

The Athenian

Volume 13, Number 2

Sponsored by Grafton Cares

October 2022

Just Like the Fall Colors, Communities Change

Fall is in the air and on the Vermont hillsides! The annual autumn color splash never disappoints despite all our worries each year about when the leaves will peak or how good the colors will be. The changing leaves bring an audacious signal that the seasons are changing. But this year, this change of season also brings with it a different kind change to our community, and one that must be properly honored, especially in these pages, because it has much to do with our Community Suppers and The Athenian even existing.

As some of you know, but many may not, Dennis and Karen Hunt are preparing for a move to be closer to their daughter and her family in Maryland. This newsletter wouldn't have been born 12 years ago if it weren't for the Hunts. And speaking for myself, I dare say the new sense of community that I have seen grow in Athens over the past 12 years springs from that core value that the Hunts brought to our town. With Karen always at his side, and Dennis as long-time president of Grafton Cares they have given more than one can image to the towns of Athens and Grafton, from meals served, medical equipment loaned and housed, library activities with kids, and many gatherings both small and large with friends at their wonderful home on McCusker Rd. Their departure will be a huge loss to our community.

Knowing how hard the Hunts have worked to build their Vermont community here, I was so happy to hear that their soon-to-be new neighbors already gather regularly in their neighborhood, and are looking forward to welcoming the Hunts into their circle. However, they don't know yet just how lucky they are!

We wish Dennis and Karen all the best, and we will dearly miss them. We don't yet know just when their big move will happen, but this Friday could be their last Community Supper as Athenians. So be sure to take an opportunity to send them off with all your good wishes!

- Sherry Maher



Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- It doesn't seem that Brookline and Athens will work together on creating their respective Hazardous Mitigation plans. David Bemis will notify the state that Athens will be proceeding on their own.
- There have been issues with DeCamp having 2 recent loads of recycling rejected at the plant because they contained bags of rotting food mixed in with recycle materials. A discussion followed about how to reach out and educate residents that compost materials cannot be included with recyclables. Janet Perry was tasked with writing up material to begin educating the public. Stay tuned.
- A request was received by the Town Clerk's office regarding a public records request related to the 2020 election. Apparently other towns in VT have received similar requests. David suggested that the Town Agent be consulted and Hannah has been in touch with the Secretary of State office for guidance.
- A Board of Abatement meeting will be held on Oct 20th at 6:30 PM prior to the next regular monthly Select Board meeting.
- Don Capponcelli has deconstructed the unsafe playground structure at the Community Center. He informed the Board of an offer to donate a used structure, but it was not a commercial grade set. Anything up there would need to be strong, sturdy and safe assuming it would have lots of use, thus while the offer is appreciated, it was rejected.
- It was noted that audio recordings from Select Board meetings are archived by the Town Clerk.

- The Board was asked if there were expectations of individual committee members, and how the Select Board might assist a committee if for example a member is not attending meetings or communicating with the chair or fellow committee members. David said appointed officials can be removed, but elected positions are left to the board or committee in question. Janet was asked if she still intends to participate on the Meetinghouse Committee in light of her many absences and lack of communication.
- The Board reviewed 4 sealed bids for culvert work on Brookline Rd. After discussion and debate on details of the bids, the contract was awarded to A.S. Clark by a vote of 3 to 2 with Denis Randall and Sandi Capponcelli opposed.
- A policy related to rolling over sick leave was reviewed and amended. Four Board members voted in favor of the change, while Janet abstained.
- Sherry Maher offered a public appreciation to Don Capponcelli for all that he has long done as a volunteer to assist members of the Meetinghouse Committee.
- There will be a public hearing regarding Taylor Hill on October 12th at the Community Center. The hearing will convene at 9:30, the Commissioners will then go to view the road, then return for the public hearing at the Community Center.
- Following an executive session regarding a legal matter and a contract matter, the Board called for a special Select Board meeting on September 22nd, and approved a motion to pay the village of Saxtons River \$5,000 for fire protection. They also would like to have the Town Agent review the contract from 1994.
- Matt Perry arrived at 8:55 PM and further matters related to roads and equipment were addressed.
- At the special Select Board Meeting on Sept. 22, brief business related to VLCT insurance matters were addressed in public session. Then the Board along with Matt Perry entered an executive session. No decisions were made in executive session and the meeting was then adjourned.

