

Vicki B. Stocking

From: Cowan Community Center <mail@networkforgood.com>
Sent: Saturday, January 18, 2025 7:00 AM
To: Vicki B. Stocking
Subject: * 2025* Happy New Year from Cowan Creek Post!



Cowan Community Action Group
Growing Community Since 1964

A monthly letter from Cowan



HAPPY NEW YEAR!! January 2025



Wolf Moon Greetings

Greetings from snowy Cowan!

We hope you took some time to gaze at the moon last night. Maybe even howl? Or perhaps you made a snow angel?

Last night was the Wolf Moon, and it was beautiful. Folklore says it is called the Wolf Moon because wolves howled to let others know they were there and the wolves claimed their territory in a territorial way. The spiritual meaning of the wolf moon reflects its namesake beautifully, as this lunation is about strength, tenacity, and the importance of taking care of your pack. It invites us to reconnect with our roots, reflect on our past, and set intentions for the future. From Bustle, The Wolf Moon has a meaningful sense of emotional connection — with yourself and with others — as you embrace exciting new beginnings that come along with a New Year. The spiritual meaning of this empowering lunation is about blending strength and softness.

Does any of this sound transferable to community building? I'm hoping so!

The Wolf Moon was my catalyst to greet and meet the new year. Hoping to carry this energy with our community into the new year.

Wishing you all the energy you need to succeed in 2025. We are grateful to stand with of this community.

Photo thanks to Dennis Kincer, CANE Kitchen who is always looking to the sky.

Happy New Year!

Valerie

News from the Creek

Tanglewood Trail Skating Rink, Ringing in the New Year

Cowan was happy to be a part of bringing a little extra joy to the community this season. As magical as Santa Claus and the Christmas parade, Whitesburg got a bit more joy with the Tanglewood Trail Winter Market and Skating rink up and running this winter. Of course, magic like this doesn't happen without a lot of work and help from our partners. Many thanks to the teen interns, CANE Kitchen, the City of Whitesburg, Appalshop, and the Whitesburg Farmers Market for bringing this to our community.

The skating rink is located under the Appalshop outdoor concert pavilion. It is a perfect place for the rectangular faux ice rink, some may be skeptical but it really works! The rink is decorated with multiple lit Christmas trees to give it that extra ambiance for the holiday spirit!

All smiles with hot chocolate and cookies, with free rental skates for all ages. We hope you enjoyed the fun!

See you next year!





Christmas on the Creek

What are traditions?

Christmas on the Creek at Cowan Community Center has been a long tradition in Letcher County. The beautifully decorated Big Room at our center warms the souls during every holiday season. Many folks share fond memories of gatherings, birthday parties, square dances and concerts in this room. The tradition in Cowan, starts with this Big Room.

In the past few years, we have been inviting animals to join the tradition, with a pony walk and a fun choo choo train ride along the trails at the community center to Hillview Farms for the service each year. With Santa (this year, a Singing Santa) giving us a jolly laugh and hot cocoa served in the kitchen, we bring the busy holiday season to a halt, leaving room for the family to enjoy the day.

Every year, we love seeing happy faces of all ages, making memories, and celebrating your family traditions.

Agro-Forestry and Watershed: A Sustainable Future

by James Stapleton

CCAG Watershed Coordinator

I would like to thank Cowan Community Action Group for the opportunity to serve the community as Watershed Coordinator. This position has been added to facilitate a Division of Water 319 grant that will address water quality, flooding issues, implementation of green infrastructure, and sustainable forestry farming.

