

Southern Christmas Trees

The Southern Christmas Tree Association Newsletter Third Quarter 2019

September 30, 2019

Important:

- *NEW* Louisiana Department of Revenue *Commercial Farmer Certification REQUIREMENT*
- January 25, 2020 SCTA Board Meeting 10:00 AM Lazy Acres
- Proposed Mississippi Grower Workshop April 4, 2020 Bass Christmas Tree Farm
- *2020 Annual Meeting* August 7-9, Gulf Shores, Alabama - *Make Your Reservations Now*

From the Executive Secretary

Thanks to all who planned, facilitated, participated and attended the 2019 annual meeting of the Southern Christmas Tree Association. You made it another great meeting the association can be proud of owning. The executive secretary has attended numerous annual meetings and conferences of all sorts throughout the world and can say that there is a cohesiveness and sincere desire to improve operations through cooperation with SCTA more so than he any event he has witnessed.

With 2020 around the corner, boots are on the ground for next year's meeting on the Alabama coast. SCTA plans to make it "another great" meeting so please be sure to stay tuned and make every effort to attend. Steve and Sandra Mannhard will host the Sunday Farm Tour on Fish River Trees near Summerdale. Since the meeting will be at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel (a new facility) surrounded by a beautiful state park you will want to make it a mini-vacation of it with family and friends. Please see more below about the 2020 meeting. Steve has been plowing the fields along The Emerald Coast preparing the way for the 2020 meeting. *Thank you Steve and Sandra!*



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2019 Annual Meeting of the Southern Christmas Tree Association

The 2019 annual meeting was conducted August 9-11 in Tupelo, Mississippi at the BancorpSouth Conference Center. SCTA's host hotel, the Hilton Garden Inn, was conveniently located next door. It all began Friday evening when the board and several members enjoyed a meal at Romie's Grocery.

The board, general and business meetings went smoothly. Lots of information was presented with constant engaging and conversation.

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The exhibitors had everything anyone could ever need. Delicious meals were served on-site by Romie's Grocery catering staff. Saturday's event ended with yet another successful auction thanks to the fine auctioneering by Michael May and Kevin Steele. It is amazing where you can find hidden talent. For those of you who provided items and those who purchased them, SCTA is extremely grateful for your contribution that helps offset SCTA expenses.

The Southern Christmas Tree Association extends its gratitude and sincere appreciation for enabling a successful, enjoyable and glitch-free event to:

Courtney Holcomb, Event Manager, BancorpSouth Conference Center (www.BCSArena.com) and BCS associates;

Jan Pannell, Sales Manager, Tupelo Convention & Visitors Bureau (www.Tupelo.net) and staff;

Lindsay Rayburn, Manager of Romie's Grocery (www.Romies.net) and Romie's entire crew, including Romie's Catering; and

Demetra Sherer, Sales Manager, Hilton Garden Inn (www.Tupelo.HGI.com) and the Hilton staff.

Sure, it is their job but it really makes a difference when players like these know the Southern Hospitality tune. Thank you Courtney, Demetra, Jan and Lindsay and the staff who supported you for a job well done.

Lowell and Linda Worthey with their family and friends put on an all-out-effort for the Sunday farm tour. Their hard work shone as everyone was treated to an interesting and enjoyable event on a beautiful farm. Their tour was a critical component of the annual meeting. The Worthey's with the assistance of the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service made it such and substantiated SCTA's purpose.

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The 2019 annual planning Committee consisted of: *Danna Day*, Old Days Farm, Winnsboro, La.; *Dr. John Kushla*, Mississippi State University, Verona, Miss.; *Steve Mannhard*, Fish River Trees, Summerdale, Ala.; *Larry Massey*, Rosebud Christmas Trees, Walnut Grove, Miss.; and *Lowell Worthey*, Worthey Tree Farm, Amory, Miss. Through their unselfish participation and cooperation the 2019 annual meeting was chalked-up as “another” successful event. Thank you.

See pictures of the meetings and tour are at the end of newsletter.

Tree Competition

Another important component of the annual meeting is the grower tree competition.

The competition serves as a platform and focal point for discussion by gathering around, looking, and feeling the trees.

