

The Athenian

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Sponsored by Grafton Cares

APRIL 2022

Changing Seasons

You can feel it coming, especially when we change the clocks from Winter Dark to Spring possibilities. With hope that mud season is behind us but good sugaring weather continues, and planning for Green Up Day has begun, we know that new days are coming.

Some specifics for us - Will we keep the expanded 5-member Select Board? Should I volunteer to help with the refurbishing of the old school building or volunteer with the Meetinghouse Committee, or the Weather Emergency Committee?

This issue is packed with information on a variety of topics, but we're not out of mud season yet so let some quotes about our 5th season put a smile on your face. And read on . . . - *Dennis Hunt*

A Few Notes from our New Town Clerk

If residents need trash bags outside of normal office hours on Mondays, Darlene will still be selling them at her house for this year. The town office email is likely to be changing soon as part of the IT upgrades, but for now you can use townofathens@hotmail.com. And you can leave messages on the town office voicemail for me. I'll check that a couple times a week. - *Hannah Regier*

Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- The Selectboard will reorganize the board, meaning elect the Chair of the Board for the year, until the additional Board members have been elected.
- Concerns were raised about people unable to get home due to severe mud conditions on our dirt roads.
- Dennis Mirante inquired about funds available to forgive the \$15,000 loan from the Housing Rehabilitation Fund made to the Meetinghouse for the stabilization work in 2016/17. It was noted that perhaps the \$13,000 in ARPA funds could be a



Jay Maciejowski

source. David Bemis noted that there will be a community discussion on how that money is spent.

- Krista Gay pointed out for those present that having approved a 5-member board at Town Meeting, any decision made by the current 3 members will need to be unanimous.

- Concern was noted about there being too much salt in the sand that is available to the public.

- Sandi Capponcelli noted that the safety related grant they are seeking for the Community Center is in jeopardy

because of 18 items at the Town Garage that were to be corrected, only 4 have been addressed. Quotes for the required exit signs and emergency lighting were discussed and HB Energy Solutions was awarded the contract.

- Hannah Regier reported that there is a new mailbox at the Town Office. The official Town mailing address is now 25 Brookline Rd. And the installation of the new IT network is moving ahead.
- The Select Board made the usual appointments to the non-elected posts in Town.
- A brief executive session was called for a personnel matter. No decisions were made. - *Sherry Maher*

What You Need to Know for April 26th

As we noted in an email blast, late last month the Select Board agreed at their March meeting to hold a Special Meeting on Tuesday April 26th. They had been advised to hold a vote rather than appoint new board members. And just before the March board meeting, a citizens petition was submitted to reverse the March Town Meeting vote calling to increase our Select Board from a 3 member board to a 5 member board. David Bemis suggested doing both on the same day, so in actuality, this will be a 2-part process. Since we now do elections by Australian ballot, the polls will be open from 10 AM to 7 PM at the former elementary school to elect the 2 new board members. And at 6 PM there will

be a Special Town Meeting to potentially return the board to a 3-person body.

As we understand it from the Secretary of State, new seats to the board will automatically be 1-year seats. Which would mean that if the 5-member board is upheld when we come together and vote at 6 PM on April 26, each year at Town Meeting we would be voting on 3 Select Board seats, one being a 3-year seat and the others each 1-year seats.

If those who turn out for the in person vote on April 26 returns us to a 3-member board, then the newly elected members will serve on the board for 31 days from the day they are elected.

As of this writing, 3 people will be on the ballot for the 2 new seats. They are Sandi Capponcelli, Krista Gay and Harold Noyes. The ballot will also have space for Write In candidates should anyone be interested in a seat but missed the Friday, April 1 deadline.

- Sherry Maher

School Board Notes

It has been a busy and productive month. First, thanks to all who came out to vote, our school board has a full slate of members: Athens is Lynn Morgan and Krista Gay; Grafton is Hardy Merrill and Jack Bryer; and Westminster is Elise Manning and David Major. The Westminster board members will only be with us until July 1st when Athens-Grafton and Westminster officially become two separate school districts.

I look forward to working with the new board members and want to thank Ginger Maciejowski of Athens, Jessa Westclark of Grafton and Melissa Carlstrom of Westminster for all the help and energy they brought to the board over their time with us. They will be missed.

