

# AMERICAN PAULOWNIA ASSOCIATION

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## Annual Conference Report, Queenstown, Maryland 2016

As said before by our dear friend, past Editor and Association President, the late Ralph Donaldson, a major benefit of the American Paulownia Association membership is the Annual Conferences. The 25th Conference at Queenstown, Maryland was no exception.

This year's conference was, like last year's conference, supported through higher education institutions. Last year it was supported by Fort Valley State University through the efforts of Dr. Joshee Nirmal. This year's conference was held at the University of Maryland's Wye Research & Education Center. I want to publicly thank both universities for their support in the promotion of Paulownia. If the world only knew all the wonderful benefits and uses of paulownia, I believe public opinion would be much more open and



**Paulownia on the Capitol Grounds**



**MD DNR Director VanHassent**

positive to its promotion. This conference, once again, supported this opinion.

The title of this year's conference was "Mid-Atlantic Paulownia Timber, Production, and Alternative Uses". As is the norm, we started out with a welcome and "State of Forestry" presentation by Mr. Donald VanHassent, Maryland State Director of Forestry & Natural Resources. Here we learned the mission of the Forest Service is: "To restore, manage, and protect Maryland's trees, forests, and ecosystems to sustain our natural resources and connect people to the land." They have several programs to meet this mission. They include; The Forest Action Plan, The Forest Resource Assessment, The 2013 Forest Preservation Act, The Lawn to Woodland Program, and The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan. Like Tennessee, Maryland's private landowners own and control the majority of the forests; urban forestry included. And like Tennessee, they have their challenges as well with pests like the Thousand Cankers Disease of Black Walnut, the Emerald Ash Borer, and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid. Seems to me these pest challenges are another reason to promote

## President's Message. . .



Hi, this is George Newsome

First I'd like to thank Dan and Sharon Blickenstaff for putting on an excellent conference this year. I know other people helped including David Sutton, with some loose strings getting tied by the host and others. I was fascinated by all the speakers including topics like biochar, and even the caterers we're impressed with the woodworking/boat building skills of James Budi. His Paulownia kayak is a work of art. I have conducted a lengthy interview with James Budi about the details of the kayak which I will be presenting in a article probably in the next newsletter. I would just like to thank everyone who was able to attend a very informative conference this Spring.

Thank you!

paulownia plantings. These pest challenges are not an issue with paulownia. If you would like to find out more you can go on line at [www.dnr.maryland.gov](http://www.dnr.maryland.gov) or call Director VanHassent's office at (410) 260-8531.

After Mr. VanHassent's talk, we got right into the meat of this year's conference...Alternative uses with Mr. Dale Hendricks on the subject of biochar. He represented the International Biochar Initiative which can be found online at <http://www.biochar-international.org/>. He has been an advocate of biochar benefits since 2009 and, after listening to him, I have a better understanding as to why. Biochar is a soil



International Biochar Dale Hendricks

amendment that has been with us since the beginning of time. It is all natural. It is stable, lasting thousands of years. It is an excellent method to sequester carbon. Biochar promotes both plant health and growth by significantly improving the soil's properties. This includes, water holding capacity, retaining nutrients, and soil aeration. Biochar's microscopic structure is an ideal habitat for the beneficial bacteria and fungi soil flora.

Biochar is a special type of charcoal which has undergone pyrolysis under high heat and has literally cooked all the organics out of the material. Nothing is left but an organized matrix of carbon that is highly absorbent. Since there are no organics remaining, there is simply nothing left to rot.

Dr. Nirmal Joshee pointed out that the parent material in making the char is very important. Once again I felt as if I was back in a college class room looking at electron microscope slides of char. He pointed out that Paulownia appears to make a superior char over most other materials. This is validated in turf grass studies. Because of this, the demand for biochar on golf courses is on the rise. I think Paulownia makes a superior char due to the fact that the wood is not very dense. Paulownia's carbon matrix already has lots of air spaces grown between and it is these natural air spaces that make great char!



