



LEEDS LETTER

JANUARY 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS 2015

JANUARY 11

LCA Meeting

Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:00 pm
Leeds School teacher's lounge
Come and share your ideas!

JANUARY 16

Merchants of Doubt screening

Saturday, 10:00 am
Coolidge Room at Forbes Library
FREE!

FEBRUARY 5 AND 6

LEEDS KIDS CRAFT CLUB Hand Crafted Chocolates, Boxes and Heart Strings

Friday, 4:00 - 6:00pm
Saturday, 3:00 - 5:30pm
More details on flip side

FEBRUARY 27

Beat the Winter Blues Pizza & Raffle Party

Saturday, 4:00 - 7:00pm
Northampton Country Club

LCA board members 2016-2017

Officers

President - Sue Carbin
Vice President - Heidi Stevens
Secretary - David Rondina
Treasurer - Sue Carbin (through 2016
until Karyn Nelson takes over)

Board Members

Marc Freedman
Penny Geis
Jason Johnson
Earl Meunier
Tom Quinn

Leeds Civic Association

P.O. Box 114,
Leeds, MA 01053
leedscivassoc@gmail.com
www.leedscivic.org

2016 Pizza Party Planning Time

The Annual Leed's "Beat the Winter Blues" Pizza Party & Yankee Raffle will be held on Saturday, February 27th at the Northampton Country Club from 4:00 - 8:00pm. Grab a friend, neighbor or relative or all three and join us. There will be a cash bar, prizes, music, pizza, side dishes and desserts. Consider joining in the planning phase, volunteer for set up and or clean up. Leeds Civic is looking for interesting prize donations suitable for kids or adults. Prizes should be in good condition or even new. This is a great opportunity to re-gift your holiday misfit gifts! If you're cleaning out your closets and attics for the new year and happen upon something interesting that would make a cool prize, contact Heidi at 585-9923, heidi@heidistevens.com.



Serving it up at the 2015 Pizza Party, photo by Pamela Cobb

Leeds Bike Trail Extension Update - by Heidi Stevens

Early in December a site visit was made along the new rail trail extension by Wayne Feiden of the Planning Department, Councilor Klein, and the small group from the LCA. Maintenance tasks were reviewed. The city will not be maintaining the bike path and will rely on adopt a trail volunteers. Signage was also reviewed. Two bicycle parking signs will be eliminated from the trail side to discourage groups hanging out on and along the trail. City ordinance signs have been placed at the Grove Ave entrance, the Mulberry Street entrance and at the Haydenville end. Littering, open alcohol containers, loitering, motorized vehicles are some of the illegal activities posted.

Leeds Civic Association will be researching content and the cost of historical interpretive signage to post at a few points of interest on the trail. The Leeds section of the rail trail was active for over 94 years when the "Burdy Bullet" train had passenger service to and from Williamsburg from 1868 till 1962. Having photos showing the rail trail from back in the day could give trail users a deeper appreciation of the area and its history. If funding is available, a small kiosk at the Mulberry Street garden might be designed showing photos of the Main Street scene before, during, and after the 1874 Mill River flood.

The LCA will be donating native wild flower seeds and planting them in areas along the new bike path extension early this Spring. Leeds-Mill River Greenway has adopted the new extension and will need volunteers to help pick up litter and clear invasive plants throughout the summer and autumn. We'll keep you posted about group work days.



Train derailment in Leeds near River Road, Circa 1900, photo courtesy Gazette

My Leeds Park - by Martin Rule

My family is the fourth generation to live in the house on Florence Street across from the elementary school in Leeds. The house was built by my grandfather in about 1924.

I have always loved gardening and spent much of my spare time over the past 30 years creating my 'one acre park'.

About 4 years ago I bought a video camera and started filming the four seasons of beauty around me, trying to capture the character and spirit of my property in Leeds.

I think I succeeded! I edited hundreds of hours of film down to an 11 minute video that tries to capture the soul of our village of Leeds.

The front yard looks over the Leeds Elementary School (the school auditorium is named after my uncle, Donald Ducharme, who was killed in WWII). The film shows the school yard filled with the fun and play of our young, innocent children during four seasons.

