



Ryan Liberty, President
Matt Quinn, Vice President
Joanne Bond, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

Correspondence to: Joanne Bond
174 Bond Spring Rd
West Newfield, ME 04095

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Greetings from our President

Ryan Liberty

Greetings fellow MCTA Members!

Colleen and I hope you are all wintering well and enjoying a bit of a break from the frenzy of the holiday season. We recently returned from a trip to Orlando, Florida, where we enjoyed several days soaking up that Florida sunshine and visiting the theme parks. Of course, Disney World was one of those parks and we had an amazing time exploring it with our youngest grandson, Jack.

In my opinion, nobody does entertainment like Disney. Their steadfast adherence to quality and tireless attention to detail make for an incredible vacation experience. As we toured the parks, we were entertained by the nostalgic rides taken from the pages of the favorite Disney books of our youth, as well as newer attractions from the more modern era of Disney entertainment. Walt was certainly a master cartoonist and innovator, but the thing that made Walt an entertainment genius was his vision. When Walt first conceived the idea for a theme park back in 1948, he understood the value of creating experiences that would last a lifetime. After all, he built an entertainment empire “Making Dreams Come True!”

None of us are Walt Disney and our farms are nothing close to Disney World. However, one thing that most of us do share with Walt is a vision of making meaningful and cherished family memories. We grow pretty good Christmas trees, but that’s only part of our offering. I can remember only a few of the Christmas trees that my family had over the years, but I have countless memories and warm feelings of the pursuit of those trees: where we went, how we got there, and who we were with. That’s what makes our industry so special.

On the topic of making memories, the MCTA leadership team is currently planning our next fall meeting. I’m excited to announce that it will be held at Great Works Tree Farm in North Berwick on Sept 21st/22nd and will be a joint meeting with the New Hampshire/Vermont Christmas Tree Association. We’ve already lined up some incredible industry experts that will speak to some of the challenges that we face, as well as vendors that market the products and services that can assist us in managing our farms.

I’m also pleased to announce that at the winter Board of Directors meeting, we voted in favor of allocating funds for an assistant to the executive team. Jennifer Hicks has been contracted for that role and will be working on initiatives that include brand refresh ideas, administrative task streamlining, a membership drive, and community outreach. Please all join me in welcoming Jenn to the MCTA team!

Here’s to hoping that February’s light precipitation is a sign of our return to a more normal weather pattern. In speaking with Brett Johnson of the Maine Cooperative Extension, he expects we’ll see the negative results of last year’s excessive rain in this year’s crop. This means we need to be more vigilant for an increased risk of needle cast and fungal issues. If you’re interested in trying to mitigate these issues, please reach out to Brett to develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for the coming year. His contact information is as follows: brett.w.johnson@maine.edu 207-832-0343.

Wishing you all a few more weeks of rest before our seedlings begin to arrive in mid-April.

Best,

Ryan Liberty, MCTA President



2024 Officers & Directors Maine Christmas Tree Association

Officers

Ryan Liberty, President
331 Sanford Rd, Wells, ME 04090
207-251-2099 ryan.liberty1967@gmail.com

Matt Quinn, Vice President
18 Huff Rd, Cornville, ME 04976
207-399-0566 matthew.quinn141@gmail.com

Joanne Bond, Executive Secretary / Treasurer
174 Bond Spring Rd, W Newfield, ME 04095
207-793-4658 bondjoanne1947@gmail.com

Heidi Watson, Recording Secretary
918 Richville Rd, Standish, ME 04084
207-576-5076 watsonoutdoors@gmail.com

Directors until 12/31/24

Gary Fisher
324 Augusta Rd, Belmont, ME 04952
207-322-8716 alonghere492@gmail.com

Matt Quinn
18 Huff Rd, Cornville, ME 04976
207-399-0566 matthew.quinn141@gmail.com

Lee Skillin
89 Foreside Rd, Falmouth, ME 04105
207-781-3860 leeskillinsg@outlook.com

Directors until 12/31/25

Matt LaCasce
89 Ames Rd, Dover Foxcroft, ME 04426
207-717-0836 matthewlacasce@yahoo.com

