



LEEDS LETTER

APRIL 2014

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2014

History & Hot Chocolate Social

Thursday, April 3
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Leeds School Music Room

LCA April Meeting

Tuesday, April 8
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Leeds School teacher's lounge
Agenda:
Mill River Greenway
Robert Hill Update
Bike Trail Clean Up
Village Wide Tag Sale

City Wide Bike Trail Clean Up

Saturday, April 26
9:00am - 12:00pm
Help clean up the Leeds section!

Memorial Day Celebration

Sunday, May 25
1:00 p.m.
Veterans Memorial Park
(across from Leeds School)

Village Wide Tag Sale

Date to be determined

Leeds Civic Association
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www.leedsciv.org

New Date - History & Hot Chocolate Social, April 3

The correct time for the History Social is 6:30 - 8:30. There was a misprint in last month's newsletter. Come see the slide show and celebrate Leeds' past!

Recap - Rail Trail Extension Community Meeting

Wayne Feiden, Director of Planning and Sustainability for Northampton, presented details about the Rail Trail Extension project to a group of about 45 in the Leeds School cafeteria on March 25th. The current rail trail bike path will be extended from where the trap rock ends at the bottom of the Grove Avenue trail and continue to South Main Street in Haydenville, crossing the Mill River before the Williamsburg town line. (South Main in Haydenville, as many of you know, is the continuation of River Road in Leeds.)

If the expected funding is received, the rail trail extension project is slated to begin late summer or early fall in phases which include protecting the integrity of the Beaver Brook arched bridge and correcting drainage issues at the base of the Grove Avenue paved path. There are still decisions to be made on the best way to design and proceed with the extension. Opinions from those attending ranged from enthusiastic support for asphalt to a fervent wish that it be left an undisturbed wild and natural walking path. Varying opinions were voiced about the trail's surface: whether to pave it with asphalt, use trap rock, or a surface like the one used at DAR.

The width of the bike trail is another design decision yet to be made. Feiden said the standard width is 8-10 feet for asphalt or 10 feet for trap rock. The removal of too many trees was a concern for many and most people seemed to agree that the fewer removed the better. Feiden told the group that the trail from Florence Street north to South Main will not be plowed in the winter because it is not part of a critical transportation route, moving people from one part of the city to another.

Both Feiden and a member of the Northampton's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee who attended the meeting assured the audience that comments and concerns expressed at the meeting will be relayed to the consulting engineer during the design process. If you would like to add your voice to the discussion before the design phase is complete, please contact: Wayne Feiden, wfeiden@northamptonma.gov, or Alisa Klein, aklein@northampton.gov.

Pizza Party Plenty by Heidi Stevens

There was plenty of pizza, prizes, and people beating the winter blues at the 15th annual pizza party held last month at the Northampton Country Club. A big hint of spring sat on every table - a bright yellow container of not-yet-budding daffodils. Jim Mias and Dana Collins pelted their quick wit as they awarded raffle prizes to those with the winning tickets. When the bucket of boozy items donated by Leeds Package Store was won by a teenager, Mias quickly auctioned off the prize to the highest bidder. It was a boisterous auction with bids and hands flying. The teenager went home twenty bucks richer and the bucket of boozy

stuff went home legally with Jim Ryan. Even the bartender commented on how refreshing and unusual it was to see a large group of people of varying ages having so much fun together. The LCA sends a warm thanks to all of you who donated gift certificates, prizes, and hand made items, like the charming hand-felted birds nest with little eggs made by Trine Fabricius Rondina of Upland Road – a perfect harbinger of Spring! When the ground thaws, the table daffodil bulbs will be planted in the Leeds Mulberry Street garden to bloom again.

“The Leeds”... a sandwich!

