

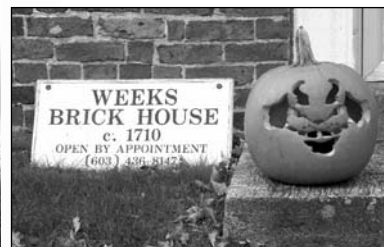
News of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens



1710 HISTORIC HOUSE • GARDENS • TRAILS • CONSERVATION LAND
Weeks Ave. (off Rte. 33) • P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840
603-436-8147 • www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

A publication of Leonard Weeks & Descendants in America, Inc., a non-profit organization formed in 1975 to preserve the historic Weeks family house and farmstead.

After a period of uncertainty, at last there is good news: Our 1710 'house' is once again a 'home' to new tenants



A homey touch is in place on the front step of the Weeks Brick House this fall. The two finely-carved pumpkin jack'o'lanterns stand guard at each corner of the granite slab, right next to the historic house sign. We can hope that these gnarly pumpkin faces will (1) scare the wolf from our door, and (2) scare lapsed members into sending their renewal check.

A 2013 season recap includes trail repairs & brick maintenance

When the spring 2013 issue of the *News of the Weeks Brick House & Gardens* was distributed, the house was without tenants, the membership renewals had sagged, and the organization's cash flow was at a trickle. In this issue, thanks to the time and energy of volunteer board members and a bit of good fortune, there are now items of good news to report in the 2013 seasonal recap.

- **New tenants.** Back in 1975, Leonard Weeks & Descendants in America, Inc. was ahead of its time in its decision to rent the 1710 house, on the National Register of Historic Places, to residential tenants. All these years later, the organization relies on the rental income to sustain itself. In recent years, however, tenant turnover has resulted in several periods with no rental income. So when we secured new tenants shortly after the plea in the last newsletter, the board could at least exhale with some relief, if not actually celebrate.

- **Trail maintenance & bridge repair.** In spring 2013 a team of grunt-working board members tackled the repair of deteriorating footbridges along our hiking trails. The trails help us forge a relationship with the Greenland community, so trail maintenance is vital. See the separate article on the footbridge repair project on page 3.

- **Brick-and-mortar house repairs.** Work on the west chimney of our 1710 house has been on the agenda for some time, but it was postponed again in 2013 in

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If you missed the WBH 2013 Annual Meeting, here is an overview of the weekend's activities

The Weeks Brick House & Gardens 2013 Annual Meeting was held Sunday, Sept. 8 at the Great Bay Estuarine Research Reserve and Discovery Center in Greenland, N.H.

The Sunday afternoon business meeting capped a weekend that included Saturday morning work on our nature trails, midday house and garden tours, and a late Saturday afternoon wine & cheese reception for new arrivals.

On Sunday morning, attendees proceeded from the Weeks Brick House to the Great Bay Discovery Center for our guest speaker presentation and lunch.

This year's guest speaker was Ken Turino, Manager of Community Engagement & Exhibitions for Historic New England. His topic was "Reinventing the Historic House." The well-conceived and well-received presentation illustrated numerous examples of historic house museums, foundering for one reason or another – irrelevance, location, fuzzy mission, lack of interest and support – that re-purposed themselves in ways to increase relevance and service to their communities.

Several examples were drawn from Historic New England properties. The 1793 Lyman Estate in Waltham, Mass. was, and is, majestic in its beautiful expansive landscape,

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From the President:

WBH&G president reports to members at Annual Meeting

This past year has been a fairly quiet one for the Board of Directors. We were without tenants in our brick house from last October to May of this year. So, we were quite pleased when Cynthia's granddaughter and her friend decided to make the old Weeks homestead their home.

Reg Bacon continued his excellent work as editor of our newsletter. Our 1710 brick house weathered an October 2012 earthquake and hurricane in fine fashion. We can thank Reg for lining up Ken Turino, Manager of Community Engagement & Exhibitions for Historic New England, as our guest speaker this morning. His topic "Reinventing the Historic House" is a very timely topic for our organization.

Steve Pike continues to expertly manage our house maintenance efforts and expense (your dues dollars at work). This spring we called on Richard Irons to restore bricks on the front and side of the house, which had caused water to leak into the Great Room. Steve also managed the spring project to replace the badly rotted wood planking on

our two bridges on the conservation trails. He not only ordered the pressure treated planking, but also had all the necessary tools ready to remove the old bridges and install the new bridges. Thanks also to Skip Weeks and his pickup truck, which he expertly maneuvered down trails and over fields to deliver the heavy planking directly to the bridge piers for easy installation.

Leslie Stevens agreed to continue to manage our vegetable garden again this year. She is looking forward to a partnership between her small urban farm, Sidewalk Farms, and the Weeks Brick House & Gardens as a model for other organizations.

