



TOWN OF BOXFORD Community Newsletter

Issue No 10. | Winter 2024



Snowy field on Main Street. Photo credit - Dawn Hannigan

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR, MATTHEW COOGAN

Greetings Boxford Residents

This is the Winter 2024 edition of the Town of Boxford Quarterly Community Newsletter. We aim for everyone to find these updates accessible and informative, and welcome feedback for improving communication with the public.



May 14th Annual Town Meeting and May 21th Annual Town Election are quickly approaching. Next year's operating budget, Fiscal Year 2025, will be one of several warrant articles for residents to consider. Several of our boards and committees are working diligently to assemble a budget that funds level services as efficiently and effectively as possible. It will be a challenging year as costs to maintain existing school services are increasing at a rate beyond the [Proposition 2.5 tax levy limit](#). Information on the proposed FY25 school budgets can be found on the [Masconomet Regional School District website](#) and the [Tri-Town School Union website](#).

The Select Board will be finalizing the Town Meeting Warrant and Town Election ballot on April 8th and will be utilizing its scheduled meetings in February and March to review department budgets, warrant articles, and prepare for Town Meeting. Agenda materials can be reviewed on the [Select Board website](#). The Finance Committee will also be meeting in February and March to finalize the FY25 budget. Information on the Town Meeting Warrant Article will be available to review in mid-April.

One significant change in for Fiscal Year 2025 will be the Town's trash and recycling hauling and disposal program. The Waste Stream Task Force, consisting of representatives of the Select Board, Finance Committee, Recycling Committee, and Board of Health, have been meeting for over a year to design and negotiate a new, 5-year trash and recycling collection and disposal contract. The goal is a long-term collection program that incorporates automated collection, promotes waste reduction, and preserves or enhances Pay-As-You-Throw components of the existing program to start July 1, 2024. Residents can visit the [Waste Stream Trask Force webpage](#) for information and updates.

Thank you to all the staff, the Boards and Committee members, and all the volunteers who work over several months to plan the Annual Town Meeting and Town Election.

TOWN CLERK

The Town Clerk's office is busy processing Annual Street Listing (census) forms, dog licenses and Vote by Mail applications.

Residents who have not already done so are reminded to return their census forms as soon as possible to ensure the accuracy of our active voter roll.

Dog licenses submitted later than January 31 to avoid a late fee of \$25 per dog in addition to the cost of the license.

Vote by Mail applications for the March 5 Presidential Primary must be returned no later than February 27.

For those who do not wish to vote by mail, in person early voting will take place from February 24 through February 29 in the Town Clerk's office, 7A Spofford Road.

In person early voting hours will be as follows:

- Saturday, February 24, 9am - 3pm
- Monday, February 26 through Thursday, February 29, 8am - 4:30pm.

Polls will be open on Presidential Primary Election Day from 7am-8pm at Town Hall, 7A Spofford Road for those voters who choose not to participate in early voting.

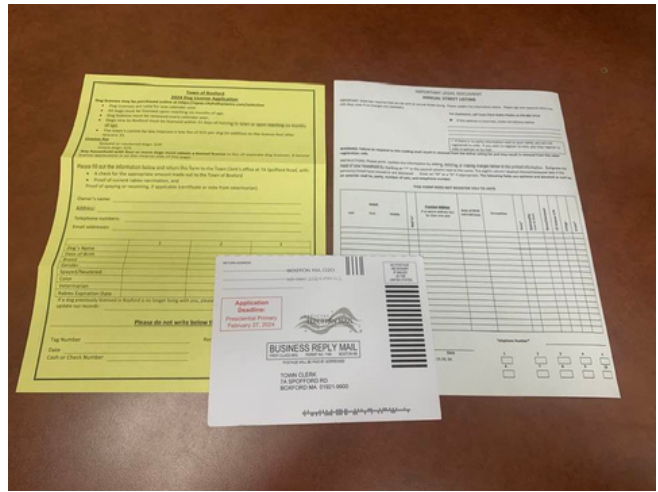
We look forward to a visit from third and fourth grade students at Spofford Pond School to learn how we choose our presidential candidates, and to having a number of Masconomet students help out at the polls on Election Day.

