

# Chestnut Tree

The Pennsylvania Chapter of  
The American Chestnut Foundation



**PA-TACF Contact Information:**

Penn State University  
206 Forest Resources Lab  
University Park, PA 16803  
Phone: 814-863-7192  
E-mail: mail@patacf.org  
Website: <http://www.patacf.org>

## PA-TACF Hosts TACF Annual Meeting Oct 23-25

**PITTSBURGH MEETING FEATURES  
PA FOREST HISTORY,  
RESTORATION SUCCESS STORIES,  
AND LOCAL TOUR OF  
SEWICKLEY ORCHARD**



PA-TACF will not be holding a separate Chapter meeting this year because we have the pleasure of hosting the National meeting! Please join us in **Pittsburgh** this fall for TACF's 26th Annual Meeting. Invitations are in the mail, with a special rate for those who only wish to attend one day. Highlights of topics from our tentative list of speakers include:

**KEYNOTE:**

- Rhett Johnson, Longleaf Alliance, *Restoration of the Longleaf Pine*

**OTHER NOTABLE SPEAKERS:**

- Chandis Klinger and Tim Phelps, TACF, *P Planting of American chestnuts in forested areas.*
- Dana Nelson, USFS: *Fagaceae Genome Project*
- Stacy Clark, USFS: *Plan for planting B3F3 plots*
- Emily Just, PA DCNR: *Restoration of River Otters*
- Dr. Joe James and Steve Barilovits III *Findings on Phytophthora root rot*
- Ephraim Zimmerman, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) *Restoration of black oak ecosystem to Erie Bluffs*
- Mary Ann Furedi, WPC: *Restoration of Goat Hill, a serpentine barrens*

The meeting also includes a bus trip to the Sewickley Heights chestnut orchard on Saturday. We will observe both the orchard and several medium-sized native American chestnut trees in their woodlot.

Hope to see you in Pittsburgh!

**TACF 26th Annual Meeting  
Restoring the Tree of Hope**

Embassy Suites Hotel  
550 Cherrington Parkway  
Coraopolis, PA 15108  
412-269-9070

[www.pittsburghintlairport.embassysuites.com](http://www.pittsburghintlairport.embassysuites.com)

Download registration materials at:  
[http://www.acf.org/Calendar\\_Annual.php](http://www.acf.org/Calendar_Annual.php)



### What's Inside this Issue?

President's Corner	2
Summer Intern Reflections	3
Chapter Loses Founding Member	3
New Jersey News	4
Growers Gatherings	4
Volunteer Spotlight/Sharing Harvest	5
Sober Farm: Part 2	6
Breeding Update	7
Chapter Calendar	8



## President's Corner

By R. Alex Day

One of the ways we keep in touch with our members is through electronic means, our website. If you have been reading our Chapter website lately you have discovered

that it has been re-designed and has some added features that were not there previously. Our thanks for this very nice update go to Denise Soufi for offering to donate her time and talents to produce this wonderful "communication central" website for us. If you have not seen it yet, please take the time to visit our new 'look' at [patacf.org](http://patacf.org).

In other news, the PA Chapter received a very nice grant of \$5000.00 from Dominion Resources, Inc. of Greensburg, PA. Mr. John Frith of Dominion visited University Park in July for a check presentation ceremony. I had the good fortune to be present and to receive this wonderful gift which will be used to improve our orchards, pay our summer intern and help supply us with orchard supplies. The ceremony took place in our B3F2 orchard in the The Arboretum at Penn State. Thanks to Sue Oram for doing all the background work that enabled our Chapter to qualify for this gift.

Other gifts of note have been received from The Ashland Foundation (PA), Alcoa Global Impact Fund, and an anonymous gift from a PA Chapter member. Thanks to all and please note that donations are tax deductible. You may visit the PA Chapter website for details on making direct donations to the PA Chapter ([www.patacf.org](http://www.patacf.org)).

The chapter event at Penn State's Ag progress Days—August 18, 19 & 20, 2009—was a success. We had a booth erected at our usual location and tours of the two orchards given on all three days. The wagons were filled to capacity. Thank you Dr. Bill Lord and Sara Fitzsimmons for leading the tours and Tracey Harpster and Paul Lupo for driving the tractor.

