

The Athenian

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Community is Key!

While there can be a strong desire in winter to hibernate, pull back, stay warm and patiently wait for the warmth and the light to return with spring, we all know that bundling up, getting out into the fresh air and sunshine and connecting with friends and neighbors is a true balm not just for our spirit, but our overall health and well-being. Reportedly Punxsutawney Phil forecast six more weeks of winter, but his accuracy rate is only 40%. So don't wait, start now building community, gathering with neighbors you know, or getting to know others you haven't met yet. Community suppers, lunches, library events, or sampling delicious soups and stews at a Cook Off are great ways to start...or continue! - *Sherry Maher*

Select Board Meeting Tidbits

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

- The Athens Community Center Committee has been busy with several events in line for the next two months. Two planned events are: February 8 - Soup cook off and basket raffle March 31- CPR class at 6 pm
- Financial hardship payment for MERP grant was approved. 20% of funds have been dispersed already.
- A special Select Board meeting has been scheduled for Feb 6 at 7 pm to discuss options for hazard mitigation on Ober Rd. The town needs to work towards enrolling in the National Flood Insurance program as part of the Hazard Mitigation grant application.
- Don Capponcelli is getting the garage project underway and is willing to be the project manager. At present he is the only applicant.
- Hannah Regier was voted unanimously by the Board to act as the ethics liaison with the State of VT.
- There was much discussion around grants for road work that have not reimbursed the town. Follow up with the road foreman is needed and a new plan to improve communication is being formulated.
- Discussion of how to use the 2024 surplus involved

different opinions, however the Board voted on using surplus funds to defray taxes for 2025 with 4 in favor and 1 abstention.

- 2025 Town Budget was accepted, all in favor.
- Funding requests for the town to approve at town meeting were reviewed and approved with a new article added to raise \$15,000 to replenish emergency highway material reserves for future environmental events.
- The Board agreed to purchase the new small town truck using the Vermont Municipal Equipment Loan Fund. - *Ginger Maciejowski*

News from the Town Clerk

Town Reports should be available soon at the town office. I'll put a stack of them outside in the message board for people to pick up when the office is closed.

Also, if anyone wants to request absentee ballots for the March 4th local elections, they can call the town office to request ballots by mail, or stop by and pick up ballots starting on February 13th. - *Hannah Regier*

Notes from the School Board

The budgets for the 4 school districts within the Supervisory Union have all passed. The Articles containing these budgets for each district have been drawn up and also passed. The Articles have been sent to the respective towns to be added to their Australian ballots for voter approval.

We currently have no representative on the Bellows Falls Union High School School Board. The date to run for this position has passed, so if you are interested please let your friends and neighbors know so they can add your name as a write in for that position.

January 28th at 5 PM was the Grafton Elementary School's Winter Concert. The performances for the different groups were so fun to watch and listen to. Be sure to check the GES Web Site calendar each month for a listing of any upcoming events that the public are invited to. The children and staff enjoy and appreciate our support.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding our schools please contact me at Lynn.morgan@wnesu.com

- *Lynn Morgan*

Athenians, Let's Get Ready for Green Up

Green Up day this year is May 3. Remember that here in Athens we do Green Up for the whole week. Each volunteer is welcome to choose any day of the week of April 28 through May 3 to green up their route. As the Green Up coordinator for Athens, I am starting to set up our Green Up route list. We are in need of more folks to help out this year if we are going to Green Up all the roads in town. Please contact me if you are interested in helping, and let me know if you are interested in a one mile stretch or a smaller stretch, such as your road frontage. Contact me at jelpmorgan@yahoo.com or 802-869-2227, please leave your name and phone number if I'm not home.

"Green Up Day is a perfect example of how working together for the health of our environment can make a serious impact with an easy effort. Over 30,000 volunteers cleaned up over 400 tons of litter and 15,813 tires from roadsides and waterways. If we grow this effort and mindset of reducing waste together, we can reduce our carbon footprint and thus start to restore our climate. There is power in numbers. If we can lead from the front for our environment with pride and influence, we can grow the impact we are having with the simple act of picking up litter." Kate Alberghini, Executive Director of Green Up Vermont 1/30/2025.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

- Lynn Morgan

Grafton Cares News

Can it be that we have already crossed the threshold of February? For the old-timers, the first "plink" of sap in the bucket will come sometime this month. For the "young-uns," ask for that sound on YouTube. Sure, lots of snow, ice, and mud are yet to come, but keep your spring hopes eternal!

Here's the community meal calendar for this month:

Friday, Feb. 7, dinner at 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 12, lunch at noon

Friday, Feb. 21, dinner at 6 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 26, lunch at noon

All meals are held in the Chapel and are free and open to all. Donations are gratefully accepted.

