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 Norma Corliss, Rec. Secretary
 Joanne Bond, Exec. Secretary
 Tammie Mulvey, Exec. Treasurer
 Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

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GREETINGS FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Stephen Higgins

Now that we are marching toward planting season and the weather is starting to be more conducive for spring projects and planting, let us hope for good sun and just the right amount of rain to get things started.

At the last Board of Directors meeting we learned that the MCTA is doing well financially. We have enough money in our account to run programs, such as the scholarship fund, which has funded five deserving recipients in 2019, and the MCTA seed orchard, which is vital to the production of our superior MCTA transplants, to name a couple. Membership-wise we have signed 18 new members since September 2018 for a total membership of 135, so our numbers are increasing.

Our Vice President, Art Mingo, is working on the agenda for the 2019 fall meeting, which will include a variety of information, with a farm tour, round table discussions, speakers, pesticide credits and technical information. These will be valuable to the new as well as veteran growers. The agenda and farm location for the fall meeting will be announced in the August newsletter.

I would like members to feel free to contact me with any question or concerns that you may have. I will be glad to answer any question that I can. If I do not have the answer I will direct you to someone who can address your concern.

I believe that the Christmas Tree Promotion Board is important to the production and promotion of real trees. Remember to vote. Keep it Real! Thank you.

All the Best,

Stephen Higgins
 President

Christmas Tree Workshop June 7th

The Oxford County Cooperative Extension Service will be conducting a Christmas tree workshop on June 7th in South Paris. Len Price will be speaking at this training. Details, as they become available, will be posted at:

<https://extension.umaine.edu/oxford/county-events-workshops/>.

The Oxford County Extension Service is located at 9 Olson Rd, South Paris, ME 04281.
 Phone: (207) 743-6329.

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SECRETARY'S CORNER

Joanne Bond

Wholesale buyers are already calling and emailing looking for trees for next season. Remember your 2019 dues that were due by February 1. If you haven't renewed your membership yet, please do so now.

Joanne Bond

Executive Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

Tammie Mulvey

General Membership as of March 28, 2019:

We have 88 paid members along with three lifetime members. We have 50 members that have paid for our website.

Bank Account as of March 28, 2019:

Beginning balance 2019:	\$40,462.50
Current balance:	\$43,031.11

NCTA Director's Report

Dugald Kell Jr

This summer, from August 8-10, NCTA will hold a meeting in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association meeting. The location will be at Roba Family Farms, North Abington Township, PA.

The bi-annual National Tree & Wreath contest will be conducted to select Grand and Reserve Champion growers and wreaths for 2019 and 2020. The Grand Champion growers will earn the honor of providing the tree to the White House and the Reserve Champion growers the honor of providing the tree for the Vice President's residence for 2019 and 2020.

The meeting agenda will include a NCTA Board of Directors meeting and a meeting of the Christmas Spirit Foundation Trustees, along with numerous events, speakers and exhibits.



MCTA DIRECTORS' MEETING / March 29, 2019

Norma Corliss, Recording Secretary

The MCTA Directors meeting was held March 29, 2019 at Governor's Restaurant in Waterville. The meeting was called to order at 6:45PM by President Stephen Higgins. Other officers and Directors attending were Joanne Bond, Tammie Mulvey, Artie Mingo, Jim and Norma Corliss, Len Price, Lee Skillin, Doug Kell, Dugald Kell, Brett Mitchell, Mike Seaman and Robert Palmer. Guests were Regina Mitchell, Tom Bond, Donna Palmer and Angela Mingo.

Minutes of the January meeting were approved as amended.

Treasurer Tammie Mulvey reported a MCTA net worth of \$43,701.

Secretary Joanne Bond reported that we have 18 new members. Total membership is 133, of which 88 are paid for 2019. She said she had been contacted by a representative of the Bangor Fair regarding a Christmas tree exhibit at the Bangor Fair. Not much information was provided however several Directors were interested in learning more details. She said she was getting calls already from retailers who were interested in purchasing trees. This is much earlier than usual.

Jim Corliss advised he had found the PA system that MCTA needs at the \$1,000 authorized price. Tammie Mulvey said she knows the owner of the store and might be able to get a better deal.

Len Price said four scholarship checks have been distributed, the fifth is being held at the request of the recipient until the recipient requests it. He said he has had no further word from Oxford County Extension regarding MCTA participation in a Christmas Tree workshop.

Jim reported on the February meeting of the CTPB in Washington. The Board met with the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service at USDA headquarters. Although new in the job, he was very aware of the Boards efforts. The referendum period is April 15 to May 10. Jim urged the Directors to vote YES to keep the program in place.

Mike Seaman said he had visited the Norridgewock site and it appears we may have a good cone year. Fifty scions will be grafted in May to replace old trees in the orchard.

Meetings Chairman Artie Mingo said he had two or three speakers lined up for our annual meeting in September. However no one has stepped up and offered their farm to be the host. We need to have a host by June 1st in order to plan other events.

Stephen Higgins mentioned a conversation he had with a new member who did not believe the newsletter was very useful as it did not contain enough technical information. Board members agreed there should be some technical information in the newsletter, members should not rely on the newsletter. The purpose of the two membership meetings every year is to update members on the technical aspects of growing Christmas trees. Christmas Trees Magazine is also good source.

