

## SWST DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

The SWST Distinguished Service Award is given in recognition of extraordinary contributions in wood science and technology. Such service may have been made in an educational, technological, industrial, or scientific area in furtherance of the objectives of the Society of Wood Science and Technology, as outlined in its Constitution and Bylaws. Committee: Chair Jim Armstrong, Douglas Gardner, Doug Stokke, Audrey Zink-Sharp, and Paul Smith.

This year's awards go to: Carol B. Ovens and Thomas E. McLain

Past recipients of the award have been:

1966—Harry Tieman	1993—Robert Kennedy
1968—Alfred Stamm	1994—William Nearn
1980—Jim Bethel	1995—Arno Schniewind
1981—George Garratt	1996—E. Allen McGinnes, Jr.
1982—Alex Panshin	1997—Warren S. Thompson
1983—Fred Dickinson	1998—Everett L. Ellis
—Fred Wangaard	1998—Steven A. Sinclair (posthumously)
—Frank Kaufert	1999—Richard J. Thomas
—Herbert Fleischer	2000—Otto Suchsland
—Herbert McKean	2001—Thomas M. Maloney
—Alfred Stamm	2002—Frank C. Beall
1984—George Marra	2003—James L. Bowyer
1985—John Haygreen	2003—Elvin T. Choong (posthumously)
1986—Christen Skaar	2004—Geza Ifju
1987—Peter Koch	2004—Helmuth Resch
1988—Stanley Suddarth	2005—Howard N. Rosen
1989—Robert Youngs	2006—Duane Lyon
1990—Wilfred Côté	2007—A. William Boehner
1991—Charles Bertolzheimer	2008—Alan A. Marra
1992—Stephen Preston	

## “THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!”

*Comments accompanying receipt of the 2009 SWST Distinguished Service Award*

*Carol B. Owens*  
Editorial Assistant (1968–2008)  
*Wood and Fiber Science*

To receive the Distinguished Service Award is something I could not have imagined even in my wildest dreams. When I was notified of this honor, I was flabbergasted (to use a word dating back to the 1700's) or to use the current slang, “I was blown away!”

Amusingly, it was a very well-kept secret. My daughter, Lizzie Hewitt and her husband, Geoff Hughes, knew it long before I did. Frank Beall and his wife Mavis visited with them on a trip to New Zealand last year, so Frank contacted them to check out a few facts on my background; and they never gave me the slightest hint of the honor that was to come.

I looked through back issues of the journal to refresh my memory of past recipients, and they constitute an august body indeed. I like what Warren Thompson said in 1997 under the title “Professional Communication.” “What prompts me to choose this topic is the conviction based on many painful lessons that success in virtually all endeavors is closely associated with good communication, and failure, to a lack of communication.” The fact that the journal has just celebrated its 40th year is proof that it has indeed been based on good communication. As we all know, discovery is based on discovery, and knowledge upon knowledge. What you are working on today in the field of wood science may have ramifications far beyond what you envisage.

I was married for 18 years to Lizzie's father, a research mathematician, and he published many, many articles. We found that long after his death, people were requesting some of these articles because they had relevance to what they were then working on. I'm sure that what you are doing today will have relevance in the future in ways that you can perhaps not conceive of now.

Members of the Society obviously realized the importance of circulating their results when they decided it was essential to publish a journal. So one day in 1968 while I was working at the University of Washington in Seattle, I was summoned to Anderson Hall in the College of Forest Resources to be interviewed by Ben Jayne and Dave Thomas, the then current dean. They told me that the Society was launching a new publication, *Wood and Fiber*, and they asked if I would be interested in becoming the Editorial Assistant. I answered immediately with a loud and enthusiastic “YES!” and as the saying goes, “The rest is history.”

