***President’s Message***

Greetings,

Spring is here or maybe we will just go into summer. The weather still seems

to be making some real swings in temperature and precipitation. Hopefully

normal weather patterns will prevail.

As I write this message, apple bloom is mostly over. We have had good

pollinating weather and the fruit set looks good. We need to be thinking

about thinning, and as usual it is always a real challenge on what to use,

when to thin, and we don’t need to go to Vegas.

The Pennsylvania tart cherry crop seems to be very poor and the word I have

gotten is that most growers will not need to harvest. The sweet cherry crop

fared better, but is light.

We need to be in contact with our legislators on the situation of EPA and PADEP

on regulating all bodies of water, ponds, small streams and other bodies

of water. I understand a consent period will come soon, watch for it. The

control they are talking about would have a negative effect on production

in agriculture. Immigration reform still is in a holding pattern and hopefully

common sense will prevail.

We can be thankful we have not had the weather the Midwest has had the

past several weeks. Others misfortunes make our problems not so bad.

Hopefully this letter will find you healthy and ready to tackle the challenge

of our growing season and successful harvest. Eat some fruit and spread the

word about how great it tastes and how healthy it is for you. Take time to

enjoy your family as time flies by fast.

***Tim Weiser,***

***SHAP President***

***Editorial Views***

*By Dr. Rob Crassweller*

**“Bits and Pieces”**

We had our first set of twilight tree fruit meetings at the beginning of the

month and will wrap them up the end of this week. This is one of the few

years that I can remember having twilight meetings when there was actual

bloom on the fruit trees. In going around the state it seems as if there was/is

variable bloom and cold damage. Peaches at Rock Springs are non-existent

except for a few solitary blooms. We have no sweet cherries and our tarts

are too young. Interesting, however, are the peach trees

we planted a couple of years ago at the Master Gardener

Demonstration site next door at the Ag Progress Days site

which were loaded with bloom. Asian pears seem to be

setting a nice crop. In apples we have some damage to

king bloom in early cultivars like McIntosh and Idared;

but by and large we have a lot of fruit set potential. The

damage most likely occurred on April 16 when we had

21oF at the Horticulture Farm. Vinifera wine grapes up in

Erie also took it on the chin. When I was up in the area in

the middle of May, Pinot Noir and Syrah were seriously

hurt and the other vinifera cultivars were also damaged

to some extent. Around the state, peaches in central to

northern Pennsylvania are pretty much non-existent as

well. In southern and south central areas, some peach

varieties were also damaged. I think we also escaped the

cold weather of the last few days, May 6 (35oF) and May

17 (38oF).

Last week driving to the twilight meetings it was interesting

to see all the wild apple seedlings in bloom. No wonder

I get inundated with apple samples in the fall to identify.

I saw wild apple seedlings along interstates as well as

in old overgrown woodlots. Sometimes I wonder if one

of these chance seedlings could be “the next big thing”.

Probably very unlikely but you never know.

Classes ended the first Friday in May and graduation was

held Mother’s Day. This was the first time the College

of Agricultural Sciences held graduation in Bryce Jordan

Center. We have outgrown Eisenhower Auditorium;

last year there was not enough room for all the parents

and relatives that wanted to attend. Those of you who

remember your graduation in the cozy confines of the

auditorium can probably relate to the need for expanding

to a larger venue.

While Penn State has a new president, Dr. Eric Barron,

we are still without a new dean of the college. We are

very fortunate that Dr. Barb Christ has continued to serve

as our interim dean. Barb has a good appreciation of the

horticultural industries.

Summer at Penn State means fewer people on campus

but that does not mean it is easier to get around. Every

summer there is always some road construction, however,

this summer has to be the worst in all my years at the

University. The university is converting from coal fired

heating system to natural gas so many roads on campus

and leading to campus are torn up to lay the new pipes.

It is so bad, that I have moved off campus to an office

out at Rock Springs. The commute is much nicer and less

troublesome. I have a new phone number 814-692-2184.

The nice thing is, at present, I do not have an answering

machine hooked up to the line so the best way to contact

me will be via email at rmc7@psu.edu.