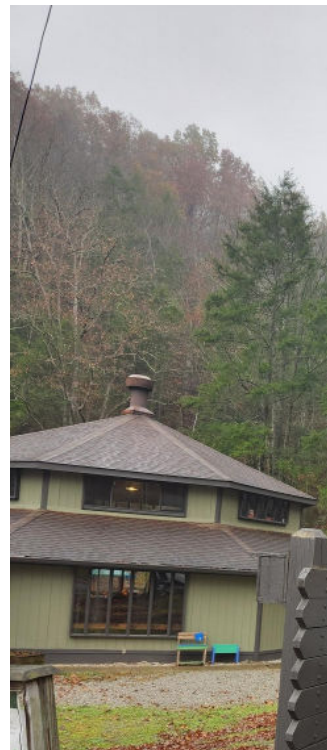
I am a native of Elkhorn City and feel fortunate to live and work in Central Appalachia. I am well aware of the good things that happen at Cowan Community Center and look forward to being a small piece of this community quilt!

Water quality and sustainable living has been a central focus of my professional background as well as personal philosophy. Even though my background has revolved around stream ecology, the duties, goals, and objectives of watershed coordinator will concentrate on how to utilize the scientific data that is generated, in a manner that is useful to the community. All goals and objectives will concentrate on preserving, restoring, and celebrating natural and cultural resources, as well as sustainable development. This concept supports the idea of a healthy landscapes can generate economic development, without killing the goose that laid the golden egg!

Projects in the works and how they affect your community:

EPA / KY Division of Water 319 Grant: “Whitesburg Tributaries Implementation Project”

Cowan Community Action Group will engage community members in activities that help address water quality issues which include streambank erosion, sedimentation, and trash and litter. It will also educate the local community on the water resource impacts and how



residents can help improve water quality and continue to build partnerships and lay the groundwork for future watershed implementation projects.

Kentucky Division of Water, Green Infrastructure Assistance Program (OSG)

This project will be used to implement green infrastructure on two sites in Letcher County. Cowan Community Action Group will be responsible for administration and implementation of the two projects listed below. The first project will be a green infrastructure project at Cowan Community Center with native plantings. The next project will be on the grounds of the Farmers Market and Tanglewood Trail in Whitesburg. This effort will concentrate on streambank rehabilitation with native plants and drainage issues.

Rural Action’s Sustainable Forestry Program

The goal of this project is to help landowners develop goals that support the implementation of agroforestry practices and sustainable forest management. Non-timber forest product species such as American ginseng, black cohosh and goldenseal are becoming increasingly rare in the wild due to overharvesting and habitat loss. Unfortunately, as these species are declining, the demand for herbal products containing these species is steadily increasing. Forest farming provides landowners with the opportunity to sustainably cultivate these species in their forests, generate income, and reduce harvest pressure on wild populations.”

NASDA Foundation / EPA Grant

Cowan Community Action Group was one of fourteen awardees of this grant to serve “historically underserved farmers.” This project is designed to help underserved farmers improve water quality, habitat resilience and information exchange to benefit watershed ecosystems.

Beyond the science, the numbers, and the administrative hoops that will be required to facilitate these grants and projects, it is my goal to navigate these processes in a manner that will produce quality projects in Letcher County. If you would like to know more about any of these projects, please give me a shout, and if you would like to participate in strategic planning, you are welcome to join the community advisory board that will help drive this train.

I feel fortunate to be part of the Cowan Team and have confidence that I am standing on a solid foundation, in a strong community, built by good folks, on the banks of Big Cowan Creek.



Farms & Friends



Winter Vegetables

by Louise Murtaugh
Farmer's Market Consultant

All summer long, I talk with customers at the City of Whitesburg Farmers Market. Once every market I catch myself saying, “This is a keeper. It will last.” I then go to one of our vendors to give them good advice on how to store potatoes

When Yoko asked me to write about winter veggies, I thought squash, pumpkin and garlic and stopped. But then I stewed about this.

So here we are in the middle of a tough winter for us all. Our driveway is a continuous sheet of ice. It's foolish to even try to get out. Thankfully, the internet and the internet works as well as it can. Those activities that we all tend to do happen. Sorting, cleaning and sewing, woodworking and if I ever get to do puzzles, naps, reading and talking keep us busy and content.

