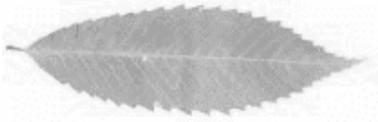


Canadian Chestnut Council (CCC)

...on the Chestnut Trail



NEWSLETTER # 40

January 2006

<http://www.uoguelph.ca/~chestnut>

In this issue: - Meetings...Elections of Directors...Meet Your Directors...and more!

CCC Founder Retires

Dr Colin McKeen announced his retirement as Chair of the Canadian Chestnut Council (CCC) during the annual general meeting, held at Woodstock on 5 November.

The CCC was founded in 1987, at Dr McKeen's urging, to restore the American chestnut tree to the forests of Canada. He has served as Chairman ever since then, but at the age of 89 he has decided to spend some time at more leisurely pursuits.

The annual general meeting acclaimed Dr Terry Anderson (Vice Chair) as our new Chairman.

Dr McKeen was born in 1916, on a farm near Strathroy, and attended a one-room schoolhouse where he was the only student in most of his grades. He graduated to Strathroy Secondary School and then to the University of Western Ontario, where he obtained a BA in 1938. His MA and PhD were earned at the University of Toronto by 1942.

Upon graduation, Dr McKeen volunteered for the Canadian Army, and received a commission in the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals. Posted to England in 1944, he was offered a choice of specialty courses and chose Cipher training; he spent the rest of the war at Canadian Military Headquarters, Trafalgar House, London, and returned to Canada in August 1945.

While in high school, young Colin developed an interest in the sweet American chestnuts, and the tree from which they dropped. We may surmise that this devotion focussed his future research attention on plant pathology and – ultimately and inevitably - the American chestnut.

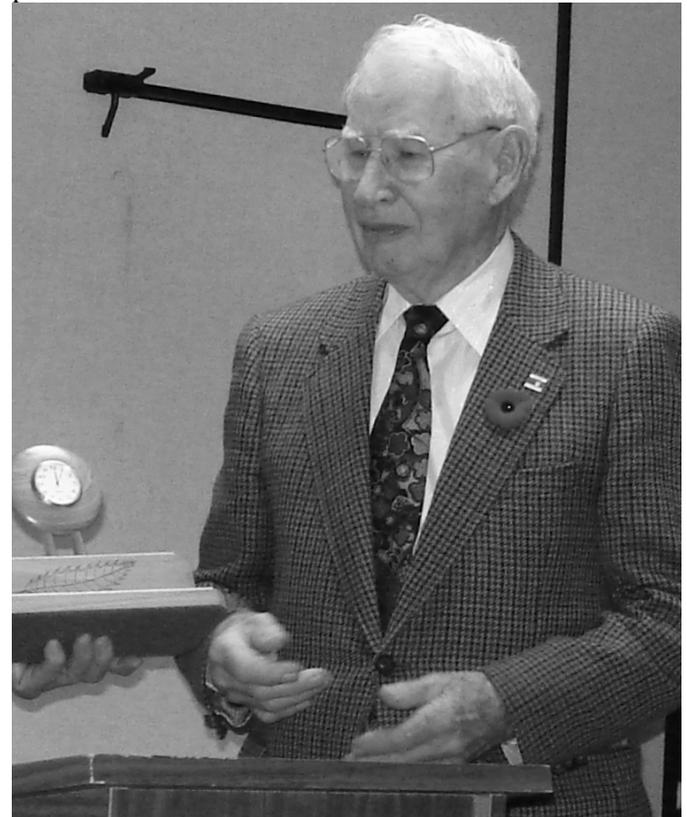
The war over, Dr McKeen was recruited by the Harrow Research Station, where he managed disease research for greenhouse and field vegetable crops grown in southwestern Ontario. His reputation in this field grew internationally, and Dr McKeen was invited to become National; Coordinator of Plant Pathology at the Central Experimental Farm in Ottawa. Here he remained until retirement in 1978.

Unwilling to become inactive, Dr McKeen led the creation of the Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology, and

served as its editor-in-chief for several years.

By 1983, the chestnut blight reawakened his interest in the American chestnut tree, and he worked with scientists at the University of Guelph in search of a cure.

His experience as a leader in the scientific community persuaded him to found the CCC as the best means to



Dr McKeen receives a handsome clock mounted in carved American chestnut wood, created and presented by Director Mike Nemerowski.

restore a healthy tree to the Canadian forest.

