



**Volume 2, Number 12 - December 2021**

**A Christmas Carol – Radio Play – Sunday,  
December 12, 7:00 p.m. at the Conway Firehouse**

Oh come all ye Conwayans to a pre-pandemic reprise of a reading of the classic *A Christmas Carol* with sound effects and commercials. Local readers will join professional actors in bringing the Christmas spirit back to all.



Marley

The details: Seating is limited and will be available on a first-come basis. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. We ask anyone who has not been vaccinated to wear a mask or, better yet, get vaccinated. Seats are arranged in standard rows. Adequate ventilation will be adhered to. Because this is a dramatic *reading*, it may not hold the attention of very young children. Just sayin' . . .

A \$15.00 donation is recommended. ALL proceeds go to the Conway Firemen's Auxiliary scholarship fund. Come and celebrate with your friends and neighbors. Questions? Text 413-537-9149.

**HUZZAH!**  
Sir Reginald Buttwinker



Scrooge

## Conway Council on Aging

The COA receives a grant from the state Executive Office of Elder Affairs and an appropriation from the town. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9:00 a.m. in Town Hall. Next meeting will be December 1. For more information, contact Patricia Ann Lynch, COA chair, at 369-4284 or email [patricialynch@earthlink.net](mailto:patricialynch@earthlink.net).

### Senior Calendar for December

**Congregate Meals** On December 9 there will be a holiday meal at the Whately Inn at a cost of \$20.00 per person (see notice elsewhere in this issue). A sit-down meal will be offered in Town Hall at noon on the last Thursday of the month, December 30. No menu has been set as yet.

**"First Friday" Walk-in Wellness Clinics** Clinics are held on the first Friday of the month in the Conway Town Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Regional public health nurses Lisa White, RN, and Meg Ryan, RN, staff the clinic. There are no out-of-pocket costs to residents for this service, which is provided through the town's membership in FRCOG Cooperative Public Health Service. For more information, call 413-665-1400 x 114.

**Grab-and-Go Meals** The COA offers fully prepared meals from LifePath most Thursdays at noon for curbside pickup at Town Hell. Menus vary. For more information or to sign up for a meal, call Carolyn Thayer at 369-6948. LifePath suggests a voluntary donation of \$3.00 per meal ordered. *Note:* There will be no Grab-and-Go meal on December 9 or 30.

**Healthy Bones & Balance Classes** These free classes, sponsored by RSVP, offer a combination of upper body, lower body, core, and balance exercises. Classes meet on Tuesday from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. and Friday from 9:00 to 9:30 a.m. on Zoom. Contact leader Gary Fentin at 369-0001 for information and the Zoom link.

**Monthly Foot Care** Foot clinics are usually held on the first Monday of the month in Town Hall by appointment only. The next clinic will be on December 6. There is a \$20.00 fee. For information or to schedule an appointment, call Peg Tiley at 369-4010.

**Walking Group** The walking group will continue to enjoy walks around Conway for companionship, conversation, and exercise until the weather gets too cold. The group gathers at 10:00 a.m. in front of the library every Monday, weather permitting. For more information, contact Phylis Dacey at 369-4326.

**Yoga for Seniors** Led by Jody Fontaine on Wednesdays at the library. These are hybrid classes with an option for Zoom streaming. Class times: mat yoga 10:00-11:00 a.m., chair yoga 11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Call Jody at 413-824-9435 for the Zoom links.

### Senior Services

**Durable Medical Equipment Loans** The COA has items of durable medical equipment available for loan, including wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, canes, tub and shower chairs, commodes, and raised toilet seats. Call Hank Horstmann at 369-4405 to borrow equipment. Owing to lack of storage space, we are currently unable to accept donations of equipment.

**Home-Delivered Meals** Meals on Wheels are provided by LifePath for Conway seniors seven days a week. Call LifePath at 773-5555 for further information and registration.

**Transportation for Medical Appointments and Shopping** The Shelburne Falls Senior Center provides curb-to-curb van transportation within Franklin County for seniors 60 and over, for in-county medical appointments and grocery shopping. Call the center at 625-2502 to make an appointment at least 48 hours in advance or for information about reservations and fees. A short application with a copy of a photo ID is needed to be pre-approved for ridership. Fares range from \$.75 to \$2.25 each way. For rides to out-of-county medical appointments, call the FRTA at 774-2262 x 163 for information and reservations.

## Perspectives on the Pandemic: Field Memorial Library Grant Summary

The Perspectives on the Pandemic grant at the Field Memorial Library focused on the experience of the Conway community the library serves during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose was to encourage healing from its effects through community engagement in adding perspective to our experience. This premise evolved from a countywide community reading of the novel *Station Eleven* by Emily St. John Mandel, the story of a fictional pandemic. In reading *Station Eleven* as part of our Libraries in the Woods (LITW) Collaborative's community read project, I was surprised by the paradoxical effect it had on me. Comparing the fictional and real-world pandemics left me feeling grateful for the perspective I gained in reflecting on the two, which, despite the massive impact COVID-19 was having on my life, was so much better than the fictional one. Conversations with the LITW group, our library's friends group, and with family and friends made clear many were not eager to read about pandemics beyond the news, but all were supportive of finding means to encourage coping and healing from the impact of COVID-19.

