

# The Athenian

Volume 13, Number 4

Sponsored by Grafton Cares

DECEMBER 2022

## Tis the Season

It's the holiday season again! One just past and a variety to come. Many cultures and religions which have celebrations during December have in common the celebration of "light" as we pass the shortest day of the year. Whether it is Diwali in India, Loi Krathong in Thailand, or St. Lucia's Day in Sweden, Norway and areas of Finland, like the more familiar Christmas and Hanukkah, lights, candles, food and gathering together are the common themes. And while the rain delayed it a day, we here in Athens began to light the long cold nights with our 3rd Annual Tree Lighting at the Meetinghouse. A small but cheerful group gathered together to share in community and enjoy the lights!

We wish you a safe and joyful season that keeps more to the spirit of the holidays making memories with those you love. And if you can in whatever way you can, consider helping to feed the 2 out of 5 Vermonters who are food insecure. There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer at local food shelves and with meal distribution efforts in the area.

- Sherry Maher & Ginger Maciejowski

### Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- The Selectboard met with the Budget Committee prior to the start of the meeting to review budget questions for the board mostly pertaining to highway related matters. See the November Board minutes for more details.



Joanna Lake adds an ornament to the tree.  
Photo Sandi Capponcelli

- A request was made that information about how to get a fire permit be on the town website, and it was noted that Windham County VT Pride 2023 is conducting a survey. There is a card at the town office with more information.
- The final invoice for the Meetinghouse Façade project was approved for payment. The committee is hoping to hear in December about a grant for further work. The corrected agreement for clearing the corner needs to be forwarded to the owners of the property. Sandi will send to Sherry to pass on.
- David Bemis suggested looking into a tabulator for future elections.
- An executive session was called for a legal matter and contract matter. No decisions were made.
- The Board decided not to join the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council and discussed the need to replace the fuel tank at the garage, and approved temporary storage of medical equipment in the basement at the Community Center.

- Sherry Maher

### Notes from the School Board

A feasibility study has been done that looked at the feasibility of the SU building becoming its own Preschool center. The study has shown that this is not financially feasible for the SU. A Preschool committee has been formed and is looking at the various district schools to see if there is enough space at any of them to add a preschool component. The lack of Preschool space in our area is preventing some qualified teachers from accepting jobs at our district schools.

At the SU meeting on 11/16/22 the 2023-2024 SU budget was presented and we were walked through the

new format and questions were answered. We were all impressed with the new format and how much easier it is to understand. That budget was passed. At the Ath-Graf board meeting on 11/17/22 their 2023-2024 budget was presented. There were a few items not in the budget. These will be checked out and the further discussion on this budget will occur next month.

The Thanksgiving lunch at the Grafton Elementary School was well attended. The food was great and the Thank You to Our Veterans presented by staff and students was well done. On Friday Nov. 18th the classes presented their circus acts that they had been working on with Troy Wonderly all week. What a fun way to end the week.

- Lynn Morgan

### **Windham County Selectboard Panel**

I wanted to share with you that I will be hosting a zoom panel with Selectboard members from around the county to talk about what it means to be on a Selectboard. This is in hopes that people can either be empowered to run for Selectboard themselves or support others in knowing about it. This is especially so because we have several seats open around the county.

So far, we have Brattleboro Selectboard members Daniel Quipp and Jessica Gelter, Halifax Selectboard Member Tristan Roberts, Townshend Selectboard Member Robert Wesley and Athens Selectboard Member Sandi Capponcelli for a panel Q&A. We will talk about the benefits and drawbacks of being a Selectboard member. [OUR NOTE – Remember there will be 3 board seats up for election this coming March.]

Register in advance for this discussion.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/79124202020?pwd=ZlZlcUgqpgj8pHND54S.>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

- Wichie Artu

### **Winter Safety Checklist**

As we transition from Fall to Winter there are some things the Grafton Fire Department recommends that you do to help provide for the safety of yourself, your family, and your home.

