



President's Message

First things first, hoping the best for all of you and a great big thank you for all the folks who continue do important work to support WWFRF and our Fruit Garden.

As usual, drafting the President's Message for the WWFRF newsletter has been put off to the very last minute. For my last several messages I was able to draw on information I had gleaned talking to different folks at work parties, meetings, and events and live discussions about current issues in our Fruit Garden. I was able to work in the garden several times this summer (within the COVID-19 protocols of course) but communication was very limited. So folks, I'm shooting from the hip on this one....

With very limited volunteer activity, many maintenance tasks were reduced or skipped this year. Fruit thinning always seems under resourced, and was even more so this year. A lot more summer pruning would also have been desirable. Fortunately, the nature of a non-commercial demonstration orchard means that there will be few negative impacts on the long-term health of the garden. I am very encouraged by many thing that did and will get done which demonstrates that our organization appears to remain sustainable despite an overwhelming "off year".

We have a new and vastly improved blueberry enclosure framework and a thorough sheet mulching of north blueberry plantings. The struggling trees in our Slender Spindle display have been replaced with five new nicely feathered Cosmic Crisp trees donated by Joe Biringer. Despite the limitations, it was gratifying to see that when I did get to visit the garden, it was well mowed (or was being mowed) and the site never looked neglected.

Behind the scenes, a good deal of administrative activity has occurred that is equally crucial to our success. Business and financial activity continues to be managed and reviewed with increased board involvement. Garden inventory system continues to evolve with discussions and planning for a robust future implementation.

Perhaps most impressive is the harvest distribution plan developed to respond to the cancellation of the 2020 Apple and Pear Sample the Harvest Day. You'll read more about that in the pages to follow. We have a number of people who will be putting in a lot of work to make it happen.

So here are some of my parting thoughts for opportunities for the future. I've been thinking about these for a while and hope to discuss them with members when communication improves.

1. We should try to help people understand that our Garden is part of a local ecosystem. The health of that system is directly related to the health of our Garden and our community. To support this idea, we need understory, island and border plantings which support pollinators, pest parasites and predators.
2. We need to more efficiently manage the soil in the Fruit Garden to maximize healthy soil within a healthy eco system. Cloud Mountain Farm uses a system of mulching with dairy solids that we should investigate further.

We have the advantage of not facing limitations based on the need for annual production so we have more freedom to experiment.

Other important thoughts? Keep hope alive and be sure to vote your conscience in November.

Bob Baines, President

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Apple and Pear Day Alternative

October 2020

Our Sample the Apple and Pear Harvest Day is canceled this year, because of Washington State University (WSU) site restrictions due to COVID-19.

As an alternative way of getting apples and pears from the Fruit Garden to our members, the volunteers will be picking the fruit; **current members only** will have the opportunity to get a time slot appointment to pick up the fruit in the Discovery Garden parking lot at WSU Mount Vernon. An email will be sent out on the week of the 21st of September to current members along with a link to a web page with all information, and a link to make your appointment to pick up fruit.

Check the email which delivered this newsletter to see if your membership needs to be renewed in order to participate.

Fruit Garden Report

First and foremost, I want to send out a huge thanks to Thomas Wake, our Fruit Garden Manager. He has handled the adjustments that the COVID-19 virus has imposed upon us with a very deft hand, keeping Volunteers able to keep working in the Fruit Garden while maintaining appropriate safety protocols.



Jay and Chris with the wagon showing the new sides. Thank you Chris for all your work!

Kristan Johnson

New things developing in the Fruit Garden include:

1. A new commercial grade wooden bench, to be located in front of the English walnut (for some shade).
2. A major rebuild of a field wagon used for transporting branches, etc. See photo to left.
3. Shift of plants in the Tatura trellis, removing older, duplicated Bosc pears, and replacing them with various cherries on Gisela-3 rootstock (the most dwarfing of the Gisela rootstock series). Many people are very interested in the future results of this trial.
4. We want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication the crew has applied in re-mulching the blueberries! See photo below.



The new blueberry netting framework is working well.

NW Fruit Board Meeting

June 27, 2020

11:00 am – 1:30 pm

Zoom video meeting

Attending: Dennis, Kim, Jay, John, Celeste, Bob, Larry, Ira, Kristan, Colleen, Joanne, Sam

Minutes from last meeting – The minutes of the meeting from February 8, 2020, were read and approved.