The goal was to create perspective on our pandemic through encouraging patrons to read *Station Eleven*. We then provided a Zoom conversation to discuss the book and invite comparisons to our experience living with COVID-19. Community engagement with the project was furthered through a concert at which accomplished local musicians created a carefully constructed playlist that allowed the audience to enjoy the music, facilitate sharing, and thus ease the grief and disruptions that the real-world pandemic had created.

Gaining perspective can provide the means to change the meaning of a circumstance. A new perspective changes the meaning of the event, which can change the feelings you have in response, which can change the actions you take. This would counteract the lack of perspective, when, as Margaret Atwood put it, without perspective "you live with your face smashed up against a wall, everything a huge foreground of details." Without perspective one has no sense of how their experience compares to anything else. Expanding perspective was reinforced by reading accounts of other pandemics, both fictional and true life. Accounts of the bubonic plague – known as the Black Death –

pandemics in Europe in the 1350s and in England in 1665-66, the smallpox epidemic of the 1770s, and the Spanish flu of 1918-20 made how much we have available to us to fight the current pandemic stand out, resources that never existed before in human history.

The additional readings added perspective and created opportunities to highlight the many resources we can be grateful for in this time. These resources include our health care system; the creation of vaccines through science and engineering; front-line workers; Zoom; the internet and television communication and entertainment available to ease the stress of confinement; and curbside pickups and delivery of foods and goods through UPS, Fed-Ex, USPS, and others. Discussions of gratitude were managed so that these did not diminish the loss and heartache that many suffered.

The first event of the project was our Zoom conversation on September 14, 2021. Personal discussions and research suggested key topics as the framework. These included time at home, fear, disruptions to life's routines, comparisons to other pandemics, losses and heartache, screen time, and gratitude and silver linings.

Ten people participated in our conversation. We talked for 90 minutes, working through the topics, each one naturally winding down and leading to the next. On every topic except the comparisons to other pandemics, all agreed that these subjects addressed many of the major disruptions brought on by COVID-19 and shared their experiences of them. Our conversation led to a sense of added perspective on our COVID-19 experience simply by sharing our own experiences.

The library's outdoor concert featured old-time country, bluegrass, and original songs. Chairs were set up to allow social distancing, and people were invited to bring their own. Because the music was in good hands and voices, our biggest worry was the weather as COVID forced us to hold it outside. Luckily, we had a lovely, warm fall day to promote healing from the pandemic. The music set a welcoming tone while acknowledging with some reflective tunes the COVID disruptions. At intermission, attendees were game to join a hand-raising activity to participate in a survey of how the pandemic affected them.

The video of the Q and A session included 49 participants, with many others outside the camera's frame. Of these, 88% agreed that the pandemic had increased their time at home, and 60% responded that

they were grateful to have that extra time at home. Sixty-three percent agreed that the pandemic had disrupted their life routines, and 39% said they had created new routines as a result. Forty-seven percent agreed that the pandemic had caused an increase in the time they spend, and have spent, on screens, with no consensus on whether this was harmful or a benefit. Last, 47% agreed that they had experienced loss in their lives due to COVID-19, and 53% agreed that they had experienced "silver linings" during the pandemic. One example of the gratitude many felt was expressed by Conway artist Debra Hoyle:

During the past year of the pandemic with all its disruptions, I found that I had more time to spend in the studio. My bodywork practice was closed and the chance to have more time for art presented an opportunity. Living in these hilltowns teaches a person to be resourceful in making a life. Before the pandemic time, my practice had been quite busy and time for creativity was sporadic. It's been exciting to have had the time to delve deeper into concepts and techniques, despite COVID being a tragic source of that time. Exploring the interface between representation and abstraction has been a major source of artistic expression I have been able to explore during this time. (Debra Hoyle, 2021).

## Conclusion

**Fear** Fear was a major topic of discussion in our Zoom-based conversation: fear of being exposed to the virus, of spreading the virus unknowingly, of getting sick, of dying, even of going outside was expressed about the far-reaching presence of fear during COVID. Fear was something we all had in common.

**Disruptions to Life Routines** Conversation attendees and concert respondents reported that their life routines were disrupted by COVID. People spoke freely of important routines that were lost or compromised but also of how losing some routines was a benefit. One noted that she had become so accustomed to a two-hour commute that when she was forced to work from home, she realized she had never thought about those two hours spent driving every workday, and how grateful she was to have that time at home. "I hope I never have to go back to the office," she concluded.