Calvin Luther
1420 River Rd, Bucksport, ME 04416
207-825-8729 calvin1420@gmail.com

Directors until 12/31/26

Lowell Freiman
263 Hopkins Rd, Washington, ME 04574
207-845-2544 lrfreiman@gmail.com

Tom McNeil
1 Mountain Farm Rd, Waterville, ME 04901
207-872-7329 baymeadowstreets@gmail.com

Past President

Arthur Mingo
405 Shattuck Rd, Calais, ME 04619
207-454-7411 akmingo@roadrunner.com

Director-at-Large

James Corliss
70 Hopkins Rd, Hampden, ME 04444
207-862-0065 jmc52536@gmail.com

Director-at-Large, Constitutional

Matt LaCasce (NCTA Director)
89 Ames Rd, Dover Foxcroft, ME 04426
207-717-0836 matthewlacasce@yahoo.com

TREASURY REPORT

Joanne Bond

Summary of MCTA's account balances as of 2/19/2024:

Account	Balance 1/01/2024	Y-T-D Deposits	Y-T-D Expenses	Balance 6/28/2023
General	\$27,057.03	\$5,070.58	\$3,766.77	\$28,360.84
Marketing	\$1,979.99	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,979.99
Website	\$7,675.50	\$900.00	\$0.00	\$8,575.50
Seed Orchard	\$10,202.58	\$0.00	\$1,432.50	\$8,770.08
Meetings	\$5,752.34	\$1,194.00	\$1,148.94	\$5,797.40
Scholarships	\$6,398.52	\$0.00	\$1,130.45	\$5,268.07
Totals	\$59,065.88	\$7,164.58	\$7,478.66	\$58,751.80

Save These Dates!!

August 1st - 3rd, 2024
3rd International Christmas
Tree Conference
Oak Island Resort, Western Shore, NS
hosted by



For more information, visit:
christmastreeforum.com/ncta-meeting/

Sept 21st - 22nd, 2024
MCTA Annual Fall Meeting

to be held at
Great Works Tree Farm
North Berwick

this will be a joint meeting with the
NH/VT Christmas Tree Association

Minutes of the January 2024 Board of Directors Meeting

Heidi Watson

Monday, January 8, 2024 - Call to Order at 6:27 pm by Ryan Liberty.

Roll Call – Present: Lowell Freiman, Tom McNeil, Ryan Liberty, Joanne Bond, Heidi Watson, Lee Skillin, Gary Fisher, Calvin Luther, Matt Quinn, Jim Corliss

Guests – Melba Fisher, B. Watson

Not present – Dugald Kell, Matt LaCasce

Recess at 6:28 pm for attendees to order dinner. At 6:40 pm meeting started again.

The MCTA 2024 Fall Meeting will be held at Great Works Tree Farm, 392 Oak Woods Rd., Berwick, ME.

Ryan asked Jenn Hicks to give an overview of what she has to offer. Jenn works full-time for Maine Woodland Owners (formerly SWOAM) and does part-time non-profit administrative consulting. She could contribute towards the growth of our organization. Our two leaders, Matt and Ryan, are why she is interested in working with MCTA. It can be as essential as getting a strategy to get board members to meet or run a conference; her skill set is whatever we need. She desires to help meet the needs or help the organization find a way to meet our needs. She handed out three pages of information about her services. Some ways she could help are as follows:

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1) Pick up where Joanne is signing off. | 3) Bring in more members. |
| 2) Explore grants and other areas of revenue. | 4) Help plan events. |

A Q&A session with Jenn ensued. Topics covered were grant writing, types and sizes of organizations Jenn has worked for, membership growth, fundraising, and newsletter.

Following this session, the Board continued with their business:

Ryan appointed Lee Skillin to fill one of the vacant director seats for the term that ends December 31, 2024.

Calvin made a motion to approve the minutes of a September Board meeting. It passed unanimously.

