



# LEEDS LETTER

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MARCH-APRIL 2022

## Sweet New Business in Leeds! by Heidi Stevens

What added ingredient makes an event more celebratory? Cake, of course!

How about a cake that is visually stunning and teases your palate even before your first bite? Cakes of this caliber are baking in Leeds most days of the week in the Northampton Country Club's professional kitchen by a talented artist-baker, Brandee Simone. Brandee's make-to-order cake business is called Many Layers Cake Shop. The phrase "many layers" has been a favorite of Brandee's because it's used to describe many things, like a story or situation. The name fits her business. She explains, "Most of my cakes do indeed have many layers—cake, buttercream, fillings, and other additions—so there are the actual physical layers of a cake, as well as layers of flavors, textures, smells, and colors, and there are special meanings and stories behind many of my custom cake designs."

Brandee has loved baking ever since age 5 when her mom let her swirl the chocolate batter into vanilla batter for her birthday marble cake. She remembers being enthralled by the beautiful patterns. Throughout her life she's collected cake cookbooks and finds the alchemy of baking to be fascinating. A few years ago, Brandee started making cakes from home for friends and family. She would work her 9-5 office job, come home, spend time with her family, and then bake into the wee hours of the night. She kept practicing—getting better and better.

The confidence to take her passion for baking and turn it into a business came from years of baking experience, a business course, speaking with other business owners, and support from friends and family. Being laid off from her office job during the pandemic served as a catalyst, and the professional kitchen at the Northampton Country Club in Leeds was perfect for Many Layers Cake Shop to start baking.

### MANY LAYERS CAKE SHOP

Below from left to right: Brandee Simone of Many Layers Cake Shop readies chocolate macarons for the oven; Easter themed macarons; hazelnut and chocolate three layer cake; cupcake assortment

For now, Brandee works solo surrounded by the tools and ingredients of her trade, as a pearlescent Kitchen Aid professional mixer stands ready on the stainless steel counter. Containers of piping tips, palette knives, stamps, cutters, and pastry brushes are neatly stacked. Cabinet shelves hold special ingredients from amaretto to cookie butter to rose syrup. The air smells absolutely delicious. Brandee listens to podcasts or plays music while working, which adds another happy layer to her kitchen atmosphere. She likes to mix it up—energetic and upbeat music when she needs to move fast, and serene and mellow when she needs to hyper-focus on decorating a cake.

She continues to learn and get better. Some unique cake requests have given Brandee an opportunity to discover new skills and try new materials.

She took on the challenge of a special order for a cake in the shape of a dog's head. She used a material that was new to her, homemade modeling chocolate, which can be wrapped around a cake and sculpted like clay. Sculpting tools were used for the dog's features, and edible paint was brushed on to enhance his "look" and add highlights to the chocolate fur. Brandee appreciates customers' imaginative ideas. Themes from outer space, anime cartoons, the animal kingdom, and the natural world—they all inspire her. With each baked cake, batch of cupcakes, or platter of macarons, she can add joy and elevate her customer's celebrations. Brandee also offers vegan and gluten free cake options! Her baking schedule fills up quickly, so whether you're looking for a traditional cake or something out of the ordinary, plan ahead and order as early as possible! To find out more or place an order from Many Layers Cake Shop, go to:

[www.manylayerscakeshop.com](http://www.manylayerscakeshop.com)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Friends of Northampton Trails (FNT) "It's My Rail Trail"

#### Clean Up - Leeds Section

SATURDAY, APRIL 2

(Rain date, April 3)

9:00 - 11:00 A.M.

Meet at Mulberry Street/bike path for bags and assignment. Contact Steve McDonough with questions: spmmic01@gmail.com

### LCA Monthly Meeting

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

7:00 - 8:00 P.M.

Leeds School Cafeteria

### LCA Village Litter Clean-Up

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

(Rain date, April 24)

See back page for details

### Party on Main Street Green: Food Truck, Bands, Games!

SATURDAY, MAY 14

(Rain date, May 15)

More details to come

### Memorial Day Ceremony

SUNDAY, MAY 29 at 1:00 P.M.

At park across from Leeds School

### New Information Panel for Robert's Hill Kiosk on Dimock St.

The new panel will be a fresh update. It will include a trail map with a QR code so you can take the map with you on your hike, a list of Northampton conservation land regulations, and ways to respect conservation land, wildlife, and visitors. The panel will also include a brief history about the namesake of the conservation area, Robert, written by Sue Carbin, a former LCA president.

For those of you who don't hike and will not have the opportunity to read the information panel and would like to know who Robert was, read on!

Robert Lyman was one of Northampton's first settlers. He loved wandering in the "Long Division," which is what Leeds was once called. Robert was born in Essex, England, in 1629. In 1631, his parents sailed to the new world with Robert and his brothers and settled in Windsor, CT. When Robert was 22 years old, his parents died and left him a wealthy man. He made his home at 89 Hawley Street. He married his neighbor, Hepzibah Bascom, and had nine children.