At the SU level we got reorganized by electing new officers. Jack Bryer is the new board chair. Our next line of business was to review and vote on the long-awaited Teacher Contract. The contract passed and covers our teachers for the years 2021 to 2024. We were all much relieved to get this overdue task accomplished. This document is to be posted on the WNESU web page. There is, however, still work to be done on settling the pay schedule for the paraprofessionals.

At the WNUESD level we got reorganized by electing officers. Jack Bryer was reelected as our board chair. We reviewed and voted on the teacher contract that was passed down to us from the SU. This was passed unanimously. We discussed the situation of the Grafton school being owned by the town of Grafton which will prevent us from getting ESSER funds to

make needed repairs. There are talks in the works with the town to resolve this problem. We also discussed the need for revisiting the Articles of Agreement, which is the official operating document for our board. Once Westminster separates from the WNUESD this document needs to reflect this change. Our "all district" meeting for the new union district will be scheduled for early May where the voters of Athens and Grafton will vote on district meeting officers and vote on the new Articles of Agreement. More on this meeting next month.

- Lynn Morgan

Green Up Notice

With the snow finally disappearing the road side trash has blossomed. It is once again time to sign up to help collect these unwanted blossoms. I have long time volunteers that are no longer able to help. So please, if you have not participated in Green Up before I urge you to join our team. I work up the routes to fit each person/group's energy and time limitations. Let me know if you are up for doing your road frontage, a half mile stretch, a mile stretch or more. The more hands we have the more of the town roads we can get cleaned up.

Green up is the first Saturday in May, which is May 7th. I know this date does not fit into everyone's schedule. Therefore, Green Up will start on Saturday April 30 and go through May 8th. From the 30th to the 7th any Green Up bags filled with road side trash tie off and leave well off to the side of the road and the road crew will pick it up Saturday starting at 4 pm. Any bags filled after 4 PM and on Sunday please take home and put out with your personal trash.

Anyone interested in helping, whether a new or former volunteer, please contact me at 802-869-2227 or email me at jelpmorgan@yahoo.com. Let me know where in town you live, as I try to get route assignments to coincide with where volunteers live. By April 25th I will deliver the Green Up packets to each volunteer. These packets will include the official Green Up bags, a description of your road assignment, procedural instructions, safety notes and a tally sheet (information I need for my report to the Green Up organization). Looking forward to hearing from you.

- Lynn Morgan



Crystal Bascom Trimble

Update from Grafton Cares

As we all know, spring brings hope of new life, and so many things that have been absent for a long winter season return to us with a wealth of song and color. The spirit of renewal is infectious. Oh, no! --- We should

avoid that word. It would be better to say that having been swept up in the spirit of spring and having found the great decline of Covid cases convincing, the board of Grafton Cares has decided to reestablish community lunches starting on Wednesday, May 4, at 12 noon, in the Chapel. As always, lunch is free of charge and everyone is welcome. For those who wish to donate, a collection jar is available by the door.

Our activities this month include delivering Meals on Wheels to 12 customers, \$285 in gas cards for medical appointments, 8 sunshine baskets, 3 shawls and 1 baby blanket, and 2 rides to medical appointments. We also loaned out 1 walker and had 1 wheelchair and 1 commode returned.

It would be difficult to say how excited we are to have community lunches once again on the calendar. Community dinners will be reestablished in the fall.

Happy Spring to everyone! - *Bill Toomey*

Think Plant Sale!

The Meetinghouse Committee and the Athens Historic Preservation Society want to remind everyone about our annual Plant Sale coming up on the Saturday of Memorial Day weekend. Yes, it's nearly 2 months away still, but as the ground thaws and you start getting out into your gardens, be thinking of donations to the plant sale for any divisions you need to do, or of course for any holes you need to fill in!

We are already gathering raffle items and making plans for the sale. Let's just hope we have a warmer Memorial Day weekend than we did in 2021!

And stay tuned for an update on the Façade Project next month. Hopefully you'll be seeing activity there come June as work gets underway. - *Sherry Maher*

Athens Community Center Update

We are finally taking our first steps in turning our beloved school into a community center. Progress is slow but it's still progress. Last year we cleaned out the attic and we had an 'Un Tag Sale' which helped put a little money in our coffer for projects. We were fortunate to have some teens work on the cleaning project which we will give community hours for as they are required by the high school for graduation. We are hoping that we can get some more teens involved in wall prep and painting so they can add to their community hours. Please contact me at vtplntldy@hotmail.com to get your name on the list of available workers. There might also be some other town projects in the works to help the teens out with accruing community hours so please email me to get your name on the list.

