



Stephen Higgins, President  
 Norma Corliss, Rec. Secretary  
 Joanne Bond, Exec. Secretary/Treas.  
 Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

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### MCTA MOURNS PASSING OF TWO LONG-TIME MEMBERS

Please join me, as members of the Maine Christmas Tree Association, in expressing our condolences to the families of two long-time members who have recently died.



On Thursday, November 14th, 2019, David W. Rice passed away peacefully surrounded by his loving family. He fought an extraordinarily courageous battle with esophageal cancer. He was 61. Dave's full obituary can be read at [www.stetsonsfuneralhome.com/memorial.aspx?oid=1680&vid=1](http://www.stetsonsfuneralhome.com/memorial.aspx?oid=1680&vid=1). One passage, relating to his family's tree farm, reads as follow:

*“In 1989, he planted his first field of balsam firs, which was the start of his family owned and operated choose and cut Christmas tree farm. It brought him great joy to see growing families return year after year to create cherished memories at Rice Christmas Tree Farm.”*

On Sunday, December 15, 2019, Jim Pearson, 82, was fatally attacked in the front yard of his home in Scarborough. He was a well-known figure in his community and had been a teacher for many years at Gorham High School teaching industrial arts, graphics arts and drafting. Jim and his wife, Nancy, founded Beech Ridge Farm in 1969 and began planting Christmas trees there in 1986. With the help of their children, they have been planting new trees to continue the Beech Ridge Farm into the future. Many families in the Scarborough area have enjoyed the choose-and-cut tradition for years at the Pearson's farm.



Respectfully,

Dugald Kell, Jr.  
Editor

**MCTA MARKETING COMMITTEE  
 WANTS YOUR HELP**

The newly reconstituted MCTA Marketing Committee needs 2 or 3 more volunteer members. Currently, the committee consists of Ryan Liberty and Ed Buschmann. The goal of the committee is to brainstorm some ideas related to the promotion of industry and collective farms, and to report those ideas back to the board.

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**Greetings from our President**      **Stephen Higgins**

Dear MCTA Member,

We have had a great season, the weather in the north at least was not as dry this growing season as it was in the 2018 season. We have seen good if not great demand for trees, not only from the New England market but also from the southern portion of the United States. All and all things are looking up.

Real Maine grown trees and the MCTA have gotten a boost in recent media coverage with three separate interviews which were given by three of our members. The first of whom was Joanne Bond of Bond Mountain tree farm and was seen on MPBN, channel 13 and 23. Secondly Rob Palmer of Ben and Molly's tree farm was interviewed by channel 8 WMTW and last but not least James Cox of OLD Farm Christmas was interviewed by channel 6.

In addition, the MCTA was asked this year to supply the Blaine House with three fresh Maine real trees. Frank Zmigrodski of Old Field Farm was happy to respond. This is the first time in seven years that the MCTA has put a real tree in the Blaine House.

As I had stated at the first of my greeting things are looking up for real trees and the MCTA. We have gained members again this year. And with that said, I will say All the Best. See you at the Agricultural show in Augusta.

Respectfully,

Stephen Higgins  
President

**SECRETARY'S CORNER**

Joanne Bond

I would first like to wish all of the MCTA members a Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year. Please find our Member and Website applications enclosed in the newsletter. The applications need to reach me by February 1. The good news is our membership keeps rising. The other good news is the wholesalers sold out this year along with the choose and cut farms. We had to close early for the same reason. On another note, please keep fellow member Rob Mulvey in your thoughts as he had a hernia operation last week. Plus we also lost a wonderful and sweet long time member Dave Rice last month. Take care and I will see you at the January 14, 2020 MCTA Winter Meeting in Augusta.

Take care,

Joanne  
Executive Secretary

## MCTA 2020 WINTER MEETING

### Registration Form

Date: January 14, 2020

Location: Augusta Civic Center  
76 Community Dr, Augusta, ME

Business/Farm Name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Business Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

List Additional Attendees' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Type	Quantity	Pre-Registration (Deadline Jan. 11th)	On-Site Registration	Extended Amount
MCTA Member	_____	\$ 15.00	\$ 20.00	= _____
Add'l Family Member	_____	\$ 12.00	\$ 15.00	= _____
Non-Member	_____	\$ 20.00	\$ 20.00	= _____
			Subtotal	\$ _____

**Please Pre-register for the Commissioners' Luncheon:**

Call Joanne Bond (793-4658) to reserve. Limited seats available.