\_\_\_ make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors work and batteries are good

\_\_\_ clean wood and pellet stoves

\_\_\_ clean chimney flues and inspect throughout the winter

\_\_\_ make sure exhaust vents for propane, wood, pellet stoves and clothes dryers are kept free of debris and snow now and all winter

\_\_\_ make sure the numbers identifying your home are clearly visible and readable from the street

\_\_\_ have preplanned emergency escape routes from your home and an outdoor meeting place

More people may be burning wood this year, due to the cost of heating fuel, which potentially increases the likelihood of chimney fires. Burning wood that is not aged or is damp increases the build up of creosote in chimney flues. Tamping down fires and burning stoves at low heat levels, as is often done in the early Winter and Spring, can also lead to creosote build up. Creosote is the primary cause of chimney fires. Inspecting and cleaning stoves and chimney flues throughout the heating season is an important thing to do to avoid chimney fires for all wood burners. Please, take this checklist seriously and stay safe. Look for regular updates on the Grafton Fire and Rescue Facebook Page.

- Dave Ross

### **Food News You Can Use**

Below is a list of local sites where food assistance is available at no or little cost to you. Please get the word out to your friends and neighbors about these programs as we go through these uncertain times.

**Grafton Community Church Food Pantry:** The food pantry at the Church is sponsoring free food pickup at the Church during the week. Staples such as pasta, tomato sauce, jam, oatmeal, and sometimes even frozen meat if available. Call Mary Feder at the Church at 843-2346 or email her at [graftonchurch@gmail.com](mailto:graftonchurch@gmail.com) and leave your name and phone number to arrange a pickup time and please wear a mask. Delivery can also be arranged.

**Townshend Community Food Shelf:** This long-time food shelf is open and providing food to those who need it. They have limited fruit, vegetables, milk, frozen meats, and fresh bread. They also have canned food, pasta, rice, and shelf stable proteins. They are located in the Townshend Church and are open every Monday from 6pm to 7:30pm. Masks requested but not essential. If you have questions call Joe Winrich at 365-4348.

**Putney Foodshelf:** Located at the Community Center, Christian Square, Putney. Open weekly on Fridays at 1:30-3:30, and Saturdays 9:00-10:30. All are welcome - they just ask you to provide your town of residence and number in household for data tracking purposes. Stay in your car. Volunteers will take your order and bring out boxes of food, including nonperishable items, fresh produce, paper goods, meat, and dairy products.

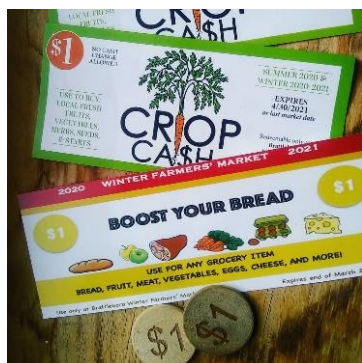
**Everyone Eats—Newfane:** This program benefits our communities in several ways. It financially supports area restaurants and their employees, as well area farmers and other food producers. And we get to eat nutritious meals! Meals are prepared by the Newfane Country store and distributed every Thursday from

4:30pm to 5:30pm in front of the Newfane Congregational Church. All meals are free and there is a onetime registration at the site or call Jeryl at 802-348-7173. Deliveries can also be arranged.

**Meals On Wheels:** Senior Solutions in Springfield, VT sponsors a Meals On Wheels program for seniors and those with disabilities. Grafton Cares provides pickup and delivery three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Sign up is straight forward. Call Senior Solutions Senior Helpline at 800-642-5119 for all the particulars and enjoy having meals delivered to your door in Athens and Grafton.

**Veggie-van-Go:** Free food is available for the month of December on the 22nd from noon to 1 PM at the Newfane Congregational Church on West St. The purpose of the program is to help people obtain fresh fruits and vegetables to sustain a healthy lifestyle. All are welcome and no proof of eligibility is required. This program is sponsored by Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital and the Vermont Food Bank. Typically it is on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

**Multiply Your EBT Benefits at a local Farmers Market.** Do you have 3 Squares VT/SNAP benefits? When you use 3 Squares VT/SNAP or P/EBT benefits at a local farmers market. The Brattleboro Winter Farmers' Market is open Saturdays at 60 Austine Dr., through March. There you can turn \$10 SNAP into \$40 with a \$20 match in Crop Cash for fresh fruits & veggies as well as an additional \$10 in Boost your Bread for any food items at the market.