Joanne delivered her Secretary's report: MCTA has 135 members. 27 members were dropped from our rolls because they didn't pay dues. She hasn't yet sent a check to NCTA for our 2023 TIP payment. It is estimated at \$3,375 (\$25/member) and comes out of the General fund. Joanne announced that she is stepping down as Executive Secretary/Treasurer as she doesn't have the time anymore.

NCTA Update – written submitted by Dugald and read by Ryan.

AGCOM – Gary Fisher reported that there hasn't been a meeting since November. Everything that would be important is on the website (Updates and News).

Nominating Committee – Matt Q. was appointed to that committee. One Director slot is open till the end of this year. If anybody has a suggestion, let Jim or Matt Q. know. Lee suggested Dugald and Todd.

Budget Committee – written report submitted by Dugald and read by Heidi. The committee had a good meeting, and goals were set. Every organization should have a solid budget. Most of the meeting was a discussion about hiring Jenn and where the money could come from. Taking portions from different accounts to cover the cost.

Scholarship Committee – written report from Len read by Matt Quinn. One application was received from a well-qualified applicant. She has been awarded a \$1000 scholarship. She is currently enrolled at Eastern Maine Vocational in the electrician program after completing her bachelor's degree 10 years ago.

Seed Orchard – Calvin reported that the contract with UMO is signed. We have keys to the gate and the site was mowed once last year. We laid out rows for planting trees from the grafting program. We grafted 70, and only 29 broke bud. We collected 80 lbs of seed at the Norridgewock seed orchard, and 60 lbs were sent to Downey. The other 20 lbs is being freezer stored half by Todd and half by Calvin. It takes 20 lbs to produce about 75,000 seedlings. Regarding the Ashland orchard, Steve went out, looked at it, and talked to the owner, and it's still

Minutes of the January 2024 Board of Directors Meeting (cont'd.)Heidi Watson

there. We had a good cone crop, but we didn't need it. Didn't do any mowing. Trying to smooth things over for the future. Maybe we need to give that one up; we haven't collected seed from it for 12-15 years. The idea arose of having a 5 year forecast of demand for seedlings. Last year there were 32,450 MCTA seedlings sold.

Marketing – Ryan reported that he did a “Legacy Member” interview with Max McCormick. He would like to interview Jim Corliss next. “Maine Calling”, a weekly radio talk/call-in show of Maine Public, had an episode on Maine Christmas trees on November 22, 2023. The in-studio panelists included Matt Q. and Ryan. Molly and Jesse Jimerson also contributed by calling in. Additional publicity for MCTA and Maine Christmas trees also came from REAL MAINE (“*Real Maine Christmas Tree Season is Here*” web article on 11/14/23) and Downeast Magazine (“*In Maine, the Governor's Yuletide Fir Is Put to a Referendum*” in the December 2023 issue). There was also a TV interview about the Blaine House Christmas tree and wreaths. Ryan ended his report with the suggestion that we should refresh our brand. We don't sell anything, but we could.

Fryeburg Fair – Gary Fisher reported that the market for plugs is dried up for a late summer delivery. He is looking for help to find plugs in late summer that are affordable, and shipping could be in September. There is talk that the Fair may open on Saturday, a day earlier than usual. If so, trees and wreaths would need to be dropped off on Friday. Gary would like to have a stump removed that's in the way of the demo area. The kiosk made up for Tress for Troops at the fair and made good money. The wreath deadline is 12:45 pm this year. A Peoples Choice award was initiated for Wreaths, which went well.

Trees for Troops – Rob Mulvey sent no written report given, but had stated that it was a successful year.

Ornaments for Troops – Melba reported that 6,000 decorations are ready. Melba and the other volunteers are asking for \$150 for the cards that are sent with the decorations. That amount will be good for two years.

Tom made a motion was made to allocate \$150 to the MCTA Ornaments for Troops committee. It passed unanimously.

Website – Dugald reported that there have been a few issues with the functionality of the website with regards to members logging in and updating their information. This is especially true for new members trying to create a profile and pay dues. It may be necessary to pend some money to fix that.

Old Business – Hiring Jenn Hicks, this is a per-fee hire, no contract.

