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

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## Greetings From Our President

Artie Mingo

Hello MCTA Members,

Hope this message finds all of you healthy and well. For those growers that are planting my hope is that every seedling gets in the ground with success.

I would like to express a heartfelt welcome to our new members. Your membership and participation are important to the success and growth of this association. I look forward to meeting all of you one day.

Christmas time can be an opportunity to reflect on how we live and consumers tend to turn toward things that make them feel good and happy. As we see the popularity of purchasing a real Christmas tree over artificial growing with every generation, the demand for what we grow will certainly increase over time. Many of us have been receiving unprecedented levels of early outreach from buyers and consumers.

This gives us a perfect opportunity to increase our marketing and advertising process. When business is good it's time to practice the principles of promoting your business and separating your farm from the norm. No detail is too insignificant and always remember people love Maine products, use it to your advantage. Remember the 3 most important marketing secrets, commitment, investment, consistent.

We can all be excited about our new marketing committee headed up by Ryan Liberty. Their vision and focus will give MCTA greater outreach and promote the importance of Maine trees and promoting 'Get Real- Get Maine'. Don't hesitate to reach with your ideas and thoughts.

Just a reminder that we will be reaching out to our members looking for Trees to be displayed at the Fryburg Fair. Jim and Norma Corliss have spent years making sure MCTA is well represented. MCTA has a premium space in the heart of the Ag area with thousands of visitors passing viewing the products. We need to maintain a good showing so we don't lose our area. Hope you can help this coming year.

Hope you all have a successful shearing summer.

Arthur Mingo  
 President

### **MCTA Fall Meeting September 11th and 12th**

The Meeting Committee (Ryan Liberty) met with Rob & Donna Palmer on May 22 to begin planning for an In-Person MCTA Fall Meeting at their farm. More information will be sent out as we get closer to the date.

**2020 Officers & Directors  
Maine Christmas Tree Association**

**Officers**

- Arthur Mingo, President**  
405 Shattuck Rd, Calais, ME 04619  
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- Ryan Liberty, Vice President**  
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- Joanne Bond, Executive Secretary / Treasurer**  
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207-793-4658 bondjoanne1947@gmail.com
- Norma Corliss, Recording Secretary**  
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207-862-0065 jmc52536@gmail.com

**Directors until 12/31/21**

- Brett Mitchell**  
PO BOX 226, Bass Harbor, ME 04653  
207-266-1960 brett@mftreefarm.com
- Donna Palmer**  
424 Hanson Rd, South China, ME 04358  
207-877-5487 bm@benandmollystrees.com
- Robert Palmer**  
424 Hanson Rd, South China, ME 04358  
207-877-5487 bm@benandmollystrees.com

**Directors until 12/31/22**

- Pat Ankers**  
20 Norway Dr, Chelsea, ME 04330  
207-623-1656 ptaanp@hotmail.com
- Tom McNeil**  
35 Silvermount St, Waterville, ME 04901  
207-872-7329 tcmcneil@gwi.net
- Calvin Luther**  
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207-825-8729 calvin1420@gmail.com

**Directors until 12/31/23**

- Lee Skillin**  
89 Foreside Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105  
207-781-3860 leeskillinsg@outlook.com
- Michael Seaman**  
127 Pine Tree Rd, Litchfield, ME 04350  
207-268-2834 mseaman@fairpoint.net

**Past President**

- Stephen Higgins, President**  
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207-227-7425 pstephen20@hotmail.com

**Director-at-Large**

- James Corliss**  
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207-862-0065 jmc52536@gmail.com

**Director Emeritus**

- Doug Kell, Sr.**  
PO Box 481, Ellsworth, ME 04605  
207-664-0350 doug@kelcoindustries.com

**Director-at-Large, Constitutional**

- Dugald Kell, Jr.**  
667 Morgan Bay Rd Surry, ME 04684  
207-546-7989 dugald@kelcoindustries.com

**SECRETARY'S CORNER**

Joanne Bond

Spring has sprung and we tree farmers are wound right up planting, spraying and fertilizing until we have to start shearing.

