

# The Athenian

Volume 13, Number 6

Sponsored by Grafton Cares

FEBRUARY 2023

## Thinking Ahead to Town Meeting

**Y**es, Town Meeting is a month away, but we are still adjusting to all the changes in this annual tradition over the past 3 years, so it's a good time to review all you'll need to know. See a summary below, and should you have any questions contact Hannah at the Town Office. If she doesn't have the answers she'll either point you in the right direction or track it down. There are still four offices with no candidates so you could mount a Write In campaign. Beyond getting everything in place for Town Meeting, there are plenty of other interesting things happening around the area, so read on!



Winter Sunset - Ginger Maciejowski

- Sherry Maher

### Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- A Special Meeting was held Jan. 10 to plan for a tax sale and an Executive Session was held where no decisions were made.
- David Bemis motioned to add signing grant paperwork for the Meetinghouse to the agenda. After Janet Perry raised questions about funds from the historic society the board voted 4 to 1 against the motion with David voting yes.
- At the regular monthly meeting on Jan. 19th questions were raised about the Taylor Hill matter, a contractor viewing the road without the residents being informed, and the status hearing in Newfane on Jan 9th. According to David, the Judge wants the parties to come to an agreement but the commissioners report is not yet available to the public.
- Sherry Maher read a personal statement into the record regarding continued concerns with the Meetinghouse committee's working relationship with the Select Board in light of the Board's vote and discussion at the Jan. 10th special meeting.

- The Town Garage oil tank needs to be replaced, there have been problems with the Town Office copier, and a plan was made with Hannah Regier and Don Capponcelli to check out the town office vault in Grafton.
- Plans to proceed with the moisture mitigation work under the Town Office are coming together and consideration is needed for the timing to avoid having staff or meetings in the building while the materials are off-gassing.
- Various opportunities for present and possible future grant assistance was discussed and a motion was approved to include the Windham Regional Commission request on the Town Meeting Warning to help support technical assistance from the WRC.
- The final piece of paperwork for the Meetinghouse Bruhn Grant from 2020-21 was signed which will release the final payment on that grant. Once that is received, \$7500 will be transferred from the Meetinghouse fund for loan repayment to the Housing Rehabilitation Fund. The 2023 VDHP Preservation Grant Acknowledgement Form was also signed indicating that the Town consents to the conditions of the grant. Work cannot begin until VDHP approves a detailed scope of work, and bids will need to be put out for the different parts of the project. No Town funds will be used for this project. Don Capponcelli will again serve as Clerk of the Works for the project, and the board approved in advance, David signing the scope of work if needed.
- The Budget Committee noted a few outstanding questions for the Board – the big truck, the chloride tank and Town Garage roof. They are awaiting information from Matt on these. Other budget points were discussed including the issue of the oil tank at the Town Garage that needs to be replaced before BART refused to continue delivering fuel. Concerns were expressed that the budget has increased. The Board approved presenting the budget as reviewed.

- Regarding roads, Janet Perry asked on behalf of Matt Perry if FEMA grant money is in, and if it can be used to replenish gravel used in 2021. Hannah indicated that it has been received, but that it was budgeted as general revenue in 2022 and thus is not available for gravel. David put forth a motion for up to \$8000 to purchase gravel and/or sand from the current budget.
- An executive session was held for just under a half hour. No decisions were made.
- A motion was made for Harold Noyes to contact the logging company working on Sam Farr Rd. and invite them to the next Board meeting.

- *Sherry Maher*

## **Town Meeting Summary**

As town meeting approaches there is some information that all voters in the town of Athens should know.

Town meeting is 6:00pm Monday, March 6th at the Community Center building (old elementary school). The articles on the warning will be voted from the floor. Australian ballot voting is March 7th from 10:00am - 7:00pm at the Town Office. There will be ballots for town officials, WNUESD articles, BFUHS articles, and RVTC articles.

Absentee voting is available for the Australian ballots. Ballots will be available after February 15th. Voters can request an absentee ballot at the Town Office and there is also a request form link on the town website that voters can print, fill out, and mail or bring to the town office. Voters should also be able to request an absentee ballot from their MyVoter page on the Secretary of State's website. There will be a ballot box for voters to return absentee ballots at Town Meeting however, there will not be absentee ballots available to pick up at Town Meeting. So please, if you want to vote absentee in this election, be sure to get your request in early. If you are not voting by absentee ballot you must vote on Tuesday March 7th between 10:00am and 7:00pm at the Town Office.