Tom made a motion that we create a line in this year's budget not to exceed \$5,000 for contracted services with Positive Force Consulting, and that money for that budget line comes from the general, marketing, and website lines. It passed unanimously.

New Business – NECTA (New England Christmas Tree Association).

Calvin made a motion that we appoint Ryan to represent MCTA on the NECTA Board. It passed unanimously.

New Business – UMAINE signage / Hartland Seed Orchard

New Business – The MCTA Fall Meeting will be hosted by John & Linda Archambault at Great Works Tree Farm in Berwick. Allows campers to tent. He also asked NH/VT to host theirs in conjunction with ours. A later date would be better for them. September 21st/22nd is the official date, and NH/VT CTA will join us.

New Business – Lee suggested that a dues increase needs to be discussed at the next meeting.

Date for March meeting – March 22nd by virtual means (ie. Zoom).

Lee made a motion to have a completely virtual spring directors meeting. It passed unanimously.

Gary made a motion to adjourn. It passed unanimously.

Application for Membership
Maine Christmas Tree Association, Inc.

Date _____ Business/Farm Name _____

Owner's Name _____ Telephone _____

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Website _____

Do you wish to receive the MCTA newsletter by email? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(for the foreseeable future, a hard copy will also be mailed to your mailing address)

Please check the items that describe your operation:

- ☐ Wholesale Grower ☐ Choose & Cut Grower ☐ Wreath Maker
☐ Retail Grower ☐ Tree Retailer ☐ Related Products

Membership Class (check one):

- ☐ Regular (\$75)
☐ Sustaining (\$100) *Upgrade your membership to help keep MCTA strong*
☐ Junior (under age 18 – enter birth month/year: ____/____)

Total Amount for
this Section:

\$ _____

MCTA Website Application and/or Renewal

To be listed on the website, you must be a member of the MCTA and grow/produce Christmas evergreen products in Maine.

Once you have paid the appropriate fee, a website account will be created for you. You will be sent the information to log on and set up your listing. Features include listing in any of three categories, customizable links to your own website and/or Facebook pages, as well as your own web page on the site where you can describe your product offerings, hours, location, etc.

Website Fees (check one): ☐ New Listing (\$60) ☐ Renewal (\$30)

Total Amount for
this Section:

\$ _____

Send completed application with a check to the treasurer at the following address:

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

Payment Due:

Check # _____ Amount \$ _____
Payable to: MCTA Add 2 Amounts above

Membership Application can be done online at mainechristmastree.com. Payment can be made by PayPal

Signature _____ Date _____



State of Maine

Governor Mills Declares November 24 as "Maine Grown Christmas Tree Day"

November 20, 2023

For more information contact: Jim Britt at: Jim.Britt@maine.gov

Christmas Trees and wreaths grown in Maine generate \$18 million in annual economic impact

Augusta, MAINE - The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) announced today that Governor Janet Mills has proclaimed Friday, November 24, 2023, as "Maine Grown Christmas Tree Day" in recognition of the contributions and economic impact of Maine's Christmas Tree industry.

The production and sale of fresh Maine Christmas trees and wreath products is estimated to create more than \$18 million in direct economic impact each year and provide jobs for nearly 800 Maine people. The Governor's proclamation recognizes the contributions of the more than 100 family farms that make up the non-profit Maine Christmas Tree Association (MCTA), a cornerstone of Christmas and Solstice celebrations since 1962.

No Christmas is complete without a Maine-grown Christmas Tree. As Maine people kick off the holiday season this weekend, I encourage them to support our local family farms for all their Christmas Tree and wreath needs, **said Governor Janet Mills**. I thank the Maine Christmas Tree Association and its member family farms for their hard work and dedication to make Christmastime in Maine beautiful each and every year.

"At a time of year when many bring joy to their homes with beautiful Maine-grown Christmas trees and wreaths, it's a great reminder of how much the work of the agriculture community in Maine enhances our lives and makes special occasions all the more special," **said DACF Commissioner Amanda Beal**.

"This proclamation is a perfectly timed reminder for MCTA members," **said MCTA President Ryan Liberty**. "We thank Governor Mills for supporting MCTA's enduring spirit and the craftsmanship showcased by the state's Christmas tree farms, businesses, and makers."

