



Celebrating
the first century
of Lumberjack history,
scholarship and tradition

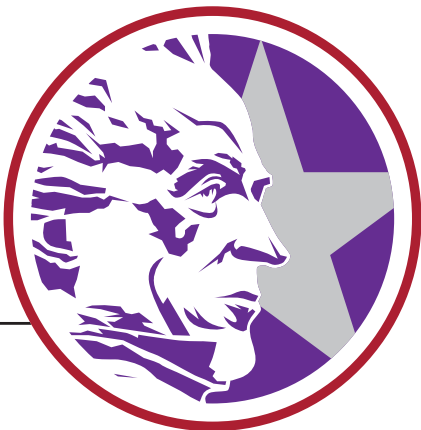
1923 ~ 2023

CENTENNIAL EDITION

Monday, September 18, 2023

the
PINE LOG

The Independent Voice of Stephen F. Austin State University



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University celebrates century milestone

Founder's Day birthday party to highlight centennial events

By Savannah Dean
News Editor

For over 100 years, SFA has remained at the heart of Nacogdoches. With its breathtaking pine trees and towering buildings, the University has held up to its mission to educate and inspire each Lumberjack. This week, SFA will host four days of centennial activities for students, alumni, faculty and staff, and the community, culminating in a centennial birthday party on Monday.

Founder's Day will begin with the Centennial Ring Plaza Dedication at 10:30 a.m. at the corner of Vista and Alumni drives across from Tracie D. Pearman Alumni Center. The birthday party is scheduled to start at 4 p.m. Monday, and attendees will be treated to SFA's traditional birthday cake and ice cream, activities, and entertainment.

Since the 90th anniversary in 2013, faculty and staff members have contributed their time to planning the birthday party and other centennial events, according to Executive Director of Student Life Dr. Hollie Smith, who has worked at SFA for over 20 years.

"It is such an exciting time in SFA's history, and 100 years as a university is something all Lumberjacks can take pride in," said Smith, who is part of the centennial planning committee. She added the centennial is a milestone not only for SFA but also the city of Nacogdoches.

SFA officially kicked off year-long centennial celebrations in January with the annual SFA Gala. Other centennial events so far this year have included a centennial design competition, planting trees on campus and a large-scale service initiative.



Photo by Cody Gill / Stone Fort yearbook

In honor of SFA's centennial, members of the Class of 2027 formed the shape of the number 100 on Jimmy W. Murphy Field at Homer Bryce Stadium during the annual "Holler at Homer" event Sept. 7. As new Lumberjacks, participants had the opportunity to paint their first axe handle in anticipation of the upcoming football home-opener against Alcorn State.

Centennial yearbooks on sale now

A limited number of centennial volumes of the Stone Fort yearbook, celebrating a century of SFA history and tradition, is available for purchase by alumni, supporters and community members while supplies last.

The full-color, hardback edition costs \$67 and features 312 pages of SFA images and stories pertaining to the past year and all 99 years that came before it. Proceeds from yearbook sales are used to help cover the cost of printing and pay for SFA student writers, photographers and editors who work for the award-winning publication.

"The yearbook staff set a goal in summer 2022 to elevate the centennial edition in all aspects, from making it full color to delving deep into the institution's history for content and perspective to designing a high-quality cover that would look nice on any Lumberjack's coffee table for years to come," said Laney Wise, current Stone Fort editor-in-chief.

"Working on the centennial yearbook was such an honor," said Wise, a junior graphic design major from Keller. "I feel incredibly lucky to have been a part of such an important piece of SFA history, and I had an amazing time talking to so many of my peers to help tell the story of SFA."

Many historical photos and references from past SFA yearbooks made their way into the centennial edition, said SFA Student Publications Coordinator and Stone Fort adviser Rachel Clark.

"The students and staff have had a lot of fun during the last year reviewing past yearbooks and seeing how the campus has changed over the decades, not to mention students' outfits and hairstyles," she said. "But just as remarkable to us was the realization that a lot of aspects of student life at SFA, in particular Lumberjacks' school spirit and reverence for tradition, haven't really changed that much in the past 100 years."