The Association is doing well surviving the pandemic with added members and a good bunch of officers and directors plus money-wise we are holding our bottom line.

My biggest concern is the fact we are low or even sold out of trees at both our wholesale and choose and cut farms. I have had phone calls since the first of the year looking for wholesale trees. At this point all I can do is put them on my list prioritizing by date of inquiry. What I need is for you wholesalers to report too me ASAP on whether you have any availability of trees or you are sold out. This way I will or will not have customers and myself calling and bothering you. So please the first chance you get let me know either way. I certainly will appreciate it.

On another note, I would like to thank everyone who uses East Commerce Solutions credit card machines. ECS has a profit-sharing program for associations like MCTA. In mid-April they sent us a residual payout check for \$614.66 that was earned by MCTA members who used East Commerce Solutions as their Merchant Services Provider for 2020.

The Ornaments for Troops group will be getting together in June to bag them up. If you are interested in helping, we have a lot of fun and a nice potluck lunch. Please contact Melba Fisher at 322-8716.

Well I guess that is all for now.

I hope that you are all happy and well,

Joanne Bond  
Executive Secretary/Treasurer  
[bondjoanne1947@gmail.com](mailto:bondjoanne1947@gmail.com)

**TREASURY REPORT**

Joanne Bond

Following is a summary of MCTA's account balances:

<u>Account</u>	<u>Balance 4/30/21</u>
General	\$17,552.18
Marketing	\$2,786.79
Website	\$5,327.50
Seed Orchard	\$11,558.45
Meetings	\$7,586.28
Scholarships	\$2,016.75
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$46,827.95</b>

## MCTA March 2021 Directors' Meeting Minutes

Norma Corliss

The Spring meeting of the MCTA Directors was held March 31, 2021 via ZOOM call. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by President Artie Mingo. Officers and Directors attending were Artie Mingo, Ryan Liberty, Joanne Bond, Jim and Norma Corliss, Robert Palmer, Tom McNeil, Calvin Luther, Lee Skillin, Mike Seaman, Stephen Higgins and Dugald Kell Jr.

Minutes of the January 20 meeting were read and accepted.

Treasurer Joanne Bond reported the following accounts as of 12/31/2020: General Fund \$18,645.52; Marketing \$886.79; Website \$5,267.50; Seed Orchard \$11,558.45; Meetings \$7,586.28; Scholarship \$2,016.75; Donations \$92.00; Total \$46,053.29. It was suggested that the donations fund be closed and all donations added to the General Fund, unless the person giving specified a purpose. This was approved by consensus. Joanne said she would like all growers who have trees to wholesale call her so that she can pass the information on to buyers. The Treasurer's report was accepted as presented.

Dugald Kell said NCTA would be sharing a meeting with the North Carolina Association in Jefferson, NC on August 5, 6, and 7.

Mike Seaman said he will organize a work day to do clean up at the seed orchard in Norridgewock this spring. He believes the reason for the grafting failure last year was that the leaders were not thick enough.

Jim Corliss described the effort to find a grant writer. He and Len Price thought the MCTA stood a good chance to obtain funds to establish another seed orchard through the USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant program. Len found someone who apparently agreed to do this. However with only a few days before the deadline the individual denied ever having made that agreement. We will try again next year.

There was some concern expressed about the future of the Ashland seed orchard. It is known that Steve Sherman is acquainted with the owner. Dugald will ask Steve to find out what the current demands of the owner are regarding the MCTA stewardship of the seed orchard. He will report back at the next meeting.

The following action was taken by the Board before Jim was allowed into the call. Norma was instructed to add it to the end of the minutes.