Finally, don't forget that the PA Chapter will host the TACF annual meeting again this year in Coraopolis, PA, October 23 - 25<sup>th</sup>. The theme of this year's annual meeting is **Restoring the Tree of Hope**. This is a meet-

ing you don't want to miss. Meeting details and a registration form are available on the TACF website.

Have a good summer.

Alex Day

## Chapter Volunteers Educate Thousands Over Summer

Once again our volunteers were busy this summer teaching the public about the history and restoration of the American Chestnut. More than 1,000 children attend the Outdoor Heritage annual event at Quemahoning Lake. Thank you **Jay Hoar** and **Karen Danes** for volunteering at this event!

Also **Brad Foy** for teaching elementary students at North Star elementary in Boswell, PA, about chestnut restoration and balloon pollinating, and **Vicki Brownell** for teaching kids at Barrett Township's Earth Day, Monroe County. In addition,

we also attended the Wonders of Our Watersheds event in Hazelton, PA (Thank you **Alex Day**, **Alan Tumblin** and **Ethan Habrial** for running that event) Codorus Summer Blast at Codorus State Park (Thank you **Dave Armstrong**) ...and we're not finished yet...as of press time, **Bob Summersgill** is coordinating the display and six volunteers for the Festival of Wood at Grey Towers National Historical Site in Milford PA; the chapter will provide wagon tours to research orchards and have a booth during AG Progress Days in Rock Springs, with more than 15 volunteers... and there will be a presentation by **Mike Shanshala** at Chapman Dam State Park, near Warren.



Students look at our display at Outdoor Heritage Days, Quemahoning Lake, Somerset County

**Thank you volunteers—those named and those who quietly volunteer—you are the core of our organization.** Check out our fall event calendar at [www.patacf.org](http://www.patacf.org)

## Chapter Loses Friend and Founding Member: Charlotte Barnhart May 16, 2009

By Ann Leffel

The occasion was an Annual Meeting of ACF in Roaring Spring, PA in October 1994. The meeting was hosted by Charlotte and ‘Barney’ Barnhart, founders and owners of the News Printing Co. The meeting was held on their nearby property in the ‘Pig Barn’, a huge building where Barney housed and displayed his awesome collections of all things chestnut – a fabulous array of tools; furniture; wagons and sleds; tree trunks, branches, and shingles; pieces of art, and total decor including door knobs, made of chestnut. A far cry from a pig house!