The first volume of the Stone Fort yearbook was produced in 1924 and chronicled the first academic year of SFA's history. Except for two years

during the Great Depression, the yearbook has recorded each intervening year of the unique SFA student experience.

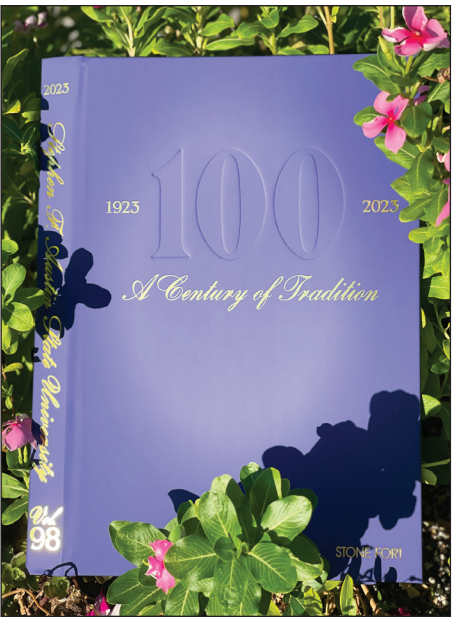
Just a handful of Texas universities and only four public institutions in the state are still producing a traditional, printed yearbook each year, according to Amy Roquemore, director of student publications and divisional media at SFA. The Stone Fort routinely wins writing, photography and design awards from the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association and earned two national awards from the College Media Association in 2022.

"Changes in the student staff's interests and preferences, as well as publication design trends and cultural and societal institutions, have resulted in each Stone Fort yearbook's uniqueness, yet the volumes share a throughline of Lumberjack history, spirit and tradition," Roquemore said. "For the centennial edition, the staff doubled down on SFA history, and the students did an outstanding job of encapsulating highlights of the 2022-23 academic year while also paying homage to the history and alumni behind a lot of the traditions and activities Lumberjacks take part in today."

Roquemore said the professional and student staffs decided early in the centennial yearbook's production to make the special edition available to alumni and community members in addition to current student yearbook subscribers.

"We knew this would be a one-of-a-kind piece of SFA history that Lumberjacks would want to have, whether they attended classes last week or many decades ago."

To purchase a centennial Stone Fort yearbook, call SFA Student Publications at (936) 468-4703, email clarkr1@sfasu.edu or stop by the office located in Room 2.308 of the Baker Pattillo Student Center.



File photo

The cover of the 2023 Stone Fort yearbook features debossed numerals and gold foil lettering.

SFA planting trees to mark 100 years

By Brooke Miller
Editor-in-Chief

One of the many ways Lumberjacks are celebrating 100 years is by planting trees dedicated to an organization or person of their choice. This is part of a broader SFA initiative to plant 100 trees on campus during the centennial year.

The SFA Alumni Association is offering opportunities to purchase a Centennial Tree Package that includes a tree that will be planted on SFA grounds and continue to grow into the next century. According to the Alumni Association website, "Purchasing a Centennial Tree Package is a great way to leave a lasting legacy by honoring your time on campus, celebrating a loved one or recognizing your favorite organization."

Each Centennial Tree Package costs \$1,923. The cost is inspired by the year the University was founded. Each tree will be planted somewhere on campus by the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture. Tree packages also include a dedication plaque and certificate, champagne or a non-alcoholic drink of choice, photo opportunities, and two T-shirts. They also come with the opportunity to contribute to a new scholarship fund.

"The event is trying to build up funds for a scholarship," Nathan Lyons, vice president of the Student Government Association, said. "It's for individuals whose parents came to SFA."

According to the Alumni Association website, each tree package will be sold on a first come, first served basis. If someone is interested in purchasing a tree, the sooner it is reserved, the better.

"[SFA] didn't expect [the trees] to be this popular until they started it," Lyons said. "And then they realized that a lot of people wanted trees."