**Comparisons to Other Pandemics** The comparison to the portrayal in *Station Eleven* led easily to the discussion of many things for which people are grateful. Nearly all conversation participants had read the book and comparisons to COVID were readily accessible.

Acknowledging the benefits we have in comparison to the more drastic circumstance in the novel led to a solidarity among participants, despite the losses all had faced.

**Screen Time** Many participants reported an increase in screen time during the pandemic, but participants did not report having a strong sense of either harm or benefit from this. Discussing screen time and the sharing of resources and recommendations led to a sense of community, a sense that we're all in this together.

**Losses and Heartache** It was harder to talk on Zoom about losses and heartache caused by COVID. Daily painful stories in the news and horror at the daily death tolls and illnesses were pervasive, but the Zoom-based conversation did not lend itself to drawing out these aspects. Perhaps an in-person gathering would have been better.

**Gratitude and Silver Linings** Gratitude and silver linings were a consistent element of our perspectives on the pandemic conversations and an obvious benefit at the concert. Despite the disruptions and heartache, many were resourceful in adapting to the changes and found themselves rewarded for the shifts in time and the resources available to them.

A line from Katie Clarke's song "Slenderest Thread," performed at the concert, brings us another perspective:

I feel the weight of this cold world in every step I tread  
Joy will come on back in her own good time it's said  
Sometimes we hang on to the slenderest thread.

The library's Perspectives on the Pandemic community engagement project was funded by the American Library Association (ALA) through its "Libraries Transforming Communities: Focus on Small & Rural Libraries" national program. Library staff and friends are grateful to the community and the ALA for supporting the perspectives project. Thank you!

David Whittier  
Director, Field Memorial Library

## Board of Health Vaccine Update

The Conway Board of Health has been working with FRCOG and the state Department of Public Health to ensure that COVID-19 vaccine is made available to the community through VAXBUS clinics and in-home visits to community members who are not able to leave their residence.

The recent VAXBUS clinics vaccinated 382 people at Deerfield Elementary School and 304 at Sunderland Elementary School. The VAXBUS is not exclusively for children; anyone in need of the vaccine or a booster can preregister at <https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/yankeeline>. Preregistration allows you to order a specific manufacturer's vaccine. CDC recommendations allow for mixing and matching of different COVID-19 booster doses, and individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Children aged five to eleven will receive the Pfizer vaccine. Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson are available for those twelve and over.

Clinics are planned for the following dates:

- December 2: Buckland-Shelburne Elementary School
- December 3: Leverett Elementary School
- December 8: Deerfield Elementary School
- December 10: Sunderland Elementary School

For additional information visit <https://frcog.org/>.

## Holiday/Christmas Giving Tree

Friends of the Field Memorial Library announce that their annual Holiday/Christmas Giving Tree will return this year, displayed in the library from November 29 until December 18. We invite all Conway residents to support the efforts of the Hilltown Churches Food Pantry to provide items to local families who are struggling. The library is open to receive donations Monday 3:00-6:00 p.m., Wednesday 2:00-7:00 p.m., and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

The tree can be found in the beautiful, restored Italianate rotunda of the library. It will be decorated with envelopes in which you can leave gift cards, donations, notes of support, and the like for people who use the food pantry. In addition, there will be colorful gift bags available in which you can place donated items and/or take to fill and bring back.

The food pantry is requesting that we especially supply them with:

- Books for ages 2 to 18.
- Gift cards that parents could use for children's gifts. They prefer Walmart cards and are hoping to provide \$100 per child for holiday gifts.
- Food items that could be used to make cookies and sweets for the holidays, such as flour, sugar, vanilla and almond flavorings, sprinkles, Hershey's kisses, jams, coconut, candied fruit, marzipan filling, and so on.
- Basic toiletries with a seasonal flavor and maybe a bit special.

The food pantry will distribute holiday items on Tuesday, December 14. We will try to get the early donations to them in time to distribute items during the pre-holiday weeks.

The Hilltown Churches Food Pantry is located downstairs at the Congregational Church on Main Street in Ashfield. The only requirement for joining the food pantry is proof of residence in one of the towns they serve and a simple statement of need. There are no income requirements. The Food Pantry serves the eleven hilltowns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Hawley, Heath, Monroe, Plainfield, Rowe, and Shelburne. Food distributions are every other Tuesday from 3:00-5:00 p.m., serving about 600 people at each distribution. For more information go to <https://ashfield.org/2391/Hilltown-Churches-Food-Pantry> or <https://fieldmemoriallibrary.org/>.

## Conway's Secret Santas

by Patricia Ann Lynch

The "mailbox" for children's letters to Santa Claus that you see at the Conway Post Office this month is a long-standing tradition. I knew that my friend Lorna Rose was the "secret Santa" for many years, gathering the letters posted in the box and sending individualized responses from Santa to each child. This year I asked her how she came to take on this role.