At our last CCAC meeting, Krista Gay generously offered to donate the cost of the paint so we can repaint the main room, but fixing of the walls and painting was

on hold until we could get lit exit signs and emergency lighting in place. Well that is happening as I type out this article. We also received the good news today that we are recipients of a \$1200 grant from PACIF which will go to defray the cost of the installation of the signs and lights. The monies from the 'Un Tag Sale' will be used to purchase some folding tables for use in the building. We will continue to research and apply for grants to help make 'our school' into 'our community center' which at some point, in the future, will be available for rental for various activities.

Right now we are considering an "Open House" possibly in early fall so people can get an idea of the building space and give us some ideas about this project. Would another 'Un Tag Sale' be a good idea for this? How about something to do with meeting local craftspeople and farmers? We are searching for ideas and would love some input.

Thank you for your support and we hope it will continue. - *Sandi Capponcelli*

The Ticks are Here!

Along with an advisory from the State's Fish & Wildlife that the warm weather has brought the bears out, we also heard from the good folks at TickReport in Amherst, MA that the submissions of adult deer ticks tripled recently from all states east of the Rocky Mountains. This signals the start of the peak season for adult deer ticks, which will last until at least June in most regions.

So to prevent bites if you're hiking, working or playing outdoors, please consider the precautions that TickReport recommends:

1. Wear a DEET-based repellent on skin or clothing
2. Consider Permethrin-treated clothing to repel and kill ticks
3. Check yourself and family members for ticks immediately when you're back indoors

If a tick does bite remove it with sharp-pointed tweezers and place the tick in a zip-top plastic bag or other container. Consider having it tested for pathogens at the TickReport testing lab.

You can also send a photo of your tick to: info@TickReport.com?subject=ID%20request for a fast and free visual ID by their experts. Proper identification is key to estimating risk, and research shows that even doctors and veterinarians can mis-identify ticks in more than 80% of cases.

TickReport provides DNA and RNA testing for up to 25 different pathogens, and most results are ready in 24-48 hours after arrival in their lab.

So while keeping an eye out for those bears, please remember to stay tick-healthy! - *Tim Stevenson*

New Staff at GES

Please join me in congratulating and welcoming Sarah Noble as Grafton Elementary School's new Administrative Assistant. Sarah has been a part of WNESU for 12 years and this is her third year here at GES. Our students, staff and families are fortunate to have such a caring and supportive person like Sarah in this role. I am confident that she will continue to be an asset to our school and to the community. Sarah can be contacted at sarah.noble@wnesu.com or at 802-843-2495.



Also join us in welcoming Mrs. Lora Miele to GES! Lora will be the first and second grade teacher until the end of the school year! We are so happy to have you, Lora!

- Angela Cartier



Veggie Van Go

Free, fresh food distributed each month hosted by Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital. Upcoming Distribution Dates: Thursdays, Noon – 1 p.m. April 28 and May 26. Location: Newfane Congregational Church (at the back side of the Newfane Common). Veggie Van Go is a program hosted by hospitals & schools and offered by the Vermont Food Bank. Typical items include seasonal fresh produce and occasional frozen or dairy products. All in need are welcome! There are no eligibility requirements.

-Dennis Hunt

April Library Corner

Smiles and Gratitude

The on-going participation and enthusiasm of our on-line program attendees make us smile. These programs have developed community and spread much needed joy, and our attendees are a large part of that positivity. We thank all of them. While the library will begin to schedule more in-person events, we've seen that the use of platforms such as Zoom broaden our reach and make programming available to many more people. That is a positive outcome we will continue into the future.

We are also grateful that conditions allow us to modify our masking and other Covid policies. See more below for programming and Covid policy changes at the library.

Library Programming

Have you ever met an African Grey Parrot? Or someone who owns one? Here is your chance! New Grafton resident Russ Campbell has been a long-time bird owner and has African Grey Parrots. He will be sharing his birds and his considerable knowledge as a bird owner in a family friendly library program on Zoom in April. Adults and children are most welcome to join us in

learning about these fascinating creatures and their care. Our Page Turners Book Group returns **in person** at the beginning of April! Come join us to share your favorite reads over the winter.

