

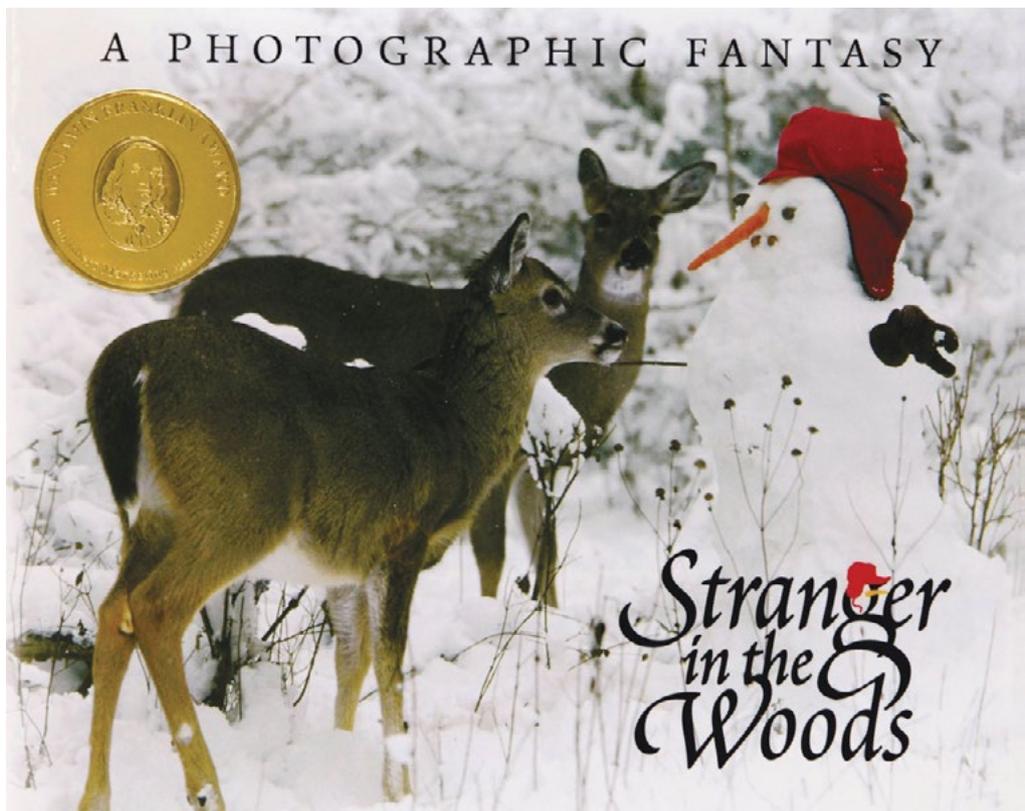


Issue 10, December 2016

# News of the Fells

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The Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation is dedicated to the protection and harmonious use of the Fells; promoting awareness, policies and programs to honor and preserve the ecological, historical and recreational resources of this urban forest reservation.

[www.fells.org](http://www.fells.org)  
781-662-2340  
[friends@fells.org](mailto:friends@fells.org)

## *Stranger in the Woods* StoryWalk®

We are excited to bring you our latest StoryWalk® collaboration with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, Malden CFCE, Mass in Motion, Medford Family Network and the North Suburban Child and Family Resource Network, to offer a self-guided walk through the Fells! *Stranger in the Woods*, by Carl R. Sams II & Jean Stoick, is a delightful book about the animals and birds' reaction to a snowman that suddenly appeared in their woods after a winter storm. Laminated pages of the book will be displayed along the trail from December 24 until January 8. Please sign in

on the sheet posted on the Kiosk at Greenwood Park (across from the Stone Zoo), 176 Pond Street, Stoneham. There will be a print out with animal tracks to look for along the way and a handout of literacy activities to do at home. Directions for the self-guided walk will be posted at Crystal Trail.

This program was adapted from The StoryWalk® Project created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library.



