

# WOOD AND FIBER SCIENCE

JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY OF WOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

VOLUME 33

JULY 2001

NUMBER 3

## THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Robert Frost begins his poem of the above title "Two roads diverged in a yellow wood." I "looked down one as far as I could." It led to the relaxed life of an emeritus professor in a delightful university town in the Appalachians. Then I "took the other, as just as fair, and having perhaps the better claim, because it was grassy and wanted wear." That other road led me to six years of challenges and rewards as Editor of this journal. Reaching the end of it inspires me to look back and reflect on its course and its future. And, contrary to Frost, "I kept the first for another day," fully expecting to return to it.

This is an especially memorable time, because February of this year marked the 50th anniversary of my embarkation on a career in forest products research. I look back at the early days of my research—crawling into a lumber dry kiln at the Forest Products Laboratory to help John McMillen measure drying stresses. I recall the sessions a few years later in my living room in Madison and in hotel corridors and meeting rooms with Herb Fleischer, Ben Jayne, Eric Ellwood, Jim Bethel, Fred Wangaard, George and Alan Marra, and other pioneers that led to the formation of the Society, then later this journal. With that feeling of having been "in on the creation," I embarked on the editorship with mixed emotions.

One of my greatest pleasures has been seeing *Wood and Fiber Science* grow from a vehicle for publishing fundamental papers of members and a few scientists in related fields into a highly respected international journal that stands well among the world's leading scientific journals in the field. My thanks to the authors and reviewers who have made it so cannot be expressed adequately. Even less adequate are words to express my gratitude to our Editorial Assistant, Carol Owens, who has played an essential role in transforming manuscripts into published papers. The high standards of scientific excellence we have established and maintained can be continued only with dedicated effort by all concerned to meet the new challenges and seize the new opportunities that lie ahead.

Predominant are the challenges and opportunities posed by the rapid rise of electronics and the Internet. Electronic media are revolutionizing communication. We have dipped our toes into that pool by publishing abstracts on our web page. We must be aware of new

developments that will facilitate use of this technology to benefit the readers, authors, and reviewers, and the librarians and database managers, to help us extend the journal to the broader world.

We have frequent reviews of books that are of interest to those in the field. How about notes from major world congresses and symposia? Should we be considering ways to call these to our readers' attention and make them available?

There is room for discussion of major advances in wood science and implications of findings reported in our journal. Our series of "State of the Art" papers is beginning in this issue with Jim Bowyer's paper. However, there is room for more discussion—perhaps in a "feedback" section of the journal. I know that our papers are read widely. ISI Journal Citation Reports indicate that our impact and frequency of citation rank well with other major journals in wood science.

Wood science is interdisciplinary by its very nature. We have many contributors to our pages from those whose main focus is in one of the basic sciences or fields of engineering. Are there additional ways to be aware through the journal of developments in those fields that may have a strong bearing and effect on wood science? In his thorough review and analysis of the ideas that shaped civilization during the past century, "*The Modern Mind: An Intellectual History of the 20th Century*," Peter Watson points out that period was dominated intellectually by coming to terms with science. He concludes that "... the most important development intellectually ... was the way in which the various disciplines could be seen as telling the same story from different angles." Looked at from this perspective, I see wood science as a contributor to, and beneficiary of, the broad field of science and at the same time a key link in focusing developments in science on the wise management and use of forest resources. *Wood and Fiber Science* should be a primary medium for this transfer and application of knowledge.

I leave you in good hands to consider these points as we develop the future of *Wood and Fiber Science*. I hope to be an interested and active participant. I will certainly be a major cheerleader. Thank you for the privilege of traveling this road with you. I return now to "the road not taken."

BOB YOUNGS