- Sherry Maher

Notes from the School Board

The new school season is off to a good start. The custodians at the Grafton Elementary School had the school looking great with freshly painted walls, waxed

floors and newly organized spaces. The teachers all had their class rooms organized and decorated, making them very welcoming. Students were excited to be back in school without masks and other COVID restrictions. I'm excited to report that families and the community are once again welcomed back into the school to visit and participate in activities. We are short a few staff members, so the after-school program has not started up yet. However, interviews are in progress and the hope is to fill the vacancies soon. [NOTE – See the call for Community Engagement Opportunities at GES at the end of this newsletter.]

On September 12th a School Board Community Meeting was held. There were a number of parents and non-parent community members in attendance. Great questions were asked and informational answers provided by the board and/or the superintendent. As a group we were able to brainstorm some ideas to meet some of the needs mentioned, and a plan was put into progress to move forward on one need in particular. I want to thank all who came out on the 12th and their willingness to work with us. Future meetings of this type were asked for. We are looking at scheduling one every 3 months.

- Lynn Morgan



Meetinghouse Update

Have you seen the bright, shimmering, new paint job on the Brick Meetinghouse? Or the newly restored windows? The building's "facelift" is nearly complete.

The finishing touches to the Façade Project, funded in part by the Bruhn Grant administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, are expected to be completed very soon. And with the arrival of fall and cooler weather, well, an ice cream social just didn't seem right so how about gathering or cider and donuts? Details to

follow, so stay tuned. The committee can't wait to show off what has been accomplished so far!

And there being no rest for the weary, we just submitted our next grant application for the 2023 round of state historic preservation funds that will help us add storm windows to protect the newly restored historic windows, address some sinking piers under the floor, and put down a barrier that will prevent moisture in the dirt crawl space from migrating into the building. Keep

your fingers crossed that we'll hear a positive outcome on that come this December!
- *Sherry Maher*

Grafton Cares Update

The month of September has passed in a flash, and nothing makes time pass more quickly than the pleasure Grafton Cares takes in our weekly lunches and community dinners. But we have been busy in other ways as well -- delivering meals on wheels to 7 customers, 3 sunshine baskets, 2 welcome bags, and 2 shawls. In the medical department, we provided 5 rides, and \$285 in gas cards. Also, we loaned 1 wheelchair, 1 hospital bed, 1 shower chair, 1 raised toilet seat, and 2 walkers.

Once again, we will honor the Grafton/Athens "over 80" population with lovely gifts bags, sadly foregoing the more traditional luncheon. This, of course, is out of concern for COVID, and not wanting to risk any spread among our elders.

Finally, Wednesday luncheons in October begin on the 5th and continue throughout the month, taking place in the Chapel at noon. Community dinners will take place at the Athens Church on Friday, October 7, and at the Chapel in Grafton on Friday, October 2 --both are at 6 p.m.

We are looking for cooks for our Athens Community suppers. Three of our cooks are no longer able to continue to make delicious meals. Volunteering for this does not involve cooking the entire meal but could mean making a side dish, salad or a main course. Any help would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested, please contact Kate Bova at 869-1527.

Wishing you all a colorful and happy autumn.

- *Bill Toomey*



Fuel Assistance Sign up at the Athens Town Office

Fall is here – which means it is time to sign up for Vermont's Seasonal Heating Fuel Assistance Program,

which can offset winter heating costs by anywhere from a few hundred to even a few thousand dollars. Senior Solutions can help you apply for assistance through Vermont's LIHEAP program, which could help lower your bills if you heat with oil, kerosene, propane, electric, coal, wood pellets, or wood.

This program is income and household-size based. If your income is at or below these levels, you qualify:

Household of 1 – \$2,096/month

Household of 2 – \$2,823/month

Household of 3 - \$3,550/month

Senior Solutions staff will be on hand at the Athens Town Hall on Monday, October 24, from 11 am to 1 pm to help you fill out this easy application. No appointments are needed – just drop in! Please bring your account number with your fuel provider when you come.
- *Thom Simmons*

And More from Senior Solutions

Explore free classes that Senior Solutions and other Area Agencies on Aging have reserved for us on this site. Go to GetSetUp.io and login/set up your account with your email address. Travel, languages, computer and iPhone tips, cooking and creative art are just a few of the weekly curriculums. Just sign up and attend virtually. It is interactive and fun!