The displayed trees certainly surprise non-conference participants and draw their interest when entering the foyer and see and smell beautiful trees. New customers!

This year, monetary awards were given for placement to at least offset some of the costs associated with the competition and stimulate more participation.

The 2019 winners are:



Grand Champion & Louisiana First Place
Gray Anderson
Grant Farms, Grant
www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com



Louisiana Second Place
L>R: Brad, Connie & Joe Gersch, Jr.
Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm
Independence
www.YawnStationTreeFarm.com



Louisiana Third Place
Kevin & Beverly Steele
Steele's Christmas Tree Farm
Angie
www.SteelesChristmasTreeFarm.com



Alabama First Place
L>R: Lucie, Frank, Josh & Lauren Wadsworth
Wadsworth Christmas Tree Farm
Wetumpka
www.WadsworthChristmasTrees.com



Alabama Second Place
Steve Mannhard
Fish River Trees
Summerdale
www.FishRiverTrees.com



Mississippi First Place
 Larry & Sue Massey
 Rosebud Christmas Trees
 Walnut Grove

www.RosebudChristmasTrees.JSMassey.com



Mississippi Second Place
 Bob & Mary Shearer
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Mississippi Third Place
 Center: Cathy & Michael May
 Ends: Lane & MiKayla Carey with grand daughter #1
 Lazy Acres, Chunky
www.Lazy-Acres.com

2020 Wreath Competition

There will be a wreath competition during the 2020 annual meeting. Danna Day chairs a committee that will provide guidance and etc. for the competition. The wreaths will be another interesting focal point throughout the weekend. You have plenty of time to plan wreath designs. For the 2020 competitions, the executive secretary will ask in advance during the registration process who will be entering trees and wreaths. Winners can promote their farms with placements and, remember, winning contestants may qualify for the National Christmas Tree wreath competition.

New Louisiana Commercial Farmer Certification Requirement

Louisiana growers, if you have not already done so or unaware and *intend to seek sales tax exemptions for purchases of qualifying products* and etc, you will need to complete the newly established 2019 application for *Commercial Farmer Certification Form-1085*.

Recently, Clarke Gernon of Shady Pond Tree Farm near Pearl River, Louisiana brought to the attention of the executive secretary a newly implemented Louisiana Department of Revenue certification process in which persons or entities must be certified as a commercial farmer to claim certain Louisiana sales and use tax exemptions. Earlier, Clarke had gone to his chemical supplier and was surprisingly informed that he had to be certified by the Louisiana Department of Revenue as a commercial farmer to benefit for any tax exemptions. Having done his homework applied for and received the certification, Clarke now has better guidelines and knowledge how and where his farm can seek and benefit from better tax deductions, etc. Thanks to Clarke the executive secretary was able to print this information in the newsletter. Thank you Clarke!



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Both Clarke and the executive secretary have had conversations with Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry Mike Strain on the subject for which Dr. Strain has been very helpful. A concluding email from Dr. Strain to the executive secretary stated:

In order to be sales tax exempt for inputs, it is necessary to file a Form-1085, *Application for Certification as a Commercial Farmer*. Once approved you will be issued a R-1091, *Commercial Farmer Certification*, which can then be attached to the R-1060 (Farm Equipment Sales Tax Exemption Certificate), R-1007 (Farm-Related Products) and R-1065 (Non-Road Utility Vehicles Used Exclusively on Commercial Farms). If you have a problem give me a call and we will try to assist you. The Louisiana Department of Revenue has been very helpful reviewing applications; however, it can take a little time. Please do not delay. You can download R-1085 from the Internet at the Louisiana Department of Revenue's website www.Revenue.Louisiana.gov.

Sincerely,
Mike Strain, DVM
Commissioner
Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry
5825 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, LA 70806
(225) 922-1233; www.Ldaf.State.La.Us.gov

Two helpful Internet links are:

- LDAF Press Release (06/24/2019) *Tax Exemption Form Due Soon*:
www.ldaf.state.la.us/news/tax-exemption-form-due-soon/
- LDR Commercial Farmer's Exemption Certificate Program:
www.revenue.louisiana.gov/TaxpayerEducationCourses/Commercial%20Farmer's%20Exemption%20Certification%20Program%20202019.ppsx or conduct an Internet search LDR Form R-1085

For the benefit of Alabama and Mississippi growers who may be unaware of similar state tax exemption requirements, the executive secretary did some research in Alabama and Mississippi. It appears that Louisiana is the only state that requires that a farmer applies to the state for a document that proves it to be a commercial agricultural operation that would then qualify it for state tax exemptions.

