizations each with its own officers and funding. The two groups share space in the Grafton Firehouse at 711 Route 121 East and also share members, some of whom are Rescue Responders as well as being Firefighters. All are volunteers who respond when alerted on their pagers or cell phones from their homes or workplaces, and all have the appropriate training and certifications to be First Responders. In order to maintain their skills, they train at least once a month, often with other Departments in the area, and take recertification tests as necessary. Both organizations would welcome new members from Athens to join with the approximately 20% of Grafton Firefighters and one Rescue Responder who are currently from Athens.

Although getting help in an emergency won't change, just call 911, there are some things you can do to assist the First Responders. Turn on outside lights, secure pets, and be on the lookout for First Responders who will be arriving in their personal vehicles and flag them down. Remember, these are volunteers who will be coming to help you from their homes and worksites. One thing that seems minor but saves important minutes in a response is making sure your home has easily readable

numbers. They should be a least 3 inches high and have good contrast with the background, be near the driveway or easily seen from the street and not be hidden by shrubs or snowbanks.

More information can be obtained the Grafton Fire Department Chief, Robbie Sprague, at 802-384-2288 cell, 802-843-2288 home, or 802-843-2488 work. You may also contact the Assistant Chief, Nathaniel Noyes, an Athens resident, at 802-380-8648 cell, or 802-869-2959 home. Email



Grafton Rescue Responders including, 2 Athenians, review protocols for helping injured skiers, tubers, and snowshoers. Grafton Fire & Rescue Facebook Page

the Fire Department at graftonfire@vermontel.net. For Rescue related information contact Rescue Squad President Keith Hermiz at 802-843-1160 or email him at graftonrescue@vermontel.net. Routine inquiries may be left as voice mail at the Firehouse number, 802-843-2401, but if you have an emergency call 911! Do not call any individual and do not call the Firehouse, which is not staffed. Calling an individual First Responder will cause a delay and possible confusion in getting help to you. Everyone associated with Grafton Fire and Grafton Rescue looks forward to serving your community and being able to help you in your time of need. Updates about Grafton Fire and Rescue activities, often with photos, can be found on the Grafton Fire and Rescue Facebook page.

- Dave Ross

Athens Remembers Russell Brown

Athens residents are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Russell Brown this past December 22. Russ was a close friend to many Athens and Grafton residents. As proprietor of Brown's Oil Heating Service, Russ' customers included the Town of Athens municipal buildings, beginning in 2015.

The Brown's Oil Heating Service logo read "Quality work at a fair price," and Athens officials would agree that Russ lived up to the claim. Athens Town Clerk Hannah Regier recalls that Russ would take it upon himself to see that the heating system inspections for Town of Athens properties were kept on-track. Hannah described Russ as being "very scheduled, of a generous spirit, and his fees were reasonable." At a very reasonable price Russ replaced a boiler at the former Athens Elementary School building in 2021. Road Commissioner Matt Perry recalls Russ' service work, as well as oil line re-piping done at the Town Garage. The Athens Emergency Management committee remembered when Russ volunteered his services in helping to fabricate the emergency short-wave radio tower on the back of the Town Office in 2016.

Pastor Harold Noyes recalled what a blessing Brown's Oil Heating Service was for the Community Christian Church and its 2 parsonages. Russ tended to all 3 heating systems, replaced furnaces on 2 buildings and labored with long-overdue duct cleaning on all 3

buildings. Pastor Noyes said that whenever there was a heating problem Russ was there "lickedy-split."

There are many accounts of Russ' being on-hand in short order, no matter whether he was in the midst of a busy winter heating season or not. He always seemed willing to put in the extra effort if he felt he could help someone out. Russ will be missed terribly. His absence will leave a large void in this section of Windham County, both for customers and for friends.

- Don Capponcelli

News from Grafton Cares

Is April really the cruelest month? Perhaps, but for us weather-wise December ran a close second. We had to cancel the Grafton community dinner of December 16 as heavy snow and loss of power walloped us. Fortunately, we were able to celebrate the season with a festive holiday luncheon on December 21. Our Meals on Wheels deliveries in Grafton and Athens, however, faced some serious challenges with two very nasty days featuring downed trees and wires.

Otherwise, business continued as usual. Here is the rundown: Meals on Wheels - 6 customers; gas cards for medical appointments - \$135; sunshine baskets - 2; welcome bags - 1; knitters - 2 shawls.

We want to remind everyone that all community lunches and dinners are free of charge. Of course, donations are gratefully accepted.

Finally, we are stating the obvious when we say how terribly we miss Dennis and Karen Hunt. Their passionate dedication to Grafton Cares over many years has helped to build and strengthen our organization. Beyond that, they were friends we truly love, and we wish them and their family the very best.

- Bill Toomey



Suddenly It's Winter - Sherry Maher

Meetinghouse News

An early Christmas present arrived via by email in mid-December, informing the Meetinghouse Committee that our application for a second Vermont Division of Historic Preservation (VDHP) Grant was successful! We were one of thirty-eight applications submitted to VDHP, requesting a total of \$606,251 in matching funds. The selection process is always very competitive because they receive many more applications than they can fund. Twenty grants were awarded this year including ours and we were thrilled to learn that our

award was for the full \$20,000 requested, the maximum allowed for this grant program.

