



LEEDS LETTER

LCA P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053 LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com LeedsCivic.org

WINTER-SPRING 2023

LEEDS PIZZA PARTY GAME NIGHT 2023

ELKS LODGE
17 Spring
Street

Go!

SATURDAY, APRIL 29 4:30-7:30 P.M.

- Bring your family
- Invite a friend
- Choose a game at the party or bring your favorite
- Catch up with neighbors
- Enjoy a cocktail
- Eat some pizza
- Maybe win a raffle prize!

Pizza

Wii

Music

Games

Cash Bar

Raffles

LCA MEMBERS

\$5 - Adult
\$3 - Children age 5 to 12
(\$20 max per household)

NON LCA MEMBERS

\$10 - Adults
\$5 - Children age 5 to 12
(\$40 max per household)

If you'd like, bring a dessert
or side dish to share!

UPCOMING EVENTS

FRIENDS OF NORTHAMPTON TRAILS - BIKE TRAIL CLEANUP

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

9:00-10:30 A.M.

Meet at Mlas Catering lot on route 9
at 9:00A.M. Bags will be provided.

LCA MONTHLY MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Leeds School Cafeteria

Come help plan the Pizza Party!

SPRING LITTER CLEAN-UP

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

8:00 - 11:30 A.M.

See page 4 for details and sign up

PIZZA PARTY & GAME NIGHT

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

4:30-7:30

Elks Lodge, 17 Spring Street

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY

SUNDAY, MAY 28

1:00 - 1:30 P.M.

At park across from Leeds School

VILLAGE-WIDE TAG SALE

A SATURDAY IN JUNE

DATE TO BE DETERMINED.

Watch for posters, LCA emails, and
posting on the LCA website.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

END OF AUGUST

DATE TO BE DETERMINED.

Free Mt. Tom's Ice cream served up at
the Leeds Main Street Green. Watch
for posters, LCA emails, and posting
on the LCA website.

PIZZA TIME! GAME TIME!

A party for every age! Kids, adults and everyone in between will find amusement, laughs and fun. There will be plenty of fun board games and card games, a Wii screen for more active play, corn hole, cash bar and Keno for adults, a 50/50 raffle, other raffles and of course pizza! Mark your calendar for April 29th and spend a couple of hours with your Leeds neighbors and friends at the Elks Lodge. If you feel inclined, bring a side dish or dessert to share. Volunteers

to run game tables, set up, gather supplies, check in guests are needed. Help plan the party at the next LCA meeting on April 11th at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome to join in!

You can contact Marc Freedman at 774-219-4290 or mfreedman65@gmail.com to sign up for food or volunteer positions. Or, use this [link](#) to sign up to bring a dessert, side dish, or to volunteer.

Winter at Musante Beach by Heidi Stevens

In early February, I heard that a couple of guys were swimming at Musante on weekends. I was very intrigued, not because one was reported to have been swimming nude, but because I have always wanted to try cold water dips. I've watched the polar plunge at Musante where a couple dozen people get in the frigid water with people cheering from the shore. I never had the courage to try it. I enjoy long distance fresh water swimming from May to early November with my "mermaid" swim pals. When the water temperature drops in mid October my friends and I wear wetsuits and swim until we feel the chilly buzz—about 20 minutes. I know this is sounding like torture to some of you, but trust me, being in cold water does something very cool—increases happiness.

Cold water dips or ice swimming has been part of the Nordic region's culture for hundreds of years and is now popular in many other countries. Most likely because cold water immersion activates endorphins in the brain and nervous system causing a feeling of wellbeing. Mental stress is reduced, the mind clears and a happy feeling ensues.

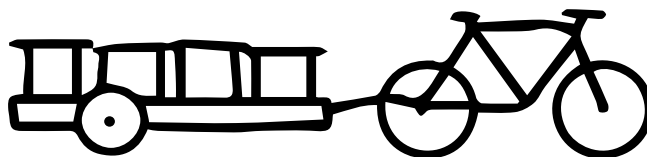
Back to the weekend swimming guys at Musante...The weekend after I heard about the swimming guys, my friend and I were driving by Musante and we spotted the swimmers on their way to the beach. What luck! We tagged along to watch and get some tips. The guys, Sam, Ethan and Reed are in their 20s. Sam had been taking cold water dips for the past month and he said they had made his winter so much better. Reed and Ethan had done it once before. This day they were going to stay in for a full 2 minutes. Pretty much right away they stripped down to their briefs, walked to the water's edge, did some squats to get the blood flowing. Then without hesitation they walked into the frigid water to chest level, submerged to their shoulders and stayed very still and quiet for two minutes. With big smiles and bright pink bodies they walked to shore and leisurely found their towels.



