

Wentworth-Gardner Tobias Lear Houses Association Board of Directors 2016

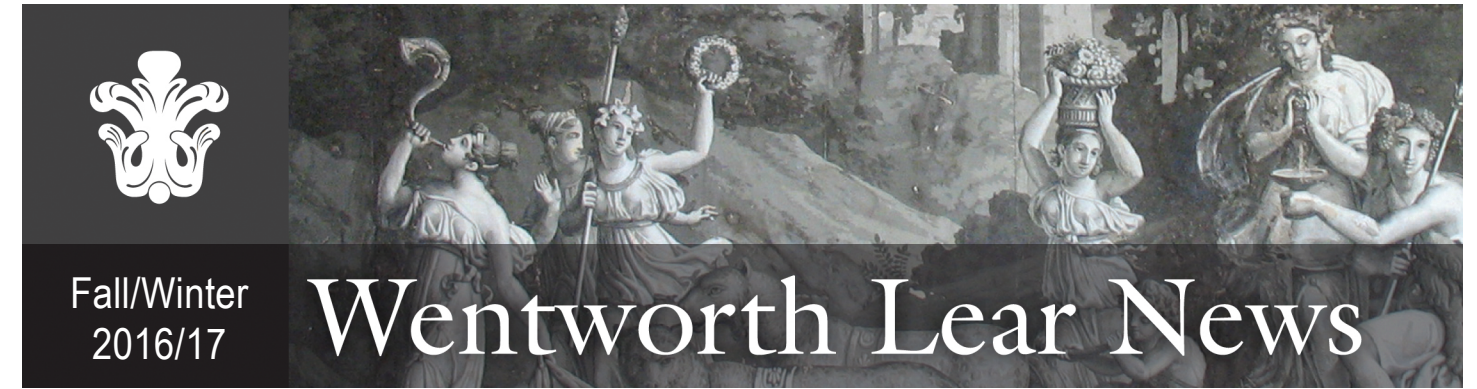
Richard Adams, <i>President</i>	Walter Bardenwerper	Sandra Dika
Kelly Davis, <i>Vice President</i>	Marjorie Beck	Peter Follansbee
Joe Capobianco, <i>Secretary</i>	Karen Bouffard	Priscilla Miller
Fred Engelbach, <i>Treasurer</i>	Joanna Brode	Dexter Robblee

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Wentworth Lear Historic Houses • P.O. Box 563, Portsmouth New Hampshire 03802-563

<p>Membership Categories</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr><td>Individual</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$35</td></tr> <tr><td>Family</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$50</td></tr> <tr><td>Contributor</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$100</td></tr> <tr><td>Sponsor</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$250</td></tr> <tr><td>Wallace Nutting Society</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$500</td></tr> <tr><td>George Washington Society</td><td style="text-align: right;">\$750</td></tr> </table>	Individual	\$35	Family	\$50	Contributor	\$100	Sponsor	\$250	Wallace Nutting Society	\$500	George Washington Society	\$750	<p>Enclosed is \$ _____ for 2016 MEMBERSHIP ____ INDIVIDUAL ____ BUSINESS</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>BUSINESS NAME _____</p> <p>ADDRESS _____</p> <p>CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____</p> <p>TELEPHONE _____ E-MAIL _____ Membership Renewal ____ New ____</p>
Individual	\$35												
Family	\$50												
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George Washington Society	\$750												

Open May 25 through October 16, 2017
 Daily 11 a.m - 4 p.m. Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays,



From the Board

The mission statement of the Wentworth Lear Historic Houses Association is to preserve its structures – the Wentworth Gardner House; the Tobias Lear House; and the Warehouse; to protect and enhance the collections; to maintain the surrounding grounds and waterfront; and to promote a public appreciation of these resources. For the most part in 2016 we have succeeded in advancing these objectives. As is detailed elsewhere in this newsletter, we have made steady gains in enhancing the condition of the Wentworth Gardner House, so that in all probability it is in its best shape in many years.

Our devoted guides Pam Schwotzer, Jeff Thompson, Anne

Rehner, and Jen King shared with visitors their deep knowledge and passionate affection for the houses. Visitor counts were slightly off this season, probably owing largely to the off-and-on difficulties of access as a result of construction on the Peirce Island bridge. That situation is, unfortunately, not likely to improve as the sewer plant upgrade work intensifies over the next four or more years.

While no visible improvements have been made to the Lear House, a great deal of effort has been invested towards the resolution of a dilemma that has vexed previous boards extending back to the very founding of the Association in 1940: how best to

preserve the structure while ensuring the financial health of the organization as a whole. By the issuance of the next newsletter in the spring we expect to be able to detail a plan that will address in very concrete terms how best to achieve that objective.

As always, we value your comments and advice, and we welcome with open arms any and all offers of volunteer assistance with any of our standing committees: Administration, Buildings and Grounds, Development, Events/Programs, and Finance.

