



The Acorn

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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December 2012

Tis the Season



Yule Celebration December 2nd at Nathan Lester House

The Society's eighth annual Yuletide Celebration will be held on **Sunday, December 2nd** at the Nathan Lester House from **1:00 to 4:00 PM**. As in past years, the house will be decorated for holiday cheer and there will be a cozy fire, great refreshments, carolers and good cheer and company. As ever, our books and maps are available for holiday gifts.

This will be a time to enjoy fellowship with members and friends, before the hustle and bustle of the season become too intense. Come, bring a friend and enjoy the afternoon.

The **Nathan Lester House** is located at the intersection of Long Cove and Vinegar Hill Roads in Gales Ferry.

Leading Ladies at March Meeting Patty Carver to Highlight Pioneer Women

For our first program of 2013, we are pleased to partner with the Ledyard Library Friends to present the "second act" of Patty Carver's popular "This Old Hat" series. This inventive and engaging event focuses on five noted American women, each of whom was the first to accomplish her groundbreaking achievement.

In the presentation, Dolley Madison tells her story of saving the Declaration of Independence during the War of 1812 and how she served as the "Hostess in the President's House" for sixteen years. Elizabeth Blackwell was the first American woman to become a doctor. She tells the story of her first day at medical school. Nellie Bly was the first undercover reporter. She tells of the story of how she spent ten days in Blackwell's Island, New York's notorious madhouse. Belva Lockwood, in 1884, was the first woman to run for President. Belva Lockwood also sings and talks about Eleanor Roosevelt, the remarkable American woman who never wanted to be a president's wife, but came to be known as "First Lady of the World."

The meeting will be held on Sunday afternoon, March 3rd; plans are afoot to hold it at the Ledyard Senior Center. Full details of time and place will be in the next issue of *The Acorn*.

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, December 2, 2011: Annual Yule Celebration at the Nathan Lester House, 1:00 to 4:00 PM.

Wednesday, January 9, 2013: Executive Board Meeting, Gales Ferry Community Center, 7:00 PM.

Sunday, March 3, 2013: Membership meeting, Leading Ladies, joint program with Ledyard Library Friends, Ledyard Senior Center, 2:00 PM.

Wednesday, March 13, 2013: Executive Board, Gales Ferry Community Center, 7:00 PM.

Second week of April 2013: Membership Meeting, program, time and place to be announced.

Wednesday, May 8, 2013, Executive Board Meeting, Gales Ferry Community Center, 7:00 PM

REMEMBER, the Nathan Lester House is available for use by small groups of up to 35 people. Contact caretakers Lee Moore and Dan Weaver at 860-464-2040, or email nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com for more information or for tours out of season.

The Acorn

MIGHTY OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS GROW

Published bimonthly by Ledyard Historical Society, Inc., P.O. Box 411, Ledyard, CT 06339

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Items for inclusion should be submitted by the first of July, September, November, January, March or May.

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Lester House Welcomes New Caretakers Lee Moore, Dan Weaver Move In

In our last issue, we bade farewell to Andrea and Scott Buka, after nine years as caretakers and curators at the Nathan Lester House. We are now pleased to introduce their successors, Lee Moore and Dan Weaver.

A California native, Lee was so taken with Southeastern Connecticut that he bought a circa-1765 Ledyard house while here on vacation several years ago. Later, he discovered, through genealogical research, that his roots are right here in Connecticut. A 13th generation Avery descendant, he is active in the Avery Memorial Association and serves as its secretary, and is past chairman of the Ebenezer Avery House Committee. He is also a member of the Sons of the American Revolution. A former air traffic controller, he later worked as a set decorator for CBS Television, on such shows as "Mama's Family," "The Price is Right" and "The Bold and the Beautiful." Since moving to Connecticut he has become a licensed message therapist, operating his business, The Spa in the Woods, for eight years. He is currently secretary of our Ledyard Historical Society.

His partner, Dan Weaver, is also a veteran of television production, having worked on such shows as "Donahue," "Geraldo" and "Entertainment Tonight." Lee serves on Ledyard's Library Commission while Dan is on the Board of Southeastern Connecticut Television and produces and hosts many shows on Comcast's public access channel. Lee and Dan moved into the caretakers' quarters in early November. They may be contacted by telephone at the new number 860-464-2040 or by email nathanlesterhouse@yahoo.com. Although the house is closed until Spring,

appointments can be made for special off-season tours. The grounds and surrounding 102 wooded acres are open to the public from sunrise to sunset, year round.

Highlights from the Executive Board Meeting , Sept. 19, 2012

The Board met at the Nathan Lester House at 7:00 PM. Present were President Kit Foster, Vice president Vin godino, Secretary Lee Moore, and committee chairs Rusty Godino, John Bolduc and Ellen Fossum.

- Kate Dimancescu will speak at the October 14 Membership Meeting about researching her Williams, Morgan, Stanton and Larrabee ancestors. Discussions are being held with the Ledyard Library Friends about co-sponsoring a speaker for a program early in 2013.
- The Annual Yule Celebration will be held at the Nathan Lester House on Sunday, December 2nd.
- The Society will participate in the Local History Expo being held at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Groton on October 20.
- Scanning of images in the archives continues. In coming months, the research files will be re-organized to assist librarians in serving the public
- The schedule for upcoming meetings was reviewed, and it was decided to omit a December Membership Meeting subsequent to the Yule Celebration. The Gales Ferry Community Center is available to the Society on certain weekdays and evenings, and will be scheduled for

Executive Board meetings, and perhaps some others.

- Notice of the vacancies for treasurer, publicity and hospitality will be published in *The Acorn*.
- Rusty presented a summary of the dues structures for area historical societies. Board members will review it in advance of discussion at the next Executive meeting. Any proposed changes to our dues structure will be voted by the Board and presented to the membership for action at the annual meeting in June.

