

For Immediate Release
January 19, 2012

CONTACT: Susan McCaslin
(203) 764-2391
susan@susanmccaslin.com

Mitchell Branch Library
37 Harrison Street, Westville Village, New Haven CT

Presents

'Walk in the Woods'
An Exhibit of Artwork by Susan McCaslin
Inspired by The Old Leather Man
March 1 - 31, 2012

Artist Reception: Monday, March 5 from 6 to 7:30 pm

Lecture and Book Signing

Dan W. DeLuca, author of "The Old Leather Man,
Historical Accounts of a CT and NY Legend"
Saturday, March 17, 2012 at 1:00 pm

Shelter Building

for Children and Families
Rain or Shine
Thursday, March 15 from 4 to 6 pm

NEW HAVEN CT -- Drawings, Paintings and Small Installations by Susan McCaslin will be exhibited at the Mitchell Branch Library, 37 Harrison Street, Westville Village, New Haven CT from March 1 through March 31, 2012. The work is inspired by the Old Leather Man, a Connecticut legend who lived in the second half of the 19th century.

In addition to the exhibit, three events are planned.

Artist Reception: Monday, March 5 from 6 to 7:30 pm. This event is free and open to the public.

Shelter Building for Children and Families: On Thursday afternoon, March 15 from 4-6pm, a Shelter Building Workshop will happen on the grounds of the library. Dress appropriately for the weather. Rain or Shine. However, the workshop will take place indoors if the weather is severe. This event is free and open to the public.

Film, Lecture & Book Signing: At 1:00 pm on Saturday, March 17, Dan DeLuca, an expert on the Old Leather Man, will present a short film and lecture followed by an informal discussion and book signing. Refreshments will be served. Dan is the author of "The Old Leather Man, Historical Accounts of a CT and NY Legend." These events are free, open to the public, and appropriate for all ages.

McCaslin's interest in the Leather Man was sparked by a doll collector in North Branford who owned a rare Leather Man doll – a clump of old leather with a small face poking out from under a hat. With the help of the Internet and Dan DeLuca's book, McCaslin learned that the Leather Man spent the last six years of his life traveling the same circuitous route every 34 days, a 365 mile journey that passed

through at least 41 towns, including New Haven. He took refuge and slept in caves and shelters along the way. Even though he did not speak to people, many fed him and helped him survive. His clothing, which was made from thick, heavy leather and his obsessive traveling, was a source of interest and Leather Man sightings were frequently mentioned in the local papers. These mentions and fabricated stories about his roots added to the legend, making his solitary life difficult. As curiosity seekers searched out his shelters, he was forced to find new ones that were farther off the beaten path.

It is in wondering about the Old Leather Man's perspective that McCaslin finds her inspiration. She is drawn to the solitary aspect of his life, to the caves where he slept, to his few possessions such as cups and pipes that he fashioned from cast off metals. What caught his attention as he walked? Did he have familiar landmarks, familiar bits of nature to let him know that he was on the right path? Might he have had pets – not in the traditional sense but creatures he came upon repeatedly whose trust he might have gained?

Visitors will find a varied and unique group of drawings and paintings. Historical text and thoughts from the artist will also be available as part of the exhibit giving a broader experience for all. A free activity page will be available for younger visitors to peak their interest in the work and in the legend of the Old Leather Man.

About Susan McCaslin

Susan McCaslin is an artist living in New Haven CT. She earned her BFA from Pratt Institute. She has exhibited on nationally and is a member of Loft Artists Association in Stamford CT. She and her husband George Corsillo own Design Monsters, a small graphic design studio in New Haven CT. Contact: susan@susanmccaslin.com

About Dan Deluca

Dan DeLuca is a genealogist, a Meriden, Connecticut historian, and a retired high school teacher. He has been researching the Leather Man for twenty years and is the leading expert on the subject. Contact: danwdeluca@aol.com

About the Mitchell Branch Library

The library is located in Westville Village at 37 Harrison Street, New Haven, CT 06515 | 203-946-8117. Parking is next to the building. Hours of Operation: Mon 12-8 | Tue Closed | Wed 10-6 | Thu 10-6 | Fri Closed | Sat 12-5 | Sun Closed

###