

# Southern Christmas Trees

## The Southern Christmas Tree Association Newsletter

Second Quarter 2020

June 30, 2020



### Important:

- *Nominations are open* for 2021/2022 Alabama, Louisiana & Mississippi state directors
- *2020 annual meeting* August 7-9, Gulf Shores, Alabama
- *Room Reservations* The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel
- *SCTA Annual Meeting Registration*
- *Wreath Competition Rules & Ballots*
- *Planned exhibitors: Evans Christmas Products, Fraser Knoll, Grant Farms & Steele's Saje*

### From the President

Dear Fellow Growers:

Our 2020 annual conference is almost here! The planning committee has been working very hard under some very difficult circumstances to prepare for this conference. The committee and our farm hosts, Steve and Sandra Mannhard, have put together an excellent program filled with great topics and timely information. We look forward to seeing you all at the meeting August 7-9th and collectively sharing ideas about how to prepare for our upcoming seasons.

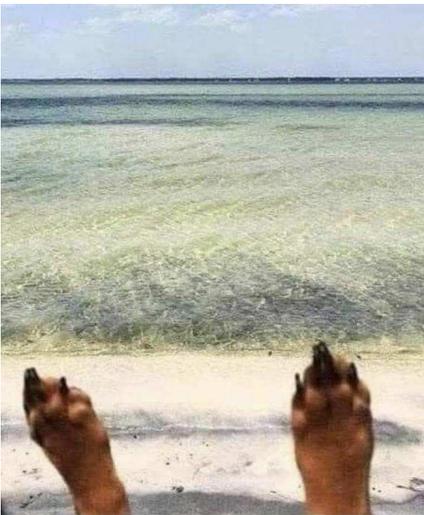
While we were all hoping that the coronavirus would be gone by meeting time, it looks as though it is resurging. We have adapted our set-up and practices to maximize safety and social distancing and we are taking a number of steps to ensure safety and hygiene. Daily temperature checks will be available during the meeting and the board of directors strongly recommends that everyone wear masks (especially during the indoor portion of the meeting) and to bring personal hand sanitizer. The outdoors will be utilized as much as possible for activities, weather permitting. We are also monitoring Alabama health regulations closely for any changes. Your safety and the safety of those around you is our primary concern.

Michael May, SCTA President 2020/2021

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During an exploratory trip to Gulf Shores, the executive secretary's traveling companion Charlie, a seasoned Golden Retriever, disappeared immediately upon arrival. It was not until later a bikini clad beach standout texted this picture of Charlie who found his owner's name and number on the collar. Bingo!  
Looks like he beat Mike Buchart to the beach. Good dog.

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**2020 Annual Meeting**



Nice!

The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel

SCTA's 2020 annual meeting is "a go" for August 7, 8 & 9 in Gulf Shores, Alabama at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel. Announcements by email, social media and the website will be posted as new information becomes available. Steve & Sandra Mannhard of Fish River Trees ([www.FishRiverTrees.com](http://www.FishRiverTrees.com)) will host the Sunday farm tour near Summerdale, Alabama. There will not be a mini-farm tour on Friday mentioned earlier as a possibility by the executive secretary.

Please visit The Lodge at [www.LodgeAtGulfStatePark.com](http://www.LodgeAtGulfStatePark.com). The physical address is 21196 East Beach Boulevard, Gulf Shores, Alabama 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 group rate reservation *cutoff date of July 7, 2020*. Feel free to contact Hilton's SCTA reservation coordinator Ms. Terri Bonifay at (251) 923-2936 or [TBonifay@lodggesp.com](mailto:TBonifay@lodggesp.com). If you have difficulty making your reservations definitely contact Ms. Bonifay.

*To date, the following companies plan to exhibit: Evans Christmas Products, Fraser Knoll, Grant Farms and Steele's Saje. Thank you for your support!*

SCTA invites corporate sponsorship, especially for this event, to help offset annual meeting expenses. If you or someone you know might be interested in partnering with SCTA for the 2020 meeting, please be in contact with the executive secretary.

Thanks to the 2020 annual meeting planning committee (Paul Beavers, Michael Buchart, Michael Duncan, Steve Mannhard, Michael May & Jeremy Pickens) a fine event is ahead.

Please refer to [www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org](http://www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org) for updates.

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**From Steve Mannhard of Fish River Trees - Sunday Farm Tour Host**



Fish River Trees, Summerdale, Alabama

*Welcome to our tree farm!*

Sandra and I wanted to extend a special invitation and welcome in this newsletter to all our fellow Christmas tree growers to our upcoming annual meeting and Sunday farm tour at Fish River Trees.

