



LEEDS LETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2016

UPCOMING EVENTS 2016



SEPTEMBER 30, Friday
Pumpkin Party planning meeting

6:30-7:30 pm
163 Main Street
(Jason Johnson's house)

OCT 11, Tuesday
LCA meeting

7:00-8:00
Leeds School teacher's lounge

OCTOBER 29, Saturday
Leeds Pumpkin Party

4:00- 8:30 pm
Corner of Chestnut and Upland

Leeds Civic Association

P.O. Box 114, Leeds, MA 01053
LeedsCivicAssoc@gmail.com
LeedsCivic.org

The City Acquires the Talon Property in Leeds

On June 29th the City closed on the 20 acre Talon Trust property on Reservoir Road. With this purchase, the City is able to preserve the rural feeling of Reservoir Road, keep the ecological and trail connection between the Saw Mill Hills/Robert's Hill Conservation area, Reservoir Road, and the reservoir itself. Soon, the City will install a Saw Mill Hills Conservation Area sign and a Robert's Hill sign on Reservoir Road. The trails on the property will be managed by the Leeds Civic Association and may be marked as the LCA decides. (Roberts Hill is one hill within the Saw Mill Hills. The official name of the conservation area is Saw Mill Hills, with the northerly section being the Roberts Hill section.)

Who is the "Robert" in Roberts Hill Conservation Area? - Sue Carbin

It's a bit hard to describe Robert Lyman. He was a wanderer during the 1600's, spotted everywhere. Many people thought he was a bit strange. And in truth he was a member of a prominent Northampton family and he was not poor. He had extensive land holdings in New Jersey and rode down to check them every so often. He also sold land and bought land. Robert is not mentioned much in the Lyman family history, most likely because he was thought to be "odd," men of his station with a lineage back to England were not expected to be wanderers in the woods! However, Robert loved being outside in the woods and meadows. His favorite place was the "Long Division," what most of Leeds was called way back then. After trips to check on his holdings he would return to his house lot on, what today is, Pomeroy Terrace, and soon 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. He often wandered over into the Mineral Hills. On one of his adventures in the Mineral Hills he stumbled onto the Lead Mines, most likely his only claim to fame in Westhampton history.

In 1691 Robert sold his holdings in New Jersey and other places. When he returned he transferred all of his local 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. It's fascinating that these beautiful places in Leeds, Robert's Hill, Robert's Meadow, Robert's Meadow Brook carry not the Lyman family name, but simply the wanderer's first name, Robert. Robert Lyman died somewhere between 1691 and 1693. Still, after more than 320 years his name still graces some of the most beautiful areas in Leeds. Robert's life ended while hunting in the place he loved best, Robert's Hill.



Luck in the Mill River - Heidi Stevens

When my sons were young we spent summer days swimming and scavenging in the Mill River. We always brought along a bag to carry back our treasures of river glass chards. All those different shapes, shades of blue, occasionally a dull red or even purple, soft pinks. Some had fancy diamond patterns, scalloped or swirled textures that made me wonder what it had been and who had used it when it was whole. I was entranced by these fragments. Anyway, the big prize for me was when I found smoothed bottle necks. They made for a perfect round fish eye in my wire and river glass assemblages. Recently, I went through my box of "extra special" river glass and found a small clear bottle that had visible raised letters on it that read HOYT'S -ICKLE C--OGN.



A quick Google search found that this was a sample bottle of men's cologne manufactured in Lowell, Mass in the late 1800s and was sold throughout the East and South.

Apothecary owner, Eli Waite Hoyt developed the perfume and his partner, Freeman Ballard Shedd, applied his marketing genius. Shedd designed the unique bottle with the indented panel and raised letters. In 1870 the product became "Hoyt's German Cologne" to give it a more definitive name (Due to its negative connotation at the time of WWI, the term "German" was dropped.) Full size bottles sold for a whole buck and the small 2 inch

bottle with a slim neck, like the one I found, either sold for 5 cents or was given away as an advertising sample. Soon 25 cent trial-size bottles were produced and business really boomed.

In 1871 H.W. Hoyt & Co. began producing a series of illustrated trade cards (above) that were soaked in the cologne as a way to introduce new people to the product. They also made theater programs and ladies fans soaked in the cologne. Probably the most brilliant marketing devise was the promise that Hoyt's Cologne would bring good luck to men, not only in matters of love, but with cards and other endeavors. I wonder if the empty nickel bottle that I found brought its owner some good luck and happy times!