If you didn't make it to the Pizza Party you may not know about “The Leeds!” For years the Cup and Top cafe in Florence has had panini sandwiches on their menu named after local towns, like The Haydenville, The Easthampton and The Florence, BUT they have no sandwich on their menu named after LEEDS! The Cup and Top agreed that it was time to try out a Leeds sandwich. We came up with 4 options using ingredients from the Cup and Top menu and put the selections out to a vote at the Pizza Party. The winning panini, with 41% of the vote, is the Tuna Melt: curry tuna, monterey jack cheese and apple on peasant wheat. “The Leeds” panini will be offered as a weekly special at the Cup and Top in mid-April. If it sells well it will be added to the menu, so try to make it down to the Cup and Top and order “The Leeds”! Panini runners up: 3 cheese with caramelized onions - 31%, Ham, cheddar, apple - 21%, Chicken BBQ, jack cheese - 7%

Go Take A Hike! by Heidi Stevens, Sue Carbin

The Roberts Hill Conservation Area trails are in the process of getting a thorough and thoughtful reblazing in time for Spring hikers. The Leeds Civic Association in partnership with the Northampton Conservation Commission holds stewardship of the conservation area. When a tree falls across a path and the LCA is notified we ask member Joe LaPlante on Dimock Street to check it out. If the tree is too large, Joe asks his Chesterfield Road neighbor, Pat Melnick, to help with the removal. So far, this dynamic duo hasn't met a tree they couldn't handle. Over the years many Leeds volunteers and families have contributed to annual trail clean ups.

We are especially fortunate this year to have another volunteer, David Litterer, of the University of Massachusetts, who has walked and charted every trail, large and small, detailing problems and potentials. Roberts Hill trails had several generations of trail markers painted on the trees which had become confusing and some were down right sloppy! The wildcat, unauthorized blazes have been painted over and thanks to Dave Litterer, Roberts Hill now has three clearly marked trails which are neatly blazed with green, blue, and orange markings. The Blue trail leads to the summit and a beautiful view. It has entrances on both Dimock, and

Reservoir Road across from Musante Beach. The Green trail is an historical route, a section of the old Boston-Albany route. Its' entrance is at the end of Water Street. The very last section of the Green trail, the part leading out to Chesterfield Road, still needs to be cleared of brush. The Orange trail is an inner loop off of the Green trail. Eventually, connector trails will be blazed with yellow markers. When that is complete the LCA will post a color coded trail map at the Dimock Street kiosk and on the LCA website. The reblazing was a huge project for one person to undertake and Dave really did a beautiful job! Go take a hike... and see for yourself!

Midnight to Midnight: Northampton's self-portrait in 48 hours

by Penny Geis

What do you love about Leeds?

How would you show it in a photo?

Let's make sure Leeds is well represented!

Photos taken by hundreds of Northampton residents will become a permanent part of the city's historical record after a 48-hour photo blitz.

Participation is open to anyone, regardless of age or photography experience. Photos must be taken during the 48 hours between 12:00 am Friday morning, May 2, 2014, and midnight, Saturday night, May 3, 2014. During the following week, each participant may submit up to twelve (12) JPEG files of images of her/his own choosing and up to twelve (12) of specific subjects/areas Historic Northampton hopes to include in the digital record. Sessions for those volunteering to document specific topics will be held in advance at Historic Northampton. No files will be accepted after midnight, Saturday, May 10, 2014.

Historic Northampton, Inc. and Forbes Library will select photos for their permanent collections based on both historical interest and photographic quality. These photographs will be displayed in digital slide shows in multiple Northampton locations, including at Historic Northampton, during August and September, 2014. The blitz was conceived by Historic Northampton director Nan Wolverton, and the Northampton Camera Club is collaborating to organizing the event. If you'd like to help organize it, offer financial sponsorship, or just have questions, contact your Leeds neighbors Penny Geis: pgeis@comcast.net or MJ Marccardini: mjm106@gmail.com

For more information closer to the photo blitz dates, check these two websites: www.historic-northampton.org/, www.forbeslibrary.org

- Times for information sessions at Historic Northampton and Forbes Library to review subjects, camera settings, etc.
- The web address and how-to info for uploading photos.
- Times when assistance with uploading photos will be available at Forbes.