Lunch \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ 20.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Info: Check# \_\_\_\_\_ (made out to MCTA)

Mail Completed form and payment to:

*Joanne Bond, Executive Secretary, 174 Bond Spring Rd, West Newfield, ME 04095*

**REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY January 10<sup>th</sup> for Pre-Registration Rates**

## **MCTA DIRECTORS' MEETING - JANUARY 13, 2020**

To be held at IHOP, Augusta, ME  
Social hour 5 to 6 PM, Order Dinner at 6 PM, Meeting proceeding Dinner

### **AGENDA**

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Reading of the minutes of the last Director meeting	
Treasurer's Report	Tammy Mulvey
Executive Secretary's Report	Joanne Bond
Website/NCTA	Dugald Kell
Scholarship Committee	Len Price
Seed Orchard	Mike Seaman
Trees for Troops/Fryeburg Fair	Jim Corliss
Nominating Committee	Donna Palmer, Jim Corliss
Legislative/pesticide committee	Gary Fisher
Public relations	Jim Corliss
Old business	
New business	

#### **MCTA Directors' Meeting January 13, 2020**

The Directors Meeting will be held Monday night in the International House of Pancake's Function room down the hall between the Inn and restaurant. Cocktail hour is at 5:00 until 6:00 at which time we will all order off the menu. The meeting will start as soon as we eat.

#### **Rooms at the Best Western**

The Association has reserved 10 rooms at the Best Western Plus at the Augusta Civic Center. The rooms are \$85.00 each plus tax for the night of January 13. Reservations need to be received by January 6 and made under the Maine Christmas Tree Association name to get the discounted price. Check in time is 3:00PM and you have a choice of a king or two doubles beds. Rooms were requested to be on the first floor. Phone #622-4751

# MCTA 2020 WINTER MEETING

Tuesday, January 14, 2020  
Arnold Room, Augusta Civic Center

## AGENDA

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- 8:30 – 9:00      Registration / pre-registration recommended. Coffee etc.
- 9:00 – 9:15      Presidents welcome. Stephen Higgins
- 9:15              MCTA business meeting  
                          Committee reports  
                          Treasurers - Tammie Mulvey                      Scholarship - Len Price  
                          Executive Secretary - Joanne Bond              Legislative/AgCom - Gary Fisher  
                          Website - Dugald Kell                              Fryeburg Fair/Trees for Troops - Jim Corliss  
                          NCTA - Dugald Kell                                  Marketing - Ryan Liberty, Ed Buschmann  
                          Seed orchard - Mike Seaman
- 11:00              Christmas Tree Diseases and Soil Health  
                          Aaron Bergdahl, Forest Pathologist / Maine Forest Service
- 12:00 – 1:30      Lunch
- 1:30 – 2:45      Tax Issues Relating to Christmas Trees and Forest Timber  
                          Christian A. Smith, CPA, CFE / Wipfli, LLP, CPAs and Consultants
- 2:45 – 4:00      Pesticides: New rules and regulations (one pesticide credit)  
                          John Pietroski, Manager of Pesticide Programs / Maine Board of Pesticides Control
- 4:00              Adjourn

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## TREES FOR TROOPS

Jim Corliss

On the morning of Monday, December 2nd, 300 trees left Maine bound for the Marine Air Station at Cherry Point, NC. Each tree was accompanied with a bag of at least ten donated ornaments, many handmade and high quality. All three of the Bangor TV stations sent a reporter to cover the loading of the trees at Piper Mountain.

