Conococheague Pioneer Times The Newsletter of the Conococheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage



1st Quarter 2024

INSTITUTE 30 Years of Bringing History to Life

Good Day to you...From the Executive Director

Volume 30 Issue 1

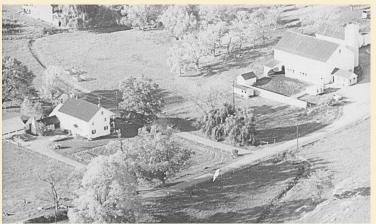
Our last newsletter was just before the holidays so we hope everyone enjoyed a restful time with family, a joyous New Year and everything in between. 2024 also means I get to say Happy 30th Anniversary to all our our founders, members, donors, volunteers and supporters. Though I've only been with the Conococheague Institute for 4 of those 30 years, I've enjoyed every minute of it.

And given my interest in studying the past, you can be sure I've read the Pioneer Times for the last 30 years to catch up. This newsletter is a written legacy of the growth, events, research and programs CI has undertaken over the years.



When I come across photos (above) of the Negley home before its restoration, it is a marvel to me to see how far we've come. It's a testament to the dedication of our Founder John Stauffer, and all of the volunteers of the Tuesday Bridge Club, who saved this historic structure, and made it part of what is today an award winning historic site beloved in the region.

Several historic building restorations and relocations went a long way into making CI the historic site today, but the natural world is even more remarkable. Photos from 1966 (below) show the site as a standard farm, with most of our visitor areas today being pasture for cows, and the changing boundaries of the woods is startling.



Trees have overtaken the stream that runs under Bain Road (and which once held a mill...something we'll be looking at in the future) and the roads have changed a lot!

Over the last few decades scores of naturalists have planted native trees, roses, pollinator gardens to restore the environmental heritage of the region. This conservation is a constant effort, and we're always looking for new volunteers to help us out.

Our Nature Committee just met, and this year we'll be aiming to test some lawn to prairie conversions in small areas. Not only does this restore native grasses, flowers and plants to our region, but in provides habitats for all sorts of native creatures that rely on them for food and shelter. It also dramatically decreases the amount of areas we have to mow (which is already too much).



In terms of the historic landscape, we're well on our way to following our Strategic Plan item of having an Animal Husbandry program by 2025. We have 3D blueprints, building permits, and rustic lumber to be full steam ahead on our animal shed and fencing, with work to begin in Spring with our Mercersburg Academy student volunteers. The location chosen is between the Negley and Piper Cabin. While historically animals were free roaming (and at one point the Negley had a pen attached to its rear: see the photo on the left), we've separated the locations both for hygiene and visitor experience. When we have 250 students on site, we can have a 'station' at the Negley, Rock Hill, the Piper Cabin, the Garden, the Bake Oven and in the future the animal area, spreading out our programs equally. A good job too as we have already taken 4 bookings for the Spring with 200+ students.



Rock Hill Farm tours are taking place at 11am, 1pm and 3pm on the First Friday of each month and have already proven of interest to many visitors. Add this to our weekly FREE Saturday programs, Little Learners, and education bookings and we're seeing more visitors than ever before.

As always I love to hear from our members. You can contact me at 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236, phone 717 328 2800 or email info@cimlg.org with your thoughts and suggestions for our future.

Alternatively, stop by any Saturday from 10am to 5pm and chat in person!

Cheers! Matthew Wedd

Winter Contributions

We'd like to thank the following people for their recent (December 18th 2023 to February 29th 2024) donations and memberships. In that time we've had a spree of End of Year Giving, a nice holiday break for our team, a rearrange of exhibits and gift shop in the Visitor Center, lots of Saturday programs, some exciting sponsorships and lots and lots of planning! In the same duration we had \$13,066 in donations, \$3,250 in memberships, \$5000 in business sponsorships, \$5000 in foundation gifts, \$15,000 in grants, and \$663 in tour fees, totalling \$41,979!