According to Lyons, there have already been some memorable purchases and plans for trees. The Jack Walkers, SFA's official tour guides, are fund-raising to purchase their tree. SGA has nominated their adviser, Dr. Hollie Smith, for a tree as well.

"I know that tree number one, the Alumni Association dedicated to SGA," Lyons said. "Everyone else has been buying trees in honor of or in memory of loved ones and other Lumberjacks."

SFA becomes 14th member of The University of Texas System

Following a 13-month process that included the formation of representative input groups, the collection of community and public comment, and the filing of state legislation, SFA officially became the 14th member of The University of Texas System earlier this month.

The formal action of transitioning SFA into the UT System was finalized during the Aug. 24 UT Board of Regents meeting in Austin to become official Sept. 1.

"This is just the beginning of our journey. We are convinced that this new relationship will make each of us stronger," UT System Board of Regents Chair Kevin P. Eltife and UT System Chancellor James B. Milliken said in a joint open letter to the SFA community distributed Aug. 24. "From SFA's regents to faculty and staff, students and alumni, to the entire Nacogdoches community, we have been inspired by your enthusiasm and many new friendships that have evolved over the past year. It is our pleasure to officially welcome you to The University of

Texas System."

Benefits of affiliation with the UT System began emerging before the transition was made official. The first was announced in January 2023, when the UT System invested \$1 million in SFA's Purple Promise tuition coverage program. This need-based financial aid initiative funded through the system's Promise Plus endowment is allowing more than 1,200 students to attend SFA tuition-free in the first year alone.

"It's a historic year for SFA. Today, we celebrate our affiliation with the UT System and in a few weeks will celebrate our university's 100th anniversary of educating students," said Gina Oglesbee, SFA interim president. "SFA's ability to continue offering a quality education in the pines will only be strengthened by our membership in the UT System."

The UT System has also committed \$22 million to address transition costs, including compensation

for SFA faculty and staff, and \$80 million to support capital projects, including a new forestry, agriculture and interdisciplinary facility, and investments in the Arthur Temple College of Forestry and Agriculture and the Nelson Rusche College of Business's Arnold Center for Entrepreneurship.

More than \$4 million in annual support services at SFA will be covered by the UT System and will range from access to free student mental health services to cybersecurity expertise.

The process of affiliating with a public university system began in August 2022, when then-SFA Interim President Dr. Steve Westbrook announced to the campus community that representatives from four Texas university systems had extended interest in affiliating.

A months-long fact-gathering process followed,

headed by an SFA Board of Regents subcommittee that included Karen Gantt, chair; Tom Mason, vice chair; Jennifer Wade Winston, secretary; David Alders, member and former chair; and Westbrook.

Over the course of five weeks in 2022, from Aug. 22 to Sept. 23, representative campus groups, including the Deans Council, Chairs Forum, Faculty Senate, Staff Council, Student Government Association and Alumni Association, developed questions related to their constituent groups. These question sets were provided to each of the four systems Sept. 26 with an invitation to respond by Oct. 6.



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Axe handle tradition featured in exhibit

By Ryleigh McCoy
News Editor

To celebrate SFA's centennial, there will be an axe handle exhibit in the Pearman Alumni Center Hall of Honor on Sept. 18. The exhibit will showcase axe handles belonging to members of the SFA community and highlight a tradition that is almost as old as the school itself.

"The tradition was started by a social group called the Sawyers in 1927," said Chris Cotton, university archives and research coordinator at the East Texas Research Center. "They were somewhat of a forerunner to the Purple Haze student section, and each axe handle was representative of its owner's personality."

While the axe handle tradition was not officially adopted by SFA until 2012, the infectious school spirit of the Sawyers caused increasing numbers of students to acquire and decorate their own handles. The axe handles became symbols of pride and unity for Lumberjacks attending games and other school events—even when they were not allowed.

"I've seen students in the student section smuggling in their axe handles in places like their pant legs when they weren't supposed to have them at events," Cotton said, laughing. "I think it just goes to show how important they are for students and how unique the tradition is."