Dr McKeen has agreed to continue as a CCC director for the present. His leadership will be missed, but his knowledge and experience will be available to serve the CCC for the foreseeable future.

Editorials

The Canadian Chestnut Council

The CCC is a scientific and charitable organization with the mission to restore the American chestnut. All its officers volunteer their services both in the field and at the desk. The CCC annual meeting, the web site and this Newsletter dispense information to generate support for saving and restoring this once-important forest tree.

Executive

Chair - Dr. Terry Anderson
888 Rd. 3 E., Kingsville, ON
N9Y 2E5, 519-733-3796

Secretary - Mr. Charles Hooker
RR # 2, Orangeville, ON L9W 2Y9
519-942-8085

Treasurer - Mr. Douglas McKeen
RR # 1 Orangeville, ON L9W 2Y8
519-941-5765

Board of Directors (by county)

Brant - Mr. John Hill
RR # 2 St. George, ON
N0E 1N0, 519-448-1749

Dufferin - Dr. Colin McKeen
62 Westmoreland Ave., Orangeville, ON
L9W 3B6, 519-941-9513

Essex - Mr. Tom Welacky
527 Lake Drive, Kingsville, ON
N9Y 3S6 519-981-4076

York - Mr. Phil Careless
160 Briar Hill Rd., Toronto, ON
M4R 1H9, 416-482-6079

Norfolk - Mr. Brett Hodgson
1685 WQ Line Road, RR 2 Langton, ON
N0E 1G0, 519-875-1003
Mr. Mike Nemerowski
RR # 3 Simcoe, ON
N3Y 4K2, 519-426-2174

Elgin - Mr. Brad Reive
RR # 2 West Lorne, ON
N0L 2P0, 519-768-1365
Mr. Murray Alward
Riverbend Farms, Box # 3, Port Burwell, ON
N0J 1T0 519-448-1749

Wellington - Dr. George Collin
RR # 3 Fergus, ON
N1M 2W4, 519-787-1849

Honorary and Advisory Directors

Dr. Ernie Kerr, Simcoe, ON
Dr. Arthur Langford, Simcoe, ON
Mr. Arthur Loughton, Vittoria, ON
Mr. Leslie Corkum, Falmouth, NS
Dr. Peter Rice, Hamilton, ON

A quantity of useful intelligence about previously unknown American chestnut trees has been received recently, in interesting letters from members. Some are printed in this Newsletter.

Letters have also come from readers of the CCC web site. Those of you who have access to The Internet will find much of interest at <http://www.uoguelph.ca/~chestnut> – the product of Director Phil Careless's artistic talents.

A number of submissions have enclosed quite substantial donations as well. The CCC will apply them to the restoration program, and the Board of Directors expresses its thanks.

The largest blight-free American chestnut in Ontario known to the CCC was photographed near Fonthill in 1999. Its trunk diameter was 28" (71.5 cm) in October, 2005. Standing next to it is the late Orlin Crysler.

Letters

From Prince Edward Island

Jocelyn Clarke wrote from Prince Island to join the CCC and make a donation, and to report a chestnut tree "out behind my barn." She said that the tree may be a hybrid Chinese-American; it was purchased by mail order. Ms. Clarke enclosed two pressed leaves and a large photo of the tree in its site.

Dr Colin McKeen, past Chair of the CCC, examined the leaves and tree photo, and has confirmed that the tree is a hybrid Chinese-American chestnut.

This information will be most useful for the Canadian Chestnut Registry being compiled by Dr Greg Boland for the University of Guelph, and (of course) for the CCC. Many thanks, Ms. Clarke!

From Nova Scotia

Enclosed is a cheque to help out with your valuable work. PS – Do you have a spare lapel pin?

[The CCC has not created lapel pins, but we will consider doing so if enough members express interest. – Ed]

Congratulations on your newsletters, particularly your last one. Will photocopy and distribute them to interested friends.

[We can mail some extra copies of Newsletters to members on request, until we run out - Ed.]

I have supplied American chestnut trees to the following areas where only single trees existed:

Mount St Vincent University, Halifax;
Annapolis Royal Historical Gardens;
the very large Ashdale tree .

I was unable to provide a tree to the Mount Uniacke Estate before it was too dry. It is under new management; will try again next Spring.

The old reported tree at Carleton, Yarmouth County has either died or was confused with a hickory tree.

