

## SECOND RESTORATION BRANCH EVENT A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!

Building on the last year's first restoration branch event at John Mirick's home in Princeton, this year's RBE was held at Old Sturbridge Village's Oliver Wight Tavern on the evening of September 10th. Restoration Branch Events are designed to allow people who are not active in TACF to get a membership, to enjoy a social gathering, to eat a delicious dinner, to bid on some chestnut items and to learn about TACF's mission and the MA/RI Chapter's contribution to chestnut restoration.

TACF's development officer Mark Banker gave the keynote presentation on the state of chestnut restoration from chapters around the country. Mark is using his background in and passion for biology and wildlife conservation to raise funds to make available to state chapters to carry on their important work. Take a look at Mark's chestnut blog [livingchestnuts.wordpress.com](http://livingchestnuts.wordpress.com) where he reflects on the amazing work members are doing nationally.

Cocktail hour featured chardonnay and chestnut chatter in the beautiful pre-industrial decor of the Wight Tavern while some robust attendees made the trek through the village up the hill to the BC3 F3 demonstration chestnut planting. The seedlings, planted two years ago, sit atop a picturesque knoll overlooking the steeples and chimneys of Old Sturbridge Village.

As guests dined on a delicious meal including chestnut soup as the first course, a silent auction ran as bids were taken on donated items such as cookbooks and gift baskets. Beautifully carved chestnut walking sticks, bird houses, bird house kits and raw lumber were provided by board member and carver extraordinaire Guy Shepard.

Most of our state chapter events and board meetings tend to focus intensely on the business of TACF breeding program: pollinating, planting, inoculating and harvesting. The RBE is a welcome departure for us all to socialize and celebrate this amazing process in which we are involved. The RBE is a great way to get friends who are interested but cannot be involved in field work to be a part of the restoration effort. Kudos go out to member Elizabeth Hammond for planning and coordinating this great event. Planning is already starting for RBE 3 in which we would like to increase more member and non-member participation. Contact Elizabeth if you would like to help in organizing next year's event. Elizabeth's email address is: [danc305@earthlink.net](mailto:danc305@earthlink.net)



Guest of Honor, Dr. Frank and his wife Deborah Howard  
Photo: Elizabeth Hammond



Rich Giordano shows BC3 F3's progress  
Photo: Elizabeth Hammond



One of Guy Shepard's fanciful carved birdhouse creations  
Photo: Brad Smith



Mark Banker and son by large chestnut in Michigan  
[livingchestnuts.wordpress.com](http://livingchestnuts.wordpress.com)



BC3 F3 rising out of hardware cloth. Photo: Elizabeth Hammond



Old Sturbridge Village as viewed by our BC3 F3 seedlings  
Photo: Brad Smith



From left to right Dr. Frank Howard stands with MA/RI President Yvonne Federowicz as Board Member Rufin Van Bossuyt reads the honorary plaque  
Photo: Elizabeth Hammond

## DR. FRANK HOWARD HONORED AT RBE

Dr. Frank Howard was recognized for his years of outstanding work for the MA/RI Chapters of TACF. Frank was a founding board member back in 1999 of what was then the fledgling Massachusetts Chapter. Frank's contributions to our chapter are numerous and include every stage of our work from finding mother trees to taking beautiful photos and videos of our annual meetings and forest plantings. The Howard family has also made generous financial gifts to help the chapter with inoculation costs. Rufin Van Bossuyt read the chestnut wood plaque enumerating his contributions to the chapter. Frank was fortunate to be accompanied by his wife Deborah and two charming daughters at the event.