When the city finally completed the extension of the Rail Trail from Look Park, it became the perfect addition to my 'Leeds Park'. I focused my camera on the new bike path, giving viewers a birds eye view of the walkers, cyclists, and runners that use this calm and peaceful trail through the woods. I would like to thank the people that planned it, built it and the ones that use it. It's an excellent addition to our town's already quaint atmosphere.

This charming film can be viewed by googling "My Leeds Park/Vimeo" (VIMEO not video) on your computer, laptop, or iPhone. Please, like it and share it! Let's show everyone, in all the neighborhoods around the world, what a special place we have here in Leeds, Massachusetts.

Climate Documentary - by Penny Geis

Merchants of Doubt, a new documentary film about the deliberate effort to create doubt in the science of climate change, will be shown in a free screening on Saturday, January 16, at 10:00 am in the Coolidge Room at Forbes Library. The LCA is one of eight local co-sponsors.

When the Williamsburg dam broke that rainy spring day in 1874, families in Leeds learned what happens when greed tampers with nature. Everyone knew the dam was leaky, but it was easier – and more profitable – to just ignore it. After all, the mill owners said the dam was safe.

Is that what is happening with climate change? Are today's industrialists working to cast doubt on the science of climate change in order to maintain their profits? Is it easier for all of us to just ignore possible dangers threatening our future? After all, the industry owners assure us we're safe.

Merchants of Doubt draws parallels between the climate change controversy and earlier controversies over tobacco, acid rain, DDT, and the hole in the ozone layer, documenting that some of the same players are using the same strategies.

The Leeds Civic Association joins the Northampton League of Women Voters, Represent.Us Western MA, Climate Action Now, Arise Springfield, Amherst NAACP, and Forbes Library to make this free showing of the Merchants of Doubt available here.

Beaver Brook Conservation Area in Leeds - by Jason Johnson

Members of the LCA, the Leeds Chapter of the Mill River Greenway Initiative and the Broad Brook Coalition have been working on improving public access to the 106 Acre Beaver Brook Conservation Area located in Leeds on Route 9 near the Williamsburg town line. Preliminary work this fall and winter has included clearing invasive species, removing refuse, flagging and mapping of a trail with areas planned for a wildlife blind, picnic area, and benches. They are working with Northampton Planning Department and Conservation Commission staff to file a Notice of Intent for the project, and hope to begin work on the project in summer 2016. The project participants have been meeting with stewardship groups of other City owned conservation properties under the organizational name "Northampton Conservation Alliance", in the interest of identifying mutual goals involving conservation planning and stewardship. Be on the lookout for Spring/Summer workshops or workdays in Leeds and other conservation areas in the city. If you are interested in participating in this project, or would like more information about the Northampton Conservation Alliance, contact Jason Johnson at cookjohnson@comcast.net

Hand Crafted Chocolates, Boxes and Heart Strings **Leeds Kids Craft Club - Session #2**

Friday, February 5, 4:00 - 6:00pm

Saturday, February 6, 3:00 - 5:30pm

The first Leeds Kids Craft Club was a big success. Fifty two dollars was donated to the Hotel Bridge Restoration fund! Thirteen kids worked

on nine different holiday craft projects during the three day workshop.

This new Leeds Kids Craft Club workshop is meant to be sweet, beautiful and tasty! On Friday, February 5th kids will be crafting specialty chocolates using molds and other techniques. They will be filling, dipping and decorating their assortment of chocolates with various flavor sensations and toppings. On Saturday, February 6th kids will style boxes for their chocolates, heart magnets and paper heart strings. All materials and ingredients will be provided. The workshop is designed for kids age 7 and up. 10% of the profits will go to the Hotel Bridge Restoration Fund.

Register by January 15th - two day workshop is \$55.

Register after January 15th - two day workshop is \$70.

Space is limited, so reserve a spot early!

For more information and to sign up for the workshop contact:

Heidi at heidi@heidistevens.com, 585-9923, or

Amy at stammad@yahoo.com, 586-9123

Call for newsletter submissions

We are always looking for interesting or entertaining snippets and stories about Leeds. If you have an idea for us to pursue or would like to write an article yourself, hurray! Contact Heidi: 585-9923, heidi@heidistevens.com.