When interviewed, Mac was very explicit that the trees came from farms over much of the state. Nevertheless, one station edited out that statement and so it sounded like all the trees were donated from Piper Mountain. Once again, a reminder that when we deal with the media we do the best we can but can't really control exactly what goes on the air. Here in Maine, most of the reporters who go out in the field to record stories are very young, not long out of school and learning their craft. The faces change often as they leave for larger markets and move up the ladder. The good news is that no matter which station you watch for your local news, you heard about Trees for Troops. Listed below are the growers who donated trees. My thanks to all of you.

On a personal note, this was my 15th and last year as coordinator of Trees for Troops. My thanks to all of you who have made contributions of trees. Going forward, the new owner of Piper Mountain, Mac McCullen, will continue to be looking for growers to step forward and make commitments and the trees will continue to be gathered at Piper Mountain. Thank you for making my job easier.

Good news. I have sometimes involved local American Legion posts to find a member who would help to bring trees to the farm or to another farm for pickup. This has become known to the leadership of the Maine Department of the American Legion. As a result I have been asked to make a presentation to their Winter Conference in January. Perhaps this will inform more Posts about the project and make it easier to find transportation from farms to Piper Mountain.

Wayne Adams, Adams Family Farm, Kennebunkport  
 Tom & Joanne Bond, Bond Mountain Acres, West Newfield  
 Ed Buschmann, Dun Romin Farm, Lewiston  
 Duane & Mathew LaCasce, Finestkind Tree Farm, Garland  
 Calvin Luther, Penobscot Evergreens, Bucksport  
 Mac McCullen, Piper Mountain, Newburgh  
 Clem & Mary Meserve, Boiling Spring Tree Farm, Dayton  
 Brett & Regina Mitchell, Mitchell Farm, Bass Harbor  
 Rob & Tammie Mulvey, Pleasant View Tree Farm, Hodgen  
 Dave Barden, Dalou Farm, St. Albans  
 Todd Murphy, Tree to Please, Rome  
 Mike Pomroy, Christmas Tree Ranch, Amherst  
 Len Price, Nutkin Knoll Farm, Newburgh  
 Lee Skillin, Skillin Greenhouses, Falmouth  
 Art & Joe Young, Moose Hill Tree Farm, Fayette  
 Frank Zmigrodske, Oldfield Farm, Vassalboro  
 Dana Graves, G & S Nursery, Bangor  
 Bryant LaPlante, The Forest, Cornville.  
 Tom McNeil, Bay Meadows Tree "Farm, Waterville  
 Steve and Judy Sherman, Deep in the Woods, Oxbow  
 Belfast Rotary Club, who brought trees harvested from the former Fisher Tree Farm

***MCTA IN DANGER OF LOSING EXHIBIT SPACE AT FRYEBURG FAIR!***

Only five Maine farms exhibited a total of eight trees at Fryeburg this year. Four more came from New Hampshire. Our premium space in the heart of the Ag area was mostly empty. Fair officials were heard openly discussing using the space for another purpose. Ironically, the People's Choice voting produced just under 1,000 votes, a new record. This certainly shows a high level of public interest in the exhibit. Growers left a total of nearly \$500 in premiums on the table because the tree classes were not filled. The wreath exhibit was nicely filled out with plenty of well made and well decorated wreaths. Fifteen wreath making demonstrations were given spread out over all eight days. They attract about 30 to 40 people on average.

Thanks to the Bonds, Bardens and Ankers for their help, and especially the Fishers, who were there nearly every day.

Judging results are as follows:

***CHRISTMAS TREES***

**Class I – Balsam Fir**

1. G&S Tree Farm - *Reserve Grand Champion*
2. Finestkind Tree Farm - *People's Choice Winner*
3. Boiling Springs Tree Farm
4. Trees to Please
5. Skillins Greenhouse

**Class II – All Other Fir**

1. Finestkind Tree Farm (Fraser Fir) - *Grand Champion*
2. G&S Nursery (Fraser Fir)
3. Finnegan's Fine Firs (Fraser Fir)
4. & 5. <no entries>

