

# Conway Historical Society

100 Main Street, P.O. Box 1949, Conway, N.H. 03818  
Phone: 603-447-5551

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## *The President's Corner*

We pass a sign in Center Conway frequently. It simply says: "The Building is closed but the Church is not." That sign's message also applies to your Historical Society. Partly due to the effects of COVID, and partly due to needed reconstruction, the Eastman Lord House has been closed to the general public, but work is still going on inside even though it is not obvious on the outside.

Some of our activities include the facts that your Board has been working to get needed repairs to the house moving forward, Curator Bob has been tagging items all over the house, Judy has been taking care of business (and crafting this issue of our newsletter), we have dealt with plumbing issues in the Old Firehouse (where the Upper Saco Valley Land Trust shares office space with us), Mike Tamulis, Gary MacDonald and Bob Cottrell have been sorting through a trove of papers donated by the Chamber, we have got a contractor confirmed to do more painting of the ELH, we have accepted a bunch of books for re-sale, and we have laid out a 'recovery plan' of sorts to get our member activities back on track – all of which are written about separately later in this newsletter.

Most importantly, with less of a requirement for wearing masks and limiting inside activities, we have been able to move forward on getting together again! We'll start off small, with a book and art sale in June, during which Brian Wiggin will need some extra help from you (we have over 50 boxes of books to sell!). Then we have arranged to have our annual August Summer Picnic held at the Tin Mountain Conservation Center facility on Bald Hill Road in Albany. We had hoped to hold this picnic at the Old Firehouse but .... The Water Precinct and Coleman Construction are using that parking lot for construction equipment and storage of materials during the reconstruction of Main Street. If you have traveled that route recently you'll understand the situation there all too well.

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## *Art and Book Sale*

The Conway Historical Society has been hard at work. To help support the financial aspect of the renovation of the Eastman Lord Home on Main Street in Conway Village, there will be a combination art and book sale on Saturday, June 19th and Sunday, June 20th. Many art pieces have been discovered in our collection that have no relevancy to our area and will be offered for sale. There are several treasures.

The book sale will undoubtedly be the largest of its kind in Conway Village history. Nearly 100 boxes of books of all varieties are boxed with donations from several charitable organizations and private citizens. All categories are included. Many books are written by recent authors and are in excellent shape. However there are antiquarian works as well - historical, sports, biographical, science fiction, religious, mysteries, psychology, as well as classics. The sale will occur between Salyards (the Robert Frost School) and the Brown Congregational Church. Parking will be available there as well as at Conway Elementary School. The hours will be between 9-5. No "early birds" please as there will be a need to set the books and art work up prior to opening. If willing to help, please call Brian (447-3426) or Ken (447-2720).

## *Upcoming:*

**June 19 & 20** **Art and Book Sale**, 9:00 - 5:00,  
between Salyards and the Brown  
Church

**August 10** **Annual Summer Picnic** at Tin  
Mountain Conservation Center, 6:00

## **Save the dates**

Conway Historical Society monthly program is the second Tuesday of each month. Meetings and presentations are held at the Old Firehouse beginning at 7:00 P.M. and are open to the public. Parking is available next to the building.

If anyone has an idea for an upcoming program that would be of interest to you, please contact Ken Rancourt. If you know of someone who would be willing to present a program, also please contact Ken Rancourt.

### *The President's Corner* (From Page 1)

In September we'll have our first real 'members meeting' at the Library. In the process of getting ready for our own construction we've realized the large collection of photographs of the Conway area that we have in storage. It's time to get some help to review the pictures and share them with our group.

Our self-imposed isolation has been difficult to deal with on any number of levels: from not seeing our loved ones as frequently as we would like, to simply just going out for coffee, or having lunch with friends. That is hopefully all behind us now (or will be shortly) so it is time to look forward to the next few months and get us all back into circulation again. That in itself will help us look to a brighter future!

### *From the Curator*

As you can see from the photo on the next page, we have been busy tagging items on display in the CHS collection. Here we have a bird cage, a couple coffee pots and cups with fake coffee in them.

The idea of the string tags is to tie a unique accession number to each item so that all of the information we have about that item can be entered into our computerized PastPerfect collections management software along with a few photos showing all sides of the object and any details such as maker marks or patent numbers. Eventually we will post our collection online so we can share it with Society members, local students doing research reports and anyone from anywhere at anytime interested in Conway's history.

