



LEEDS LETTER

MAY-JUNE 2020

UPCOMING 2020 EVENTS

TUESDAY, JUNE 9

7:00 p.m.

LCA MONTHLY MEETING (ZOOM)

For an invitation contact Karyn at
karynnelson@gmail.com

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

9:00-11:00 a.m.

KNOTWEED PULL

See article on flip side for specifics

Green Tip by Amy Stamm

We've all seen the fleet of Amazon trucks delivering goods to our neighborhood during the pandemic. Amazon has become ubiquitous by making purchasing its products supremely easy and convenient. However, this convenience has come with a steep environmental cost. Amazon delivers 2.5 billion packages per year, and its expedited shipping means that products are not consolidated, increasing packaging waste and causing pollution and congestion with its endless trucks bringing individual items to people's homes. Carbon emissions can reach 35 times greater for individually-packaged and delivered items than for consolidated trips. And while you can temper your environmental footprint a bit by selecting the shipment option of using less packaging, buying your products from Amazon also supports their documented inhumane treatment of workers and devastates local businesses, so a better choice is to purchase products from local businesses that need your support now more than ever. Do you want to help Jeff Bezos to fulfill his personal goal of becoming the first trillionaire, or do you want to help Northampton to thrive?

LEEDS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

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LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com

LeedsCivic.org

A Note From Our City Councilor

Greetings Leeds neighbors and friends. I want to take a moment to introduce myself: I'm Rachel Maiore, your Ward 7 City Councilor. By now I had hoped to be meeting with you all in person at community meetings. But, during this time of global pandemic, like so many of our well-laid plans, it will have to wait. I want you to know I am here for you and encourage residents to reach out to me with any questions, ideas or concerns. As challenging as it is right now to stay connected to our community, we need each other more than ever. I send out an online Ward 7 newsletter from time to time and if you are not on that list and would like to be please email me: rmaiore@northamptonma.gov.

Wishing you health and well-being. -Rachel

Training in the Time of COVID by Sylvie Mahon-Moore

The possibility of starting freshman year at Hampshire Regional High School terrified me. I was shy and barely knew anyone, and I spent the summer after eighth grade worrying about my choice to attend a school away from all my friends. Understanding my anxiety (and, who wouldn't be nervous going to any new school, even if friends were by your side?), my mom came up with an idea. "Why don't you join Hampshire's cross country team?" she asked, and I agreed. Runners were generally nice people. I had always liked hiking up hills and playing tag, running through fields and spending time with kids who shared this similar interest. Joining the cross country team not only helped to alleviate my anxiety about transitioning into HRHS, but inspired me to try Nordic skiing and track.

One of the best parts of being on a team is spending time with teammates: pasta packs, Deerfield River polar plunge, howling and screaming contests, nighttime skis in the woods, and enduring workouts designed by our teammate, the "torture master." Coaches took us on adventures, and we played trust games, explored new trails, received pep talks about maintaining positive attitudes, ate pizza and pasta at banquets, talked to goats at Look Park, and got teary-eyed when each season shifted to a close.

Now, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, spring sports have been cancelled--along with the possibility that fall and winter sports may become nonexistent as well. Training feels empty without teammates alongside me. I run because I want to get stronger for myself, which is less motivating than doing it for the benefit of the team. I try to make a schedule for myself and run longer distances at the start of the week, then do hills or tempos by Thursday or Friday. Because running alone feeds on my mental stamina, I take days off to do yoga or strength training by myself or with captains over Zoom. I have started doing weekend roller skis; roller skiing mimics the motion of skate skiing and helps me maintain my balance, form, and speed for next winter. I attend weekly Zoom meetings hosted by my coaches and captains. The virtual meetings encourage us to find the fun in running. These meetings help me feel less alone, and remind us that we need to beat our competition next year and accept that we are all struggling as runners in the time of coronavirus. Though it is challenging to push myself while doing a workout when I am not suffering alongside teammates, I am taking this time to strengthen my distress tolerance and improve my speed for next year's cross country season (if there happens to be one.)

Now that Massachusetts is starting to open up again, what has significantly helped boost my motivation is social distance running with a few members of the ski team and cross-country running team. We trail run at the DAR and Chesterfield Gorge, keeping our distance and wearing masks. It is so strange having to run apart, but I am thankful to be exercising and socializing with the people I miss so much. After a morning of running with them, I go home inspired to keep trudging through my training schedule, knowing I am not alone when I run because they are out there also running-- just apart from each other.

Thank You to 2020 Litter Pick Up Volunteers!

Bill Cobb, Kris Cobb, Greg White, Trish Reidy, Amy Stamm, Alisa Klein, Marge Riddle, Bob Riddle, Rondina Family, George Kohout, Margaret Arraj, Michael MacDonald, Penny Geis, Megan Freeman, Mave Freeman, Jason Johson & Sadie, and Sue Carbin (truck hauler), David Rondina (monster truck hauler).

Managing Japanese Knotweed Infestations in Leeds

by Jason Johnson

If you spend time outdoors, especially around the Mill River or its tributaries you may have recognized a large bamboo-like plant in the Polygonaceae family commonly known as Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*). Its nickname is “Godzilla weed” because it is one of the world’s most invasive plants. It prefers sunny, moist areas including riverbanks, roadsides, lawns and gardens. The plant arrived from Japan to the U.K. and then North America in the 19th century as a landscaping ornamental. By the 1930’s it was already recognized as a problematic invasive plant. It is a perennial, growing each year from its extensive underground rhizomes, and spreads rapidly both by natural means and as a result of human activity. Japanese knotweed can tolerate deep shade, high temperatures, high soil salinity, and drought. The horizontal roots can reach depths of 65 feet or more!