The process of deciding whether to even have the meeting has been a difficult one in light of the pandemic issue, so why did we decide to go ahead with the meeting?

First, and most importantly, we felt that growers needed to discuss in detail how we are going to operate our farms in light of the pandemic because there are going to have to be some adjustments. We, for one, want to hear what other growers are going to do and share ideas. So that has become the first topic of the Saturday meeting.

Next, there are so many new growers who joined because they need to know much more about the whole business, and since the spring \*workshop was cancelled this annual meeting is their only opportunity. That is why we put together a very detailed schedule for the Sunday farm tour from station to station covering basic topics of what growers are doing: planting, trimming, staking, fertilizing, herbiciding, fungiciding, etc. Over the years, we have learned so much from fellow growers that it has been a very key factor in our success. For example, we learned so much from last year's detailed

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discussion/presentation on fungicides that we had much greater success controlling fungal disease in our cypress trees because of the recommendations. That alone has had huge benefits.

We chose this very popular beach location for the meeting because it is really nice. You will like Gulf State Park. Bring your walking shoes, bikes, and of course, your bikinis! Use it as a mini-vacation; God know we all need one.

Finally, we can do this meeting safely!

Blessings to all. We look forward to your visit and stay safe.

Steve & Sandra Mannhard

13982 Woodhaven Dairy, Summerdale, AL 36580

[www.FishRiverTrees.com](http://www.FishRiverTrees.com), Email [FishRiverTrees@GulfTel.com](mailto:FishRiverTrees@GulfTel.com), Steve (251) 604-7512

P.S. Come ride our Magi Camel Sunday morning from 8:00 to 9:00.

*\*A note from the executive secretary:* workshops/field days are not held regularly or as a scheduled annual event. However, when there is strong enough support, a willing host and members able to facilitate and conduct a workshop with the support of state extension personnel, SCTA will make every effort to do so while rotating around the core three states. SCTA is proud to state that every workshop the association has been involved with has been very successful, beneficial and well attended.



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## 2020 Wreath Competition – A First Ever Event for SCTA

From Brittany Anderson, Wreath Competition Committee

Hello everyone.

I am excited to be a part of leading our first wreath competition. This conversation was started before I joined in by Danna Day of Old Days Farm. This will be a great addition to our annual meeting. As we have seen in the past, having a tree competition has greatly challenged us to see how our trees measured up along side others. I anticipate the same affect for our wreath competition. Selling wreaths at our farms has proved to be a very profitable addition to overall sales. Therefore, it is very crucial that we seek to continue learning and evolve our style with the current seasonal market. I want to encourage each of you to consider entering a wreath in our competition so we may all benefit in learning from one another. I look forward to this new event especially seeing everyone in August.

Thank you,

Brittany Anderson, Talson Farms

88 Arnold Pryor Road, Laurel, Mississippi 39443

[www.TalsonFarms.com](http://www.TalsonFarms.com), [TalsonOutdoors@hotmail.com](mailto:TalsonOutdoors@hotmail.com), (601) 433-4794

During the registration process, the executive secretary will query, beforehand, participants about their intent to compete with wreaths and/or trees. Understand that winning contestants who are members of NCTA are the only ones who may qualify for the national tree/wreath competitions. If you have any wreath questions or comments, please contact Brittany Anderson. See attached rules and ballots both of which will be included in the registration packet.

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Upon arrival to the hotel, check with the executive secretary, Brittany Anderson, Steve Mannhard or hotel staff for wreath placement. Entry forms will be in the registration packet. You will need to submit your completed entry form to Brittany and receive an identification tag for your wreath. Competitors must have their wreaths set up no later than the start of the Saturday meeting. By the end of Saturday night's function, you must remove your wreath. Good luck.

### **2020 Tree Competition**

Competitors must have their trees set up no later than the start of the Saturday meeting. Either the executive secretary, Michael Duncan, Steve Mannhard or a Hilton representative will show you placement spots. Trees will be placed in the conference hallway and foyer. Generally, the executive secretary tries to place trees between vendors, especially competitors, offering some type of privacy barrier. You will need to complete an entry ballot (provided in packet) and get with either Duncan or Buchart for an ID tag for your tree. By the end of Saturday night's function, you must remove your tree. Good luck.