The old chestnut tree at Swallow Point-Chester Basin has recently been destroyed by new owners. (I wish I had the wood.)

The chestnuts located in the Public Gardens – Halifax apparently have survived recent hurricanes, heavy snow and ice storms.

[These data will be preserved in the Canadian Registry of American Chestnuts – Ed.]

I will be 83 within a few days and...may not accomplish much more, but I am sure that the CCC will continue and eventually restore this important tree to its natural range.

Best of luck,

Les Corkum.

[Les is one of our Honorary Directors.- Ed]

Meetings

The Directors met briefly before the Annual General Meeting (Saturday, 5 November) to finalize year-end plans and draft proposals for the General Meeting.

The discussion was not long. Dr Colin McKeen, Chairman of the Board of Directors, expressed his wish to resign his position but to remain as a Director for the duration. Dr Terry Anderson agreed to stand as a candidate for the position of Chairman.

Doug McKeen presented his audit report and draft budget for the fiscal year 2005-6.

Annual General Meeting

The meeting was attended by about 30 members and friends. Dr Colin McKeen presented his final Chairman's Report (Page 4) and the Treasurer, Doug McKeen, submitted for discussion and approval his audited statement for the last fiscal year and his budget for 2005-6 (elsewhere in this issue).

A slate of candidates for vacant Director positions was submitted by Director Mike Nemerovski (Chair of the Election Committee) and approved by general vote. Drs Terry Anderson, Colin McKeen and George Collin, and Mr. John Hill, were re-elected.

The afternoon session was begun by Dr Bill MacDonald, University of West Virginia, who described American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) progress on restoring the American chestnut in the USA. Dr MacDonald described the benefits of applying a specially designed virus into the blight fungus to counteract it. However, the parasitized strains do not reproduce consistently; the blight can be controlled by treating cankers on individual trees, but the biocontrol mechanism does not spread to other blighted trees as had been hoped.

Dr MacDonald recommended that trees be tested for blight immunity by injecting a high-virulence blight into the lower trunk and a low-virulence blight into the trunk higher up – when the trunk is at least 4-5 cm in diameter.

Dragan Galic presented a photographic record of seedlings in the CCC plots. A total of 15 mother trees have been used in the breeding program.

Dr Brian Husband and Mr John Gerrath, of the University of Guelph, described their research on Native Populations of American Chestnut Trees within Canada. The University of Guelph has created a National Recovery Plan for the American chestnut; the Journal of Forestry Research had an article about it.

Mr Gerrath recently found an effective means of distinguishing foreign chestnut species in hybrid lines, using DNA analysis. - CE Hooker

Meet Your Directors

Murray Alward was born and raised in Port Burwell, on Lake Erie's north shore, and has not, understandably, strayed very far from there. He learned plant propagation at McConnell's Nursery, where he worked with knowledgeable European immigrants, and eventually became Head Propagator there.

Moving to Riverbend Farms – a wholesale nursery near Calton, Ontario in the Carolinian Zone - he became Vice-President and Propagator. The nursery grows quality nursery stock and exports much of its produce to the USA. As Murray has stayed with the firm for 26 years, we must credit him for much of the success.

Two years ago, Harley Hotchkiss – owner of Riverbend Farms – offered the Canadian Chestnut Council a plot of ground for growing American chestnut hybrid seedlings, thus giving us a second grow plot to diversify our stock geographically and ensure survival in case of a local disaster. Murray quickly became a source of sound advice, prompting his nomination and election as a Director.



Murray was previously a member of the Board of Landscape Ontario; so he knows management and trees. He is currently a member of the Elgin Stewardship Council, which supported the CCC's irrigation system financially. Since 1977 he has been a member of the International Plant Propagators Society, whose motto - "Seek and Share" – could well be applied to the CCC.

This young man has been happily propagating seedlings from seed, cuttings, grafts and budding for over 40 years. He can grow anything from a scrap of a cutting or graft shoot. Now he experiments with various propagation techniques for American chestnuts: nut grafting, splice grafting and chip budding. He credits his wife Karen and the Hotchkiss family with enabling him to pursue his interests.

Murray says, "It is a privilege to work with the Canadian Chestnut Council, participating in the restoration of the American chestnut." His fellow directors think the same of him.