My undergraduate degree was from Simmons College in Boston. The Department of English where I was enrolled was the first in the country, to my knowledge, to offer a course in editing. But long before that, I was fascinated by language, probably because of the excellent teachers I had in elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school. I loved worrying about such things as whether a word was spelled correctly, whether a semicolon was needed instead of a comma, whether the subjunctive mood was more accurate than the indicative, whether a sentence should be rewritten to make it more easily understood, and so on. My various positions at the University of Washington had involved several years of teaching Freshman English, editing *Isis Magazine* and,

*The Journal of Asian Studies* and writing articles for a couple of marine- and fishery-related departments, so that was probably why I had been tapped for this new position. We modeled the new journal on *Limnology and Oceanography*, which was being produced on the campus.

I was thrilled to work on *Wood and Fiber*, and I think very fondly of the various editors with whom I was involved. First came Ben Jayne and then Bob Meyer, Al McGinnes, Jr, Wayne Murphy, Bruce Cutter, Thomas Elder, Arno Schniewind, John Siau, Robert Youngs, Geza Ifju, and our current editor, Frank Beall. I think it was in 1983 that the journal became *Wood and Fiber Science*. And I remember that in that year we all proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of the journal by having the cover printed in silver. It was a milestone, indeed!

I can honestly say that I was never bored working on the journal. It was even fun learning what all the abbreviations meant—OSB, MOE, MOR, DBH, FSP, EMC, and so on. About a year ago, a man I hired to deal with problems that crop up in my forty-year old house pointed out that my three decks were rotting away and he would need to replace them. I said, "Are you recommending OSB?" He gave me a very strange look, so I said "That means oriented strandboard." He laughed and said, "Oh, I know what that means—I just didn't expect YOU to know!" I even liked certain words such as *xylem*, *heartwood*, *cambium*, *lignin*, and so on. I don't know why—perhaps they just "roll trippingly off the tongue."

I loved even the proofreading and putting together the index. On my desk I kept several dictionaries and grammar books, and the latest version of *The Chicago Manual of Style*. That book is now in its 15th edition, a fact that shows that while basic English grammar may not change much, some of the styles do, often becoming simpler. Frank Beall, the current editor, as you probably know, has simplified things, and you can now access these changes on the internet.

One thing I learned early on in my editing career is to proofread everything at least TWICE. You may have heard the story about the man who e-mailed his wife on his way back from a trip, saying "I have gotten tickets to 'Hello, Dolly,' for tonight. Meet me at the theater at 7:30." Unfortunately, he did not proofread his message and did not see that the word "gotten" had been split in two so that it read "I have got TEN TICKETS." So of course his wife showed up at the theater with eight friends.

Shortly after I began to work for the journal, I learned that one must put a hyphen in the phrase "Douglas-fir" to indicate that it is not a true fir. So when I went to buy a Christmas tree that year, I smugly told the proprietor of the tree lot that he needed to insert a hyphen into the phrase since he was not selling true firs. He became incensed and said to me in no uncertain terms: "Lady, I don't sell no fake firs!! Why don't you take your business elsewhere!!"

I always regretted that I was not able to take courses in the College of Forest Resources, but that was because I always had another job at the University, and part of the time I was also bringing up several children. However, reading the many articles over the years was in some sense a course in itself, and I could not fail to learn interesting things even without a background in the subject.

The many authors who submit articles from countries all around the world, the dedicated reviewers of these articles, and the editors of the journal, like Frank, are the ones who have REALLY made *Wood and Fiber Science* the success that it is. I recently counted up the number of countries represented by authors and it came to 25, and there is a chance that I may have even missed some.

“THANKS FOR THE MEMORIES!”

I was interested in reading again in one of the 1997 issues Bob Hoyle’s description of how the Society came into being with all the birth pangs that it went through. That it is now in its fifty-plus year is a wonderful vindication of its success.

All those who have served as officers of the Society are to be commended for their hard work and commitment in making the Society and its many activities a success. And I can hardly say enough about Vicki and her efforts. She is incredible, as I’m sure you all agree. To be holding annual meetings in such places as Chile and soon to be China is certainly a testimony to the success of the Society and the esteem in which it is held all around the world.

The research and teaching and outreach that you are all engaged in are of worldwide importance, and I wish all of you continued success. And finally, to have been able to do for 40 years what I so loved doing has been a wonderful experience for me. Those of you who remember Bob Hope will know that he used to sign off by singing the title of the song “Thanks for the Memories.” So to all of you, I say “Thanks for the Memories”—they have been wonderful indeed!

