***President’s Message***

As the newly elected president of the State Horticultural Association of Pennsylvania, I thought my first entry to this newsletter should be an introduction. I am a third generation fruit grower who grew up working and playing on my family’s 600-acre orchard in Adams County. Many of you may have known my grandfather Fremont, or know my father Louy.

I received my Bachelor’s degree in Horticulture from Delaware Valley College in 1991. I have been employed as the Orchard Production Manager and Retail Farm Market Manager for the Masonic Villages in Elizabethtown, PA in northern Lancaster County for the past 25 years.

The Masonic Village is a 1400 acre, 1500 resident retirement community for members of the Masonic fraternity. The first fruit trees were planted in 1911 as part of a total farm operation that raised fruit, vegetables, beef cattle, chickens, pigs, turkeys, ducks, and peacocks. Horses and mules were also housed and used through the 1950’s for powering tillage equipment and logging. The farms also consisted of 150 head of dairy cows, and had 40,000 sq. ft. of greenhouse production. The farm operation along with a coal powered heat and power plant, abattoir, sawmill, bakery and cannery allowed the Masonic Village to be totally self-sufficient from 1920 through 1965. As the resident population continued to increase and labor costs began to rise, the Masonic Village, like most institutional farming operations, struggled to continue the self-sufficiency model. The agricultural department has made necessary adjustments over the past 50 years to keep the beautiful agricultural campus setting where urbanites yearn to retire, while at the same time maintaining an operation efficient enough to pay expenses and put some funds back into resident care. The current operation consists of 700 acres of field crops, 200 head of Shorthorn beef cattle, and 100 acres of tree fruit. Our landscape department maintains 100 ornamental acres that are listed as a national arboretum.

Our current Orchard encompasses about 100 acres, consisting of apples, peaches, nectarines, pears, plums, apricots, hardy kiwi, sweet cherries, tart cherries and pumpkins. In order to make the farm market experience enticing for the Masonic Village residents and surrounding community, we supplement what we grow with produce from local growers. We also sell our own Premium Dry Aged beef from our cattle in the Farm Market and hand dipped ice cream from Trickling Springs Creamery in Chambersburg. Our Farm Market is open year round and we welcome Masonic Village residents as well as the local community to shop at our market. We also offer many of our products for sale on our web site at [www.MVFarmmarket.com](http://www.MVFarmmarket.com). Produce is also provided to our food service department for resident meals and we participate in local farmer’s markets during the summer months. We offer Pick Your Own apples and pumpkins and we run a 150 member CSA through 16 drop off points at local businesses. The orchard and farm market employs two full time and up to 40 part time employees, so I have plenty to keep me busy.

After serving on the SHAP Board of Directors for the past four years, I’ve come to realize how much I didn’t understand about what SHAP and all the committees do. Before being elected I couldn’t have guessed half the things SHAP gets involved in and the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes. Because of the visibility, fruit growers in the state see the apple booth at the PA Farm Show and the Mid-Atlantic Fruit and Vegetable Convention in Hershey which are huge projects each year, but not all the other glue that holds the industry together. The board also is involved in extension advisement, legislative activity, research, fundraising and communications with SHAP members through this newsletter.

I would be remiss if I did not mention what a great team of experts we have to represent our industry including researchers at FREC, Cooperative Extension, our Executive Secretary and some great industry leaders that jump in with leadership and monetary support when important issues arise that affect us as an industry. The fact that we as an industry were able to raise $252,000 in one year to support the building of new graduate housing at FREC is astonishing. Also impressive is the $250,000 that goes towards research each year. When faced with voicing our collective opinion on the state budget issue and USDA support of postharvest research,

a letter was composed and sent to the proper entities within 48 hours. The issues that face our industry will never come to an end, but it’s comforting to know we have SHAP to help stand our ground and fight for the industry we believe in.

I’m excited by what I’ve learned so far and what is yet to learn about our industry and this great group of unsung heroes. An election to the SHAP Board of Directors is like receiving the secret password to enter the horticultural underground. The networking and people you meet are a great experience and I highly recommend saying yes when you are asked to serve. Better yet, shoot me an email and offer your services.

Tad Kuntz

SHAP President