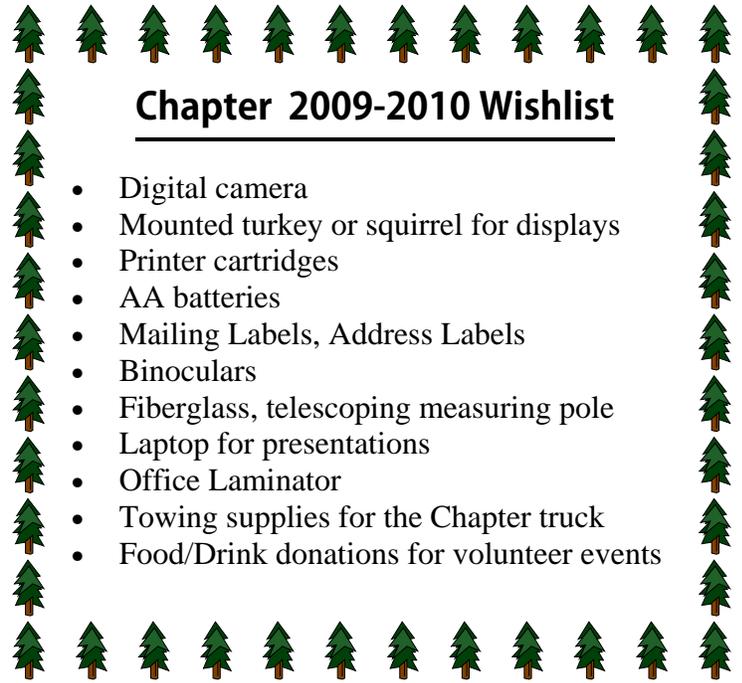
Ann Leffel and Charlotte Barnhart

There were 17 ACF supporters from PA. One item on the agenda was a meeting of those 17 to resurrect the foundering chapter that was established in 1991. Barney, passionate about the “American Chestnut Tree” and wife Charlotte, a very capable and can do business savvy woman, were instrumental in reorganizing the Chapter. By the end of our brief meeting, we had a steering committee, our co-sponsors – Charlotte & Barney, a beautiful meeting place, a set of goals, an organizational meeting set for November, a request to ACF for the names, addresses and any other information they had on the 169 supporters from PA and a check to cover printing and postage to issue a letter to chapter supporters.

Once the Chapter was up and running, Barney served as our first editor of Chestnut Tree, Charlotte prepared it for printing and the News Printing Co. (NPC, Inc) printed, labeled, and mailed the first issues. They also printed the “Bark” and the “Journal” for many years.

The chapter grew quickly from 169 supporters under Charlotte’s management. Their enthusiasm, generosity, know-how and involvement were inspiring and set the chapter off to a roaring start in Roaring Spring, March 1995.

They were active as long as their health permitted. Barney passed Oct 14, 2002 at 81 and Charlotte on May 16, 2009 at 79. They will be greatly missed by those who knew them.



### Chapter 2009-2010 Wishlist

- Digital camera
- Mounted turkey or squirrel for displays
- Printer cartridges
- AA batteries
- Mailing Labels, Address Labels
- Binoculars
- Fiberglass, telescoping measuring pole
- Laptop for presentations
- Office Laminator
- Towing supplies for the Chapter truck
- Food/Drink donations for volunteer events

### Carl Mayfield: Expert Grafter, Chestnut Grower: June 13, 2009



Many of you remember our friend Carl Mayfield ,who passed away on June 13, 2009. Carl had a successful career as a Federal Civil Servant for NAVSEA, a U.S. Naval Reserve Officer and a private consultant supporting Navy programs, and also spent 20 years volunteering his time for the restoration of the American Chestnut tree.

Carl was an expert grafter and often taught grafting workshops for our members at his chestnut farm in Virginia. And everyone at our PA Chapter meetings looked forward to being outbid by Carl during the silent auctions.

We are pleased to have a copy of one of Carl’s grafting workshops on DVD. If you would like to borrow it from our member library, please call the Leffel Center at 814-863-7192.

# GROWERS GATHERING

## HAVE PROBLEMS with YOUR TREES?!

Is your tree dying? Leaves shriveling? Turning brown? Turning yellow? Turning . . . PURPLE?!



Whatever your problem, Penn State's Plant Disease Clinic may be able to find out the issue.

Anthracnose on leaves from Codorus State Park orchard in Hanover, PA. Problem identified by the PSU Plant Disease Clinic after samples were submitted in May 2009.

The Plant Disease Clinic is run by the Department of Plant Pathology at Penn State. There is no charge to send in your samples, but the samples MUST have been collected in Pennsylvania.

Here are more instructions from the office:

- Contact your [local Cooperative Extension Office](#) to discuss the problem with an extension agent. If the extension agent is unable to diagnose the issue, you will be instructed to submit the sample to the Plant Disease Clinic for diagnosis.
- Complete the [Plant Disease Clinic Specimen Information form](#), and carefully follow the accompanying [instructions for selecting and sending the specimen](#). Please provide as much information as possible on the Information Form.

[http://www.ppath.cas.psu.edu/Plant\\_Disease\\_Clinic.htm](http://www.ppath.cas.psu.edu/Plant_Disease_Clinic.htm)  
Phone: 814-865-2204

## GRUB CONTROL

One of our growers in New Jersey, Les Nichols, was having trouble with his trees dying for what we call "no good reason".

To see if he could get a better answer as to what was going on with his trees, Les sent a sample of the dead tree to the Rutgers plant diagnosis center. Unfortunately, this service is

not free to residents of New Jersey, but Les still got a satisfactory answer. Rutgers wrote back and suggested the culprit was the grub of the "oriental beetle".

