

# Southern Christmas Trees

## The Southern Christmas Tree Association Newsletter Second Quarter 2019

June 30, 2019



### Important:

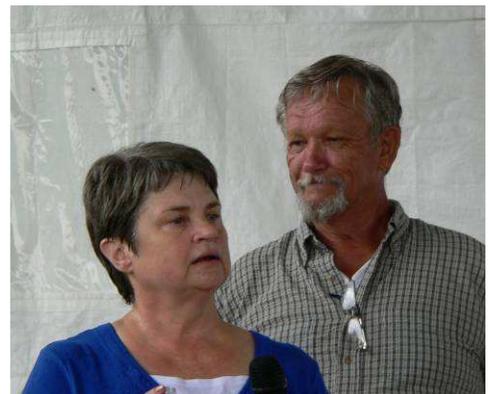
- Joe Wayne "Joe" Gersch, Sr.
- 2019 Annual Meeting August 9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> Tupelo / Amory, Mississippi
- Christmas Tree Promotion Board Referendum Passes
- 2020/2021 SCTA Director Position Nominations
- 2019 SCTA Membership – if you have not paid up, you'll be removed from the roster

### Joe Wayne "Joe" Gersch, Sr.



April 19, 1946 – May 26, 2019

The Gersch family and that of The Southern Christmas Tree Growers Association recently lost someone everyone held close to their heart. Joe Wayne "Joe" Gersch, Sr. died as the result of a tragic motorcycle accident May 26, 2019 while participating in a group ride near Cartersville, Georgia. That day all prayers and support immediately focused on the Gersch family and continue with increasing strength. Joe was a grower everyone could relate with. He was always willing to help anyone learn especially since his school was the hard-knock program. He would not hold anything back if it could benefit someone. Joe will truly be missed. SCTA members received a thank you card from Kay with the following note: "Thank you for all your kind expressions of sympathy during our time of grieving." Joe's obituary can be viewed at [www.ThompsonCares.com](http://www.ThompsonCares.com). Please consider leaving an on-line memory for the family. Thank you.



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## 2019 Annual Meeting of the Southern Christmas Tree Association

The 2019 annual meeting will be conducted August 9-11 in Tupelo, Mississippi at the BancorpSouth Conference Center (375 East main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804; [www.BCSArena.com](http://www.BCSArena.com)) which is next door to our host hotel the Hilton Garden Inn (363 East Main Street, Tupelo, MS 38804; (662) 718-5500); [www.Tupelo.HGI.com](http://www.Tupelo.HGI.com)). SCTA's group rate is \$119 (code SCTA) and will be available until July 10, 2019. The HGI will provide conference patrons with a 20% discount coupon for breakfast. You are urged to make your reservations now. *It is all happening in the heart of historic downtown Tupelo.*



BancorpSouth Conference Center



Hilton Garden Inn – Tupelo

The meeting registration form was not available for this newsletter but will be emailed soon and posted on [www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org](http://www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org) and Facebook pages: “Southern Christmas Tree Association” and “Southern Christmas Tree Growers”. Please check the website regularly for updates.

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Six o'clock Friday evening the board of directors will dine at Romie's Grocery (804 West Jackson Street, Tupelo, MS 38804; [www.Romies.net](http://www.Romies.net); (662) 842-8986) for a good ole, comfortable dinner. Conference attendees are certainly welcome to attend but please do not confuse your sitting with the board's reservation. There you will enjoy dinners created by Rob Lesley and Mike Malone in a relaxed atmosphere throughout the full bar, patio and main dining area.

Following dinner, the board of directors will conduct their meeting in the Walnut Room of the HGI. Exhibitors and tree contestants are encouraged to set up early since you will have access to the BancorpSouth Conference center 2:00 PM – 5:00 PM. BancorpSouth will close promptly at 5:00 PM and re-open 6:00 AM Saturday for your benefit.

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All SCTA activities will take place in the conference center: meetings, lunch, dinner, tree competition and auction.