Large flowering chestnut with burs in Orleans MA discovered by Rufin Van Bossuyt  
Photo: Brad Smith





Dr. Fred Hebard  
Photo: Forrest Stuart MacCormack  
<http://www.fsmphoto.com/>

## DR. FRED HEBARD TO SPEAK AT MA/RI ANNUAL MEETING NOVEMBER 20th AT HARVARD FOREST IN PETERSHAM

Dr. Fred Hebard has agreed to be the keynote speaker for our Twelfth MA/RI Annual Meeting on **Sunday, November 20th, 2011** from **10am to 4pm** at the **Harvard Forest** in **Petersham MA**. Mr. Hebard is the chief scientist for TACF and the architect who has carried out the backcross breeding program in Meadowview Virginia for the last 27 years. Few living humans have planted and grown more chestnuts trees than Dr. Hebard. He will discuss the seed orchard step of the breeding program upon which our chapter is about to enter. Don't miss this opportunity to listen to Fred's experience and ask him questions about our favorite tree. Other topics will include our usual National Annual Meeting Update, MA/RI Breeding and Chapter Activities Update, Chestnuts in Orleans MA, Reforestation Conference Report, and How Testing Theory Explains our Preliminary BC3 F3 Results and much much more. Look for a postcard coming soon with a specific agenda for the meeting but save the date! This year's meeting will include a tour of the research facilities at the Harvard Forest, don't miss it! For more information about the meeting, contact Jamie Donalds ([n1djb@yahoo.com](mailto:n1djb@yahoo.com)) or Brad Smith ([schoolmastersm@hotmail.com](mailto:schoolmastersm@hotmail.com)).

## EXTREME CHAPTER OUTREACH - THE CHESTNUT WHISPERER OF CAPE COD

A major function of the MA/RI Chapter of TACF is to reach out to our community by spreading the message of chestnut restoration. No one individual exemplifies this more than board Member Rufin Van Bossuyt. In August Rufin delivered a lecture to a packed house on the TACF's work and the American Chestnut to The Orleans Conservation Trust. This fall Rufin led a chestnut weekend walk in Orleans that attracted 50 participants. Although Cape Cod has been considered traditionally to be out of the native range of chestnut, Rufin has generated publicity with newspaper articles, has followed up on tree leads and has discovered with his keen eye some large American Chestnuts where experts would say, there should be none. A few of these trees are quite large (40 to 50 ft. tall and 8 to 12 inches in diameter) The MA/RI Chapter is interested in these large surviving Americans because of their proximity to salt water and their ability to survive with blight and produce some natural seedlings. Plans are to pollinate the more accessible trees to bring them into the chapter research program. Sarah Fitzsimmons, TACF Mid Atlantic Science Coordinator visited and documented the larger trees in a visit to the Cape last summer. We expect that Rufin will continue to use his chestnut radar to find more trees on the Cape in the future.



Rufin Van Bossuyt speaks to the Orleans Conservation Trust  
Photo: Brad Smith

## LAND CLEARING CONTINUES FOR FIRST MA/RI SEED ORCHARD

In three separate land clearing work sessions, one last November, the second in May and a third following the Summer board meeting in July, a seed orchard lot is taking shape on the property of John and Sarah Meiklejohn in Granville Ma. John is currently working out the details of a conservation easement which will allow TACF access to the land for the foreseeable future. This will likely be the home to our first MA/RI BC3 F2 nuts which will eventually yield BC F3 nuts, our restoration product.

The work of clearing this old farm field has been difficult. Without bobcats, chainsaws, massive brush burning piles, the sweat and multiple cases of poison ivy infecting our members, this seed orchard would never become a reality. In addition to the generous donation of the Meiklejohn's land, dedicated members have volunteered hundreds of combined hours and personal resources to the project. This has saved the chapter thousands of dollars which would have been spent to clear this field "professionally". BC3 F2 seed plots could be replacing poison ivy next spring. The chapter has authorized funding for harrowing of the field which will be completed hopefully before frost. John and Sarah hope to have the conservation easement finalized by year's end.



The editor would like to thank  
Kathy Desjardins and Yvonne  
Federowicz for their help with  
this issue.

From left to right: Charlotte Zampini, Brad Smith, John Meiklejohn and Brian Clark with his bobcat, burning brush, Roy Najecki and John Meiklejohn.  
All Photos : Elizabeth Hammond



eSeedlings is the electronic newsletter of the MA/RI Chapter of the American Chestnut Foundation. Please email any descriptions and pictures of MA & RI chestnut events to Brad Smith: [schoolmastersm@hotmail.com](mailto:schoolmastersm@hotmail.com)