Our thanks to the donations and memberships contributed by the following from December 18th 2023 to February 29th 2024

Tomi Kotowich, The Mercersburg Inn, Will Willis, Wendy Mahan, Ron Jones, Barry & Charlotte Elliott, Robert Weir, Donna Catling, George White, Ann Allen, Mary Sanders, Kitty Clark, The Native Niche, Sally Haver, Don & Deb Kaminski, Larry Williams, Bob Failor, Mark and Becky Shubert, Ed Leisinger, Joyce Horst, Drusilla and Vern Hart, Thomas & Nancy Burkey Fund, Pam Knepper, Harriet Gilbert, The Conococheague Audubon Society, Ivor Knight, Betty Jane Lee, Thomas Durkin, Douglas Foreback, Joyce Horst, Joel Manges, Harriet Hurd-Gilbert, Ruth Hamil, Paula Dawson, Anne Wain, Gary Stallings, Carolyn Forsythe Smith, Mike & Mary Ellen South, Frank Walizer, Charles Shannon, Richard Kline, Betty Lee, Franklin Klink, Rachel Clark, Janelle Abbott, Pam Anderson, Erica Peck, Theresa Kochert, Ed and Victoria Whetstone, Keith and Angela Taber, Ben Barnhart, Trump and Darlene Vanderau, Catherine Geisbrecht, Karen Bescaney, Greg Adamson, Linda Rieke, Joshua Beall's Company of Maryland Forces, The Potomac Garden Club, Frank Hood, Carl and Patty Kime, M&T Bank, Tom Hand and Americana Corner. Thank you!

In Memory of James F. Rogers

It's with sadness that we share the passing of one of our founding members, Jim Rogers, of Mercersburg. An enthusiastic supporter of early American history, and always with a compliment and encouragement for CI's growth, Jim had a lifetime of experience serving with several nonprofits and businesses, and we're honored he cherished being a member of the Conococheague Institute.

With his wife Janet's permission, we share Jim's obituary. Our 30th Anniversary celebration on June 1st is a time when we hope to see our founding members come to a reunion event, and Jim will be missed, but remembered as a pillar of our history.

James Frederick Rogers

James Frederick "Jim" Rogers of Arlington, Virginia, and Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, passed away January 15, 2024, at the age of 88.

Jim was born June 27, 1935 in Centerville, Iowa, and grew up in Milan, Missouri. He was the son of John Watson Rogers and Mildred Holly Morris. After graduating from Milan High

School, he earned degrees from the University of Missouri and the Stonier School of Banking at Rutgers University.

Following service in the U.S. Army as a commissioned officer, Jim joined American Security and Trust Company in Washington, D.C. At the time of his retirement in 1985, he was President of American Security Corporation. During his twenty-five year career at the bank he was President of the District of Columbia Bankers Association, and a member of both the Government Relations Committee of the Association of Bank Holding Companies and Government Relations Council and Bank Leadership Conference of the American Bankers Association. In 1985 he joined Golembe Associates, a financial services consulting firm located in Georgetown, Washington, D.C. He was an organizing Director and Chairman of the Board of the

National Bank of Northern Virginia (now part of Truist Bank). He has served as Trustee of the Arena Stage; the Leonard Wood Foundation (President 1983-85); and two terms as Trustee of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. (1973-1978). He also served on the board of the Friends of the National Zoo, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and the advisory board of the McIntire School of Commerce at the University of Virginia.

Jim retired from the banking industry in 1998. He and his wife, Janet, restored an early 1800s stone farmhouse near Mercersburg where they enjoyed many family vacations and summers.

They are longtime supporters of the nearby Conococheague Institute. Jim had a keen interest in American history, particularly local and presidential history. Over the years, he and his wife traveled to many presidential sites, including their homes and libraries. They also enjoyed following the major historic trails in the footsteps of the explorers and pioneers, with the occasional side trip for birding.

Surviving are his wife of 66 years, Janet Marsden Rogers, and his daughter, Jenny (Mike) Burke, and son, John (Dana) Rogers. Five grandchildren, Sam, Alex, Will, Grant and Lila also mourn

his passing. He was preceded in death by his twin brother, John William Rogers. Private service.

If you would like to remember Jim with a memorial, the family suggests The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Rd, Mercersburg, PA 17236 or The FamilieSCN2A Foundation, P.O. Box 4260, Gettysburg, PA 17325.

Giving for Another

Many people note that their contribution is made in memory of another, and with Jim's passing we've had many show their support of his legacy. Linda & Blaine Rieke, Frank Hood and Patty & Carl Kime all gave in his memory, with the latter noting that Jim was a great man loved by all.

