Trail gets rough for historic properties like WBH&G, as sagging finances generally parallel member attrition

Our conservation land & trails offer a route to sustained relevance

Over the past several years, the recession has taken its toll on all non-profit educational and charitable organizations, including historic sites and museums. As citizens have tightened their personal purse strings, the flow of support that formerly sustained such non-profits has slowed to a trickle. The Weeks Brick House & Gardens has seen this play out, all the while watching its modest reserve accounts lose value and slowly recover, with no real growth. The organization’s financial situation is further impacted by being without a rent-paying tenant since September 2012.

So … this is no time to mince words: If you care about the future of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens, and think you might be behind in your dues, get out the checkbook, choose your level of support, and get back in good standing! (Perhaps you simply missed the dues reminder in our fall 2012 newsletter. To those who did pay their dues, you are “due” a giant “Thank You”!

In the years 2007 to 2011, records show that WBH&G had well over 100 paid-up members each year. In 2012, the number of paid-up members dropped to … drum-roll here … 54. We all realize that even the most robust of us don’t live forever, and organizations like ours will experience a loss of loyal members over time. But the rate of our member dropoff suggests that it might be due to deadbeats rather than the dead.

Annual Meeting set for Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013; planning in progress for Greenland Day in July

This year’s Weeks Brick House Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Sept. 8, 2013. Events will be held at both the 1710 Weeks Brick House and grounds, and at the meeting hall at the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve and Discovery Center.

As always, Weeks family descendants, members, non-members, community friends, and history enthusiasts are invited to join us for tours, trail walks, socializing, genealogy networking, our guest speaker, and the opportunity to walk in the footsteps of progenitor Leonard Weeks (1633-1707) on the original 1656 family farmstead. Early arrivals on Saturday Sept. 7 are invited to join the WBH&G board that afternoon for an informal wine & cheese social.

Our guest speaker this year is Ken Turino, Manager of Community Engagement & Exhibitions for Historic New England (SPNEA). Ken has long been a sought-after presenter at regional and national museum

Rep. John Wingate Weeks earns headlines again: This time it’s for the birds

Recently your editor received a note from Barbara S. Weeks of Amherst, Mass., who appreciated past newsletter coverage of U.S. Rep. John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926) and the 2011 centennial of the Weeks Act, legislation that was instrumental in the creation of our National Parks. Thanks to a special alert included in her note, there is

In this issue …

Trail Gets Rough for WBH&G ..........1
Annual Meeting Set for Sept. 8 ..........1
This is for the Birds: J.W. Weeks ..........1
Engraved Brick Opportunity ..........2
News Roundup..........................2
Garden Collaboration..................3
Want to Live in a Landmark? ..........3
Membership & Dues Form..........3
Honor your own Weeks family with an engraved brick on our Memorial Brick Walkway

The Memorial Brick Walkway project at the 1710 Weeks Brick House & Gardens resumes this spring, and local residents are invited to join with Weeks descendants to submit suggestions for relevant honorees.

The walkway project at the Weeks Brick House, which has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1975, began in 2010, when a number of descendants of Leonard Weeks (1633-1705) from near and far were memorialized with engraved bricks on the walkway at the rear of the house.

Since then it has become clear that there are Greenwood residents who, while not descendants of Leonard Weeks, may still have personal or family connection to the farmstead established in 1656, or else have cherished memories of a more recent Weeks family member – perhaps one who has no living descendants to speak up for them. The Memorial Brick Walkway project is the perfect way to memorialize,

honor, dedicate, or show appreciation to Weeks-relevant ancestors, family members, or special friends of the Weeks Brick House by ordering a custom-engraved brick for placement this season.

The cost is just $100 per brick, which includes preparation, engraving, and placement. For complete information, visit the Weeks Brick House website at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org. From the web site’s “Donate & Shop” page, one can download the convenient Brick Inscription Order Form. Fill in the order form, craft your inscription according to the guidelines, and send the form with your check to The Weeks Brick House & Gardens, P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840. Bricks will be in place by the annual meeting Sept. 8, 2013.

News Roundup:

Notes on prospecting for new board members, a new Facebook presence, in-house driveway work, and a report from our ‘Washington lobbyist’

Miscellaneous news items from the Weeks Brick House & Gardens:

• WBH seeks locally-based go-getters for board service. In recent years it has become clear that forging a connection with the local community is essential to the future of the WBH&G. Reader recommendations are encouraged. At the same time, the family bond is strong, and we encourage Weeks family members to volunteer for board service as well.

