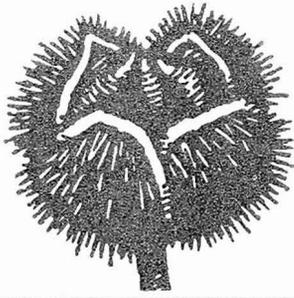


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Volume 4, No 1

Newsletter of the New York State Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation, Inc.

Spring 1994

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Soon we will all be introduced to Charlie Chestnut our new mascot. He is exhausted and downtrodden from the relentless battering from Buster Blight our villain and bad guy. Can Georgia Gene, our heroine, save Charlie? Stay tuned and we will find out.

The latest adventure of the ACFNY is commencement of our education program which will be tried this Fall in Erie and Niagara Counties in the third through the sixth grade under the leadership of Glen Gelinis and his capable committee. With this accomplishment, we will all look forward to the expansion of the program in the Fall of 1995 to the other Districts of NY State. Further expansion to higher grades will be following. This will be ACFNY's way of letting the children know what an American chestnut tree is and that they can take part in a program to help reestablish this magnificent tree. Hopefully, the children will get their parents involved bringing in the 30 to 40 year old group most of whom do not know what an American chestnut is.

The rest of the people can be brought on board using our new video slide show at Service Clubs and Environmental Centers. Many people think the American chestnut is extinct and we need to get the message out that this is not true.

At our Board of Directors meeting on Wednesday, March 30, 1994 we presented ACFNY's program to Mr. Robert Bathrick, New York State Forester from the NYSDEC, Albany, NY. Having the privilege of spending the few remaining hours with him, we adventured to the Zoar Valley Planting area to show him the type of program we need in all districts across NY State. His comments were most favorable saying he had not met very many groups as dedicated and enthusiastic as our Board and Committee people. He assured me that he would do everything in his power to get full cooperation for our program.

Congratulations to all Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairmen on a job well done. We can look forward to a long term relationship with the WYSDEC.

## SET JULY 3 ASIDE TO SEE AMERICAN CHESTNUTS IN FLOWER

In earlier days, when chestnuts dominated the eastern forests, the hills around the Fourth of July were said to be "covered in smoke", an optical illusion caused by the numerous creamy-white catkins produced by *Castanea dentata*. today, the ACF uses those flowers to locate American chestnut trees via aerial reconnaissance, a procedure possible because chestnuts are the only large tree of the forest to bear white flowers in early July.

If you don't have an airplane handy, join us on the ground for a hike at Shale Creek Sanctuary, where two American chestnuts, 8-10" DBH, will hopefully be in bloom! Meet ACF member Carol Seigel on Sunday, July 3, 1994, at 9:45 am, in the parking lot behind the Casino at Chestnut Ridge Park, approximately 2 miles south of the village of Orchard Park. (Heading south, the park entrance is on the west side of Route 277 and a bridge connects you across Route 277 to the Casino.) From the Park, we'll travel a short distance south to Shale Creek Sanctuary on Seufert Road.

Wear shoes you can hike in, as the trail along the gorge is short, but includes some steep spots. For those who don't mind the possibility of getting their feet wet, we will continue down into the gorge, and up the creek bed, to see the "eternal flame", a naturally occurring vent of natural gas, before returning to Chestnut Ridge Park.

Time and weather permitting, we will view several other *Castanea* species planted in the park. As a suggestion, bring your lunch and enjoy a picnic in the park with your family afterwards!

Long live the American chestnut.  
Herbert F. Darling, Jr. President ACFNY

## DISTRICT NEWS

**DISTRICT 3** Frank Munzer reported that additional plantings will be made this spring at three arboretums in the District. One of these sites is new and the other two have the beginnings of seed orchards. In an attempt to assist the research program at SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse, the District will seek out donors to contribute a total of \$4000 for a new microscope that has the capability of seeing inside American chestnut cells.

**DISTRICT 4 (and Fulton County)** Lewis Decker has arranged a District meeting for May 22, 2:00 pm at the George Landis Arboretum, Espereance NY. The Arboretum has an American chestnut grove where mud packing has been used in an attempt to preserve blight infected trees. Seeds from this grove have been planted by Mr. Rand, a member of the Arboretum. Potential new planting sites are in various stages of development. One will be on open rolling hills on the grounds of the Fulton County Infirmary. Another possibility is a linear park along a bike trail in the City of Gloversville. The location of American chestnuts will be aided by the Fulton Airport Pilots Association. They intend to search along a ridge that extends for many miles in the County. On this ridge near route 29 in the Town of Johnson several chestnuts are known to exist, so the prospects are good for finding more.

