



JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2021

LEEDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION
P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053
LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com
LeedsCivic.org

LEEDS LETTER

UPCOMING 2021 EVENTS

TUESDAY, MARCH 9
LCA MONTHLY MEETING
7:00 p.m. (ZOOM)
For an invitation contact Karyn:
karynnelson@gmail.com

SUNDAY, MARCH 14
3.14 - PI DAY PIZZA PARTY
YOUR DINNER HOUR!

TUESDAY, APRIL 13
LCA MONTHLY MEETING
7:00 p.m. (ZOOM)
For an invitation contact Karyn:
karynnelson@gmail.com

"What good is the warmth
of summer,
without the cold
of winter
to give it sweetness."

-John Steinbeck-



This First Article is Especially for YOU!!

If you haven't yet renewed your LCA membership, please do so right after reading this article! Due to the pandemic the LCA is unable to host our one and only annual fundraiser, the "Beat the Winer Blues Pizza Party." Your December newsletter with member renewal information may already have been recycled, so here is the member renewal information again: The cost for a family is \$10, businesses \$25. You can renew on line at leedscivic.org or write a check, made payable to: Leeds Civic Assoc. and mail to P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053.

The LCA is a volunteer organization. No one gets paid. We offer our skills, time and talents for free for the good of the community (Some of you are part of that effort). Even with the pandemic the LCA has worked hard to keep our community connected by publishing this newsletter, hosting the pumpkin carving contest, ordering new Leeds hats, contributing to our schools and students, organizing litter pick-ups, and continuing to address the summer problem along the river. If the reasons listed have not moved you to your checkbook, perhaps the chance to win \$200 will! (This is an anonymous gift from a member.) Every up-to-date member and new member will be included in the drawing (except board members). A random number generator will be used to determine the winner. The raffle will end at 6 p.m. on March 14th. Time to renew!

Pi Day = Leeds Pizza Night on (3.14)

Pi (π) is the value that is calculated by dividing the circumference of any circle by its diameter (we typically round the value to 3.14). So, in honor of Pi and in lieu of our annual "Beat the Winter Blues Pizza Party" we invite you – encourage you – to order a pizza pie from your favorite pizza place and enjoy it at home knowing that other Leeds neighbors and friends will be doing the same thing on that evening. This is the best we could do for a safe pizza party during the pandemic. . . Alla vostra salute! (To your health!)