Japanese knotweed is spread by fragments of rhizome or stem being transported to new sites. Very small fragments of stem/rhizome can give rise to new plants. The plant forms dense stands, outcompeting native vegetation and causing nuisances and structural damage. One of the best ways to reduce knotweed invasion on freshly disturbed soil is to ensure that the area is re-seeded or planted with native vegetation.

There are several different methods recommended for controlling knotweed, depending on where you get your information from. Techniques range from smothering with tarps, repeated cutting, digging, and using herbicides. I want to emphasize that I am not an expert on knotweed removal. I’ve spent about 20 years trying to keep it from overwhelming my backyard floodplain, with limited success. More recently I’ve been involved with the Beaver Brook Conservation Area properties in association with the Broad Brook Coalition, we hired Bay State Forestry Service to eradicate knotweed using the herbicide glyphosate. This seems to be working well, but also has required repeated applications. The Ecological Landscape Alliance has a good website article on two small scale strategies, one using herbicides and one without that is a good read. It can be found here- <https://www.ecolandscaping.org/09/landscape-challenges/invasive-plants/managing-japanese-knotweed-two-small-scale-strategies/>

The New York Invasive Species Programs suggests; for mechanical control that single plants be pulled by hand depending on soil conditions and root development. If all of the root isn’t removed, re-sprouting can occur. For small initial populations beyond single plants, or in environmentally sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used, grubbing with a Pulaski or similar tool to remove all of the roots after cutting back the standing vegetation can be an effective control measure. All parts of the removed plants should be bagged and disposed of in a secure location. It is best if knotweed not be mown or cut with weed trimmers as the pieces of the plant can easily get moved around and re-sprout, spreading, rather than controlling the plant. Chemical controls for Japanese knotweed include application of glyphosate and triclopyr herbicides to freshly cut stems or to foliage. Before using chemicals to control any invasive plant, check with your local conservation commission, natural resource management agency or Cooperative Extension office to find out what chemicals are legal for use on knotweed in your area. Knotweed is a pervasive problem on both public and private land throughout the watershed. Please do what you can to limit the spread of this invasive plant on your property or volunteer at a local event.

Volunteer Event - Beaver Brook Knotweed Cleanup

When: Saturday, June 13th from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Where: Meet at the Beaver Brook Bike Path Bridge

What to Bring: Gloves, Clippers, Black Trash Bags, and Face Mask.

I’m sure a lot of you have noticed the invasive Knotweed choking the banks of the Mill River in the summer months. Unfortunately,

Knotweed has started to also take hold in some areas of Beaver Brook between the bike path and Route 9 adjacent to the Beaver Brook Conservation Area and the newly acquired Church property to the North. The good news is that if we put in some effort now, we have the ability to get ahead of it and prevent its spread.

Members of the LCA and Northampton’s Planning Department recently mapped the area and are developing a plan. We identified a few areas that we can immediately address near the bike path and need volunteers to help.

Whether you can make it for the entire time or just an hour, your help will be appreciated! Please email Steve at spmmic01@gmail.com if you are able to attend so we can consider the number of volunteers while being aware of social distancing.

Leeds’ Dogs by LCA Board

During these unprecedented times of safer-at-home-advisories and with many of us working & schooling from home for the first time, one incredible benefit that many people are taking advantage of here in Leeds is not just getting themselves outside more often, but also getting their dogs outside. Unfortunately, we have heard about a lot of confusion and misinformation regarding accompanying dogs in public spaces in Northampton. We hope that the following information is helpful and informative so that we all can share in the numerous wonderful public spaces Northampton has to offer in a kind and respectful way.

City ordinance 128-9 [www.ecode360.com/11954204] states that when on City property, including but not limited to: conservation land, bike paths, school grounds, watershed property, and City streets, sidewalks and parks, dogs cannot roam at large and must be restrained. This ordinance is intended to protect dogs, dog owners, public infrastructure, and water quality. All it takes is one time out of a thousand for things to get bad real fast: your dog runs out into a busy street, your dog startles or knocks someone over on a trail, your dog encounters a reactive dog, or your dog trespasses onto private property.

Additionally, ordinance 128-13 [www.ecode360.com/11954222] states that when on City property, dog owners must collect and remove all canine waste. Dog poop, which can contain several types of microorganisms potentially pathogenic to humans, such as E. coli, that is left on the ground, washes straight to the Mill River with the next rain storm. Yuck! Who wants to swim in that? You might ask, but don’t wild animals defecate or urinate in the water? Yes, they do, but they don’t share a home and a microbiota with humans that results in similar waste to human waste.

Furthermore, as much as a lot of us love dogs, that’s not true for everyone. Many people have had traumatic experiences with dogs, whether it’s being bitten as a child, living in a region/regime that uses dogs for intimidation (i.e., police, military), or just have a natural aversion to dogs. Even though you know your dog and may feel they are not a risk to someone, you cannot assume everyone shares that sentiment. Having a dog freely running about and/or running at or jumping on bystanders out for a relaxing walk imposes upon that person’s right to freely use public property.

These ordinances are not intended to hurt or punish dogs, but are meant to protect dogs, their humans and the general public. The LCA is working with the City’s Planning & Sustainability Office and Ward 7 City Councilor Rachel Mairoe to provide signage around Leeds to remind residents and visitors of Leeds’ green and recreational spaces of City ordinances around dogs.

Northampton is an incredibly welcoming community to people from all walks of life. If we all do our part, which includes taking responsibility for our dogs, we can all enjoy the benefits of our beautiful community.