### **Pre-Meeting Chartered Fishing Trip**

Gray & Mollie Anderson were successful arranging an off shore fishing trip Thursday before the annual meeting. The Fair Water II Fishing Charter is now booked and awaiting the day to shove off. Caution beachcombers: everyone prepare themselves for when the boat returns to dock. Knowing the boat's manifest, there will be fish stories nay repeating, even more so with SCTA's Fisherman #1 onboard. Hopefully his Fisherwoman #1 will keep her reel drag set for optimum control without snapping the line on him (won't capitalize that one for fear of a wrong referral above).

Also heard the other half are buying or at least looking for new deck uniform bikinis. Awesome! Rest at ease knowing the executive secretary will keep watch from high above in the crow's nest with a good pair of binoculars - doesn't want to miss anything, keep a safe distance and announce the Fair Water II return to land. Any questions about the charter can be directed to Gray Anderson (337) 789-3072. Good luck!



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### Auction Items

Please consider bringing auction items to be auctioned during the banquet as an association fundraiser. Place your items on the auction tables in the conference hall as soon as possible. Be sure to identify items with your name and approximate retail value. Funds raised help off set conference expenses. Auctioneers Bentley Curry (yep, he's back) & Michael May will do the honors. Might even be privileged to have Jim King and Kevin Steele circling. Awesome.

### Nominations for 2021/2022 AL LA & MS State Directors

The state director positions for Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi are open for the 2020/2021 term. The positions are presently held by Michael Duncan, 1879 Country Road 107, Randolph, AL 36792, (205) 389-1832; Gray Anderson, 17030 Highway 10, Pitkin, LA 70656, (337) 789-3072; and Lowell Worthey, 60025 Worthey Lane, Amory, MS 38821, (662) 305-2545.

This announcement is considered the official notice for nominations. Nominations shall contain the signature of the person making the nomination in a letter to be hand delivered or by the US Postal Service to the president Michael May, Lazy Acres, 596 Lazy Acres Road, Chunky, MS 39323 or executive secretary Michael Buchart, 12263 Brookshire Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70815 no later than 12:00 pm July 23, 2020. Nominations must be received at least fifteen (15) days prior to the annual meeting. Any nomination must be a member in good standing and a Christmas tree farmer in the core states of Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi.

The 2020/2021 continuing state directors are: Paul Beavers, 10093 Bradford Trafford Road, Trafford, AL 35172, (205) 527-1192; Roger "Tod" Miller, 23237 Highway 1057, Kentwood, LA 70444, (985) 514-0660; and Wesley Bass, 431 Lillis Road, Columbia, MS 39429, (601) 731-8232.

### Please Welcome New Members

- Matthew Boehm, 17755 Davis Road, Summerdale, AL 36580, 251-269-4761,
- Jadey & Chere' Bourque of JC Acres, 16232 Mourning Dove Road, Kaplan, LA 70548, 337-772-8202, [shachere@gmail.com](mailto:shachere@gmail.com) located in Vermilion Parish
- Keith & Yonna Davis of Deer Meadow Farm, 112 Deer Meadow Drive, Chelsea, AL 35043, 205-807-5668, [KeithDavis@me.com](mailto:KeithDavis@me.com) located in Shelby County
- Patricia & Craig Cassebaum of Living Tree Farm, 13657 County Road 91, Elberta, AL 36530, 251-458-7526, [LivingTreeFarm@outlook.com](mailto:LivingTreeFarm@outlook.com) located in Baldwin County

## A Lost Cornerstone



W. Wayne Ayers  
11/10/1936 – 06/10/2020

Wayne Ayers, founder of Roan Valley Tree Farm near Johnson City, Tennessee, at the age of 83 passed away June 10, 2020 surrounded by his family. Wayne was an early pioneer in the Christmas tree industry and remained active for approximately 65 years until his remaining months. In the beginning as a youngster, he was well known for climbing trees to cut tops for sale on the retail lots. Wayne was a founding member of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association and was active in all aspects of the industry. As a wholesale grower, Wayne and his wife, Joan, would travel the region and on occasion visit Southern Christmas Tree Association events. One of their son's Steve, who has for years and continues to operate their farm with family, said that his parents always enjoyed visiting with members of SCTA and that it was one of their favorite meetings because of being welcomed as family.

To view Wayne's obituary, search "H. Wayne Ayers" or visit [www.TetrickFuneralHome.com](http://www.TetrickFuneralHome.com). The executive secretary had a great conversation with Steve and will look forward, as other members, to seeing more Ayers in the future.