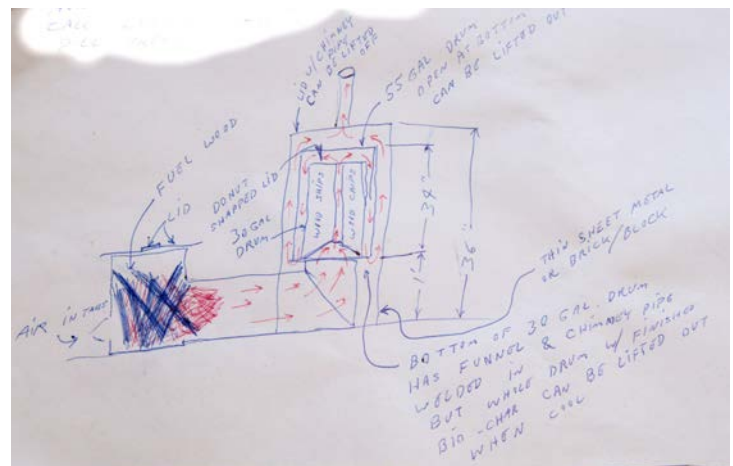
**Paulownia Multiple PurposeCrop**



**Dr. Nirmal Joshee**

I also talked about Paulownia biochar. I have played with the process of making the char and found out some interesting things. The first thing I found out is there are about as many ways of making char as there are in starting a fire. I tried 6 different ways, all with various degrees of success. I was looking for a low cost system that would give me a high conversion of material to char and at the same time make use of the major-by-product, heat. I wanted the process to burn clean with as little pollutants as possible. I ended up making char in my basement, using a modern wood stove using #10 food cans containing Paulownia wood chips. It took about 45 minutes to convert to char with temperatures exceeding 500 degrees Celsius. By volume about 50% was converted to char while the other 50% went to either heating my house or going up the chimney.

I also talked about ramial chips (RCW) using Paulownia. RCW is a wood product used in cultivation for mulching, fertilizing, and soil enrichment. I used it in my garden this Spring and have gotten some amazing results. I have found it to develop an airy, spongy soil that holds an ideal amount of water and resists evaporation and compaction, while containing a long-term source of fertility from the bark. For fertility, only small branches are used to make the carbon to nitrogen ratio more favorable.



**Biochar Retort Concept**

A few invited guest lecturers were unable to attend. This offered an opportunity to have Mr. Joe Cross from Florida, and Mr. E.L. Law from Malaysia present their stories. Our President Mr. George Newsome also spoke briefly about his trip to Washington DC. *Editor's comment:* In addition, member Jim Budi engaged the attendees with a "show-and-tell" about the details concerning his Paulownia kayak constructed entirely of Paulownia strip wood. What a useful and beautiful piece of art." (See pictures on page 4).





**Jim Budi Paulownia Kayak**



**Jim Budi Paulownia Kayak**

Mr. Cross is a sales representative with a company named Zero Gravity Solutions. The company's information can be found at <http://www.zerogsi.com/>. They have a product called BAM-

FX. It is an interesting product sold as a fertilizer and growth accelerator. However, it is not your normal N/P/K formula we are accustomed to. Rather, Mr. Cross stated that, "it is an ionic nutrient delivery system for crops, which works by enabling the systemic uptake of specific, targeted minerals and other nutrients.

I am not sure of the exact science behind it all; however, I do know that the uptake of nutrients in the plants is in its elemental form, cation". I was given some samples...so I am going to give it a try.

Mr. Law has an interesting project going on in Malaysia, challenging us and the world to join in his effort to plant 1 million "Revo



**Capitol Paulownia & The Newsome's**



**Million-Tree Project E.L. Law**

Tropix Paulownia" trees in the unused lands of Malaysia. These are cloned trees from his labs, designed for the tropical weather of Malaysia. His group claims their "RevoTropix Paulownia" tree is able to grow as high as 18 feet and achieve a diameter of more than six inches within 8 months. He and his team need support to save the native forest trees and native wildlife habitat. Our Association will follow this project and plan to report on progress in a future newsletter article. You may assist in this reforestation project by donations made at his web site, [www.million-tree.com](http://www.million-tree.com).



Pitz Quattrone poses with a collection of his didgeridoos at his home in East Montpelier on Friday. Quattrone is starting a new business called the Didgeridoo Vibroacoustic Experience that will offer sound vibration therapy for ailments ranging from depression and anxiety to addiction and Parkinson’s disease.

MONTPELIER — An East Montpelier man plans to combine his love for an ancient Australian wind instrument and a desire to help others when he opens his Didgeridoo Vibroacoustic Experience studio. The studio will offer alternative ways of healing, according to Pitz Quattrone. The Didgeridoo Vibroacoustic Experience, as Quattrone explains it, involves a specially designed, vibrating sound-table. Patients lie down to hear and feel a mix of specifically-produced recorded music, gathered nature sounds and roaming live didgeridoo.

