



# LEEDS LETTER

LCA P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053

LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com

LeedsCivic.org

**AUTUMN 2023**

## UPCOMING LCA MEETINGS - ALL WELCOME!

**OCTOBER LCA MEETING, TUES, OCT 10, 7:00 - 8:00 PM.**  
Leeds School teachers' lounge

**NOVEMBER LCA MEETING, TUES, NOV 14, 7:00 - 8:00 PM.**  
Leeds School teachers' lounge, Voting for board members

**DECEMBER LCA MEETING, TUES, DEC 12, 7:00 - 8:00 PM.**  
Leeds School teachers' lounge

## LEEDS 2023 PUMPKIN PARTY

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28** RAIN DATE: - OCTOBER 29

## PUMPKIN ROLL & CARVING CONTEST

**4:00-8:00 CORNER OF CHESTNUT & UPLAND**

- 4:00 Pumpkin roll begins.
- 4:00-5:30 Pumpkin entries accepted at check-in table.
- 4:30-6:00 Drop off food at party site.
- 6:30-7:30 View pumpkins and vote for the funniest, scariest, and most artistic pumpkin.
- 7:45-8:00 Winners announced and prizes awarded.

Sign up to bring a soup, bread, dessert with QR code.



HOSTED BY THE LCA - LEEDSCIVIC.ORG



### JOIN THE HALLOWEEN FUN AT THE LEEDS PUMPKIN PARTY

Carve or decorate a pumpkin entry and add to the party! It's always a fun time with homemade food, music, voting, and prizes! To contribute a food item call or text Marc Freedman at 774-219-4290 or use the party's Signup Genius link: <https://tinyurl.com/3jru7kyz>.

### MYSTERY VOLUNTEER

Early this summer, a kind soul weeded the iron steps leading from the bike path up to Front Street. Each year climbing weeds tend to obscure large swaths of the stairs. Thank you who ever you are! Your good deed was noticed and is appreciated!

### THE LCA'S ICE CREAM SOCIAL - By Marc Freedman

It was a bright, warm day and a perfect ending of the summer, and for the Leeds Annual Ice Cream Social. The event was held at the Leeds Village Green on Main Street. Many neighbors (over 65!) gathered for a last hurrah and lots of yummy Mt. Tom's Ice Cream. This year's flavors were a little more exotic with Burnt Coffee, Salted Chocolate with Almonds, Irish Cream and Orange Sherbert. I'd like to thank all the volunteers that helped set-up, scoop and clean-up. Maren Freedman, Logan Hodges, Sadie Mahon-Moore, Penny Geis, Michael Wojtech, Christine Luiggi, Earl Munier, David Rodina, and Colin Chambers.

### A CHANGING MILL RIVER AT CONSERVATION AREA - By Heidi Stevens

July's strong flood waters changed the contour of the river near the new conservation area north of Chartpak. Water washed 10 to 20 yards into the wooded area wiping out low plants and short shrubs. The wide pebbled beach that connected to the eastern bank was submerged for most of the summer. In this area the river bed was dug deeper along the east bank, so just a narrow peninsula of pebbly beach remains. The hedge of Japanese knotweed that grew along the west side of the pebbly beach was smacked down by the flood. The rainy summer kept the river much higher than normal.

**RIVER OUTREACH** - For the second summer, a couple of volunteers from the LCA and Friends of Northampton Trails have been chatting with folks at the river on weekends, reminding them about the carry in-carry out policy and offering trash bags. When there is something as beautiful as a refreshing river in front of you, it's easy to agree about the need to help keep it healthy. Users were happy to be given a big trash bag to make their cleanup easier.

Less trash was left behind this summer. From Memorial Day to Labor Day, a grand total of 14 (28 gallon) bags were collected by volunteers from Friends of Northampton Trails (FNT), the Inclusive Group (IG) and the LCA. The wet weather played a big role, and the outreach probably did, too. Thirteen full bags of trash is still too much, but compared to the summer of 2022 when volunteers collected 53 bags, we feel like we are moving in the right direction.

**THANK YOU RIVER CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS** - Your efforts benefit the health of the river and the greater community! Thank you Friends of Northampton Trails: George Kohout, Elean Huisman, Deb Orgera; LCA: Bruce Walker, Julie Akeret, Steve McDonough, Justin O'Connor and Heidi Stevens; Inclusive Group: the Carmody-Reiss family, the Durrant-Wests and the Recubers.

A special thank you goes to Bruce Walker who was amazing this past summer (He was last year, too!). He stood in as a replacement on a holiday weekend, he walked the bike path and river trails almost every Monday and after hot week days to check for and cleanup trash. He and his dog, Madea, are a dedicated Leeds team.