Please mark your calendars:

- March 5, 2024: Presidential Primary
- May 14, 2024: Annual Town Meeting
- May 21, 2024: Annual Town Election
- September 3, 2024: State Primary
- November 5, 2024: State Election

Finally, nomination papers are available for May 21, 2023 Annual Town Election. There are several Boards and Committee positions on the ballot this year. If you are interested in serving on an elected Board or Committee, please [click here](#) to learn more.

Questions? Please call 978-887-0710 or email rphelan@boxfordma.gov



COUNCIL ON AGING

Participation at the Senior Center continues to grow. While many of our "Snow Birds" have sought out warmer climates, new people have been in seeking indoor activities for the colder months. Classes and exercise programs continue to be well attended and our group playing bridge increases almost weekly. "Lunch Bunch" trips and social and educational events are also seeing a rise in numbers.

In January we started a new Intergenerational play group Seniors/Toddlers under the direction of two former teachers. While a storm kept several who had registered away, we anticipate growth in this group to take off.

Upcoming events include a fresh floral arrangement class for Valentines Day, a Valentines Tea, lunch with Police Chief Riter, a performance by the Delvena Players, a St. Patrick's Day party and the start of a new Memory Cafe. Stay tuned as we are always adding to our schedule and as always, your ideas are welcome.

We are happy to announce that after months of looking we have found a podiatrist that will not only come to the Center but will do home visits. A new Strength Training instructor has been found and classes will resume this month.

After twenty years we are losing the company that printed our newsletter. We are currently exploring options on a replacement. The cost of printing and mailing out monthly newsletters has become astronomical and we are looking at ways to efficiently provide this service electronically to all who have internet service. To all who have email, kindly call the COA with your email address. All issues of the newsletter are all available on the [Town website](#).

BOXFORD TOWN LIBRARY

FEBRUARY

Events For Children

- Preschool Storytime, Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 1:30 pm. Session runs through February 14 and then restarts February 27.
- Music & Movement for children up to age 3, with MaryBeth Maes, CFCE of the North Shore, Thursdays in February at 10:00 am
- Winter Craft Time for Kids, Mondays at 10:00 am continues through February 12
- Lego Club, Thursday February 15 at 4pm in the library. This month's theme is Castles.
- Magic Show for kids with magician Robert Clarke on Thursday, February 22 at 3 pm

Events For Adults

- How to Follow the Mediterranean Diet, in-person program on February 3 at 1:00 pm
- Cookbook Club, February 9, at Noon
- How to Survive in Medieval England: virtual program on February 10 at 2:00 pm
- Poetry Circle, February 20, at 7:00 pm
- Bending Toward Justice-Virtual Art History Program on February 21 from 7:00 to 8:00 pm
- Evening Book Discussion, February 21, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom
- All-Ages Beginning Chess Program in-person on February 24 from 1:00 to 2:30
- Daytime Book Discussion, February 28, at 1:00 pm
- Virtual Author Talk w/ Katherine Howe on February 28 (author of "a rollicking mystery set in the Golden Age of Piracy") at 7:00 pm

MARCH

Events For Children

- Preschool Storytime, Tuesdays & Wednesdays at 1:30 pm. Session runs through March 20.
- Music & Movement for children up to age 3, with MaryBeth Maes, CFCE of the North Shore, Thursdays in March at 10:00 am

Events For Adults

- Thicker than Water: The Quest for Solutions to the Plastic Crisis, March 4 at 7:00 pm via Zoom
- Cookbook Club, March 8, at Noon
- Author Christopher Morash on "Dublin"-The Place and the Literati! on March 9 at 10am
- Backyard Birding on March 16 at 1pm
- Poetry Circle, March 19, at 7:00 pm
- Evening Book Discussion, March 20, at 7:00 pm, via Zoom
- Daytime Book Discussion, March 27, at 1:00 pm

Visit our website at boxfordma.gov/town-library for information about these events and so much more!



BOARD OF HEALTH

Happy New Year!

Trash Stickers can be purchased at the Board of Health office Monday thru Thursdays from 8-2. Online stickers are also available for sale through the town website under [Online Payments](#).