Green Tip - Amy Stamm

The recent drought is one expression of increasingly erratic and severe weather patterns resulting from global warming. With the water ban in effect, there are measures we can all take to conserve water. Toilets account for almost 30% of our home water use. For those of you who do not have water-saving toilets, one water-saving measure that requires almost no effort is to fill a gallon jug with rocks and water, and stick it into your toilet tank. Every time you flush, you will use one less gallon than you did before. If you're due for a new toilet, consider purchasing a WaterSense labeled model, which can save you up to 13,000 gallons a year and \$2,200 over the lifetime of the toilet. You can also save water by putting a bucket in your shower to collect the cold water before your shower water warms up. Then you can water houseplants, fill your birdbath or water your garden with the bucket. It is also good practice to turn off the faucet as you're brushing your teeth or washing dishes when you are not directly using the water. If you get an energy audit, you can receive water-saving shower-heads and other energy-saving devices. If we all pitch in, we can help our town with its water needs.

Summer efforts on Leeds Dams and Conservation Land

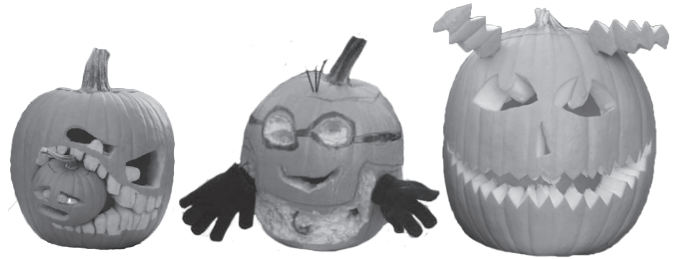
Extra steps were taken this past summer to try and discourage abusive behavior along the river. Neighbors within earshot of the dams called the police over 60 times. NPD officers made property checks and park and walks at these areas on their own as well. The DPW has put up No Trespass signs and No Parking/Tow Zone signs along Arch Street near Cooks Dam.

With donations from Chartpak, Leeds Civic Association, Northampton Planning Department, and generous Leeds residents the LCA was able to hire off-duty police details on several weekends.

Officers were asked to inform users of conservation area rules to be followed when using the river and the trails, i.e. no alcohol, littering, excessive noise, coolers, fires, grills or day camping are allowed. Swimming is fine. Fishing is fine. Hiking and dog walking are fine. Trespassing is not. NPD officers advised over 300 people to leave Chartpak Dam and Cook's Dam. These areas in particular draw large groups who haphazardly park their cars along Main Street and leave a plethora of garbage on the street and along the river.

Litter collections were organized. Volunteers walked the areas at least once a week filling bags with all sorts of garbage, some of which is too gross to describe. An estimated 200 pounds of trash was taken out and that doesn't even count the several hundred bottles and cans found. The problem of how to drag a large haul of trash out was one reason we made a more concerted effort to organize litter pick ups. A large plastic wheel barrel was donated for carrying heavy loads out. The DPW and Planning Department contributed City trash bags for volunteers to use.

One volunteer, in particular, is worthy of special mention, Shawn Drewitz. Shawn cares deeply about the river and trails. He hates to see the way some people trash it. For years he has quietly been trying to maintain a litter-free river front. An impossible task for one person. If you are someone either with the LCA litter effort or just on your own who has picked up litter along the river and trails over the years, hats off to you!



Volunteers needed to organize Pumpkin Contest and Party

Your input is needed...

1st planning meeting will be on Friday, September 30th at 6:30.

- Should there be a 50/50 buy-in contest (maybe \$5 per entry) for those who have a special finesse with carving tools or have a talent for conceptual decorating? If so, should half the winnings go to the Hotel Bridge Restoration Fund and half to the winner?
- What other prizes should be given out and for what?
- What about the food? some or none?
- Should people who bring pumpkins judge the 50/50 entries (if they happen)?
- Other ideas?
- The kids Pumpkin Roll is definitely happening!!

A second planning meeting date to be determined.

Volunteers are needed before, during and after the party.

Leeds Pumpkin Party will be held on Saturday, October 29th.

The Pumpkin Party has become a Leeds tradition. Given that the party will fall just two days before Halloween, there should be no excuses for arriving empty handed without a pumpkin to add to the display. Imagine seeing 100 pumpkins glowing on October 29th?!!

If you cannot make either meeting and would like to help out in some way please call Jason Johnson at 413-320-3386 or email cookjohnson@comcast.net.