

# The Athenian

Volume 15, Number 9

Sponsored by Grafton Cares

MAY 2025

## Our Feathered Friends Return

If you are a birdwatcher, this time of year brings out so many opportunities for witnessing bird behavior and nesting habits. So many species of birds have recently reappeared and are scouting out nesting spots in our backyards. Along with the Wild Turkey with its annual mating routine, some of the regular visitors that are commonly seen in our area include Tufted Titmouse, Cardinal, Chickadee, White Breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Phoebe, Blue Jay, Dark eyed Junco, American Goldfinch and Robin as well as many others. If you are interested in identifying birds and learning more about their habitat, Merlin Bird ID and Audubon Bird Guide are apps that can assist you with identification and information. Take some time to enjoy this wonderful natural resource and amazing time of year right in your own backyard!  
- *Ginger Maciejowski*



rested before the storm hits. Also posting a daily work plan on the board in front of the garage so they could be found during the work day if needed.

- The Ober Rd. scoping project report should be complete soon. However, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program was not an option, and appears to be ending with all the Federal cuts. Colin Bratton recommends waiting until the fall to see what funding is available. He also advised not to start anymore big projects, and wait until next year to put in for the structures grant. It may be needed

for either the planned Brookline Rd. culvert or the Ober Rd. bridge.

- At the advice of WRC, the Board approved a motion to put out a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Brookline Rd. culvert project on which Colin Bratton will work with the Town.
- Sandi reported that Matt will be applying for a blacktop grant and a structures grant he would like to use for a culvert at Athens Pond. These might be eligible for the Better Back Roads grant. He has noted at least 6 metal culverts on Rt. 35 that need to be replaced before any new paving is put down.
- The big truck needs a \$4,000 EGR cooler replaced. And rather than buy a new laptop for the Town Garage, the consensus was to get a Chromebook instead for a fraction of the cost.
- Krista shared concerns about a House bill imposing class sizes that would force many small schools such as ours to close. She shared information about the Rural School Alliance which is advocating for small schools. The Board approved a motion to join the alliance.
- A lengthy executive session was held for confidential attorney-client communications to receive professional legal services. Janet Perry recused herself. No votes were taken.
- Krista recommended two changes to the current personnel policy. This and a policy for mileage

### Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- Plans are moving ahead for replacing the Town Garage roof.
- The Board is looking into options to fill the soon-to-be vacant positions of Town Clerk and Town Treasurer (see news about this below). The Board could create a new position and hire an administrative assistant who would not need to be an Athens resident. It seems likely that a Special Town Meeting will be scheduled soon.
- The Board was asked where things stand with the equipment and
- labor sharing idea with Brookline. Sandi says there has been that one meeting. Janet says it might have been her who was supposed to meet with them. She thinks it sounded very cumbersome. Sandi thinks it isn't the best thing for Athens to do.
- A suggestion was made in public comments about the highway crew taking time off prior to an anticipated winter storm enabling them to be well

reimbursement will be considered at the next meeting.  
- Sherry Maher

### **Town Clerk/Town Treasurer Resigns**

“By now, many of you will have heard that I've resigned from my positions of Town Clerk and Town Treasurer. My last day in the town office will be May 8th. This was a difficult decision with many influencing factors. I know I'm really going to miss everyone's visits to the town office. It's been a true pleasure to serve the town and try to help everyone who has come into the office. I'm committed to making the transition to a new clerk and treasurer smooth and will make myself as available as possible to answer questions and keep town operations going. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have questions or concerns about anything. ~Hannah”

At the Special Select Board meeting on April 11, the Select Board approved a motion to accept “with deep regrets,” Hannah’s letter of resignation for the positions of town clerk and town treasurer. Hannah has accepted a full time position related to one of her passions - land conservation.

Those present appreciated Hannah for the tremendous work she has done in “moving Athens into the 21st century” creating a town website, moving the town’s financial records into the NEMRC system, and working with various regional partners to seek out funding opportunities to help move along projects like the Town Garage repairs and updates and the Community Center. She will be missed!

- Sherry Maher

### **Town Planning Commission Update**

On April 22, 2025, the Town Planning Commission hosted an information session at the Athens Community Center to receive feedback on the current draft of the 2025 Athens Town Plan. Approximately 10 Athens residents attended the information session and provided helpful comments to the Planning Commission. The final proposed 2025 Athens Town Plan will be reviewed by the Windham Regional Planning Commission, submitted to the Select Board, circulated to neighboring towns, and then presented to Athens residents for approval at a to-be-scheduled special Town Meeting. For those who were unable to attend the information session, copies of the Town Plan should be available at the Town Hall.

