



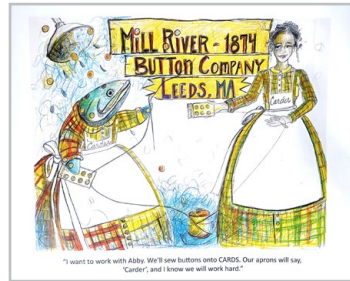
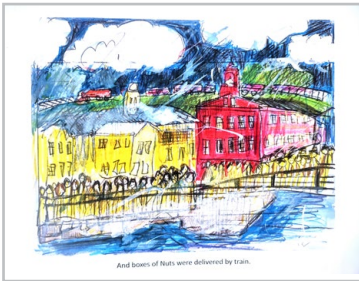
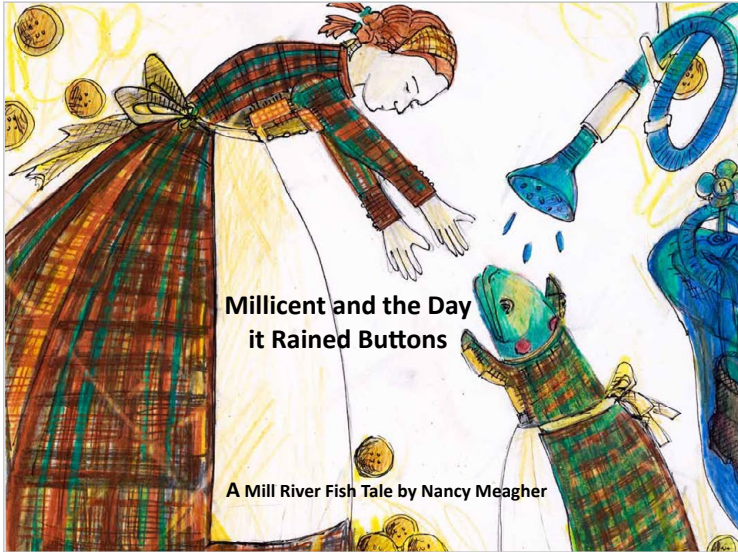
LEEDS LETTER

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NOV-DEC 2022



A Children's Book That Takes Place in Leeds!

A woman's boot recovered from the 1874 Mill River flood on display at the Williamsburg Grange; a brown plaid dress, typical of those worn by mill workers during the mid-1800's; vegetable ivory buttons made on Main Street in Leeds; and the power of the Mill River inspired Amherst artist Nancy Meagher to write a children's book about a fish, Leeds Button Factory workers and the 1874 Mill River Flood.

The protagonist is a fish named Millicent who admires the dresses worn by Leeds Mill River Button Company workers. The fish yearns to be part of the community above water. She recognizes the usefulness of the button mill girls and would like to be useful, too. When the Williamsburg dam bursts, the Mill River crashes through Leeds and the world above and below the water changes. Millicent finds a way to rescue tub load after tub load of flood victims: a small boy, chickens, buttons, and the button factory girls, Annie and Caroline. The whimsical story line of Millicent takes a tragic historical event and pays homage to the real factory girls, Annie Chamberlain and Carolyn Bonnie. Meagher hopes to instill a curiosity in young people about the history of Leeds, the importance of being involved in their community, and being comfortable in their own skin. Meagher also produced an animation of the book. The Mill River Greenway Initiative has the video posted on their website: <https://millrivergreenway.org/k-12-education>

Millicent and the Day it Rained Buttons is for sale at Gallery A3 in Amherst and Historic Northampton. For older readers, *In the Shadow of the Dam*, by Elizabeth Sharpe tells the dramatic story of the 1874 Flood following the water's surge through each village along the way. These two books would make unique holiday gifts!

Caring for Leeds Conservation Areas By Heidi Stevens

Did you know that 25% of Northampton is made up of conservation land? Several parcels are in Leeds. The LCA helps to safeguard the land for users by having trail committee volunteers survey the trails and borders of each conservation area every Autumn. I did it for the first time this year with volunteers, Lora Sandhusen, Erin Mahon-Moore and Justin O'Connor. We walked different sections of Robert's Hill on 4 different days. We noted trail blockages, widow makers, and blow downs with waypoints using the excellent trail app called GaiaGPS. (If you hike, I'd recommend trying the free version, which is what we used.) On Robert's Hill we found 12 trail sections that needed clearing. Our waypoints were sent to Tom Annese, field manager for the Planning Department. Tom has already done the clearing work! Conservation area borders are also walked to note any sign of disturbance, signage and blazes are reviewed, trash and other signs of abuse are included in an end-of-year report for each parcel. The reports are sent to the Department of Planning and Sustainability and the Conservation Commission.