It was Lorna's father, Sydney St. Peters – Conway's postmaster from 1958 to 1983 – who began the tradition, she told me, and Cyndie Rowell, still a familiar face across the Post Office counter, who made the first Santa Letter Box. Before this, children had mailed their letters in stamped envelopes placed in the regular mail slot. Lorna doesn't remember her father ever saying why he began answering children's letters to Santa, but she does know that Syd loved children. Perhaps he wanted to reassure them that Santa had actually gotten their letters. After Lorna's marriage in 1972, she and her husband, Leroy "Butch" Rose – moved into the house next door to her father's, and Syd soon passed the role of secret Santa on to her.

Everyone who knows Lorna knows her love of children – none more so than the many Conway children for whom she babysat, children now grown and with families of their own. Each Santa letter – and there were at least 40 to 80 each year – was special to her, she says, and she made each response special as well, enclosing an assortment of stickers with each letter from Santa she wrote. Sometimes younger children just drew pictures of what they wanted for Christmas, while older ones wrote at length. "It gave me pleasure reading the letters," Lorna says. "I enjoyed each one so much. Each letter had a meaning."

Lorna's life in Conway was a life of service, whether it was the Santa Letter Box, working with Butch on the Marine Toys for Tots program, serving as a member of both the Conway Fire Department (even driving the tanker to a fire once) and the Conway Firemen's Auxiliary, or always being there when someone was in need. Butch also gave his time and energy to helping others, through the Marine Corps League, the Conway Fire Department, the Conway Sportsman's Club, and on the transfer station crew. We lost good neighbors when Lorna and Butch left Conway in 2016. But Lorna couldn't leave without finding a new secret Santa to take her place. And thanks to her, the Santa Letter Box continues to appear at the Post Office each December.

## The Santa Letter Box Is Back

Many years ago the Santa mailbox appeared at the Conway Post Office. It continues to be a special tradition. On December first the Santa Letter Box will be set up at the Conway Post Office again this year. Children may drop off their letters to Santa here. Please include a self-addressed envelope (no postage necessary). Santa needs an address in order to write a letter back to the children. The deadline for receiving letters is **December 20**. Happy Holidays.

## A Conway Solstice

by Geoffrey Baker and Mikayla Reine

'Twas the night of the Solstice and all through the town,  
Not a creature was stirring – except a few nouns  
Conwayans create with their bare-knuckled hands  
And hearts full of pride for their town's Do's and Can's:  
There's miso and syrup and zip-coded hats  
And teatime and music and festival chats!  
There's Boyden's, there's Baker's, there's Orchard Supply  
And hats with our very own zip code, hey-hi!  
Oh-one-three-four-one for all those to see,  
Who wonders how anyone would care to see  
A town by the road in the hills by a creek?  
Who cares? Why should I? Can you give me a break?  
Why, yes, you should know! Yes – there's many a reason  
Why Conway's a place you should visit all seasons.  
Where factories on the South River once stood,  
Are bright, cheerful houses with fresh-painted wood.  
For building our town for all who might see  
Takes help for our very own students to lead.  
Big chances at making the lives that they wish  
Are given by those who would care that they fish.  
Will you give a whit for our town to grow bigger  
By showing the world a few reasons to figure?  
That Conway's a pretty nice place to grow up  
Or visit or stay at or just have a sup  
At Barb's pizza night at the inn by the road  
Where Marshall Field knew he had his mother lode  
Of beauty and knowledge and insight galore:  
A treasure house, marble-floored, free-knowledge store.  
Volunteer! Volunteer! Volunteering is needed  
To make our lives better for ground that is seeded  
By noble intentions for life that is better  
And fairer and greater and mostly unfettered  
By miserly misery – staying alone's  
The best way to fashion our shackles from stone.  
For it's you and it's us and it's *we* that create  
The place that we like to call Conway that's great.

But great it won't be if we don't come together,  
Supporting our town through fair and foul weather.  
Donations of time can be better than money,  
But that which is green can be sweeter than honey.  
The future of Conway on this Solstice night  
Is something that can and will be very bright.

This holiday season, buy local, donate to local volunteer organizations, and give your time to all the things that make Conway great. Zip code 01341 hats are available for sale by writing to [festivalofthehills@yahoo.com](mailto:festivalofthehills@yahoo.com).

## Conway Seniors: Holiday Meal at the Whately Inn

Celebrate the holiday season with a festive meal at the Whately Inn with your friends and neighbors. The Council on Aging is inviting Conway seniors to come together at **noon on Thursday, December 9**, at the historic Whately Inn. There will be a choice of three entrees – steak tips, ham, and a fish dish (or opt for all three!) – with salad, vegetable side dishes, and dessert, at a cost per person of \$20. The COA pays the tax and gratuity. We are asking that payment be made when making a reservation. Contact Carolyn Thayer at 369-6948.