Pam Knepper gave in memory of **W.E Weaver**, while **Becky & Mark Shubert** gave in memory of their **Blair ancestors** (some who are buried here in their Old Welsh Cemetery). Scores of donors noted in their letters that they gave primarily due to the wonderful work we are doing **keeping American history engaging** for the public and students, **Ancestral links** to the site, and how **welcoming our nature areas** are for all who visit.

Your contributions to our annual fund ensure we can operate the essentials: staffing, utilities and upkeep are important for allowing our educational programs and preservation to continue. Remember all contributors whose total lifetime donations exceed \$5000 will be part of a new permanent plaque to be unveiled during our 30th Anniversary celebration on June 1st 2024. All donations are tax deductible, and should be made payable to "The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236



30th Anniversary of the Conococheague Institute

The Conococheague Institute is pleased to unveil a new logo to celebrate our 30th Anniversary celebration!

We've made so many strides in recent years thanks to people like you and we now welcome 10,000's of visitors annually. This design highlights the best of what CI is known for in the region, as we continue to grow.

It's not an easy step trying to represent a 30 acre site with a wide ranging mission to preserve the past, conserve nature and provide engaging educational experiences, but **Laura Oates Design** did outstanding work, and are so grateful. We provided scores of photos of CI at its best and Laura turned them into the line arts in the logo, making this totally unique to us!

So what is in the logo?

The Log Home: Representing historic preservation, our Negley log home is iconic for visitors Despite being a reconstructed building, it's the host of our programs, and as the site continues to grow provides the framework for a working homestead, allowing visitors to step back in time.

The Heron: Representing our natural environment, the Great Blue Heron is seen by staff every week on our Wetlands pond and roosting above the Welsh Run. We did consider a few other birds, but the heron's size and unique shape is instantly recognizable.

CI's pond was actually installed in the late 1990's to restore lost wetland habitats to PA and is now a thriving ecosystem of frogs, turtles, birds, native flowers, cattails and more!

The Apple Tree: Representing agriculture AND genealogy, the apple tree is another CI staple. Our oldest apple trees (Newton Albemarle Pippin) on site date back 200 years, and apples were one of the first things planted by settlers for use in cider, vinegar, butter and more. CI's genealogical resources in our library are also a major draw especially from visitors from further afield. Davis, Chambers, Martin, Negley, Brewer, Niswander, Stauffer and many more...lots of families had roots here.

The People: Representing the human connection with our past, and the engaging living history programs CI has become known for. Our human element encourages critical thinking of early American history on the frontier. European settlers sought freedom and wealth yet brought enslaved black people to labor under them. Conflicts with Indigenous groups drove the original inhabitants from the region. By learning how diverse groups of people lived, we can use our understanding of history to improve our current lives today.

The two figures were chosen for their simple shapes that highlight our 18th century focus, but an astute eye will recognize them as one of our favorite student volunteers Sophia Mielke when she won a cocked hat for excelling in a program, and Matthew Wedd holding a cricket bat (though Laura cleverly turned the full graphic into an axe).

June 1st 2024: 30th Anniversary Welsh Fest

The date has been set for our 30th Anniversary Celebration. On Saturday June 1st 2024, we'll be having a **special founding donor luncheon, and ceremonial ribbon cutting between 1pm and 2pm.** There will be special performances by the Rehoboth Welsh Choir and Lauren Swain (Harpist). RSVP invites will be going out in April but **save the date now.**

After the donor ceremony, we'll be hosting a **public event from 2.30pm to 6pm**, with more performances by the musicians, lecture and presentations all with a Welsh theme.

Don't forget we are seeking lifetime donors of \$5000 or more to be included on a 30th Anniversary bronze plaque. Make a stock donation today directly!