The above report has been condensed by the editor from the official minutes taken by Secretary Lee Moore.

Can You Add, Subtract, Multiply and Divide?

Unforeseen circumstances recently forced our treasurer to resign. President Kit Foster is currently handling financial matters on an ad-hoc basis, but the continued viability of the Society requires more attention than another officer can give to the task.

Experience with bookkeeping is certainly desirable, but by no means mandatory. Our transactions are few, and as the headline suggests, our records are quite simple. Familiarity with such software tools like spread sheets and elementary financial programs like Quicken or Quickbooks is obviously a plus.

If you have the interest and the ability to devote a few hours a month to this important job, please contact Kit at 860-464-6466 or president@ledyardhistory.org. Your Society will be very grateful.

History in Small Helpings

Many Novel Ideas Developed This Year for Pleasure of Children

The up-to-date toymakers in these days must be an inventor [sic]. There is a constant demand for novelties in playthings and the public expect to be supplied each Christmas with new and original ones, something unlike anything that we ever seen or heard of before, says the Philadelphia Press. Hence the call for brains in the toy-making business, the progress of events all over the world being watched for useful suggestion.

No toys worth mentioning are manufactured in the United States, because labor costs too much. For our supply of playthings every Christmas we look mainly to Germany, where the peasants, content with a wage of a few cents a day, pursue the occupation as a sort of household industry, even the little children helping their parents to carve, stuff, glue and mold. From the neighborhood of Sonnenberg alone, in the Thuringian mountains, more than \$3,000,000 worth of wooden toys are shipped to this country every year.

This country is Germany's largest customer for playthings of all kinds – wood, metal, papier mache and dolls.

Under these circumstances it is natural that the great toy manufacturers of Sonnenberg, in the Thuringian mountains, and of Nuremberg (where most of the metal toys are made), should pay special attention to the requirements of American children. To take a concrete example, the Bear of Berne (famous in history), which, adopted in Toyland, has come to be known on this side of the water as the Teddy bear, appears with the face of Mr. Roosevelt, spectacles and all.

A modification of the same idea is a mechanical toy, in which Mr. Roosevelt is represented, disguised in rather striking togs, as a ringmaster in a circus, persuading a

Teddy bear to execute antics with the help of a whip. As the bear walks around the small revolving platform upon which Mr. Roosevelt stands, that distinguished statesman waves the lash.

A noteworthy illustration of the inventive cleverness of the toymakers is afforded by another of this season's novelties, which is a mechanical mermaid. Being wound up with a key she swims in water. Her arms and legs, and even her hands, are joined, so that the movements she goes through are decidedly lifelike.

Equally novel in its way is a battleship for the playroom. Toy warships, both battleships and cruisers, and torepedo boats as well, have been common enough for a number of years, being popularized greatly by our war with Spain. But this is something different. It is wholly of wood and is put together out of small building blocks, no little trouble and skill being required to adjust the parts correctly. Even the smokestacks are of the same material and the last touch of construction consists in hanging the tiny wooden boats from the wide davits provided for them.

One of the most striking of the new toys is a peacock. It is sufficiently well made to look quite natural – such things requiring to be decidedly artistic nowadays in order to satisfy an educated popular taste – but the remarkable point about it is its mechanical action. When wound up with a key it lifts and spreads its tail exactly in the manner of a real peacock, emitting at the same time a hoarse cry resembling that of the fowl itself.

The Day, Dec. 9, 1907

The first sentence of the second paragraph sounds all too familiar – until the homeland of the “peasants” is mentioned. When this was published “Mr. Roosevelt” was in his second term as President. –Editor.



It's the Cat's Meow

Our edition in the Ledyard series of "Cat's Meow" collectibles is available. A faithful likeness of the Nathan Lester House joins earlier landmarks in the set, the Bill Library, Gales Ferry Library and Ledyard Congregational Church.

Priced at \$18.50, tax included, the Lester House Meows are **available at both libraries, at the Nathan Lester House.** They make great holiday gifts!

Would You Like to Receive the Acorn via Email?

Printing and mailing *The Acorn* is one of the Society's largest annual expenses. Delivery of the newsletter via email would cut down on these substantially. A number of members have signed up for email delivery, which comes as a pdf file in advance of the regular mailing. To change from postal to email delivery just email a request to the editor at acorn@kitfoster.com. Be sure to include the email address to which you want the issues sent.

Pay your dues, recruit a member?

Our membership year runs nominally from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting. **Dues for 2012-2013 are now due and payable.** If your dues are paid through 2013 (check your mailing label), please use this form to recruit a new member.

**Ledyard Historical Society
Membership Year 2012-2013**

Name _____	_____ Senior \$5.00
Address _____	_____ Senior Couple \$8.00
_____	_____ Individual \$10.00
Telephone _____	_____ Family \$15.00
E-mail address _____	_____ Patron \$25.00
Special interests or comments _____	_____ Life \$150.00
_____	_____ Life Couple \$200.00

Mail to: Ledyard Historical Society
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THE LEDYARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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Who's Who at Ledyard Historical Society 2012-2013

President: Kit Foster	464-6466	Second District Schoolhouse:	
Vice President:		Bill Fossum	464-2575
Vin Godino	464-6314	Hospitality:	
Secretary: Lee Moore	572-7084	Information Technology:	
Treasurer: Vacancy		Andrea Buka	235-2387
Programs: Ellen Fossum	464-2575	Publications: Rusty Godino	464-6314
Membership: John Bolduc	464-0366	Board Member-at-Large	
Historian: Jan Bell	464-2061	Gail Milroy	
Newsletter: Kit Foster	464-6466		
Publicity: Vacancy			
Curator: Bill Fossum	464-2575		

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