- Mark Berman

### **Notes from the School Board**

#### **GES Updates:**

• May 15, Thursday at 5pm-Kindergarten Round Up Pizza and Play Night. This is a time to meet and greet other kindergartens, their teacher, the nurse, principal,

secretary and counselor and to explore the school building.

◦ Be sure to let any neighbors that have child that will be 5 or turning 5 on or before Sept. 5, 2025 to contact the GES to register for this fun night. Email the secretary, Sarah Noble at sarah.noble@wnesu.com on or before Thursday May 9 with the number of family members attending.

• June 17th, Tuesday at 5pm is 6th Grade Move Up. Come support our graduating 6th graders.

#### **An Introduction to Student Services:**

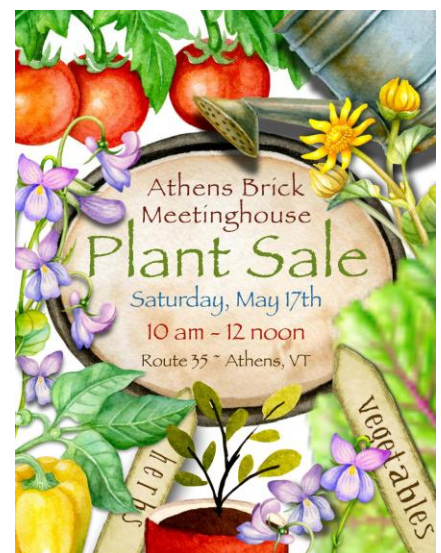
April 27th we had an all board training which was very helpful. The big takeaway for me was the presentation by the Student Service personnel. The Student Services Director is Heather Willis Dozsee. The Director of Student and Family Systems is Shelley Wilson, and the Director of instruction and Innovation is Deb Kardane. I was amazed at how many hats each of these ladies wear and the multitude of tasks that make up their days. They are responsible for making sure all our students get the education they deserve by seeing that assessments are given and annualized, that 504 and IEP helps are in order for those that need them, that grants are researched and applied for, and that our teachers receive the professional development training they need. These are just the tip of their work load areas.

If you ever have questions regarding your child’s educational needs please contact your principal. If that person is unable to answer your question, ask them to help you make an appointment with the appropriate Student Services Director.

- Lynn Morgan

### **Meetinghouse Summer Events & an Update**

First up, it’s May and that means Plant Sale time! Mark your calendar for the 8th Annual Plant Sale Fundraiser for the Athens Brick Meetinghouse on Saturday, May 17th from 10AM to 12 noon. If you are a gardener, between now and then would be the perfect time to divide up your perennials and send them off to new homes for a good cause! On the 17th, visitors can expect to find a wide array of perennials, annuals, veggie starts and some great raffle prizes. If you want to know more about



getting plant donations to us before the sale or lend a helping hand with you plant know-how call Sherry at 802-869-2141.

Here's more dates for your summer calendar:

- Tuesday, July 8th at 7PM in collaboration with Bull Creek Common Lands, we will be hosting a talk and slide show about the incredible journey Monarch butterflies make every year to their winter home in Mexico.
- Saturday, September 13th will be our Annual Quilt Show at the Meetinghouse from 10AM to 2PM. Interested quilters can get in touch with Pam Russo by text at 820-575-5576 or email at pamrusso56@hotmail.com

Stay tuned for more event dates as details are confirmed. Concerts are in the works, and likely another of our popular Ice Cream Socials. Follow [AthensMeetinghouse](#) on Facebook.

Aside from our May through October event plans, we are excited to be moving ahead on our goal to create an accessible entrance to the building. After attending a retreat last fall offered by PTV specific to creating accessibility for historic buildings, we have been weighing the options and challenges the Meetinghouse presents. Preservation Trust Vermont (PTV) will provide considerable funding to cover the cost of an architect consultation. A meeting with architect Jon Saccoccio was held this week to discuss an option that the Committee believes can lead to a viable plan which can move us to begin fundraising for work to begin in 2026. Stay tuned!  
- Sherry Maher

### Grafton Cares News

April was a month in which our activities were happily normal, uninterrupted by the many fluctuations in weather typical of this time of year.