A list of choose and cut farms, wreaths and retail products for sale, and wholesale distributors across the state can be found on the MCTA website at www.mainechristmastree.com.

In 2021, the Governor started an annual tradition of showcasing award-winning, Maine-grown Christmas Trees from the Fryeburg Fair during the holiday season at the Blaine House. Governor Mills is expected to welcome the Peoples Choice Christmas Tree, as chosen by fairgoers, and the Grand Champion Christmas Tree, as chosen by judges, to the Blaine House later this month.

Read Governor Mills proclamation, declaring Friday, November 24, 2023, as "Maine Grown Christmas Tree Day" at <https://www.maine.gov/dacf/about/news/news.shtml?id=12117829>

Fryeburg Fair

Gary & Melba Fisher

The Fair season has already begun, even with the Fair being months away. I requested some repairs and improvements to the Christmas Tree booth that should be finished by Fair time in September. Mostly they are just usual maintenance items that have been needed for years, will provide more parking at rear of building, repairing the front porch floor which has become soft in spots from the snow and rain, also the front room floor will be stained as years of foot traffic have taken a bit of a toll on it. We are trying early on to locate our awning for the demo area so we don't have the wrong one, as last year. We have most of our helpers in place for this year but would love to hear from anyone that would have an interest in a shift at the booth. There is a room in the booth to accommodate staying over the evening for a shift. It is fun talking trees with folks and sometimes they are interested in starting a tree farm or joining MCTA. Then in the evenings you can take in the Fair. We provide a pass for helpers, we have 4 hour shifts and overnight shifts. It doesn't take any special training, you sell seedlings, wreath supplies and talk to fairgoers to keep them interested in the tree business and growing trees. Call us at 207 322-8716 or email us at alonghere492@gmail.com.

The seedlings that we sell to fund the scholarship program have been ordered and we should have true plugs again, not bare root seedlings. We are in good shape for our wreath supplies, which also are sold with proceeds going to the scholarship program. The scholarship program, if you don't already know, enables MCTA to present up to three \$1000 scholarships each year to college students. The wreath demos that are done twice each day are a highlight of the exhibit, usually attended by 20-30 people at each demonstration.

Now is the time to start looking for that special tree that you could enter in the competition in September. There are premiums, ribbons, and great recognition for winning trees and wreaths. The winners of the "PEOPLE CHOICE TREE and WREATH" are designated to present to a tree and wreath to the Governor for the Blaine House in December, and thus more bragging rights! Hope you are all well and ready for another exciting Christmas tree growing year.

Gary & Melba Fisher

Scholarship Committee

Len Price

The MCTA Scholarship Committee has awarded the 2023 MCTA Scholarship to Hannah K., of Bangor. She is currently enrolled at Bangor's Eastern Maine Community College, training to become an electrician. She is very appreciative of the MCTA's recognition and support, and thanks the Association for the Scholarship award of \$1000 to defray some of her college expense. These funds are raised by the annual sales of tree seedlings and wreath supplies at the MCTA's display at the Fryeburg Fair, staffed by MCTA volunteers.

Hannah completed her undergraduate degree 8 years ago, at Unity College, and subsequently worked for a vegetable farm and a Christmas tree farm. These were enjoyable experiences and as a result she realized her desire for a career that was hands-on, but also could provide year-round work and stability of an electrician's career. And as a dyed-in-the-wool traditional Balsam wreathmaker, in the future she hopes to always do seasonal wreath tying and maintain her contact with the Maine Christmas tree and wreath industry. Hopefully she also has time for basal pruning! Best wishes on your new career, Hannah.