In an interview Friday, Quattrone recalled his previous experience working at a vibroacoustic center in Maryland. First, the patient would lay down on the sound table, which is basically a mattress with speakers placed inside. Recorded music then plays from inside the mattress and over the studio’s external speakers, all while four musicians also play live in the room. The live music also gets piped through the sound system and into the table, making for a potent mix of sound and vibration. “The speakers are in tune with all the vibration of the music that we are playing,” said Quattrone. In planning for his own vibroacoustic studio, Quattrone has been specifically recording Vermont nature sounds that he will incorporate into the sessions.

“And, I’m also going to play the didgeridoo (live) through all of this and mix that in,” he continued. “So the person will hear the didgeridoo organically in the P.A. system and into the sound table with all this other music that is happening. They will feel it in the vibroacoustic sound bed. The person who is laying on the sound table hears everything but they also feel it up and down their bodies through the sound table,” he explained. The purpose of it all is to heal. According to Quattrone, certain soundboard combinations will be catered to specific ailments such as depression, insomnia, chronic back and neck pain, arthritis, addiction, headaches, Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue syndrome, asthma, and fibromyalgia. Vibroacoustic therapy has also been used for post stroke rehabilitation, autism, and treating attention deficit disorders.

Quattrone began playing the didgeridoo in the early 1990s. About two and a half years ago



he got connected with the Samara Healing Center in Taneytown, Maryland. There he worked with a sound therapist, acupuncturists and other musicians, incorporating the didgeridoo into vibroacoustic sound-table sessions. He also performed with a meditation ensemble, Sounds of Spirit. The ensemble often plays at yoga studios or in church basements, where they perform for up to two hours straight. "People come in and lay down, and we take them on a journey," said Quattrone. "It's an inner meditative trip that they go on."

The ensemble tours out of state, and played last summer at the Unitarian Church in Montpelier. Rose Englund lives in Maryland, outside of Baltimore. For the last two years she has been getting sound therapy treatment. She also enjoys Sounds of Spirit concerts. "Pitz is a musician who understands the healing gift of music and sound," she said, adding that working with Quattrone puts her at ease, helps her relax and gives her a sense of well being. She said she does the therapy sessions as often as possible, and that it helps her get through her week. I would recommend to anyone to explore the deep rhythms of the didgeridoo along with other sounds on that vibroacoustic table," she said.

Also at his new studio, Quattrone will be teaching "how to play" Didgeridoo workshops for sleep apnea sufferers and anyone else who is interested in the instrument. Quattrone has been working for years with patients struggling with sleep apnea. "I teach them how to play the didgeridoo because it strengthens lower throat muscles, which are usually the culprit in obstructive sleep apnea," he said. "Basically you give those muscles a workout so that they get back into shape. So they're not flabby and blocking the airway, and the apnea goes way down." Not only is the treatment backed by science, according to Quattrone, he has personally seen clients make progress with their sleep apnea with his own eyes, although it's no quick and simple fix.

"It's a commitment," he said. "You have to play it five days a week for about half an hour a day. But it's not drugs, it's not a machine, there's no health insurance involved and it's fun." He said it doesn't matter if one is musically inclined or not, it will help just the same. Quattrone plans to open his studio at the end of the summer. Right now he is at the tail end of fundraising to get it off the ground. He plans to open up shop in or near the Montpelier area.

*Thanks to the following for permission to publish: gina.tron @timesargus.com / Jeb Wallace-Brodeur - Staff Photo*

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Pitz Quattrone purchases green Paulownia stalks and canes, to fabricate didgeridoos, from Dan Blickenstaff in Hagerstown Maryland. Dan and his wife have attended the meditation ensemble event, Sounds of Spirit, and have become supporters of Pitz's Didgeridoo Vibroacoustic Experience studio project. To obtain further information and/or support this natural healing studio, go to the following web sites: <http://pitzquattrone.com/> <http://samarahealingcenter.com/sos-concert/>*

You will receive a nice t-shirt, cap, and a certificate of your trees giving the GPS locations and assigned numbers designating your trees.

Mr. George Newsome entertained us with some interesting pictures of Washington DC, including Paulownia trees on the capitol grounds, all neatly pruned and well cared for.