We were pleased to provide Meals on Wheels for 6 customers, \$275 in gas cards for travel to medical appointments, 7 rides to medical appointments, 1 sunshine basket, 1 welcome bag, and 4 shawls and 1 baby blanket from our knitters. Also, 1 pair of crutches was returned to us.

Recent donations were received in memory of Bob Wright and George and June Foltz.

The community meal calendar for May is as follows:

- Friday, May 2, dinner at 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 7, lunch at noon
- Friday, May 16, dinner at 6 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 21, lunch at noon

All meals are held at the Chapel in Grafton and are free of charge. Everyone is welcome, and donations are gratefully accepted.  
- Bill Toomey

### Green Up Reminder

A quick reminder that May 3rd is Green Up Day here in Athens. If anyone would like to help with green up that hasn't already signed up, please call me at 802-869-2227. I have several stretches of road that have no one working on them – a section of Reed Rd, all of McKusker Rd. and several side roads. When you are out and about on the 3rd please be very watchful for Green Up workers here in Athens and in the other towns you pass through. Thanks to all those that are helping Green Up Vermont.  
- Lynn Morgan

### Ernst Tree Farm: 50 Years and Counting

Jay and Ginger (Ernst) Maciejowski, owners of the Ernst Tree Farm in Athens received their Gold Tree Farm sign at the 2025 Vermont Woodlands Association Conference in Randolph, VT on April 12.

The 90 acre property has been in the Vermont Tree Farm program for 50 years. The Ernst Tree Farm was named "The Mowings" by Ginger's grandfather Alfred Ernst who purchased the property in 1938. Alfred was always interested in making the land more productive for future generations and began to learn more about the land and the best ways to care for it. In 1952 he started to work on his forest land with Gil Cameron, the former Windham County Forester, and Ginger's parents, Robert and Elizabeth Ernst, continued the program of careful management.

In 1975, Ginger's husband Jay, a professional forester, certified the property as Tree Farm # 313. Throughout the family's ownership, the property has undergone five timber sales harvested by local loggers. These harvests have improved the quality and the growth of the woodland and produced over a million board feet of saw timber and firewood. The property has also been enrolled in the State of Vermont's Use Value Appraisal program for more than 40 years.

Although a goal for the land has always been to produce high quality White Pine and Sugar Maple trees, Jay and Ginger have also implemented wildlife habitat practices and management of natural communities into their forestry objectives. They maintain the fields for pollinators and nesting birds and have been eliminating invasive plants whenever they are found. Jay and



Ginger have enjoyed being a part of the American Tree Farm system and are grateful for the benefits the program offers to landowners. For more information about the program contact:

[vermontreefarm@vermontwoodlands.org](mailto:vermontreefarm@vermontwoodlands.org)

-Jay Maciejowski

## Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association News

The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association (WHPA) invites the public to the opening ceremony and trail dedication at Lily Pond Highlands, a 615-acre property formerly owned by Jim Massey. We will be celebrating all the hard work that went into acquiring and conserving the land, obtaining an Act 250 permit for a parking lot and new trail, and conducting an ecological study. Please join us on Saturday, May 31, 2025, 1-3 p.m. at 466 Brookline Road, Athens, VT 05143

We are excited for you to see the beauty this unique parcel has to offer, with a guided hike to Lily Pond!

Contact us if you would like to know more at [info@windmillhillpinnacle.org](mailto:info@windmillhillpinnacle.org).

-Leigha Allen

## May Library Corner

### Smiles and Gratitude:

Many thanks to Tania Evans and others for frequent donations of nearly new books for the collection and the book sale room. It's a great help for our budget.

The lawn looks wonderful, thanks to the hard work of the Windham Foundation grounds crew. Sarah Yarosevich has done her usual superb job on the library gardens. Pat Mack continues to take the library trash and recycling each week--a much-appreciated gift! We have various other small building projects that need attention right now and we love having volunteers--so if you are handy with tools or paint brush and have an interest in helping us to keep the building looking in fine fettle, please let us know.

### Library Programming

A huge thank you to Nancy Richardson for so adeptly and generously hosting an Afternoon of Poetry last month and an equally big thank you to all our readers who shared poems. We hope to continue with further poetry events, so keep posted for announcements.

Walks of Wonder will return in May! Please join us for scheduled walks around the surrounding area, as we explore the wonders of our local landscape. Our first adventure will be right next door, at the Henwood Hill/Allen Brothers Marsh for

birding and wildlife viewing, followed by a short walk in Bellows Falls on the Riverfront Trail.