Canadian Chestnut Council Donors - 2005

White Leaf (to \$99)

George Amaolo
Mrs. Margerie Anderson
Harry B. Barrett
Bruce Bowyer
Ron Bridge
Jocelyn Clarke
Robin E. Cunningham
Freda Flook
Dragan Galic
Dr. Wilfred Goodman
Brian and Marlene Hepburn
Joe Hickson
John Hill
Wes Horley
Keith Johnston
Harry Kravec
Dr. Leslie Laking
Dr. Arthur Langford
Lionel Lustgarten
Alvin Marr
Ms. Cora Munn

Mike Nemerowski
Arlin Otto
Palyul Foundation of Canada
Wilson Pate
Tom Pellar
Dr. Peter Rice
Harry Thorpe
Tom Welacky
Stan Wortner

Green Leaf (\$100-249)

Dr. Terry Anderson
Annita Bergen
Peter Bergen
Dr. George H. Collin
Mr. Leslie Corkum
Dr. Adam Dale
Don R. Fick
G. Alan Fisher
G.M. Graham
Ken Jewett
Dr. Ernie and Olive Kerr

Michael Margetts
Doug and Mary McKeen
Gordon and Susan Miller
William and F. Joyce Young

Bronze Leaf (\$250-499)

Erik Jorgensen
Krysten and Kurt Schroeder
Barb Smith

Silver Leaf (\$500-999)

William E. Barnett

Gold Leaf (\$1,000+)

Harley Hotchkiss
Dr. Colin McKeen

Canadian Chestnut Council Financial Statement

(year ending 30 September, 2005)

Receipts	2005	2004
Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant	21,700	
Elgin Stewardship Council Grant		2,500
Memberships and Donations	7,860	5,235
Interest Income	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	29,561	7,736
Disbursements		
Annual General Meeting	692	106
Breeding Program – University of Guelph	20,000	7,500
Brochure Production		403
Computer and Related Equipment	2,878	
Conference and Educational Programs	243	274
Insurance – Directors’ Liability	810	
Irrigation System	133	5,527
Newsletters	1,109	1,187
Office, Postage and Stationery	96	399
Signs		1,265
Tree Propagation, Maintenance and Nut Harvesting	<u>1,105</u>	<u>708</u>
	26,976	17,369
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements for the year	2,585	(9,633)
Bank Balance, beginning of year	5,240	14,873
Bank Balance, September 30, 2005 (Scotiabank)	7,825	5,240

(Signed: D McKeen)

(Verified by: Alexander Clarke, November 3, 2005)

Canadian Chestnut Council Proposed Annual Budget

Income	
Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant	42,900
Membership and Donations	<u>6,710</u>
	49,610
Expenses	
Annual General Meeting	800
Breeding Program – University of Guelph (2005 Balance)	9,300
Breeding Program – University of Guelph (2006)	27,700
Computer and Related Equipment	2,100
Conference and Educational Programs	1,400
Insurance – Directors’ Liability	810
Irrigation System Maintenance	200
Newsletters	1,200
Office, Postage and Stationery	400
Tree Propagation, Maintenance and Nut Harvesting	2,000
Preservation of Germplasm, Grafting	800
Plot Development of Additional Site and Travel Costs	2,100
Public Relations Program (Presentations)	<u>800</u>
	49,610

Chairman's Annual Report - year ending September 30, 2005

The Directors of the Canadian Chestnut Council (CCC) have had a busy year. Our most important achievements are described as follows.

Research Progress

A year ago it was reported that Phase I of the blight resistance breeding project was completed. That referred specifically to the end of the pollination program undertaken in the period 2001 to 2004. In April 2005, all the remaining unplanted nuts and seedlings from the pollination project were planted at the Onondaga and Riverbend Farms. There are 1,157 trees on 5-1/2 acres at Onondaga Farms and 541 trees on 2-1/3 acres at Riverbend Farms. – a grand total of 1,698 trees. Both of these orchard-like sites are impressive, and you are encouraged to visit and see them.

In this afternoon's program, technician Dragan Galic will show coloured pictures of these two sites. At least 50% of the trees represent Backcross 3 and Backcross 4 germplines of resistant parents. We are happy to report that chestnut growth at these two sites has been excellent.

At Riverbend Farms the watering has been through drip irrigation from a system installed by Director Mike Nemerowski, and at Onondaga Farms campers have watered the trees by hand as necessary under the direction of John Hill.

To prevent deer browsing of the trees, electric fence has been installed at both sites.

