

# WOOD AND FIBER SCIENCE

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## TRANSITION TIME

This January 2011 issue is my last as Editor. It has been an interesting 3 years during a major transition to electronic management of the Journal. The elimination of hard copies throughout the submission and review process had a major impact on time to publication, which has gone from an average of 14 to 6 mo. We also added a “prepublication” listing to our web site further shortening the time to 4 mo.

When I came on as Editor, although I had a reasonable amount of editorial experience, I found the responsibility considerably greater than I expected. The major challenge is to get excellent and timely inputs from reviewers. To those who fulfill this obligation, I thank them for the substantial and constructive impact on the quality of our articles. We will never have too many of them!

Recently, I read that editors should work to improve not only the quality of manuscripts, but also the quality of research in the field. By quality of manuscripts, we usually mean grammatical and technical aspects. I would guess that close to one-half of the manuscripts that we receive are a bit short in both of these aspects. That is not to deprecate the research findings but the presentations. I feel that the Editor of this journal, considering the wide range of subjects and authors, has a special obligation to be sure that a published article is in the best possible condition, a credit to the author(s), and improves the quality of research reported. I must say that I appreciate the acceptance of authors of my “light editing” of their manuscripts. On the other end of the spectrum are manuscripts that are not approved for publication. Rarely are these defective; more often they have been submitted prematurely and lack the approach or information that would constitute a meaningful contri-

bution to the literature. In this case, the Editor owes the author detailed feedback from reviewers so that they can revisit the manuscript or research and complete a suitable piece of work.

Another important role of the Editor of this journal is to plan for the future in conjunction with the SWST Board. With regard to this, the Board has been discussing the possibility (and perhaps the ultimate need) of going to an e-journal. Some thoughts on this were in an editorial by Jerry Winandy in *Wood and Fiber Science* 42(3). We are very much aware of the competition from other journals, most without page charges, and some already in e-journal format.

I thought that it would be useful to provide a demonstration of the value of e-publishing to both the author and readers of such papers. A distinct advantage is that authors would no longer be hindered by the cost of color figures (now \$400 for the first and \$250 for subsequent in-print copies). Also, articles can have more background material (length would not be an issue) and even hot links to some references or explanatory material.

The authors of the paper that received the 2010 Second Place George Marra Award agreed to provide an “enhanced” version of what could be done if we went to an e-journal. The original and enhanced versions are on the SWST web page ([www.swst.org/wfs/journalElectronic.html](http://www.swst.org/wfs/journalElectronic.html)).

In closing, I will be working for a short period with Mike Barnes who is now the Editor. From our long professional association, I know he will uphold the highest possible standards for the Journal.

FRANK BEALL

*Professor Emeritus  
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Immediate Past Editor*