Diana Lomakin

## News of the Fells

Issue 10

**Neil O. Anderson**

*Publisher, Executive Director*

**Lindsay Cornell Beal**

*Publisher, Vice Chair*

**Diana Lomakin**

*Creative Director*

**Katie Aberbach**

*Editor*

**Cherylanne Petrunti**

*Editor*

**Sheri Qualters**

*Editor*

## Found in the Fells, December

by Bryan Hamlin

[foundinthefells.com](http://foundinthefells.com)

It has to be admitted that there isn't so much to immediately delight the eye in the winter—not if we're used to Technicolor. But there are compensations. The absence of much foliage means that one can see much further in all directions in the woods in the winter, whereas in summer our view gets often hemmed in to looking along the path ahead of us. If we're quietly on foot and keep alert, there is a better chance of seeing animal inhabitants of the Fells. In December '04 I saw a very handsome, healthy-looking fox in Lawrence Woods.

It is also easier to spot the several evergreen plants that grow on the forest

floor. From the Pyrola family are striped wintergreen, pipsissewa and round-leaved pyrola. Other ground-cover wintergreens in the Fells are teaberry, bearberry and partridgeberry. These latter all produce red berries, but don't expect to see too many berries later into winter—they will have most likely been eaten by chipmunks and birds.

Then about half of all ferns and all clubmosses are evergreen, and so the late fall, and into December, if we don't have snow yet, is a good time to see these attractive plants as they are easier to spot now that the competition has died back.



Frosted teaberry by Bryan Hamlin

Dear Friends,

I'm writing to ask you to consider a [tax-deductible, year-end gift](#) to the Friends of the Middlesex Fells Reservation to usher in a new year of expanded youth programs, park maintenance, and vigilant stewardship of our woodland preserve.

Allow me to share a story about Devin, a local high school senior, whose life has been deeply enriched by the Friends' youth programming. Although he grew up in a house next to the Fells, Devin felt uneasy about venturing into the forest, and never stepped foot into the Fells for 16 years. His outlook changed this past spring when he hiked the Fells for the very first time through a Friends program. He shared with me that he is no longer apprehensive in the natural environment but instead wants to celebrate nature every day and join the Friends' efforts to protect and preserve the Reservation. Devin has become an active program participant, volunteer, and student leader. His first hike in the Fells was amongst a litany of firsts for him, including climbing his first tree. Devin is now an everyday hiker, nature enthusiast, and is considering a career



Devin (far left) with Mustangs of the Fells' Saida Osman, Zachary Matteo, and Friends of the Fells Board member Charles Saulnier

## Winter Appeal by Neil O. Anderson

in environmental science. His is one of many stories about how the Friends are impacting lives and impacting nature.

As we reflect on the year past, the Friends of the Fells has a great deal to celebrate. We have continued to lead the charge against incongruous development, created an ambitious program of volunteer-assisted hiking trail maintenance and restoration, and provided recreation and conservation-driven service programs for local youth. The results have been impressive—more than 1,200 volunteers participated in service and stewardship programs to benefit the Fells and its visitors resulting in 36 miles of trails cleared of brush and overgrowth,

and 76 thirteen-gallon bags of trash removed. More than 2,000 children participated in nature-based learning programs.

Our work depends on the generosity of thousands of supporters like you. Today, more than ever, we need your help. [With your generous assistance](#), we will inspire more Devins. We will continue to strengthen our substantial stewardship offerings, and we will have the resources to continue to bring the community together to maintain the character and integrity of the Middlesex Fells Reservation.

Warm Regards and Happy Holidays,  
Neil O. Anderson  
Executive Director



Spectacular sugar maples

## The Colors Teach Us

Photos and article by Barbara Buls Boudreau

Richard Louv spoke at Brookwood School in Manchester-by-the-Sea the other day. His new book *Vitamin N* follows on the heels of his other two ground-breaking works *Last Child in the Woods* and *The Nature Principle*. *Last Child* was a wake-up call to our nation to recognize the necessity of outdoor creative play for children to develop into sound, complete adults. *Nature Principle* is targeted more toward adults and the restorative period we are now entering, the most creative period in history. *Vitamin N* contains 500 suggestions about how to incorporate nature and outside time into our kids' lives. Nature provides peace, essential microbes, fresh air, exercise. Though we live in houses, nature is essen-

tially our "home," and knowledge of surroundings increases our safety and enhances our life experience. I have followed Louv's writings since *Last Child*. As an Interpretive Coordinator for Massachusetts State Parks, I have experienced fear and hesitation from parents of small children about being outdoors, but more than anything, unfamiliarity. Of course we want to infuse our children with nature, the natural order, sunshine, and clean air. But in order to succeed, we need the parents.