## AT A CROSSROADS

*Comments accompanying receipt of the 2009 SWST Distinguished Service Award*

*Thomas E. McLain*

Department Head

Department of Wood Science and Engineering  
Oregon State University

I have found through experience that you should never lose the capacity to be surprised. Nevertheless, this award catches me off guard. I am very grateful to the Society for this honor and especially to the anonymous nominators who took the time to put forth my name. I greatly value my long association with SWST—you do me honor and I thank you.

Past recipients of the distinguished service award have used their few minutes of fame to wax philosophic about their career or to bemoan/embrace change, or to reminisce about some formative event or time. The week I learned about this award I also received an invitation to my 40th college reunion so the temptation to follow is great. However, I have been thinking about the future of wood science and technology and especially about SWST. So, I'll use this time and space on three points about the future of the Society.

First, I believe that we are in a period of accelerating transformation. We must not forget that SWST, like any professional society, exists to serve the needs of its members. That presumes that we have members with needs. The Executive Director's report shows the long-term trend of declining full members reflecting, among other factors, our challenge with converting students into members. Importantly, this trend means a smaller pool to serve and to take leadership roles. Despite the recent small uptick in membership I believe that the next five years hold the potential for dramatic downward changes in our traditional member pool. I see at least three potentially transforming trends:

- Traditional industry R&D will likely continue to decline in North America. Those research scientists and managers have been good members; their production or operations colleagues have not. This suggests a smaller pool of future traditional SWST members from this sector. It is not clear whether the non-traditional small-to-medium sized firms who hire wood scientists/technologists, and those workers themselves, will value a professional organization enough to pay dues and participate.
- The WS&T academic programs in North America are at serious risk because of systemic factors that are working against mission-directed programs and make it difficult to attract the best and brightest students to a field associated with manufacturing. This struggle is exacerbated by the recession, and I fear that some of the SWST accredited degree programs will not survive this current downturn without significant change. Many WS&T academic programs have broadened the multidisciplinary nature of their research and teaching portfolios resulting in fewer "wood science faculty" and a greater number of core faculty and graduate students with first allegiance to other professional organizations.
- Last, the demographers forecast that we are on the cusp of an unprecedented generational change in technical and science leadership. Delayed by the recession the coming wave of retirements may offer the greatest challenge to SWST. In Oregon, we have constituents who project that when the Dow hits 10,000 and we see a million new housing starts that 60% of their technical

workforce will retire. Many who have grown up with WS&T will either not be replaced or will be replaced with Gen-Xers or Millennial's without wood science backgrounds and who don't see value in investing in any professional organization, let alone SWST. There were not enough WS&T- educated graduates to meet the demand in the private sector before the downturn—at least in the West.

Strengthening the international base for SWST and expanding that potential member pool is a right move for the Society. I'm not drawn to the idea of merging with others but the reality is that without bold moves I believe we face the risk of losing the critical mass necessary to chart our future.

That brings me to my second point which is about strategic focus and scope. The “profession” of WS&T is pretty broad in scope. The interests and needs of the many private companies who use wood directly or indirectly are even broader. Our umbrella is pretty big, but appears to have limits that may not serve us well. Few stakeholders are focused on fundamentals of the material, or the direct derivatives from it, but most are more engaged with the technologies of measuring, manipulating, converting, building, using, deconstructing, etc. The unifying element for SWST is the material, but that's not a well-recognized and defined umbrella such as “engineer” when it come to identifying a set of common concerns or needs that can be met by a professional society. Remember, a society exists to meet member needs.

SWST has some close sisters that directly compete for the attention of those members. We have talked about overlapping interests with FPS for decades, but there are similar challenges with the ACS Cellulose and Renewable Materials Division especially in the area of lignocellulosic materials. With the growth of bioenergy and bioproducts interests there are a variety of organizations emerging to service that sector. So the question becomes what will be the unique SWST focus that will capture the interest (and dues) of future members?