From left to right: Reed, Sam and Ethan

I was cold just looking at them and wondered why they didn't seem to be hurrying to warm up. As they dried off, they told us how it felt and how they expected to feel in the hours ahead. It all sounded fantastic.

Next day at noon with the sun out and the air temp 38°, I suited up and went to Musante with my husband, towel and warm coat. I also brought my wetsuit booties and gloves for a little extra protection. There was a thin film of ice near the center of the beach, so further down I did what the guys had done—a few squats, then walked in. The cold water immediately shortened my breath and forced concentration and calm. I relaxed my muscles, slowly walked out to my chest and gently tread water. All my focus went to lengthening my inhales and exhales. My mind rinsed of thought and memory. I only noticed the rippling water directly in front of me and the sound of my exhale. I stayed in for nearly one minute and wow...did I feel wonderful. I thought I would be running for my towel, but I wasn't cold at all. I felt exhilarated and happy. I dried off slowly, relishing the feeling. On the way home, I wasn't a shivering ninny—I was actually warm and grateful to Sam, Ethan and Reed for inspiring me to take my first cold water- ice swim!



Interview with a Leeds Pedal People Person by Lora Sandhusen

On a snowy Thursday in February, James Dale of E. Center St. was spotted on Rt. 9 riding a bicycle with a trailer full of trash from Leeds neighborhoods. James is a worker/owner of the Pedal People Cooperative and provided some great information about a typical day on the job.

"My wife Sarah Mazza and I moved to Leeds two years ago and I started working for Pedal People about a year ago. Pedal People's mission is to find alternatives to petroleum-based power, using people power and bicycles, as well as reducing trash and waste. When we haul trash, we replace fossil fuel-burning trucks with bicycles. To discourage waste, our service is less expensive than traditional waste haulers for customers with less than 30 gallons of trash weekly.

"On a typical day, I dress for the weather, do a little warm up stretch, get on my bike and head down to the Pedal People hub on High Street, where I pick up my trailer. Then I ride an empty trailer uphill to Leeds, load it up with trash from eight to twelve customers, and ride a full trailer downhill to the Locust Street Transfer station. I'll do that twice. Empty uphill, full downhill is pretty nice.

"I like serving my Leeds community. I get to ride around and see my neighbors, customers who are now friends. We ride in almost any weather. When it's actively snowing, it's pretty tough. But actively raining, yeah. As most customers know, we do not cancel a whole lot for weather. The mentality seems to be, when the weather's bad, people are really nice. On the last snowy day, one of the National Grid guys held out a granola bar for me as I rode by. One of my customers gave me a sleeve of Girl Scout cookies, and another gave me some fresh baked bread. I don't know what happened that day, but it was Free Food Day, and I was there for it. It was awesome."

James is planning on helping out on the Leeds Spring Litter Pickup on April 22 by hauling a full trailer to the transfer station – thank you, James and Pedal People! Pedal People Co-op also provides moving services and yard work (using electric equipment and arriving by bike).

Encounters with Pileateds by Heidi Stevens

Early one winter morning I came upon a Pileated Woodpecker whacking its beak into the tall tree stump near the little free library on Upland Road outside the Quinn's house. The large bird was at eye level and I just 10 feet away. I watched for several minutes as this fascinating bird drilled for its breakfast. Hammering away, wood chips flying all over, bright red head flashing back and forth, It didn't seem to mind at all that I was standing so close.

Amy Quinn told me that the pileateds have been feasting on that trunk for many years and at ladybug season it seems to be a particularly favorite spot. The Quinns have seen both the male and female and definitely hear the hammering from inside their house.

A few years back, a pair of pileateds bored a nest and raised their young high up in the tall tree trunk on the north side of Jim and Robin Mias' yard. Grove Avenue neighbors sometimes saw the adult pileateds fly to and from the nest entrance. In fact, the location of the pileated's nest was so perfect for viewing that several avid birders with high quality cameras were able to snap close up photos of adult pileateds pecking for insects in the trunk and of the young birds peaking their heads out of the hole. Another interesting observation was of adult pileateds carrying poop pouches from the nest. Right after eating, nestlings poop out fecal matter in a thick mucous sac, which makes it easy for a parent to immediately grasp the "bird diaper" in their beak and dispose of far from the nest, thus keeping the nest clean.

I wonder if the pileated I saw on Upland Road this winter is one of the pileateds from Grove Ave. Pileateds can live up to 12 years and rarely use the same nest twice. They mate for life and pairs remain in the same one square mile territory year round.