Among the services provided last month were Meals on Wheels to 10 customers, 1 ride to a medical appointment, \$225 in gas cards for travel to medical appointments, 1 welcome bag, and 1 baby blanket from our knitters. In the medical department, we loaned out 1 shower seat, 1 pair of crutches, 1 wheelchair, and 1 walker. One hospital bed and 2 canes were returned to us.

We are especially heartened by the enthusiastic attendance at community meals and the joyful spirit of the kitchen crew. The food is mostly basic fare, but so

good! Want to try being a featured chef? We can always use more cooks. (Food purchases are reimbursed, of course.) Just call either Kate Bova at 802-869-1527 or Bill Toomey 802-843-2397.

- Bill Toomey

Community Center Soup, Stew and Chowder Cook-Off Reminder!

Just a reminder that on February 8th between 5pm and 7pm we are having our Soup, Stew and Chowder Cook-Off at the Community Center. At the moment we have approximately 12 cooks coming with their delicious concoctions and 12 Baskets for the raffle. Once again the cash prizes are 1st place - \$100, 2nd place -\$50 and 3rd place - \$25 plus had made aprons and wooden spoons.

There is no cost to enter. Tasting and judging the Soup, Stews and Chowders is \$5 per person.

We hope to see you there.

- Sandi Capponcelli

February Library Corner

Smiles and Gratitude:

The library is grateful to have received donations this month in memory of Thomas Wells Hall, Truman and Margaret Hayes, Marion Park, Patricia Parker, Buddy Royal and Doug Wright. We've also received contributions in honor of Beverley and Sabin Streeter, Bill Toomey and Pat Mack. Due to our generous library supporters, we have met 80% of our fundraising goal for the annual appeal! Only 20% more to go—which translates into a little more than \$3,500 needed. If you haven't had the opportunity to support the library's annual appeal, this is the time to help us reach the finish line. The library depends on the annual appeal for operating expenses such as utilities, programming, staffing and library services. We thank you all for your continued generosity.

On that topic, we've distributed the first Baby Book Bag of 2025 in Grafton, containing board books and a knitted blanket from Grafton Cares Knitters. The library has co-sponsored this community outreach for many years with Grafton Cares—thanks to the Russell/Paulsen family's long-term financial support for children's programming, services and book purchases—including the Baby Book Bag program! We have also received a directed donation from the Barber Family Foundation (previously the Bodman Foundation) for the purchase of all 2025 Red Clover nominees and Vermont Golden Book Award titles for our juvenile collection—a gift the Barber/Bodman Family Foundation has been providing to our young readers for more than 30 years. The library is honored to be the recipient of such long-term support from our donors and community.

Gifts and generosity arrive in many forms. Often, they are gifts of time, talent or a kind word, enriching all our lives. Bill Toomey is one such gift-giver. His Holiday Storytelling this past December, which has become a beloved tradition for the library, delighted a Zoom audience of over fifty attendees, and he is a regular and most enthusiastic contributor to our weekly Spanish program. Hats off to Bill and all he brings to our library community!

February Library Programming

Craft Table: Valentine's Day Cards, Saturday, February 1, 10am-noon All ages welcome!

Nature & Books Discussion Series on Zoom, Wednesday, February 26, 6-7:30pm: Eight Bears by Gloria Dickie

Spanish Conversation Group, Tuesdays, 11am to noon on Zoom, Advanced Beginner Level.

- Michelle Dufort

Brighten up Winter Break!

On Valentine's Day, February 14th, Main Street Arts is hosting a family dance with MSA's string band from 6-8pm. The dance is a barn dance style, called by Lioussa Engle, and open to all ages and ability levels. Main Street Art's string band is led by Jill Newton and is the oldest program at MSA, running for over 35 years. Tickets are \$5 for an individual and \$10 for a family, available for purchase at the door. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

On Monday, February 17th, Main Street Arts is hosting a Family Music Palooza from 2:00-4:00pm. From 2:00-3:00 pm there will be an instrument "petting zoo" where children can experiment with an array of Main Street Art's musical instruments. From 3:00-3:30 pm, Stu Fuchs and Sarah Carlisle will lead fun participatory songs for all ages. From 3:30-4:00 pm, Tara Murphy will teach African dance to live drumming. Activities are open to all ages. Tickets are \$10 for an individual and \$20 for a family, available for purchase at the door. Refreshments will be available for purchase. Learn more about Stu Fuchs and Sarah Carlisle at <https://stufuchs.com/>. Learn more about Tara Murphy at http://ammaya.org/about-us_2.

MSA Program Director states, "Through these events, we hope to kick off families' winter break with opportunities to gather in joyful music making and movement in the depth of winter. We believe that the arts unite people through self-expression and play, and we want MSA to be a place families can rely on for their children to experiment and grow throughout the year."

Both events are fundraisers for Main Street Arts programs. Learn more about our course offerings at

mainstreetarts.org. Main Street Arts is located at 35 Main Street in Saxtons River, Vermont. Main Street Arts has a ramp, elevator, and accessible bathrooms.