## Holiday Missions from UCC Conway

We are supporting the Franklin County Adopt-a-Family program this Christmas. If you'd like to contribute along with the church, please send a check made payable to UCC Conway with a memo notation of Adopt-a-Family. Checks need to be received by December 10, mailed to UCC Conway, PO Box 214, Conway, MA 01341.

We have RADA on-hand for Christmas gifts. Please call Muriel Antes (369-4350) or Tina Burnett (369-8035) for available items.

## Conway Creators: Bill Haines, Woodturner

by Carol Baldwin

Conway residents live surrounded by trees, but many of us don't really notice them or even know what kind of trees they are. Not so for Bill Haines. He is a woodturner, and he knows a great deal about his stock in trade. According to the American Association of Woodturners, woodturning is "the craft of using

the wood lathe ... a simple mechanism which can generate a variety of forms limited only by the imagination of the artist or craftsman." Bill doesn't sketch out his designs but rather lets the wood speak to him as he works, a process not unlike working with marble or clay. The product reveals itself in the process.



Bill worked with Walter Goodridge of KM Designs, then joined Sackrey Construction about fifteen years ago. In 2019, he began planning for a workshop in a building adjacent to his home, where he lives with his wife, Ceil Antes, an elementary school teacher. When the pandemic began, he decided to work independently. Along with tools of the trade such as routers, lathes, and table saws, his workshop holds pieces of raw wood taken from trees that Bill selects carefully, looking for signs of decline. He often harvests white ash, black cherry, black birch, and maple.

Shelves along one wall display dozens of wooden urns, each with a unique swirling wood pattern and color. The urns range in size from eight to fourteen inches high, and their shapes vary. Once finished, they are dried for six months, then spray-varnished to enhance the wood grain. At the top of each is a small lid, which unscrews through a delicate series of turns. Choosing the lid was a process requiring experimentation, and Bill tried over one hundred lid designs before settling on one that incorporates glass "planets" created by glassblower Josh Simpson. The glass orbs catch the light and offset the warmth of the wood.

When asked why he began making urns, Bill told the story of his father's sudden illness and death several years ago. His father wanted to be cremated and to have his ashes buried with his wife after her passing. Bill decided to create an urn to hold his father's ashes. After his mother died, his parents' ashes were interred together, so the urn returned to him. It is made of spalted sugar maple, egg-shaped, with a carved heron on the lid. It is a tribute to someone he deeply admired.

Bill has also been making many household items, such as wooden bowls of various shapes and sizes, boxes made of red maple with cherry lids, and salt and pepper grinders, each polished to a soft glow. The grinders have a

ceramic mechanism rather than metal, so they won't rust. They crush as well as grind, bringing full flavor to the finished product.

To learn more about Bill's work, email [mail@wrhaines.com](mailto:mail@wrhaines.com) or phone 413-628-1715 – by chance or by appointment.

## Gardening Beyond the Catalog

*Winterberries: A Splash of Winter Color*  
by Patricia Ann Lynch

Next time you drive along Whately Road, just beyond the sign for Cricket Hill Road look to either side and you'll see bushes aglow with brilliant red berries. This splash of color in the fall and winter landscape is the signature of winterberry holly (*Ilex verticillata*). A native of eastern North America, winterberry holly is a deciduous relative of the evergreen American holly (*Ilex opaca*). The loss of its leaves in fall makes its appearance even more dramatic, the reason it's prized as an ornamental shrub. In the wild you'll find it growing in damp thickets, marshy areas, and along ponds and streams.

The berry clusters, called drupes, appear in late summer and persist throughout the winter and into spring – unless eaten by birds, for which it's a critical source of winter food. This feature is the obvious source of its common name. If you want to provide impact and interest to your winter landscape, consider adding a few of these plants. Winterberries are dioecious – with separate male and female plants – and only fertilized female plants produce the colorful drupes characteristic of this species, so you'll need to buy at least one male plant, which can fertilize six or more female plants. This slow-growing shrub typically reaches a height of 3 to 15 feet.

Although it's most commonly found in moist, acidic soils, it can also be grown successfully in average acidic, medium-to-wet soils in full sun to part shade and adapts to both light and heavy soils. Winterberry holly has no serious insect or disease problems, and – an added plus – its flowers are pollinated by bees.

## Get Your Conway Cookbook While They Last!

Some copies of the cookbook assembled for Conway's 250th anniversary celebration are still available for purchase. I recently made Rena Moore's yummy chicken and rice soup and Helen Reed's

chocolate cupcakes (for some very eager youngsters). This summer we tried several of the coleslaw recipes – who knew there could be so many variations and each one delicious?! We liked the simplicity and flavors of Ada and Archibald MacLeish's recipe "Dish," as well as Portuguese Stew, LA Company Meatloaf, and First Lady Grace Coolidge's secret recipe (revealed by Jim Hardigg).

