

Historical Commission Awards for Stewardship and Leadership

The Historical Commission voted in 2020 to begin a program to honor people who have contributed exceptionally to the preservation or restoration of Weston's architectural history. In the course of the Commission's work, we have found certain projects that exemplify an extraordinary effort to preserve the architectural integrity of buildings that are part of the 300-year history of Weston. We have also found an example of extraordinary effort to preserve Weston's historical character beyond a single building. We want to acknowledge these extra efforts.

After a nearly 2-year delay due to the pandemic, in 2021 we elected to award two award certificates: to a family for work on their house, and to an individual who contributed an intense five-year effort to save and enhance an important non-building feature of the town.

The family:

Edward Fiske House, 215 Boston Post Road, Steven Gaklis and Giovanna Bortolamedi

To Stephen Gaklis and Giovanna Bortolamedi, (working with Duckham Architecture and Northwoods Builders) for their work and dedication to restoring the 1867 Edward Fiske House at 215 Boston Post Road.

This elegant residence occupies a stylistic place in the continuum of Stick style to Queen Anne, a relatively rare style in Weston. The interesting interlocking masses of the whole, and the complexities of intersecting hip roofs and inserted dormers yield a satisfying, balanced and rich composition. The "stick" aspects of the exterior trim which picks out corners, windows and bays and decorates the gable ends, are tasteful and relatively modest for the era. It is a credit to the owners, Steven and Giovanna, that they have recognized the special beauties of their house and are motivated to bring it back to its original form and finish. It is particularly wonderful that they are bringing back missing elements, such as porches, identified by their historical research assisted by Pam Fox.

Their desire to bring back much of the original interior finish and detailing is further reason to celebrate their work. The elements of a Victorian interior can be intimidating and can seem at odds with our contemporary life style. Working to strike a balance between those elements and needs of our daily lives is difficult and they are managing it beautifully.



In appreciation
Steven Gaklis



Giovanna Bortolamedi

For their dedication to restoring the 1867 Edward Fiske House at 215 Boston Post Road. It is a credit to them that they have recognized the special beauties of their Stick Style/Queen Anne house and have worked to bring it back to its original form and finish, inside and out.

**WESTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION
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The individual:

Paul Penfield for his dedication to the creation of Weston's portion of the Massachusetts Central Rail Trail

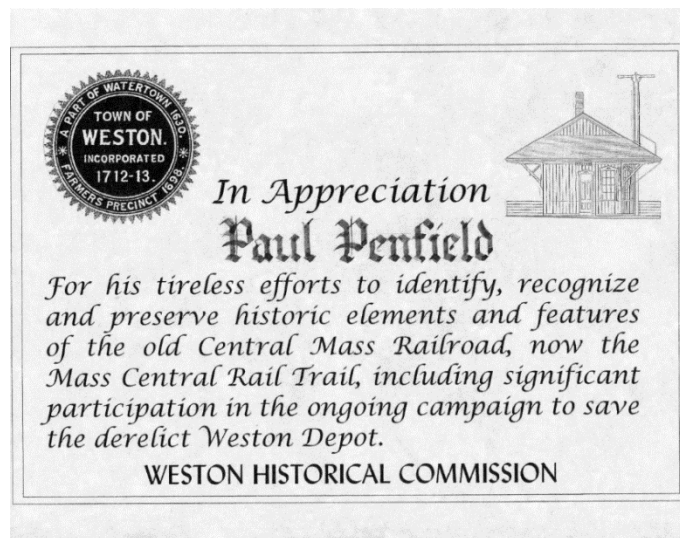
To Paul Penfield for his tireless efforts to identify, recognize, and preserve historic elements and features of the old Central Mass Railroad, now the Mass Central Rail Trail, including significant participation in the ongoing campaign to save the derelict Weston Depot.

As soon as the future Mass Central Rail Trail was announced, Paul spent innumerable hours on the tracks searching for and cataloging every extant rail rest post, mile stone, section marker, iron stringer cattle pass, rail top cattle pass, signal post, bridge, and telegraph pole. He identified each by its GPS coordinates and nearest Eversource tower and then researched its historical function. He led various groups of Weston residents, including Commission members and WF&TA walkers along the route to educate them about these treasures. He researched historical photographs and interviewed local railroad historians to learn as much as possible. He reached out to Historical Commission members in nearby towns to inform them of the Weston artifacts and to help them discover artifacts along their Central Mass Railroad routes. He worked with Weston Media Center to ensure they documented pre-construction conditions with photographs and video. Finally, he authored several articles for the *Weston Town Crier* about this work, as well as a more in-depth article about Central Mass Railroad engineering features for the Spring 2018 *Weston Historical Society Bulletin*.

Paul developed and nurtured contacts at DCR, Eversource and VHB Engineering (the civil engineers who designed the conversion from abandoned rail bed to finished trail) to ensure that Weston would become their partner in decision-making all through the process of the trail design. This helped these entities understand and manage the town's priorities, including making certain that the historic artifacts would remain protected before and throughout construction. As construction began, he accompanied

archaeologists from PAL (Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc) as they marked each artifact in both Wayland and Weston with protective orange fencing and support stakes. During construction he personally shored up this protection as needed. Paul attended almost all "tailgate construction meetings" as the representative from the Rail Trail Advisory Committee, ever mindful of conservation and historic goals.

Paul founded the non-profit FLRT or Friends of the Legacy Rail Trail to assist with future fundraising and activities on the Mass Central Rail Trail in Weston. He initiated development of a signage program to educate future rail trail users about the artifacts. His program includes restoration of any artifacts that are damaged. Paul also focused on saving the run-down Weston Depot at 55 Church St. with its very complicated ownership situation. With Paul's leadership, guidance and impact, Weston's portion of the Mass Central Rail Trail has been enhanced and the Historical Commission is grateful.



The award was presented posthumously to Paul Penfield's family

The Commission intends to issue these awards every now and again. We hope they help encourage the preservation of our architecture and landscape and give credit where it is due.

(Submitted by Henry Stone)