There are still several offices with no candidates running for the upcoming year. The deadline for adding names to the ballot has passed, however if you are still interested you can campaign for Write In votes for any of these positions. See the list of Offices & Candidates at the end of this newsletter.

- *Ginger Maciejowski*

## **Free Monthly Teen Arts Night**

Outburst Arts, a free monthly teen arts night at Main Street Arts, will be held on Saturday, February 11, from 7 to 9 p.m. Area teens are invited to make art, do crafts, listen to music, eat snacks, and spend time with friends.

“I’m thrilled to be partnering with Main Street Arts on this project,” said Sam Howard of the Rockingham Free Public Library (RFPL). “As the youth services librarian at RFPL, one of my goals is to create welcoming spaces where youth can express themselves and make connections. Main Street Arts approached me with the same goal, so we’re working together. Outburst Arts is designed to be a youth-led place where teens can make art, launch creative projects, or just hang out.”

Outburst Arts will take place from 7 to 9 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month through the end of the school year. In addition to February 11, the program will meet on March 11, April 8, May 13, and June 10.

Main Street Arts is located at 35 Main Street in Saxtons River, Vermont. Main Street Arts has a ramp, elevator, and accessible bathrooms. Face masks are strongly encouraged at this event.

- *Maryann McArdle*

## **Carbon Monoxide, A Winter Worry**

Most people have heard about carbon monoxide, CO, poisoning but have likely not experienced it, or due to the subtle and insidious nature of CO have been unaware of their near constant exposure to CO. Colorless and odorless, CO is a byproduct of anything that burns. This includes fuels such as gasoline, diesel, heating oil, kerosene, propane, wood pellets, charcoal, and wood. Any device that burns these fuels will produce CO including vehicle engines, furnaces, pellet stoves, propane stoves/ranges/heaters, generators, water heaters, camp stoves, and fireplaces which is why CO becomes a real worry during the winter heating season.

CO is prevalent all around us and is the leading cause of accidental poisoning in the United States. Symptoms of CO poisoning could be one or more of the following: headache, dizziness, upset stomach, general weakness, chest pain, confusion, or flu like symptoms in general.

Because CO is the result of combustion there may be an odor from the fuel being used that will serve as a warning of the presence of CO otherwise it has no odor. The best indicator is a functioning CO detector that will sound an alarm when a hazardous level of CO is present. Such an alarm should be battery operated so it will function during power outages which is also when alternative heating and power sources are apt to be used that may have inadequate ventilation.

General situational awareness regarding the sources of combustion and their proper ventilation is an important protective measure. Make sure flues, stove pipes, and outdoor vents are securely connected and maintained, and not blocked by snow or debris. Generators should not be used in attached garages or within 15 feet of windows and doors. Vehicle engines should not be run inside of attached garages.

If you experience any of the symptoms listed above or if your CO detector activates call 9-1-1 and get outside away from any exhaust fumes. Do not call Grafton Fire or Grafton Rescue Responders directly as this only delays their response. The Fire Department will respond and firefighters wearing SCBA masks and air packs will search using special gas meters to locate the source and level of CO. Rescue Squad responders will check your vital signs and symptoms, and help you as needed, possibly sending you to the hospital for further assessment.

We all live with CO being produced around us and usually without incident. Making sure that appliances and devices which burn fuel are properly vented, recognition of CO poisoning symptoms, maintaining working CO detectors, and having situational awareness will keep us safe from this unseen danger. If you think you are having a CO issue or any type of emergency, do not hesitate to call 9-1-1. Stay safe this winter and look for updates on the Grafton Fire And Rescue Facebook page.