Anytime is a good time to start. Parents sometimes feel inadequate about teaching their kids about nature, but lucky for you, there are materials everywhere. And the season for ease of identification of plants and trees is upon us.

The magic has begun. The natural changes in autumn provide parents with a brilliant opportunity to teach children – a virtual science project surrounding us on all sides, the sensory delight of color, technical lessons of chemical reactions, all contained in a spiritually magical setting – the fall colors emerge.

The process is complex, involving terms like *anthocyanin* and *carotenoid*, chlorophyll of every persuasion and biological processes that can blow the mind, all manifested in a gorgeous display of nature's best. The best part is you don't have to know all the scientific details to introduce your kids to natural species.

And for the nature lover, there is a chance to easily put names to key species. Every plant has its own composition and as a result, its own unique color and window of change.

At this writing, the red maples are at peak, and are concentrated in wet environments, stream beds, and low-lying areas. These are the reds that drive the fall leaf peeping schedule. The change of colors continues for weeks, yet as different species of trees attain their hues, we experience several peaks of color.

Early in the autumnal change, nature spotlights one of the more ubiquitous species in New England: poison ivy. Right now, poison ivy is visible from hundreds

of yards, particularly the tree- and telephone-climbing individuals. It is bright red and surrounds the trunk, reaching sometimes as high as 15 or 20 feet, a spectacular and successful species that also provides plenty of berries for wildlife winter repast. Now is the time to teach children about this noxious plant. Once they can identify it, they can avoid it, unlike yours truly, who suffered from horrible episodes every summer of childhood. Look closely at the leaves and learn them now. Your kids (and you!) will remember what they look like.

Blueberry bushes turn their gorgeous red-purple, Virginia creeper turns scarlet (both anthocyanins), and invasives become show pieces. Just drive on any highway at this time of year. The oriental bitter-sweet becomes bright yellow and lays in virtual sheets over trees on the side of the road. This time of year, you can see how pervasive this introduced plant has become.

Following the red maples with their brilliant scarlet, the sugar maples bloom in orange and yellow combinations that will make your heart sing. They are unique beacons in the less brilliant surrounding palette.

Identifying the sugars now will allow you to collect sap in the spring with your kids, providing yet another opportunity to teach the amazing lessons of nature, and consume its products. When a child eats

something they have harvested themselves, it takes on a whole new meaning and can make them feel more secure in nature. We have gotten so far from the circle of life in recent history that food appears to originate from a store, rather than from natural food-stuffs in the world. If children see themselves as part of nature rather than separate from it, the fear of outdoors melts away and becomes a stage for creative exploration.

Take your time. Pick up a couple of field guides and page through them. Learn and then teach one or two basics. Feel the texture of the bark, of the leaves. Press some colorful leaves (but not poison ivy!) to laminate later. Cut the stems from the leaves and then place them at least a half inch apart in a 5 mm laminating sheet. Once they're laminated, stick a magnet on the back of the leaf, and voila, you have a New England refriger-

ator magnet you can send in a Christmas card. Your kids' knowledge will impress their teachers and draw them closer to the natural world.

And remember to have fun. Exploring nature is enjoyable as well as educational, and has the added benefits of fresh air and exercise. Find your local parks and make friends with the trees, now shutting themselves down for the winter and giving us the true magic of autumn colors.

*Barbara Buls Boudreau works for the Department of Conservation and Recreation as a Regional Interpretive Coordinator, teaching kids and adults about the amazing resources of Massachusetts State Parks. She is also the author of numerous articles and her first novel The Frenchman.*



These red maples really stand out

Green and yellow beech



Golden basswood



New England blueberry



Poison ivy

# Fall for the Fells Success

On Sunday, November 6, Whole Foods Market, together with the Friends of the Fells and Medford Family Network, hosted the first annual Fall for the Fells 5K and Festival at Medford High School. The event included a 5K trail run with over 300 registered runners, a kids' fun run, family activities organized by Knucklebones, and dozens of food vendors and food trucks. All proceeds went to benefit the Friends of the Fells. An estimated 1,000 people attended.

