

**Commentary**

It's Party Time!

William H. Banzhaf

So here we are, entering our centennial year. SAF is 100 years old, and we’re the lucky foresters who get to celebrate!

I’ve reviewed some of the many wonderful activities state societies, divisions, chapters, and working groups have planned for the coming year, and I am truly impressed by the creativity and talents of the membership. There are projects that involve outreach to schoolchildren and civic groups; archiving activities to ensure that our successors will have the resources and information to celebrate our next anniversary; and, of course, the publication of a number of national, local, and individual histories and memoirs.

All of these efforts reflect our ability to focus on our centennial goal and work diligently until our work is completed. As a profession, we have always worked hard at what we do and have taken our responsibilities very seriously. It is clear we are applying the same work ethic to the centennial and that’s great—sort of.

As I’ve traveled the country and talked with members I’ve encountered a certain flatness about this wonderful birthday of ours. I’ve wondered, where is the joy, the lightness of heart, the just plain fun?

I get the feeling that many see the year as merely a more focused attempt to get the public to appreciate forestry and foresters. I understand, because I sometimes feel the same way. The last 10 to 15 years have not been easy for any of us, and it is difficult to shift from a mode of frustration to one of festivity. Neverthe-

less, I encourage us all to try. This is a once-in-a-life-
time opportunity to celebrate and take pride in what we have done and will do in the future. In other words, it’s party time!

Don’t tell me we don’t know how—I have been to enough state society banquetsto know differently. I hope to see plans for special parties all across the country this year. If anyone wants ideas, I would be happy to share my experience at the joint SWSAF/AMPF (Mexican professional foresters’) banquet: It started at 9:30 PM and closed with toasts and dancing at 3:00 AM. Another great party is planned for the national convention in November, but we sure don’t have to wait that long.

**Letters**

Certified Foresters and Forests

Thanks, Fred Ebel, for a succinct and optimistic view of our professional future in the November Commentary. With the ballooning issues of environmental protection and scientific accountability, I find it soothing to step back and count the simple but profound improvements our profession has ensured for my generation.

He also touches on the emerging debate over forester certification versus forest certification. How can we bridge the differences by taking the best from both? If our individual efforts as foresters result in positive environmental and social outcomes, we have done our job. Management of land tracts by certified foresters should accomplish this.

Unfortunately, the lost revenue in reserving filter strips, the down days waiting for the soil to dry to avoid compaction, and inappropriate mechanization sometimes give poor forestry practice the economic blue ribbon. Although the conscientious forester on the ground is familiar with these details, I am not sure that a blanket certification of a land tract can address them, not to mention the administrative difficulties in forest certification for the increasing number of small forest parcels.

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Inventory Imperative

Congressman Bob Goodlatte and (Continued on page 43)