Steve McDonough walked Beaver Brook Greenway North and South and the Kennedy Road parcel. He prepared reports for those conservation areas. On Beaver Brook Greenway South he found a tree had been axed down in an unsuccessful attempt to create a bridge across the brook. Damaging trees, disturbing vegetation, leaving any kind of trash (dog poo bags included) is 100% wrong and against City conservation rules. There is still work to be done on this property, so stay tuned for volunteer trail opportunities in the spring.

Data collected from the 2022 summer trash clean-up collaboration between LCA, the Inclusive Group, and Friends of Northampton Trails were included in the Mill River Greenway-Leeds report. The number of clean ups and trash bags collected per week were noted along with the number of user outreaches. Summer E.coli water testing results, trail quality, improvements made and general concerns were also included. Since the reports were sent in, a tree fell from the river bank at the main swim area. It will be cleaned up by Tom Annese and the narrow trunk lengths will be used to delineate some of the trail edge to prevent any more widening. The stump will remain to ward off erosion and hopefully the small sprout that is still alive on the stump will flourish next spring!

Green Tip - Leaf Piles By Amy Stamm

Following up on "No Mow May" in the spring, here is an autumn tip on how to be green by being lazy. Similar to letting lawns grow without being mowed, not raking your leaves confers several benefits to pollinators. Butterflies and moths lay eggs on the undersides of fallen leaves, and bees build nests in dead plants or shallow holes in the ground. Dead leaves provide insulation and habitat for pollinators, and fertilizer for grass, plants, and trees. This layer of leaves also enables the ground to maintain moisture. Raking, mowing, and bagging leaves destroys these fragile systems. So this year, try being lazy! Let your leaves exist as they are, and your backyard friends will thank you!

Newsletter Delivery Change

The LCA can no longer hand-deliver the Leeds newsletter. We are sorry to have to end what was a lovely, free service for some readers. You can still have a paper copy mailed to your address in 2023. If you would like a paper copy rather than an online version, please include that on your membership renewal, which will be mailed in January, 2023.

The Annual LCA Pumpkin Party Marks it's 25th year!

Many new families have moved to Leeds since the early years of the party and are joining the effort by participating and contributing in some way to this terrific event. Several families from the early days continue to be part of the mix, a few even bring their grandchildren! The pumpkin party is a beloved tradition that kids are sure to bank in their memory forever. It's always so fun! This is why the LCA does it's best to keep it going. It's a party that requires all kinds of things to make it successful: pumpkin entries, food contributions, grills, posters, pumpkin roll pumpkins, music and a great DJ. It takes people to run the pumpkin roll, people to check in pumpkins, vote tallies, prize pie bakers, people to set up lights and tables and take them back down after the four hour party. All of this takes coordination and volunteers. The LCA is pleased to lead this effort and grateful that so many new families and long time residents chip in to make the party a success.

A big thank you goes to Shawn Gunderson for lugging his equipment to the party site and providing music and emceeing for 4 hours, even though he had another gig starting at 8:00! Shawn also put together the unique "Kissing Boo(th)" pumpkin entry. Now, that's party participation!

Thank you to Ian Woglom, Scott Samolewicz, Constantine Voyevodka, and David Rondina for helping to organize and/or run the pumpkin roll, which drew 32 kids. First place winner was Dylan Steed, who took possession of the 3-D framed pumpkin roll trophy until next year's roll reveals a new winner. The second place winner was Rowan Durant-West. Both winners received a gift certificate to A2Z.

The gallery of pumpkins is always the focal point of the party, without which the party would be something entirely different. This year 17 families made the gallery of 30 carved pumpkins. Thank you to everyone who took the time to carve a pumpkin or put together an assemblage for the display! They were all quite amazing. The first prize really stunk! It was a skunk spraying it's victim carved by Justin O'Connor. Second prize went to Clara Rondina for her pumpkin cottage complete with leafy awnings, a smoking chimney and Goshen stone steps! The huddle of dried apple face witches warming around a glowing cauldron by Heidi Stevens won third place. Each winner won a home-made pie baked by either Linda Butler, Marc Freedman, or Julie Jones. Thank you bakers!

Thank you to the 27 families who contributed delicious homemade soups, chilis, breads, sides and desserts (seven of which also carved pumpkins!) Hats off to you all! You can view all of the pumpkin entries on the LCA website [here](#).

UPCOMING EVENTS

LCA December Meeting
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 13
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.
Leeds School Cafeteria

LCA January Meeting
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9
7:00 - 8:00 P.M.
Leeds School Cafeteria

The LCA wishes you all a wonderful holiday!

Check your mailbox in January for the next LCA newsletter. It will include the 2023 membership form!

