



Mark your Calendars!

What: Texas SAF
Annual Meeting

When: April 24-26,
2007

Where: Moody Gardens
Hotel, Spa, &
Convention Center in
Galveston

More information to
follow in the next
newsletter!

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From the Chair...

TSAF had a great year in 2006, due to the hard work and dedication of our state officers, chapter officers, and volunteers. I really enjoyed this year and want to thank the leadership and membership for making this year another successful one for forestry in Texas.

We are in good hands with our incoming officers-Lee Flannery, Chair, Eric Taylor, Chair-Elect; and Beverly Kruger, Secretary/Treasurer. And Mike Murphrey is always there to lighten our load.

Have a Great New Year!

Sincerely,

Gary Burns

It's That Time Again...

Nominations are now being accepted for the Texas Society of American Forester's **2007 Laurence C. Walker Distinguished Service to Forestry Award** and the **Forestry Leadership Award**. If you would like to recognize someone for their service and leadership in the Society of American Forester's please visit TSAF's website at www.tsaf.org to learn about eligibility requirements and nomination procedures.

The deadline for nominations is **March 1, 2007**. Please take this opportunity to recognize a fellow SAF member for their achievements and leadership

in SAF, their communities, and in the field of forestry.

To nominate a fellow SAF member, please submit a letter of recommendation, biographical sketch (not over 300 words), and no more than three (3) letters of support to the TSAF Professional Recognition Chair. Nominations should be sent to:

Joel Hambright
TSAF Professional
Recognition Chair
513 State Hwy. 75 North
Huntsville, TX 77320-1121
jhambright@tfs.tamu.edu
fax: 936.291.2035
ph: 936.295.5688

A list of past recipients for these awards may be accessed by visiting the Texas SAF website at www.tsaf.org.

Election Results

Congratulations to **Dr. Eric Taylor**, Texas Cooperative Extension in Overton and **Beverly Krueger**, Larson & McGowin in Jasper, for being selected as the 2007 TSAF Chair-elect and Secretary/Treasurer. **Lee Flannery**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, will be the 2007 TSAF Chair. Thank you to everyone who submitted a ballot!

Check This Out!

The Texas Forest Service has a new document on their website entitled **State of the Texas Forest** (written by Ed Barron). Visit <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1226> for more information.



Jim Carse reports that over 300 people attended this year's Texas Tree Conference at the Marriot Hotel in Round Rock on October 4 - 6. Arborists, foresters, planners, and landscape architects came from as far away as El Paso and Amarillo to

attend the themed "What Works for Texas " conference. The 2006 conference was said to have been one of the best attended conferences ever.

The topics at the main conference included everything from marketing and advertisement, to diagnosing tree diseases, installing lightning protection, and using organic products in the landscape. Speakers ranged from local arborists and sales professionals, to nationally recognized leaders in urban forestry and arboriculture.

The conference would not have been a success without the hard work of the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Texas Chapter, the Texas Forest Service, and the Round Rock Marriot Hotel. Also, a special thanks to the sponsors and exhibitors for their involvement.

More information about the conference and other upcoming events can be found at the new and improved ISA Texas website www.isatexas.com

Clifton Coffman, Jr. - A Member of SAF for 68 Years

Clifton Coffman, Jr., one of the first professional industry foresters in East Texas, joined the Society of American Foresters in 1938. Now at the age of 92, Clifton maintains a sharp mind and vivid memories of his career in forestry, spent primarily in Texas. I recently visited him and his loyal wife Myra in their comfortable home in Huntsville to learn more about his contributions to forestry.



Clifton was born October 10, 1914 in Lewisburg, West Virginia. This was just two months after Germany declared war on France, initiating World War I. The son of a dentist, Clifton attended public school through the eighth grade and then transferred to the local Greenbriar

Military School. A career counselor there suggested that Clifton pursue forestry, given his early desire for an outdoors career. After graduation from Greenbriar, however, he failed to follow this sage advice and, instead, entered Emory and Henry, a small liberal arts college in Virginia. After two years at this institution, Clifton realized that the classes he was taking would only prepare him for one of two careers – "teaching or preaching." Neither choice inspired him.

With this "wake up call," Clifton changed his career goal to forestry and began hunting for the best school for a forestry degree. Outstanding forestry schools at the time included Penn State, Yale, California, and Michigan. Michigan won out, primarily because this university would waive out-of-state tuition if incoming students from other states had one year of prerequisites in the sciences. These courses Clifton took at West Virginia University. He began classes at the University of Michigan in 1935 with summer camp. In 1937, Clifton graduated with

Bachelor's and Master's degrees in forestry. He was one of 55 graduates in his forestry class, all men.

His first jobs after graduation consisted of various temporary ones with the West Virginia Conservation Commission, the US Forest Service Shelterbelt Project in the panhandle of Texas, and the Central State Experiment Station in Illinois. In 1940, Clifton returned to Texas, working as a junior forester with the Soil Conservation Service in Nacogdoches. With a sparkle in his eyes, he recalls that "the period in Nacogdoches was the most important position I had held because I met my wife there." Myra was a senior at Stephen F. Austin State College at the time and they met on a blind date. On November 25, 1942, Clifton and Myra tied the knot, beginning a marriage that has lasted 64 years (and counting). They have three children: Dr. Clifton Coffman III of Shreveport, LA, Charles Coffman of Santa Fe, NM, and Dr. Nan Coffman of Houston, TX.

Continued on page 3...