**DISTRICT 5** One of the District's members has located a mature American chestnut tree at the Adirondach Ecology Center and it has been offered for pollination. In pursuit of suitable planting sites, Director Adrien Gaudreau will be contacting county officials in his District. In order to develop more membership in this thinly populated area, Gaudreau will be making a presentation in Saratoga in May.

**DISTRICT 6** Darrel Rippiteau whose District includes the Watertown area had previously reported the establishment of a DEC planting site in Dexter, a community on Lake Ontario near Watertown. Darrel has announced his retirement as Director at the conclusion of this current term and Mr. T. Urling Walker has accepted the nomination to fill this position after the election at the Annual Meeting in October.

**DISTRICT 7** Director Roy Hopke reported there was a good turn out at the District meeting April 8. They planned their spring planting in DEC's Rogers Environmental Center at Sherburne using seedlings from nuts and root collar sprouts. They also discussed identification of several likely American chestnut trees in the area. Roy has made membership/educational presentations at the Masonic lodge in Greene NY, Shriners in Johnson City and the New York Forest Owners Association.

**DISTRICT 8** Woody Clark having recently assumed the responsibilities of District Director is holding his first District meeting in May at which he will offer a free chestnut tree to attending members and persons who join on that occasion. In addition, Woody has arranged a showing of the ACFNY display at the following functions: June 4 at the Central NY Forest Owners Association, Family Forest Fair, Elbridge NY; in August at the Lumbejack Festival in Macedon and at the Empire Farm Days in Seneca Falls; and in September at the National Hunting and Fishing Festival at the regional headquarters of DEC's District 8 in Avon NY. Woody announced that any ACFNY member could order Supertubes (Tubex) and stakes at cost if ordered through their District Director. At the recent Board meeting he recommended a tree numbering and tag system.

**DISTRICT 9** On March 22, Bill Snyder held a meeting of his District in Buffalo which was attended by approximately 30 persons coming from as far as Jarnestown and Olean. At the meeting plans were completed for the fourth annual Planting Day on April 30 in the DEC's Multiple Use Area in the Zoar Valley region. Attendees were also urged to volunteer for the location, pollination, public relations and other duties for the District.

(Note: Districts 1 and 2, covering New York City and Long Island, as yet do not have a District organization. Volunteers to accept that responsibility would be appreciated.)

## STATE FORESTER RECOGNIZES IMPORTANCE OF ACFNY'S WORK

At a meeting of the ACFNY's Board of Directors on March 30, 1994, the group was pleased to have State Forester Robert Bathrick in attendance. He had an opportunity to hear about the activities of Districts throughout the State and the projects the ACFNY is promoting. Several issues were presented to Forester Bathrick and the following are the major ones and his response:

1. *Assignment of a Division liaison to the New York State Chapter American Chestnut Foundation (ACFNY).*

Mr. Robert Bathrick indicated he was in favor of assigning a liaison. He would review the regional candidates that are familiar with the Chapter (like Mr. Wayne Cooper) and make a formal This person would be the contact person between Division and the New York Chapter.

2. *Preparation and distribution of a Division memo supporting the ACFNY.*

Mr. Bathrick felt that this was a strong possibility since the New York Chapter continues to be aggressive in both funding as well as field work. His only reservation was the lack of staff time available at this point. He indicated that he supports the Chapter, but cannot offer staff time to do chestnut work. However, he felt two areas showed promise:

- a. Regional Foresters should be aware of ACFNY. He felt that the Chapter Regional Directors should contact the DEC Regional Foresters. They should introduce themselves and offer to show the video at a staff meeting.
- b. After developing a liaison with Regional Foresters, DEC staff could forward inquiries or information about chestnuts to the Chapter Regional Director. The Chapter will follow-up with the call.

3. *An opportunity to include chestnut work in the work plan.*

Again, because of the loss of Forestry staff, this may not be a possibility at this time.

(Cont. Page 4)



*Drs. William Powell and Charles Mayard (at left) show their latest genetic engineering work conducted at the School of Environmental Science and Forestry to Stan Wirsig, Vice President of ACFNY, Chairman of the ACFNY Science Committee and member of the national ACF Science Committee.*

## FIRST STEPS UNDERWAY IN GENETIC RESEARCH TO COUNTER BLIGHT

Dr. Powell and his students at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry at Syracuse are testing several small proteins, and plan to test more to see which is most effective against blight. A good defense mechanism is for an organism to release very short strands of protein, (peptides, or "mini-proteins"), just long enough to pierce the cell membranes of the attacking fungi and collapse them.

