



LEEDS LETTER

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

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LeedsCivic.org

SEPT-OCT 2022



Leeds Pumpkin Party - Carving Contest and Pumpkin Roll - Oct 29 (Rain date Oct 30)

The popular LCA Pumpkin Party will be full-on this year. Last year, we had just the pumpkin roll and the year before that, just the carving contest, due to the pandemic. This year, both wildly fun components will take place back to back!

Pumpkin contest entries can be carved or decorated, very simple or creatively wild. The party's success is all about having lots of pumpkins on display. The more people participating in the pumpkin contest, the better! And everyone gets to be a judge! Everyone gets to vote for their top three favorites.

Enjoy delicious warm soups, breads and desserts provided by you and /or your generous Leeds neighbors. If you would like to sign up to bring a food item or volunteer to be a food server, you can use the [Signup Genius](https://www.signupgenius.com) link on the LCA website: leedscivic.org. Or, contact Marc Freedman at: mfreedman65@gmail.com or 774-219-4290.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LCA October Meeting

TUESDAY, OCT 11

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Leeds School Cafeteria

Pumpkin Party

SATURDAY, OCT 29

(Rain date, OCT 30)

4:00 - 8:00

Corner of Upland and Chestnut

LCA November Meeting

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Leeds School Cafeteria



Leeds Center Flower Displays

Edna Greene, a life long Leeds resident planted the three beautiful flower displays along Mulberry Street. She also watered them throughout the summer and into the fall. Thank you Edna for making that stretch look so nice!

What's Special About Your Neighborhood? The Origins of the LCA Ice Cream Social

In the summer of 2011, WRSI radio had a competition to win a free neighborhood ice cream social. Contestants had to describe what made their neighborhood special. Deb Orgera, an ice cream lover and former resident of Evergreen Road, wrote this:

Dear Joan, I would like to entice you to come to Leeds for an ice cream social. Most people don't know that we have our own zip code 01053. We are a great neighborhood of all aged folks and our Leeds Civic Association hosts many community events. In addition to political debates during election years, we have a fall potluck, a pumpkin contest at Halloween, high tea on the bridge in May, summer backyard movie nights and a village wide tag sale that just took place. We are connected by our own spur of the bike path to Look Park, Florence and beyond. But in general, we watch each other's back through good times and bad. We grieve together. We also have a lot of fun together.

There are a lot of nice people here that I'd like you to meet. Most people don't know where we are tucked behind the Leeds school and extending up Kennedy and Audubon Road.

I love WRSI, I love Monte, I love Leeds and I love ice cream. And I'm sure I'll like you too :) Please come!

And, the reply... **YOU WIN!!!!** *Your neighborhood is getting an ice cream social tomorrow!*

Back on that June day in 2011, the LCA scrambled to get the word out, a poster was designed, printed and posted, calls were made, the time and place was passed along. The "River" came to the Leeds Main Street Green and served free ice cream to all who showed up and a lot of people showed up! It was the start of what became an annual tradition. The LCA has been holding an end-of-summer ice cream social ever since. This year, the LCA served up nearly 10 gallons of Tom's home-made ice cream to about 65 happy Leeds folks.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to serve the frozen treat: David Rondina, Tim Recuber, Penny Geis, Anne-Marie Fant, Amy Stamm and Ian Woglom. Thanks to Marc Freedman for being the chief organizer with help from Gabe Chambers, Logan Hodges, Maren and Maeve Freedman, and Heidi Stevens. Thank you, Shawn Gunderson for the music. And most of all, thank you to Deb Orgera for getting the party started back in 2011!

Green Tip: Mini-Splits - Amy Stamm

If you are looking for a way to save significant energy this winter, now is the perfect time to install a whole-house mini-split (air source heat pump) system because Mass SAVE is offering a \$10,000 rebate if you do. If you already have radiators or another heating system, a mini-split system can still be installed with a special thermostat to integrate it with your current system. Installing mini-splits will offset a good portion of the energy you may currently be using because mini-splits both heat and cool your home ultra-efficiently. It's important that we all keep taking steps to minimize our energy use and offset climate change. This is a great opportunity to do so. If you are interested in this program, check out <https://www.masssave.com/saving/residential-rebates/air-source-heat-pumps> or call 1-866-527-SAVE (7283).

Mill River Greenway-Leeds Update - Heidi Stevens

Volunteer efforts continue in the new conservation area now called "Mill River Greenway-Leeds," which runs along the Mill River south of Beaver Brook. This area always gets a lot of foot traffic and visitors for 16 weeks during the warm weather months from mid-May through mid-September. Ongoing, coordinated efforts by the LCA and our partners help make the area safer and healthier for users.



NHS student, Elsie Baker collects water samples at the Mill River this summer.

WATER TESTING, MAY-OCT6 - Watershed ecologist, Jason Johnson trained LCA volunteers, Elsie Baker and Pamela Cobb, how to collect water samples for E. coli testing. Every Thursday morning Elsie and Pamela collected water samples, took air and water temperature, and noted weather conditions on Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) log sheets. They drove the samples to the CRC drop-off site on Damon Road. Thank you Elsie and Pamela for the early morning effort! Samples were then sent by CRC to a lab in Greenfield for E. coli analysis. Test results posted on Friday afternoons. The water tested above the MA State health standard for E. coli three times this summer and notices were posted at the conservation swim areas. High E. coli levels often occur after a heavy rainfall. A good rule to prevent illness is to wait for two dry days to pass after a heavy rain event before swimming in rivers, lakes and ponds.