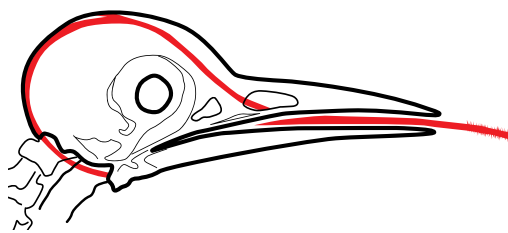
A FEW FUN FACTS ABOUT PILEATED WOODPECKERS

- To handle the force of up to 12,000 tree pecks a day, the pileated has evolved extra-dense neck muscles, a compressible skull bone and a brain that doesn't slosh around in cerebral spinal fluid in its head. Pileateds have virtually none of that fluid in their heads.
- thenaturalistsnotebook.com

- Pileateds can drum close to 17 beats per second and will perform 10 to 30 beats before they take a break. - Audubon.com

- Woodpeckers tongues can extend three times the length of the bill. The barbed tip allows the bird to impale and extract insects.

- Massachusetts Wildlife



Young pileateds in Mias' tree awaiting lunch- Kathy Graves

Reservoir Sightings by John Daniel

A common sight at the Leeds Reservoir or on the Mill River, especially during springtime, is the Common Mergansers, a type of duck that dives for its food. Like all ducks and many other birds, the males and females look quite different from each other. More recently, I've seen at both places a less common merganser, the Hooded Merganser. Although smaller than its cousin, the Hooded Merganser will definitely catch your eye with its colorful markings and unusual shape, if you're lucky enough to spot one. So when you're near water in Leeds, keep a lookout for these beauties.



Male Hooded Merganser - Stock Photo

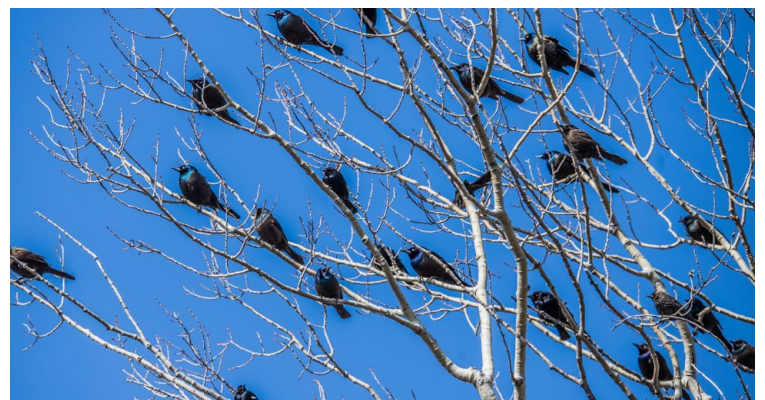
A True Story Best I Can Tell by Jim Mias

It was around 7:00 in the morning on a Saturday in mid-February with no snow on the ground. The only thing to break the quiet outside the old Look Restaurant was a flock of-what turned out to be-Grackles flying toward the diner coming from directly over Scotti's and the driving range fields.

As I watched the flock, thick as a river of birds in the air, they headed along Route 9 by the new VA iron fencing and towards Florence. When I looked back over to Scotti's, the river of birds continued unabated making that constant "crackle" sound they make. I actually counted the seconds-you know...one-one hundred...two one-hundred...three-one hundred. It went on for 4 minutes!! The birds flying slightly faster than the cars below them.

Same day, four hours later, I was walking along the bike path near Mulberry Street towards Haydenville and started noticing a few Grackles in the trees until it became that Grackles were perched on every tree branch. It was as if I were walking in a tunnel. When groups of birds flew off there was this great drumming of wings-really cool sounds. The backs and front yards of about 8 Grove Ave houses on both sides of the street were covered as if carpeted with birds. Every where the birds went, the leaves were noticeably stirred up...Maybe they were looking for ticks or other bugs.

This giant flock, I never saw again but it sure was quite the show. Did anyone else see it? - I would love to talk to you about it.



Grackles congregating - Stock Photo

LEEDS

2023 Spring Litter Cleanup

APRIL 22, 8:00-11:30 A.M.

Step 1. Between **8:00 and 9:30** come to the Leeds P.O. to sign up for a location and get trash bags. (Garden gloves are recommended.)

Step 2. Go to your chosen location, fill your bags, and leave them by the side of the road. The LCA will pick up the filled bags by 11:30.

Step 3. Enjoy the rest of Earth Day!