• Have you seen our Facebook page? Late last year board member Jean Eno established a Facebook presence for the WBH&G. This is another way for our community across the U.S. to stay up-to-date, involved, and conversant with our news, activities, and initiatives. Connect to the Facebook page through the link on our website: www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.

• Snowstorms – and plowing – leave driveway scarred. But not to worry, as energetic board members with shovels, wheelbarrows, and strong backs will soon redistribute the displaced crushed stone, and restore a passable driveway.

• Study with our Weeks Brick House archaeologist. Dr. Neill DePaoli, who has conducted archaeological digs at WBH&G, reports that he will be conducting five one-week sessions of his Archaeology Field School this June and July in Berwick, Maine. For more information, schedule, and cost, e-mail Neill at ndpquid@yahoo.com.

• From our “Washington lobbyist”: Last year WBH&G member Rebecca W. S. More took up the case of correcting the assertion in the Congressional biography of U.S. Rep. Edgar Weeks (1839-1904) that he was a cousin of John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926). She reports that the required documentation she assembled is on its way to the Office of the Historian of the U.S. House of Representatives. Stay tuned. (Edgar Weeks descends from George Weeks, 1600-1650, of Dorchester, Mass.)
Editor’s Note: Leslie Stevens, our former board member who rejuvenated our herb gardens and vegetable gardens in spectacular fashion in 2009, has agreed to maintain the two large vegetable beds this season, and recently explained her plans.

By Leslie Stevens

I am very excited to be back vegetable gardening at the Weeks House this summer. The vegetable gardens are cleaned up and ready for spring planting. We weeded yesterday (April 10) and prepared the beds.

Because of the “critter” problem experienced last year (new bunnies, woodchucks, turkey, and more deer), we are limited in what we are planting. Mostly we will plant tomatoes, potatoes, onions, eggplant, peppers, pumpkins, gourds, squash, and cucumbers. The animals either don’t like these plants, or the spines on the leaves and vines make them harder to eat. We can’t plant beans, corn, peas, cabbage, broccoli, carrots or lettuces. They are just too tempting to the wildlife that abounds at the Weeks Brick House.

I am looking at this partnership between my small urban farm, Sidewalk Farms (www.sidewalkfarms.com) and the Weeks Brick House as an excellent example of the way in which city/urban farmers can find land to borrow or share and enable them to produce more fruit and vegetables than they would otherwise be able to grow. It is actually a really cool model and one that I am seeing more and more around the country. Sidewalk Farms currently partners with the Weeks Brick House and a private land owner in Rye, N.H. to provide two larger garden spaces beyond the limited city lot we are located on in Portsmouth. Our hope is to be able to provide our neighborhood with fresh produce in the summer and possibly join the Rye Farmer’s Market Coop to provide vegetables for them as well.

I am excited about this model and hope to continue to grow by partnering with other organizations or land owners in the next year to create a small farm that exists on scattered sites. I am convinced our culture will continue to head in the direction of healthier eating and re-learning how to grow our own food. I believe more of these relationships will appear in the coming years. Sidewalk Farms is proud of our model and we encourage others to reach out and try this type of partnership.

www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

**Tenant sought for 1710 Weeks Brick House**

Do you know an old house lover? We’re enlisting readers’ help in finding a tenant who will appreciate living in the 1710 Weeks Brick House. If you know someone in the N.H. seacoast region who would value the opportunity, please pass on this information.

The house has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1975. Since then, the house has been occupied by tenants as a way to secure the house and provide a small income for preservation. The house sits on 33 acres of the original Leonard Weeks farmstead between Rte. 33 and the Winnicut River. For comprehensive information about the Weeks Brick House & Gardens, visit www.Weeksbrickhouse.org.

Features include three bedrooms, 1.5 baths, kitchen, wood floors, and a private setting near the bus terminal and Rtes. 95 & 101. Rent is $1000 per month, plus electricity. (Heat included.) No smoking or pets.

A credit check and museum-standard background check are required. The selected tenant will sign a historic house museum-standard license agreement.

Prospective tenants should e-mail Sara MacCorkle (Sara_MacCorkle@yahoo.com) or Cynthia Smith (CSmith_nh@myfairpoint.net). List “Weeks Brick House” in the subject line and include name and contact information.

---

**Weeks Brick House & Gardens Membership Form**

(For Renewals and New Membership)

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

City/Town: ___________________________ State: _____ Zip: _______________

Phone: ___________________________ E-mail: ___________________________

Please indicate your preference:  
Y N  Do you prefer e-mail newsletters?  
Y N  Do you wish to be listed in any future member directory?