But I didn't mention cooking or baking yet! That's probably our biggest project in summer, and fall. So thinking about this article for winter vegetables, I even came to the conclusion that they are all winter veggies. Bear with me!

My husband, Jim, is a gardener and loves to grow. The harvest is amazing and he can attest to this. Not only have we stored lots of sweet potatoes but there is anything else I can sneak into their kitchens. There is variety in our raised beds we don't grow, our local farmers do. Canning, freezing and dehydrating. We admire those with high tunnels growing fresh tomatoes and greens but we're not there.

In our basement, we have racks of sweet potatoes, and butternut squash. The ones that could have lasted longer are all gone. The remaining bulbs of garlic are on the stove, ready for the next culinary invention. The freezer is mostly full of cauliflower, plums, blueberries, spinach, kale, swiss chard, meat from the freezer, yellow squash, zucchini and quite a few packages of mystery veggies. It's a little too, right? I have canned tomatoes, beans, jams and more. Empty jars are waiting for the next canning season.

So sitting down to dinner, being thankful for all we have, is a joy. . . Remember our plates and remember where the corn came from, picking all the broccoli, local beef and eggs. We're eating with a community in our little kitchen during the vegetable season!

Music from the Mountains

Pick and Bow Students, Gather and Celebrate

by Leo Shannon
Letcher County Pick and Bow Coordinator

Last month, we capped off the fall semester of Pick and Bow classes with a gathering and concert at Cowan Community Center. We had performances by students from Martha Jane Potter Elementary, Burdine Elementary, Cowan Elementary, and from the evening classes at Cowan Community Center. Sarah Kate Morgan and I also played a couple fiddle tunes to open and close the night out. It was a great opportunity for our students to show off what they've been working on all semester to their families, and to connect with the local music community.

The program included renditions of classics like Boil Them Cabbage, Shady Grove, Jingle Bells, and Good King Wenceslas, as well as more unique performances like Marty Robbins' Big Iron and an original Christmas story called "Nuh Uh and the Gal O' Gifts" written and conducted by



Tommy Anderson. It is encouraging to see students become familiar with old traditional tunes, and also to branch out into other realms — Big Iron was suggested by Adam, a student at Cowan Elementary, and it turns out that it works perfectly as an old time stringband tune.

We are excited to continue to grow this program as we move into 2025, and we are grateful to all who are supporting the work of passing on this music to the next generation.

Scroll down to *Cowan Monthly Calendar* section for the 2025 schedule!

View the recital online!

[Cowan Community Center Pick and Bow Performance](#)

[Cowan Elementary School Performance](#)

[Leo Shannon and Sarah Kate Morgan Performance](#)

[Martha Jane Potter Elementary School Performance](#)

[Burdine Elementary School Performance](#)



Summer: Cowan Creek Mountain Music School

Summer feels far away while there is much snow to be scraped off your car. Come quicker than you think! And with great success of last summer and this year on right now, make sure you snag your spot for the exciting summer session. The tickets will go on sale in February!

Wanna be informed?

Follow this [link](#) to register so you will get notices from us, directly to your email.

A Note from Our Partner

Carcassonne Community Center: A Bond Through Traditional Music

by Manuel Vanderpool

We're so grateful to be part of the Pick and Bow program here at the Carcassonne Community Center. It's been a meaningful way to connect with our community while helping to keep the traditions of Appalachian music alive. The program has brought so much more than music lessons—it's brought people together.

It's incredible to see the excitement and pride on the faces of kids learning their first chords on a dulcimer or adults picking up the banjo or fiddle for the first time. What we love most about Pick and Bow is how it creates a space for generations to come together, share their love for music, and preserve a tradition that's been part of this region for so long.