We could continue to focus on “wood” interests, but strive to be a home for the science, business, engineering, and technology that might appeal to a potentially larger pool of members. There is some comfort in being a small “family” of like interests—and perhaps the move towards internationalization will pay new dividends. Or we could embrace a bigger vision and greater diversity of interests around plant-based biomaterials and products. Either approach will take leadership and vision, but more importantly will take identifying what future members will want and need from a professional society and how to position SWST to be the first choice.

Names are very important and SWST has served us well for 51 years. It is, however, limiting and may not be as descriptive of a professional organization to a current generation as it was last century. I believe that it is time to ask whether a new image and identity will serve us better. We need to remember that the name is as much a member identity issue as an organizational identity.

My third and last point is that SWST has the license to be an agent of change, but struggles to use it. SWST programs have historically been focused on information dissemination and science forums. We have a first class science journal, but many of our meetings could easily pass as FPS sessions. Unlike FPS and ACS CELL, SWST is chartered as a 501 c(6) organization. That means we as a group can be advocates for more than just good science. We can and do take positions, but often don't do much with them—we are not really organized to do that effectively, and not all members are comfortable with that role.

## AT A CROSSROADS

I believe that future members from the next generation could be interested in an organization that supports their personal and professional goals to make a difference. I suggest adding to our suite of member services a future agenda centered on making a difference beyond assembling a group of like minded professionals to discuss topics of interest and publishing a journal. This will take leadership and commitment, member support and a group of champions from this and the next generation of SWST members.

I'm not ready to ride off into the sunset just yet, but the reality is that these issues and questions have to be taken up and led by the next generation. I'm happy to help and hope for a bright future where the science and technology of wood make even greater contributions to the future of a sustainable world. Thank you again for the honor of this award.

## GEORGE MARRA AWARD

The George Marra Award is given in memory of George Marra by the Marra family in recognition of George's devotion to excellence in writing. Every article in each issue of the most recent volume of *Wood and Fiber Science* is read and judged by a three-person committee—one each from academia, government, and industry.

This year's winners are:

**First Place**—Heiko Thoemen and Christian Ruf, "Measuring and simulating the effects of

the pressing schedule on the density profile development in wood-based composites" published in Vol 40(3).

**Second Place**—Brad Jianhe Wang, Chunping Dai, and Steve Wharton, "Impact of mountain pine beetle-attacked lodgepole pine logs on plywood manufacturing" published in Vol 40(3).

2008–2009 Committee: Chair Thomas Eberhardt, Kurt Bigbee, Steve Kelley, and John Phelps.

## GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR GEORGE MARRA AWARD

1. Award recognizes excellence in research and writing.
2. Papers considered are those published in the four quarterly issues of one volume of *Wood and Fiber Science*.
3. The first place award consists of the following:
  - a. \$1000 to the author(s) (provided by the Marra family)
  - b. A plaque to the sponsoring firm or institution
  - c. Certificate(s) and plaque(s) to the author(s)

The second place award, if warranted, will consist of certificate(s) and plaque(s) to the author(s) and a plaque to the sponsoring firm or institution. Up to two other papers may be selected for honorable mention, for which the certificate(s) will be awarded.
4. Presentation of the awards will take place at the annual meeting.
5. The selection committee will be appointed by the President.
6. The selection committee will consist of at least three members, one of which will be designated the chair by the President. One member will be selected from each of the areas of the private sector, industry, government, and academia. A committee member may not have a paper considered for an award.
7. Committee responsibilities are as follows:
  - a. Individually "score" all papers in the volume using George Marra's judging criteria.
    - 1) Research quality (30 points)
      - Complexity of the problem
      - Originality Impact on present knowledge of the subject
    - 2) Clarity and Completeness of the introductory section (30 points)
      - Objective
      - Introduction
      - General procedures
    - 3) Conclusion, recognition and literature (20 points)
      - Conclusion that speaks to the objective
      - Recognition of important assistance received
      - Command of the literature
    - 4) Clarity of exposition; i.e., understandable to those in other specialties (20 points)

#### GEORGE MARRA AWARD

- b. Committee chair will rank papers based on average score obtained from combining each member's scores.
  - c. Each member re-review and rank the four papers with the highest combined scores.
  - d. Combine reviews and select the first and second (if warranted) place papers and those for honorable mention (if any).
8. The chair will report the selection of the winning paper(s) to the President by 90 days prior to the SWST annual meeting.