Athens Emergency Responses January 1 - January 23

Grafton Rescue Squad : 1 medical

Grafton Fire Department: No responses to Athens  
- *Dave Ross*

### New Play Group in Grafton

There is a new playgroup in Grafton! It is geared towards newborns – 5-year olds and their parents or caregivers. We meet inside the Grafton Elementary School gym on Thursdays from 9:30-10:30AM, following the school calendar for the days the school is open. This playgroup is in coordination with the SAPCC who hosts other playgroups in Vermont. During playgroup, we have lots of free active playtime with toys and gym equipment plus some songs, books, and arts and crafts. No registration or fee is required. If you have any questions please contact Heather Rodrigues by email at [Heather\\_michaud@yahoo.com](mailto:Heather_michaud@yahoo.com) or at her home phone 802-843-4792.

- *Heather Rodrigues*

### Legislative Update from Heather Chase

The energy in the Statehouse on January 4th was palpable. Children, grandchildren, friends and family joined legislators in the House Chamber as we were sworn in. One of my daughters joined me for the big day. I felt honored to be representing the communities of Athens, Chester, Grafton and Windham.

Within days committee assignments were made. I was pleased to be assigned to the Commerce and Economic Development Committee (CEDC) where I feel my experience running a small business and serving on VEPC will be put to good use.

The second and third weeks have been spent

becoming familiar with the landscape of the Statehouse, and learning about various aspect of state government. Representatives from the judiciary to corrections to non-profit organizations have appeared before the CEDC to introduce themselves and talk about their work. As the session progresses, we will hear testimony from these agencies and others about legislation as it is introduced. Also, in the coming weeks, the CEDC and the House as a whole will be reviewing the Governor's proposed budget adjustments. Already, several bills have been introduced affecting Child Care, Parental Leave and Shield Laws, which, if passed, will have a big impact on the day to day lives of Vermonters. As these bills, and others, progress through committees and the House, I will keep you apprised.

This promises to be a busy (and interesting) legislative session.

I look forward to hearing from you with any thoughts on proposed legislation and to address any concerns you may have. Thank you and please keep in touch. [Hchase@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:Hchase@leg.state.vt.us)

-*Heather Chase*

### Grafton Cares Update

If it's not COVID, it's the weather, and we are very sorry to have had to cancel one lunch and one dinner in the past month due to snow storms. Hopefully, our luck in February will be better. Here is the meal schedule for February:

Fri, 2/3: dinner in Athens, 6 p.m.

Wed, 2/8: lunch in Grafton, noon

Fri, 2/17: dinner in Grafton, 6 p.m.

Wed, 2/22: lunch in Grafton, noon

All meals are free of charge; donations are gratefully accepted.

During the past month, we provided: Meals on Wheels to 6 customers; \$135 in gas cards and 2 rides for medical appointments; 3 welcome bags; knitters--2 lap robes.

We wish you all the Valentine of your dreams.

- *Bill Toomey*

### Nature Museum News

At the Nature Museum, we've turned our work indoors to prepare for the coming year of camps and community programs, as well as refreshing some of our exhibits. The Museum is open again after a winter break, and we're excited to share this work with you. Come visit us Friday- Sunday from 10-4 to explore our updated exhibits!

The Nature Museum is more than a museum, playscape, and native gardens -- we are facilitators of a larger conversation and learning opportunity with expert naturalists and teachers. We are busy finalizing our list of workshops and speakers for 2023 and we're excited to

share some of the names and topics that are coming together -- stay tuned for dates and details!

- The Nature of Oaks with Doug Tallamy
- Eagles with Dara Carleton
- Growth of Trees: A Journey Through Time with Michael Wojtech
- Ferns with Lynne Levine
- Birding Programs
- Wild Extract Making
- and more topics in the works.

Meanwhile, summer camp registration is just around the corner, our February and April Vacation camps are open, Mighty Acorns begins a new series, and our Earth Day celebration is in the works. Are you ready to learn more about this magnificent world all around us? Let's go! Stay wild out there,

- Nikolas Katrick, Executive Director

## February Library Corner

### Smiles and Gratitude:

The library has been a very busy place this month. Even though we have been closed to the public for much of January for interior painting and all might have seemed quiet—it's been everything but!

First, I'd like to thank those that helped prepare for the painting project: Kim Bank, Lucia Corwin, Mary Beth Culver Maryanne Donald, Deanna Maceachern, Pat Mack, Kathleen Pajcic, David Ross and Angel Squires. Next, I'd like to thank all our patrons for their patience during our extended closure. We hope you will all be very pleased with the results—a painting job long overdue at the library!