Looking ahead to June, mark your calendars for a Color Your World watercolor workshop with Melissa Hooke (past GES graduate, former Grafton resident and also Debi Plummer's daughter, now returned to live in Vermont once again). Color Your World is the theme for this year's summer reading program and Melissa just happens to work for the Collaborative Summer Library Program! We are thrilled to have her host this program for teens and adults in her "old home town". More information will be available soon.

### May Library Programming

*Spanish Conversation Group* on Zoom, Tuesdays, 11am to noon

*Walks of Wonder*: Sunday, May 18th, 9:00am-11am, Henwood Hill/Allen Brothers Marsh and BF Riverfront Trail. Please register via email for more information about this walk and to get the entire summer/fall schedule.

*Color Your World Watercolor Workshop*, Saturday, June 21st, 2-4pm. Suitable for teens and adults, Limit of 10 attendees, registration required please.

-Michelle Dufort

## Bovas Honored as WHPA Volunteer of the Year

Bob and Kate Bova were honored by the WHPA as "Volunteers of the Year" at their 2025 Annual Meeting held in Saxtons River on April 26th.

Bob and Kate have been the Land Stewards for the 615 acre Lily Pond Highlands property located in the towns of Athens, Brookline and Townshend. The Athens couple has participated in a number of projects to help the WHPA manage the property. They helped to paint the property boundary lines, assisted with the location of a new hiking trail that will go from the new parking area to Lily Pond, donated and erected a metal gate for the main access road and built a new kiosk for the parking area constructed last November by Danny Taylor of Athens. The couple has been enjoying the beauty of Lily Pond for many years and is

delighted to welcome others to visit this wild and scenic place.

- Jay Maciejowski



## Nature Museum Happenings

As spring emerges, so do changes across the Nature Museum grounds in the Chapman Meadow and Magic Forest Playscape. We invite our community to help us on May 3rd from 10-2 with various projects that will continue to improve access to natural spaces for exploration, play, and learning for all ages.

The Herricks Cove Wildlife Festival on May 4th, is a family-oriented outdoor education event featuring nature-based programs, activities, walks, and hands-on experiences for all members of the community in an inclusive atmosphere and a natural setting.

Visit The Nature Museum table in the exhibitors tent to explore our educational biofacts, speak with museum educators and learn about what's new at The Nature Museum!

The Museum is open Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10-4. Visit [www.nature-museum.org/](http://www.nature-museum.org/) for more information about summer camps and other Nature Museum happenings. - *Nature Museum Newsletter*

## Easter Egg Hunt & Potluck Success

The 2nd Annual Easter Egg Hunt was great fun and brought out about 50 people to the Community Center on Saturday, April 19th! Lots of delicious dishes, great raffle prizes, and happy kids finding eggs and visiting with the Easter Bunny! The organizers want to extend a big thank you to everyone who made this event so special.

- *Jen Benware & Tina White*



## News From Grace Cottage

Beginning May 5, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital will be offering an additional hour-long Strong Bones class starting at 9 a.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays. This is in addition to the Monday/Wednesday 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. classes and the Tuesday/Thursday 11 a.m. class.

Grace Cottage's Strong Bones Program is a strength and balance exercise program for adults and is appropriate for both sedentary and active individuals. Research has shown that strength and balance training can help adults to live healthier, happier and more independent lives. The Strong Bones Program is free, but pre-registration is required, and classes are limited to 12 participants. For more information and to pre-register, call 802- 365-3649.

Mark your calendars for the Grace Cottage Golf Benefit at Haystack Golf Club on June 7. Support a great

cause and enjoy an afternoon of golf at the spectacular Haystack Golf Club in Wilmington, VT. Now in its sixteenth year, all net proceeds from Grace Cottage Hospital's Tee It Up for Health Golf Tournament will go toward the construction of Grace Cottage's new primary care clinic building.

Registration closes when all team slots are filled. For more information about becoming a sponsor for this event or playing on a team, call Charma Bonanno at (802) 365-9109, e-mail [info@gracecottage.org](mailto:info@gracecottage.org), or visit [www.gracecottage.org/events](http://www.gracecottage.org/events) (you can register online).

- *Charma Bonanno*

## Senior Solutions is Grateful!

Thank you. Yet again, you have shown your support for Senior Solutions, the local area agency on aging, by approving our request for town funding. As the executive director, it is heartwarming to see your commitment to our aging neighbors and family members. For over 50 years, Senior Solutions has been a trusted partner in providing services, support, and advocacy for older adults and their caregivers in southeastern Vermont. The approval of this funding highlights Athens' dedication to building a community where people of all ages can thrive. Senior Solutions looks forward to continuing our work in Athens and ensuring that all older adults have the support they need to lead fulfilling lives. For more information, please visit our website at: [www.seniorsolutionsvt.org](http://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org).

