



# LEEDS LETTER

SEPTEMBER 2012

## Upcoming Events for 2012

### Block Party

SEPTEMBER 9, Sunday  
3:00-7:00  
(rain date Sept 8)

### LCA Meeting

SEPTEMBER 11 @7:00  
in the Leeds School  
teacher's lounge

### Pumpkin Carving Contest

Date and Location to be  
determined

### History Night

NOVEMBER 13, Tuesday

### Holiday Lights at Park

NOVEMBER 25, Saturday  
(rain date Nov. 26)

### Visit the

**Leeds Civic Association on  
the web for event details  
[www.leedscivic.org](http://www.leedscivic.org)**

## See you at the Leeds Block Party

Invite your Leeds neighbors and friends and join us on the Village Green for a fun filled late afternoon barbeque. There will be free burgers and hotdogs, music and games! If you can, bring a side dish or dessert to share, and a chair for relaxing. Soak up the neighborhood vibe while eating, gossiping, limboing, and laughing.



## Ice Cream Social Satisfies!

Two gigantic containers of Mt. Tom's delicious homemade ice cream were served up free of charge to the lucky Leeds residents who made it down to the Village Green in the early evening of August 7th. The lines formed quickly at 6:45 when ice cream was scooped and served to more than 75 happy Leeds kids and adults.

## Neighborhood Traffic Calming Update

This fall, Leonard and Front streets will be getting new signage and pavement markings as part of the DPW's traffic calming efforts. These improvements are in response to safety concerns expressed by neighborhood residents and will be paid for out of the \$50,000 for traffic mitigation paid to the city by the developers of the Beaver Brook project. The signs will mark curves and indicate recommended speeds, while the double yellow center line and white shoulder lines will serve to visually narrow these streets. According to Laura Hanson, the DPW engineer who met with Leeds residents at a traffic-calming forum held at the Leeds School in February, visually narrowing a roadway has been shown to be effective in slowing down traffic. Additional traffic calming efforts in the Yankee Hill neighborhood will occur as determined after further discussions between neighbors and the DPW.

## Leeds 2012 Pumpkin Carving Contest

The fun event will continue, but at a new location. The previous 18 years were hosted by Robin Forsyth and Jim Mias and held at the end of Grove Avenue. Many neighbors offered helping hands with set up, clean up, snacks and baked goods. The pre-Halloween event has been so popular that some years close to 100 carved pumpkins were entered. A big thank you to Jim and Robin for beginning this incredibly fun Halloween tradition. Stay tuned for upcoming details about the 2012 Pumpkin Carving Contest. Posters will be tacked up and details will be posted on the LCA website, [www.LeedsCivic.org](http://www.LeedsCivic.org). We look forward to seeing this year's frightful, hilarious, and clever pumpkin entries glowing in the late October darkness. What will you carve?

**Pumpkin Carving  
Contest  
is on  
the LCA  
Meeting  
agenda!  
Come and  
share your  
ideas!**



**September 11  
@7:30 pm  
in the teacher's lounge  
@ Leeds School**



### A Day at the Races - Saratoga, NY

**On a hot Friday**, August 3rd, when most people should be at work, fifty one folks from Leeds, the VA, Northampton Country Club, and as far away as Burgy, Bay State, and Florence headed up in a cool air-conditioned bus to Saratoga Springs' Civil War era horse racing track. With high hopes of winning cash, the 2 1/2 hour bus trip zipped by as riders chatted through the miles.

A quick side trip to a casino near the race track took just an hour and was a hit for most. The group arrived at the race track at noon for a 1:30 post time (10 races in all). You might have thought you were at Look Park with the natural and casual setting, beach chairs, picnic tables, coolers all allowed. Red and white striped tents, umbrellas and petunias prevailed and then of course there were the horses - the best of the best! Their beauty, strength and grace something to note, not to mention the pageantry of it all: fancily dressed owners, jockeys in their silks, and the excitement as the horses galloped to the finish line.

The bus headed back to Leeds after the final 6:00 race. We didn't hear about a lot of winners, but most wanted to reserve a seat for next year. Saratoga day trips have a lot of charm. Next year the LCA hopes to have a trip in late July and late August.

### Robert Emrick -My Grandfather

Back before many of the prominent businessmen moved to Leeds, the town was considered "the sticks" and had very little fire protection. When a disastrous fire broke out on East Center Street in 1923 my grandfather started a movement in Northampton to get the first motorized fire pump called "The Seagrave" and an additional six fireboxes installed in Leeds. This is also what got him started in politics. He was on the Common Council in 1924 and then Board of Alderman in 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928 and then as an independent 1934 and 1935. I listed every year because back then you had to run for office every year. He was as honest as they come and very tight about spending money foolishly, which doesn't sound like a politician. I heard rumors that both parties wanted him to run for Mayor, but "Fighting City Hall" took it's toll on him and my grandmother. She said, no way was he to be Mayor. But that didn't stop my grandfather from continuing to speak his mind. He wrote numerous letters to the editor of the newspaper and voiced his opinion if he thought something wasn't right.

Boys Scouts were fairly new back in my grandfather's day. He organized Troop 108 and was it's scoutmaster for 8 years. There was also the Young Men's Club back in 1919. When the Leeds Civic Association started around 1933, my grandfather was the first president. One side story, (and I heard this from someone reliable) was that my grandfather had to quit school at the age of 14 to go to work, but finished high school thru the mail. He then took up mechanical drawing thru an international correspondence school, so when they were putting the sewer in many years ago , my grandfather submitted a plan. Since he didn't have a college education they took someone else's plan and that system didn't work well and many years later when they reconfigured it, they basically did what my grandfather had said years before. My grandfather did many things for his village of Leeds. Talk to any of our older residents (75+) who lived in Leeds back then... I think most will be able to tell you stories of him.

**The LCA wishes a successful school year to all of our Leeds' students, parents, and teachers!**