The Board of Health office offers free covid test kits (five tests per box) and free Narcan for our residents. The Sharp Disposal Container is located behind the East Fire Station

Medication Take Back Days - Tri-Town Police Depts and many other local communities have anonymous medication disposal programs located in their police departments. Each Town also participates in a yearly drug take-back program. Proper disposal of prescription medications helps to keep drugs out of the wrong hands. Look for these drives hosted by Local Police departments in April & October each year. Over 1 million pounds was collected in the US in 2023 from take-back days! The Drug Drop Off Box is located in the lobby of the Boxford police station.

OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

The Assessing Department wishes to remind residents about the recently adopted Local Option Personal Exemption Clause 57. If you owned and occupied your property on July 1st, 2023 AND received a Senior Circuit Breaker credit on your 2022 Massachusetts state income taxes, you are eligible to obtain a reduction of your real estate taxes up to the amount of your credit. Other available exemptions include:

- Legally Blind
- Disabled Veterans
- Seniors 65 years + with low to moderate income
- CPA Surcharge Exemption

Applications for all exemptions will be accepted until April 1, 2024 for the current tax year. Additionally, as part of the tax relief bill recently signed into law by Governor Maura Healy, the tax reduction that participants of the Senior Property Tax Work-off Program may earn has increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 annually.

Please contact the [Assessor's office](#) at (978) 887-6692 for questions regarding exemption qualifications.

TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR

Real Estate Tax Bills for the 3rd and 4th quarters of Fiscal Year 2024 were mailed to property owners on December 29th. Please contact [the office](#) if you did not receive a bill. The payment due dates are Feb 1st and May 1st.

Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills will be mailed in late February to owners of vehicles garaged in Boxford with active registrations as of January 1st. The bills are prepared by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts using the information submitted on new and renewal registration applications:

- Owner's name
- Mailing address
- Place of garaging (for taxation and insurance rates)

Please check the [Town of Boxford website](#) announcements and/or subscribe to E-Alerts to receive notices about tax bill issuance or payment due dates. Timely tax payments will avoid the payment of fees and interest as provided by state law.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Online payments are available!
Purchase trash stickers, dog licenses, burn permits and pay your property or excise tax.

<https://epay.cityhallsystems.com/selection>

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The DPW has transitioned into winter operations and planning for the upcoming construction year. In addition to the routine maintenance of the town's roadways, the DPW is concentrating on fleet maintenance activities as well as indoor facility maintenance.

DPW is also working on several large-scale planning, design, and permitting projects. These include: the final permitting of 4 major culverts, the design of major repairs to the Endicott Road Bridge over Fish Brook, and the schematic design phase of a new DPW Facility. The culverts are in the final stage of permitting and it is expected that 2 of those 4 will be bid in the coming weeks. Those are the Glendale Road Culvert and Pye Brook at Georgetown Road. The Endicott Bridge design is being finalized for review at MA-DOT's Bridge Division and being prepared for permitting. Finally, a design firm has been selected by the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) to prepare a Schematic Design and estimate. The DPW Superintendent is assisting the Town Administrator in finalizing a design contract with that firm.

Lastly, the DPW is working on the roll-out of the Operations Hero facility maintenance software. It is expected that a training will take place in the coming weeks and it will be fully operational at that time. This software will facilitate the DPW in preventative and elective maintenance work on all our buildings assets.

Chris Olbrot, Town Engineer & Superintendent

MASCONOMET

The Masconomet School Committee and district leaders invite you to follow the superintendent's blog for important updates and information. Dr. Harvey's blog is updated after each school committee meeting (approximately twice per month) and can be accessed at: <https://mascosuper.school.blog/>

scholarship opportunity!

The Commissioners of Trust Funds are now accepting applications for the Perley-Parkhurst-Cole Trust Scholarship Fund.

For guidelines and application information, please visit our website:

<https://www.town.boxford.ma.us/PPC-Scholarship>



TRI-TOWN SCHOOL UNION

Happy New Year from the Tri-Town School Union! With the turn of the calendar to 2024, that means that we are at the halfway point of the school year. New Year's always brings opportunities for reflection and gratitude and we are grateful for the wonderful Boxford community including all its citizens and members of its town offices/departments. Below are several updates from the school department and a picture from the recent Winter Concert at Spofford Pond:

- At the 2023 Annual Town Meeting, funds were approved to upgrade the camera systems at both elementary schools and that work has been ongoing since late fall.
- Both Cole School and Spofford Pond School have been working on their FY25 draft budgets and also members of their School Improvement Councils have been working on the development of their School Improvement Plans.
- The school department works closely with the New England School Development Council to monitor enrollment trends in 10-year timeframes. Based on those projections, enrollment is predicted to continue to grow in the years ahead, hitting a peak in the 2029-2030 school year. As these are just projections, they will continue to be monitored and reviewed for accuracy.
- The School Department, in partnership with the Town, is engaged in a feasibility study to determine costs and planning associated with the potential HVAC electrification at Spofford Pond School. This work will continue in the months ahead and future progress will be shared.
- Finally, a big thank you to the Boxford PTO for supporting many initiatives at both schools through their Teacher Wishes Grant Program!