Yet current students are not the only ones who value their axe handles, and they are not the only ones who are able to loan them to the exhibit. For long-distance alumni or even students who can't bear to be parted with their axe handle, the committee has organized a digital submission option. The slideshow exhibit will take place in conjunction with the physical exhibit, and photo submissions will be accompanied with the owner's name and a short description of the handle's decorations.

"We wanted to show off how many different ways you can make an axe handle," said Cotton. "We're all one big family, but just like any family we all have our diverse personalities. Each axe handle is unique to the person, but ultimately they unite the entire campus."

SFA students leading service hours contest

By Brooke Miller
Editor-in-Chief

The SFA community is coming together in a friendly competition to reach 100,000 service hours by Founder's Day, Sept. 18.

Four different groups are competing to see who can log the most service hours in 2023. Alumni, students, staff and faculty are tracking their hours on the Centennial website, where they can be seen increasing in real time. As of early September, a total of more than 80,000 service hours had been logged. The student group was leading the charge with more than 73,000 service hours earned so far this year.

"When we were coming up with ideas on how to celebrate last fall, we asked the students what they would love to see," Dr. Hollie Smith, executive director of student life, said. "A student suggested 100,000 hours of community service hours. We wanted to do something unique."

The MLK Day of Service and The Big Event brought in most of the service hours, according to Smith. She said that athletic teams bring in service hours, as well. Lumberjack parents and Facebook groups have also been racking up service hours.

According to the SFA website, students gained the lead on MLK

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Plaza Dedication set for Monday



Photo courtesy of the SFA Alumni Association

Workers at Pyrology Foundry and Studio are pictured creating the 9-foot-tall statue of the SFA Ring that will be unveiled during the Centennial Ring Plaza Dedication at 10:30 a.m. Monday.

By Oscar Vasquez
Staff Writer

The SFA Alumni Association will dedicate the Centennial Ring Plaza on Sept. 18 as part of the four-day centennial celebration recognizing the institution's history and achievements during the past 100 years.

The dedication will feature opening remarks from Executive Director of Alumni Relations Craig Turnage and keynote speakers such as Interim University President Gina Oglesbee, Alumni Association Board President Erika Tolar and a representative of

the Pyrology Foundry and Studio.

Pyrology, a foundry group from Bastrop, is credited for making the institution's newest statue installment, a 9-foot-tall replica of the SFA Ring.

"The SFA Ring is one of the crowning achievements a student will experience during the graduation process," Turnage said.

"It is truly a symbol to the world that you are a proud SFA alum. To have a 9-foot tall statue of our ring directly outside of the Austin Building and Alumni building sends a message to all visiting our campus how serious we are about student success while focusing on our Lumberjack Legacy."

The SFA Ring, produced by Balfour, is also associated with the institution's Big Dip tradition, where students wear their ring proudly and dip their hand into purple dye as they wear their ring with pride. Students with at least 60 credit hours are eligible.

"Balfour is in the traditions business and has been our ring partner for over 20 years," Turnage said. "They have seen the value and significance of our Big Dip ceremony and the traditions we have continued to build as each Lumberjack receives their official SFA Ring."

The Centennial Ring Plaza Dedication will take place at 10:30 a.m. Monday on the corner of Vista and Alumni drives.



Photo courtesy of the Micky Elliott College of Fine Arts

Several special events surrounding the re-opening of the L.E. Griffith Fine Arts Building are planned in conjunction with SFA's centennial unveilings, and a centennial composition concert will be held Saturday afternoon beginning at 1:30 p.m.

weekend celebrations. A grand opening and ribbon cutting, plaque



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Hoco tops SFA traditions

By Brooke Miller
Editor-in-Chief

Homecoming has always been a spectacle for the educational world. To celebrate 100 years, SFA is reflecting on its biggest and brightest traditions.