Grubs are often problems in nurseries, orchards, and gardens. Grub populations tend to be worse in old field, especially those that have had turf on them for many years. There are many different types of grubs, all larvae of different insect species. The most notable grubs that would be of problems in the mid-Atlantic are those of the oriental beetle (*Anomala orientalis*), the Japanese beetle (*Popilla japonica*), and the May/June beetle (*Phyllophaga* spp.). Collectively, these pests are considered "white grubs".

(continued on page 7)



## NEWS FROM NEW JERSEY: Fencing grant secured for Morris County orchards

Two chestnut plantings with the Morris County Parks Commission (MCPC) will now have deer protection, thanks to a

TACF USFS Subaward grant awarded in June. The MCPC plantings make up 1/3 of PA-TACF's six orchards in the entire state of New Jersey. Both pure American chestnuts and FI chestnuts are planted in the parks. The seeds produced by the FI trees will be planted, tested for resistance, and used for future crosses.

The upcoming NE-1033\* meeting will be held in Ocean Grove, NJ, in September, which will include a tour of the Middletown Library trees.

We've planted additional Americans from local seed in three Monmouth County parks this year. This fall, we will be harvesting nuts. If you would like to come out and help, please contact Tony Rosati at 732/673-1440



Volunteer John Kressbach at the gate to the Stokes State Forest Planting, New Jersey

## Volunteer Spotlight: George Perry

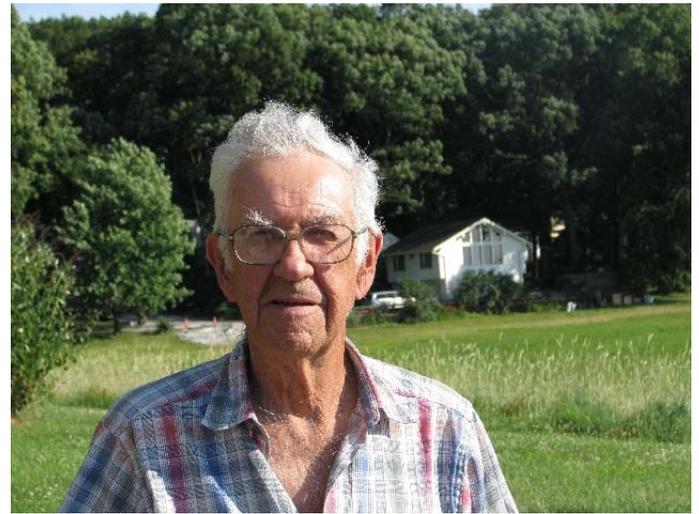
by Ann Leffel

We met George a good many years ago at one of our early meetings as I recall. George has been a most willing and capable volunteer with us and PA Chapter. He lives close to us and was always available to help in bagging, pollination, harvesting, husking and packing

“...HE EXTENDED HIS HELP ACROSS THE STATE.”

seed in our BC3 backcrosses and intercrosses of BC3's. He also was at hand for orchard planting and inoculation of trees. He gave us access to his 'Nanking' and 'Chungking' Chinese

chestnut trees for A x C and C x A F1 crosses. He has generously provided ice cream and bottled beverages (especially chocolate milk) from his family's Perrydell Farm Dairy. Delicious indeed!! He not only helped us frequently, he extended his help across the state to participate in Chapter projects and meetings and served as a spokesman for the Chapter at various displays including the PA Farm Show, Farm City Days, and Ag Progress Days to name a few. Such dedication from many of our members has led to our success as a chapter.



Volunteer extraordinaire, Mr. George Perry

**Thanks**

Thank you Alan Tumblin for securing 11 skids or 18,690 fiberglass handles for pennies a piece. These handles will be used as tree stakes throughout our

orchards and breeding program.

Live in Northwest PA and want to know what chestnut activities are happening in your region? Join Gary Micky's "Chestnut Chatter" e-mail group. Contact Gary at gwm6@psu.edu to join.

Look for your election letter in a separate mailing this fall, and please return your ballot as soon as possible. Every vote counts!