Membership Report – Joanne – We currently have only 52 memberships, which is very low due to not having our events this year, especially not having the Winter Field Day. Richard Fairfield suggested we mail out something to help boost membership. Kim and Joanne to work on sending out an email. Bob and Kristan to review the email before it is sent out.

Financial Report – Dennis - All taxes have been filed for this year. Kristan noted that the only large expense we have coming up within the next couple of years is the cherry block structure and netting. Financial report reviewed and passed.

Better utilization of video meetings – The Publicity committee that was formed last meeting made no progress. The fact that we didn't have any events to publicize is part of the reason, but also, we need to have a better way of accomplishing things during the COVID-19 restrictions. Celeste suggested that we could make better use of Zoom meetings to get things done as a group. Celeste explained about breakout rooms and demonstrated screen sharing. Talked about having a working document that a group of people can all work on at one time during a breakout session. Celeste hosted a meeting after the board meeting to demonstrate some of these Zoom features. We will try to have another meeting to learn more. Bob motioned that we get a year's professional subscription to Zoom. Celeste 2nd. Should be used with an email for the board of directors (BOD) and not an individual. Passed unanimously. Kim to purchase since she has access to the Gmail account for the BOD (nwfruitbod@gmail.com).

Fruit Garden Committee report – Kristan explained what had been covered in the Fruit Garden meeting on June 20th for those who were not at the meeting.

Old business

Online access of documents for board members – Kim has set up a Gmail account nwfruitbod@gmail.com in order to use the drive for documents. The newsletters going back 10 years are already posted. Other documents will be added.

New Business:

Insurance quotes – John – Do we need professional liability insurance? There were various opinions expressed about whether we need professional liability or not. We can put disclaimers on our information and newsletters, and for the scion wood sale. We can use best practices for not spreading diseaseZ. The idea of working with WSU to get sponsorship to have insurance under WSU was brought up. It was decided that we need to get more information before we can decide whether we want to have this type of relationship with WSU, as it might change what we can and can't do as an

organization. John is going to contact CIMA Volunteers Insurance to get more information about their insurance. We need a waiver of liability for volunteers who use ladders. Dennis will chair (set up meetings and host the meetings) a group with John, Larry, and Ira to design a waiver and a policy to enforce.

Postponement of General Membership meeting – Kim – If we are able to have out 2020 Apple and Pear Sample the Harvest Day, we can have our General Membership meeting then. If not we will have an email meeting and ask for a vote on board members.

Ideas suggested to help take the place of events: We could have small groups come in to harvest as trees ripen or pick fruit and make packages that members can come and pick up. We need online opportunities to reach out to members. Online classes? Apple identification as a subject? Celeste, Bob, Ira, John, Sam, and Kristan to work on these ideas. The group will have Zoom meetings. After setting Zoom meeting time all groups and committees will send an email listing the meeting to Kim to put on calendar with the nwfruitbod@gmail.com account.

Benches – Kristan – motioned that we authorize up to \$300 for a bench in the fruit garden. Passed.

Next Board meeting – Kim will send out a Doodle survey for the BOD meeting in August.

Board Members – Colleen has volunteered to be a director so she is on the BOD and will be voted in by membership at the next opportunity.

NW Fruit Board Meeting

August 22, 2020

11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Zoom video meeting

Attending: Dennis, Kim, Bob, Jay, Kristan, Ira, Colleen, Larry, John K.

Guests: Tom Wake

Minutes from last meeting – Kim read the minutes from the meeting on June 22, 2020. The minutes were approved.

Financial Report – Dennis had previously emailed the financial report covering 2020 up to August 18 to each board member. Revenue and expenses are down due to COVID-19. The current cash balance for the general fund is over \$17,000 the current cash balance for the Fruit Garden is over \$20,000.

We do not have auditable financial records for the first half of 2019 due to not receiving the receipts from the last treasurer. Kim will set up a financial review for the months that Dennis was Treasurer.

Dennis estimates that we will have \$1,300 more in expenses to pay this year, all other expenses have been paid. The financial report was approved unanimously.

Better utilization of video meetings – Kim has purchased the Zoom professional account and we have had several meetings of committees.

