***President’s Message***

*By Tim Weiser*

Greetings! By the time you read this issue, we will be into peach harvest for those who have peaches, and the hope that those who lost their peach crop will be able to secure their peach needs.

Size and quality of the peach and nectarine crop seems to be good, some varieties of peaches and plums have a lite crop, and hopefully we will have enough labor to harvest our crop. Immigration seems to be going nowhere! We have had the largest push ever from the consumers of America. They want American grown fruit and vegetables with good quality and that are safe to consume. They want to buy local and they don’t want to pay the carbon expense of shipped fruit and vegetables.

Congress and the President need a reality check. Without good reliable labor, the food production in America will not continue. In 2013, there was a labor shortage and food was left unharvested. I expect the same situation will exist in 2014. Congress will spend millions to secure an oil supply, but refuses to guarantee a supply of labor and food for Americans. Maybe we need a food shortage in Washington!

I would like to congratulate Dr. Richard Roush, who has been named Dean of the College of Agriculture at Penn State. He comes to Penn State from the position of Dean at the University of Melbourne’s School of Land and Environment in Australia.

I would also like to thank Dr. Barbara Christ for filling in as interim Dean until a replacement was found for Bruce McPheron. Job well done Barbara. Let’s hope for good weather, a successful harvest and good health!

***Editorial Views***

*By Dr. Rob Crassweller*

**Ongoing Events at Rock Springs**

If you stay at one position long enough, what goes around comes around. Back in the late 1980’s Tyson was totally renovated with new windows, heat and ventilation system and asbestos removal. Well, this May it was time to renovate the renovation, and remove the asbestos a third time. It seems that previous asbestos removal was never completed because each time they ran out of money. Hopefully they will finally get all of it removed and will replace the electrical and heating and cooling systems again. While they will not actually get to my office until next May, the main thoroughfare to move all the old duct work and electrical fixtures is right past my office door.

So, as mentioned in a previous column, I have moved out to Rock Springs as I did back in the late 1980’s. I had forgotten how nice it is to be off campus, especially during the growing season; and being able to dash across the street to work in the orchard.

This spring has been especially busy. Our 2010 NC-140 planting looks to have the best crop since we planted the trees. At this point some of the rootstocks are much too vigorous, but we also have some that are very non-vigorous. Currently some nice looking Aztec Fuji are on G.202 and G.935. We were successful in finally doing a good job of thinning our Gala

rootstock trial and fruit is growing well. Actually, on most varieties fruit size is exceptionally large. I have some 3 inch diameter Shizuka apples here in the middle of July.

The Asian pear variety block we planted in 2010 has a good crop. We have eleven different varieties all on Pyrus betulafolia rootstock. We had to hand thin them because we missed the window for chemicals, but fruit size should be good. All I need to figure out is how to sell them.

The wine grapes we planted last spring really took a beating. Many of the vinifera were severely damaged, while the French hybrids fared much better. Our new viticulturist, Michela Centinari, will have her hands full in the coming years as she will expand the wine grape plantings at Rock Springs.

Our peaches look pretty rough this year. Last fall I taught the tree fruit course which means we had the students pruning peaches in December. This is not a good idea! Most of the Starfire trees we pruned will not be around this time next year. We actually do have some fruit on

the ones that we did not prune in December, not many, but enough to make one or two pies. I figured December pruning would catch up with us so we planted some new peach trees this spring as replacements. Also, as part of the class we planted some apple trees last fall in

November. To my surprise, they all survived with only a little tip dieback. Again, this is something I would not recommend for our area!

The best new planting this year was a new NC-140 rootstock trial with Aztec Fuji and Honeycrisp. The main purpose of the trial is to see how some new Vineland rootstocks will perform. The rootstocks are either M.9 or M.26 size, cold hardy and resistant to fire blight. The Aztec Fuji trees on the Vineland rootstocks were exceptionally well feathered and large. I was tempted to let them fruit this year because they were so big. We also planted two of the of the new semi-dwarf Geneva rootstocks, G.890 and G.969. Trees will be trained as Tall Spindles and we hope that with the high bud unions will keep the trees under control.

This planting as well as the 2010 rootstock trial are all possible because of support from the SHAP research committee funding. Elsewhere in this issue is an abstract from an article that was published in the Journal of the American Pomological Society on the 2003 NC-140

planting. That planting was also the direct result of support from the Research Committee. I appreciate the continued support for this work from the industry.