The anniversary celebration is over, so any receipts now go toward the Festival of the Hills scholarship fund: a great cause and a super cookbook, for the low price of \$10.00. Find it at OESCO Monday-Friday, 6:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., or call me and I'll drop it by your house or other convenient pickup place. *What a gift!* Thanks, Kate French, 369-4392.

## Oaks in New England Forests: Keystone Trees for Biodiversity & Resilience

Zoom Webinar, Saturday, December 11, 10:00-11:30 a.m. Seventy percent of the forests of southern New England is dominated by oaks. This forest type is facing pressures that compromise its long-term health and ability to regenerate. Oaks are champions of carbon sequestration, soil stabilization, and watershed management, producing enormous root systems and sustaining a crucial and complex web of wildlife above ground.

Native oak trees host more than 500 species of moths and butterflies. Acorns and leaves feed many creatures, and oak canopy and fallen oak leaves provide shelter for still others. Oak leaf litter can help suppress invasive species and filters rainwater to cut back on runoff, improving groundwater quality.

Dr. Desiree Narango, a UMass-Amherst ecologist, will discuss her research exploring how oak restoration can help facilitate successful conservation of songbirds and pollinators in managed ecosystems. Logan Johnson, Northeast Region Coordinator of the Forest Stewards Guild, will speak about a multistate initiative to provide best practices for foresters and landowners to keep this tree species functioning through a new Oak Resiliency Assessment Tool for southern New England forests. How can we help to sustain the oaks?

This webinar is free and open to the public. To register, email Lisa Hayden at [lhayden@newenglandforestry.org](mailto:lhayden@newenglandforestry.org) to request the Zoom link and dial-in information.

## Meet Me at the Station

by Kat Llamas

Well, things at the Transfer Station have been brisk in more ways than one. Thanks to all who have donated wonderful clothes, stuffed animals, and home goods! We appreciate your thoughtfulness. The Conway Mall is ready for your holiday "shopping," and there are no supply chain delays! You may find LL Bean, Columbia, Ann Taylor, Beanie Babies, and so much more at a price you can definitely fit into your budget!

For visitors who may not yet know, the Conway Mall this year is planning to be open year-round! The weather is getting chillier, but we have been gifted with a heater to warm visitors and volunteers alike!

If you are a knitter or crocheter, perhaps you may want to knit some mittens, gloves, or slippers for a neighbor, either an adult or a child. The mall will be collecting donations starting December 8.

Although it seems out of season now, a visitor has accidentally taken a box fan that was purchased for the Conway Mall by Transfer Station Attendant Jeff personally. We would appreciate its return at the earliest convenience.

We are so thankful for the community support since we opened this summer! We extend warm wishes to the entire community this holiday season! The weather may not always be sunny, but visitors always make the mall merry and bright!

The Transfer Station will be open Friday, December 24th and Sunday, December 26th but closed on Saturday, Christmas Day. The station will also be open Friday, December 31 and Sunday January 2, but closed on Saturday, January 1.

Happy Holidays!



## Notes from the Town Administrator

As you may know, federal monies are coming into town from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Eligible uses include the four main spending categories identified in the statute:

- Response to the public health emergency or its negative economic consequences
- Provision of premium pay to eligible workers
- Revenue replacement
- Investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure

The town's ARPA working group is interested in obtaining information on households and businesses in Conway that have been negatively affected by the pandemic. Knowing what the effects of the pandemic are and have been on the Conway community is the first step toward being able to direct these funds to the best uses. Please do reach out to me at

[townadmin@townofconway.com](mailto:townadmin@townofconway.com) or 369-4235 x 3, or you may also use the Resident Feedback option listed under Town Administrator on the website. All information will be kept confidential and can be made anonymously.

As we enter the holiday season, I want to say what a pleasure it has been to meet so many more of you, and I wish everyone safe and happy holidays!

Véronique

## Conway Awarded \$195,200 Grant for Climate Resilience

Conway will be continuing work on flood resiliency projects for the South River Watershed with the recent \$195,200 grant from the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program for the South River Flood Resiliency Project. Conway is one of 66 communities and regional partnerships that received MVP action grant funding in the latest round of applications.

Over the next two years, the town and its consultant team – GZA GeoEnvironmental, Field Geology Services, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) – will complete environmental

permitting for one priority culvert replacement project on Main Poland Road and continue outreach to residents and stakeholders to engage them in the project and discussions about climate-resilient rivers. In addition, the consultants will develop a hydraulic and hydrologic model for the South River and one of its tributaries, Pumpkin Hollow Brook, in Conway center. The model can be used to identify the sources of flooding and potential flood mitigation projects along the South River, Pumpkin Hollow Brook, or within the upstream watershed area that could reduce flooding in the center of Conway.

