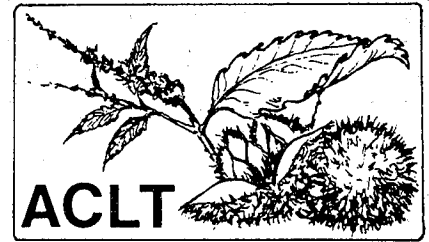


# American Chestnut Land Trust, Inc.

Post Office Box 204  
Port Republic, MD 20676



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 5 - Number 4

Autumn 1991

Editors: Ellen and David Farr, 4512 Tonquil Place, Beltsville, MD 20705 (301-937-8160)

### Annual Membership Meeting

The fifth Annual Meeting of the American Chestnut Land Trust will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, October 26, 1991, in the Christ Church Parish Hall on Broomes Island Road, Port Republic, MD. We are honored to have Mary Krug, President of the Calvert County Board of Commissioners, as our principal speaker.

*The program:* 9:45 a.m. Sign in  
10:00 a.m. Business Meeting  
11:00 a.m. Program  
12:00 Noon Picnic Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Guided Tours of the Property

For the last four years we have had absolutely glorious weather for our annual meetings and trail walks. Each year attendance has increased, and last year we just barely had enough chairs for all who came. Please return the enclosed registration form with your reservations as soon as possible and no later than *October 19*. We will need to know in advance how to arrange the tables and chairs to conform to the occupancy restrictions in the Parish Hall, and the caterer will appreciate the week's notice on the number of luncheons to provide.

While there is no charge for the luncheon for individual and family members (two per household), you may contribute if you so desire. If you would like to bring a guest or children, please enclose a check for \$6.60 to cover the additional cost for each. Please also enter the name of your guest(s) on the reservation form so we may have pre-printed name tags available for everyone.

You may have a question you would like us to address at this meeting. Let us know on the back of the registration form, and we will fit it in to our morning program.

Mary Loew is serving as our coordinator again this year. If you can help with the set-up arrangements starting at 8:45, cider and luncheon service at noon or clean-up at 1:00, please give Mary a call on 586-0529.

On our list of tours this year will be the recently acquired Kenwood Beach tract.

### Land Acquisition/Preservation Report

While it would not be prudent to negotiate land acquisitions in print, we do feel a responsibility to keep members informed of what is cooking. For some time we have had discussions with representatives of the Wallace family (Woodrow Wallace, et al.) about the possibility of ACLT purchasing land held by the family to the north of the Gravatt/Miles parcel.

Recently this project has moved to the front burner, as efforts to define the exact location of their land, the

### Board of Directors

Aileen R. Hughes, President  
Peter Vogt, Vice President  
Ralph H. Dwan, Jr., Secretary  
Gary A. Loew, Treasurer  
Stephen M. Bunker  
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Carl Fleischhauer  
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Sue Hamilton  
John Hollowell  
Daniel Priest  
Joseph Steller, Jr.  
John Mark Switzer  
Robert Ulanowicz  
Caroline E. Van Mason

amount of acreage (50+) and the possibility of adding the land to the existing APD (to allow ACLT to be certified for TDRs) appear likely to succeed. While the Wallaces would retain frontage on Scientists Cliffs Road for future home sites, ACLT would expect to have access to the interior woodlands through a roadway or easement leading to the property somewhere on the west side of the county road, north of Gate E of Scientists Cliffs.

Negotiations will continue with the hope of reaching an agreement that is acceptable to all parties. We felt it important to share this information, because it will be necessary for ACLT to appeal to our members for help in funding such an acquisition. That effort will begin as soon as we have a signed agreement.

—Aileen Hughes

### Welcome to our new members

We have not published the names of our new members since the Winter 1991 newsletter. We, of course, have welcomed them by personal letter, but we want to share their names with you:

Ms. Theresa M. Albright	Kenwood Beach Civic Assn.
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Altoz	Mr. & Mrs. John Miller
Mr. John Bailey	Mr. Hagner Mister
Doris and Paul Berry	Mrs. Kathryn Nicodemus
Baltimore Gas & Elec. Co.	Mr. Geoffrey Parker
John Smith, Pub. Rel.	Mrs. Jefferson Patterson
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Blackman	Mr. & Mrs. Ted Post
Mr. & Mrs. David Brownlee	Mr. Milton A. Robertson
Mrs. Alberta Clemmons	Mr. & Mrs. Eric Schneider
Ms. Audrey Davenport	Ms. Evelyn I. Schwab
Mr. & Mrs. John Fales	Mr. & Mrs. John W. Snyder
Mrs. Ruth E. France	Ms. M. Kathryn Steele
Governors Run	Mr. Robert Steiner
Condominium Assn.	Mr. & Mrs. Robert Swann
Rev. & Mrs. John Hoffman	Mrs. Hans von Schlieben
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Jacobson	Mr. J. Jackson Walter
Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Kelly	Western Shores
	Civic Association

We hope our newest members will join us as our *special guests* at our Annual Meeting on October 26th.