Clifton Coffman Cont'd

World War II interrupted Clifton's forestry career, as it did careers of so many members of what Tom Brokaw calls the "Greatest Generation." Following Officers Candidate School, Clifton spent most of his service with the 77th Infantry Division. He was 10 months overseas and participated in battles against Japanese forces on Guam and Leyte in the Philippines. When wounded on Leyte, he was sent to an army hospital in Hollandia, New Guinea for treatment. After a few weeks, he was evacuated to the states. Upon his discharge in February 1946, he returned to Texas.

Within 10 days of Clifton's return to the states, Paul Hursey told him of a job with the Texas Longleaf Lumber Company (TLLC) in Trinity, Texas. Paul, who worked at the time for Angelina Lumber Company, had been Clifton's forestry roommate at Michigan. Thus, when Clifton took the TLLC forester position, he joined Paul as members of a pioneering group: the first "modern-day" industry foresters in East Texas. The Texas Longleaf Lumber Company owned 250,000 acres of pine timberland in Trinity County. Ironically, it was essentially all loblolly pine, contrary to the name.

As the company's only forester, Clifton says his duties included marking timber for harvest, occasionally planting trees, and, more often than not, fighting forest fires. Timber harvesting in the 1940s was carried out by two-man crews with crosscut saws. Teams of mules then transported the logs to landings where they were loaded onto trucks and taken to a sawmill. Foresters and harvest crews also rode horses, particularly when working in bottomlands. Clifton smiles when he recalls that his crews refused to enter Trinity bottomlands except on horseback, due to the abundance of poisonous snakes. Much of this

bottomland is now covered by Lake Livingston. Clifton used to keep his horse in the company corral with the logging mules and other company horses. One notable youngster who often came by to ride horses from the same corral was a student from nearby Sam Houston State College - Dan Rather - later to become a well-known CBS newsman.

Fire detection and control in the early days also were primitive. The Texas Longleaf Lumber Company relied on manned Texas Forest Service fire towers to detect wildfires on their holdings, as did other landowners. According to Myra, all the telephone lines from the TFS fire towers on company lands were connected to Clifton's and Myra's house, and she was the first one to respond to fire detection calls. She was expected to get the message to Clifton, so he could call out the fire control crews. (Oh, what she would have given for a pair of cell phones). Control of wildfires also was done by hand tool crews; fire lines were installed with an agricultural plow, pulled behind a jeep. One of these units is currently on display at the Texas Forestry Museum in Lufkin.

Fire was not the only destructive agent early foresters had to address. In 1947, an outbreak of the southern pine beetle occurred and continued for several years. In 1948 alone, Clifton recalls, the beetle killed 15 million board feet of pine timber on TLLC lands. No direct control was applied in those days. Efforts were directed solely at recovering dead trees.

In the early 1950s, TLLC lands were bought out and split between Champion Paper Company and Southland Paper Mills. During a two-year transition period, Clifton was forester for both companies, eventually going with Champion. As

Myra laughingly recalls, in buying out TLLC, Champion got 50,000 stumps and Clifton. Clifton began work with Champion in 1953 as timberland manager for 300,000 acres in East Texas. In 1967, Champion selected Clifton to organize and manage 500,000 acres of timberland in Alabama and Tennessee, to provide wood for a new paper mill on the Tennessee River. So, he and Myra rented their house in Huntsville and moved to Alabama where he finished out his career. Following Clifton's retirement in 1980, he and Myra returned to the same house in Huntsville and have lived there ever since.

Upon retirement, Clifton worked as a part-time consultant, buying and selling timber. In the 1980s, he worked occasionally for Rip Byrd, a well-known sawmill owner and another forester who attained more than 50 years of SAF membership before he recently passed away. This was a turn-about, since Rip, as a teenager, had worked on forestry projects for Clifton. Myra's and Clifton's other retirement activities include travel, reading, and bridge.

Clifton has maintained his membership in SAF to keep informed on current practices in forestry. He says membership in SAF is important because it is the professional society of all foresters. He and Myra also are life members of the Texas Forestry Association. Congratulations to Clifton for his long career as an East Texas forestry pioneer and for his nearly **seven** decades of membership in SAF.

*Written by Dr. Ronald F. Billings,
TSAF Communications Chair*

**TEXAS SOCIETY OF
AMERICAN
FORESTERS**

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Bits and Pieces

2007 Houston Regional Timber Income, Property & Estate Tax Seminar

January 26
8:00 a.m.—2:30 p.m.
5 hours of CFEs

For more information contact the Texas Forest Service Conroe Office at 936/273-2261. Registration forms are available to download at <http://texasforestservicetamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1230>



Check out **TREEvents** for a listing of upcoming workshops or to list workshops that you are offering:
<http://TREEvents.tamu.edu>



Chapter News

The Brazos/Trinity Chapter reports that they recently held their end of the year meeting. Joel Hambright spoke on his trip to Tasmania this summer. Twenty-one people attended in Bryan. They elected new officers for next year:

- **Jack Hill**, Chairman (Burditt Forestry)
- **Ryan Witt**, Vice Chair (TFS Huntsville)
- **Chad Holton**, Sec/Treas (Larson and McGowin Huntsville)



Address Changes

If your e-mail or mailing address has changed,

corrections need to be made by contacting National SAF. You may call 301/897-8720 or e-mail safweb@safnet.org.

**Happy Holidays
from the Texas
Society of
American
Foresters!**



Contact Kathy Flannery at flannerys3@sbcglobal.net for newsletter suggestions