The Alabama Department of Revenue (www.alabama.revenue.gov) requires the seller and purchaser complete information as described on page 22 of ADR's *Guidelines Regarding Agricultural Related Sales*: www.revenue.alabama.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Alabama_Agricultural_Guide.pdf.

The Mississippi Department of Revenue (www.dor.ms.gov) requires farmers to complete an *Affidavit of Farmers Purchasing Tractors, Farm Implements and/or Parts and Labor* Form 72-620-14: www.dor.ms.gov/Forms/sales_FarmersAffidavit.pdf.

Proposed Mississippi Christmas Tree Grower Field Day

SCTA is planning a grower workshop Saturday April 4, 2020 at Bass Christmas Tree Farm located 103 Riley Road, Columbia, Mississippi 39429 in Marion County. Wesley Bass had offered to host the workshop shortly after the 2019 annual meeting. Please mark your calendars and promote it among growers whom you know are not SCTA members. The specifics have not yet been determined but the workshop will start early in the morning and conclude sometime around mid day/afternoon with a small registration fee. More information will follow after the January 2020 board meeting.

2020 Annual Meeting August 7, 8 & 9 in Gulf Shores, Alabama

SCTA's 2020 annual meeting will be held August 7, 8 & 9 in Gulf Shores, Alabama at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel (www.LodgeAtGulfStatePark.com). The address is 21196 East Beach Boulevard, Gulf Shores, AL 36542. The telephone number is (251) 540-4000.

A room reservation rate for Run of House Rooms of \$219.00 (without tax) or Guaranteed Gulf Front Rooms of \$249 (without tax) has been established. A block of rooms has been reserved August 6-9 for participants with a reservation *cutoff date of July 7, 2020*.

If you or your family and friends plan to arrive earlier or stay longer, please be sure to do it in the name of the Southern Christmas Tree Association so SCTA will be credited. SCTA will be held accountable if it does not meet the number of rooms reserved in the block. The July 7th cutoff date is much earlier than we are used to for annual meetings but because of the resort's popularity during the peak season, the Hilton establishes early cutoff dates. So, it is very important for you and SCTA to reserve your rooms through Hilton as soon as possible without delay. For reservations, either telephone (251) 540-4000 or go on-line at <http://group.hilton.com/SouthernChristmasTreeAssn> Thank you.

The Sunday Farm Tour will be at Fish River Trees (www.FishRiverTrees.com) near Summerdale with Steve and Sandra Mannhard as hosts. SCTA is grateful the Mannhards are willing to host their second SCTA farm tour. If the planning committee is able to identify willing growers to host a Friday mini-tour, the planning committee will arrange. If you would like to consider hosting an informal mini-tour and are located not too terribly distant (now there is wiggle room), please contact the executive secretary. Most annual meeting participants will gladly visit a farm en route to the host hotel. More than one is even better. Please understand an "informal mini-tour" is just that where the host does a brief tour of their farm and does minimal preparation compared to a typical Sunday farm tour. Think about it and call the executive secretary even if you are just starting out. But if you are more than 30 minutes south of Summerdale – forget it.

SCTA invites corporate sponsorship to help offset expenses for the annual meeting. If you or someone you know might be interested in partnering with SCTA for the 2020 meeting please be in contact with Michael Buchart, Executive Secretary. Thank you.

2019 New Members

The goofball executive secretary incorrectly welcomed George & Denise Brogdon, Tim & Brenda Parker, and Brandon & April Voyles as "2018" new members. Nope, they joined during the second quarter of 2019. Oh well, another cerebral skip.

This time, please welcome new members who joined during 2019's third quarter:

Howard & Lola Owens, Hilltop Breeze, 6718 North Greensburg, Summit, MS 39666 in Amite County. Telephone: (225) 933-9164. Facebook: Hilltop Breeze. Email: LOWens1107@att.net.