Lee Skillin moved that Jim Corliss be recognized with the honor of Life Time Member. Steve Higgins seconded the motion. After a brief period of positive comments, the Board voted unanimously to approve Jim as a Lifetime Member in honor of his leadership and service to the organization.

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Norma Corliss  
Recording Secretary

## A Thank You

I was shocked when the Directors revealed they had voted me a Lifetime Member of the MCTA. I never expected that. You see, I have always felt I was paying the MCTA back for the start it gave me in this business and all the joys and memories it has brought. Most of you have experienced those first few years after you stick those first little green things in the ground. It didn't seem they would ever become a Christmas tree that anyone would want to buy. I don't know if I would have stayed the course if it hadn't been for the farm meetings where new growers can see that those little green things will actually become something beautiful. I have tried to pay back in the only way I could.

Jim Corliss

## ORNAMENTS FOR TROOPS

We will be getting together in June to bag up our usual donation of 3,000 ornaments for the Trees for Troops program. If anyone has extra ornaments they do not need or want we would greatly appreciate them. We accept homemade, store bought, gently used and vintage.

Always looking for extra help, many hands make short work, if you would like to volunteer we would greatly appreciate it. We get together at Gary and Melba Fisher's home in Belmont in mid-June at 9:00AM, enjoy a potluck lunch, done by mid-afternoon and have a lot of fun.

Contact Melba Fisher 322-8716, Norma Corliss 862-0065 or Joanne Bond 793-4658 if you are interested in helping out or have ornaments to donate.

Thank you very much,

Joanne

## MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

Ryan Liberty

These items were discussed at our last Marketing Committee meeting on Feb 24th at 6 PM:

**Blaine House Christmas Trees:** Matt will reach out to Dugald to understand future use/costs associated with using his stands. We discussed the possibility of buying the stands outright, or perhaps encouraging the Blaine House to do so. We landed on budgeting \$625 for the possibility of needing to purchase Christmas trees for this project in the future (25 trees @ \$25 ea).

**Fryeburg Fair:** I spoke with Jim and let him know that the Marketing Committee would support his efforts at this year's fair. He agreed that we should form a committee of people specifically focused on the planning and execution of the fair. I agreed to begin reaching out to prospects. It was suggested of possibly adding solar lights to the trees for evening visibility. There was discussion on the need to reach out to farms early and personally for this year's tree donations. We decided to ask for a budget of \$625 to cover the future purchase of trees if necessary.

**Website:** I reached out to Dugald prior to our meeting to discuss ways to improve our website. Those suggestions were shared with the committee.

**Seed Orchard:** It was mentioned that we should potentially consider tagging our MCTA seedlings with our proprietary MCTA brand.

**Trees For Troops:** We talked about possibly raising our own 'Trees For Troops' for future donations.

**Scholarship Committee:** Nothing discussed other than to ensure we have a good source of seedlings at the Fryeburg Fair so that we can sell as many as possible. We discussed that the committee should do more to promote the fact that we're giving these scholarships away.

**AGCOM participation:** Gary gave a brief update, and asked for help with the Dept of Ag request for information for Ag Day. It was agreed that the video that Matt produced was well received by all.

**Farm Hi-lights:** I mentioned the efforts that we've put into hi-lighting farms on social media.

**Get Real Maine:** We'll continue to encourage members to take advantage of this program.

**Table Top Trees:** We thought it may be time to begin to study the market opportunity or table top trees.

Thank you,

Ryan Liberty, Chairperson

## Fryeburg Fair

Jim Corliss

There will be a Fair this year. Ryan Liberty has volunteered to put together a small committee to bring in new ideas and hopefully more exhibitors. When you re shearing this year stop and flag that tree that shouts to you. It may be asking to go to Fryeburg and show off in front of the thousands of people who walk through our exhibit.

