

# THE



# BUR

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

Volume 15, No. 1

Spring/Summer 2006

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### THE QUEEN OF CHESTNUT RETIRES

Arlene Wirsig, one of the founders of the New York State Chapter in 1990, and almost single-handedly overseeing the formation and growth of the chapter over the past sixteen years, has resigned as Secretary/Treasurer. Arlene will still be with the New York Chapter, even though after she moved to Connecticut she didn't feel she could handle the daily demands of the chapter activities. She can be reached at (860) 968-4807 or written to at 11 Ellen Lane, Woodstock, CT 06281. Her e-mail remains the same. [awirsig@localnet.com](mailto:awirsig@localnet.com)

The Queen oversaw all of the wonderful times at the outings and annual meetings and we are going to be hard put to replace all her efforts and excellent results. Arlene will be honored officially at our October TACFNY Annual Meeting.

God bless you, Arlene, you're terrific  
- Long Live the Queen!!!



LONG LIVE THE AMERICAN  
CHESTNUT!

Herbert F. Darling, Jr., President

## SCIENCE REPORT



Identification and Packing from  
the Harvest Exchange  
See Annual Report for Details

Laboratory Work in Progress  
See Annual Report for Details



Outdoor Elm Garden Tour  
See Annual Report for Details

**DISTRICT DIRECTORS AND  
THE COUNTIES THEY SERVE  
DISTRICT 1**

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Rockland Counties

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Delaware, Greene and Montgomery  
Counties

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and Fulton Counties

**DISTRICT 6**

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Herkimer, and Lewis Counties

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and Madison Counties

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Monroe, Ontario, and Orleans Counties

**DISTRICT 9**

William Snyder  
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Erie, Niagara, Wyoming, Allegany,  
Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties

**These are your faithful  
leaders who go above and  
beyond in the field**

**2006 Annual Meeting Brief**

**October 28-29, 2006  
Grand Hotel  
Poughkeepsie, NY**

**"Reservations: made up to  
30 days prior to October 28  
will be from the rooms  
reserved for our annual  
meeting at the rate of \$119  
per room per night. This  
includes a full American  
breakfast.**

**Telephone:  
800-216-1034**

**Website:  
[www.pokgrand.com](http://www.pokgrand.com)**

\*Local Activity: Tours of two of  
Poughkeepsie National Historic  
Sites have been arranged for the  
afternoon of Saturday the 28<sup>th</sup> as  
follows:

1. FDR Home and Library  
\$8.00 per person
2. Vanderbilt Mansion  
\$5.00 per person

Please notify us by September 28  
which tour you would like to  
attend or if you would like to  
attend both tours. This will  
ensure a group rate and a more  
personalized tour for all of us.  
Include your fee for the tours with  
your registration fee.

**More information will follow  
in the next BUR.  
Please stand by.**

**TACFNY 2005 OFFICERS  
AND DIRECTORS**

**OFFICERS 2006**

H. F. Darling, Jr., President  
Stanley Wirsig, Vice President  
Richard Radel, Treasurer  
and Secretary

**DIRECTORS, CLASS OF 2006**

Margaret Collins  
Wayne Cooper  
Thomas Deacon  
Roy Hopke  
Chip Leavy  
Frank Munzer  
John Neumann  
Allen Nichols  
William Snyder  
Bethany White  
Dr. Richard Zander

**DIRECTORS, CLASS OF 2007**

Douglas Campbell  
Herbert F. Darling, Jr.  
John Gordon  
Jack Mansfield  
John Spagnoli  
Arlene Wirsig  
Stanley Wirsig

**DIRECTORS, CLASS OF 2008**

Jim Donawick  
John Dughei-ty  
John Ellis  
Adrien Gaudreau  
Craig Hibben  
Ted Kozowski  
Leonard Lampel  
Robert Nowack  
Dr. John Potente

**NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

Herbert F. Darling, Jr.  
Jack Mansfield, Chairman  
Frank Munser  
Stanley Wirsig