Meeting adjourned at 9:05PM

ANNUAL MEETING HOST FARM NEEDED

Jim Corliss

Many growers believe if they host an MCTA meeting they have to do a lot of extra work. This isn't necessarily true. The Vice-President of MCTA is the chairman of the meeting planning committee. It falls to him or her to find and schedule speakers and all of the other tasks set forth in the Field Meeting Guidelines. The owner of the host farm conducts a farm tour on the afternoon of the second day. Perhaps give members a short

history of the farm on the first morning. That’s about it, unless the owner wants to do more.

We hosted our first meeting at Piper Mountain about 35 years ago. We both scrambled for lots of extra hours getting the place spiffed up. I realized that what we showed attendees was a lie. The next time we stuck to our normal work schedule and folks saw the place as it really was, warts and all. People learned more and appreciated it more.

A new member has commented he wasn’t getting much information from the newsletter. He has a point, but the larger point is that almost all of what we learn is at our meetings, listening to speakers and mingling with fellow growers. We can have a meeting without a farm and 75% of it would be just fine. But when it became time to leave the hall and go look at some trees we would be missing a very important element. Give it some thought. Our meeting chairman is Artie Mingo. He can be found at 454-7411 or amingo@roadrunner.com

CTPB REFERENDUM

Jim Corliss

Last season there were 23 growers in Maine who paid into the CTPB Promotion and Research program (Christmas tree checkoff). I don’t know who they are, as that information is not available to Promotion Board members. This means 23 growers cut at least 500 trees. All of them will get a ballot or may already have done so. Most will vote YES to keep the program going. A few will send a NO ballot. For the most part, these are the folks who don’t go to meetings, don’t read newsletters and don’t understand what has happened to our industry over the last 40 years. Or simply lack the vision to see where we could go with a source of consistent and reliable funding.

If you are one of the lucky ones who get the emails from the individual in Virginia (who is very against the CTPB), you should know he gets about \$80 for his choose and cut trees. Yet he doesn’t want to pay fifteen cents of that for the advancement of the industry. But even worse, he is begging for thousands of dollars to be sent to him to cover unexplained “expenses.” Laughable, really.

Whatever you do, don’t forget to mark your ballot YES and make sure it gets sent back before May 10.

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- Howey Cable Baler** Model 214A.....\$1,750
- Meri Crusher MJ 1.8**, 1.8 meter width stump grinder.....\$6,500
- Case IH MXU 115**, 115 HP, 4x4 tractor, 16 x16 partial powershift,
loader with bucket and forks, open station (ROPS).....\$27,500
- F350 Lariat Supercrew 7.3 Diesel**, 6x4 Dump body, year 2001.....\$11,500

All equipment is used in good mechanical condition [Pictures available upon request]
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AGCOM REPORT

Gary Fisher

AGCOM got off and running this year due to many bills that were submitted for the 129th legislative session. Over 2000 were submitted in January! Many of the bills could or will have some affect to the Christmas tree industry or ag in general. The bills I have noted here are pending, being considered or have died in the process. The complete text is very long so I have noted the Bill/LD #'s and a brief explanation. You will have to go to the Maine legislature page and search for the complete documents.

A note on pesticides in the news: Round-Up has been noted to possibly be linked to cancer. To that I say that we must always use good sprayer practices, while storing, mixing, transporting and/or applying the chemical. Round-Up or like chemicals are so important to our industry we must be a leader in saftey. A link: weedkiller.injurybase.com for information.

The new Commisioner of DACF (Dept of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry), replacing Walt Whitcomb, is Amanda Beal. The contact for DACF is dacf@maine.gov.

There is a lot of discussion being generated on the subject of industrial hemp. As more comes along I will pass it on. Many are eyeing Maine due to many acres of land that are not being farmed.

Listed bills are not in any order of importance:

LD1211,HP 875 - An act to allow farm workers to organize for collective barganing. Farm Bureau opposes.

LD1117,SP337 - An act to increase turkey hunting due to increased number of birds. FB favors.

LD452,SP130 - An act to change the penalty when land under tree growth is transferred. FB opposes.

LD1063,HP786 - An act to support the role of municipalities in expanding broadband infrastructure. FB - watch.

LD1150, HP839 - An act to amend the maine tre growth tax law to encourage public access. FB opposes.

LD425,612,670,739,808,830,1098 - All have had public hearings and will be watched or supported as each appears. These all have to do with minimum wage increases and should be read.

LD119,HP101 - An act to base the motor vehicle excise tax on the sale price. FB supports.

LD1031,HP761 - An act to base the vehicle and mobile home excise tax on the actual value. FB supports.

LD1074,HP797 - An act to establish a tax on water extracted for bottling in order to secure the economic future of rural Maine. FB opposes.

LD1251,HP912 - An act to make agricultural workers an other workers employees under the wage and hour laws AGCOM opposes.

LD369,SP110 - An act to support healthy workplaces and healthy families by providing earned paid sick leave to certain employees. AGCOM opposes.

LD796,HP584 - An act to reestablish the Dept of Agriculture Food and Rural Resources and the Dept. of Conservation. AGCOM supports.

LD BILLS - 241,146,101,197,413,199 - were listed on, industry updates, on the web site.

Many food issues are discussed at AGCOM but I have not seen a need to report on them. If there is a need for this please pass it on.



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