MCTA scholarship applications are available on the MCTA website. Applications are due by Oct 1 for award consideration that year. Applicants are encouraged to apply if there is an educational pursuit that incurs an expense, and has a connection to the Maine Christmas tree/wreath industry

Marketing Committee

Ryan Liberty

The Marketing Committee has been busy working on several initiatives since our last newsletter. First, we've begun doing interviews and creating videos with legacy members. The first was of Max McCormack, and the video was showcased at the MCTA fall meeting. Second, we've been working with Fryeburg fair superintendents, Gary and Melba Fisher, to help promote our organization and farmers to the large group of attendees that the fair receives. This collaboration will continue with several of our farms presenting the Governor with Christmas trees and wreaths at the Blaine House in late November. Third, we've been reviewing our logo and imaging, and will be asking membership and the board of directors to give their opinions on a path forward. Last, the organization is embarking on a couple of important partnerships in the coming months that the Marketing Committee will be promoting. The first is MCTA's helping the Maine Department of Corrections (MDOC) develop their own Christmas tree plantation that will grow trees dedicated to the Trees For Troops program.

Seed Orchard Committee

Todd Murphy & Calvin Luther

Huff Hill Seed Orchard Site: At the various meetings of the Board, the Association and the Seed Orchard Committee in 2022 and 2023 we discussed moving forward with selecting a third orchard location. The best choice seemed to be in a field in Hartland at the end of the Huff Hill Rd, behind a locked gate on land owned by the University of Maine. There is also a hybrid chestnut trial planting being maintained on some of the fields.

The seed orchard committee selected this location and meetings were held in 2023 at UMaine and at the Huff Hill site to verify the potential of this site, plan for the use under the auspices of UMaine and plan for the seed tree grafted transplants to be outplanted in 2024. Using UMaine's site required a written agreement and has several stipulations which the seed orchard committee reviewed and accepted. An MCTA lock was added to the chain of locks on the gate and keys distributed to Ryan, Matt Q and Calvin.

Site treatment in 2023 consisted of only mowing in September, performed by Matt Quinn. Herbicide strip application by Ron Lemin of Nutrien Solutions (commercial pesticide license required) is now planned for late May prior to outplanting the grafted stock.

Grafting Seed Orchard Stock: This year we had cuttings from 7 superior trees from the most recent provenance study (owned by Len Price) grafted onto 70 potted root stock. The grafting was performed by Ellis Sprague, who previously performed all grafting of our seed trees in Norridgewock and Ashland seed orchards. The 7 selected superior trees are from the 13 superior trees identified by previous provenance tests throughout Maine and had the best results from the needle retention study, so these will be the seed sources for the future.

Of the 70 grafts performed, 29 survived, which was an unusually low survival percentage compared to previous grafting sessions. Lessons learned from this project to improve future results are:

- Select robust root stock individuals at the end of the growing season (Late July) with leader caliper diameter of sufficient size to match the diameter of intended scion as closely as possible.
- Pot the root stock after selection in sufficiently large pots to last for 2 years in the same pots.
- Tend the root stock through the first winter to ensure survival for grafting the next spring.
- Cut scion in early March in weather below freezing, keep the scion encased in snow to prevent drying while harvesting.
- Store scion in 34F refrigerator in sealed plastic bags with some snow inside the bags, until grafting can be performed.
- Perform grafting as soon as practical to minimize the drying of the scion in the refrigerator. The use of a greenhouse would allow for a warmer environment and earlier grafting vs. leaving root stock outside.

Seed Orchard Committee (cont'd.)

Todd Murphy & Calvin Luther

We are overwintering the 29 grafted potted seed trees at Len Price's farm this year. We have staked out the locations for seed trees to be planted so that herbicide treatment can proceed in late May, and intend to outplant the transplants after the herbicide treatment.

Grafting Costs: Ellis Sprague (\$1935.00); Materials (\$240.50); Root Stock (\$408.28); **Total = \$2,583.78**

Seed Collection 2023 at Norridgewock Orchard: This year Todd reported that at Norridgewock we would have a good seed crop based on his early scouting report. He had treated these trees with a systemic insecticide to eliminate previous cone bugs which had ruined the cones in a previous year. When he tested a few cones in July he could see no cone worms or cone feeding, so he proceeded to plan for a cone harvest. He hired a forestry crew of 2 with a self-powered platform lift who were able to reach and cut the tops of our cone filled seed trees and lower them to the ground. A group of 4 MCTA members then set up plywood on saw horses and a tarp, and set the tops on these to strip off the cones. It was a warm dry day and the tops were very dry so this process went well and quickly. Seed was collected from the 13 superior clones and they were separated by clone number. The clones are #1,3,4,11,14,15,20,39,45,47,54.