Do you remember when Medicare Open Enrollment Begins? This is the window during which you can select or change Medicare plans. It starts on October 15th and runs to December 7th. Make sure you decide what plan suits you and what plan matches your budget. We can help you find answers before the rush starts.

And we are recruiting additional Senior Companion, Friendly Visitors and Vet to Vet Volunteers. Thank you in advance!

Check our website for all this important information and more: www.seniorsolutionsvt.org.

- *Joann Erenhouse*

Traveling Exhibit from the National Audubon Photo Contest.

The photos are on display at the Rockingham Library in Bellows Falls at 65 Westminster St. There is an opening reception this Friday the 7th at 5:00 P.M. The photos will be on display during library hours until October 26th. The library is open Mon-Wed. 10-6, Thur & Fri. 10-5:30 and Sat. 10-1. The library will be closed this coming Monday for the holiday.

- *Lynn Morgan*

Second Calls for Resident Responses

The Weather Emergency Committee would greatly

appreciate having more residents use the link below to update volunteer information and medical information that can assist the Shelter Team in the event of a natural disaster impacting Athens. The brief survey can be completed online from this link:

<https://form.jotform.com/221636569468065>

Similarly, the Town Meeting Survey Committee would still love to hear thoughts about Town Meeting scheduling from more Athens voters:

<https://form.jotform.com/221727676329061>

Thanks in advance! - *Sherry Maher*



October Library Corner

Smiles and Gratitude

We have a new volunteer! Please welcome Ellen Goldstein to our excellent crew at the library! Many thanks to volunteer David Ross for helping out with our problematic screen door handle. Extended thanks to Pat Mack for keeping the houseplants happy at the library, Sarah Yarosevich for working her magic on the gardens and the Windham Foundation for a season of mowing.

Library Adult and Family Programming

Do you know where some of the oldest trees in Vermont are located? Join us for our final Walk of Wonder of the year to the Black Gum Swamp in Vernon to experience this unique area in our state and see these ancient trees. Details are available at the library, via email and on-line. Fall has arrived and so has the Nature & Books Discussion Series, co-sponsored with the Nature Museum, and going strong in its third year! The entire schedule appears below. Please register via email for this program on Zoom.

Join us for either (or both) of our long-running programs (now hybrid—which means you may join us in person or on-line). Spanish is weekly on Tuesdays and the Page Turner's Book Group is on the first Tuesday of the month.

In the month of October, Grafton Elementary School students will begin regular visits to the library with their teachers for story time, crafts and book check out. We are delighted to have the school kids here! In addition, the library is sponsoring a concert at the Grafton school for students and families with musician Marcos Levy. Details are below.

Halloween @ the Library is a Grafton tradition that your family doesn't want to miss! Stop by on Halloween for trick-or-treating and some hot cider.

Finally, the Gingerbread House Extravaganza returns to the library in late November—with houses on display and available for purchase during Christmas in Grafton. More details to follow—but start designing your creations!

Programming Schedule

Spanish Group on Zoom, Tuesdays, 11:00am-noon, Hybrid, in person and on Zoom. Intermediate level.

Page Turners Book Group, Tuesday, October 4, 12:30-1:30, Hybrid, in person and on Zoom

October focus: Book Genre Blitz

Walk of Wonder: Sunday, October 23 2022, 11:00 am: Vernon Black Gum Swamp, Vernon, Vermont

Nature & Books Discussion Series: Wednesday, October 26 (Beloved Beasts), Wednesday, November 30

(The Bald Eagle, The Hawk's Way) and Wednesday, December 28 (The Book of Eels) 6-7:30 pm on Zoom

Musical Concert with Marcos Levy (rescheduled) Friday, October 28 10:30 am GES—families welcome

Halloween @ the Library, Monday, October 31, 5-7 pm.

- *Michelle Dufort*

Grace Cottage Family Health Adds Providers

Three new providers are now seeing patients at Grace Cottage Family Health in Townshend.

Nurse Practitioner Caroline (Carly) Dormer is accepting new patients 18 and older. A graduate of St. Lawrence University and State University of New York-Binghamton's Decker College of Nursing and Health Sciences, Dormer graduated with a Master of Science as an Adult Gerontological Nurse Practitioner with a Forensic Health Advanced Certificate. Dormer was a clinical and charge nurse at Binghamton General Hospital and Decker Health Services & Department of Emergency Management prior to moving to Vermont in 2021, where she's most recently worked as a Nurse Practitioner at Savida Health in Brattleboro. She enjoys snowboarding, hiking, painting, and gardening.