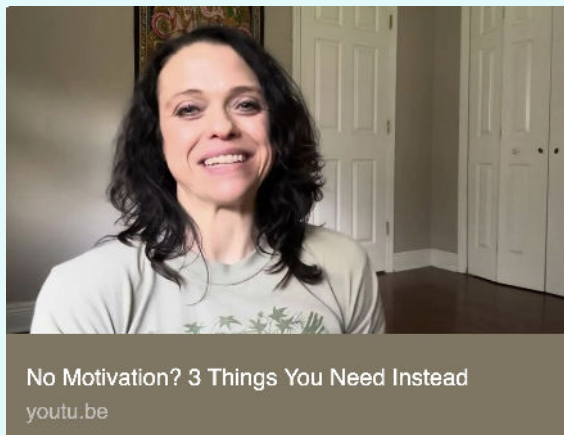
We're incredibly thankful for this partnership and the joy it has brought to our community!

We are so happy to connect the mission of Pick and Bow to Carcassonne Community Center last semester, continuing on to the spring semester! We look forward to carrying this mission forward together! ~ Cowan Team



Ph

Monthly Goodness from Cowan



Mindful Moment video click [here!](#)

Kelli's Mindful Moments

by Kelli Hansel Haywood

“I wish I could do that, but I just can’t get motivated.”

This is one of the most common statements I hear in response to someone who asks me to teach physical fitness and yoga, or that I have had a movement practice for a while.

I usually don't give much of a response for that because I find people generally don't have a response for one. But... sometimes they ask me about my motivation.

My response is that if you aren't motivated to do it, you probably don't really want to do it.

Under 10% of New Year's resolutions are successful.

So, what do you need instead of motivation to create meaningful habits or routines?

Know Your Why - Have you chosen a goal that actually comes from your inner desire (like... I need to be healthy), or is it something that you feel pressure to do from outside? If the reason you feel you should do this thing is coming from external pressure (societal/family/friend pressure) it will not succeed. Taking the actions necessary to achieve your goal should be joyful. It will be soul sucking, and you will resent it eventually. You will be resentful. **Create Discipline** - Discipline is there when you no longer need "motivation" because the thing is enough to be the impetus for doing it. We all face obstacles, but the things we have chosen to work on will enhance our quality of life, those obstacles are just a part of the process.

from continuing. It becomes like taking a medicine that is necessary to keep it because you're not alive if you don't.

Be Curious - If the goals you are working toward don't fascinate you and make you want to do the work, then go back to step one. When we are truly passionate about something, it can be really hard to become uninterested unless at some point we realize that we've lost interest in it. It's true we might get burned out on an approach or philosophy around something itself. It is when we are curious that what we call our failures become drivers for change.



Cowan Community Center "Our Favorite Recipes" ~ From Friends & Family Ed Neil's Apple Cake

By Carrie Dixon

Need other recipes? Click [here!](#)

Something about wintery mornings what suits a hot cup of coffee and an apple pie. This is not a regular apple cake but Carrie Dixon's daddy Ed Neil Fields' made up from scratch. He loved making it and serving it any chance he got. Now here's you go to warm up.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup vegetable oil
2 cups sugar
1 t. vanilla
2 eggs
3 c. flour
1 t. cinnamon
1 t. baking soda
1/2 t. salt
1/2 cup walnuts
3 c. raw apples, peeled and diced
1/2 c. raisins

ICING

8 oz. cream cheese
1/4 c. butter
2 c. powdered sugar
1 T. milk
1 t. vanilla

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees
2. Mix together oil, sugar, cinnamon, soda, and salt.
3. Stir until smooth and then add apples and raisins.
4. Pour into a greased 9x13 pan.
5. Bake 30-40 minutes until a toothpick comes out clean.
6. Mix together the icing ingredients and spread over the cooled cake with the icing.

January Events Calendar



Genie Visiting Us from Korea!

Cowan Community Action Group, Inc will welcome Genie Park to our community center for the month of February. We met Genie during our visit last year to South Korea and are looking for upcoming opportunities to have a cooking class with Genie or enjoy her music. Stay tuned for more details.