You can always call the Senior Help Line at Senior Solutions 802-642-5119 for more food information.

--Sherry Maher

## News from Grafton Cares

Because December is a peculiar month concerning our meals schedule, here is a complete listing of what we are offering: Fri., Dec. 2, 6 p.m. dinner at Athens Church; Wed., Dec. 7, 12 noon - lunch at the Grafton Chapel; Fri., Dec. 16, 6 p.m. - dinner at the Grafton Chapel; Wed., Dec. 21, 12, noon - Festive Christmas Lunch at the Grafton Chapel.

This year there will be no Christmas Day dinner as many of our board members will be away for the holiday, so try to attend the special Christmas lunch on the 21st. Starting in January, our new "normal" schedule will resume beginning with dinner in Athens on Friday, Jan. 6.

Our November activities included delivery of 2 sunshine baskets, 2 welcome bags, 2 shawls, 1 baby blanket, and \$135 in gas cards for medical appointments.

Finally, Lynne Buehler is hoping to needle a few folks into joining the Grafton Cares knitters. Please give her a call at 843-1125.

Best wishes to all.

- Bill Toomey

## December Library Corner

### Smiles and Gratitude

We are overflowing with things to be grateful for at the library during this holiday season. Our thanks and appreciation to: the Windham Foundation for leaf removal and winter plowing,; Pat Mack, Ray Lisai, and Angel Squires for holiday decorating; Ray Lisai for cleaning gutters, washing windows and sprucing up the French doors; David Ross for his patience with screen door repair; all the creative folks for their Gingerbread House donations; trustee Kathleen Pajic and volunteer Pat Mack for their help with the Gingerbread House Extravaganza; and storyteller Bill Toomey for offering his holiday tales once again.

It's also a great time of the year to once again publicly thank our wonderful library volunteers and hard-working library trustees. The library would not be the same place without their time, support and talent.

We also would like to thank all our library patrons. Whether we are finding the perfect book on the shelf, ordering an inter-library loan needed for school or work, proctoring an exam to further professional development, providing the framework for the downloading audio books and e-books, offering help with computers, printing and other tech-related matters, opening the library for organizational meetings, registering people for library programs, working with students for community service, loaning equipment and furniture for local events, working with community organizations such as Grafton Cares, The Nature Museum, The Historical Society, and the Grafton Inn, maintaining our book sale room, giving directions to visitors to town, or simply chatting at the circulation desk, we value and take joy in interactions with our community. The library would not be the same place without all of you and your patronage.

Finally, we would like to thank all of you for your support with our annual appeal fundraising drive. Your yearly contributions to the annual appeal go directly to library operating expenses such as books and materials, programs, utilities, and regular building maintenance. Without you, our community library would simply not exist at the same level of service.

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

**Gingerbread House Extravaganza and Christmas in Grafton**, Saturday, December 3, 10-4pm, Gingerbread house display and Silent Auction

**Santa Visits the Library**, Saturday, December 3, Noon  
VSO Tickets Available @ the Library, Monday, December 5, 10-1pm (not a library sponsored program)

**Holiday Stories with Bill Toomey**, Wednesday, December 21, 7-8pm on Zoom, Registration required.

**Nature & Books Discussion Series**: Wednesday, December 28 (The Book of Eels) 6-7:30 pm on Zoom

- Michelle Dufort

## Main Street Arts News

Main Street Arts seeks storytellers for January performance. Do you have a true-life story to tell or song to sing?

In the spirit of public radio's The Moth Radio Hour, Main Street Arts is seeking storytellers and singer/songwriters from our local community to present in the sixth "A Night of True Stories", an MSA event which will be held in our historic Saxtons River theater on Friday, January 27, 2023.

Your story or song should be appropriate for teens and up, derived from your personal experience, and delivered without notes in ten minutes or less. No prior storytelling experience is necessary. There will be two required practice rehearsals prior to the performance, which will be scheduled at a later date. If you would like to participate in this event, please contact Main Street Arts at [info@mainstreetarts.org](mailto:info@mainstreetarts.org).