Preserving the Frontier Endowment Account (Chapin Davis) DTCC Number: 0141 Conococheague Institute Acct#6672-9564 Donor Name (if you wish to give it)



I N S T I T U T E 30 Years of Bringing History to Life



Or donate stocks & securities directly to the Kurtz Endowment for Early American History

DTCC Number: 2116 Conococheague Institute Acct#301500000

This endowment fund at **F&M Trust** was established to further on ongoing education programs and partnership with **Mercersburg Academy** by **Robert Kurtz Jr (Class of '52)**

Winter Activities: A Snapshot

Winter Saturday Programs

Starting this year, we're pleased to say we have a direct sponsor for our free Saturday programs: A generous \$5000 contribution from the Thomas G. & Nancy H. Burkey Fund, a charitable fund of the Franklin County Community Foundation, a regional foundation of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC). Tom Burkey was a big fan of our re-enactments and his daughter Sue and grandchild Annie are pleased to support our first quarter of the year...which has entailed spinning workshops, bird crafts, archery, homestead life, bake oven fun, genealogy and more!



Site Improvement Volunteering

Winter is never slow and our staff are often aided on improvement projects by volunteers. We had our annual Mercersburg Academy students on MLK day to help repaint doors in the Visitor Center, sand and stain bird houses and other projects. Keith Taber installed some new compost bins near the garden, and we are having active volunteer days to scrape and stain porches, get the garden up and running and pruning our fruit trees. Contact us to lend a hand where you can.



Unexpected Guests

Driving home in a snowstorm our staff noticed something moving in a storm drain, and it turned out to be a very scared puppy. We went to every house and farm on Bain, Locust Level, Royer and Hege road and none of our neighbors knew her. We named her Gwenhwyvar (Welsh for White Fairy), and she lived in our museum for a week while we contacted shelters and vets. We managed to find her a very good home, and were able to advocate for proper housing and microchips for your pets! Please don't abandon loving animals. If you need to give one up, contact a Humane Society or Shelter. The Concoccheague Institute has amazing trails and nature areas and welcome your pets on a leash every day.

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The Negley Root Cellar

Restored by Dakota Bricker as an Eagle Scout project, the root cellar has been closed in recent years due to accessibility. This winter our team finished renovations to make it an interpretable space again! Root cellars helped food produce from freezing in the winter and getting too warm in the summer. Check it out during your next visit.



Item Donations and Exhibits

Rodney 'Cork' Shank of Clear Spring donated a large collection of old PA maps (brought by Lisa Shank Poole), and we'll enjoy archiving them and spotlighting some in future exhibits. We are always changing the way the Visitor Center exhibits look, and this winter saw a massive overhaul (our gift shop is now in the large room) with all our expanded Firelocks on the Frontier exhibit, 18th Century clothing and revolving exhibit cases. Currently the focus in those cases is on dentistry and health/hygiene!

Stop by during our open hours any Saturday to see what is on display.



Bringing Colonial History to Life CONOCOCHEAGUE INSTITUTE 30 Years of Bringing History to Life

HISTORIC PROGRAMS EVERY SATURDAY 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Make every week an experience by visiting our Historic Homestead and Gardens. Learn about the 18th century through hands on programming, crafts, and exhibits. Lend a hand in the garden, play games and experience frontier history come to life!









The Conococheague Institute 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA 17236 www.cimlg.org | (717) 328-2800 | info@cimlg.org A 501(c)3 Non Profit Organization





Free programs every Saturday, exhibits on frontier life & culture, with museum and gift shop access.

March 2nd - Welsh Heritage for St. David's Day March 9th - Oakgrove Farm: Women in Brewing March 16th - 18th Century Homestead Life March 23rd - 18th Century Tavern Life March 30th - 18th Century Homestead Life April 6th - 18th Century Homestead Life (Laundry Focus) April 13th - Get to Know Nature (Special Event)

April 20th - Frontier Music Day April 27th - 18th Century Homestead Life

Subscribe to our newsletter and social medias for more details for each month.

F Facebook@ConococheagueInstitute Instagram@Conococheague_Institute

> Programs are free thanks to support from the Thomas G. & Nancy H. Burkey Fund and by donations from people like you. Scan here to make a tax deductible contribution



2024 Grants and Sponsorships Provide Growth for the Conococheague Institute

Thank you to all our supporters!

In just the first 2 months of 2024 we've seen an explosion of community support from Grants, Foundations and Businesses. These funding projects allow us to achieve more then our standard operations and grow as a site.

The 2024 Americana Corner Preserving Americana Grant will support even more bookings, virtual programs (look out for new videos with a proper camera) and new sensory exhibits ... do we hear Bagpipes in our future?