Funding and its Application

So far, progress in the breeding program has been made possible through the receipt of funds and much volunteer help. To begin the breeding program three years ago, the CCC obtained a grant of \$79,600 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. That grant expired in 2004. In March 2005 another grant, this time for \$108,400 over three years, was promised from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The first installment has been received; the second and third installments are dependent on a convincing CCC performance.

The CCC was unsuccessful in obtaining Ontario Trillium Foundation funds to cover the cost of hiring a Stewardship assistant to give us public relations help. A portion of the 2005 grant was spent on a computer and a digital camera. These two items will help publicize the work of the CCC.

The major part of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant is devoted to a "grant-in-aid" to the University of Guelph to hire a technician, Mr. Dragan Galic, to work under the direction of Dr. Adam Dale, plant breeder at the Simcoe Research Station.

The CCC gratefully acknowledges the plot acreage made available by the Tim Horton Children's Camp

Foundation, and also the many hours of help from John Hill and the children in planting and nurturing the trees. For a similar reason, we are greatly indebted to Harley Hotchkiss of Calgary, Alberta, for the use of land at Riverbend Farms and to Murray Alward, Farm Manager, for his many volunteer duties dedicated to that plot.

The Board of Directors of the CCC is very grateful to the members for your generous financial support, volunteer work and general encouragement. We accept that as an endorsement of the CCC program.

Recently, the CCC has been offered use of some parcels of land in Malahide Township, in East Elgin County. This generous offer is being pursued to determine how it may best be used by the CCC to advance the breeding program.

Publicity

In the field of publicity, four Newsletters were published, in January, April, August and October. The August issue was special in that the two central pages contained coloured photographs. Although only half the size of a regular issue, colour printing of two pages was triple the usual cost. This experiment was undertaken to offer a unique portrayal of chestnut seedling plantings on Earth Day in late April at Onondaga Farms, with both young and older volunteers participating. Readers' response to this special Newsletter has not yet been evaluated. The other Newsletters have tried to keep members informed about CCC business and the activities to advance the program.

Dr Terry Anderson recently addressed two public meetings on the CCC chestnut program.

The CCC web site is another arm of our publicity program.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that environmental programs such as the chestnut restoration are able to succeed only through financial and other assistance like that enjoyed by the Canadian Chestnut Council. My thanks to all our members.

Respectfully submitted,
Colin D. McKeen, Chairman, CCC

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Ornate Newel Post

On many occasions, chestnut literature has alluded to the abundant use of chestnut timbers in the construction of buildings and their furnishings.

The attached photo shows a beautifully carved newel post and lower balustrade made from chestnut. A few Newsletter readers may recognize this fine piece of wooden adornment; it is in the Aylmer office of the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Carpentry work of such a high calibre surely whets a desire to see the chestnut restored to the deciduous woodlands of Canada.

- CD McKeen

This photograph was provided by David McLeod, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Aylmer, Ontario.

AMERICAN CHESTNUT SITE RECORD

Castanea dentata

The CCC wants to know where the chestnut trees are.

You can help by submitting any of the listed information you can provide.

Owner's name, telephone, e-mail:

Street or rural address, township, county, province:

GPS or other location data:

Number of American chestnut trees:

Other environmental data:

Send to any CCC director. Thanks!



Dr. Colin McKeen, outgoing Chairman, and Dr. Terry Anderson, incoming Chairman, consider future operations for the Canadian Chestnut Council's American chestnut tree crops.

Membership

Membership fees and donations are tax deductible.

Membership Renewal:

Annual subscription = \$15.00 \$

Donations in excess of the annual subscription will be recognized in the Newsletter in the following categories (Requests for anonymity will be honoured):

Gold Leaf:	\$1,000 or more
Silver Leaf:	\$500-\$999
Bronze Leaf:	\$250-\$499
Green Leaf:	\$100-\$249
White Leaf:	Less than \$100

Donation: \$

Total enclosed: \$

**Make all cheques payable to the
Canadian Chestnut Council**

Comments:

Volunteers

We need your help! As our program grows and our activities expand, we very much need the talents and skills of our members. If you would like to contribute your skills, please tell us. We start pollinating in early summer!

I'm interested in (check all that apply):

Membership
 Publicity
 Fundraising
 Library research
 Field work
 Other:

Return your completed form to the Secretary:

Charles Hooker, 431068 19th Line, RR # 2
 Orangeville, Ontario L9W 2Y9
 chuckh@sympatico.ca