Homecoming began for SFA in 1935. According to the SFA history website, it was announced by Charles Gribble, the head of the Ex-Students Association. After several successes, such as the Lumberjacks winning the Lone Star Conference and the world coming out of the Great Depression, SFA was optimistic. Victor Fain, the first editor-in-chief of The Pine Log student newspaper, was eager for Homecoming. He said, "1935 was a great year for Stephen F. Austin."

Since then, each year as Homecoming comes around students can celebrate with traditional events and finish with a football game.

"I'd have to say the biggest tradition is the bonfire," Lacey Folsom, director of student engagement, said. "It seems to be the most popular."

Folsom explained that the bonfire, which began roughly 50 years ago, is hosted the Friday night before the Homecoming football game. There is often a concert and a pep rally open to students and Nacogdoches residents. Drought and other weather conditions have resulted in the bonfire being canceled some years.

"Most years we're able to build a bonfire," Folsom said. "Some years there is burn ban, like last year, and that puts a damper on it ... but we're working through what that can look like this year. We work with the local fire department and go from there."

Folsom recalled one year, during a burn

ban, that SFA ordered a bunch of string lights to hang on the burn pile, and it ended up looking like a Christmas tree. She said it still makes her smile to remember having something to look at, even if it wasn't a traditional bonfire.

Traditionally, Alpha Phi Omega co-ed fraternity builds the bonfire from the ground up. This year, according to Folsom,

She also said that Homecoming Court often uses Spirit Week to get involved and campaign with other students by showing them who they are and why students should vote for them. The winners are announced during the football game on Saturday the week of Homecoming. Folsom said that she enjoys the halftime show during Homecoming. During halftime, aside from the band's performance, Homecoming court is presented along with Best of SFA winners.

"Last year, we had over 60 students compete for Homecoming court. To name only 10 is just crazy," Folsom said.

There is also a downtown parade on Saturday at 10 a.m. before the game. Folsom said that this gives a great opportunity to partner with the local community and organizations. She's seen local shelters walk their dogs down the street during the parade, for one example. She also said the parade is a great way for alumni to see how their school and town have expanded.

"Homecoming is taking the old and new and bringing them together on one day when we're all Lumberjacks and we're celebrating all of our memories," Folsom said. "We get to bring everyone together, and I think that's really neat."

This year's Homecoming is planned for Oct. 20-21.

SFA Fraternities and sororities take an active role in SFA's annual Homecoming activities, including the downtown parade.

SFA is looking to have more hands on deck to aid in safety.

Leading up to the Homecoming game, SFA has traditionally hosted Spirit Week. Hosted by the Axeperience organization, Surfin Steve—the fountain where the statue of Stephen F. Austin stands—is dyed purple to kick off the week's events.

"We do trivia and blood drives, there's a step show hosted by Greek life, and there's different activities hosted throughout the week in order to encourage participation and spread Lumberjack spirit," Folsom said.



Photo courtesy of University Marketing Communications

Sept. 18, 1923, was no ordinary day

When SFA's first president, Dr. Alton Birdwell, circled the date on his calendar that was to be the college's opening day, he didn't choose it at random. Sept. 18, 1923, was to be his 53rd birthday; what better day to begin classes at Stephen F. Austin State Teachers' College?

It turns out, the day Birdwell chose was a little too optimistic, and when the much-anticipated date rolled around, the campus was not yet ready to accept students. Unwilling to cancel the planned start, Birdwell worked with the faculty and local citizens to secure a temporary SFA location at Washington Square near downtown Nacogdoches while construction continued at the future site further north.

According to SFA historian Dr. Jere Jackson, the school welcomed 270 students that first day, a Tuesday, although continuing enrollment allowed the census to rise to more than 400 by the end of the year.

As the sun set on that first day, faculty members and their spouses surprised Birdwell with a giant, heart-shaped cake, which was served with ice cream on the lawn of the president's home on North Street. The visitors serenaded Birdwell with "Happy Birthday," a sweet ending to a very important day for SFA and Nacogdoches.