**Class III – Pine**

1. Finnegan's Fine Firs
2. Skillin Greenhouse
3. - 5. <no entries>

**Class IV – Spruce**

1. Finnegans Fine Firs
2. - 5. <no entries>

***CHRISTMAS WREATHS***

**Class I – Decorated**

1. Laurie McKenna – Rumford
2. Wanda Wilcox – Newcastle
3. Donna Manzo – Aurora
4. Cheryl Collins – Stow
5. Trees to Please – Rome
6. Christina LaFlamme – Whitefield, NH
7. Maria Kingsbury – Dixmont

**Class II – Undecorated**

1. Laurie McKenna -Rumford
2. Christina LaFlamme – Whitefield, NH
3. Cheryl Collins - Stow
4. Wanda Wilcox - Newcastle
5. John Hyslop – Farmington, NH
6. June Brooks – Whitefield, NH
7. Shawna Mitchell - Unity

**SEED ORCHARD**

Mike Seaman

**Seed Harvest:**

The seed harvest was planned for August 31, 2019. The timing was near perfect as the cones were nearly 100% dry and easy to separate from the tree tops. The team who participated in the harvest were Len Price, Dave Schaible, Ryan Liberty, Jim Hummer, Frank Zmigrodski, Todd Murphy and Mike Seaman. We started harvesting seed at 8am sharp and finished at 7pm.

All but one of the trees numbered 1, 3, 4, 11, 14, 15 and 43 were harvested. The one tree was omitted due to wet conditions from recent rain making it impossible to get the lift near the tree. Several trees needed to have 20 feet removed from the top to permit the 40-foot lift to reach in future harvests. The harvest started out well until the lift ran out of power. Fortunately, Eagle rental was still open and they came up and put four new batteries in the lift. It operated on the new batteries the rest of the day.

Total labor for the harvest was about 84 hours.

Dave Schaible noted that he had seen weevil damage in the cones.

**Seed Cleaning:**

Mike Seaman performed the seed cleaning on September 1, 2 and 7, 8. Total time spent cleaning was 30 hours. There is a total of 91 pounds of cleaned seed.

**Harvest Report:**

Bag	Total Weight	Seed weight	Cone Weight	Gallons of Seed	% of Seed from Total Weight
1	18	5	2.5	4	32.26%
2	17	6	2	4.25	40.00%
3	17.5	6.5	2	5	41.94%
4	24	5	10	4	35.71%
5	23	6.75	5	5	37.50%
6	27	8.25	6	6	39.29%
7	28	7	7.5	5	34.15%
8	27	6.5	10.5	5	39.39%
9	24	7	10	5	50.00%
10	25	7.5	6.5	5	40.54%
11	26	6.5	11	5	43.33%
12	26	7.75	6	5	38.75%
13	21	5.75	4	3.5	33.82%
14	22	6.75	4	4.5	37.50%
15	20	7	2.25	5	39.44%
16	24	7	2	5	31.82%
<b>Total</b>	369.5	106.25	91.25	76.25	38.19%

**Numbered Trees:**

Actively Collecting Seed: 1, 3, 4, 11, 14, 15, 43

Future Progeny Evaluation: 9, 20, 27, 39, 47, 49, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58



### Seed Orchard Maintenance & Assessment of Orchard Health:

There were over 20 trees that had died or had blown over and were removed by Todd Murphy and Len Price. While topping the trees it was very obvious that more are dying. Many trees are exhibiting various stages of stress that may lead to dying. For example, the bottom branches were dead and upper branches were unhealthy, dying and had very limited new growth. The good news is that the numbered trees that we harvested appear to be in decent shape.

### Grafting:

The Spring 2019 grafting failed due to the potted trees being too dry. I picked the potted trees last November and put them in a back shed out of the elements. They were frozen until the Spring thaw. I checked the trees several times throughout the winter and they remained frozen with snow and ice on the top of the pot. The trees were watered once thawed and then grafting was attempted. I do not know why the stems were so dry as I do not care for any potted trees. Len has offered to manage the potted trees and we will schedule another grafting for spring of 2020.

### Future Maintenance:

Remove the remaining non-numbered trees.

Grind stumps.

Plant new grafted trees.