Main Street Arts dance classes return with Tango Boot Camp 201! Due to the enthusiasm for the Tango Boot Camp 101 series, MSA will hold another seven-week series called Tango Boot Camp 201 through December & January. New dancers are welcome, as teachers will review what has been learned thus far in Tango Boot Camp 101 and they will work with newcomers to "catch up" during the practice session that follows each of the lessons. Both couples and single dancers are welcome, no partner is needed. Classes are only \$10 for the one-hour lesson and one-hour practice following. All classes are held at Main Street Arts in Saxtons River, VT, will run Thursdays from 7- 9pm, on Dec 1, 8, 15 & Jan 5, 12, 19, 26. Masks are required.

For more information, go to [mainstreetarts.org](http://mainstreetarts.org).

- Maryann McArdle

## A Vermont Gardener's Notebook, December

We here in Athens have one of the best fertilizers available to gardeners, and it is free for the taking in the fall. Trees collect summer sunshine & soil minerals into

their leaves, and for a bit of labor in the raking, we can greatly enhance the fertility of our gardens. Since we have been using them in our garden, our soil's tilth and garden productivity has improved markedly. You can simply rake them up into a pile and wait until they break down which will take about a year. To speed up the process, shred them with a leaf shredder or simply run them over with a lawnmower. Oak leaves, in particular, will benefit from this because they don't break down as easily as maple or birch leaves do. Then they can be added to your compost pile or just placed directly on the garden.



We make it a practice to mulch all our garden beds with a thick layer of whole leaves in the fall. Since the last several years have brought prolonged dry spells in the summer, the leaf layer does double duty of protecting the soil from torrential spring rains and then holding in that moisture during a later drought. The leaves will remain useful until mid

to late summer at which time you can supplement with straw or hay. We've also noticed that worm activity continues at the plant root level because the soils aren't baking in the hot summer sun causing the soil micro fauna to move deeper.

### Oct. weather summary:

**High temp., 72.8 degrees**

**Low temp., 27.3 degrees**

**Total rainfall, 3.8 inches**

- Treah Pichette

## A Year of Moons with Joe Bruchac

Join the Abenaki Arts & Education Center as we welcome author Joe Bruchac in a discussion about his new book "A Year of Moons: Stories from the Adirondack Foothills, a collection of essays that reflect on the rhythms of the land, the lunar cycles of the year, the plants and animals that surround us, and the connections that link humans, animals and the land. With one foot rooted firmly in the inheritance of nature essays, and another rooted firmly in Bruchac's Abenaki heritage, the collection is an artifact of a beautiful landscape and the changes it encounters throughout the year. In his thoughtful and perceptive way, Bruchac contemplates the changing of the seasons, his relationship with the creatures and plant life that share his home, and a vision of stewardship. Bruchac's curiosity and reverence for the earth shines through on every page as he looks at the place he calls home with new eyes, reflected by the changing of each season's moon.

For over forty years Joseph Bruchac has been creating literature and music that reflect his indigenous heritage and traditions. He is a proud Nulhegan Abenaki citizen and respected elder among his people. He is the author of more than 120 books for children and adults. His best selling Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children series, with its remarkable integration of science and folklore, continue to receive critical acclaim and to be used in classrooms throughout the country.

**Tuesday, December 13th, 2022**, Online. 4:30pm-5:30pm. Register in advance for this meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingRef=1234567890>

Admission is free and donations are welcome to help us continue our crucial work. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

- Abenaki Art & Education Center

### Thoughts to Ponder

On Saturday, December 3, Dennis & Karen Hunt leave Athens with a “one-way ticket” to their new home in Maryland. In honor of them and all they have contributed to this community, and especially Dennis for sharing great “Thoughts to Ponder” for the past 13 years, here are some thoughts on gratitude and saying goodbye.

“How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.”

*A.A. Milne (Winnie-the-Pooh)*

“If you’re brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello.”

- Paulo Coelho

“Piglet noticed that even though he had a Very Small Heart, it could hold a rather large amount of Gratitude.”

*A.A. Milne (Winnie-the-Pooh)*

“Don’t cry because it’s over. Smile because it happened.”