And this impact is already being felt! We've received bookings of 400 students from Greencastle Antrim Middle School, 300 students from Shippensburg Middle School and 250 students from Frederick County Public Schools all for this Spring. Add this to our homeschool groups, private bookings and we're going to have our busiest Spring ever!

We also offer our utmost gratitude to the M&T Bank Charitable Foundation, for supporting our Preservation and Environmental efforts with a generous \$5000 sponsorship for 2024!

In 2023 they supported our Summer Camp and Puppet Show, and this year's increased support is going to have so many benefits.

The sponsorship will allow us to purchase an AED for our Visitor Center (vital given our remote location), eco-friendly hand dryers for the bathroom, and historic restoration materials. The latter restoration will be undertaken with our student volunteers and interns, making it an educational experience for area youth on the importance of local history.

F&M Trust has continued to put support behind our Get to Know Nature event, increasing to \$3000 this year, so the we will feature even more presenters, craft vendors and food trucks. Don't miss this fascinating opportunity to get up close with the natural world.

And Middletown Valley Bank, has also become a new program sponsor. \$1000 to support our tree plantings this year, \$1000 for our music sponsor for the Anniversary and \$1000 for entertainment during our popular Bonfire Night on November 9th!



CHEERS MIDDLETOWN VALLEY BANK For a \$3000 sponsorship for tree plantings, music sponsor for our **ANNIVERSARY, AND BONFIRE NIGHT!**

CONOCOCHEAGUE INSTITUTE

Middletown Vallev Bank.

Each of these supporters has dramatically increased their contribution from last year, and that means more preservation, more education and more experiences for our community.

Whether private individual or business, please contact us to find out how you can make a tax deductible donation that brings new programs and opportunities for CI.









Get to Know Nature: at the Conococheague Institute



- Prepare for Earth Day 2024 and learn ho to love and understand the natural world Event activities include:
 - 'Wonderfully Wild' Animal Encounter Program
- 'Millers Wildlife' Falconry Program Tree Conservation: Learn how to plant
- trees with us for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and take a tree home to plant yourself
- Conococheague Audubon Society, Bird
- The Institute Water Striders macroinvertebrate stream studies
- Nature Crafts for Kids and Adults! Make a 'Seed Bomb or a Simple Bird Feeder
- Medicinal Plant walks
- Lucky's Legacy Dog Adoption
- Franklin County Bookmobile
- Food Trucks and Craft Vendors

<u>Kori's Korner</u>

Programs by the Numbers

We are in for a very busy spring! As always, we will have our regular Saturday programs and site improvement projects, but in between that all we will be sharing the site with so many awesome groups! We don't just take school and education groups! Do you have a hobby group that would enjoy a program at CI? Check out the education booking tab on our website, call us, or Email **visit@cimlg.org** to get your booking started! We will always take more groups if we are able, but we are quickly filling up for the spring!

We look forward to welcoming 1130 students over 14 days with a total of 36 programming hours!

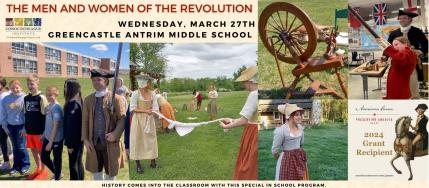
March: 280 students, 11 hours of programming, 7 days of volunteer projects

April: 428 students, 11 hours of programming, 10 days of volunteer projects

May: 422 students, 14 hours of program bookings, 12 days of volunteer projects

Not only have we been busy taking program bookings, but we have also been busy launching a new program! **Little Learners takes place on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month.** This program helps to introduce our smallest members of the CI community to environmental stewardship through storytime, crafts, movement activities, and site exploration. This program targets those 2-4 years old but we welcome those with older or younger siblings that would like to partake as well! While our first few sessions have been largely in the visitor center due to the winter weather. **We are looking forward to moving the sessions to the outdoors as it gets warmer!** Do you or someone you know have a little in your life that would enjoy this program?