The SFA administration has continued the tradition of serving birthday cake and ice cream on SFA's anniversary dates as recently as the 99th, which was celebrated on Sept. 19, 2022, because the actual anniversary fell on a Sunday. Faculty, staff, students and community members gathered to mark the occasion at the Stephen F. Austin statue in Sesquicentennial Plaza. Although the day brought sweltering East Texas heat and humidity, everyone enjoyed cake and purple ice cream while listening to remarks from Dr. Steve Westbrook, who would later become SFA's 10th president, and other dignitaries.

Events celebrating the University's centennial kicked off a few months later in late January 2023 with the annual SFA Gala and continued throughout the spring. Several days of special activities are planned in the days leading up to the 100th anniversary date, Sept. 18, 2023. Birthday cake and ice cream will be part of the festivities.



Dr. Alton Birdwell
SFA's First President

SFA boasts distinguished alumni

Since SFA's first graduating class in 1925, well over 100,000 Lumberjacks have earned their college degrees, according to the Alumni Association. Our alumni have distinguished themselves around the nation in the fields of sports, entertainment, science, education, business, the military and government, just to name a few.

Among SFA's athletic standouts are 14-year NFL veteran Larry Centers, one of the most prolific pass-catching running backs in the league's history, and the late O.A. "Bum" Phillips, legendary former head coach of the Houston Oilers.

Will Jennings, Oscar- and Grammy-winning songwriter of "Up Where We Belong" from "An Officer and a Gentleman," "My Heart Will Go On" from "Titanic" and "Tears in Heaven" with Eric Clapton graces the list of notable SFA alumni in the entertainment field along with Brad Maule, current SFA School of Art lecturer who starred as Dr. Tony Jones in "General Hospital" for more than 14 years.


Notable SFA alumni scientists include the late Joseph W. Kennedy, co-discoverer of the radioactive chemical element plutonium, and George Damoff, an international leader in megadrillology (the study of earthworms) with specimens displayed at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C. In addition, Virginia Burkett is the chief scientist for climate and land use change for the U.S. Geological Survey who co-authored the Intergovernmental Panel on climate Change's Nobel Peace Prize-winning fourth assessment report.

Alumnus Mike Moses is a former superintendent of Dallas ISD and a former Texas Commissioner of Education, while Charles Runnels is chancellor emeritus of Pepperdine University in Malibu, California.

The list also includes Nancy Dickey, former president of Texas A&M University Health Science Center and the first woman elected president of the American Medical Association, and Yvonne Gonzales Redman, longtime soprano for the Metropolitan Opera in New York City.

The late retired Lt. Gen. O.R. "Cotton" Whiddon was a highly decorated U.S. Army commander who served all over the world, including numerous posts at The Pentagon. The Howitzer fired at SFA home football games when the Lumberjacks score is named "Ol' Cotton" in Whiddon's honor.

For a more complete listing of the university's notable alumni, visit [sfaalumni.com/page/notable](#).



Monday, Sept. 18, 2023

10:30 a.m. - Ring Plaza Dedication

2 to 6 p.m. - Car Cruise In

4 p.m. - Centennial Birthday Party



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Centennial Car Cruise In



Photo courtesy of University Marketing Communications

A Car Cruise In along Vista Drive will be part of centennial celebrations Sept. 18. Awards will be presented for Best Car, Best Truck, Best Off-Road, Special Class, Best Motorcycle and Lumberjacks' Choice. Pictured above is a 1940 Chevy Super Deluxe owned by Nacogdoches attorney Sean Hightower, a 2009 graduate of SFA.

Bricks added to recognition walk

By Oscar Vasquez
Staff Writer

The Alumni Walk of Recognition, the walkway that surrounds the “Surfin’ Steve” statue just outside the Ralph W. Steen Library, will be adding new bricks to commemorate the University’s centennial in 2023.

For a limited time, bricks purchased during the centennial will include, “The Centennial 1923 - 2023,” on the lower right side. The signature will be included on both available brick sizes. Prices depend on how much text is included on the brick, and are sold for \$100, \$250 or \$500.