- Dr. Seuss

- Quotes Selected by Sherry Maher



Photo by Mary Feder

### 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

**Next Athens Community Supper** – Friday, January 6 at 6 PM in the church basement

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](mailto:theathenianvt@gmail.com).



**TRASH PICK-UP: DEC 12 & 26**

**RECYCLE PICK-UP: DEC 5 & 19**

### Charles Perham Journal November December 1863

#### November

- 4 Father and Mother went to Brookline today I stayed home and practiced.
- 5 Went to Saxtons River and took my ninth lesson.
- 8 There was no meeting today. Jessie and Merril was here this afternoon. In the evening I practiced.
- 10 Mother and I have been to Brookline to see grandfather for he is sick. In the evening I practiced.
- 11 Practiced and then in the evening went to the sings. Stayed at the Somes all night.
- 12 Father carried off his wool today. I went to Bellows Falls with him. Bought me a coat.
- 15 It rained so I could not go to Meeting. I practiced some. In the afternoon I went down to Dodges after papers.
- 18 Practiced 5 hours today. Mr Balls wife came here today.
- 22 Father and Mother have been to Brookline. Ella and Miranda come here in the evening.

- 24 Miranda is here all day today. A rainy day today. I practiced. I don't feel very smart today.  
 25 Have been to carry Miranda home today. I went to see my aunt for she is sick.  
 26 Thanksgiving day. I stayed home most all day had a good practice. I went down to --- did not have a very good time.  
 27 This morning I went up to get the old cow. Then practiced three hours Then went to the singing school was appointed to sing in a quartet.  
 29 Father and I have been to meeting today. Mr Marshes has been here today so has Charles \_\_\_\_\_.

### December

- 1 Stayed to Somes last night. I had Sylvia cut my hair then I went home. I did not practice Ella come here this evening.  
 3 Went to Saxtons River to take a lesson but could not take one so went to Bellows Falls. Mr Hayden gave me a new piece.  
 5 I have practiced 3 hours. Father went to Brookline. I went to singing school.  
 7 Father and I have been to Grafton today. In the evening I practiced two hours.  
 8 My birthday today. I have had a headache all day did not feel well. In the evening went to singing school.  
 10 Went to Saxtons River today. Mr Hayden had gone to New York. I went to Miss Burroughs.  
 12 In the forenoon I practiced three hours in the afternoon I went to visit the school that Hattie Miller is in.  
 13 Stayed to home all day a very rainy day today.  
 14 This forenoon and afternoon I practiced 6 hours. In evening at home a very rainy day.  
 15 In the forenoon I went to Port to the Mill. In the evening went to singing school. Went home with Sarah Ball.  
 16 \_\_\_\_ came to tell us grandfather was dead. In the evening went to Port with Emma Osgood. Went to hear July play. Went home with Emma Osgood had a good time.  
 17 Practiced 4 hours today a very snowy day today. In the evening went down to the Dodges.  
 18 Father and I have been to grandfathers funeral. I did not practice.  
 21 Father had killed his old cow today. Did not practice much today.  
 22 Started to Bellows Falls but did not go bought Sylvia home with me. In the evening went to singing school  
 24 Practice three hours. In the evening went up to Port with Sarah Ball. Merry Christmas.  
 25 Have been to home all day. Father and Mother went down to Merrillo Party.  
 26 Went to Port today did not practice much. Brought Jessie home with me.  
 30 Father had been to town Meeting with Mr. Jenkins. The new Teaches son here this evening.

And a few little poems written by friends of Charles Perham in their own hand writing in the back of his Journal.

When the moon sheds her silvery light o'er earth, so reliant as a stair, beneath her beams, and think of me.  
 Ella Dodge Athens October 1863.

Passing through lifes field of action, Lest we part before its end, Take within your modest volume, This memento from a friend.  
 Sylvia Powers Athens December 1863

May our link in the golden chain of friendship bare the name of Helen Childs

When rocks and hills divide us and you are marred see open this book and read these lines and think of the one that thinks of thee. Yours truly Le H

When on these line you look, please think of the girl that scribbled in your book. Yours truly Sarah Burroughs  
 Saxtons River Village 1863  
 - *Transcribed by James Trimble*