Ice and Snow by Heidi Stevens

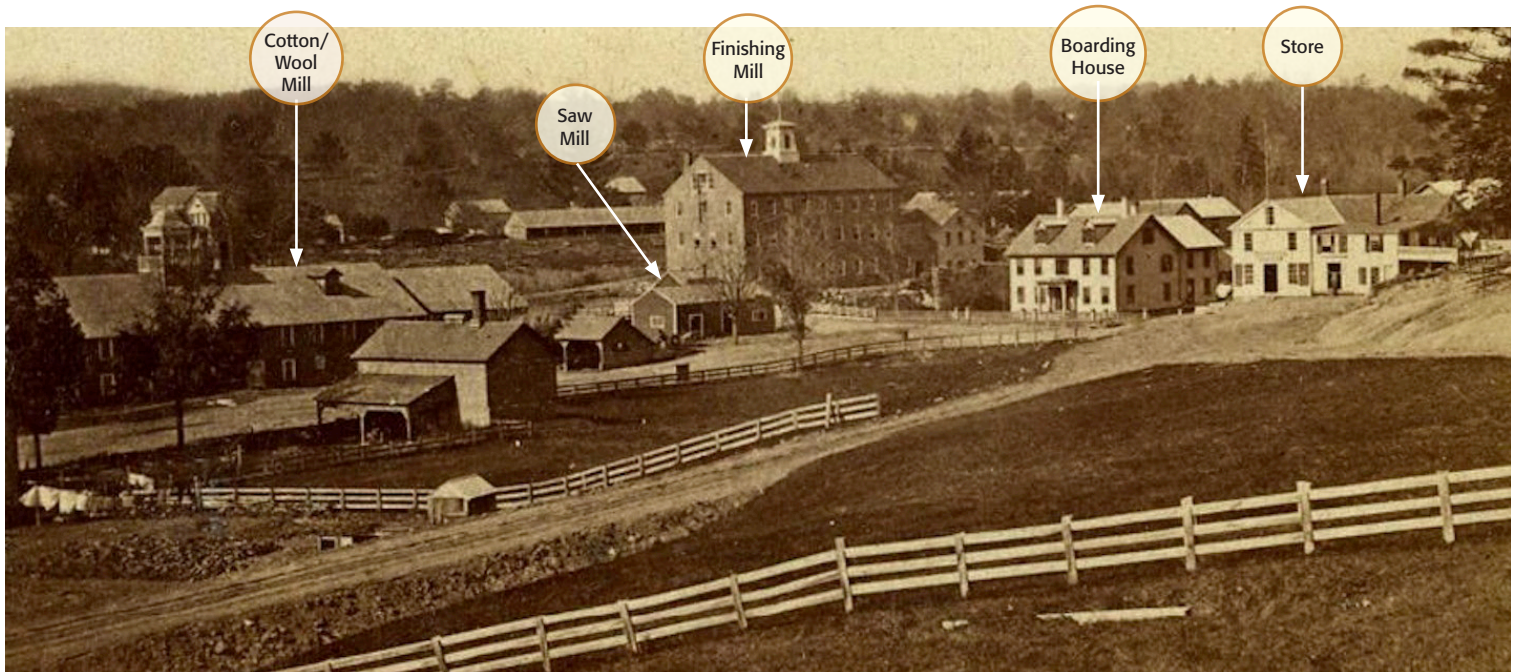
While walking along the river trail south of Beaver Brook, I stopped short when I saw a mini ice rink had been cleared on the Mill River. The intense Christmas rain had created a small pond about one foot deep on this low pebbled sandbar. Some fun-loving group had not only shoveled off the February snow and created a pint-sized rink, but also formed a giant snow bear resting on it's back, arms out stretched. The face with a heart shaped rock as a nose and an open mouth full of dried leaves made me crack up! And the bear was not alone. Along the borders of the rink were 3 foot high, funny snow faces with thin stick sculptures in between. I imagine the hours of fun kids must have on this little winter oasis on the river, skating around the snow bear. The short path to the rink is sloped just enough that if you were wearing slippery winter outerwear, you could slide down penguin-style onto the ice...I imagine the kids do that, too!

If you live on Water Street, it would be impossible to miss the snow bunny on Bob and Margie Riddle's front yard. Nearly 8 feet tall, including the ears, the rabbit sculpture takes up close to half the snow covered lawn! Early February snow storms left over a foot of snow that was perfect for sculpting. After snow blowing his two neighbor's driveways and his own, Bob stayed outside and got creative. He is, among other things, an artist and knows his animal shapes. He also has a history of giant snow sculpting. He once made a unicorn in his backyard, but unfortunately few caught sight of that marvel.

This year, Bob chose to sculpt a rabbit because his granddaughter absolutely loves rabbits! I do, too! So, when I heard about the giant rabbit on Water Street, I went over to see it for myself. The bunny sat sphinx-like gazing out to the road, it's huge cotton ball shaped tail balanced out the rear. Bob said the only tricky part was stabilizing the ears to be straight and tall. So tall, in fact, that Bob had to set up a ladder to reach the ears and get them just right.

I love seeing signs of creativity in the winter landscape and evidence of people who embrace what New England winters give us. Snow and ice can be a pain to deal with sometimes, but every now and then it's a gift that with a little imagination and effort can be repackaged into something wonderful, like a snow bunny!