## Call for Nominations

With a 15-member Board and 3-year terms of office, five Board positions open every year. The five persons completing their terms this year are Stephen Bunker, Gary Loew, Joseph Steller, Caroline Van Mason, and Peter Vogt. All but Gary Loew have agreed to stand again as candidates for Board Member for the next three years. The services of Gary Loew, who has served so well as the Treasurer of ACLT, will certainly be missed.

His leaving the Board does, however, create an opportunity for others to serve as Treasurer. Duties of the Treasurer include basic bookkeeping, coordination of budget preparation, and preparation of materials for an annual audit. While ACLT is deliberately not a financial highroller, its activities are evolving, and the Treasurer plays a crucial role on the Executive Committee.

We do not now have a candidate for Treasurer. If you are interested, or know of someone who would be interested in serving the cause of land preservation in Calvert County in this capacity, call or write Donald C. Dahmann, 1914 Martha's Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22307 (H: 703-765-3584; O: 301-763-5592) or another Nominating Committee member.

—Don Dahmann, Ralph Dwan, Caroline Van Mason,  
Nominating Committee

## American Chestnut Foundation Is Worthy of Your Support

From time to time, we will include in our newsletter mailing a brochure from another organization we feel merits your consideration for support. For this fall issue, The American Chestnut Foundation is high on our list. For the past year ACLT and the Foundation have been cooperating with experimental plantings of seeds in our harvested area (see Sandy Roberts' Chestnut update in this newsletter), and we look forward to an on-going and highly productive association with this organization. A new Maryland Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation is being organized with the assistance of the Department of Natural Resources. With Sandy Roberts as the coordinator for our Chestnut Programs, ACLT will be doing its best to further that effort. Unfortunately, ACLT's October 26th Annual Meeting conflicts with the ACF's Annual Meeting to be held this year at the Colonial Farm in Accocek, MD, where there is an extensive experimental Chestnut Restoration program going on. (Neither of our organizations could reschedule our events.) It may interest you to know that the Anna Belle and John Wagner families, cited in the ACF brochure as donors of the Virginia Research Farm land to the Foundation, have been members of ACLT since 1987. If you become members, you will be kept well informed through both the ACF Journal and the newsletter, *The Bark*, on the progress for chestnut restoration to our eastern forests.

## Margaret Young Retires as Port Republic's 20th Postmaster

On May 31, 1991, one of the best known ACLT members stepped down after eighteen years as Postmaster (no, not postmistress!) of Port Republic. Margaret Young had begun as a postal clerk here in 1963. She has been temporarily replaced by Ms. Sherry Ogden, Acting Postmaster, until a permanent replacement can be found.

The first Port Republic Postmaster was a William A. Dalrymple who began on September 9, 1836.

Of course none of us 20676ers believe that Margaret can really ever be replaced. Her popularity in the Port Republic area was there for all to see on the night of May 30, when hundreds turned out at the St. Leonard Fire House for a retirement party in Margaret's honor.

All the ACLT mail came through Margaret's Post Office to Box 204, and much of that mail never got to ride in the mail truck or fly in a plane. Some strange items also came through the Port Republic Post Office through the years, including "live things such as chickens, ducks, bees, and snakes," chestnuts (to the ACLT), and an occasional box of cremation ashes mailed to the local undertaker. Eight years ago an unsigned postcard, written in a child's scrawl, arrived from Colorado addressed to "Mama and Papa, Port Republic." Something for the dead-letter box? No way. Margaret handed the post card to me. It was from our son Jason!

As time goes on, such personalized service will fade away even as Calvert's rolling fields dissolve into subdivisions. Postal boxes were installed in 1980. They had to be, with the rising flood of mail to ever greater numbers of patrons. Fishing my mail out of a box at night is pretty sad compared to having it handed to me by Margaret or her assistant, Jean Bowen, and before 1973 by Eloise Somervell. There was always time for a cheerful greeting or a short exchange about the weather or some local news. (Of course, you can still do that during the day.) But even with postal boxes, the present space is far too cramped. Just before Christmas the staff can scarcely wriggle their toes. So our P.O. will no doubt relocate to more spacious quarters in the next few years.

