



LEEDS LETTER

JUNE 2013

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR 2013

June LCA Meeting

Tuesday, June 11 @7:30
Leeds School Teacher's Lounge

Village Wide Tag Sale

Saturday, June 22, 8:00 -12:00



Leeds Hats for Sale!

5 Colors to choose from: Khaki, burnt orange, black, green and dark blue. The hats have a metal clasp, adjustable back and are on sale for **\$20.00**. Please see color photo on the LCA website, www.leedscivic.org. Hat orders can be made by contacting Heidi at 585-9923, heidi@heidistevens.com

Saturday Night Movies!

Keep your eyes peeled for LCA's posters of dates/times/movies which will be displayed throughout Leeds and on our website! Bring a blanket and drinks. Popcorn is always provided!

Saratoga Race Track Trip

Friday, July 26th
Friday, August 23rd
Trip Details to Come

Memorial Day Ceremony, Sunday May 26 at 1:00pm

We will have a wreath laying ceremony and a cannon salute at the Veterans Memorial Park across from Leeds School. We will also have a color guard and buglers and a reading of the Gettysburg Address. The Reverend David Whiteley, chaplain from the VA Medical Center will officiate. Please join us!

Village Wide Tag Sale June 22!

Your trash could be someone else's treasure so, gather up all the things you want to sell and put them out on Saturday morning, June 22nd!!

The LCA will advertise the 8:00am -12:00pm "Village Wide Tag Sale" in the Gazette and Hampshire Life. A large sign, "Village Wide Tag Sale Today" will be placed at the beginning of Florence St. (Rt 9 entrance). Families and neighborhood groups who plan to be part of the village tag sale should put up additional signs and arrows at each entrance to your street.

The Village Wide Tag Sale is a perfect impetus to clean out closets, basements and attics!

Mark and Patricia Bradford Memorial Fund Scholarships Awarded

Congratulations to Jack Haller, Tyler MacDonald, and Autumn Ross-Kellogg for their selection as the 2013 winners of the scholarship award.

The scholarship fund was established by the Leeds community in 1992 in honor of Mark Bradford, president of the LCA at the time, and his wife Patricia who both died in a tragic accident while on vacation in Mexico that year.

Fourth Annual Hotel Bridge Ride by Alice Badecker

For the fourth year in a row riders came out and enjoyed a scenic bike ride through Western MA towns which began in Leeds and ended in Leeds. All routes traveled over the historic Hotel Bridge where riders saw a freshly painted thank you sign. We thanked them for taking part in the fundraising efforts and riding a 10, 25, or 50 mile route on their bikes. In return they went home with an awesome Tshirt with our Leeds Hotel Bridge graphic designed by Heidi Stevens. About 55 riders, age 8 through 72 took part in the event. The weather was perfect for biking, cool and no rain! At the top of a long climb about 13 miles into the ride, cyclists laughed and chatted as they were greeted by Bob Riddle who had snacks and drinks ready. Back at Chartpack more volunteers worked registration tables checking in and out riders. Thank you Stephy Cho, Deb Jacobs, Alisa Klein, Amy Stamm, and Sue Carbin. Registration was well organized by the set up crew of Joel Emrick, David Rondina, and Tom Silliman. Photographing the smiles all day was Joel Emerick with a camera ready at every turn!

Riders who braved the hilly 50 mile route were greeted by George Merriam at

the Conway covered bridge with much needed snacks. A big thank you to Alisa Klein for her expertise in advertising our ride, although we had many returning riders, she got the word out and new faces were riding too! Justin O'Connor made online pre-registration available so sign ups were quick and easy the morning of the ride. All in all, the event was successful, riders had fun, there were no injuries, and a profit was made toward restoring the Leeds Hotel bridge. Our next step will be to meet with DPW to get an update on the progress of restoration plans. Thank you to all who came out and to sponsors...Stop & Shop, River Valley Market, Walmart, Staples, B.J.s, and Joe's Garage.

A Note to Leeds from Florida

Chuck Dunning, a retired Northampton Police Officer who now resides in Florida recalls walking the night beat in Leeds back in the middle sixties. Dunning says, "One great memory was walking across the bridge to check on the Post Office. What great memories I have of Leeds." We thank Mr. Dunning for reaching back to Leeds with his donation toward preserving the Hotel Bridge as a walking bridge.

Notes from LCA President Alice Badecker Leeds April Cleanup April 13th

As winter ends and the snow melts away, we see the remnants of what people throw along the roadsides. Before the spring flowers can bloom the trash must get cleared. Very few Leeds residents went out to pick up what others left behind. Frankly it was a disappointing amount of help that day, but with the hard work of Penny Geis, Bruce Walker, Deb Jacobs, Stephy Cho, and Don Willard's Group, Leeds is a little cleaner. Thank you so much!

Part 5 - continued from May newsletter Daily Hampshire Gazette Article about Leeds by Alice Manning, Sept. 27, 1975

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

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.

The peak of the industry came between 1920 and 1923, after which there was considerable fluctuation in production. Labor troubles had set in and competition with new techniques plagued the business. - to be continued