### STUDENT POSTER COMPETITION AWARDS

(Judges: Chair Jim Armstrong, Fred Kamke, Jan Wiedenbeck, and Bob Rice)

There were 10 participants in the competition, which was held in Boise, Idaho, during the SWST Annual Meeting. The winners were:

**First Place**—Arijit Sinha, Wood-based Composite Center Fellow, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR 97331, “Thermal Degradation of Strength of Plywood and OSB: A Kinetics Approach.”

**Second Place**—Günter G. Modzel, Graduate Research Assistant, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, 97331, “3-D Micron-Scale Assessment of an Adhesive Bond in Response to Cyclic Moisture.”

**Third Place**—Zeki Candan, PhD Candidate, Research Assistant, Department of Forest Products Engineering, Forestry Faculty, Istanbul University, Bahcekoy, Sariyer, 34473, Istanbul,

Turkey “Thickness Swelling, Water Absorption and Vertical Density Profile of Medium Density Fiberboard Panels Affected by Continuous Press Pressure.”

Contributors to the competition fund were: APA—The Engineered Wood Association, Asian Woods Company, Balazs Zombori, California Cedar Products, Entwood LLC, FPInnovations—Forintek, Iowa State University, Louisiana State University, Mississippi State University, North Carolina State University, Oregon State University, Pennsylvania State University, State University of New York (SUNY) ESF, Virginia Tech, University of British Columbia, University of Idaho, Washington State University, and Willamette Industries.

## FELLOW AWARD

### *Qualifications and Procedures for Nomination of the Fellow Award*

*Purpose:* To recognize significant contributions to the wood science and technology profession and service to the Society by SWST members.

*SWST Fellow Qualifications:* The criteria for election to this distinction are significant contributions to the Society of Wood Science and Technology and the wood science and technology profession while being a voting member of SWST.

Significant contributions to the Society of Wood Science and Technology include activities that demonstrate continuing commitment and leadership to SWST. Leadership commitment should include some of the following:

(1) Past president of SWST; (2) Election to SWST Board of Directors for two terms; or (3) Numerous terms of service, including committee chair or committee member.

Significant professional accomplishments include refereed publications and professional presentations that advance wood science and technology in the regional, national, or international area over a 15-year period "Promoting the Profession."

An SWST member may be nominated for the membership rank of SWST Fellow by any other SWST voting member. The nomination will be reviewed by the Past Presidents' Council. The Council will make recommendation to the Executive Board by March 1 of each year. Election to the rank of SWST Fellow will require a majority vote of the SWST Board of Directors.

All nominations for the rank of SWST Fellow must be forwarded to the SWST Executive Director and must include a letter of nomination and a resume with SWST and wood science and technology professional contributions by the nominee. All members elected to the membership rank of SWST Fellow will be announced at the annual meeting and will be presented an appropriate plaque by the SWST President.

The recipient of this year's award is: Douglas D. Stokke.

Past recipients of the award include:

#### **2008**

Robert Rice

#### **2007**

H. Michael Barnes

W. Ramsay Smith

#### **2006**

Thomas E. McLain

#### **2005**

J. David Barrett

Frank C. Beall

A. William Boehner

Gilbert L. Comstock

Wil Côté

Everett Ellis

Robert W. Erickson

John G. Haygreen

Robert J. Hoyle, Jr.

Geza Ifju

Fred A. Kamke

Robert Kennedy

Duane Lyon

Thomas M. Maloney

E. Allen McGinnes, Jr.

William T. Nearn

Helmuth Resch

Howard N. Rosen

Arno P. Schniewind

Christen Skaar

Otto Suchsland

Fred W. Taylor

Richard J. Thomas

Warren S. Thompson

James B. Wilson

#### **2004**

James L. Bowyer

Robert L. Youngs