Rev. Frank Weeks suffered a stroke earlier this year. His work on *Leonard Weeks & Descendants 1639-2005* over the years is a major genealogical accomplishment. As a lifelong genealogist, I can appreciate his masterful work on the Weeks family. Frank

has only one copy left for sale, at a price of \$125. Today, I am pleased to donate a copy of this genealogy to the Weeks Brick House.

Our biggest challenge is the drop off in membership, which has been steadily declining over the last three years. We depend heavily on member dues to support our historic brick house. In the past year we have had to use funds from a reserve account to just cover our basic expenses. We still have a chimney that needs repair at an estimated cost of \$12,000. So, my questions to current members is simple: How can we increase our membership? Perhaps "gift memberships" to children and grandchildren, or brothers and sisters, would encourage others to join. I would appreciate your thoughts and recommendations on this critical issue. ■

– Respectfully submitted,
Thomas Ayres, President
Weeks Brick House & Gardens

A 2013 season recap ...

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favor of more urgent repairs to the mortar on the south and east walls, where moisture was penetrating. Once again we engaged Richard Irons Restoration Masons for this essential work. The house is now secure to the weather for the winter – and repairs to the upper west chimney remain next in line.

- **More on man vs. water.** Just as we secured the exterior of the house from water penetration, a water pipe sprung a leak inside the house. Board member and overseer of maintenance and preservation Steve Pike isolated the problem, opened up the wall, coordinated plumbing repairs, and brought the job to a tidy finish.

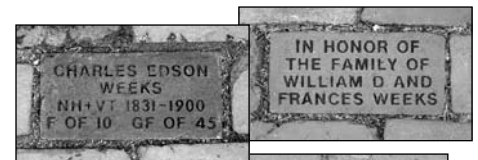
- **Garden report.** This year the vegetable garden beds were planted and maintained by former board member Leslie Stevens as part of her Sidewalk Farms enterprise. Meanwhile, self-guided tours of the 17th-century herb garden beds were via the flyer and garden plot diagram available onsite. With one beehive occupied and in action this year (the occupants of the adjacent hive buzzed off for parts unknown), the open meadow behind the Weeks Brick House was mowed late in the season, after the hive was well-established.

- **Board member report.** We report with regret that Jean Eno, our human dynamo board member from Greenland, has resigned from the Weeks Brick House board of directors. While the many demands of her

professional work and other commitments that prompted her resignation continue, Jean remains a friend of WBH and aims to be available for efforts of "spontaneous action." There are several open slots on the WBH board of directors. If any WBH members are willing and able to contribute time, experience, judgement, labor, and/or expertise on our board of directors, contact the Weeks Brick House & Gardens by e-mail or postal mail and state your interest. ■

New bricks in place on Memorial Brick Walkway

Thanks to all who responded to the opportunity to honor a family member with an inscribed brick on our Memorial Brick Walkway. This year 11 new bricks were added, and board member Steve Pike had them all in place in time to be viewed at the Annual Meeting on Sept. 8, 2013. For more information about this ongoing project, visit www.WeeksBrickHouse.org. At the web site's "Donate & Shop" page, one can download or print the Brick Inscription Order Form. ■



Here are three of the new bricks on our Memorial Brick Walkway, an ongoing project at WBH&G.



News Fall 2013
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Please send articles, letters, news items, and corrections to the editor:
R. W. Bacon
P. O. Box 489, Newburyport, MA 01950
rwbacn@comcast.net

Weeks Brick House & Gardens Board of Directors

Thomas AyresPresident
Skip WeeksVice President
Cynthia WeeksTreasurer
Nicola AstlesSecretary

Reginald W. Bacon
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Steve Pike

Administrative Assistant
Mary Groebner

Office
P. O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840
603-436-8147
E-mail: weeksbrickhouse@aol.com

Manual labor...and a signed lease...make 'A Very Good Day at the Weeks Brick House'

(Editor's Note: In late spring 2013, upon returning from a professional conference, your editor received the sunniest report from WBH president Tom Ayres on "A Very Good Day at the Weeks Brick House." I wish I could have been at WBH that day, as even after several months, the report is still heartening to read. It's a pleasure to share it with members and WBH News readers.)

By Tom Ayres

Yesterday was one of those almost perfect spring days to be at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens. The lawn was recently mowed and the house looked great. Leslie had recently planted the vegetable garden and the bees were busy at work around at least one hive.

Our day began with Skip, Steve, and myself meeting at the trail parking lot in anticipation of the receipt of a load of pressure-treated wooden planks to replace our two badly deteriorated bridges. Unfortunately the lumber had not arrived by 9 a.m. as promised. After a frantic call by Steve, we were promised to be the first delivery of the day. So we three amigos proceeded to dismantle the existing bridges, which was more work than I expected, as the planks were well fastened together. Then Skip and I proceeded to rake some of the gravel back on to the driveway, near the steps to the house, also harder work than I expected. Fortunately the lumber arrived about 10:30 a.m. to stop this misery.