Moving is nothing new to our Post Office. When I arrived a quarter century ago, Eloise Somervell ("Miz Tommie") was the Postmaster and the P.O. was part of her home, that charming Vicotrian farmhouse on what is now MD 765 across from Dorsey Gray's historic home. Ms. Somervell, who still lives there today, was also a very popular Postmaster, and of the 20 Postmasters of Port Republic to date, she retained the post the longest—32 years. Her late husband's parents Nannie (1923 to 1941) and Alex (1899 to 1923) served before her, so the P.O. remained in the Somervell house some 73 years, until October 1972. Benniah Bowen, Postmaster from 1886 to 1899, was also proprietor of the old "Ogden's" General Store (today "Bourbon Street Antiques"), but the P.O. was never housed there. Instead it was variously located in a nearby store (now gone), at Governors Run (1875-1885) when the Dorseys had the job, and, in the early years of the P.O. probably in the Dorsey Gray home.

Following Dalrymple, our early postmasters were William Sorta (1837), Basil Gray (1841), John Kershaw (1843), Everett Mills (1847, the year stamps were introduced in the US), Charles H. Bowen (1850), I. N. Mariarty (1851), Elijah I. Bowen (1851), James Smith (1858), James Smith Jr. (1865), Sewin Fowler (1872), William Weedon (1875), William Dorsey (1875), Katie Dorsey (the first woman, 1881), and James Smith (1885). According to Margaret Young, this rapid turnover in early postmasters may be because the job was then a political appointment. In 1840 and 1872 our P.O. was briefly discontinued, perhaps because no postmaster could be found. The reappearance of familiar surnames

tells of a small and stable rural world populated by a fairly small number of "clans," many descended from 17th century English colonists.

Margaret Young grew up a Bowen on a farm on Parkers Creek Road. While too young (no pun intended) to have attended the local one-room school house, which closed in 1932, she remembers waiting for the school bus next to the General Store and attending class in what is now the Masonic Temple in Prince Frederick. Although Margaret is not closely related to earlier Bowen postmasters, most Calvert Bowens probably descend from David Bowen, a Puritan who settled north of Battle Creek in 1657, years before a central postal organization came to the English colonies (1691). Long-distance mail arrived at major Colonial plantations by ship and was then probably distributed by private messengers inland from one plantation to the next.

The Port Republic Post Office offers services whose roots extend back to ancient Egypt. While house to house faxes and e-mail may replace postal letters, I doubt whether technology will find a way to fax live chickens and snakes and Christmas cookies! Or to perform as reliably as our Post Office, which no blizzard or hurricane ever shut down in Margaret's 28 years there!

—Peter Vogt, with help from Margaret Young and Eloise Somervell

### **Administrative Assistant joins ACLT**

We would like to introduce you to our new Administrative Assistant. She is Margaret (Peggy) Niland who comes to us with more skills and ability than we are ever likely to use and who will make life a lot easier for the volunteers who have carried the ACLT ball without staff assistance thus far.

We first met Peggy Niland when she was associated with Alliance Properties, a firm that was planning the new Parker Ridge community on the Somervell and Turner farm tracts lying between Dares Beach Road and Parkers Creek on the outskirts of Prince Frederick. The ACLT Board liked their plan which included clustered housing on the ridges, plans for protection of slopes and streams and the set aside of 140 acres of wilderness area along the Parkers Creek shoreline for conservation. We wrote letters on their behalf and testified at public hearings. Alliance Properties had asked ACLT to accept stewardship for the 140 acre wilderness area.

Unfortunately, the recession hit the Calvert building industry; promised bank loans were withdrawn and plans for the development of Parker Ridge had to be postponed indefinitely.

While the work for which she is best trained is on hold, Peggy hopes to broaden her base of interests and skills to include conservation. She is wonderfully bright, personable, willing to do whatever needs to be done to accomplish our goals—even the menial tasks.

We look forward to introducing her to you at the Annual Meeting.

—Aileen Hughes

### **Why does ACLT need paid help?**

When ACLT was founded, our plan was to purchase and provide stewardship for 436 acres of land. At that time, three of the members of the Board were retired, lived in the area full time and had almost unlimited time

to devote to this volunteer activity. Today, only the President has weekday time for the ACLT. ACLT's land holdings now total 608 acres with another 50+ in the offing. Despite the fact that Program Open Space funds we had been counting on to help with land purchases have been taken over to reduce the state's deficit, ACLT has been able to continue to purchase undeveloped woodland in our area of interest (between Governors Run and Parker Creek watersheds). Our budget demands are increasing requiring us to search for sources of income other than membership dues and contributions for administrative costs.

