Battered by winter, just like all of New England, WBH blossoms with ‘boots-on-the-ground’ help

Day-long spring clean-up by board volunteers checks off essential items on a very long to-do list

Five energetic board members convened at the Weeks Brick House in Greenland, N.H. on Friday, May 15 for a much-needed all-day spring clean-up.

Tom Ayres and Skip Weeks traveled from Connecticut to join board colleagues Steve Pike, Amanda Nelson, and Cynthia Weeks Smith, who arrived from various points in New Hampshire.

Like almost everywhere else in New England this past winter, the seacoast New Hampshire region was buried in blizzard after blizzard. When the snow finally melted, the damage from ice, wind, water, plowing, and the sheer weight of massive drifts and man-made snowpiles was everywhere. At the Weeks Brick House, the lawn, brick walkway, driveway, and some fenceposts suffered damage. Many tree branches were down. Some distressed shrubs needed pruning, and some trees are still clearly in need of attention from a professional arborist.

Essential to maximizing accomplishments on the spring clean-up day at the Weeks Brick House was the thorough property condition evaluation prepared in advance by Steve Pike. That report enabled prioritization of tasks so that the small crew could set to work immediately upon arrival to attain big results.

On the grounds, Cynthia Smith worked on preparing the two vegetable garden beds for rototilling in advance of planting. Amanda Nelson wrestled with the tangle of overgrowth in the herb garden beds – the same gardens once a point of pride, but now in need of attentive restoration.

Also on the house grounds, Skip Weeks, traveling with his chainsaw, removed a dead pear tree from the fruit tree orchard adjacent to the garden beds.

Tom Ayres and Steve Pike concentrated on restoring the hiking trails to a passable state. Mangled trail signs foreshadowed the blocked entrance – a fallen tree across the trail tangled with vines and thorns. Steve Pike (another man toting his trusty...continued on page 3

Don’t miss this one! Sail along with us at our Annual Meeting Sept. 19-20, 2015

This year’s Weeks Brick House Annual Meeting is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, September 19 & 20, 2015, and will be memorable not only for marking a special anniversary, but also for our first-time gundalow sail on Great Bay, and a silent-auction fund-raiser that already has garnered an impressive array of donated items sure to attract generous bids.

Our gathering this fall marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of Leonard Weeks & Descendants in America, Inc., which in 1975 successfully saved the 1710 brick house and 1656 farmstead from development. At the time, this was a bold preservation triumph of the highest order, and 40 years later, it is an accomplishment that deserves our celebration.

Featured on Sunday, September 20 will be an exhibition of photos and ephemera from the earliest years of the organization, and a continuation of last year’s panel discussion that reflected on the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of saving the house and farmstead. Longtime board...continued on page 4

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www.WeeksBrickHouse.org
Forethought in estate planning and charitable giving has benefits for donors … and for recipients like WBH

By Amanda Nelson

I recently had the opportunity to teach estate planning essentials to a group of intrepid undergraduates who are following artistic career paths. I was understandably a bit concerned at first that such a crowd would find Facebook and other social media outlets on their computers far more interesting than me because they believed they were “too young” to worry about a will. Instead I found an engaged audience of budding artists who were very interested in learning how they could protect their artistic creations after their death.

One of the areas we discussed was making a donation to a charitable organization. A charitable donation allows a donor to deduct the value of the donation from the overall value of the estate, and thereby lowering potential estate taxes that are levied after a person dies. Many times a well thought-out donation can reduce the overall value of the estate such that it falls below reporting thresholds. While federal estate taxes have a fairly high reporting threshold (over $5 million for a single person), individual states can have much lower state estate tax thresholds and some even impose an inheritance tax on heirs.

Further, a charitable donation allows a donor to recognize a beloved organization one final time. A monetary gift can be general, in that it goes to the overall operating budget, it can be earmarked for a specific fund, or it can be apportioned however a donor wishes. Before you earmark a monetary gift, however, it is best to speak with the charitable organization to make sure that your bequest is the best fit for the organization’s needs. For example, you may want to earmark your bequest to develop an educational program. However, after speaking with the organization’s board of directors, you realize that funds are desperately needed to repair the building’s structure. And if you wish to make a gift of an actual item, always discuss the bequest with the organization, because each organization has specific collections policies of what they may and may not collect. The organization has no legal requirement to accept your bequest, so you always want to make sure that your gift will be accepted by an organization.

So please, as you create your estate plan, don’t forget about the Weeks Brick House. Your gift will allow it to continue to survive through the generations.