Leeds Spring Litter Cleanup - April 22

Check if your family or friends are interested in helping with the litter cleanup this year. You'd be outside doing something that's good for the environment and makes Leeds' streets look nice. On Earth Day morning, Saturday, April 22, the LCA will have a table outside the Leeds post office. There will be a list of streets to choose from or suggest another spot to clean. This year the DPW is asking volunteers to separate recyclables like bottles and cans from regular trash. Don't forget to bring your garden or work gloves.

**Volunteers that we have here in Leeds
All tend to community needs.**

Not one is a quitter.

They pick up all litter

And rid our town garden of weeds.

by Rick Limmer

Friends of Northampton Trails Bike Trail Cleanup Event - April 8

If you can't make the Leeds cleanup, consider helping FNT clean a section of the bike path in Leeds. The focus will be the bike trail area from Mias Catering on Route 9 to Look Park. Meet at Mias Catering parking lot for bags. Clean up will run from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.

2023 Mill River Trails Summer Cleanups - Volunteers Needed

For the past two summers the Leeds Civic Association has led an effort to keep the new conservation area north of Chartpak dam and the bike path leading to it as free of trash as possible. Our partners have been volunteers from Friends of Northampton Trails and the Inclusive Group. The three groups rotate every third weekend from the end of May through Labor day. Volunteers collect trash in bags provided by the City and the bags are hauled away and disposed of by Tom Annese from the Office of Planning and Sustainability.

If you would like to volunteer for a weekend, please contact Heidi Stevens: heidi@heidistevens.com. or call or text 413-588-1327. The 2023 cleanup calendar will be set up by end of April.

On summer weekdays, if you visit the river beach area and notice trash issues, please contact Heidi so we can get volunteers to pick it up before the wildlife gets to it or rain sends it down stream.

Summer River Water Quality Monitoring-Volunteers Needed

2023 will be the third consecutive summer the LCA will coordinate with the Connecticut River Conservancy to monitor the water quality at the new Mill River Greenway-Leeds conservation area north of Chartpak dam. What this means is that each Thursday morning from June 1 through September 7 water samples must be collected from the site, rain or shine. Water and air temperature are taken and noted along with weather conditions from the past 48 hours. Water samples kept on ice and the log sheet are driven to the CRC building on Damon Road by 9:00 a.m. The CRC sends samples to the lab for testing. Results are posted on the CRC site on Friday afternoons.

Water sampling at this site is important for public health. Last summer, the water tested above Massachusetts State health standards for *E.coli* three times. The LCA posted warning notices on site alerting visitors to the conditions.

Collecting water samples is sort of a cool volunteer gig. It's a great opportunity for high school students, college students home for the summer, or anyone interested in environmental science, ecology, conservation—you don't have to be a student—early rising retirees make wonderful volunteers! Last year Pamela Cobb and Elsie Baker volunteered and will do so again this year. Having more volunteers would make it possible to split up the weeks. Training involves coming along for one on-site morning water sampling, which takes about 15 minutes. If you're interested in helping with this effort for the summer of 2023, please contact Heidi Stevens at heidi@heidistevens.com or call 413-588-1327 or leave a text. Even if you're not sure you can commit just yet, touch base anyway and when we get closer to June 1, you'll be contacted to see if you're still interested.

Green Tip by Amy Stamm

Clothes dryers are some of the biggest energy consumers in our homes. One way to save precious energy in the winter while making your home healthier is to air dry your clothes. When temperatures drop and heat is operating at all hours, the humidity inside your house drops. Air drying your clothes humidifies the air, helping your skin and lungs. Wooden indoor drying racks are ecologically constructed and nontoxic. You can pick up a drying rack at Florence Hardware and place it in any room that needs a little moisture. The racks are quick to set up and take down and are light and easy to carry. And if you air dry your clothes, you also can save money by not using energy on a clothes dryer and not buying a humidifier. So, save money, the environment, and your health in one easy action!

Councilor's Corner by Rachel Maiore, Ward 7 City Councilor

Much of my first term on the Energy and Sustainability Commission was spent crafting our City's ambitious Climate Resilience and Regeneration Plan, which sets the goal for all city operations to be carbon neutral by 2030, and to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Ambitious; but how do we get there? The City's answer involves two exciting developments; the new Climate Mitigation Stabilization Fund, seeded with ARPA funds, and our newly established Climate Action and Project Administration Department.

I look forward to discussing the particular environmental issues we face here in Leeds around recreational use of the Mill River with the new Department Director. I plan to continue to advocate for the creation of a Steward/Ranger position to monitor and care for our rivers and trails.

Special thanks to the Northampton Climate Emergency Coalition for their guidance in establishing our new department.