Richard Adams, *President*

Lost Portsmouth: Exhibit Planned for 2017

For next season we will mount an exhibit titled “Lost Portsmouth.” It will consist primarily of images of houses, other kinds of structures, and vistas that no longer exist. Adding interest will be side-by-side images of what has replaced those largely forgotten scenes. An example is shown below, where in 1956 the stately Cutter-Langdon mansion, at the corner of Congress and Middle Streets, was demolished and replaced by the building that is now home to Jumpin’ Jay’s Fish Café. We estimate that not fewer than thirty such examples will be displayed, together with explanatory text clarifying locations and the rationale for the removal of the buildings.



Participating in the Past (PIP)

The PIP Committee has been actively organizing events and workshops for the 2017 season. Two being discussed are another carving workshop with master carver Wayne Prescott and a workshop on crafting 17th & 18th century reproduction interior house trim moldings. Also being organized is the continuation of our very popular Chamber Music Series which has featured concerts by students



from the Walnut Hill School. Concerts are held in the Warehouse. The Buildings & Grounds Committee is preparing a revised lighting plan to install additional lights for workshops and concerts.

The Board would like to thank Jane Nelson for her continued support of the PIP program.

LCHIP II

The NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH Communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve NH's most important natural, cultural and historic resources.

The Wentworth Gardner House received a 2016 LCHIP grant of \$ 24,090, with matching funds provided by the WLHH. The grant is being used to preserve, repair and paint the interior windows and their functional and decorative features such as sash, frames, muntins, glazing, cornices, raised panels, trim and shutters. Interior work also included much needed repair to ceilings in second floor rooms.

Exterior work included in the grant is for pointing and repair house foundations and adjacent stone work to remedy water infiltration issues. The Board voted to provide additional funds to install perimeter drains at the foundation as an additional measure to divert water from the house. Additionally, money is being used to install a knee wall at the corner of the main building and rear ell to divert water away from the house to prevent wood sills deterioration.

Dan Desrochers

The Board of Directors will be greatly diminished by the departure of Director Dan Desrochers at the end of our calendar year on October 31st. Dan's dedication to the Association has been remarkable by any standard. Whether it's writing grants, overseeing contractors, performing hours of physical labor (often of a difficult nature), serving with dedication on several committees – there's little that Dan has not done, and with no desire to seek praise or even acknowledgement of his services that have been so invaluable. He cannot be replaced, and we hope that when his personal circumstances change he will rejoin us.



Buildings & Grounds

It has been a busy year for the Lear House. President Richard Adams formed a committee last November to study all feasible uses for the house. The committee included Larry Yerdon, President, Strawberry Banke; James Garvin, Architectural Historian; Peter Michaud, NH Division of Historical Resources, and Joe Cornish, Senior Stewardship Manager at Historic New England as well as representatives from the WGTLHH, Joe Capobianco and Karen Bouffard. Over the course of six months the committee met to analyze and review sustainable solutions to protect the future of the building and the organization. They returned a list of four options which the Board has engaged a financial modeler to analyze for both long-term viability and financial impact on the organization.

Additionally, work began last Fall on a Conditions Report for the house. The comprehensive analysis was conducted by Steve Bedard from Bedard Preservation & Restoration and is a critical component of any decision for the future of the building.

The Board has scheduled a November meeting to review the information and recommendations from all of these reports and hopes, after careful consideration, to come to a prudent decision in the near future, ending decades of uncertainty for the future of the house.

Karen Bouffard



The John Stark Bed

David and Nancy Borden recently donated to the Association a valuable rope bed that had once belonged to Revolutionary War hero General John Stark.

Stark gained fame for valor at Bunker Hill and the Battle of Bennington, but today he may be best known for words he penned to former Bennington comrades attending a reunion in 1818: "Live Free or Die," now the state motto of New Hampshire. Not commonly known are the words that followed: "for death is not the worst of evils."

We are grateful to the Borden family for their generosity. The bed will be on permanent display in the southeast bedroom.

Treasurer's Report

Wentworth Lear Historic Houses remained in financially sound condition over the past year. At the end of the fiscal year, which closed on September 30, 2016, our \$44,000 Operating Budget showed a surplus of \$12,056. Primary reasons for the surplus, on the income side, were due to exceptionally strong membership dues receipts and to record participation in the annual fund drive. On the expense side, a number of line items came in under budget including staffing cost, grant writing fees, internet service, and technology purchases.

The Operating Budget surplus, along with a \$9,000 draw from the budget, have been placed in the Tobias Lear House Building Restoration Fund – giving the fund a significant boost. The fund now stands at \$58,000. A current objective of WLHH is to grow the fund to the level that will enable badly needed work on the house to be carried out.

WLHH has four funds in which money has been set aside for special projects. One fund is the Tobias Lear House

Building Restoration Fund (mentioned above). Another fund is the Participating in the Past Fund. This fund has had a large amount of activity over the past year - there have been seminars, lectures, workshops and hands-on training. The remaining two funds provide matching money for two LCHIP grants that have been awarded for restoration of the Wentworth-Gardner House. Collectively the four funds contain nearly \$90,000.

It is expected that WLHH will remain on a solid financial footing for the foreseeable future. Primarily due to generous support from our members and from people in the community who are interested in preserving our important houses.

Fred Engelbach, *Treasurer*