$________ to the Chimney Fund  $________ to the Garden Fund

TOTAL ENCLOSED: $_________

Please return this form with payment to: Weeks Brick House & Gardens, P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840. Thank You!

Make check payable in U.S. currency to “Weeks Brick House.” All gifts are tax deductible. Thank You!
Rough trail for WBH&G … continued from page 1

Nevertheless, be assured that the small handful of board members is working – not whining – and watching every penny:

• Driveway repair will be accomplished with board volunteer labor.
• Trail-clearing & footbridge repair will be accomplished with all-volunteer board labor. Maintaining the trails on our conservation land is essential, as the trails may be our best way to connect to future supporters in the Greenland community, and engender a local sense of “ownership.”
• The repair of the west chimney has been put on hold. Meanwhile, the board is actively exploring grant funding for historic preservation projects that could get the chimney repair back on track.
• The WBH&G Newsletter, produced by a volunteer editor/designer, has been cut to four pages to reduce printing cost. Fewer issues of the twice-yearly publication are being mailed, thanks to members who prefer to receive the identical e-mail version.
• Board member recruiting is a priority. There are openings on the WBH&G board of directors, and we seek those who are willing to serve not only from the ranks of the Weeks family, but also from the ranks of local community members.
• Securing a tenant has been more difficult than anticipated. Some observers of the Portsmouth area rental market attribute this simply to supply exceeding demand. To be ready for the spring market, the rent has been lowered, which should improve our chances of securing an acceptable tenant as soon as possible.
• In summary, this year our conservation land and trails will continue to serve the Greenland community, and the 1710 house will continue to be an icon for Weeks family descendants – on a thin shoestring budget.

So … this is no time to mince words: If you care about the future of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens, and think you might be behind in your dues, get out the checkbook, choose your level of support, and get back in good standing!

This time it’s for the birds … continued from page 1

more to celebrate about J.W. Weeks. We never should have put away those pointy party hats and tin horns!

Ardent birders know that March 2013 marked the centennial of the Migratory Bird Act – also known as the Weeks-McLean Act. One of our country’s first environmental laws, the legislation was the first to place migrating birds under federal jurisdiction and protection. Concern about extinction of some species had increased throughout the late 19th century, but in 1908 Charles H. Hudson, a farmer in Needham, Mass., wrote a letter to his representative in Congress, John Wingate Weeks, imploring him to sponsor “a national law put on all kinds of birds in every state in the country, as the gunners are shooting our birds that nature put here …” The process took five years, but the bill introduced by Rep. John Wingate Weeks of Massachusetts and Senator George P. McLean of Connecticut was finally passed in 1913, setting the stage for national bird conservation awareness that continues today.

This news is adapted from an article by Ann Prince in the spring 2013 issue of Sanctuary, the journal of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Ann Prince, associate editor of Sanctuary, is the niece of our timely correspondent Barbara S. Weeks and her late husband, Willard T. Weeks, M.D.

Weeks, implored him to sponsor “a national law put on all kinds of birds in every state in the country, as the gunners are shooting our birds that nature put here …” The process took five years, but the bill introduced by Rep. John Wingate Weeks of Massachusetts and Senator George P. McLean of Connecticut was finally passed in 1913, setting the stage for national bird conservation awareness that continues today.

In other event news, planning continues for the Weeks Brick House participation in this year’s Greenland Day festivities on Saturday, July 20, 2013. Event activities center around the town green, but for the past several years WBH&G representatives on the green have also directed interested folks to visit the Weeks Brick House for an introduction to the house, gardens, trails, and conservation land.

So … this is no time to mince words: If you care about the future of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens, and think you might be behind in your dues, get out the checkbook, choose your level of support, and get back in good standing!

2013 Annual Meeting … continued from page 1

and history conferences on the topic of securing a sustainable future for historic properties. His presentation is entitled “Reinventing the Historic House” – a timely topic as the Weeks Brick House charts a careful and frugal course for its own future.

In summary, this year our conservation land and trails will continue to serve the Greenland community, and the 1710 house will continue to be an icon for Weeks family descendants – on a thin shoestring budget.

This news is adapted from an article by Ann Prince in the spring 2013 issue of Sanctuary, the journal of the Massachusetts Audubon Society. Ann Prince, associate editor of Sanctuary, is the niece of our timely correspondent Barbara S. Weeks and her late husband, Willard T. Weeks, M.D.