Jay & Maria Porter, Porter's Pines Christmas Tree Farm, 3116 CR 55, Clanton, AL 35046 in Chilton County. Telephone: (205) 294-5712. Email: MJPorster@SouthernCo.com.

Sandy & Marlous Quillin, Cullman Christmas Tree Farm, 840 CR 1082, Cullman, AL 35057 in Cullman County. Telephone: (256) 595-3325. Email: SandyQuillin@AOL.com.

No Rain - Anywhere

Do not feel unfairly affected by extremely dry (and hot) conditions. Everyone in SCTA's 3-state core is super dry. More prayers and rain dancers needed! Good luck ya'll.

2020/2021 SCTA Director Positions

The 2020/2021 director positions were filled by Wesley Bass, Paul Beavers and Tod Miller and the 2020/2021 vice-president by Kevin Steele.

Individual contact information for the administration of SCTA can be viewed from the "Officers/Directors" page under "Membership" at www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org.

The 2020 line-up is as follows.

President (2020-2021):	Michael May, Lazy Acres, Chunky, MS
Senior Vice-President (2020-2021):	Steve Mannhard, Fish River Trees, Summerdale, AL
Vice-President (2020-2021):	Kevin Steele, Steele's Christmas Tree Farm Angie, LA
Past President (2020-2021):	Danna Day, Old Days Farm, Winnsboro, LA
NCTA Representative:	Kevin Steele, Steele's Christmas Tree Farm
Alabama Directors (2019-2020):	Michael Duncan, Neely Farms, Thorsby
Alabama Directors (2020-2021):	Paul Beavers, Beavers Christmas Tree Farm, Trafford
Louisiana Directors (2019-2020):	Gray Anderson, Grant Christmas Tree Farm, Grant
Louisiana Directors (2020-2021):	Tod Miller, Christmas Town, Kentwood
Mississippi Directors (2019-2020):	Lowell Worthey, Worthey Tree Farm, Amory
Mississippi Directors (2020-2021):	Wesley Bass, Bass Christmas Tree Farm, Columbia
Alabama Extension Director:	Dr. Jeremy Pickens, Auburn University, Mobile
Louisiana Extension Director:	Valerie West, Louisiana State University, Benton
Mississippi Extension Director:	Dr. John Kushla, Mississippi State University, Verona

January 25, 2020 Board Meeting

The SCTA board of directors will meet 10:00 AM Saturday January 25, 2020 at Michael & Cathy May's Lazy Acres, 596 Lazy Acres Road, Chunky, Mississippi 39323. Next quarter notices will be emailed to the board.

Membership Enrollment (unfortunately a necessary reminder)

If you did not renew your 2019 dues and intend to remain as a member of good standing, your response will be appreciated. Membership forms can be downloaded from SCTA's website www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org.

SCTA has three (3) levels of membership:

- 1) Regular grower (actively selling trees) dues are \$120.00 (after March 1st \$130.00) annually
- 2) New growers just starting out or people considering the adventure, may join for \$50 annually and can pay the \$50 rate for a maximum of 3 years or until they begin selling trees, whichever is first
- 3) Growers in states other than Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi may join for \$60 annually and will be listed on SCTA's website under "Other States". Such growers are non-voting members

SCTA Website

If you have recently created your own website or made any changes to your farm contact information please inform the executive secretary by e-mail so the updates can be made to the association's database.

For those members who do not have a website, SCTA provides a dedicated sub-page (until you have your own website) to facilitate exposure. SCTA will post your page with the expected sale season the year before you open or sooner (your preference). Information posted will be static in nature, i.e. farm name, address, telephone number, county and a brief description.

If you utilize SCTA's website and have a Facebook page (highly recommended) the executive secretary will provide a link to your Facebook page. New growers who are not yet harvesting should consider promoting their farm through social media to develop an early following.

SCTA Advertisement, Exhibits, Sponsorships

Feel free to inquire about advertising, exhibiting or sponsoring events with SCTA. SCTA's advertising platforms are the quarterly e-mailed newsletters, the association's website membership page and the annual meeting program packet. When you advertise with SCTA, your placement is with each platform for a 12 month period. Advertisers are requested to provide electronic file (.jpg or .pdf) scopies of logos, art work and text suitable for placement in Word documents.