In addition, we are thrilled to have received a fabulous response to our 2022 annual appeal drive and are also grateful to have received, in the past month, donations in honor of Willa Hiensch, Pat Mack and Ann Record and in memory of Karen S. Hall and Buddy Royal. Thank you all for your faithful support.

In the middle of our 2022 annual appeal drive we had the unexpected and thrilling news of a very generous directed donation from Elizabeth Bankowski—which made the library trustees' dreams for updating the library's heating/cooling infrastructure a possibility! Liz's gift kicked off a matching funds challenge for this project, and we have had a fantastic initial response to the matching grant opportunity. We are very grateful for your contributions and we will be keeping you up to date on our progress.

### "Valentine's Day" Open House and Celebration to

### Thank Our Amazing Community

We would like to share these joys, opportunities and reasons to be grateful with our community directly. Please join us for a gathering on Saturday morning, February 11 from 10am to noon. We will have Rachel Laliberte's delectable cookies, punch and some sweet treats available. We want to thank you and give you a chance to chat with trustees, staff and volunteers, tour the library, and check out our refreshed look. We hope you will be able to join us.

### Library Programming

Valentine's Day "We Love Our Community" Open House, Saturday, February 11, 10am-noon

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

Page Turners Book Group, Tuesday February 14, 1:30-2:30 (Theme: "Great Romances") Hybrid—In person & on Zoom

Nature & Books Discussion Series: Wednesday, February 22, 6-7:30 pm on Zoom (An Immense World: Part 2)

Preschool Story Hour Returns! 4th Saturday of the month, February 25, 10-11am, Ages 0-5.

[librarian@graftonpubliclibrary.org](mailto:librarian@graftonpubliclibrary.org)

802-843-2404

- Michelle Dufort

## A Vermont Gardener's Notebook, Feb 2023

Most of us use a fair amount of onions and often grow them in our gardens, planting sets which are small onions grown the previous year. Because onions are biennials, they are programmed to make flowers in their second year which is the reason plantings from sets are often disappointing. You will get better results planting

seedlings, and the least expensive way to do that, is to grow your own.

Start seeds in flats at least 3 inches deep in early to mid-Feb. Scatter seed thinly over seed-starting mix, and if possible, use a heating mat underneath until germination which should start within a week. If you don't have a mat, a warm windowsill will also work. Once they are all up and growing, fertilize with a water-soluble fertilizer every 2 weeks until it's time to transplant to the garden, usually by the end of April.

The night before planting, carefully separate out each plant, trying not to damage the roots. Place them in a glass, covering the roots with water which will provide a good drink and reduce transplant shock. Then the next



Onion Harvest - Treah Pichette

day plant them about 3 inches apart. They will be ready to harvest when the tops fall over in late July or early August. After pulling them, store under cover in a warm place with good air circulation around each bulb until the tops are thoroughly dry. Then you can cut them off and store the onion bulbs in a cool place to enjoy all winter!

Dec. Reed Rd. weather summary:

High temperature: 57 degrees

Low temperature: 4.2 degrees

One 2-ft. snowfall, very little otherwise

- Treah Pichette



A Snowy Path - Ginger Maciejowski

## Cabin Fever Online Auction Feb. 14-27

Grace Cottage's Cabin Fever Online Auction is a perfect way to bring fun and joy to your winter. You'll find items that are practical, delectable, delightful, and inspirational! Bidding takes place Feb. 14-27, 2023.

Each year, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital's Cabin Fever Online Auction includes exotic vacations, Vermont foods, local gift certificates, handcrafted items, jewelry, art, and more. Generous local businesses and individuals donate this awesome array of items. With a wide variety of offerings, there's something for everyone, whatever your interests or budget.

All proceeds support patient care at Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital.

You can visit the auction website now to get registered, check out the selection, and plan your bidding. Visit [32auctions.com/CabinFeverAuction2023](https://32auctions.com/CabinFeverAuction2023) and register so you can hit the ground bidding on Valentine's Day!

For more information, visit [gracecottage.org/auction](http://gracecottage.org/auction) or e-mail [info@gracecottage.org](mailto:info@gracecottage.org).