### WATER SAMPLING FOR E.COLI TESTING

It's important for swimmers to know if the water is safe for swimming! Pamela Cobb volunteered to collect water samples again this summer. Thank you Pamela! The LCA would also like to thank Peter Parsons who was a solid addition to the volunteer team. This is the third summer the LCA has participated in the Connecticut River Conservancy *E. Coli* monitoring program. Every Thursday morning for 15 weeks either Pamela Cobb, Peter Parsons, or myself collected water samples from the new conservation area and took them to the Connecticut River Conservancy headquarters on Damon Road. The CRC sends weekly water samples to a lab for bacteria testing.

### WINTER READING RECCOMENDATION - By Heidi Stevens

If you live in Leeds and haven't yet read Elizabeth Sharpe's book, *In the Shadow of the Dam*, now is the perfect time! May 16, 2024 is the 150th anniversary of the 1874 Mill River flood, the biggest man-made disaster of its time. Sharpe retells the story of the flood, which was caused by a shoddily built dam that burst as village mill workers began their work day.

In Williamsburg, Haydenville, Skinnerville and Leeds, mills and homes and livelihoods were destroyed in under an hour. The flood claimed a total of 131 lives (51 from Leeds). Sharpe's book brings to life heroes like the horseback riders who risked their own lives to warn those down stream, the survivors whose accounts are harrowing, and how greedy mill owners escaped accountability.

It's a good time to brush up on Leeds history! Copies of *In the Shadow of the Dam* can be found at local libraries and bookstores in Amherst and Northampton. The LCA has 4 copies for sale (\$21.95). I'd lend you my copy, but it's currently out on loan with two people on the waiting list!



### PREP WORK FOR THE MILL RIVER FLOOD COMMEMORATION

The Flood Memorial on Main Street got a good scrubbing this summer. Thank you to Sadie Mahon-Moore for volunteering to help clean the granite stone, freeing it of moss, lichen and even slugs!

It's ready for the May 2024 public gathering where we will honor the 51 Leeds residents who lost their lives in the 1874 flood.

The LCA is part of a multi-village group planning other events around the 150th anniversary of the Mill River flood. In May 2024 there will be guided hikes to the dam site, a theatrical performance, river art exhibits, and self-guided tours to 65 historical marker sites along the river. More details about events will be in the January membership newsletter.

### NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY RESPONDERS

By Rachel Maiore, Ward 7 City Councilor

After two years in the making, the City's new Division of Community Care (DCC) has opened its doors at One Roundhouse Plaza, behind City Hall. The DCC, which falls under the Department of Health and Human Services, was born out of the recommendations of the Policing Review Commission's final report.

Currently the DCC is open Monday-Friday, 8:30a.m. to 4p.m. Folks can stop in or call or text (877) DCC-0413. Responders will travel anywhere in Northampton, but are not currently providing emergency response. Work and collaboration between the DCC, dispatch and emergency services continues. For now the Responder team is offering support for those experiencing houselessness, emotional distress, difficulty with meeting basic needs, substance use, navigating conflicts, and other related situations.

I met the dynamic team of Community Responders at the Division's grand opening on Sept. 8th. I look forward to the Division continuing to grow and will advocate for adding mediation and ranger services for areas here in Leeds and citywide.

### GREEN TIP: PLOGGING - By Amy Stamm

In 2016, a Swedish trail runner named Erik Ahlstrom moved from a small skiing village in northern Sweden to Stockholm, where he was stunned by the amount of trash he saw in the streets. He started picking up trash when he jogged and created a website called "Plogga," a combination of plocka upp (pick up) and jogga (jog), to organize group events for community-minded joggers to clean streets and community spaces together. The idea of "plogging," combining exercise with trash removal and environmental stewardship, spread to other European countries and has now become a global movement.

As more and more people across the globe have joined in the movement, parks, trails, beaches, and other parts of the natural world have been cleaned up. The Swedish government has saved hundreds of millions of dollars in cleanup costs as a result of the widespread plogging movement. Other countries have also benefited. In India, Ripu Daman Bevi started a Facebook group called "My City=My Responsibility," inspiring followers to form Ploggers of India, which has organized over 500 cleanup drives. In the U.S., Keep America Beautiful has promoted plogging through TrashDash events around the country. So, join this global movement and have fun while beautifying Leeds!

### NEW KIOSK SIGN AT ROBERT'S HILL

There is a new kiosk sign at the Dimock Road entrance to Robert's Hill. It includes an updated trail map, the story of why the area is called Robert's Hill and Northampton conservation area regulations. The new sign is printed on PVC board and is expected to hold up to the weather and UV rays for several years.

### THE BUCK STOPS HERE

At the end of a July bike ride, John Daniel and Justin O'Connor happened upon a large buck grazing at the edge of the bike path near Grove Ave. The riders quietly paused just a few feet away and Justin snapped this photo. Nice how the buck took a moment away from grazing to pose for the camera!