- Ashley Storrow

The 2nd Annual Grace Cottage Make Tracks for Health March 1

Enjoy the beauty and joy of winter, while helping Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital in its mission to provide vital healthcare to our communities. Grace Cottage will host its second annual Snowshoe/Cross-Country Ski event at the Nordic Center at Stratton Resort on Saturday, March 1, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Participants can choose to either snowshoe or cross-country ski on the Nordic Center's beautifully groomed trails. Rental equipment is available if you register in advance.

Afterward, reward yourself with delicious treats and a warm beverage by the fire! It's sure to be a fun time for the whole family!

For information, email info@gracecottage.org, call 802-365-9109, or sign up, at gracecottage.org/events.

- Alysabeth Simon

Reed Road Weather Summary for January

We have been experiencing temperatures that used to be considered "normal" for winter these last couple of months. January follows December with both low temperatures falling below zero. We had only a short respite in continuous stretches of Jan. cold when the high reached barely above freezing for a few days. We're burning a lot of wood this year! Precipitation continues to be on the low side with the rain equivalent of our snowfall being only a bit over 1 inch.

High temp.: 39.3 degrees

Low temp. : -8.2 degrees

Snowfall: approx. 13.5"

- Treah Pichette

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Select Board Meetings: 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM

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

Planning Commission: 1st Tuesday 10:30 AM

Meeting House Committee: 2nd Monday 10:00 AM

School Board: 2nd Thursdays 6:00 Grafton School

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CONTACT US at theathenianvt@gmail.com.



TRASH PICK-UP: FEB 10 & 24

RECYCLE PICK-UP: FEB 3 & 17

The next Journal I have of Charles Perham is from 1883. Ten years have passed since the previous journal and he is now 38 years old. He has moved from the family homestead on Whitney Road in Athens to Cambridgeport. When he refers to going (up home) it is the old family homestead in Athens.

1. Have been to Saxtons River with a load of wood this makes 3 ½ cords that I have drawn to Mr. Warners. In the afternoon went down to Brookline with Mr. Woodard to look at some oxen.
2. Let Herbert have ½ cord of wood for 1.75. Have been up home and got out Popular wood with Mr. Woodard. Drawed home a load of wood this makes 5 cords I have drawn away.
3. Have been to Bellows Falls have carried Herbert. Get the horse shod. To Walkers I now owe him 6.04. The wood comes to 5.00.
4. Let Hebert have ½ cord of wood. Mr. Woodard and wife here to dinner. In the afternoon went up home and got a load of wood.
5. It snowed all day have not done much.
6. Snowy and cold. Have been sawing up the old stuff in the barn yard.
7. To home all day was down to Herberts to supper. Just at night went after Elizabeth (his wife) and Alice (his daughter) up to Merrills. Traded the big fiddle to George Smith for a Revolver.
8. Have been up home and drawed a load of logs down the hill. Went up to the Pond woods (Lilly Pond) to get a load with the new oxen. Drawed home ½ cord.
9. Have been up home and drawed home ½ cord of wood. Elizabeth went up to Merrills.
10. Have been up home to get a load of wood.
11. Have been up home after a load of wood. My music came tonight from -----.
12. Have not done much today. Mr. Woodard and wife here.
13. Have been up home to get a load of wood. Came home in a snowstorm. Mr. Smith here tonight.
14. To home all day. Mr. Smith here all day. In the evening went down to Herberts.
15. Have been up home to get a load of wood for the house.
16. Have been up home to get a load of wood.
17. Have been to Saxtons River with a load of wood for Mr. Blynn. Mr. Woodard here. Snowing tonight. Dan Wooley here.
18. Have been with Elizabeth up to Melvina today.
19. Have been up home to get a ¼ cord of little wood and drawed to house. Came home in a snowstorm.
20. To home in the forenoon. In the afternoon went to Saxtons River. Called to see Jennie Baily.
21. To home all day. Only went down to Herberts.
22. To home all day. Have been putting up the windows at the barn.
23. To home all day. Mr. Woodard and wife here. Have not done much went down to Mr. Halls in the evening.
24. Have been up home and got a load of all maple and drawed to Saxtons River to Mr Blynn. A very cold day.
25. Have been up home for a load of wood. In the evening went to the Dance at Derbys Hall.
26. Have been to Saxtons River with wood drawed yesterday. It was but 54 feet.
27. Have been to Saxtons River with a load of wood for R Walker. Have been up home to get a load of Round wood and drawed home.
28. To home all day. Called to Mr. Threshus. For he is sick. Called to Herberts.
29. Have been to Saxtons River with Mrs. Woodard. Went up home to get a load of wood in the afternoon. Called to Mr. Threshus and Herberts.
30. Have been to Saxtons River with a load of wood for Mr. Blynn. In Afternoon went up home to get a load of wood to carry to Halls.
31. Have been to home all day. Have had the Headache all day and evening.