Robert was a land owner with extensive holdings in New Jersey. He was a signor of the Newark Covenant and as such was instrumental in the formation of the New-Ark (later Newark) settlement. In 1690, Robert sold his holdings in New Jersey and transferred all of his property to his wife and eldest son. Court records indicate that Robert could no longer manage his affairs, but that didn't stop him from wandering up into the Long Division.

Robert's name is not mentioned much in the Lyman family history, most likely because he was thought to be "odd." Men of his station were not expected to wander in the woods! However, Robert loved being outside in the woods and meadows. He'd head out with his dog and gun or fishing rod to the Long Division. He'd come up over his favorite hill (Robert's Hill) and hunt or go down into the meadow and fish in the many little streams.

It's fascinating that these beautiful places in Leeds—Robert's Hill, Robert's Meadow, and Robert's Meadow Brook—carry not the Lyman family name, but simply the wanderer's first name. Robert Lyman died somewhere between 1691 and 1699. His life ended while hunting in the place he loved best, what is now Robert's Hill. After more than three centuries, his name graces some of the most beautiful areas in Leeds.

### Green Tip by Amy Stamm

Russia, which exports 7.4 million barrels of oil every day, is the second largest oil exporter in the world. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has woken many people up to our reliance on the international oil trade and has pointed again to the importance of supporting renewable energy. Dramatically rising oil prices could help us all to take critical steps to address climate change. Whatever you can do right now to reduce your reliance on fossil fuels will impact you financially more than ever before and will support the agenda of the youth-led Sunrise Movement, which has been a global leader in setting an ethical climate-change agenda. Please consider installing mini-split heat pump units in your home, trading your gas-powered car in for an electric vehicle, weatherizing your home, installing solar panels on your rooftop, changing your water heating system to a solar thermal system, switching your stove to an induction stove, planning a deep energy retrofit for your house, purchasing locally-grown food, and, in general, taking whatever steps you possibly can to live a fossil-fuel-free life. Let's put our neighborhood's resources into helping all the animals, plants, and people of the world.

### Help Us Remove Winter Trash from Leeds Roadways

Every year the LCA sponsors a spring litter pick up. It's a great activity for families and individuals. Spend an hour or two on your chosen street and leave the bags for the LCA truck to pick up.

## LEEDS 2022 Spring Litter Pick Up

**APRIL 23, 8:00-11:30 A.M. (RAIN DATE - APRIL 24)**

**Step 1.** Between **8:00 and 9:30** come to the Leeds P.O. to sign up for a location and get trash bags. (Garden gloves are recommended.)

**Step 2.** Go to your chosen location, fill your bags, and leave them by the side of the road. The LCA will pick up the filled bags by 11:30 and bring them to the dumpster.

**Step 3.** Feel great for volunteering!



### Party on Main Street Green with Food Truck, Bands, Games!

Saturday, May 14 (Rain date, May 15)

The LCA has been busy designing a party for the Leeds community to get together and celebrate our village and springtime.

There will be live music featuring three Leeds bands: Phil' N' th' Blanks, retro-rockin country; Shawn Gunderson and Kaci Ruh of two.five (they also play with the indie rock band, Colony Motel); and Kevin Hodgson's band, where he plays the saxophone.

There will be delicious food: Caravan Kitchen, a panini food truck, will be on-site serving a variety of tasty panini. Their grilled sandwiches are made with artisanal bread. Both meat and vegetarian options will be offered. Many Layers Cake Shop will have a table of desserts.

There will be games: cornhole, ping pong, badminton, limbo contests, 50/50 raffle, and more.

Food tickets will go on sale April 15th (\$10 per meal) on the LCA website, [leedscivic.org](http://leedscivic.org). For arranging in-person ticket sales, contact Marc Freedman at 774-219-4290 or [mfreedman65@gmail.com](mailto:mfreedman65@gmail.com).

### Possible Habitat for Humanity House in Leeds by Penny Geis

On November 6, 2021, City Planner Wayne Feiden met on Evergreen Road with neighbors of the empty lot just east of 14 Evergreen. The city had recently declared it "surplus property" and plans to sell it for development of housing. It's a small lot, and with new zoning that promotes more affordable housing, the lot could potentially have two homes built there. Before deciding on how to proceed, Feiden wanted to hear opinions from neighbors. In addition, he invited volunteer coordinators from Habitat for Humanity to participate.

Everyone at the meeting agreed that a single-family home would be preferred and that Habitat would be the preferred builder. Habitat said they are interested, but that it would likely be two years before they can build this one. Six or so neighbors said that if Habitat builds it, they would volunteer to help! Can you imagine a better way to get to know your new neighbors than by working together to build a house?

Feiden recently confirmed that the goal for that lot is a single-family home, preferably built by Habitat for Humanity.