

# ***NHC NEWS***

***A Monthly Bulletin of the Northwest Horticultural Council***

## ***KAZAKHSTAN***

Christopher Robbins, an Englishman, has written a travel book published earlier this year on a steppe land in Central Asia unknown to most, Kazakhstan. This remote country was effectively shielded from the outer world during the span of time given to the USSR. Mr. Robbins relates many stories on many subjects related to his time spent in modern Kazakhstan, but one section of his book, *Apples Are From Kazakhstan*, especially captured the attention of our office. Following is a portion of this section, starting with words about the famous Soviet scientist and geneticist Nikolai Vavilov and his work in the late 1920s:

The whole of Almaty struck Vavilov as one great orchard, surrounded by forests of wild apples in which every tree was a different variety. After the Russian Revolution, the city formerly known as Verny had been renamed Alma-ata, meaning “Father of Apples,” and it was renamed once again after independence as Almaty—Kazakh for “appleness” (fittingly, the Kazakh word for man is *adam*).

Even today, modern Almaty is a city of apples. Away from the center’s main boulevards there are trees in every garden, some carefully pruned and tended, others gnarled and neglected. They lean crookedly against rickety fences, are left standing lonely in abandoned lots, and take up unlikely position beside bus stops and on street corners. And among the foothills of the Tien Shan, bordering Kyrgyzstan and China, the original Kazakh apple can still be found—ancestor of practically all the apples eaten in the world today. Further north, in the virgin vastness of the Dzungarian Alps,

wild apples flourish over thousands of acres, untended and so far unthreatened by man.

While the wild apples appear safe today in Kazakhstan, the fate of the apple-loving Soviet geneticist was less happy. Nicolai Vavilov after battling the pseudo-science of T.D. Lysenko—a favorite of Stalin—was unjustly imprisoned by the USSR in 1940 and died of dystrophia in 1943.

## ***WASHINGTON, D.C.***

Congress is scheduled for an early adjournment on September 26. This leaves few legislative days for any specific law-making other than on matters that absolutely require passage or—at the other extreme—are frivolous.

While possible, it is unlikely that there will be a lame duck session after the general federal election on November 11.

Major issues such as immigration reform and food safety are sure to be put off to the new 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, which will convene in January 2009.

The reason for this languid pace of legislative business is the looming change in Executive Branch leadership. It is certain our country soon will have a new president, either Republican or Democratic. The majority party now in control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate is of a mind to delay a whole range of important policy issues until after next January 20, Inaugural Day, when—in the current opinion of that party’s Congressional leadership—their candidate will be going to work in The Oval Office.



## *Travel*

### *Christian Schlect*

**September 9-13** – United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association's Government Relations Council meeting and United's Washington Public Policy Conference, Washington, D.C.

### *Mark Powers*

**September 8-12** – United Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Association's Washington Public Policy Conference, Washington, D.C.

**September 17** – Luncheon with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Guterrez sponsored by the Washington Council on International Trade, Seattle, Washington.

### *Mike Willett*

**September 4** – Pear Bureau Northwest's board meeting, Portland, Oregon.

**September 16-19** - Meeting of the Minor Crop Farmer Alliance Technical Committee, Washington, D.C.

**September 22-26** – USDA/Taiwan Plant Health Bilateral meeting, Bozeman, Montana.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,  
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;  
Conspiring with him how to load and bless  
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;  
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,  
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core...

**John Keats**  
*To Autumn*

*The Northwest Horticultural Council represents the deciduous tree fruit industry of Idaho, Oregon and Washington on national and international policy matters of interest to growers and shippers. Its full and associate members are:*

- *Columbia Gorge Fruit Growers*
- *Fruit Growers League*
- *Idaho Apple Commission*
- *Oregon Sweet Cherry Commission*
- *Pacific Northwest Canned Pear Service*
- *Washington Apple Commission*
- *Washington State Fruit Commission*
- *Washington Tree Fruit Research Comm.*
- *Wenatchee Valley Traffic Assn.*
- *Yakima Valley Growers-Shippers Assn.*

*The NHC also advises the Fresh Pear Committee (Portland) on certain issues related to food safety, crisis control and international trade.*



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