The ideal peptide would be one that is deadly to the fungus at very low concentrations, but causes the plant no harm even at much higher concentrations. In addition it should be non-toxic to humans or wildlife who will eat the chestnuts.

A number of organisms including moths, frogs, bees, pigs and probably many others produce peptides with these properties. After identifying a mini-protein that comes closest to the ideal, the next phase of the project will be to build a gene to make these mini-proteins inside the plant cell.

While the above research is being conducted by Dr. Powell, a parallel research program conducted by Dr. Maynard is developing a method of delivering the gene into individual cells of an American chestnut and regrowing those cells into a whole tree. Since the mini-proteins are still under development, they are working with other "designer genes" to develop the gene transfer and plant-regeneration techniques. In this way both parts of the project can move forward simultaneously.

The research program at the College of Environmental Science and Forestry is partially funded by grants by the ACFNY. These funds come from membership dues and donations.

## NATURE CENTER TO BE SITE OF ANNUAL MEETING

Picture conversation by the fireplace, stimulating State Chestnut reports... all with a background of views of a lake surrounded by the color of October woods. You'll have this at the 1994 ACFNY Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Cayuga Nature Center near Cornell in Ithaca, NY on the weekend of October 14-16, 1994.

Remember the old saying, "Be careful what you wish for, you may get it!". You did, and you are! At last year's Annual Meeting many wished they had more time to talk, compare notes and mutual problems, and get better acquainted.

This year we will have that time plus the opportunity of hearing an outstanding speaker, round table discussions and member presentations... free time to walk the nature trails, go to the waterfalls, see chestnut trees on the campus, or if you are a birder, visit the Ornithology Observation Center.

On Saturday evening we will enjoy a sunset dinner cruise on Cayuga Lake and end up with popcorn and more talk around the fire-side at the Center.

The lodging will be free at the Center if you bring your own bedroll and don't mind sleeping in a dormitory. (Meals will be catered — you won't have to help with the dishes.) If you're not the rustic type, we've arranged space at a motel a few miles down the road in Ithaca.

On Sunday morning you can enjoy a sunrise walk or sleep in until it's time for breakfast and one of the highlights of the meeting - The Harvest Mix - a first time activity. Our program of developing seed orchards throughout NY State is off to a good start and the Science and Field Committees are going to launch a project to ensure diversity of the gene pool. Nut Providers will bring the nuts they have harvested (tagged with location) and the Harvest Master will determine what the "mix" will be from the number of seed orchards plus monitored private land offers which are available to accept the nuts for planting.

Members will participate in the mixing, preparing, and recording of the bags for the planting sites. They are going to need you! Instructions will be included with the details in the Annual Meeting notice.

Put October 14-16 on your calendar. Plan to catch up on where we are and where we are going with our chestnut program. Enjoy the colors of Fall and the Finger Lakes scenery, and the camaraderie of fellow chestnut enthusiasts.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

The Bur  
NY State Chapter  
American Chestnut Foundation Inc.  
c/o Buffalo Museum of Science  
1020 Humboldt Parkway  
Buffalo, NY 14211

### NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

New York State is divided into nine Districts. A director from each Region will be sought, as well as general board members. Their duties will include: Attendance at annual meetings. Help in development of membership in their District. Seeking out of interested leaders and assisting in forming local groups. Please send nominations with a brief resume to:

Nominating Committee,  
New York State Chapter  
American Chestnut Foundation, Inc.,  
c/o Buffalo Museum of Science,  
1020 Humboldt Pkwy.,  
Buffalo, NY, 14211.

Nominations must be received by September 1, 1994.

### SLIDE/VIDEO SHOW AND DISPLAY AVAILABLE

Most of our ACFNY Districts now have the necessary equipment for a 12 minute slide program with an accompanying audio tape. The show describes the American chestnut blight and the ACFNY's research and planting programs necessary for the eventual restoration. This program is also available as a video tape. For use with the audio presentation, or alone, is a display explaining the problem the ACFNY solution and the benefits of membership in the ACFNY. All of these items are available for service club programs, meetings of conservation groups, schools, etc. Contact your local District Director.

### STATE FORESTER (con't) page 2

#### 4. Use of state land for chestnut planting.

Mr. Bathrick felt that this could be a very viable option and something that the state could very well become involved in. He will discuss this further with Regional foresters at a later time.

#### 5. News release relative to cutting live chestnuts.

Mr. Bathrick felt that if the Chapter developed some information that he would consider taking the information and developing a DEC news release about chestnuts and the needs to preserve them to the extent possible.