## SEED ORCHARD REPORT

Mike Seaman

The Seed Orchard Committee is currently evaluating an opportunity to lease land from Maine Woodland Owners (formally Small Woodlot Owners Association). The land site is in the area of the Cornville Athens town line. It is currently owned by Maine Woodland Owners and will never be sold. There is an 18-acre field that is growing up in six foot high brush, well drained, with opportunities for either a completely flat area for a seed orchard or closer to the road with a 5 to 10 percent grade. The soil type is Dixmont Series soil, and has areas ranging from moderately well drained to somewhat poorly drained, so site selection is important. There are requirements for the planting area selected to be renovated as the site was used to grow dug trees and therefore full of potholes. Clearing, renovating, soil testing and fertilizing, seeding and possibly a road extension are all things that would be needed regardless of where land is acquired for a new seed orchard. The lease cost is not known at this time. I have talked with the forester who indicated the MCTA seed orchard fits into use cases that Maine Woodland Owners would likely consider supporting. Maine Woodland Owners is currently working with a similar project developing the American Chestnut progeny. Below are two pictures from the entrance to the field:

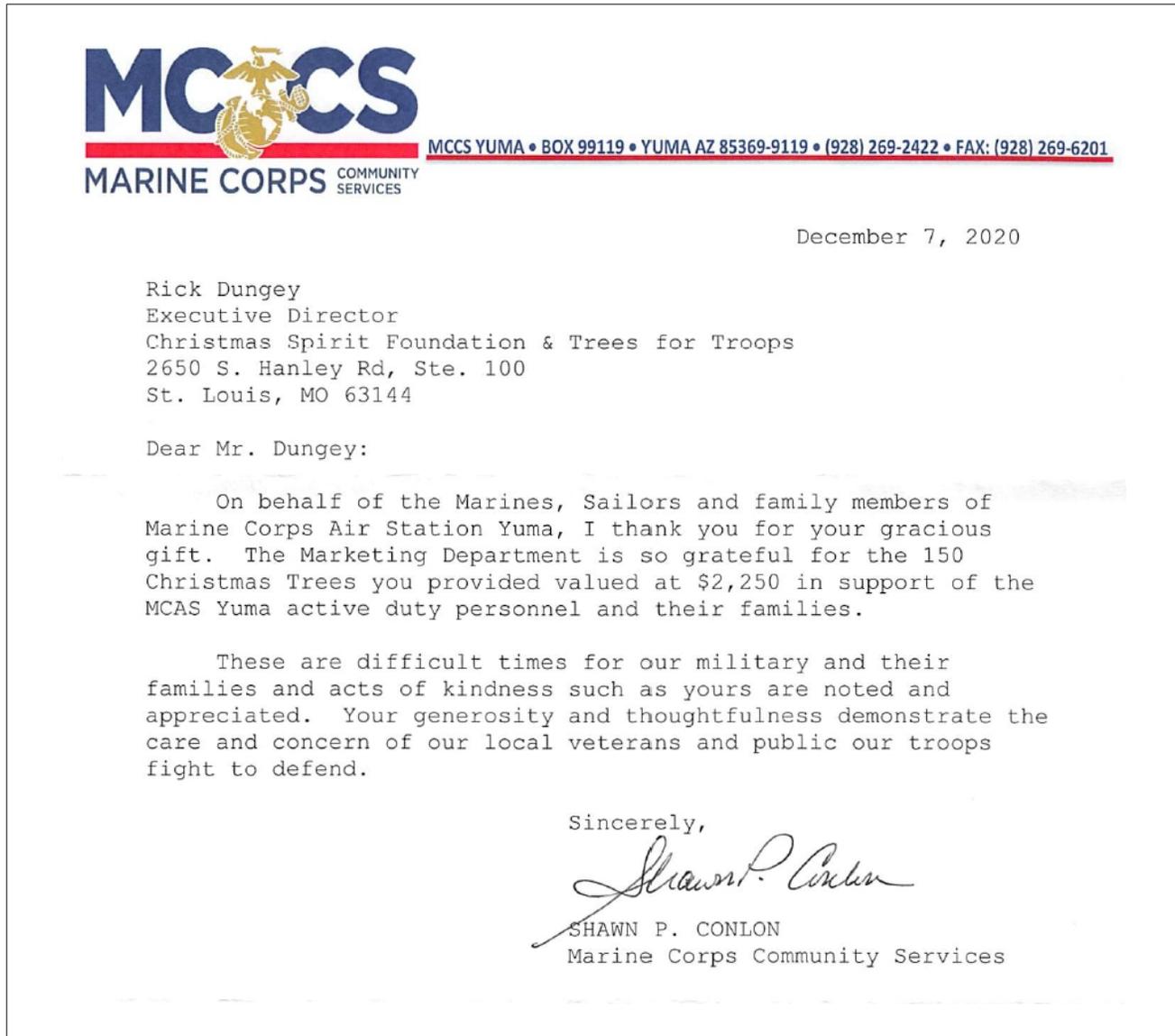


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## UPDATE ON TREES FOR TROOPS

Rick Dungey, Exec. Director  
Christmas Spirit Foundation

It's important to always highlight and share some of the feedback we get from military families who receive one of our trees. We're all doing a good thing and making a positive impact on folks who certainly deserve it. Here's a great example:



Unfortunately I have some sad news to share. Steve Drake passed away on May 22. Many of you have known Steve for as long as I have, especially since he was the main driver behind creating the Christmas Spirit Foundation back in 2005. Steve was my mentor for many years. Pretty much everything I know about being a staff person for members of associations, I learned from him. We don't have details on arrangements yet, but his wife Barb posted an update on Steve's Facebook page this morning.