INSPECTOR OF BUILDINGS

Well, on January 4th we said our goodbyes and best wishes to Teresa Mason as she embarks on her new life adventure going back to school to become a teacher.

The Department continues to digitize and go to “the cloud”, and I am hopeful that we will be able to fund the digitization our street file records in next year’s budget. This will allow some flexibility with the office space to have the administrative staff and department heads work spaces adjacent each other.

We have worked on our social media presence and will have a lot to talk about on social media as the 10th edition of the Massachusetts building code should be adopted and in force by early April. There will be significant changes in this new edition. The Fire Department and the Building Department continue working together on the 110 safety inspections of public spaces. If you have any comments or questions, please reach out to us.

Peter Delaney, Inspector of Buildings

DIRECTOR OF LAND USE

The Boxford Conservation Commission reviewed and approved several town-sponsored culvert replacement projects during the fourth quarter of the year. Each of these projects were designed to comply with stringent new stream crossing standards. In each case, old undersized pipes will be replaced with a much wider three-sided box culvert with an open bottom, and will resemble small bridges. The stream running through the new culvert in each case will have a natural stream bed and space enough for terrestrial wildlife passage to the side of the stream. The culvert projects are located at Glendale Road near MacDonald Drive, Herrick Road near the entrance to the Wildcat Conservation Area, Georgetown Road near the Four Mile Pond Dam, and Pye Brook Lane at Pye Brook. Permits for the Herrick Road and Pye Brook Lane culvert projects were approved in December, 2023. The Glendale Road and Georgetown Road culverts are still under review.

The Commission also held public hearings on

two new driveways proposed by 599 Main Street LLC and intended to serve four lots on a 38-acre parcel of land located off Main Street and Silvermine Road. The Commission is in the process of selecting a peer review consultant, funded by the applicant, to assist in the review of these projects.

The Commission also held public hearings on the proposed construction of a trailhead/parking area and other improvements associated with the Border to Boston Trail section located between Georgetown Road and the Boxford/Georgetown town line. The Border to Boston trail provides a continuous recreational trail connection from Newburyport to Boston and towns in between. The proposed improvements to the trail in Boxford will greatly enhance the accessibility and experience of the trail while providing for improved drainage, safeguarding wetland resources, and including consideration for abutter concerns.

The Conservation Commission seeks a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Commission.

The Boxford Planning Board approved driveway permits for 9 Kates Lane and for a new parcel at 68 Georgetown Road, formerly part of the Dorman property. Approval was also recommended for a proposed in-law apartment and garage expansion for 39 Lily Pond Road. A proposed driveway at 20B Wildmeadow Road was reviewed and continued for further discussion.

The Planning Board seeks a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Board.

The Community Preservation Committee held their annual public hearing in November. The purpose of this Hearing is to obtain comments from the public on the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town of Boxford regarding community preservation possibilities and resources. Projects presented at the hearing and currently under consideration include the rehabilitation of the Johnson Field Playground, a water quality assessment of Stiles Pond aimed at the rehabilitation of this vital recreational resource, signs and other improvements for recently acquired recreation/open space on Herrick Road, and a robotic mower for recreational fields. The Committee also reviewed and recommended funding for a housing coordinator to assist the Boxford Housing Partnership in its efforts to promote community housing.

The Community Preservation Committee seeks a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Committee.

BOXFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Boxford Police Department had a very productive 2023. Officer Brooke Lindley was moved to an administrative five and two schedule allowing her to continue with her SRO work at Masconomet as well as visit at Cole and Spofford Schools on a regular basis. The Regional Animal Control Program was able to add a second full-time animal control officer. We'd like to welcome Teagan Dolan. The challenges of traffic enforcement in town continue. The Police Department conducted 3,714 vehicle stops in 2023. Sergeant Anderson and Officer Dupont are working toward a spring evaluation of MA 6th Edition Accreditation standards and the department continues its collaboration with the communities of Georgetown, Groveland, Newbury and Rowley for the Regional Clinician Program.