## Tidbits Learned along the Way

The executive secretary encourages readers to offer tidbits (tricks of the trade, inventions, ingenious methods or techniques, anything off the wall that works, etc) that might be of value to be printed in newsletters as a matter of interest or amusement. Simply text or email a statement and pictures to the executive secretary who keeps an on-going list of such. Though it will be difficult to do so, try topping Larry Massey. Please forgive the executive secretary for any repeated tips.

*Tidbit #2:* Tire tubes. Save damaged or worn bicycle or vehicle tire inner tubes and fashion into shock absorbing equipment shoulder straps or cushions. It works.

## The Tim Mitchell Yule Tree Stand Company Purchased by Peak Seasons May 2020

Scott Raitz, whom many know as the representative for the Tim Mitchell Yule Tree Stand Company informed the executive secretary that Peak Seasons of Riverside, California had purchased the company and he would soon retire. Scott said "I want to thank you all for the support over the past years and wish you continued success as you move forward. It has been a lot of fun and a little work going to SCTA meetings these past years. Meeting members of SCTA always made my trip worth it. Again, thank you very much and hopefully we will meet again."

Peak Seasons stated on their website "The Mitchell family has been manufacturing rebar stands and water bowls for over 50 years. They have earned a reputation of producing a quality product at a fair price and timely delivery. These qualities are what interested us in purchasing Tim Mitchell Yule Tree Stand Company. Peak Seasons has been manufacturing rebar stands and bowls for over 25 years. Thus, we are fully prepared to assume the additional production for Mitchell Yule Tree Stand customers. Welcome to the family!"

SCTA's growth over the years has been supported by good companies such as the Tim Mitchell Yule Tree Stand Company. Their presence in the Southern Christmas tree industry has been felt, respected and appreciated. SCTA congratulates the company on a job well done. For those retiring, SCTA wishes all the best for you. Congratulations to Peak Seasons for a fine expansion. Peak Seasons has been supporting SCTA for a while and now our family has grown even more.

## **From the Executive Secretary**

It can not be overly emphasized that it is very important: 1) if you intend and are encouraged to stay at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel, you will need to make your hotel reservation now and no later than the group rate cut-off date July 7, 2020 (SCTA planners & hotel managers need a good handle of numbers for advance preparation); 2) to complete and mail in your SCTA meeting registration now; 3) if you choose to wear face masks, bring sufficient face masks for your party, and; 4) bring personal hand sanitizer.

If you attend the meeting and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, use the experience for planning upcoming activities on your farm while the pandemic will still be on the minds of your customers and employees. Such discussions will develop and hopefully everyone will be better for it.

Since Fish River Trees does not have facilities to accommodate and serve meals, please understand lunch will not be served. Refreshments will be available. As farm hands you know about heat and weather but on the coast you need to dress appropriately and comfortably for the sun, heat and humidity. The Gulf of Mexico influences are right down the road. Do not forget about potential thunderstorms or intense rains. Even though the tour is in an open, farm environment, please conduct yourself as appropriate as possible for COVID-19 prevention. As difficult as it is to do so amongst friends not shaking hands or embracing/kissing will not be considered rude.

## **Annual Membership Enrollment**

Please see the attached 2020 annual membership form which is also posted on SCTA's website [www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org](http://www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org).

Your support of SCTA allows the association to function as a focal point for everything you do as a southern Christmas tree farmer. SCTA and your fellow members thank you for your participation.

SCTA requests that membership dues are submitted promptly during the first calendar quarter and received no later than March 1st. After March 1st, a \$10.00 late fee will be assessed.

If you have decide not to continue your membership, please be considerate enough to discuss with the president or executive secretary so the association can strive to improve. If you are hesitant to join, you do not need to contact the executive secretary for a sales-job which he will gladly offer, just simply ask a grower member why you should join. The executive secretary has yet to learn that any departing member left for dissatisfaction of the organization.

SCTA has three (3) levels of membership:

- 1) Regular grower (actively selling trees) dues are \$120.00 (after March 1<sup>st</sup> \$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 you 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) copies 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 with 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.

### **SCTA's Advertising Supporters:**

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#### **Attachments:**

- 1) Annual Meeting Program (tentative)
- 2) Annual Meeting Early Registration Form
- 3) Wreath Competition Rules
- 4) Wreath Competition Ballot
- 5) Lodge Map
- 6) Gulf State Park Map
- 7) No COVID Bugs included!