The current project builds on a decade of work in the South River Watershed by Conway and its watershed neighbor, Ashfield. You can learn more about that work by visiting the *Climate Resilient South River Project Story Map*, which is available on the town's website <https://townofconway.com/south-river-project-story-map/>. The story map will be updated periodically as the new project work progresses, so be sure to check back in a few months.

Finally, the town and the Planning Board will be working with FRCOG to host another Resilient Rivers Informational Meeting, probably in February 2022. Stay tuned in for details!

## Racial Justice Rising: Tracing Racism Through Genealogy

With Orice Jenkins, 1:00 p.m., Saturday, December 4, 2021

Join us via Zoom. Please register in advance for this meeting by clicking on this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451234567>

You will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the meeting.

Drawing from his own family records, Mr. Jenkins will use historical documents to highlight the disastrous effects of chattel slavery. "My enslaved ancestors were only listed by name as the property of other people. Black genealogists are forced to uncover those names by searching the probate records of white families." This presentation will



In 1937 Evelina Smith Stepney was interviewed about her life before the Civil War, when she was enslaved by Judge David Shelton Terrell.

look at the life of Albert Terrell, a man who was enslaved for 50 years on four different plantations in Georgia. DNA research unlocked the clues that showed what Albert and his family endured on these forced-labor camps, which were owned by federal and state government officials.

Our monthly programs are supported in part by grants from these local cultural councils: Amherst, Ashfield, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont-Hawley, Conway, Deerfield, Gill, Greenfield, Heath, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Rowe, Shelburne, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately, local agencies that are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency. Racial Justice Rising, PO Box 261, Greenfield, MA 01301, [racialjusticerising.org](http://racialjusticerising.org)

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## Currents Advertisements & Notices

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Rates for ads up to 150 words are: one month \$7.75, three months \$15.75; six months \$25.75, twelve months \$44.75. For cost of longer ads or to include images (limited), call or email Louise at 413-559-1180 or [lmbeckett@crocker.com](mailto:lmbeckett@crocker.com).

Pay by checking account or credit card through the town's website: <https://townofconway.com/> > View or Pay a Bill > Pay Newsletter Advertising or send a check to **Conway Currents, PO Box 240, Conway, MA 01341**. Please send the text of your advertisement to Louise by email at [lmbeckett@crocker.com](mailto:lmbeckett@crocker.com). **Deadline is the 20<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month.** If you want to discuss your ad or have any questions, please call or email.

**The Conway Inn** - Open for pizza, chicken wings, and breadsticks, Friday and Saturday, 4 - 10 p.m.; Sunday 5 - 8 p.m. Call 413-369-4428 for takeout. **Closed Christmas Day. Bluegrass on Friday, December 10.** Masks required due to Board of Health mandate.



**Baker's Country Store** - open seven days a week for all-day take-out breakfast and lunch. Hours: Monday-Friday 6 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 7 a.m. - 5 p.m. **Closed Christmas Day.** Call 369-4936. Find a variety of homemade desserts and baked goods and a large selection of last-minute items. We always have freshly baked cakes, muffins, pies, and cookies - put in your order today for one of Helen's famous pies! Now in: Deane's wreaths - \$25 - 40. Check us out on Facebook: [facebook.com/Bakers-Country-Store](https://facebook.com/Bakers-Country-Store) for today's specials.

**Join Natural Roots CSA** - for delicious, fresh vegetables grown right here in Conway. We have several CSA share options, including part-time and low-income shares, main season (June through October) and winter shares. Our farm store is also open to the public year-round during daylight hours. We offer eggs from our own pastured hens as well as other local items like beef, chicken, pork, dairy, bread & baked goods, honey & maple products, coffee & tea, ice cream, snacks, beverages and more! Support a horse-powered farm in Conway and enjoy this beautiful, bountiful farm and the vibrant community that we feed. [www.naturalroots.com](http://www.naturalroots.com). Natural Roots, 888 Shelburne Falls Rd., Conway, MA 01341, (413) 369 - 4269, [naturalroots@verizon.net](mailto:naturalroots@verizon.net)

**Get your holiday shopping done early** - and support your local church by shopping for Rada Cutlery! All cutlery is made in the USA and includes a lifetime guarantee. This fine cutlery is in high demand; The stylish design makes it attractive but still retains quality that will last a lifetime. Choose from many options, sure to help you in performing any kitchen task and creating all your favorite recipes. And your purchases will support the United Congregational Church! Paper catalogs available by request. To order, call Muriel Antes at 369.4350 or Tina Burnett at 369.8035, or use this simple link: [bit.ly/3mTpO18](http://bit.ly/3mTpO18).