The Walk of Recognition program, administered by the SFA Alumni Association, installs new bricks during the week prior to each graduation ceremony throughout the year.

The Walk of Recognition features graduates, faculty, staff and friends of the institution. According

to the Alumni Association, “In years to come, your family members and many students, alumni, faculty and visitors will see your brick and recognize your loyalty to SFA.

“Participating in the Walk of Recognition demonstrates your commitment to help SFA students achieve their educational goals.

In addition to the Walk of Recognition, the Alumni Association will also be organizing other events for the centennial during the month of September, including the Centennial Ring Plaza Dedication on Sept. 18. Information on SFA centennial events can be found at sfasu.edu/centennial.

For more information about the Walk of Recognition or to purchase a brick, visit sfaalumni.com/page/sfa_buyabrick23.

SYSTEM: Legislation signed by Gov. Abbott in May

From Page 1

On Oct. 30, representatives from all SFA constituent groups shared their thoughts on the respective systems’ answers; and on Nov. 29, the SFA Board of Regents approved an affiliation with the UT System.

Sponsored and drafted by eight Texas legislators, including Sen. Robert Nichols and Reps. Travis Clardy and Trent Ashby, Senate Bill 1055 passed and was signed May 10, 2023, by Gov. Greg Abbott, effectively authorizing the transition of SFA into the UT System.

On July 27, the UT System Regents voted in favor of assuming management and operational control of SFA, effective July 28. The vote was also a requirement of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges’ continued accreditation of SFA. As a condition of continuous accreditation, SACSCOC required that the UT System assume management and control of SFA no later than July 28.

Answers to questions about the UT affiliation can be read at sfasu.edu/ut-system. For information on the full affiliation process, visit sfasu.edu/system.

Old and new SFA traditions bind Lumberjacks together

By Brooke Miller
Editor-in-Chief

For 100 years, SFA has stood strong—and so have its traditions. The University lasted through the Great Depression, two world wars and the invasion of the hippies. Over a century, many things have changed. The Lumberjack spirit, however, has always remained strong and burned bright.

SFA has always valued its traditions. The Axe ’em hand signal has been one of the most popular and long lasting. Folding the pinkie and ring finger inward to create the shape of Texas, and displaying your personal axe handle proudly, has always been a great way for Lumberjacks to share their spirit at athletic events and in photo ops around the world.

Literal Axe handles have also been a huge part of SFA tradition. Traditionally, only a group known as the Sawyers were given handles in the 1920s. From there, they transitioned to a fraternity and to the hands of Purple Haze. Originally, you had to earn your axe handle, but now every student is eligible to receive one at Holler at Homer—another popular tradition that takes place the week of the first home football game. Students traditionally decorate their axe handles, as well, to make them more meaningful to their individual SFA experiences.

Another tradition SFA is proud to continue is Homecoming. Since 1925, the University has celebrated Homecoming to engage current students and alumni. According to the SFA history page, Charles Gibble, president of the Ex-Students Association, announced in the summer of 1935 the plans to create an annual event for students to enjoy. From there, Homecoming was born.

Lacey Folsom, director of student engagement, said that the Homecoming bonfire has been around for at least 50 years.

Concerts, coordinated by the Student Activities Association, are open to the public and available during the bonfire. The pep rally and Spirit Week, traditional events that lead to the Homecoming game, are hosted by AXExperience.

Some newer traditions were started in 2009 and were more football focused, Folsom said. “We started throwing the axe in the wood in the football charge in the mid 2000s,” Folsom said.

“It’s obviously very unique to SFA. Then we started Jacks Charge, where the students run out on the field before the football game and go to the Purple Haze section. I think those are neat traditions.”

Another great piece of history from SFA is the Watermelon Bash. It dates back to the early days of SFA, and began as an effort to help students get to know one another.

According to the SFA website, “The deans purchased watermelons and shared them with students during the first bash, which took place in front of the Austin Building on Vista drive.”

To this day, the Watermelon Bash remains a staple of Weeks of Welcome. Students can beat the heat with a watermelon slice, get a T-shirt and meet new friends.