## Every Member Counts

Hello, my name is Nicole Lamie and I am writing on the behalf of Jim Best. Jim Best is my 96 year old, great-grandfather. He asked me to tell you about his trees. In 1992 he purchased three American Chestnut Tree saplings from Oswego County Soil. With the trees he got a card that mentioned the American Chestnut Tree Foundation. He planted the trees and after they matured they bore fruit for two years. Then because of a heavy ice and snow storm the tree was damaged and lost all of its branches. Nothing was left but a post of a trunk. Then in the spring the trunk started to sprout branches again. Since then, he has picked fruit for three years. He has also given away saplings to others.

## Every Member Gets A Member Campaign

New Members and their Recruiters are listed below:

Jeff Rupp

Kevin Beiter

Dale Demyanick, Edward Wilk, Daniel Zayack, Jr.,  
Gilbert & Elaine Irons, Scott Cant, Douglas Fitzmaurice

Herb Darling

Daniel Pierce Library

Jack **Denman**

Deposit Central School Library, The Deposit Free Library  
Larry Schaefer, Sandra Powell, Maggie Davidson

James **Donowick**

Everett Wood

John Ellis

April Gayle Hannan

Carolyn Hannon

Robert Hardy

Ernest Hardy

Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Rauth

Jayne Hopper

Lasdon Park & Arboretum, John P. Haas

Craig **Hibben**

Susan Sharko

Ernest Juhl

Richard De Valle

Charles Knapp

Lucinda Mullin

Lenny **Lampel**

Richard J. Schanley, Ben Sloat

Jack **Mansfield**

Jeanne Goodwin

Frank Munzer

William & Anne Gray, Frank Dykstra, Katharine Dawson,  
Daniel Friedman, Julia Polasik, William Gold, Mr. & Mrs.  
Glen Whitaker, Jr. , Gerianne Carillo, Marie Speutels, Art  
Peterson, Stephen Rick, Marjorie Lewis, Gloria Klingman,  
Pamela Curtin, Fred Liddle, Fred & Marie Neumann, Onofrio  
A. Vitullo, Barbara M. Marsala

John Neumann

Joseph & Sandra Messina

AI Nichols

Beth Powell, Jake Powell, Bonnie Balcerski, Bill Powell

William Powell

Karen Hansen, Patricia Lindgven

Dale Travis

Craig Murry, Inc.

Jan Van Meter



## Regional Tree Breeding Coordination

Sara Fitzsimmons gave a detailed report of her work in New York part of which follows:

Currently, I have made personal visits to seven locations where the New York Chapter has volunteers who have planted chestnut trees.

Based on my visits, the limiting factor to growing trees within the Chapter appears to be predation by deer. Orchards where trees are growing the best have some amount of substantial deer protection, or which were grown prior to current explosive deer populations. At several orchards, however, the state has an impressive collection of native germplasm being conserved. These efforts should be commended.

Based on data collection and visits to TACFNY over the past year, I have compiled the following.

### TACFNY Mother Tree Collection Status

The Chapter has made great efforts to collect seed from a diverse lot of trees around the state. I have made personal visits to three locations where seed have been collected for the harvest exchange within the Chapter, including areas in Region 9 and Region 7. Current progress is being made to track down more exact locations, and future efforts will focus on organizing this important data and establishing a common reporting method.

### TACFNY CHAPTER ORCHARD STATUS

Based on reports from Frank Munzer and SUNY student Ryan MacFee a table was constructed to help analyze the needs for further data collection within the Chapter. There are 16 known NY Orchards of which I have visited 7. Feel free to call, write or e-mail anytime.

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Tree Breeding Coordinator  
The American Chestnut Foundation  
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University Park, PA 16802

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fax: 814-863-7193

phone (cell): 814-404-6013 phone (office): 814-865-7228

## ANNUAL REPORT OCTOBER 2005

The Annual Meeting article in the last BUR started with "Syracuse, Here We Come!" Well, we came, we saw, we heard, we admired, we turned in the rain, and we had a great time.