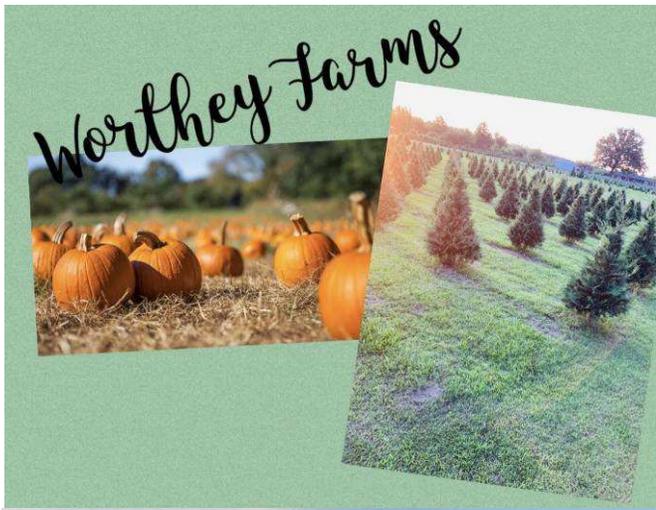
A shortened edition of the agenda is included with this newsletter.

Reminders:

- 1) *Tree competition winners* will be awarded cash awards as approved last year. SCTA encourages the competition as a focal point for discussion during meetings, an opportunity for winners to market their farm; and as a method to promote the industry. If you intend to bring a tree, please email or text the executive secretary of your intentions just in case more trees are entered than typically displayed. Recommendation: bring your own container to water your tree.
- 2) 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 and identified with your name and retail value.



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Lowell and Linda Worthey with their family, friends and employees will host the Sunday farm tour on Worthey Tree Farm near Amory. Amory is in northeast Mississippi 35 miles south southeast of Tupelo in Madison County. Sincere appreciation is extended to the Worthneys as they prepare their farm for our benefit. Make no mistake, there is a lot of work involved. If you would like to learn more of Worthey's farm, visit [www.WortheyTreeFarm.com](http://www.WortheyTreeFarm.com) or their FaceBook page "Worthey Tree Farm LLC".



### **Christmas Tree Industry Votes to Continue Research and Promotion Program**

As reported by USDA on June 13, 2019 and forwarded to SCTA by the Christmas Tree Promotion Board:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announced that Christmas tree producers and importers recently voted to continue their federal research and promotion program.

In the referendum held April 22 through May 17, 2019, 55 percent of Christmas tree producers and importers who voted were in favor of continuing the program. Christmas tree producers and importers who were subject to assessments during the period of September 1, 2018 through March 15, 2019, were eligible to participate in the referendum.

The Christmas tree research and promotion program was developed to strengthen the position of Christmas trees in the marketplace, to maintain and expand markets for Christmas trees and to carry out programs, plans, and projects designed to provide maximum benefits to the Christmas tree industry within the United States. The Christmas Tree Promotion Board has administered the program since 2015.

Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual commodities in the United States and abroad. Since 1966, Congress has authorized the development of industry-funded research and promotion boards to provide a framework for agricultural industries to pool their resources and combine efforts to develop new markets, strengthen existing markets, and conduct important research and promotion activities. The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) provides oversight of 22 boards, paid for by industry assessments, which helps ensure fiscal accountability and program integrity.

## Christmas Tree Grower Field Day

The Christmas Tree Grower Field Day held Saturday April 13, 2019 on Grant Farms (716 Whitaker Road, Grant, LA 70644; [www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com](http://www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com)) in Allen Parish of central west Louisiana was a tremendous success especially under the threat of stormy weather.



Hosts Mollie and Gray Anderson along with Bentley Curry (Curry Farms, Rayville, La.), Kevin Steele (Steele's Christmas Tree Farm & Steele's Saje Shearing Machine, Angie, La.) and others made it educational, interesting and enjoyable. Leave it up to truly enthusiastic Christmas tree farmers to make it happen even by giving a right proper tree planting demonstration in a big tub of dirt in the barn under a heavy downpour. Now, that's making it work and one of the reasons why SCTA has been so successful!

Coffee, donuts and a heck of a good lunch satisfied 28 good folks from the region.

Thank you everyone for making it happen especially Mollie and Gray.

### 2018 New Members

Please welcome new members who joined this quarter. Be sure to look for them during the annual meeting.

George & Denise Brogdon, Sugar Hill Christmas Tree Farm , 1065 Sugar Hill Drive, Moscow, TN 38057; [GABrogdon@gmail.com](mailto:GABrogdon@gmail.com); 901.283.5071. Planted 2019.

Tim & Brenda Parker, Parker Acres Farm, 16203 Old Ganey Road, Bay Mineyee, AL 36507; [ParkerAcresFarm@gmail.com](mailto:ParkerAcresFarm@gmail.com); 251.937.0470. Planted 2017.

