



# LEEDS LETTER

JUNE 2015

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2015

### JUNE 9 LCA Meeting

Tuesday, 7:00 - 8:00 pm  
Leeds School teacher's lounge  
• Hotel Bridge-Next Steps  
• Summer trail clean up  
• Rail trail art sculpture  
• Tag Sale  
• Ice cream Social

### JUNE 13

#### Village Wide Tag sale

Saturday, 8:00 - noon  
Leeds driveways or yards

### JULY 7

#### Leeds to Haydenville Mill River Greenway History Walk

Saturday, 12:00 noon  
Register at info @ MillRiver.org

### JULY 19

#### Leeds Center to Hotel Bridge Mill River Greenway History Walk

Saturday, 12:00 noon  
Register at info @ MillRiver.org

### AUGUST 7

### AUGUST 28

#### Sartoga Racetrack + Casino Trips

7:15am - 8:30pm  
Please read article for details

### Summer Movie Nights

Dates to be announced  
Watch for posters

### Ice Cream Social

Dates to be announced.  
Watch for Posters

## Leeds Civic Association

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## Dam Vandals - Heidi Stevens

For fifty years graffiti has been a part of youth culture. The west side of the Berlin Wall was inch for inch covered in graffiti, which to me was visually amazing and emotionally moving. That graffiti expressed the frustration of a divided city. Most modern graffiti vandals are coy, spraying property or "tagging" with invented names, or unique signs. A friend told me that while growing up in south LA, city buses filled with school kids were "tagged" while at stop lights. These tags were done so efficiently the sprayer was gone before the light turned green.

Rarely does a graffiti vandal leave a calling card as to who they are and where to find them. In the case of the spray painted mess recently inflicted on the stones of Orange Dam, they did just that. Leeds Civic picked up on a police report in the Gazette and photographed every signature including the helpful tagged name of the high school with the tell-tale 2105. The school was contacted and photos were sent. Chartpak, owners of Orange Dam, decided not to press charges for trespassing and vandalism, and generously offered to take on the expense of removing the graffiti. What the 14 out of town vandals got was community service. Chartpak left it up to Leeds Civic to design a community service project for the vandals that would benefit our village. The first choice was to have the vandals clean and paint the chipping fence on Florence Street near Mulberry. The DPW approved the project, but after some confusion, we discovered that the DPW already had a plan underway to paint the fence with J. Greene painting. We had to shift gears quickly - the vandals were to graduate in just one week and Leeds Civic and the school would lose all leverage.

Three main sites were chosen for clean up; the Hotel Bridge Main Street entrance and the Flood Memorial needed annual weeding, Leeds School and the Veteran's Memorial needed litter pick up, and Mulberry Street's gravel crusted sidewalks needed sweeping and storm drains cleared of debris. Extra time would be spent picking up trash along the bike path. The high school vandals were asked to write an apology letter to Chartpak and the greater community, and a short essay on "The Importance of Respecting Nature and the Property of Others."

On a hot Saturday at noon, 14 teenagers arrived at Chartpak parking lot for their community service, some with hang-dog faces, a couple chatty as if they were on a class field trip. Four students had already written their apology letters, and of those four, two had written their essay. The majority of the teenagers did what they were asked without complaint throughout the work day, a handful showed impressive leadership skills, but it was the few with poor attitudes, and one young lady with a particularly do-nothing attitude that made the day close to insufferable for the volunteer supervisors. Needless to say, the kids and adults were relieved when all sites were cleaned and we went our separate ways.

A huge thanks to the other Leeds Civic volunteers who stepped up to supervise on that hot day in late May: Earl Munier, Jason Johnson, Sue Carbin, Amy Stamm, Alisa Klein and Tricia Reidy.



## **Hotel Bridge Update** - Heidi Stevens

The big news from the June 1st community meeting with Workin' Bridges project manager, Julie Bowers, is that it may be possible to move the bridge to land to make the repairs which would cut the restoration cost considerably. Questions and logistics for such a plan would need to be addressed. One of which is, if Alternative Recycling is willing to allow the bridge to be worked on for six weeks in their parking area. Julie Bowers' initial conversation with the owner implies that it is indeed a possibility. The question of the gas line being interrupted during the lift and set would need to be addressed. Electric lines, too. The fee to research these details and logistics for the operation would cost \$1,000. How the LCA moves forward will be discussed at the next LCA meeting on June 9th.