Neil Anderson, Executive Director for Friends of the Fells: "What a great inaugural event this was! Our volunteers were terrific! The runners enjoyed the course immensely and the kids had fun all while celebrating the beautiful Middlesex Fells Reservation. We can't wait to do it again!"

Matthew Robertson, Community Relations for Whole Foods Market: "The goal of this event was to bring our communities together. We wanted to celebrate healthy, active lifestyles amidst the beautiful New England foliage. Huge appreciation goes out to everyone who attended to help support an amazing community organization and for helping make this year's event a huge success!"

Catherine Pedemonti, ongoing Community Partner at Friends of Fresh Pond: "The kids' race at Fall for the Fells was a joy to behold! Kids excited about nature, about the Fells. Kids moving their bodies. Families together, outside, on the weekend, in the Fells. Yet another great example of Friends of the Fells building the future generation of stewards of our local green spaces."

The partnership between Whole Foods Market and the Friends of the Fells has been ongoing. This past summer the Arlington, Medford, Melrose and Woburn store locations hosted a 5-Percent Day fundraiser and raised a combined \$13,000 for the nonprofit. This year's Fall for the Fells event profited \$3,000, which will go towards youth initiatives and stewardship programs.

Danielle Herrera



Diana Lomakin

## Save the Date: Volunteer Event

Did you volunteer for Friends of the Fells this year? Mark your calendars for the evening of February 1, 2017! We'll be having our annual volunteer and donor appreciation party at Slumbrew American Fresh Brewhouse on Assembly Row and we'd love to see you there.

Food, activities, games, and prizes will be provided, and it will be a great opportunity to have fun with old and new friends and to do some networking. Stay tuned for an invite and more details! For details and questions, contact Lindsay Beal at [lindsay@yarsley.com](mailto:lindsay@yarsley.com) or 413-237-4747

# Fall for the Fells



Neil O. Anderson



Danielle Herrera



Danielle Herrera



Danielle Herrera

Matt



Danielle Herrera



Danielle Herrera



Ann Frenning Kossuth



Danielle Herrera



Danielle Herrera



### 07 Evergreens and Other Cool Plants at Long Pond

9:15 - 11:30 AM

Long Pond Parking Lot,

532 South Border Road, Winchester

We will search the Long Pond area for a variety of evergreens as well as other easily recognizable plants of winter including a few winter weeds. As always, we will also focus on some fun and interesting natural history about these plants. Meet at the Long Pond parking lot, South Border Road in Winchester. Heavy rain or heavy snow cancels. For more information about this walk, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

### 09 Fells Running Club Sunrise "Beginner" Trail Run

7:00 - 8:30 AM

Greenwood Park, 176 Pond Street, Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo)

Let's go for an early "beginner" trail run through the Eastern Fells. We'll cover ≈2.5 miles in the area around Whip Hill, at a pace of around 13 minutes per mile over rocky and uneven terrain. Meet at 7:00am at the Greenwood Park Parking Lot on Pond Street in Stoneham (across from Stone Zoo). Rich will be waiting near the bulletin/map kiosk beside the parking lot. We'll start running at exactly 7:10. Lightning or very heavy rain/snow cancels. Email rich@friendsofthefells.org for more information.

### 10 Students of the Fells Amazing Fells Race

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Flynn Rink, 300 Elm Street, Medford

Please come join the Students of the

Fells (SoF) for their Winter Kick Off event on Saturday, December 10th at Flynn Rink in Medford, MA. Student volunteers from the Tufts Mountain Club, the SoF staff, and the 5 communities surrounding the Fells will join together and "race" through the Fells completing an interactive scavenger hunt. No experience in navigation required! Just bring warm clothes, good winter shoes, and an enthusiasm for the outdoors. A light lunch will be provided for participants along with a chance to find out more about future SoF adventures. Students from all towns (Medford, Malden, Melrose, Stoneham, and Winchester) grade 9 and above are welcome! Not a student? You can volunteer. For more info check us out on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/studentsofthefells](http://www.facebook.com/studentsofthefells)