Todd took all the cones to his nursery/farm and inside a small greenhouse he spread them all out onto screening purchased just for this purpose. He laid them out about 3-4" thick and stirred them daily for about 2-3 weeks. He bagged them and stored them in his dry basement at home. He and I met there in mid-October and we cleaned the material by sifting it through 1/4" screening, which allowed the seeds to fall through while retaining all the other cone materials for disposal on the screen. We weighed the sifted seeds when done; 88.3 pounds of seed! The seed weighed out by clone as follows:

2023 MCTA Seed Collection - Norridgewock Seed Orchard				
October 10, 2023				
Clone #	Weight		Clone #	Weight
1	5 lbs 2 oz		20	0 lbs 14 oz
3	15 lbs 8 oz		39	8 lbs 3 oz
4	38 lbs 10 oz		45	2 lbs 0 oz
11	14 lbs 5 oz		47	0 lbs 7 oz
14	0 lbs 13 oz		54	1 lbs 8 oz
15	0 lbs 12 oz		Total	88 lbs 5 oz

Todd then proceeded to do a germination test on these seeds, selecting clones #1, 3, 4, 39 (representing 76% of the total) for testing. He first performed stratification of a handful of these 4 clones (moistened them and put in cold refrigerator for 30 days), then counted out 100 seeds/clone and spread them on potting soil and sprouted them. He has performed this before successfully. He reported the following percentage of germination:

Clone#	1	3	4	39
Germination	19%	32%	42%	52%

All except #1 had good germination. Following the germination testing, Todd contacted Larry Downey at Downey Nursery in Quebec (our contract grower) for instructions on how to get this seed to them for storage. It was decided to retain about 20 pounds of the seed (split between Todd and Calvin for storage) here in Maine and to send over 60 pounds to Larry to use for future MCTA plantings. Todd made all the arrangements and the seed was successfully transported to Downey Nursery on December 22, 2023.

Seed Collection Costs:	Forestry Lift Crew	\$1200.00 (assumed)
	Todd Murphy	\$1,774.35 (labor, materials, transportation, shipping)
	Len Price	\$90.00 (his worker labor)
	Total	\$3,164.35

Chemically Speaking

by Steve Rosenthal

Originally published in the September 2023 issue of Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producer's Association Quarterly Journal, this article is printed here by permission.

NUTS TO YOU!!!!

Has anybody seen lots of acorns this year? My yard is full of them from the oak trees. Why so many this year? A few theories exist to give possible answers.

The abundance of acorns is called “masting”. Trees can sense severe weather issues and can transfer great amounts of energy to increase seed or in this case acorns. One of the weather related issues could be drought. 2023 sure had limited rainfall in most parts of the state. Oak trees can produce an overwhelming amount of acorns, more than predators can possibly eat, and in return some will survive and become seed for new trees. Maybe this is the answer – maybe not!

WATERHEMP UPDATE!!!!

I have written in the past about a weed that is becoming a serious problem in Wisconsin. The weed is in the pigweed family and now it has been found in Christmas tree plantations. The problem weed can be resistant to the herbicide glyphosate (Roundup). Waterhemp can produce 100,000 weed seeds or more per plant or more. The plant can be as tall as 6 feet and can easily be seen in soybean fields as you drive along.

Growers should do some research on the internet to see what it looks like. If you find only a few plants, pull them out and burn them. Herbicide options are limited in Christmas trees. If you find it let me know or talk to me at the winter convention for a game plan. IF YOU DON'T HAVE IT YET – I PROMISE YOU WILL!!

IT'S A PLANE, IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A HAWK!!!!

Fall is great time to look at your fields to see if they are inviting to mice, voles or other rodents that can girdle trees and cause severe damage. Growers that have weedy fields are inviting these pests.

MOTOMCO has a number of products to help. We will carry a product called HAWK. Hawk comes in small chunks or 1.5 oz place packs that can be spread in the field or around nurseries and buildings. Both products will kill mice with a single feeding.