Thank you, Tom Ladson for your hard work and dedication to chestnut restoration this summer. Good luck!



### SHARE YOUR HARVEST

If you harvest nuts from your tree this autumn, we request that you mail as many as possible to our Chestnut Center at PSU. They will be a great help in our breeding program and preservation of American chestnut germplasm. Please place your name, address and phone number of current e-mail address in the shipment and send to:

PA Chapter The American Chestnut Foundation  
Attn: Sara Fitzsimmons

206 Forest Resources  
Forest Resources Lab  
University Park, PA 16802



Intern Thomas Ladson working at one of our orchards. Look for Tom's article about working with PA-TACF in the next issue of the *Chestnut Tree*.

## PA Native Chestnut Culture: C.K. Sober and the Paragon Chestnut (1896-1913)

### Part Two by William Sober, Sr.

After the first 5 years of growth, the best growth of trees were left standing and the others used to furnish new scions. Also, in order to keep the grove clean after the trees were large enough, sheep were used. The grove was then fenced in— over 8 miles of wire was used. Also by using the sheep they provided the liquid manure and solid manure for the farm. Later as the trees got large, cattle were added to pasture with the sheep, which numbered 500 (also chickens to eat insects). The “orchard” is where trees were planted 15-30 feet apart in rows in cultivated land. They were allowed to remain for 2-3 years then grafted.

The “grove” was a good stand of chestnut timber where 75-100 trees per acre would make a good start for a grove.

Many of the trees that were grafted were the red oak, scarlet oak, and chestnut oak. The white oak was found to grow too slow. Weevils, bur or husk worms, mice and thieves were the biggest enemies of the groves. To start a new orchards seedlings nuts were planted in mouse-proof boxes, layers of sand ,and nuts until the box is full, then cover ed were left to sprout over the winter months.

The average growth the first year was 1 foot. Then they were transplanted into nursery rows. In about 3 years they were ready to graft. The tongue or whip graft was preferred. When grafting, a good experienced man could set 250 scions per day and do it well. One graft which was measured after 14 days was found to be 10 inches long. The European chestnut grew equally well if grafted upon oak sprouts or seedlings.

The harvesting of the nut was done by using a long pole to pick or knock down the bur to the ground. Then they were gathered and taken either to be thrashed to dry or a large open field to dry in the sun, as the bur will open and allow the nut to be removed.

**PRICES RANGED FROM \$5-12 A BUSHEL . . . MORE THAN A BUSHEL OF WHEAT AT THAT TIME**



After the nut was sorted, they were sold immediately. Prices ranged from \$5-12 dollars a bushel. Later the price dropped to \$2.50 per bushel but they still paid more than

a bushel of wheat at that time. The nuts were sold as soon as possible because the demand for them— there was no reason to have a place to store them.

It was said then that an acre of land would grow 35 bushel of wheat in a year, a and a like area of chestnut trees will produce many times as

many bushels of the nutritious nuts for an indefinite period and require no cultivation, replanting, or fertilization; also the

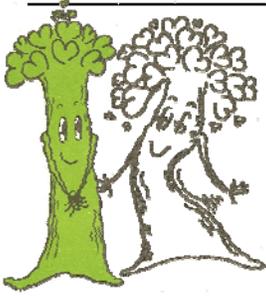
spring rain, frost, and summer droughts have no injury on the chestnut tree or its fruit.

Also it was found the chestnut tree grew very well in well-drained soil, rocky hillsides, and soil of looseness or depth, and with a northern or eastern exposure. It would thrive on rather poor land.

**DURING HARVEST TIME THE BIGGEST PROBLEM OTHER THAN INSECTS WERE THIEVES**

During the harvest time of the nut the biggest problem rather than the insects was the thieves, which were controlled by a large search light which was placed in the tower on the barn roof and focused on the perimeter of the grove. Many were caught and turned over to the law. The insects were caught too, and destroyed. During the years 1896-1913 on until the red blight or fungus hit the trees it was a thriving chestnut farm.