### 13 Living with Coyotes

7:00 - 9:00 PM

Stoneham Police Department

47 Central Street, Stoneham

Join regional Project Coyote representative John Maguranis as he offers a special educational presentation about coyotes! Topics include: Natural Behavior; Habits; Identification; Myths and Facts; Diet; Photography; Pets, Safety, and Hazing. John is the Belmont Animal Control Officer and this event is being co-hosted by Stoneham Animal Control Officer Brian Johnstone and Friends of the Fells. This fascinating presentation is appropriate for school-aged children, but is not recommended for ages 6 and under. For details and questions, please contact Lindsay Beal at [lindsay@yarsley.com](mailto:lindsay@yarsley.com) or 413-237-4747.

### 21 Celebrate the Solstice at Bellevue Pond

9:15 - 11:30 AM

Bellevue Pond Parking Lot

68 South Border Road, Medford

The Winter Solstice is here. Today marks the beginning of winter and the shortest day of the year. We'll take a stroll through the Bellevue Pond area and take a walk up Pine Hill to Wright's Tower to get a good look at the sun. We'll talk about the winter solstice and what it means using poetry, lore and science. And as usual, we'll also focus on plant ID as well as fun and interesting natural history about the plants which we see. Meet at the Bellevue Pond parking lot on South Border Rd in Medford. Steady rain or heavy snow cancels. For more information about this walk, call Boot Boutwell at 781-729-4712.

### 24 Stranger in the Woods Winter StoryWalk®

Park Hours

December 24 through January 8

Greenwood Park, 176 Pond Street,

Stoneham (across from the Stone Zoo)

Join DCR's Winter Feature StoryWalk® during school vacation. Walk a trail, read a story, use your senses and connect with your surroundings. Dress warmly, tramp in the woods and enjoy the magic of reading together outdoors! This StoryWalk® takes place on the Crystal Springs Trail, an easy walk, about ¼ mile. Trail accommodates jogging strollers. For more information, call 617-727-1199.

*Babes in the Woods* is an adult-paced hike designed for parents who carry their children. These hikes will not be appropriate for young children who walk, and trails will not accommodate strollers.

Please remember to wear appropriate shoes and clothing for the weather, and do not forget to bring water! Check the [Facebook page](#) for the latest updates. Email Diana at [dianalomakin@gmail.com](mailto:dianalomakin@gmail.com) for more information.

*Babes in the Woods* meets from 10:00 – 11:30 AM

## December

### 06 Flynn Rink

We will meet at the exercise area next to the Flynn Rink parking lot, 300 Elm Street, Medford.

### 13 Gate 16 Wyman Path

We will meet at Gate 16, the Wyman Path trailhead. Closest address is 83 Hillcrest Parkway, Winchester. On-street parking available.

### 20 Upper Sheepfold

We will meet at the upper Sheepfold parking area, 698 Fellsway West (Route 28) Stoneham ("Sheepfold Dog Park" on Google Maps).

### 27 Greenwood Park

We will meet at Greenwood Park, 176 Pond Street, Stoneham, across from the Stone Zoo.



Diana Lomakin



Amy Murgatroyd

## New Board Member Spotlight by Randi Rotjan

*Name:* Randi Rotjan

*Town:* Medford

*Occupation:* Research Assistant Professor / Scientist

I have been walking the Fells since I started grad school at Tufts in 2001. Although I am a marine scientist, this urban forest has been an important muse for me, and has inspired marine conservation, fostered my love of wilderness, and created the potential for contemplative moments that

have been critical to my personal and professional development. I have shared the Fells with my family and with many visitors from around the globe over the years because I am so proud to have this special forest within walking distance. My most precious Fells moments are personal—when I went walking with my baby boy and we saw a red-tailed hawk bathing in a small stream; when my daughter saw her first lady slipper orchid;

when my husband and I excitedly identified a huge native sycamore tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) in our favorite stretch of woods. Most of my professional conservation efforts are far-flung, and I wanted to do something impactful in my own backyard. So, I joined the Friends of the Fells board because I truly love this forest, and I want to do whatever I can to foster its success.