The city seems to have little interest in opening the bridge temporarily citing liability issues. Bowers will be asking DPW to have Stantec utilize the numbers that Workin' Bridges uses for loading at occupancy which would be somewhere between 30 and 60 pounds per square foot, which is more realistic for a pedestrian bridge. Thanks to everyone who came to the meeting. A strong show of community support was important. NCTV will be releasing a Youtube video of the meeting and we will post the link on our website. Leeds Civic will continue to advocate to make Hotel Bridge a working pedestrian bridge. New people are interested in helping with grant writing and we'll continue to fund raise. And, Leeds Civic will keep the bridge entrances looking their best. Thank you, Lora Sandhusen, for adding fresh flowers to the planters on Main Street and Water Street for the summer season. If you live on either Main or Water and you notice that the plants look thirsty, it would be wonderful if you could give them a drink. We do need more volunteers for this.

## **Saratoga Racetrack and Casino Trip**

This annual summer trip has two dates this year, August 7th and August 28th. The cost is \$40 (\$70, if you go on both trips). The price includes: King Ward air-conditioned buss ride, general admission to racetrack, bus drivers' tip and a few extra raffles with money if the bus sells out. Bus departs Leeds School at 7:15am, arrives at casino at 9:45am, departs for the racetrack at 11:15am. Post-time is 1:00pm. The bus will arrive back at Leeds School about 8:30 pm.

Bring your lawn chair, coolers with any kind of beverage (no glass), food and snacks. The group generally sits together on the lawn near Big Red Spring so you can roam freely. Call Jim Mias at 584-1623 or see Neil or Sue at Leeds Mart. Repeat customers honored first. Tickets do go fast, so make your plans soon!

## **"Gone fishing" - Leeds in the 1950s** - Richard "Red" Greene

Fishing in the mid-1950s in Leeds was a big deal for us. We couldn't wait for the season to begin. The season started the 3rd week of April and lasted through December. We would start getting our tackle ready a month ahead. We would go to Florence to F.J. Rogers to buy our gear. There weren't big box stores around then so we would all ascend on Rogers store and stock up. You would buy hooks, sinkers, line, lures, etc. Another fun task we enjoyed was digging for worms and night crawlers from my neighbor Miss Porter's compost pile...night crawlers were like "Gold".

We all had our favorite spots to hit on opening day. We hoped that the fish & game personnel stocked those areas weeks before. The Mill River in Leeds was always a great spot to get your catch. Twelve was the limit for each day. Under Cooks Dam and the Orange Dam by ChartPak were the best spots. We would catch a variety of trout, bullhead, perch and suckers. Back then, the dams were all up and functioning making the water much deeper than it is today.

My best friend Jimmy and I had our secret spot up at Big Rock which is next to the Beaver Brook Arch. This is across from upper River Rd. We would head to Sarazin's Store on Main Street to buy 5 cent William Penn cigars. We didn't really smoke them, but used them to keep the mosquitoes away!

We always caught great fish in that area. I would take my catch home and clean them and my mother would cook them for our family. She knew how to prepare and cook up the trout, either with corn meal or flour, and fry them in bacon grease.

Some of my best memories were when my father would take me fishing (usually to posted areas where you weren't supposed to be). When I was real young I didn't understand why, when cars went by, we would have to lay flat on ground and not move...Later I figured it out. One thing for sure, when I went with my father, we always caught our limit and they were big fish.

One of our friends, Allan McClellan was the best fisherman around back then and he still is today. He fishes the same "holes" and gets beauties.

To show how times were different back then, it was not uncommon for the local fireman at the fire station on Main St. to be across the street fishing for "The Big One" a legendary fish he swore was there, but never caught. He'd have to run back to the firehouse if the fire bell was clanging.

There were always fish stories going around town about the one that got away. It was great fun with great friends and kept us out of trouble. Every so often, I think about my mother cooking up some native trout, about 9-10" long. Cooked in flour and a side of fried potatoes with onions for breakfast, this was the breakfast of champions!

## **Emmy Award to Leeds Documentary film maker**

Julie Akeret and WGBY's Mark Langevin took home an Emmy at the Boston/New England Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences Awards ceremony on Saturday night for their work on Big Ideas For Little Kids: Teaching Philosophy Through Picture Books.

## **Village Wide Tag Sale - June 13**

Good day to move your unwanted stuff to new owners. Leeds Civic will advertise in the Gazette and place a sign at the intersection of Florence Street and Route 9. If you want to sell, put up additional signs at the end of your street. Good Luck!

## **Wishing everyone a safe and happy summer! - LCA**