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### *Reconstruction of Eastman Lord House*

For quite a while now we have been in the midst of getting much needed repair work done at the Eastman Lord House. In order to re-open to the public the Society was required to get some work done on life-safety issues that have not been dealt with for quite a while. We arranged with Shawn Bergeron of Bergeron Technical Services to help us navigate the life safety codes and decide what really needed to be done. Last year we proceeded with upgrading the security system to include fire/smoke detection. That work was completed by Pope Security and they did a great job keeping the modifications as unobtrusive as possible.

Some electrical re-wiring was needed in the attic space and in a few other areas. That work was recently completed and we can now finish laying a new floor in the attic space. That will provide us much needed storage space.

The next phase of the work is to install a new exit door, landing, and stairs on the northwest corner of the house. That work, as well as installing a fire-rated separation wall between the main house and the addition - as well as blocking off the small staircase in the rear of the house - is now under contract with Bergeron Landscaping and Construction Co. We accepted their bid earlier this month and hopefully the work will be completed in the next few months. The next step will be to address some window replacements. At least 5 windows need attention before winter sets in. In reviewing what is needed however, we confirmed that the windows in the house are not the same size as windows of today. That complicates their replacement somewhat so for now we are taking one step at a time!

*From the Curator* (From Page 2)

In another photo you can see we have tagged the doorbell 2020.462. The number 56 on the old tag (notice how it has yellowed over time) refers to a previous numbering system that ties to a notebook and index card system. That tells us the doorbell was donated by Leah Gray of Kearsarge. While we have records dating back to our founding in 1935, some of the records are missing or incomplete. We have not found the card indicating when Mrs. Gray donated the doorbell or where it came from. That is the mysterious part of our project. We hope that we will find more information on items like this as we go through all of the papers in the building, but that is a slow process. You would be more than welcome to become a “History Detective” and help us with our sleuthing! It really is a lot of fun!

As time goes on, we will affix that unique accession number in a more secure and less obvious location on the item and remove all those dangling string tags. However, in the meantime, we can also use the string tags to affix color coded dots (like traffic lights: red stay, green go and yellow maybe). We are definitely going to keep the doorbell. It is a real hit with visitors!

On the other hand, we probably don’t need two coffee pots for that display space and after careful review by the board’s collection committee we may decide to dispose of one through a yard sale this summer. We have a real space shortage for storing and displaying our collection and do not need to keep two nearly duplicate items.

As we have described in previous newsletters, this accession phase comes after an intensive process of stabilizing our most vulnerable object types, starting with paper and textile items that are adversely affected by sunlight, dust, insects and other pests. Then, in stages, we will continue to address items with their physical risk in mind. For example, iron that rusts versus stainless steel that does not, ceramics and glass that are easily breakable, and so on.

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### *From the Curator* (From Page 3)

At the same time as we are preserving the best parts of our collection, we are also sharing their stories. For example, while preparing for an upcoming Valley Vision episode on the history of Cathedral Ledge we found the original handwritten minutes of the “custodians” of those ledges that gave us some new insights. We have now posted scans of each page of that record book on the [archive.org](http://archive.org) website for all to see. We have also posted some great recollections of Robert Reny on that site as well. We would love to share any of your stories if you are willing to pass them on to us. We would be happy to help you with any technical computer, photography or video issues.

We also continue to do several blogs a month on what we found and are working on a step by step trail guide to lead you to the Cathedral Cave and the site of the Devil’s Den. This is in turn tied to a cell phone app called [theclio.com](http://theclio.com) that provides you with series of recorded walking and driving tours near your location anywhere you go.

We have also been digitizing older media such as VHS tapes, slides, cassette tapes, and DVD’s and posting those on YouTube. These include for example David Emerson’s tour of the Eastman Lord House, Conway Boy and Conway Girl, Smitty’s WW2 Story and a Redstone Quarry Tour with Steve Swenson.

Another pandemic silver lining is Zoom. While it took a while to get used to, I have been attending and providing Zoom programs from Texas to Wisconsin to Harvard to Freedom without leaving my comfy chair. I have presented Zooms on caring for family photographs, writing your family history, the story of Pequawket Pond for the USVLT, sled-dog history (of which Conway played an important part), White Mountain art and artists, and so on.

As they say, many hands make light work. If you are willing to help with any of these projects contact Bob Cottrell at [chinook1618@gmail.com](mailto:chinook1618@gmail.com) or call him on his cell phone at 603-323-3359.



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*Conway Historical Society*

100 Main Street  
P.O. Box 1949  
Conway, N.H. 03818

Phone: 603-447-5551

*CHS Newsletter*

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A significant percentage of our income is generated through membership.

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**CHS Membership Dues are \$20 per person per year**

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