Dr. Wyll Everett received his M.D. from the University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine and completed his residency in 2022. He also holds a B.A. in neuroscience from Wheaton College in Norton, MA. He was a Research Assistant in the Department of Bariatric Surgery at the University of Vermont Medical Center, and also in the Department of Anesthesiology. He chose to pursue a career in family medicine while working at Grace Cottage with Dr. Tim Shafer during his fourth year of medical school. Dr. Everett is Board Certified with the American Board of Family Medicine and is a board member of the Vermont Academy of Family Physicians. He grew up in southwestern Vermont.

Dr. Marc-Olivier Ratte received his Bachelor and Master of Science in Cell and Molecular Biology from

University Laval in Quebec, Canada, and his M.D. from St. George's University School of Medicine in Granada. His residency was at Stamford Hospital/Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and he has been a primary care physician at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital since 2018. He is Board Certified with the American Board of Family Medicine. Dr. Ratte's hobbies include traveling, hiking, skiing, and attending concerts.

- C.J. King

Chester Wreath-Decorating Workshops

Autumn may have just begun, but Thanksgiving and Christmas will suddenly be upon us. To prepare, here's an early alert to mark your calendar for the Annual Wreath-Decorating Workshops at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Chester, VT! The decorating sessions – to be held November 17-19, 2022 – offer the best opportunity for you to decorate a beautiful evergreen wreath just the way you want it. All materials, including especially collected natural decorations and fabric for bows, plus necessary equipment and instruction, will be provided to enable your truly personal wreath. Because the number of wreaths and sessions is limited, reservations must be made and paid for in advance.

Open to the public, the workshops will take place in the church's Willard Hall at 313 Main Street, Chester, and will once again benefit both the church and the Chester

Conservation Committee's Student Environmental Scholarship Fund. More information about cost and times of the sessions will be coming in the next month,

but if you think you'd like to participate and want a wreath reserved, please contact Lillian Willis at 802-875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net as soon as possible.

- Lillian Willis

Thoughts to Ponder

"Falling leaves hide the path so quietly."

- John Bailey

"October poplars are flaming torches lighting the way to winter."

-Nova S. Blair

"I've never known anyone yet who doesn't suffer a certain restlessness when autumn rolls around...We're all eight years old again and anything is possible."

Photo Credits – Sherry Maher

- Sue Grafton

"And all the lives we ever lived and all the lives to be are full of trees and changing leaves."

- Virginia Wolf, *To The Lighthouse*

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

Do you have a news item for The Athenian or a favorite story to share? 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: OCT 17 & 31

RECYCLE PICK-UP: OCT 10 & 24

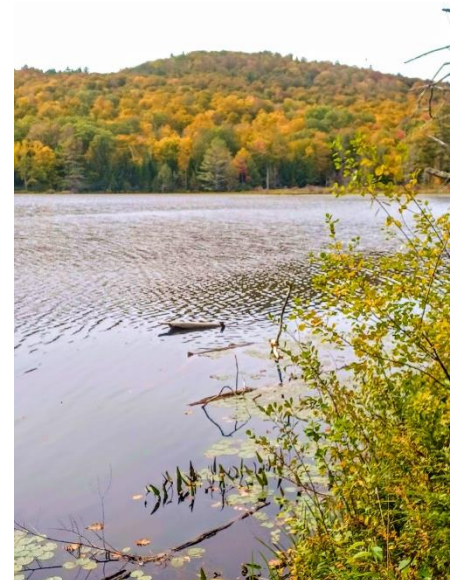


Photo Credits – Sherry Maher



First Annual

Athens Community Halloween Party



Halloween Party

at the Athens Community Center

OCTOBER

29



5pm to 8pm

*Costume contest for kids, teens and adults with gift cards as prizes

*Games

*Lots of Candy

*Chili and hotdogs



Community Engagement Opportunities at GES



READING BUDDIES

Join a class on a weekly basis to read with individual or small groups of students!



LUNCH MENTORS

Be paired with a student to eat lunch at GES on a weekly basis!



WINTER SPORTS

Help students learn how to ski at Stratton Mountain this year!



RECESS MONITOR

Join out classroom teachers and help monitor students enjoying outdoor recess time.



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Share your interest (cooking, crafting, outdoor exploring, etc) by leading a club through our After School Program!



802-843-2495

ANGELA.CARTIER@WNESU.COM