### Can your experience benefit the foundation?

Volunteers are needed to work on the Education Committee and Development Committee. Both these committees will be increasing their activity throughout 1994 and 1995. We vitally need your support. To see how you can help, please call Glen Gelinas at (716) 825-7760.



### Send us your chestnut photos

ACFNY is always looking for slides and photographs to expand our collection and public relation efforts. All materials will be returned if requested. Please send them to Jack Mansfield at 344 Roycroft Blvd., Snyder, NY, 14226.



*Joe Urso (left) and Dr. Jerry Bream (standing), both of the Niagara County Cornell Extension, lead a discussion of the goals of the American Chestnut Education Program for children in grades 3 through 5 at a meeting of teachers and the Educational Committee on January 29.*



*Isabel Ulintz from Hamburg, NY Union-Pleasant Elementary (left) and Karen Sherwood-Fidanza of Lockport's Roy B. Kelley School (right), both third grade teachers, discuss a lesson plan for their grade level with Robert Nesslin, former teacher and video consultant for the meeting. Out of the overall discussion came the need for a video tape presentation of the American Chestnut story with "Charlie Chestnut" as the lead character.*

## ACFNY LAUNCHES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Spring is always a busy month for ACFNY since there is always a high demand for tree plantings, talks and demonstrations that coincide with Earth Day and Arbor Day. This spring will mark our first cooperative effort with teachers in the NYS school system. Six teachers, grades three, four and five, in Erie and Niagara counties will be introducing their students to our first education modules. Each education module brings American chestnut facts and fun into their classrooms.

Teachers met with ACFNY members and curriculum design specialists from the Niagara County Cooperative Extension to discuss the story of the American chestnut, educational design elements and to view our new slide presentation. Groups representing each grade level went to work designing lesson plans and activities that integrate knowledge of the American chestnut with a videotaped reproduction of our slide show for use in their curriculums. The result is a group of projects, exercises, and games that expand comprehension skills, build vocabulary, teach lessons in natural history and ecology while stressing the significance of the American chestnut as a valuable resource.

This spring, these teachers will be testing the modules, sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm with students and fellow teachers, completing the first milestone of our educational agenda. Over the next year ACFNY will be producing a special educational video and creating new modules for grades six through twelve. Next spring we will assess the coordination and distribution needs for state wide program implementation by introducing the educational video and complete lesson plan package regionally to teachers throughout Erie and Niagara counties, and selectively upon demand. By 1996 our education program will be introduced to teachers across the state. Although the American chestnut may be dying in our state forests it will be alive in our classrooms, a major step in restoring the American chestnut.



*Working on a Grade 4 lesson plan are Suzanne Kovic of Hamburg's Armor Elementary and, at right, Janet Lawrence of the Charles R. Drew Science Magnet School in Buffalo. Their lesson plan included the preparation of a poster as a student project.*



*Discussing the 5th Grade lesson plan needs are (from left to right), Peter Mirando of Hamburg Senior High, Don Bronson, teacher of Biology and Environmental Sciences at Wheatfield Senior High and Dr. Jerry Bream of the Niagara County Cornell Extension. One of the needs they identified was a Student Work Book to complement the video tape and a take-home piece for parent education.*

## **ACFNY LAUNCHES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM (con't)**

Our thanks go out to Jerry Bream and Joe Urso from the Niagara County Cooperative Extension for their experience and guidance; to Don Bronson, Robin Bronson-Clark, Karen Fidanza, Suzanne Kovic, Janet Lawrence, Peter Mirando and Isabel Ulintz for their enthusiasm and creativity in designing lessons. Special thanks to all our members that have volunteered their time to get this project off the ground.

Planning has begun for the next lesson plan design session, developing educational modules for grades six through twelve. If you would like to help ACFNY expand this program or can recommend educators to participate in lesson plan design, please give Gien Geinias a call at (716) 825-7760.

## **LAND DONATED TO ACFNY**

Mrs. Angeline B. Gordon of Clarence, New York, a suburb of Buffalo, has donated to ACFNY a piece of land located in the Town of Amherst adjacent to property owned by Niagara Mohawk. Consideration will be given to creating an American chesnut seed orchard on combined properties, or selling the property to raise funds for ACFNY programs. ACFNY thanks Mrs. Gordon for her unrestricted donation. Mrs. Gordon's son is John Gordon Jr. who has been active in ACFNY since its founding.

### **Help on membership**

Our membership goals for 1994 requires new members and a director for both Region 1 (Nassau, Suffolk), and Region 2 (New York City). Another region targeted for increased membership is Region 6 (Jefferson, Herkimer, Lewis, St. Lawrence). Please consider recruiting a new member or providing a gift membership to a friend or colleague.