2025 Eastern Kentucky Farmer Conference

at the London Community Center

Cowan wants to encourage growers to attend EKY Farmer Conference with us.

Please contact [Abby Maggard](#) if you would like to attend as a group with Cowan.

Cowan Monthly Calendar



Photo by Deladis Haywood

Mindful Monday Yoga with Kelli **Mondays, 10:30 AM *FREE*** **Cowan Community Center**

No experience/registration necessary! Just show up!

Letcher County Pick



Cowan Community Action Group
Growing Community Since 1964



FREE after school traditional music classes
Instruments and snacks provided
Learn to play fiddle, banjo, guitar, or dulcimer



Mon 3:00-4:30 | Martha Jane Potter
Tues 3:00-4:30 | Burdine Elen
Wed 3:00-4:30 | Cowan Elementary

Letcher County Pick & Bow FREE After School Traditional Music Classes for KID

Appalachia Proud! Have youth engage in traditional music from the mountains after school. Instruments and snacks provided for after school, community meal provided for evening classes!

Grades 4+ welcome!

FIRST CLASS:

Martha Jane Potter: Monday January 27
Burdine: Tuesday January 28
Cowan Elementary: Wednesday January 29
Carcassonne Community Center: Wednesday January 29
Cowan Community Center: Thursday January 30
Hemphill Community Center: Friday January 31

LAST CLASS:

Martha Jane Potter: Monday May 12
Burdine: Tuesday May 13
Cowan Elementary: Wednesday May 14
Carcassonne Community Center: Wednesday May 14
Cowan Community Center: Thursday May 15
Hemphill Community Center: Friday May 9

STUDENT CONCERT @ Cowan Community Center: In the evening on Thursday

Register [here!](#)

Cowan Creek
Pick & Bow

FREE
Traditional
Music Classes
for all ages
at the
Cowan
Community
Center

Cowan Creek Pick and Bow for Kids AND Adults! Weekly FREE music lessons at Cowan Community Center Thursdays, 5:30 PM

Have you always wanted to learn how to play an instrument? Guitar, fiddle or banjo??

Free traditional music classes for all ages at the Cowan Community Center.
Every Thursday from 5:30pm for all ages. No experience necessary!

We invite you to join us for learning new skills and making new friends!

Register [here!](#)



Cowan Creek Pick and Bow Beginner PIANO! Weekly FREE piano lessons at Cowan Community Center Wednesdays, afterschool

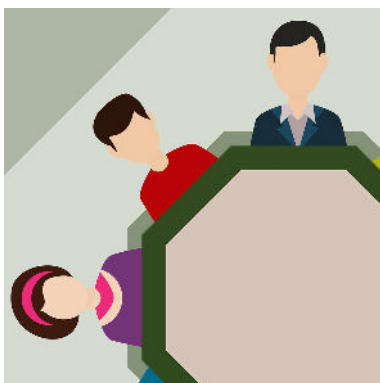
Cowan Creek Pick & Bow is now offering beginner piano lessons with Beverly May. It is open to youth grades 3rd through 5th for youth grades 3rd through 12th. Classes will be held at the Cowan Community Center Wednesdays after school. If you would like to sign your child up for a class, please register below. Space is limited! Sign up today!

Register [here!](#)



Whitesburg Old Time Jam Old Post Office, Whitesburg Every First Saturday, 1PM-4PM FREE

Play your favorites or learn some *new* old time tunes! Rekindle with your friends, make new ones and have a great time! All levels from beginners to advanced are welcome to attend! Bring a chair for yourself and snacks to share if you like. Free event.



Meeting at the Community Center Every other month, at 6PM

Open to all! Come and share your vision with us!
Stay tuned for the next meeting date!



Homemakers Every Second Tuesday, at 11AM

Free to all. Variety of lessons come from the Letcher County Extension Office. Don't miss your favorite dish to pass! See you there!

Donate



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