



LEEDS LETTER

MARCH - APRIL 2013

UPCOMING EVENTS 2013

April LCA Meeting

Tuesday, April 9 @ 7:30

Leeds School Teacher's Lounge

Village Spring Clean Up

Saturday, April 13

Registration is from 8:30 to 9am in front of the Leeds Post Office.

Hotel Bridge Bike Ride

Saturday, May 19 8:00 -2:00

Registration 8:00am

Chartpak parking lot, 1 River Rd

\$30 Individual

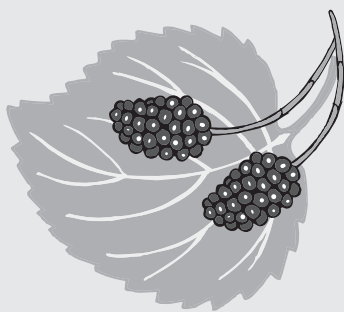
\$40 family 3+

Saratoga Race Track Trip

Friday, July 26th

Friday, August 23rd

Trip Details to Come



HAPPY SPRING!

Annual Spring Clean Up

The Leeds Civic Association's Annual Spring Litter Pick-Up Day will be Saturday, April 13, 2013. Registration is from 8:30 to 9:00 am in front of the Leeds Post Office. We work from 9am to 11am and the LCA will supply trash bags, a pick-up truck and a dumpster. Just choose a street or section of town to clean up then just pick up the trash and leave the bag (or bags) on the side of the road and our pick up truck trash crew will come along and haul it away to the dumpster. Bring a friend, a neighbor or a complete stranger along to help. And, this is dirty work, so a pair of Garden/Work Gloves is strongly recommended.

Beat the Winter Blues Low Down - Jim Mias

Amidst a rambunctious, but joyful clamor of kids, parents happy not to have to pay for baby sitters and all other folks just wanting to be at another fantastic neighborhood event - the annual Beat the Winter Blues seemed to be fun to all 100+ that attended. Thanks to the last minute, step-up-to-the-plate efforts of Heidi Stevens and a core group of volunteers including the MC Shawn Gunderson and lots of donations from so many. The event continues to be three hours of fast, furious, funny - and just oh-so heartwarming when you come right down to it. Never take it for granted!

Meanwhile, those Christmas lights at Mulberry Street Park that we all love to see were still up as of mid-March. While it's so much fun (and effort) to put 'em up - it's sort of a drag taking 'em down, wrapping, boxing, etc. But kudos to 4 year old Zachy Roberge and one adult... two hours later, lights were down and ready to go for next year's enjoyment for all to see.

Youth Volunteer Opportunities

Leeds Civic Association is looking for young people who might be interested in rounding out their resumes with some civic-minded volunteering. The LCA always needs help planning, setting up and cleaning up for parties and events, putting up posters, clearing trails, newsletter submissions, etc. We also receive requests for volunteers from Leeds Elementary, Linda Manor, and neighbors to help with a variety of projects. When and how much a child volunteers is entirely up to them. If you would like to put your child's name on the LCA youth volunteer list please contact Heidi Stevens at heidi@heidistevens.com or call 585-9923.

This could be a great opportunity for Leeds kids to gain experience and realize that their efforts can make a difference. Community volunteering also looks great on college and job applications!

The Fourth Annual Leeds HOTEL BRIDGE BIKE RIDE

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2013

10 mile, 25 mile, 50 mile routes 8am - 2pm



Rider Fees \$30 Individual, \$40 family of 3 or more

Supported Ride Food and Drinks Provided with Stops,
Waiver / Helmet Required

Registration + Start Location ChartPak Inc., 1 River
Road, Leeds, MA (Parking lot is located on Mulberry Street
across from the Leeds Post Office)

Leeds Ride part of Massbike Baystate BIKE WEEK

If you would like more info about this LCA sponsored ride or would like to help out at a station during the ride, please call Alice or Stephy at 880-903-0134.

100% of the May 19th bike ride proceeds will go toward preservation of the Hotel Bridge. The Historic Leeds Bridge, built in 1889, was first referred to as the Shanty Row Bridge by local residents. The Leeds Hotel was constructed at the foot of the bridge in 1885 to accommodate the growing industrial village and the new, more appealing name of the Hotel Bridge was born. The bridge was closed to vehicle traffic in 2004 due to safety concerns.

Daily Hampshire Gazette Article about Leeds

by Alice Manning, Sept. 27, 1975

- Continued from last newsletter

Silk Mills Built Village of Leeds, \$11.3 Million Business in 1919

To most natives the story of the silk industry is well known. Many have been brought up on stories told by parents and grandparents of the important role the area played in it's production and in the economy of the country because of it.

The story of the mulberry craze is long and unbelievable, but suffice it to say it was the birth of the silk industry here. On

October 29, 1829, the Gazette that Mrs. Charles Starkweather of Northampton was awarded a premium by the Hampshire, Hampden and Franklin County Agriculture Society for a sewing silk she made. "Superior in thread and coloring to the imported article."

Later it was declared "the most beautiful specimen of raw silk we have ever seen."

By 1846 the manufacturer of silk was fairly well established in Florence and when Shepherd Woolen mills failed in 1857, part of the complex was taken over for silk manufacture. From that time on silk became a very vital part of the village life and economy for at least 70 years.

The "spun" silk business was first conducted by William Suter, a native of England employed by the Nonotuck Silk Co. The mill was on the lower floor of the Main Street building of the woolen complex.

The raw silk was shipped here from China and Japan. The cocoons were boiled and after being put through a series of processes the coverings were made into yarn and eventually thread.

Silk Company Impact

The Nonotuck Silk Co. had a phenomenal impact and was the main spring of the growth and prosperity of the region after the Civil War. Several new buildings were built in Leeds and the operations increased. Here, the mill owners found good, faithful workers who were anxious to turn in a good account of themselves.

The company had a custom sawmill at Leeds, where they also purchased and sawed large amounts of lumber for their own use and for sale. In connection with this was the planing mill, and a shop for the manufacture of boxes to be used in shipping the silk. For this operation alone 200 million feet of pine and basswood was required annually. This project required at least a dozen men who were employed constantly and about 15 more who were kept busy making spools for the thread. During World War 1 and just after it, labor troubles began to creep into the operation but despite that business boomed.

In 1921 the name was changed to Corticelli Silk Co. and an extensive advertising campaign was started. The Corticelli kitten, the famous trademark born of this advertising promotion was known throughout the word. One of the first flashing signs on Broadway was the kitten ceaselessly chasing after the silken threads. Of course this was not a neon sign, the Corticelli kitten died a quarter of a century before neon was perfected.

To be continued in next newsletter...