NEW CONSERVATION AREA SIGNAGE - During the summer and early Fall months of 2021, the Northampton Planning Dept. and the LCA worked together to design and produce a formal sign to help define the new conservation area. LCA volunteer Jon Dietrich drew plans for the sign and helped Tom Annese from Northampton Planning Department install it last October. Conservation area rules are routed and painted on the four panel wooden sign. A smaller sign listing the rules in Spanish is posted above. The rules do not prevent people from enjoying the river, but offer a cue as how to enjoy the river safely.

ONGOING EFFORT TO MAINTAIN A TRASH-FREE RIVER AREA

Trash has been an issue in this area for over a decade. As of summer 2021, an organized effort has been in place. From May through Labor Day, volunteers from LCA, Friends of Northampton Trails (FNT), and the Inclusive Group (IG) rotate every third weekend cleaning the conservation area and the bike path that leads to it. The City provides trash bags, hauls away the collected trash and disposes of it.

IG volunteers go out on their assigned weekends and usually bring their kids along to help! This is a terrific opportunity for parents to



Violet Woglom, Marie Samolewicz, Margot Recuber, Genevieve Samolewicz help out at the river conservation area.

model hands-on (or gloves-on) community involvement that has a positive impact on the river ecosystem. Thank you to these families for their effort and being part of a solution that benefits all users: The Sylvesters, Recubers, Durrant-Wests, Fants, Samolewicz, Steed, Carmody-Reiss, and Wogloms. A special thank you to Jenna Recuber for taking over as the IG team leader since Ray Sylvester moved.

Volunteers from LCA and FNT have a different style during their assigned days. Bruce Walker (LCA) brings along his dog, Madea on weekend and Monday morning sweeps. Bruce's dog gets some extra exercise and enjoys snooping under the bushes. Once she found a hot dog. We wish it had not been left there, but Madea didn't care and made it disappear in a flash.

On some weekend afternoons, a few LCA and FNT volunteers added user outreach to the mix. George Kohout and Deb Orgera (FNT), and Lora Sandhusen and I (LCA) enjoyed chatting with groups by the river and connecting with adults and kids about what a beautiful spot it is. Users were reminded that it is a conservation area and the importance of carrying out their trash. People were happy for this friendly outreach. Extra trash bags were handed out. On mornings after outreach occurred there was often NO TRASH or very little. Unfortunately, it is impossible for volunteers to monitor the popular area all the time and reach out to all users. On summer week days and later in the evenings the area is sometimes used by large and small groups who leave their trash behind. The longterm goal is to get all users to adopt environmentally respectful behavior. We hope the City will find resources to increase outreach. The small successes we experienced this summer is proof that we're on the right track.

Thank you to FNT volunteers: George Kohout and Deb Orgera for their work making it a healthier place for people to visit. Thank you to LCA volunteers: Bruce Walker (and Madea); Julie Akeret and her sister, Liza (visiting from NYC); Steve McDonough, Lora Sandhusen and Justin O'Connor for helping out this summer.

Electric Assist Bikes in Leeds - Sadie Mahon-Moore

The bike kiosk on Main Street in Leeds is part of Valley Bike Share, a Pioneer Valley-wide initiative to make bike riding affordable, fun, and convenient for Pioneer Valley residents. There are kiosks all over the valley that connect to an app to rent an electric assist bike right on your phone. You can download the app through valleybike.org where you will be directed to the app store. Once downloaded, you add your information to the appropriate slots, and then are instructed to choose out of three payment options: a monthly membership for \$21.25 a month, an annual membership for \$85 per year, and a pay per ride pass where you pay \$2.66 per ride. Every ride you must dock your bike every 45 minutes to avoid overage fees, no matter which payment option you choose. The bikes themselves are electric assist, so you will get a boost the more you pedal. Because of this, the bikes are a little heavier than average, making the kickstand cumbersome and unloading/docking a little more difficult. Once you're riding the heaviness isn't even noticeable and the longer you ride, the more used to the bike you get. The ride I took while researching for this article was quite enjoyable. I'm recovering from Covid and the electric assist was much easier than a regular bike, so I can imagine the electric assist bikes would be especially helpful to older people or others similarly recovering from an illness. Some extra benefits that made my ride even better were the easily adjustable seats, brake lights, bells, and large baskets. The bikes are a great way to explore and see all the beautiful fall foliage around the Pioneer Valley. Get out exploring, and don't forget your helmet!

2022 Bradford Memorial Award Winners

The LCA Bradford Memorial Scholarships are awarded each year to students planning to pursue their education after high school. This year, four Northampton High School graduates were awarded the scholarship. Congratulations to Quincy Biddle, Jackson Greene, Josie Kirley and Zachery Wheat. Best of luck in your educational pursuits!