Brandon & April Voyles, 1606 Highway 348, Blue Springs, MS 38828; [VoylesApril@yahoo.com](mailto:VoylesApril@yahoo.com); 662.316.2162. Plant 2020.

### 2019 Nominating Committee & 2020/2021 SCTA Director Position Nominations

The 2018/2019 state director positions for Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi will be open for the 2020/2021 term. The positions are presently held by Paul Beavers (AL), Kevin Steele (LA) and Larry Massey (MS). *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 your appropriate state committee member no later than 12:00 pm July 25, 2019. 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 Alabama, Louisiana or Mississippi.

The 2019 Nominating Committee consists of Paul Beavers (Alabama), Kevin Steele (Louisiana), and Larry Massey (Mississippi). Mailing addresses for the nominating committee members are:

Paul Beavers, 10093 Bradford Trafford Road, Trafford, AL 35172  
Kevin Steele, 56459 Dollar Road, Angie, LA 70426  
Larry Massey 5819 Gunter Road, Walnut Grove, MS 39189

## Friday August 9

03:00 PM – 05:30 PM **Registration - Hilton Garden Inn** (lobby)  
02:00 PM – 05:00 PM **Exhibitor & Tree Competition Set-Up**  
**BancorpSouth Conference Center** (foyer)  
*Exhibitors:* Tables will be identified or check with the executive secretary for table location.  
*Tree Contestants:* Check with the executive secretary or BancorpSouth staff for placement. Obtain entry form from the executive secretary, complete and return. Where possible, place trees between adjacent exhibitors. *All need to be out by 5:00 PM. The facility will be locked.*

06:00 PM – 08:00 PM **Board of Director's Dinner**  
**Romie's Grocery & Rob Lesley Catering**  
804 West Jackson Street, Tupelo, MS 38804; (662) 842-8986; [www.Romies.net](http://www.Romies.net)  
*Non board members & families are certainly welcome to dine but please do not confuse your party with SCTA's board reservation. Thank you.*

08:30 PM – 10:00 PM **SCTA Board Meeting - Hilton Garden Inn** (Walnut Room)

## Saturday August 10

**BancorpSouth Conference Center** (Conference Hall)

06:00 AM – 08:30 AM **Exhibitor & Tree Competition Set-Up** (foyer)  
08:00 AM – 10:30 AM **On-Site Registration** (foyer)  
08:00 AM – 09:00 AM **Visit with Exhibitors & Friends**  
09:00 AM – 09:30 AM **Opening Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance & Welcome**  
09:30 AM – 10:30 AM **Panel Session 1A**  
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM **Break / Visit with Vendors & Friends**  
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM **Panel Session 1B**, continued  
12:00 PM – 01:30 PM **Buffet Lunch**  
01:30 PM – 02:30 PM **Panel Session 2A**, continued  
02:30 PM – 03:00 PM **Break / Visit with Our Vendors & Friends**  
03:00 PM – 04:00 PM **Panel Session 2B**, continued  
04:00 PM – 04:30 PM **General Membership Business Meeting**  
06:00 PM – 09:00 PM **Buffet Dinner, Tree Competition Awards, Auction**

## Sunday August 11

09:00 AM – 12:30 PM **Farm Tour Worthey Tree Farm**  
12:30 PM – 01:30 PM **Lunch**  
01:30 PM **Adjourn & Return Home Safely** *Alabama next!*

## **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](http://www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org).

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

## **Congratulations**

Congratulations to Wendy Ellis and John Sallis for they finally bought their farm! Wendy and John have attended SCTA's meetings for a couple years now while they researched Christmas trees and found the property they wanted to purchase. They bought the farm! Members will be anxious to hear about your news. Good luck!

## **SCTA Representative to NCTA**

Bentley Curry of Curry Farms in Louisiana has served in various positions with the National Christmas Tree Association and other organized efforts within the industry as well as SCTA's designated representative to NCTA. He has definitely served SCTA in every capacity. SCTA extends its gratitude for his unselfish involvement. Bentley will step down as SCTA's representative sometime in the future. Consideration and thought should be given as to who should fill the position. A discussion will probably take place during SCTA's upcoming membership meeting.

## **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) 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 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](mailto:sctaes@gmail.com).

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Attachments: none