Inset above left is a photo showing remnants of one of the two rotting footbridges on our nature trails that were replaced in spring 2013 by the crew of Steve Pike, Skip Weeks, and Tom Ayres. **At left** is the new bridge in place, with the robust 4x6s tied together from below and secured to the existing concrete piers. This bridge is located not far into the woods at the northeast corner of the meadow behind the Weeks Brick House. **At right** is the other new bridge the crew wrangled into place at the beginning of the trail that leads from the parking lot on Tide Mill Road. (If this kind of work is just your kind of non-profit volunteer board service, by all means contact us by phone, e-mail, or postal mail!)

Skip had is trusty Chevy pickup truck, which we loaded with the heavy 16-foot planks. Skip then very skillfully backed down to the first bridge, so we had very minimal moving of the planks into position on the concrete piers. Steve, the true professional that he is, had all the right tools on hand, so we were able to quickly fasten the planks together, which was much easier than I expected. For the second bridge, the planks were loaded in Skip's truck. He then

proceeded to drive up by the house, passing to the left of the shed, through the field and back to the bridge site. So it was very easy to unload the planks, which were quickly fastened together.

Then it was back to the house. As I began to call Cynthia (prearranged), she drove into the yard – perfect timing. She had the lease agreement for our new tenants, effective June 1st, all ready for Skip and me to sign.

So, it was a very good day at the Weeks Brick House & Gardens. ■

www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

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!

Membership Dues Categories:

- \$15 Student/Senior
- \$25 Individual \$50 Family
- \$100 Contributing
- \$250 Sustaining \$500 Leader
- \$ _____ to the Chimney Fund
- \$ _____ to the Garden Fund

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

2013 Annual Meeting ...

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but several years ago it became clear that the house had no compelling "story" to attract sufficient visitation. The property has since found new use and relevance to the community as a venue for special events like weddings, reunions, and meetings. The large greenhouse that supported the landscaping of the lavish estate now draws business from plant lovers near-and-far, creating additional cash-flow.

Another example is the 1683 Pierce House in Dorchester, Mass., one of the few remaining examples of 17th-century domestic architecture in Boston. The house was lived in by 10 generations of the family, and was given to Historic New England in 1968 along with three centuries of family furnishings. But from its beginning as a house museum, its location did not encourage visitation. The house was located near two public schools, however, and several years ago the organization re-purposed the interior of the historic house into a center for education programs in collaboration with the schools. The exterior of the house is preserved, and the furnishings remain in the Historic New England collection for study and exhibition. The collaboration with neighborhood schools has realized a purpose for what was formerly an undervisited house museum.

(The Weeks Brick House & Gardens is an affiliate member of Historic New England, the regional preservation organization comprised of 36 historic house museums, a library and archives, and a collections

conservation center. For information visit www.HistoricNewEngland.org.)

After the guest speaker presentation, attendees enjoyed a buffet lunch and conversation. The business meeting began after lunch, and the following are the minutes of the meeting as taken by administrative assistant Mary Groebner:

"The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Tom Ayres, president of the Association. He noted that with the returned proxy statements and with those members present, the Association had a quorum.

"A moment of silence was held to remember those members who have passed away and all the members of the military who have served or are serving.

"The Treasurer's Report was presented by Cynthia Smith. She noted that so far this year the Weeks Brick House & Gardens had income of \$11,035.60 and expenses of \$8,519.90.

"The President's Report was presented by Tom Ayres, who noted that the last year was a quiet one for the Association. (See the complete text of the President's Report on page 2.)

"Both Nicola Astles and Steve Pike were re-elected to the board of directors by unanimous vote. Tom Ayres was re-elected president, Skip Weeks was re-elected vice president, Cynthia Smith was re-elected treasurer and Nicola Astles was re-elected secretary all by unanimous vote.

"Steve Pike noted that there were eleven new bricks recently installed in the patio. Mary Groebner was recognized for her dedicated work as administrative assistant for the organization.

"A move was made by Cynthia Smith to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Kate White and the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m." ■

A fine report from our 'Washington lobbyist':

Over a year ago, WBH&G member Rebecca W. S. More took up the cause of correcting the long-standing assertion in the Congressional biography of U.S. Rep. Edgar Weeks (1839-1904) that he was a cousin of John Wingate Weeks (1860-1926). [Rep. Edgar Weeks of Michigan was not related in any way, being a descendant of George Weeks (1610-1659) of Dorchester, Mass.] After much back-and-forth communication

with the "gatekeeper" of the biographies in Washington, D.C., Barry Pump, and submission of thorough documentation, she reports that her efforts have finally resulted in a revision to the biographies.

"You will be pleased to know that Mr. Pump has updated the biographical entry for Edgar Weeks and the Senate Historical Office has corrected the one for John Wingate Weeks," she wrote in an e-mail. "With the help of two professional genealogical friends from the NEHGS and DAR, I was able to pull together the required data. Hurrah!" ■

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Fall 2013