On October 22, at the Genesee Grande Hotel, the 15<sup>th</sup> TACFNY Annual Meeting's morning session included reports from the President, Treasurer, Committee Chairman and District Directors. Membership Chairman John Spagnoli reported 599 members to date this year including 108 new members. Membership Campaign Chairman John Neumann reported that 55 of the new members can be identified as resulting from the campaign. Although the goal was not reached, the campaign will be continued with the theme "Every Member Get a Member." John personally secured 22 memberships and was awarded a chestnut plaque and a TACF cap. Others securing memberships were awarded Charlie Chestnut letter openers. Their names and a detailed report are on file.

The Science report given by Stan Wirsig referred to the presentations to be given in the afternoon session where members would be hearing about the research being done at CESF first hand. The need for a "Game Plan" for future planting and handling the transgenic trees when approved was emphasized. The Harvest Exchange was conducted on Friday night October 21 and thanks to many volunteers, the planters' packets were finished by 11:30 p.m. This was accomplished with much conversing mixed with the nut counting, some apple polishing, some relaxing, some renewing old friendships and some old jokes. There were 11,000 nuts harvested and distributed in packets of diverse nuts from several lines (see picture on first page.) Those nuts not used by New York planters or the CESF Research Team were shared with other chapters and organizations and retained for the school kits reserve.

Sara Fitzsimmons, Regional Tree Breeding Coordinator, was asked to give a summary of her visits to New York orchards. Each of our trees at Zoar, Lasden, Weathersfield, Ellis/Donawick, and Sherburne orchards have been examined and are now in the regional data base with the information on growth and condition. A detailed report is on file.

District Directors Lenny Lampel, Margaret Collins, Frank Munzer, Craig Hibben, Allen Nichols, Roy Hopke, and Bill Snyder gave reports of field activities throughout the State during the year. Please see separate articles for details of these interesting reports.

Nominating Committee chairman Jack Mansfield conducted election of Board members, and the slate was elected unanimously. See separate listing for names and term of offices.

Members enjoyed three workshops: Dr. William Powel conducted "Training for Testing Transgenic Trees;" Dr. Richard Zander discussed "Identification of the American Chestnut Tree;" and John Gordon led a round table discussion of "Planting and Growing Problems of the American Chestnut."

After a buffet luncheon, and a look at the interesting items donated for the Raffle, conducted by Bethany White, shuttle buses took the group to the CESF campus for presentations on the research activities by Dr. Charles Maynard, Dr. William Powell, and Dr. Danilo Fernando. There were high/low/high

spots. They started last year at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual meeting with the exciting breakthrough of a growing American chestnut treelet, complete with shoots and roots and bright green glowing fluorescence indicating it contained the blight resistance gene construct. It was working its way to the greenhouse. However, during the summer of 2005, the college renovated that laboratory and in the moving of equipment and changes of light and temperature, the precious treelets didn't make it. Heartbreak for the staffers, but hope as well because they immediately began again, and we observed the tiny treelets in their little houses sturdily on their way again. To quote Dr. Powell and Dr. Maynard, "We were ahead of schedule; and now we are on schedule (referring to the Pert Plan). Dr. Fernando has achieved transformed pollen, which testing shows contains the blight resistant gene construct and is still working with monitored American chestnut trees to produce progeny carrying the blight resistant gene. A more detailed summary of their work is printed in this edition of the BUR.

There were four rotating tours during the afternoon; one to Dr. Maynard's new laboratory, with observation of some beautiful green tissue indicating the presence of the blight resistance construct, through the special microscope, which the New York Chapter helped fund – our dues at work. A second was to see the various stages of the tissue work (see picture on first page); a third was to see the outdoor Elm Garden with Elm trees containing the blight resistant gene construct developed for the American chestnut. Preliminary tests show that the trees are resistant to the Dutch Elm Disease (see picture on first page). The fourth, taken by hardy enthusiasts, was a rainy tour of the Lafayette Plantation. (The rest of us substituted chestnut talk and a beverage in the Marshall Conference Room for that fourth tour.)

