

# WOOD AND FIBER

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## SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Whatever happened to the wood technologist? Our name, The Society of Wood Science and Technology, would imply that a wood technologist is as relevant and important to the organization as a wood scientist. However, examination of the activities of SWST, *Wood and Fiber*, the Visiting Scientist Program, etc. leads one to the firm conclusion that the society name would be more correct if the word Technology were left off.

There is only one thing that sets us, as a professional group, apart from other similar organizations—the requirement of a college education plus a certain core of knowledge about the raw material, wood. Unless I am missing some aesthetic value, it seems that the only real benefit of this knowledge to society at large comes when that core of knowledge is applied to the efficient conversion of wood into some product useful to society.

The role of SWST must be one of nurturing this core of knowledge, promoting its expansion and promoting its use. I perceive that we as a society have devoted nearly all of our attention to the first two and almost categorically neglected the latter. The latter is, of course, promoting the application of technology, which is the realm of the wood technologist.

I am continually amazed that manufacturers in the business of converting wood from a raw material into a finished product

do so more often than not without the benefit of any special knowledge about the raw material they're working with. When an individual suffers from an illness, he usually has the good sense to consult a medical doctor. When the wood-using industries have a manufacturing or use problem, rarely do they consult a wood technologist. Frequently they do not even recognize that an illness exists.

It is my opinion that unless we incorporate the technologist as part of the society and recognize the importance of his role, we are, at best, remiss in our responsibility and perhaps without any real justification for existence as a society.

I feel that SWST needs to encompass the wood technologists in our activities. We can do this by paying more attention to matters of professional interest and by emphasizing the professional aspects of the organization. In addition to this, I think we need to have a sustained effort to tell the story of the professional wood technologist and wood scientist to the wood-using industries. Too few are even aware of what a wood te— (er-uh, what was that again?) is. I am extremely interested in your comments, pro and con, on my ideas and particularly in ideas for programs that will effect some of the changes I am suggesting.

G. L. COMSTOCK  
President SWST