*Mr. William H. Sober, Sr. is the great grandson of C. K. Sober. A lot of this information, and some great pictures, can be found in this book, which should be found in a few libraries in Pennsylvania. A copy can definitely be found at Bucknell University: **Davis, Nelson F. Chestnut Culture in Pennsylvania.** PA Dept. of Agric. 1904. 49 pp plus 46 b/w plates.*



## BREEDING PROGRAM UPDATE SARA FITZSIMMONS

### Science Committee Update

For those of you who may not know, our Chapter has a formal Science Committee. We regularly take members onto the committee, so if you are interested in helping to form the scientific direction of our Chapter - or are just interested in that aspect - please get in touch! The picture below is taken from an orchard tour that occurred after our last committee meeting in May 2009. We have so much fun, even Dr. Leffel has to smile!

### CMS PROGRAM

Though scaled back over the past couple of years, the CMS program continues to make headway and provide useful data. During the science committee meeting back in May, and based on Dr. Leffel's suggestion, several light changes were made to the latter generations of the program.

In the original version, all backcross generations were to be bred only with American chestnuts. It may be useful, however, to leave in male fertile trees in a few orchards (though not all) in order to obtain segregating populations of backcross F2s for further breeding and research.



PA-TACF Science Committee members tour trees at Codus State Park this past spring. Pictured left to right: Dave Armstrong, Bob Leffel, Ann Leffel, Chandis Klinger, and Alan Tumblin. Not pictured are Alex Day, Tim Eck, and Sara Fitzsimmons

### Pollen Spreaders

In order to optimize diversity of progeny from CMS orchards, using some sort of pollen blower or mister, using a mixture of pollen from many various American chestnut trees may be more advantageous than trying to grow those Americans with the backcross trees. Current chapter president Alex Day, along with members Ken Allhouse and Jim Walizer, and Ann and Bob Leffel are investing options. We'd love to hear your ideas!



Sara Fitzsimmons standing in Glenn Swank's chestnut "ghost" in Rush Township, PA

### Old Snags

Early in the summer of 2009, several PA-TACF members visited member Glenn Swank at his home in Danville, PA. Thanks to the connection made by Dr. Blair Carbaugh, we were all able to observe the large chestnut "ghost" he still has standing in his front yard.

(Continued from page 4)

As with any pest issue, be certain that you **KNOW YOUR PEST!** Without knowing the specific pest you need to control, the type of method you use for control may not work. It may not be as specific as knowing the actual species, but sometimes that is necessary.

One of the more common grubs that we have in Pennsylvania and throughout the mid-Atlantic is the grub of the Japanese beetle. For control of this pest, one can use a product called milky spore. A bacterial predator of Japanese beetle grubs, this product requires applications over 2 or more years and may take time to work. But the advantage is that it should not have any effect on other, possibly beneficial insects.

Another broad range grub killer has been suggested, that of granite dust. The idea here would be to have a fine, sharp dust that would actually cut up the larvae as they travel through the soil. So the dust would need to be worked well into the soil to be efficacious.

Of course, as with any pest, there are also some pretty noxious chemicals out there on the market. Just make sure that whatever you buy has the grub you're looking for noted on the label. Again, **KNOW YOUR PEST!**

Pennsylvania Chapter  
The American Chestnut Foundation  
206 Forest Resources Lab  
University Park, PA 16802

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
State College, PA  
Permit No. 234

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Chestnut Tree Newsletter



The Dominion Foundation awarded PA-TACF \$5,000 in July. Pictured from left to right: Sue Oram, R. Alex Day, John Frith (Dominion) and Sara Fitzsimmons. This money will be used toward chestnut restoration and outreach in western PA.



Thank you, Dominion, for your support!

**Chapter Calendar: Fall 2009**

- Aug 24-PA-TACF Board meeting
- Sept/Oct-Harvest Time!
- Sept 12– Silver Lake Nature Center, Bristol. PA
- Sept 13-Village Garden Club, Sewickley, PA
- Oct 1– Community Food Expo, Shippensburg Univ.
- Oct 2-Farm City Days, Harrisburg, PA
- Oct 23-25 TACF Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, PA
- Jan 9-16, PA Farm show, Harrisburg, PA