So just as we finish tying up the final bits of documentation related to our 2021 Bruhn Grant, we now pivot to the documentation needed and beginning the work of seeking contractor bids to proceed with our next project!

It was also quite an honor to have our building featured in the recent Preservation Trust Vermont newsletter. Check it out here: <https://conta.cc/3HJO4r3>.

Want to get involved with this work? As always, there will be a seat on the Meetinghouse Committee up for election come March. Are you interested in helping to preserve this fascinating building and help efforts to bring it back to its prominent place where people from Athens and nearby can gather and engage in community? Get in touch, or just get your ballot paperwork into the Town Clerk. - *Sherry Maher*

January Library Corner

Smiles and Gratitude:

We are most appreciative for your amazing response to our annual appeal letter! The library is grateful to have received donations this month in memory of Ken and Rachael DeLonge, Jerry Stevens, Patricia Parker, Helen and Charlie Atwater, Walter Critchfield, Hans Hollstein, Dorothy Heiser, Joan Lake, Bea Fisher, Marge Prouty, Bil Walters, Henry Moseley, Annie Hawkins, Gladys Macdonough, Luella and Harry Conklin and Russ Campbell. We've also received donations this month in honor of Chris Wallace, Beverley and Sabin Streeter, and the volunteers and staff at the library.

We are also very grateful to Tania Evans and Wendy Martin for new book donations and to our anonymous donor of the lovely Christmas wreath on the door. David Ross continues to keep us in good repair—this time with lighting. And thanks go out once again to Pat Mack—she knows why.

And we have more fantastic news! Upon learning that the library trustees were gearing up to embark on a capital campaign to raise additional funds to install energy efficient heat pumps, past president and trustee of the Windham Foundation, Liz Bankowski, made an extraordinary contribution to the library for this project, from a discretionary grant

awarded to her by the Windham Foundation upon her retirement. She has pledged \$25,000 to the library and challenges the local community to raise an additional \$10,000 to match her contribution.

This is an amazing opportunity for the library to embark on much needed infrastructure improvements sooner than we had hoped! Even though we just sent out our annual appeal (which is applied to our operating budget, and not this project) we will be sending out a second request, asking for your help with the matching funds. Any amount you are able to contribute will make a difference and help us to progress with this special project at the library.

Look for the capital campaign letter with more details arriving in your mailboxes soon, and please do not hesitate to contact the library trustees for more information.

Library Programming

Spanish Group on Zoom, Tuesdays, 11:00am-Noon on Zoom. Intermediate level.

Page Turners Book Group, Tuesday January 10, 1:30-2:30 Hybrid—in person & on Zoom

Nature & Books Discussion Series: Wednesday, January 25 (An Immense World) 6-7:30 pm on Zoom

Preschool Story Hour Returns! 4th Saturday of the month, January 28, 10-11am, Ages 0-5.

- *Michelle DuFort*



Seeds A-Plenty - Treah Pichette

A Vermont Gardener's Notebook, January

Let's face it, January is dark, often snowy and certainly not conducive to gardening. But this is also the month when the 2023 garden catalogs start showing up in the mailbox, providing some pleasurable hours of dreaming about the upcoming growing season. Before rushing to order, make sure to take time to assess last year's garden first--- what went right or wrong, what varieties you may or may not want to grow again, perhaps picking out some new things to grow to expand your menu or garden beauty or that may just be fun to try! Remember to check out some local growers and nurseries

as well. Locally-grown plants will already be adapted to our climate conditions, and buying them will have the additional benefit of supporting the local economy.

To better prepare for next year's garden, this month is a good time to look over your tools, sharpen clippers, saws, hoes and spades, clean up and oil any with wooden

handles and make repairs or replace if needed. Once the weather warms up, you won't want to delay getting out there because your tools need attention first!

November weather summary:

High temperature: 74.4 degrees

Low temperature: 10.2 degrees

First snowfall: Nov. 15

- *Treah Pichette*

Donations Welcome for Grace Cottage's Cabin Fever Auction

Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital's annual Cabin Fever Auction will be held from February 14-27, 2023.

Do you have items you'd be willing to donate to this important wintertime fundraiser? Art, jewelry, antiques, household items, gift certificates or other items you've collected or been given that you'll never use? All proceeds benefit Grace Cottage.

E-mail info@gracecottage.org, or call Andrea, Charma, or C.J. at 802-365-9109 to arrange pick-up or drop-off of anything you'd be willing to donate!

Bidding takes place Feb. 14-27. You can visit the auction site now to get registered, check out the selection, and plan your bidding at <https://www.32auctions.com/CabinFeverAuction2023>.

Register now so you can hit the ground bidding on Valentine's Day!

- C.J. King

News from The Nature Museum

Winter Break Camp for Ages 6 -11

- Tuesday, February 21 - Thursday, February 23,
- Registration is available for single days of camp, or a discount for all three. See each camp day's theme for more information.
- Ages 6 - 11 (Register for the appropriate age group)
- Camp runs from 9:30AM - 3:30PM. Drop off 9:00AM - 9:30AM; Pick up 3:30PM - 4:00PM
- \$65 per day, all 3 for \$175 (per student).