SCTA's 12-month advertisement fee schedule is as follows. Please note, when an advertisement is placed, it is for the following consecutive 12 months beginning with the next full quarter and not bound to a fiscal or calendar year.

One quarter page: \$200.00. A one quarter (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters, annual meeting packet and on SCTA's membership web page.

One half page: \$400.00. A one half (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters and annual meeting packet. A one quarter page ad will be placed on SCTA's membership web page.

Annual meetings are late summer rotating in the order of Alabama, Louisiana & Mississippi. Exhibitors and sponsors are always welcome during annual meetings or other events hosted by SCTA. Exhibitor fees vary per event with SCTA keeping costs at a minimum. SCTA strives to make fees agreeable for all. SCTA members who exhibit benefit from a \$40 member-exhibitor discount. If you are interested in partnering with SCTA, please contact the executive secretary.

Announcements, Deaths, News, Tidbits, Whatever

If you have information worthy of mention in the newsletter, including deaths of past members, please inform the executive secretary.

Southern Christmas Trees is a multi-page, quarterly newsletter of the activities and interests of the membership including ideas and information beneficial to the industry. The newsletter serves as the official venue for information dissemination to membership. Content is provided by members and secured or derived elsewhere. Every effort is made to use factual information from established, credible sources with references. Subscription is a membership benefit.

Distribution is by e-mail.

Michael Buchart, Executive Secretary, 12263 Brookshire Avenue, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70815 USA
Telephone: 225.505.6335. E-mail: sctaes@gmail.com.

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This is why you join SCTA - to watch Larry Massey. Unfortunately can not insert video.



Pledge of Allegiance
Colonel (Retired) Larry Massey, U.S. Army Reserve



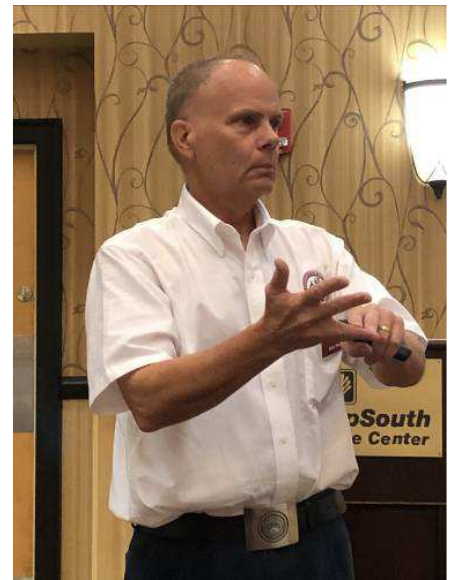
A Full House



Danna Day
President 2018/2019



Steve Mannhard
Fish River Trees



Dr. Alan Henn
MSU Extension



Dr. Jeremy Pickens
Auburn University



Larry Massey
Rosebud Christmas Tree Plantation



Dr. John Kushla
MSU Extension



Michael May



Dr. Rachael Carter



Danna Day & Wesley Bass



Fellowship



Great food!



Awesome catering – Romies
L>R: Torrie, Dana, Julie & Lisa



The Trees



Steve Mannhard
Trees for Troops



Seriously, where are the parents?



Suuuuthern Farm Boys



Scott Raitz, Tim Mitchell Yule Stand System



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T Jay Roland, The Kirk Company



Kirsten, Fraser Knoll



Jill & Carter, Mills Gourmet



Stephanie Evans & Julie Holland, Evans & Company



Gray Anderson, Grant Christmas Tree Farm



Adam Carnes, The Dogwood Company





Derrick Maranto, Minister,
Christian Chapel
Church of Christ



Dr. James DelPrince
MSU Extension



Say what?



We do it our way.



A Northern View by
Dr. Howard James
Allen Farm Christmas Trees
Buncombe, IL



Southern Belle Sandra Bass (L)
meets a
Northern Lady Elizabeth James (R)



Randall Nevins
Heading South to
Gulfshores, Alabama 2020



Randall Nevins
MSU Extension



We enjoyed y'all! Thank you for visiting.
Let's go visit Steve and Sandra Mannhard August 2020 in Gulf Shores, Alabama!