**Capitol Paulownia Dome Silhouette**



**Paulownia & Washington's Monument**

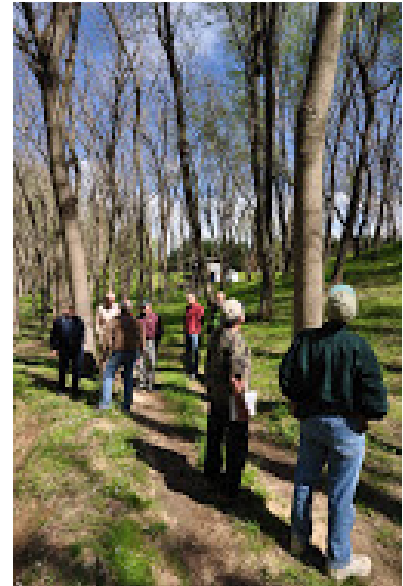
Danny Blickenstaff introduced the group to the newly formed “for profit consortium”, named Forestry, Agriculture, Reforestation and Management for the Marketing of Sustainable Timber (FARMMoST), LLC. Its purpose is to provide sales and marketing services for Paulownia timber and wood products for profit. It is a business totally independent of the American Paulownia Association (APA) and should not be confused with the formal APA organization. Anyone who meets the membership requirements stipulated by FARMMoST, LLC may submit an application to join, market their services and/or forestry products through the LLC, and share in the profits. Current members are Danny and Sharon Blickenstaff, George Newsome, Oliver Mizzell, Grady McIver, and I. If you have Paulownia timber to sale and the quality and/or the volume is acceptable, you should consider joining. For further information contact Danny Blickenstaff at [farmmost@verizon.net](mailto:farmmost@verizon.net) or by phone at (301) 790-2372.

Once again, if you missed this year's annual conference, you missed out on one of the major benefits of our organization. Hopefully, you will not miss out in 2017. Till we meet again.  
David Sutton, DDS

*EDITOR'S NOTE: As a result of the numerous photographs taken and the voluminous information provided during our Saturday field trips, a comprehensive report will be forthcoming in our next newsletter. Both the Fink's and the Bates' Paulownia plantations provided us with invaluable insight into some viable methods of Paulownia culture and marketing. Do not miss the next issue!*



Fink's 20-yr old *P. tomentosa*



Bates Plantation Regrowth



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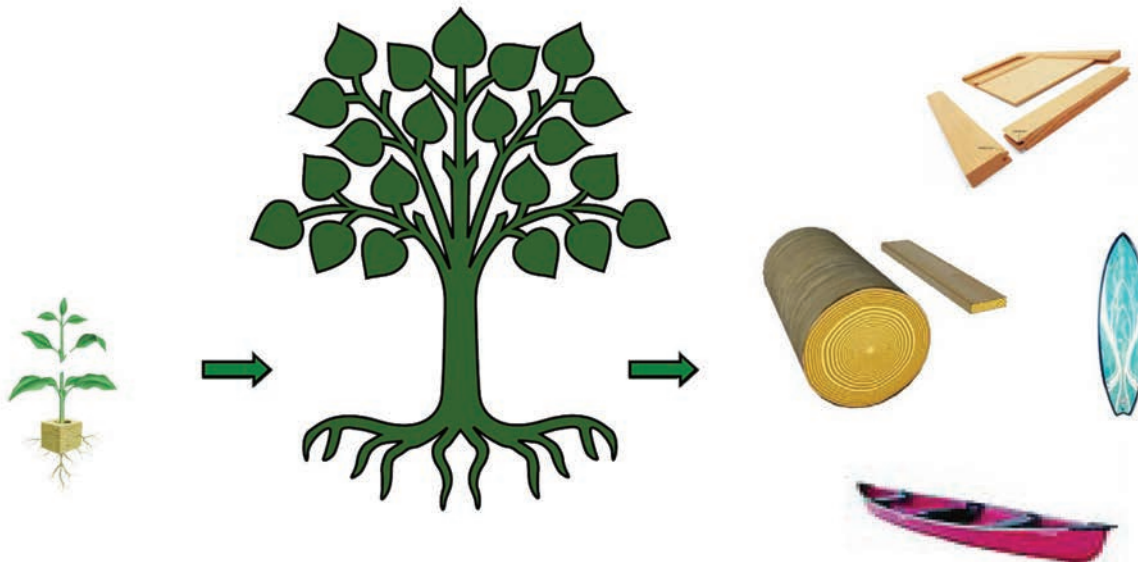
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