- *Mark Boutwell, Executive Director*

## Reed Road Weather Summary for April

We had a little bit of every season this month, coming in and going out cool with a couple days summer-like in between. Snow and rain fell reflecting all seasons as well. But everything's greening up, birds are nesting and the flowers we wait so long for are blooming happily. Get out there & enjoy New England's capricious weather!

High temperature: 84.9 degrees

Low temperature: 18.6 degrees

Precipitation: 6 ½" snow/ 4.4" rain

- *Treah Pichette*

## Thoughts to Ponder

A few bits of wisdom from Pope Francis:

"Joy springs from a grateful heart."

"Have the courage 'to swim against the tide'. And also have the courage to be happy."

"Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! Do not let yourselves be robbed of hope! And not only that, but I say to us all: let us not rob others of hope, let us become bearers of hope!"

"Believe in what you are doing and pursue it enthusiastically. That is how the seed of generosity grows and bears abundant fruit. Allow yourselves the luxury of dreaming. We need dreamers to carry forward these projects."

## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

**Select Board Meetings:** 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM  
**Budget Committee:** 2nd & 4th Tuesday 7:00 PM  
**Planning Commission:** 1st Tuesday 10:30 AM  
**Meeting House Committee:** 2nd Monday 10:00 AM  
**School Board:** 2nd Thursdays 6:00 Grafton School  
Want to get the newsletter in your inbox?  
**CONTACT US** at [theathenianvt@gmail.com](mailto:theathenianvt@gmail.com).  
**TRASH PICK-UP: MAY 5, 19**  
**RECYCLE PICK-UP: MAY 12, 27**

### Charles Perham Journal April 1883

*Transcribed by James Trimble*

- 1 To home all day. Mother worse today. Sent for Dr. Pent.
- 2-7 No Entry
- 8 To home all day Alice (his daughter) sick today.
- 9 Have been up home and helped boil sap today.
- 10 Have been up home and boiled sap today.
- 11 To home in the forenoon. In the afternoon went to Saxtons River with Ellen. In the evening went to a school meeting.
- 12 Have been about home today. The Listers here. They appraised horse 1.00, cows .60, sheep .75, wagon .30, hog .06, ----- .50. Making 3.21 took out 2.36 leaves .65.
- 13 Have been up home today.
- 15 about home all day.
- 16 Have been up home today and boiled sap. Took Mr. Woodard to the sawmill. Borrowed 50.00 off of Alvin Parkhurst.
- 17 Have been and got the oxen of Mr. Penniman and got them shod. Borrowed 100.00 of A. Wyman to pay for them.
- 18 Have been and taken the Penniman oxen up home. Drawed home one half of the popular boards and stone boat planks.
- 19 Have cleaned out the cellar. Mr Woodard and wife here.
- 20 Rainy today. Did not do much in the forenoon. In the afternoon harrowed and picked up stone out of the field.
- 21 Have been cutting down the trees along the bank. Have been drawing them and cutting them up for wood. In the evening went to Meeting House to meeting. Elizabeth(his wife) washed with Martha Penniman.
- 22 Have been up home today. Got Mrs. Hudson for Franks folks.
- 23 Have been and got Herbert a load of shaving and up to the scythe snath shop(in Athens) and got me a load of shaving.
- 24 Got out five loads of manure on the meadow. Mr. Woodard and wife was here.
- 25 Sent a Registered letter to Mr. Stowe, Readsboro VT with \$7.60 for sap spouts. Freight .75 Reg. .13 paid out 8.48.
- 26 Have got out some manure and mended some fence. Plowed a little and got out roots on the bank. Went up to Williard Whites after oats and got 5 ½ bushels.
- 27 Have been to Saxtons River after grass seed. In the afternoon mended fence around the pasture. Mrs. Woodard here.
- 28 Have been up home and carried 5 ½ bushels of oats and some grass seed. Brought back some poplar wood and the Plow. Met George Smith up on the Stickney Hill.
- 29 About home all day. Went up on the hill with Herberts Folks. In the evening went over to Mr. Tenneys
- 30 Have been plowing the oat ground today. Willie Tenney helped in the forenoon.