### Cost Break down:

Burlap Bags:	\$49.59	<b>Todd Murphy:</b>	
13mill Rubber Gloves:	\$19.80	Mowing, Skid Steer Tree removal:	\$500.00
40 Foot Man Lift Rental:	\$200.85		
Gas:	\$84.63	<b>Total Cone Harvest Cost:</b>	<b>\$881.88</b>
Plywood:	\$15.47		
Hardware Cloth:	\$11.36		
<b>Sub-Total to Mike Seaman:</b>	<b>\$381.70</b>	Labor for seed cleaning @ \$14.00/hour	

### Future Items:

I do not believe MCTA should expect a member to assume liability for rental of a man lift due to the possibility of damage during use or transport. How should MCTA cover Liability for potential injury during a cone harvest or damage to rental equipment.

### Transplant Update from Downey:

1. The first MCTA transplants be available spring of 2020.
2. The expected quantity is 10,000.
3. Transplants expected for spring of 2020 is reduced to 10,000 because we sold over 10,000 as 3-0's
4. 2021 inventory is 26,000
5. 2022 inventory is 31,000
6. The target level for total MCTA transplant trees is 30,000 based on direct input from the membership.
7. Seeding for spring 2019 targeted for 30,000,

## MCTA Annual Meeting Minutes

Norma Corliss

The annual business meeting of the MCTA was called to order at 12:58PM by Vice President Artie Mingo. The meeting was held at the Young's farm in Fayette.

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the last meeting as printed in the newsletter. Motion passed. The treasurer not being present, the treasurer's report was in print and passed out to members. Secretary Bond reported we have 140 members, however 5 will be dropped after this meeting for non-payment of dues.

Dugald Kell, Jr., reported he will become the new President of the National Christmas Tree Association on January 1. He briefly explained the mission of NCTA and why growers should be members. He also explained the activities of the Promotion Board.

Jim Corliss announced Trees for Troops was going forward for 2019 and he urged members to step forward to commit some trees for the project. The new owner of Piper Mountain, "Mac" McCullen, introduced himself and said he would be the coordinator for Trees for Troops next year.

Stephen Higgins reported for Len Price. The promotion effort at Bangor Fair was not well attended. It was suggested that the MCTA Marketing committee be revitalized to oversee efforts of this kind.

New Directors to serve until the end of 2023 were elected. They are Pat Ankers, Tom McNeil and Calvin Luther. Jim Corliss was elected as Director at Large.

Mike Seaman reported that 96 lb. of seed were collected. This weight will shrink a little when the seed dries. Most of the labor for the seed harvest was donated. There were costs of \$881.88. Some of the trees are dying at the Norridgewock site.

Meeting adjourned at 2:30

Norma Corliss  
Recording Secretary

## NCTA DIRECTORS REPORT

Dugald Kell, Jr

On November 25th, a majestic 16-year-old Douglas fir from Larry Snyder's farm in Pennsylvania was presented to the First Lady at the White House. A huge gallery of reporters and their TV cameras covered this event as the tree arrived at the front door of the White House in a horse-drawn wagon. A national tree contest is held by NCTA to choose each year's Grand Champion Grower who will provide the White House tree. Snyder was the 2019 Grand Champion. Presenting the White House Christmas tree, a tradition that began in 1965, generates the largest media coverage of any agricultural commodity group event. It's promotional value to the entire farm-grown Christmas tree industry is phenomenal. NCTA highly values this long-standing, important partnership with the White House.

The media was highly interested again this year in the supposed "shortage" of Christmas trees. To help you be prepared if the media contacts you, it is important to inform the media of the difference between a tight supply and a shortage. NCTA recommends saying the supply of trees is "tight", rather than agreeing there is a "shortage". In recent seasons, some farms and lots did sell out, but other nearby locations still had trees available. NCTA's consumer surveys showed a 5 million increase in tree sales for 2018 with only a \$3 increase in average price. These results do not support the notion there is a "shortage".

Each year as the Christmas season approaches, NCTA makes updates to the Tree Locator on their website. As a TIP state, the Maine Christmas Tree Association sends its most recent membership information to NCTA so members' tree farm information is available for consumers to find on the Tree Locator. You can view your listing at this URL: <https://realchristmastrees.org/All-About-Trees/Tree-Locator>





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