**Wreath Making Workshop-open House** - at Wilder Hill Gardens, 351 South Shirkshire Road, Conway, MA. Saturday Dec. 4, Sunday. Dec 5, 10-3. Pop in anytime to learn the traditional art of hand-tying holiday wreaths from our fresh, mixed greenery. \$20/Wreath, \$15/swag. Share a glass of hot cider by the fire with friends and neighbors! Wilder Hill Press will be open for gift shopping: limited edition prints, hand-bound books, original pottery, herbs, and organic dried fruits. Contact: Lilian Jackman: 413 625-9446. [wilderhillgardens.com](http://wilderhillgardens.com)

**Jan & John Maggs Antiques December Gifting Sale** - Jan & John Maggs Antiques in Pumpkin Hollow will be open on the first three Sundays in December. In addition to our regular stock of early furniture, jewelry, accessories, and paintings, we've prepared a special selection of pieces appropriate for holiday giving and priced very reasonably. If you'd prefer to come at another time, please call 413-369-4256 or email [jmaggs@jmaggs.com](mailto:jmaggs@jmaggs.com). Our OPEN flag will be out between 10:00 and 4:00 on the 5th, 12th, and 19th. If you've never been in, this might be an ideal opportunity. We'd love to see you. Or visit us online: [www.jmaggs.com](http://www.jmaggs.com).



**Holiday Idea: A Gift Card from OESCO!** - There are so many great garden/yard tools right here in town. Check out our professional grade pruners, loppers, shovels, saws, log splitters, winches, and backpack sprayers. We also carry apple peelers, gloves and a wonderful collection of books – including the recently released *Apple Lover's Cookbook* by Amy Traverso. We have a good selection of pruning and grafting books as well as many about native insects, plants, mushrooms and of course, cider making! Tractor Mac books for kids, too! We are an Authorized Echo dealer and service center. We are also a UPS drop-off location (side door). Celebrating 68 years in business - the time has flown! OESCO (Orchard Equipment & Supply Company), Route 116, Conway M-F, 7-5; 413-369-4335.

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**Boyden Bros. Maple** - Our pure maple syrup, candy, cream, granulated sugar, gift boxes and pancake mixes are available to purchase and/or ship for the holidays - or any time of the year! Select one of our own fresh cut Christmas trees at the sugarhouse! Visit our sugarhouse on Rt. 116 near the Conway Grammar School; call us at 413-369-4665 or email [boydenmaple@gmail.com](mailto:boydenmaple@gmail.com).

**Boyden Bros. Maple: Open December pre-Christmas weekends 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. beginning Saturday Dec. 4th, and by chance during the week.**

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**Your Home Town Realtor** - As a Conway resident for over 20 years, I provide local, attentive and trustworthy service for both buyers and sellers in our community. Previous experience as a licensed residential architect is valuable for my clients. Please contact me for a free, no obligation consultation! Sarah Newman, Realtor with Coldwell Banker Community Realtors. Call or text: 413-548-6525 or email [sarah.newman@cbcommunityrealtors.com](mailto:sarah.newman@cbcommunityrealtors.com) - Thank you!

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**Transportation Services for Elders** - Driving services for doctor appointments, shopping, supermarket visits are available at very reasonable rates. Over 6 years experience assisting community elders. Please call John at 413-369-6099 or email at [johnpitzzi17@gmail.com](mailto:johnpitzzi17@gmail.com).

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**Viola and violin lessons with Geoffrey Baker** - 215-760-0729. String players of all ages and ability at my Conway studio at 28 Main Street. Experience the fulfillment of playing Bach, Mozart, the Beatles, Bruno Mars, Fire on the Mountain, or anything you like with a bow and four strings. My teaching philosophy: you are an athlete as well as an artist when you play an instrument and playing live music is for your entire life. I have worked with teens in large classes, children in small groups, and coached adults in chamber music. It's never too late to begin! My learning foundation combines technique, expression, and theory to give you the tools to grow. Teaching is about reaching people. Learn more at [www.geoffreybakermusic.com](http://www.geoffreybakermusic.com).



*Double Rainbow After the Storm, November, 2021, Chris Eugin*

# Unheard Melodies

by Nicole Braden-Johnson

*"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard /Are sweeter"*  
– John Keats *"Ode on a Grecian Urn"*

## Crystal Kingdom

Life turns inward this time of year.  
Bears yawn in their secret dens  
and fish settle into muddy depths.  
Oak shed of foliage and roses long wilted,  
Pull into themselves, into their roots.  
The human animals draw into their kitchens;  
Little faces glow, aged sweetly by cocoa beards.

At the first fluttering snow,  
Find their noses pressed against the window,  
As they draw life back out to the crystal kingdom.  
Experienced eyes see the endless driveway  
– Know the weight of each white mound,  
The treacherous slip of icy traps –  
And sigh; How quickly they forget  
The endless possibilities for igloo adventures,  
Snow creatures, and making angels of the fluff.

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