Change in Covid Policies

What a challenging time this has been! We acknowledge with sorrow the many losses and difficulties, of all types, that people have experienced during the past two years. We also want to express extreme gratitude for an understanding patron and community base and the support so many of you have shown one another and the library. At this time, after library trustee and staff discussion, the library is streamlining our Covid guidelines to follow the new CDC COVID-19 Community Levels tool. Masking requirements and other Covid precautions will be determined by the level stated for our area. For more information, please check the library website, posters at the library, Facebook announcements and this page on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/covid-by-county.html>

Programming Schedule

Spanish Group on Zoom, Tuesdays, 11:00am-noon
Page Turners Book Group, Tuesday, April 5, 12:30-1:30, Hybrid, in person and on Zoom
For the Love of Birds: An Introduction to African Grey Parrots on Zoom, Tuesday, April 19, 7-8:30pm, Registration required
Nature & Books Discussion Series on Zoom, Wednesday, April 27, 6:00-7:30 pm. Registration required.

- Michelle Dufort

Grant for Pet Programming

Senior Solutions has been awarded a \$20,000 grant from Meals on Wheels America and PetSmart Charities to expand their existing "Foxy Fund" to provide emergency veterinary care and pet food for Meals on Wheels recipients with domestic household pets. Senior Solutions was one of only 27 grants awarded nationally, and the only one in the northeast.

"We are incredibly excited about this opportunity," said Outreach Specialist Thom Simmons. "In April we will be working out the logistics and will be running a test pilot in partnership with the Springfield Meals Center.

In addition, we are opening this opportunity to seniors in Athens who would like to participate in the pilot program at the same time. Once it is operating smoothly, we will expand it to other towns across southeastern Vermont. This will greatly transform our existing Foxy Fund program and help many of our clients keep and care for their domestic pets." Seniors in Athens who would like to participate in a once-monthly delivery of cat or dog food should call Thom

Simmons at 802-885-2655, ext. 2123 and leave a message for a call-back to sign up.

Vermonters have the highest pet-ownership rate in the country at 71%, and many think of their pets as family members. Studies have shown that pets positively impact both the physical and emotional health of seniors in significant ways, especially those at risk of social isolation. Pet ownership may not only stave off loneliness, but can also reduce blood pressure, provide mental health benefits, and offer unconditional love and acceptance. Unfortunately, many people on fixed incomes have difficulty keeping up with the rising costs of owning a pet.

The Foxy Fund was established in 2019 as a result of a bequest by a client whose life was changed by having a pet. To read more about this or donate, go to <https://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org/giving/the-foxy-fund/>

- Thom Simmons

Native Planting Resource & More

Spring is almost here and garden planning is in full swing. Last winter, we offered a webinar titled “Building a Conservation Corridor in Your Yard” by Dr. Douglas Tallamy, and his presentation made a big impression on the 100+ people who attended. Dr. Tallamy, a professor of Entomology and a best-selling author, delivered a message that is refreshingly simple — choosing native plant species for your home landscape has a significant and immediate effect on your regional food web.

As an entomologist, he’s watched the insect numbers grow in yard after yard, and he’s proved that even one native plant or tree can make a big difference that radiates out across many species. When planning your gardens this year, support the regional food web, especially the pollinators, by learning about the co-evolution between native plants and insects, and consider adding a few new plants to your list of favorites.

Where to begin? We’ve gathered some great local resources on our website, including a sale of locally native tree and plant species at the Windham County Conservation District Plant Sale that is currently underway.

Take a look at our resource list, dive into the work of Dr. Tallamy, and don’t forget we have a workshop for beginning beekeepers coming up on Saturday, March 26th!

And on Thursday, April 7th at 7-8 PM at the Grafton Community Church, local author Kieran Mulvaney will take us on an adventure through the arctic, sharing some of his incredible photos and thoughtful testimony

of the raw arctic climate. Registration is limited for *Eyes on the Arctic and Climate Change*

Find out more about these and other happenings at <https://www.nature-museum.org/>.

- Nature Museum Newsletter

Entries From A Weather Journal

April is a month of transition, and we expect the weather to be nice and warm with flowers tentatively peeking out of the ground. What can go wrong? Here are two entries, one from the beginning of April and the next from the beginning of May.

April 1st, 2018. “Winter Storm Warning still in effect for most of the day. Still snowing from early yesterday morning. Temps: 34 & 28.” (no fooling!).