Fruit Garden Committee report – Materials for the bench have been purchased and will be installed. The wagon was repaired. The blueberry netting project is working well for keeping birds out of the blueberries. We will be taking out some of the Bosc Tatura-trellised pears and putting in cherries instead.

Publicity meeting report – A document was created and worked on in a Zoom meeting and the committee will be moving forward on publicity.

Old business

Insurance – Dennis and Kim – We had a Zoom meeting with the lawyer about our insurance needs several days before the board meeting. After some discussion it was decided that we will not get professional liability coverage, only general liability and D & O liability, with a couple of add-ons. Dennis, John K. and Kim are going to move forward with finding out whether we can get a lower amount of coverage on a couple of the line items in the insurance with a corresponding lowering of the premium and then purchase the new insurance policies. Dennis will speak with his son about ways we can lower our risk, since he works in this area.

Apple and Pear Day – We need to find a way of harvest distribution under the WSU COVID-19 site restrictions since the gardens are closed to the public.

Colleen will be the liaison for the blueberry team to harvest for a local charitable group, the Skagit Gleaners, as one way to distribute part of the harvest. Tom will be in charge of letting them know which fruit they can harvest for the Skagit Gleaners. Approved.

We will get WSU input of how we can allow limited numbers of members at a time come to pick up fruit that has been harvested by the Fruit Garden volunteers. The varieties will be labeled. We will announce in the newsletter that fruit will be available for pickup. Current members will make an online appointment, and will come at their appointed time to pick up their fruit. Members will only have a short time slot within which to get their fruit. We will put up a web page about how to make an appointment to pick up apples and send the link only to current members. The September email newsletter, which is always sent out to current members and those whose membership has expired within the last two years, will detail this so that former members will have the opportunity to update their membership before the harvest time. Ira will find a scheduler for us to use online. Tom will check with WSU to see if we can have members come to the parking lot to pick up apples.

MOU – We need to have the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WSU updated and renewed, since it has expired. WSU has not contacted us about this since COVID-19 started. Bob will contact WSU about this.

New Business:

Volunteer apple pressing – Due to COVID-19 we will not have apple pressing this year.



New Cosmic Crisp slender spindle *Photo by Bob Baines*



The Gravenstein crop *Photo by Bob Baines*



Western Washington Fruit Research Foundation Membership Form

DATE: _____
NAME: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ 9-DIGIT ZIP: _____
TELEPHONE: (_____) _____

Please check all applicable lines to designate type of membership and/or extra donation:

- _____ \$25 FOR ANNUAL **INDIVIDUAL** MEMBERSHIP *(One person only)*
_____ \$40 FOR ANNUAL **FAMILY** MEMBERSHIP *(Parents with their minor children)*
_____ \$ _____ FOR **GIFT** MEMBERSHIP FOR: *(Please note for Whom Above)*
_____ \$60 FOR ANNUAL **SUSTAINING** MEMBERSHIP *(Individual or family membership with higher level of financial support)*
_____ \$125 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (List Only)** MEMBERSHIP *(Includes 3 people, and also includes business name on our website)*
_____ \$200 FOR ANNUAL **COMMERCIAL (Full)** MEMBERSHIP
(Includes 3 people, and also includes a link from our website to the commercial members' website)
_____ AN **EXTRA DONATION** of \$ _____ FOR **GENERAL FUND** **FRUIT GARDEN**

I would like to volunteer to help as follows (please check all applicable lines):

- _____ FIELD WORK IN THE **WWFRF FRUIT DISPLAY GARDEN** *(usually held every Thursday from 9am-12noon; Jan-Nov.)*
_____ HELP AT THE **WINTER FIELD DAY** *(1st Saturday in March)*
_____ **NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW** in Seattle *(usually held in February every year)*
_____ **BY DOING WORK I CAN DO IN MY OWN HOME USING MY COMPUTER OR TELEPHONE**

Please make your check payable to: WWFRF and MAIL your completed membership form and check to:

**WWFRF
C/O Joanne Hilgart, Membership
6160 Everson Goshen Rd
Everson, WA 98247-9766**



Website: NW Fruit.org

Mission: WWFRF exists to advance fruit horticultural programs for our unique Western Washington maritime climate through advocacy, research, education, and demonstration for the benefit of the general public and the small farmer.