Editor’s Note: The above article was generously contributed by current board member and former WBH president Amanda Nelson, who in addition to her career as a museum professional, is now a practicing attorney in New Hampshire.

A charitable donation allows a donor to deduct the value of the donation from the overall value of the estate, thereby lowering potential estate taxes levied after a person dies.
Weeks Brick House & Gardens Membership Form
(For Renewals and New Membership)

Name: ____________________________
Address: __________________________
City/Town: __________________ State: ____ Zip: ______________
Phone: ______________ E-mail: __________

Please indicate your preference: ☐ E-mail newsletter in PDF format ☐ Hard-copy postal mail newsletter

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!

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The Silent Auction Fund-Raiser for the Weeks Brick House & Garden is shaping up to be a major attraction at this year’s Annual Meeting Weekend Sept. 19-20, 2015.

Catherine Wescott (daughter of WBH board president Tom Ayres) volunteered her business and fund-raising experience to coordinate the auction, and already the list of donors is impressive. The array of items up for bid grows more varied by the day.

Among the donated items that will be up for auction on Saturday, Sept. 19 are the following:

- Old Sturbridge Village
  - Tickets (2 adults & 2 children)
- Boston Red Sox
- Cabot Creamery
- N.H. Fisher Cats
  - Minor league baseball tickets
- Jolly Grub
  - British Isles grocery gift basket donation
- Red Box
  - Free DVD rental vouchers
- Disney World
  - Four Parkhopper Passes
- Country View Restaurant
- Gift cards
- Badger Balm
  - Balm products
- Top of the Rock, NYC
  - Two tickets
- The Dominic White Studio
  - Sketch certificate donation and Weeks Brick House sketch

Spring clean-up day …

Spring clean-up day … continued from page 1

chainsaw), cut the tree down to manageable size, while Tom dragged the cut limbs and thorny vines off the trail and further into the woods. They found the trail to be quite wet at the tail end of a longer-than-usual mud season, so Steve fashioned a plank walkway over the low spots. The 10-foot long planks, joined and supported by 2x4s, will ensure more secure footing for trail users this spring.

Good news: The 1710 brick house weathered the winter storms surprisingly well. Our historic house preservation expert Steve Pike reports that some gutters need interior sealer, the back deck surface needs a coat of stain, four windows need a tune-up, and minor leaks need to be addressed on the west chimney and attic skylight. Considering the damage sustained by many homes in New England this winter, the relatively minor issues at the Weeks Brick House itself are a relief.

When you have the chance, make sure to thank these motivated WBH volunteers. Or at least offer to sharpen their chainsaw. Better yet, join us and put your “boots on the ground” on the next clean-up day!

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www.WeeksBrickHouse.org
40th anniversary meeting …

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member Ken Weeks has dug deeply into his own archives to find photos and news articles to share with us at the meeting.

(We continue to seek your memories of early efforts and meetings, and any photos you may have of the earlier years of our organization. Contact the Weeks Brick House & Gardens at P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840, 603-436-8147, or at weeksbrickhouse@aol.com.)

Another great reason to join us this year is our first-ever group sail on a replica of a traditional Great Bay gundalow. In the planning stages is a Saturday afternoon excursion on The Gungalow Company’s vessel, which can accommodate 46 passengers. The flat-bottom, sail-powered gundalow was used for transportation and commerce throughout the shallow inlets of Great Bay in times long before rail and highway transportation. This is exactly the type of vessel that would have docked at the Town Landing at the end of Tide Mill Road – Greenland’s early connection with Portsmouth, and in turn, Boston and the greater world beyond. Details of the group sail will be forthcoming soon in the separately-mailed annual meeting registration flyer. (For more information about the gundalow, and The Gundalow Company, visit www.gundalow.org.)

Also scheduled for Saturday, September 19 is the silent-auction fund-raiser. Read all about this exciting initiative in a separate article on page 3.

Remember, we’re more than just a brick house!

The Weeks farm began with grants to Leonard Weeks between 1656 and 1669. By his death in 1707, he owned 60 acres extending to the town landing. The town landing served to connect rural Greenland with Portsmouth, and in turn, with Boston and the greater world beyond.

Other weekend activities include tours of the 1710 Weeks Brick House, walks on our nature trails, and the ever-popular wine-and-cheese social – an opportunity to connect with cousins and friends old and new.

More complete information about our 40th anniversary celebration will be sent in a separate mailing with a registration form. But for now, mark your calendar now and plan to join us on Sept. 19-20, 2015.

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