Dinner at the Marshall Alumni Lounge on campus topped off the "See-it-first-hand-day." John Cordts, USDA APHIS Division, from Washington, DC, was our keynote speaker for dinner. He gave a very informative and interesting presentation on what to expect in the future. APHIS is the regulatory department that governs the approval of deploying bioengineered plants and trees. He described various aspects that must be considered, such as materials used, fencing, etc. and gave some encouraging examples of successful projects. Members expressed appreciation to Mr. Cordts for helping us to better understand what future work will entail.

Member Sharing at the hotel later in the evening brought about spirited discussions on several topics.

An open Board Meeting was held on Sunday October 23 with discussions including Finance, Membership, Planting Concerns, Education\*, Future Planning, and Setting 2006 Goals and Operating Budget. Frances Nichols was appointed Education Director. She is a retired teacher who has had several years of successfully utilizing the Charlie Chestnut program, and is enthusiastic about expanding the Education program. Due to moving, Arlene Wirsig will be resigning as Secretary/Treasurer as soon as replacements can be found.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. with chestnut talk continuing into the elevator and down to the parking lot.

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR.

## TACFNY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

President Herb Darling called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Minutes from the 2004 Board Meeting were reviewed and upon motion by Frank Munzer/John Spagnoli, approved.

### FINANCE

The finance report showed a beginning balance on January 1, 2005 of \$691.74 and a balance as of September 30, 2005 of \$633.16. Receipts during the nine months were \$63,633.64 and expenditures were \$63,692.22. Details and year-to-date budget comparisons were reviewed and upon motion of Neumann/Spagnoli, the finance report was approved for filing.

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Nominating Committee Chairman, Jack Mansfield, presented the slate of officers and the incumbents, Herb Darling-President, Stanley Wirsig-Vice President, Arlene Wirsig-Secretary/Treasurer were elected by a unanimous vote. Due to moving from the area, the resignation of Arlene Wirsig will be accepted as soon as a replacement can be chosen.

### MEMBERSHIP

John Neumann reported on the membership campaign. There was a total of 108 new members during the year, 55 of whom could be identified as coming from the campaign. Twenty two memberships were secured by John Neumann, and he was awarded a plaque and an American chestnut cap at the meeting on Saturday, October 22, 2005. Other members who secured new memberships were awarded Charlie Chestnut letter openers. Their names and a detailed report are on file.

Continuing membership effort was discussed, and it was determined that the next approach would be a personal call to each of the people on the Expired List. Names will be divided up among the Board members. John will coordinate this effort and continue working toward our goal of 500 additional members.

Suggestions were discussed concerning the possibility of membership expiration dates being put on all address labels and communications; also the desirability of offering multi-year memberships with a slightly reduced rate. Herb will work with the national office to develop a better monthly membership report so that District Directors can have detailed and current information to monitor new and expired memberships in their district. John urged all members to make a personal goal this coming year of securing a specific number of new members.

### SCIENCE

Stan Wirsig referred to the report given at the general meeting on Saturday, October 22, 2005, and re-emphasized the need for a "Game Plan" for future planting and deployment when the transgenic tree is approved. The research being done was addressed during the afternoon's program on the CESF campus and a summary of the details will be reported in the next BUR. He asked Sara Fitzsimmond, Regional Tree Breeding Coordinator, to give a brief report on her visits to New York orchards. A written summary of her observations is on file. Each tree in the orchards was examined and the data is now in the regional database. Comments included the need for addressing the deer problem, possibly by fencing.