May 2nd, 2018. “It is 7:00 in the morning and already 66 degrees. Wow. Winter is ‘gone’. Things are greening up.” Temps: 73 & 49.”

-Dennis Hunt

Thoughts To Ponder

It’s Vermont’s Fifth Season—MUD!. It was particularly challenging this year and we hopefully have seen the worst of it. Vermonters are tough and as the quotes that follow indicate, we can still smile. All quotes are anonymous.

“Roses are red
Mud is brown
Turn the Country Music up
And push the pedal down.”

“If you can no longer tell what
color it is.
You’re doing it right.”

“Go through the mud they said
It isn’t that deep they said.”

-all quotes selected by Dennis Hunt



Jay Maciejowski

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Select Board Meetings: 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM

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

Meeting House Committee: 2nd Monday 10:00 AM

School Board: 2nd Thursday 6:30 Grafton School

Are you on our email list to get the newsletter in your inbox?

CONTACT US at theathenianvt@gmail.com.



TRASH PICK-UP: APRIL 4 & 18

RECYCLE PICK-UP: APRIL 11 & 25

Charles Perham Journal – April 1863 Transcribed by James Trimble

- 1 This forenoon I played upon my piano Ella came up to hear. I carried her down to Sarah Ball. Then went to Saxtons River. Brought Ella home in the evening I practiced.
- 3 Practiced a good lot today. Listers were here today. was here all the afternoon. In evening practiced. A very pleasant evening.
- 4 Did not practice much for Joel ... come here today. In the evening went down to prepare for the funeral but ... was not home. I carried Ella down had a good time.
- 5 Father and I started for the funeral they did not have many. Mr. Chase preached to us his text was the 10 chapter of Job verse 20. In the evening practiced.
- 6 In the forenoon practiced some. In the afternoon Mary Wells, Ella, and Willy Dodge came up here had a invitation for tonight did not go. Stayed to home and played upon my piano.
- 7 Practiced in the forenoon. In the afternoon went down to the mill. Stayed to Dodges a little while in the evening practiced.
- 8 Went to Saxtons River to take my eighth lesson. Carried Jeanie Ober home. In the evening Ella and Martha came up here. I went home with them.
- 9 Had a good practice in the forenoon. In the afternoon I helped father brake a road to the west ... place in the evening I practiced.
- 10 Had a very bad headache this forenoon but got over it so I helped father gather some sap in the afternoon in the evening had a good practice.
- 11 Don't feel so much like practicing today but have practiced some. In the evening went down to Mr. Dodges to get the papers.
- 12 I took the team and went to meeting alone. Played in church today. In the evening practiced.
- 14 Practiced five hours today I guess. Helped gather some sap. In the evening stayed home and practiced.
- 15 This Morn I went over to Mr. Jenkins after a sled. Had a letter from Mr. ... that I could not go to take my lesson. Practiced some in the evening.
- 16 Went to Saxtons River today. It is stormy today and very bad going. I shall not practice this evening for I do not feel like it.
- 17 Had a good practice today about 5 hours I guess. I stayed home in the evening.
- 18 I had a very good practice today. In the afternoon I went down to Mr. Dodges found Ella very sick.
- 19 There was no Meeting today so I played some and helped father some. I went down to the Dodges a little while Ella is better. In the evening had a good play.
- 20 Do not feel like practicing this forenoon so I helped father. In the afternoon had a good practice.
- 22 Helped gather the buckets today in afternoon went down to the Mill Martha was to Dodges today. In evening I practiced three hours.
- 23 Went to Saxtons River and took my 10 lesson. Had a new piece to practice. The name of it Storm Galapade.
- 25 Practiced all day today for it is a stormy day. Mr. Ball did not work for father today.
- 26 Went to meeting today. Stopped to James to supper. Came up to Mr. Balls stayed a little while.
- 27 Went up in town to a funeral today. Francis Sherwin was buried today. In the afternoon Ella and Mary Wells come up here in the evening I went home with them.
- 29 In the forenoon went down to get some ... In the afternoon practiced in the evening went on a walk with Mary Well and Ella.
- 30 This forenoon I helped father mend fence. In the afternoon practiced. Dodges come here this evening.

Visit the [Athens, VT My Hometown](#) group on Facebook to keep up with spring happenings at our local farms!



Left: Grace Farm
Eggs, and Early
Planting for CSA

Right: Lamb Triplets
X2 and a call for part-
time farm help at
Wild Shepherd Farm