Call us or Email Kori at visit@cimlg.org



HISTORY COMES INTO THE CLASSROOM WITH THIS SPECIAL IN SCHOOL PROGRAM. STEP AWAY FROM THE TEXTBOOKS, AND LEARN FIRST HAND HOW ABOUT THE AVERAGE MEN AND WOMEN WHO LIVED DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. (HAT DID THEIR CLOTHES FEEL LIKE, WHAT DID THEY PEAT, WHAT WEEP THEIR JOBS & SKILLSY HOW DID AMERICANS LEARN TO FICHT OF THE BRITIL THROUGH UNDERSTANDING THE STORIES OF AVERAGE AMERICAN CITIZENS, WE ARE BETTER ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE BIG HISTORY OF THIS REVOLUTIONARY THE. OUTREACH EDUCATION PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO THE AMERICANA CORNER 'PRESERVING AMERICA' GRANT PROGRAM.

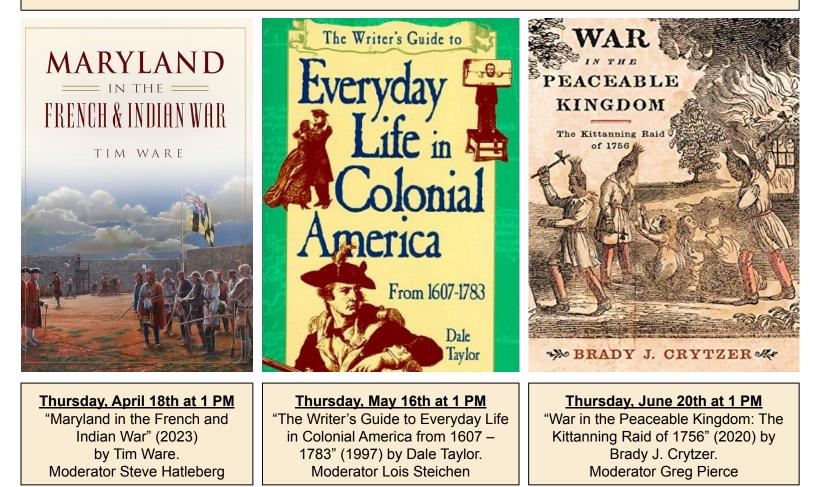


INSTITUTE Conococheague Institute's Little Learners



The Conococheague Book Club: 3rd Thursday each Month at 1pm at the Welsh Barrens Visitor Center Our book club members always enjoy a lively discussion on books about our history and heritage in the visitor center. Bring a snack too and lunch beforehand!

All are welcome, contact Book Club Leader Lois Steichen at loissteichen@comcast.net for more information.



Some great programs are just around the corner. Come out for any of our FREE Saturday programs every week from 10am to 4pm. We have lots of women's history themed programs set for March, we look forward to seeing you.



Board of Directors

Elizabeth Lillard (President), Ellen Kinzer (Vice-President), Bob Schwartz (Secretary), Sam Cathey (Treasurer), Will Sheppard, Kitty Clark, Melanie Desmond, JD Bennett, Bailey Roberts Long, Gina Vitale, Matt South, Sheryl Snider Advisory Board

Dr. John C. Stauffer (Founder and President Emeritus), Avery Cook, Tom Finucane, Dr. Doris Armstrong-Goldman, Gay Buchanan, Martha E. Stauffer, MD, Roger Swartz, David Stauffer, Chuck Holland, Carol Zehosky <u>Staff</u>

Matthew Wedd, Executive Director, mwedd@cimlg.org Kori Taber, Visitor Experience Facilitator, visit@cimlg.org Amelia Craven and Selena Feng Visitor Experience Team Members, team@cimlg.org

Contact us

The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236 Phone: 717 328 2800 Email: info@cimlg.org Website: www.cimlg.org Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/conococheagueinstitute/ Instagram: @conococheague institute Youtube: @coloniallivingattheconcocheagueinstitute



Be part of our 30th Anniversary! Your Membership support allows us to continue in our mission! CI Membership runs on a 'Valid through 12 month cycle', so whenever you renew you will receive a full year of benefits

Annual Membership and Additional Donation Form

Name:

Address:

____ Email:___ Phone No:

Newsletter Format Preference, Email or Printed:

Student: \$10
Individual: \$25
Family: \$35
Patron: \$125
Corporate: \$200
Sustaining: \$300
Life: \$1000

Membership Level: Additional Donation: Make Checks Payable to The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, 17236 Thank you!

I support the Conococheague Institute because: ____

I have included CI in my Estate Plans (check here)

I would like more information about Funded Projects and Sponsorships (check here)