Make winter memorable! Join our experienced museum educators to explore the majesty and mystery of the Vermont winter landscape. Campers can expect to adventure, play, learn, and build friendships through wildlife tracking, snowshoeing, sledding, shelter building, group games, cozying up by the campfire, and more.

Important: Camps will occur outdoors as much as possible. Camp agendas are subject to change. In the event of hazardous weather conditions, we will contact camp registrants as soon as possible. There will be a makeup date of Friday 02/24/23. Our registration and

cancellation policy can be found at the website: <https://www.nature-museum.org/registration-cancellation-policy>.

Please fill out one registration per student.

BRAVE BEARS, AGES 6-8

WILD WALKERS, AGES 9-11

Daily Winter Camp Themes:

Tues. 02/21/23 Day 1: Winter Wilderness Detectives

What do animals do in winter? We will explore animal adaptations for finding food, taking shelter, and moving across the landscape. We'll use animal pelts, paws, mounts, field guides, and more to discover animal tracks and signs. Get your detective hat on and be ready to head out into the nearby forests and fields to read the clues we find in the winter wilderness!

Wed. 02/22/23 Day 2: Winter Wanderers

Spending time outdoors in winter offers unique opportunities for experiential learning. Our educators will guide campers in winter exploration preparedness, fort building, fire making, and more. Wayfinding, snowshoeing, shelter-building are just a few active focuses campers will experience. Campers will also learn fire safety, how to responsibly maintain a fire, and enjoy the rewards of campfire cooking.

Thurs. 02/23/23 Day 3: Frosty Fun

Winter offers special opportunities to play, move, explore, and learn outdoors. There's no better place to have a fun-filled winter day with the museum's access to nearby forests, fields, Magic Forest Playscape, sledding hill, and indoor exhibits. Campers will engage in play, learning, and team-building through group games, snowshoeing or hiking, guided exploration, and unstructured play.

- *Nikolas Katrick – Executive Director*

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Select Board Meetings: 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM

Budget Committee: 2nd & 4th Tuesday 7:00 PM

Meeting House Committee: Date & time TBD

School Board: 2nd Thursday 6:30 Grafton School

Do you have a news item for The Athenian or a favorite family story to share? Or would you like to be on our email list and get the newsletter in your inbox?

CONTACT US at theathenianvt@gmail.com.



TRASH PICK-UP: JAN 9, 23

RECYCLE PICK-UP: JAN 2, 16, 30

A Few Final Thoughts to Ponder

I don't mind what Congress does, as long as they don't do it in the streets and frighten the horses.

- Victor Hugo

The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity.

- Amelia Earhart

The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

- Alice Walker

What we think, or what we know, or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.

- John Ruskin

Charles Perham Journal January 1868

- 1 Have been to home all day a very snowy day.
- 3 Have been drawing wood all day. Two loads of wood and two loads of logs. A very pleasant day.
- 4 A snowy day I drew two loads of limbs
- 5 Have been to Brookline to meeting. Called to see Royals. Brought Aunt Nancy home and some of Athens people down.
- 7 Drew wood all day. In the evening went to our school house with father to a farmers club.
- 8 Have had bad luck hauling wood today. Drew two loads. In the evening went to Donation. Aunt Nancy goes to Merrills tonight.
- 11 Have been cutting and drawing timber for the sugar house today. In the evening went to post and received a letter.
- 12 At home all day a very cold day.
- 13 Father has been to the woods. In the forenoon did two loads of logs. In the afternoon we went to town meeting.
- 14 Have been with Father to O L Perhams auction.
- 16 Father has been to Saxtons River. I have done the chores and drawn three loads of wood.
- 17 Drew wood and logs. At night went to Port called to Mr.----- to supper.
- 18 Drew wood all day. Rosea Marsh came here today.
- 19 Have been to meeting with Father and Rosea. The minister to the Port preached. Came home with the Royals they are here for supper. Sam and boys here.
- 20 Drew wood all day. In the evening father went down to see Mr. Bennett for he is very sick. We went over to Mr.Hitchcocks. Mr. Bennett died this evening about nine.
- 21 A very snowy day.
- 22 Have been breaking out the road today. Went after wood but had bad luck broke the sled. In the evening went down to Mr Witneys.
- 24 Have been with father and mother to the funeral of Mr Bennett.
- 25 Have been to town meeting today with father.
- 27 Went on the hill got a load of Hemlock. Just at night went to Cambridgeport.
- 28 Have been to Brookline carried off the dried apples. Sara and Mary here when I got home. Went down to the Mill with a load of logs. Paid taxes today. \$91.75
- 29 At home in the forenoon. In the afternoon went down to Mr. Dodges called to Mr Smiths.
- 30 Went over to the Lilly pond woods with father. Cut a big pine drew part to the mill. In the evening went to post office. Daniel Cobleigh died today half past three.
- 31 Father has gone to Townsend today. I tried to get a load of wood. Did not have very good luck the oxen carried very badly.

- Transcribed by James Trimble