BOXFORD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Do you have a house number visible to us? Each house should have their number posted on their house and at the end of the street. This simple move will help responders find you in an emergency. The house number should be 3-5 inches (roughly the size of an adult hand), a different color than your house and fixed permanently. In addition, you should have your number posted at the street such as on a mailbox (both sides) or on a post or tree. If you share a driveway, please make sure that you and your neighbors distinguish each driveway with a sign. Finally, don't forget to brush the snow off your numbers during heavy snow.



BOXFORD COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

The Communications Department has been practicing on ProPhoenix, our new Computer Aid Dispatch (CAD) software along with the Police and Fire Departments. We hope to "go live" on this new system within the next couple of months.

We are also looking to hire a full time Dispatcher. If you or someone you know might be interested, please check out the job posting on the Boxford Town website at <https://www.town.boxford.ma.us/human-resources/pages/communications-full-time-dispatcher>.

As we are in winter storm season, we would like to remind residents of what to do if your electricity goes off.

If your electricity goes off, please notify National Grid at 1-800-465-1212.

- You will be connected with an automated system which will immediately alert National Grid as to your outage.
- If multiple residents in your area call it will immediately alert National Grid to a more widespread outage.
- **It is very important that ALL residents experiencing an outage call National Grid immediately when an outage occurs so that National Grid has an accurate number of outages and can begin repair of the problem.**

Please do not call the Police or Fire Departments to report an outage unless you have an emergency.

- If you do have an emergency, please call 911.
- Currently National Grid cannot detect individual resident outages remotely. If the outage lasts more than 12 hours, you may want to re-notify National Grid of the outage as sometimes a repair in your area will be made that restores some, but not all residents. The system National Grid uses for outages may be updated that a repair has been made and remove your area from the outage list so it is important to keep National Grid updated.

You can also download the National Grid app on your smart device which will allow you to report outages as well view existing outages in your area.

Congratulations to Communications Dispatcher Jim Fernandes, who is retiring this month after 18 years of service for the Town of Boxford. Thank you, Jim, and we wish you the best of luck in the future.



Jim Fernandes (left) and Sergeant AJ Paglia (right)

VETERANS SERVICES

Veterans Services had many accomplishments during 2023:

- Change title of administrative assistant position to Veteran Service Officer.
- Conducted Medal of Fidelity Ceremony to honor the families of Veterans who passed due to their service-connected disabilities.
- The Veterans Service office was recognized by the North Shore Chamber of Commerce by receiving the chamber's Minute Man Award. The Veterans Service Office was recognized by the Greg Hill Foundation and Chick-fil-A Community Hero Award.
- In early Spring new burial flags were placed on the graves of every Veteran buried in Boxford. This was done in partnership between the Boxford graves officer and the local girl scout troop.
- Civic engagement event was conducted between the girl scouts and the Boxford graves officer where the burial flags were taken down and retired after the holidays.
- Coordinated with the Boxford boy scouts to retire the Boxford Cemetery flags at joint town flag retirement ceremony which will be conducted yearly. Going forward we hope to grow this event with a sponsored cookout open to the community.
- Partnered with The Boxford American legion to conduct the "Poppy drive", in doing so raised over \$5,000.00 which will go back into the community by way of scholarships.
- Conducted outreach at the Boxford Apple festival.
- In November the office assisted in the dissemination of 25 Turkeys, donated by the American Legion to the communities of Boxford, and North Andover.
- Maintained presence in town by conducting open office hours in Boxford twice a month, on the first and third Thursday of the month.
- Assisted 48 Veterans and dependents in Boxford with enrollment in Veterans Administration Healthcare, Veterans disability claims, and burials.
- 51 Boxford Veterans were seen at VA Facilities for a total of 1,386 unique patient encounters.

TRI TOWN COUNCIL

Open Gym - Stick and Puck

For Tri-Town youth in grades 7 - 12
Saturday, February 10th
7 - 9PM
Masconomet Fieldhouse

It's a hockey themed Open Gym for Tri-Town youth in grades 7 - 12. No pre-registration necessary. Show up ready to play!