Oldest Known Photo of Leeds Shows Col. Shepherd's Mills

The photo above was taken *circa* 1867, the same year the rail line to Williamsburg was completed. The buildings, however are from decades earlier. You can see the roof of Col. Shepherd's saw mill, 1809; his woolen mill on Main Street, 1812; the 3 story wool finishing mill on Mulberry Street on the west side of the river, *circa* 1825. The boarding house on Mulberry Street was built in 1814 and the store was built in 1843.

Leeds was once called Shepherd's Hollow, named after Colonel James Shepherd and his cousins who (right from the center of our little village) ran the largest woolen business in the country from 1809-1828.

Elusive Sign of Peace by Harmony Matters

The message was simple enough and timely for the dark December month. It said, "P E A C E," each letter spray painted in a different bold primary color. Problem was that each letter, on its own plexiglass panel, was tagged on the Front Street PVRTA bus stop shelter. There it stayed for several days, impressing a few who noticed it as it faced west toward the center of Leeds village.

Some days later the PVRTA maintenance guy showed up. He's seen lots of bus stop graffiti, destruction and trash. But this was something different. Even he marveled at the technique used by the spray painter. There was little drippage, sharp outlining and all this done in a public area and not witnessed by a soul.

But none the less, and as reluctant as he was, the maintenance man began power washing the five letters off the plexiglass – It seems, he said, several people called to complain, so **PEACE** was removed once and for all.

Green Tip by Amy Stamm

Out of the 2.5% of the world's water that is freshwater, less than 1% is available for our consumption. Wasting water has consequences for the 663 million people who don't have access to clean, safe water and for the animals and plants that have decreasing water access. Because the population of the world continues to grow, wasting water puts increasing pressure on aquifers and groundwater supplies, causing their regeneration rates to be lower than their extraction rates. This decreases water security and availability. In addition to all this, filtering and cleaning water to make it potable takes a lot of energy, so wasting water means that you're wasting the energy-intensive process of extraction, distribution, and filtration, all of which rely on fossil fuels and produce dangerous by-products. Considering that Americans consume more water, 457,018 gallons a year, than citizens of any other country, we can

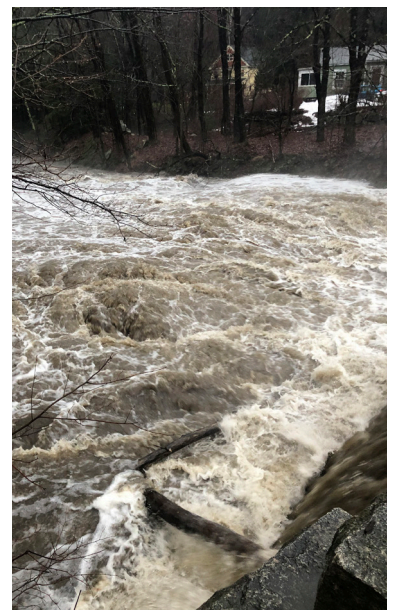
all do a lot to consume less. We can start by taking shorter showers, collecting water in a bucket while we're waiting for the shower to warm up, turning off water while we brush our teeth or shave, capturing rainwater, purchasing efficient appliances and low-flow toilets, making sure we use WaterSense-certified showerheads, and hand watering or drip irrigating our gardens.

Christmas Flood of 2020 by Jason Johnson

Those of us living on the Mill River were surprised to awake Christmas morning to see the river rise from around 60 cubic feet per second the previous day by over 3,000 cubic feet per second in 24 hours. Three inches of rainfall in some areas on top of more than a foot of snow turned the Mill River into a raging torrent overnight. The USGS stream flow data from the Mill River on December 25th, 2020 has peak flow estimated to be 3,240 cfs. This flood was the 2nd highest December flow in recorded history and ranks 18th on largest flows in the 82 year history of recorded data from this site. With the climate changing we can expect more rain on snow type events like these that are capable of producing very large floods.



Water Rages Below Cook's Dam
Photo: Chris Urlich



Pounding Water Below Main St. Dam
Photo: Jason Johnson