We do have TDRs available but the market is now very slow, and we question the advisability of selling them at present. Our financial reserves are now dangerously low, but we are still optimistic about our future.

Aileen Hughes has already served three years as President, but has agreed to serve one more year providing there would be staff assistance available. There was no one else under today's circumstances who was able to take on the job. With someone of Peggy's caliber on board, we will be able to provide reliable on-going staff assistance to support future Board Presidents with more limited time.

Peggy will be working half-time. The office is now set up in the downstairs room of the Hughes home at 4023 Evergreen, Scientists Cliffs, Port Republic, MD 20676, for the next year only. The Post Office Box is still 204. A phone with an answering device will be installed in the next few weeks.

### **Special thanks to special people**

ACLT has been the recipient of a number of generous gifts recently.

An anonymous donor contributed \$6,800 to enable ACLT to survey the Kenwood Tract—a prerequisite to our establishing the land as an Agricultural Preservation District.

ACLT Member Stephen Wilcox of Alexandria and Treasure Island, FL, recently nominated ACLT for the first Allen Morgan Award for Excellence in Membership Development offered through the Land Trust Alliance. The award is to be made at the LTA Rally in New Hampshire in late September. We don't know whether we will win, but Steve wrote about us in most glowing terms. We are honored by his nomination.

One of our members renewed his membership for the third time as a \$1,000 Benefactor.

Anne Moore, upon learning of our new office arrangement, donated a good-as-new Panasonic electronic typewriter to ACLT.

Peg Niland on her first day on the job found us a legal size filing cabinet, a steno chair and a variety of useful office supplies—saving us several hundred dollars.

Carolyn Lewis, the new Executive Director of Calvert Hospice, devoted considerable time to us as we discussed how best to find a first-rate administrative assistant. Also helpful in this regard were Bunny Parrish of the Hospice Board and Gayle Bourden, head of the County Personnel Office. Sheer luck in timing played its part in the recruitment of both Carolyn Lewis and Peg Niland.

Most of our members are responding to our membership renewal reminders promptly making our trips to the Post Office a pleasure and saving us extra postage.

### Be Alert for Possible Poachers

If you see someone hunting or carrying a gun on ACLT property, they may be poaching. Maryland law requires that in addition to a hunting license, the hunter must carry written permission from the property owner. That authorization would have to come from the President of ACLT.

If you encounter hunters, you may ask to see their authorization, or you may call the Dept. of Natural Resources toll free at 1-800-635-6124. Also, please notify John Hollowell (586-9545) of any suspicious activity.

—John Hollowell

### Update on the ACLT Chestnut Arboretum

In 1990, 104 germinated American chestnuts were received by ACLT from the American Chestnut Foundation's tree farm in Meadowview, VA. There were planted on ACLT property in 9 rows of 5-foot plastic tubing. By the end of the year, 65 were still living. The 39 we lost included those that did not sprout or died shortly afterward, as well as 17 trees that were killed when blue birds invaded their Tubex shelters in pursuit of insects.

In the Spring of 1991 the ACF, responding to a request from Sandy Roberts for replacements, forwarded 17 chestnuts with a promise to send additional nuts when they became available. In May Arnie Petty planted the replacements, marking their tubes with a single orange ribbon tied around their stakes.

This August Arnie Petty and Sandy Roberts examined and measured all the living chestnut trees in the arboretum. Of the original 1990 plantings, 57 trees have sur-

vived. They now range in height from under 5' to nearly 8' tall, with the majority of the trees being between 5' and 6 1/2' tall. They are very slender, ranging from 1/4" to 1" in diameter. Of the 1991 replacement planting, 8 did not sprout and 2 later died. The remaining 7 appear to be flourishing and are between 2 1/2' and 3' high. Hopefully we will receive more replacements from Meadowview this fall. (A note of interest: A hybrid chestnut from Rutgers University, planted in 1990 without the use of a Tubex Shelter, measured only 1 1/4' tall.)

In 1990 Gary Loew donated 50 black walnut seedlings to ACLT. The 42 survivors are now marked with orange ribbons.

—Sandy Roberts

### From the Outreach Committee

ACLT has recently joined a number of conservation organizations in order to expand our network and to obtain more visibility in a growing community of like-minded citizens. We are now members of the following groups: Land Trust Alliance, Nature Conservancy, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Maryland Forests Association, Renew America, and American Chestnut Cooperators Association. We have also joined the Calvert County Chamber of Commerce. We hope that before long these organizations will also be supporting us.

Through these groups we hope to expand our influence and expertise by attending conferences and meetings, gaining new members and extending our encouragement to others.

—Elaine Cochran

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