Strategies for Building Trust and Communicating with your Teen

Thursday, February 29th
7 - 8:30PM
Masconomet High School Library

Teen mental health matters! Join Tri-Town Council to review a recorded webinar on supporting communication about mental health and building trust with your teen. Post screening, we'll have a live discussion/Q&A w/ Randi Brown, LMHC.

Lunch and Learn: It's All About Humanity

Hosted by Let's Talk Tri-Town live via ZOOM
Tuesday, March 5th
12 - 1:30PM

Come lunch and learn with Let's Talk Tri-Town and facilitator Cyndi Weekes-Bradley. In this workshop, we'll focus on seeing the value of many minority groups and understanding anti-racism through the lens of equity.

Find out more information about all of these events at tritowncouncil.org/events



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Town of
Boxford
Massachusetts

BCATV Boxford Cable Access Television

BCATV is a 501(c)(3) non-profit incorporated in 2005 currently operating 3 cable television channels for the enjoyment of the residents of Boxford. Our funding comes from a small access fee on each cable subscriber's monthly cable bill.

Our Government Channel, Comcast Ch 8 / Verizon Ch 39, records and plays back most Boxford government meetings. Many of the meetings are broadcast live whenever possible. We have been providing this service since our incorporation over 15 years ago.

Our Educational channel, Comcast 99 / Verizon 40, is oriented towards Masconomet events. Masco spring sporting events, concerts, special events and Class of 2023 events are being featured with many being broadcast live on our website streaming channel.

Our Public Access channel, Comcast Ch 8 / Verizon Ch 45, covers other Boxford events not mentioned above, such as youth sports, local concerts, Memorial and July 4th Parades, BAA Men's Softball starting mid-June, etc.

The homepage of our website, www.BoxfordCableTv.com, lists links to all the upcoming live streaming events for the next 10 days. In addition, there is a [TV Schedules](#) link and an [Upcoming Events](#) link on our home page which provide a quick way to see what is going on in Boxford over the upcoming 10 days.

Further down on our homepage is our Video On Demand (VOD) widget, which allows residents to playback previously recorded event videos and even download them as desired. There are also links to other websites of specific interest to the residents of Boxford.

In summary BCATV strives to strengthen our community by increasing and enhancing communication among our residents via our website and our 3 local cable access television stations.

WEST BOXFORD IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with your friends, new and old, by going to Boxford's 13th Annual Soup & Chowder Fest for some hearty food. Join us for this all-you-can-eat dinner and try some local favorite dishes of various New England chowders, soups, stews, and yummy desserts. Bring your appetite and come early for the best selection. Tickets are purchased at the door.

When:
Saturday, March 16, 2024
5 to 6:30 pm

Where:
Lincoln Hall, 563 Main Street, Boxford

Tickets:
\$15 Adults
\$6 Children

This annual fundraiser is a popular event hosted by the West Boxford Improvement Society, a volunteer organization organized in the late 1800's devoted to community betterment projects and helping Boxford neighbors in need.

BOXFORD ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

News from the Boxford Athletic Association:

Attention Masco Class of 2024! Graduating seniors: Please be on the lookout for BAA scholarship application information coming out in the next couple of weeks! We will have information available via posts on the BAA Facebook page as well as BAAsports.com.

Winter indoor clinics are now running for BAA spring sports--Spring program information and registration are open on BAAsports.com.

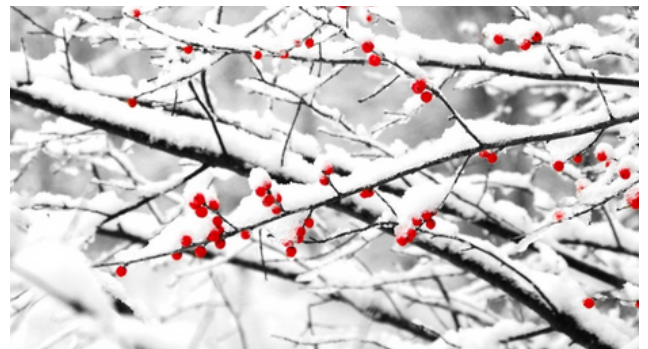


Photo credit - Alex Constan