*One of our national sponsors is Josh Cellars wines. Their sponsorship is a coupon redemption program so we didn't know the exact amount until after the holiday season when the number of coupons redeemed was counted. This year the program was so successful it garnered the maximum amount of \$25,000 donation to CSF's T4T program. Amazing. So if you enjoy wines, look for the Josh Cellars label and support a brand that supports us.*

## UPDATE ON TREES FOR TROOPS (Continued)

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For those farms/lots who want to leverage T4T into a cause marketing effort and have your customers or sponsors donate trees to the program, we have a new way to do that this year. It is called “**Official Location**” plan. Basically it is an effort to send customers to you (starting in September for those pre-selling online) if they want to buy and donate a tree. Locations will get special promotion pieces. We will roll out the forms and details this summer and you sign up by September.

Also, we have simplified into one form the various ways that you all support the program, whether it be donating trees, volunteering to be a pick up location, putting out donation jars or any of the many ways to get involved. We'll be getting that form out this summer as well. Hopefully it makes it much easier and simpler to let us know how you want to participate.

### Other updates:

- Christmas Spirit Foundation's Spirit Award

The Board of Trustees of the Christmas Spirit Foundation (CSF) has reviewed nominations and named four individuals and/or groups as recipients of the Christmas Spirit Award for 2021 thanking them for their creative and extraordinary support of the Foundation's Trees for Troops® Program. The recipients for 2021 are:

1. Dewey Romagnoli, Romagnoli's Oneida Valley Acres, Canastota, NY
2. Lehigh Area School District, Lehigh, PA
3. Miller Plumbing and Heating, Bethlehem, NH
4. Pam Helmsing, Foristell, MO

- State Christmas Tree meetings

CSF will have a booth at a growing list of state/regional meetings this summer to discuss some new participant options for 2021. We hope to see you there.

JUN 5	Kansas
JUL 23-24	Mid-America CTA meeting in Indiana
JUL 28-30	MI CTA
AUG 6-7	NC CTA / NCTA
AUG 19-21	WI CTPA
AUG 19-21	PA CTGA
SEP 18	Georgia

That's it for now. Thanks again for everything you do. Shoot me an email or give me a call if you'd like to discuss anything about CSF and the T4T program.

Rick Dungey  
Executive Director  
314-416-2245





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