The Harvest Exchange was conducted on Friday evening, and thanks to several much appreciated volunteers, plus Sara's help on the database, the planter's packets were finished by 11:30 p.m. There were 11,000 nuts harvested, which were distributed to our own planters, plus the CESF Research Team, the Maine Chapter, Greg Miller- Ohio Board member, the DEC-who will grow them and make them available to NY State planters, a research project in Ohio, and a reserve for school kits.

Frank Munzer made a recommendation to facilitate a meeting between the Institute of Ecosystem Studies for the Environment and the CESF Research Team to explore possible avenues of working together. The CESF scientists have expressed interest and John Dougherty, grant consultant, feels it would be of value, particularly in the assessment phase, for eventual deregulation. The Institute is in Frank's district and the consensus was that he should move forward on setting up the meeting.

### EDUCATION

Rejuvenating the Education Program was discussed and Frances Nichols was appointed Education Director. Fran is a retired teacher who has had great success using the Charlie Chestnut program. John Neumann volunteered to be on the Education Committee and others interested in this project will be appointed to help review, update and expand the Charlie Chestnut program. Suggestions were:

- a. An eye catching flyer developed, and teacher lists found
- b. A "Plan of Work" developed for communicating with teachers and encouraging them to take advantage of the Charlie Chestnut Kit, with its multi-purpose manual.
- c. Grandparents Day as a part of planting day at the end of the school year. They remember the tree and might join or buy a membership for a student. Sometime a newsletter just for the "Charlie Chestnut Kids."
- d. Approach 4-H, BOCES, and/or Scouts with a recommended program.
- e. TACFNY District Directors or local members establish a Chapter planting plot for students to plant their own tree so they can feel like a part of the ongoing research. Stories have it that past students ask their former teachers how "their" tree is doing.

### GOALS

The 2005 Goals were reviewed and all have been addressed during the year with varying success as reported. Goals for 2006 were developed covering a continuance of membership efforts, fencing for deer control where necessary, Board/Research Team future planning session, Expansion of Education Program, continuing orchard maintenance, the search for new mother trees and mapping known trees. The listing is on file and also will be listed in the BUR.

BUDGET 2006 was established with the needs of the 2006 Goals considered, and is on file.

### OTHER

Sherry Chase reported on his establishing plantings, by 7 operators in the Catskills, some of whom have fencing. He is interested in planting American chestnuts adapted to the Catskills. The possibility of appointing Sherry as an Assistant District Director was suggested to handle the Catskill region. Herb will work with the two District Directors involved to determine how it could be worked.

Craig Hibben recommended searching for grants through computer programs such as Google. By using key words such as "trees," "environment," etc. a good amount of possibilities including detail are available. Herb asked Craig to chair this project, and to send material to his office for preparation of applications. John Neumann suggested checking of Westvaco for an Education grant since their foundation has a category for school projects.

### ADJOURNMENT

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Board Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlene B. Wirsig, Secretary/Treasurer

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

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

**IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN OUR  
GOAL OF RESTORING THE AMERICAN CHESTNUT,  
PLEASE GIVE THEM THIS APPLICATION.**

### Membership Application

Enclosed is my  
membership support of

- Gold leaf, \$1000
- Silver leaf, \$500
- Bronze leaf, \$250
- Green leaf, \$100
- Regular, \$40
- Student, \$15
- Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- Special Gift to NY  
State Chapter \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is an additional contribution in the amount of  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_ in support of the New York State Chapters' activities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

This is a gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership includes subscriptions to The Bark and Journal of the American Chestnut Foundation and enrollment in the New York State Chapter. The Chapter publishes the BUR, helps guide research at CESF, and includes nine Districts for local involvement in maintaining the American chestnut gene pool. Please make check payable to The American Chestnut Foundation, PO Box 4044, Bennington, VT 05201-4044. TACF is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Except for the member services portion of your contribution (valued at \$15), your gift is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The American Chestnut Foundation, 469 Main Street, PO Box 4044, Bennington, Vermont 05201-4044