- C.J. King

## Thoughts to Ponder

The English Winter —  
—ending in July,  
To recommence in  
August. - Byron

A Dream of Summer  
The Night is mother of  
the Day,  
The winter of the  
Spring.  
And ever upon old  
Decay  
The greenest mosses  
cling.

- John Greenleaf Whittier

## 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 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: FEB 6 & 20**

**RECYCLE PICK-UP: FEB 13 & 27**

Charles Perham Journal  
February 1868

- 1 Have been to Grafton found Aehsa to home
- 2 Have been to the funeral of Mr. Cobleigh with father and mother brought aunt Nancy home.
- 3 To home all day. In the evening went to the farmers club with father was appointed one of the committee. A very cold day.
- 4 A very cold day. Finished drawing the logs to the mill. Went four times. In the evening Jenny Sylvia and Lenie here
- 5 Father and mother have started for Chester. Mrs. Smith and Addie here. Mrs. Whitney got me a letter from ---- --.
- 6 To home with Aunt Nancy all day. Father and Mother come at night.
- 7 Went on the hill and got down hemlocks. Broke a road down as far as Mr. Whitneys
- 8 To home all day today. Father and Mother and Aunt have gone down to Mr. Bennetts and Hitchcocks. Me very unwell today.
- 9 A stormy day. Very unwell today. In the evening very sick.

- 10 Reading some letters today. The farmers club and Mr Whitneys tonight could not go. Father and Aunt Nancy Went. Mother and I stayed home.
- 11 A very pleasant day. Mrs. Whitney here. Mrs. Goodnow here.
- 12 Father has gone to take Aunt Nancy home. A very pleasant day. Royals his mother and Alvin and all his folks here.
- 13 Wrote a letter to ----. Father has been to Cambridgeport.
- 14 Have been out to the barn today. A very lonesome day.
- 15 Have been with father to get hemlock for the sheep. In the afternoon father and mother went down to Mrs. Bennetts and Dodges. Me all alone.
- 16 Have been to Meeting with Mother got very tired. Mr. Smith and Ralph here today.
- 17 To home all day. Father has been to town meeting.
- 18 Have been to Cambridgeport to Mr. Badgers auction. Bought a cow milker 70. Carried Albert, Alexander
- 20 Have been to Saxtons River to mill. Received a letter from -----.
- 21 Have been to Bellows Falls with Father. Paid out \$12.00 for a jacket coat and rubber ----. Ella here when we got home.
- 22 To home all day. Ella and Mrs. Smith here. Commenced to saw wood today.
- 24 Sawed wood today. Just at night went to Cambridgeport carried to Royals. In the evening went to Mr. Wymans to a farmers club. Subject till farming.
- 25 Sawed wood all day.
- 26 Have been to Brookline to get a horse shod. Took dinner.
- 27 Sawed wood in the forenoon. In the Afternoon had Sylvia cut my hair. Went to the Post office received a letter from---- heard the ---- is very sick.
- 28 Father and mother have been down to Mr. Ranneys to day. I have been reading and sawing wood. Done Mr Whitneys chores.
- 29 A very cold day. Have not done much work today.

Below is a list of Candidates running for Offices on March 7th. Where there is more than 1 candidate for a seat they are listed in alphabetical order. Four offices are listed below with No Candidate.

<b>Office</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Candidates</b>
Moderator	1 year	David Bemis
Town Clerk	1 year	Hannah Regier
Town Treasurer	1 year	Hannah Regier
Selectboard	3 year	Denise Randall
	1 year	Sandi Capponcelli
		Krista Gay
		Harold Noyes
Lister	3 year	<b>No Candidate</b>
Auditor	3 year	Amanda Alsvig
Campbell Fund Trustees	3 year	Carol Bingham
Meetinghouse Committee	5 year	Krista Gay
		Janet Perry
Cemetery Commission	5 years	David Bemis
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year	Hannah Regier
Town Grand Juror	1 year	<b>No Candidate</b>
Town Agent	1 year	<b>No Candidate</b>
UHSD #27	2 years of 3 year term	<b>No Candidate</b>
WNUESD Board (2 seats)	2 year	Krista Gay
	2 year	Harold Noyes