CLIMATE CHANGE????

Everyone has an opinion on climate change. Is it real or not? I ran across a quote in the newspaper that I thought was interesting and I will share it with you as food for thought.

“The scary part is this summer may be one of the coolest summers we’ll experience in the next 50 years.”

Michael Webber. Professor of energy resources at the University of Texas at Austin

CRYSTAL BALL!!!!

WOW! 2023 has seen many changes from the previous year. Supplies of products and prices have become more reasonable in most cases. Volatility is the word I would use to describe all inputs this past year. Growers can expect to see more of the same in the near future. I would suggest you purchase part of your needs and take advantage of specials from your suppliers because they usually have a pulse on what is going on.

CHANGE IS A GOOD THING – ISN'T IT?

Soon we will be overwhelmed with political adds again. The winners of the election could change everything that I wrote about in this article. I sure hope that whatever happens will be better than it is now. If it stays the same I really feel sorry for our kids and grandkids. Remember: If you don't vote – don't bitch!

SEE YOU IN THE NEXT ARTICLE!

REMEMBER: ALWAYS READ THE LABEL!

Steve Rosenthal is vice-president of TH Agri-chemicals, Inc. Box 265. Plainfield, WI 54966. (715) 335-6343. Mobile (715) 570-7092. Email: srosenthal@charter.net

Budget Committee

Dugald Kell

The MCTA Budget Committee consists of these members: Dugald Kell Jr. (Chair), Ryan Liberty, Heidi Watson, Matt Quinn, Joanne Bond, Jim Corliss and Tom McNeil. The committee held two meetings since the end of August and had multiple emails exchanges. These are the initial goals that were:

1. Set a 3-year tentative budget for MCTA (a detailed budget won't be possible until further info from our finances is gathered and parsed).
2. Compile MCTA's financial information going back as much as 5 years.
3. Consider sub-categorizing some expenses beyond our major categories (General, Marketing, Website, Seed Orchard, Meetings, Scholarship).
4. Identify current and potential sources of revenue for the Association.

The financial records will need to be reviewed to compile a detailed history of income and expenses. This will take some time to complete, however using some information that had previously been reported to MCTA members by the Treasurer, Joanne Bond, it was determined that the Association has realized an annual average gain of \$3,633 over the past several years. The table below, "Changes in Cash Account Balances 2016-2023", shows the data compiled to show this result.

The Budget Committee recommends that an audit be considered as a means of sorting the financial records. The scope and cost of the proposed audit will need to be worked out and considered to assure that the benefit MCTA is worth the expense.

A draft budget for 2024 has been developed, based on a status quo program for the Association. The budget includes expected incomes and expenses, and shows gains in each of the accounts that are roughly similar to the average annual gains realized in the cash account balances in recent years. Further work is needed to develop this draft into a working plan for the year.

The Budget Committee will work with the Chairs of the other subcommittees to find out their expectations for their respective programs for 2024 and in the near future. This process may identify areas where the draft budget may need to be updated. For example, a seed harvest is expected then the expected costs of the harvest will need to be worked into the budget. Other subcommittees have put forward ideas to improve the value that MCTA provides to the members. The expenses of these proposals will need to be considered in conjunction with the budget to determine where cost savings can be realized or revenues increased to meet those expenses.

MAINE CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION CHANGES IN CASH ACCOUNT BALANCES 2016 to 2023							
Name Of Account:	General	Marketing	Website	Seed Orchard	Meetings	Scholarship	All Accounts
2016 Beginning Balances:	9,195.58	472.17	3,317.50	9,850.32	3,912.66	6,430.56	33,178.79
2023 Beginning Balances:	21,232.83	2,093.29	6,507.50	13,238.06	8,327.82	7,210.88	58,610.38
7-Year Gains 2016-2023	12,037.25	1,621.12	3,190.00	3,387.74	4,415.16	780.32	25,431.59
Avg Annual Gain	1,719.61	231.59	455.71	483.96	630.74	111.47	3,633.08



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