What makes these traditions great, though, are the students who inspired them, Folsom said. In order to make the most of them and ensure they continue to be passed on, students are encouraged to participate as much as possible.

“[Students] need to want to get involved,” Folsom explained. “Be open to new experiences that they never would have thought of. You don’t have to know someone to get involved anymore. You just have to show up, and someone’s created an experience for you.”



File photo



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SFA integral to city's prosperity



Pam Fitch
Former Editor-in-Chief / Guest Columnist

You cannot tell the story of Texas without starting in Nacogdoches, and you cannot tell the story of Nacogdoches without speaking of Stephen F. Austin – both the man and the university.

Nearly 200 years ago, Stephen F. Austin – the man – was among a group of independence-seeking Texians who traveled to New Orleans raising funds and political support for their cause— independence from Mexico. He was a well-spoken statesman, and his efforts were rewarded, raising \$200,000 to aid in the war effort.

Nearly 100 years later, Stephen F. Austin – the university – was founded by the state legislature, paying homage to both the Father of Texas and the oldest town in Texas.

"Nobody need to be told what a college can do for the spirit and atmosphere of a town. The spirit of Nacogdoches today is a gift from the men of the past; the spirit of the future will be the gift of the men today," Karle Wilson Baker wrote in 1906 regarding the founding of the state's new normal college in Nacogdoches.

Citizens of Nacogdoches were passionate advocates of public education dating back to the earliest days of the Republic of Texas. "They came from cultured families of the South and East and North, and brought culture with them ... They brought libraries with them, some of which are still intact. The Iliad and the Odyssey in the original Greek and the Aenid in Latin came from the old South along with the English classics and the gems of French Renaissance. They brought pianos, the classical music of Hayden and Handel were heard in houses built of logs," the Honorable Eugene H. Blount said of our forefathers in his San Jacinto address delivered in 1926.

Here, in 1845, one of the first schools in Texas was opened – Nacogdoches University. The school's building still stands today. Located on Washington Square on Mound Street, a short distance south of the present-day campus of Stephen F. Austin State University, the building serves as a monument to our ancestors' deep devotion and regard for education.

It was this passion for culture and education that led local citizens to aggressively and tirelessly advocate for Nacogdoches to be the site of a new state college. John Schmidt was elected to lead the local effort, with J. Thomas Hall serving as secretary and W. T. Wilson treasurer of the newly formed committee.

The importance of their work should not be overlooked or discounted. Their vision and passion for both Nacogdoches and the great state of Texas is equal to their predecessors' a century before. While Stephen F. Austin, Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk fought for the cause of independence, Schmidt, Hall and Wilson fought to keep their spirit of prosperity alive.

"What mighty things might here be done under a good government, with wise laws and a little public spirit among the people. Here might flourish a populous city, distinguished for opulence, learning, arts, sciences, trade, health and all the blessings and comforts of a civilized life," wrote William Fairfax Grey about Nacogdoches in 1836.

We should honor these men, for were it not for their efforts, Nacogdoches may have suffered a much different fate.

When Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College opened classes in September 1923, it sealed the city's future prosperity. Education would become the primary catalyst of the local economy. Other major industries at the time, such as cotton and tobacco, would fade away into the annals of local history, but the college would flourish into the next century, bringing students, jobs and cultural offerings to East Texas.

As we sit at the precipice of the University's second century, the future shines as brightly as it did on Sept. 18, 1923, when President A. W. Birdwell welcomed 270 students to the new college. Just a few weeks ago, on Sept. 1, SFA entered The University of Texas System, a merger I believe is highly beneficial for students, faculty and our city. As I look over the horizon, I find myself filled with excitement.

"I heard it said the other day that it is especially hard to move an old town to action. But if any town could be moved by the appeal of the future, I would think it would be an old town – a town which owes its superiority, its dignity and traditions, to the fact that long ago somebody planted trees, and built churches, and gave land for schools; a town with a stirring past to live up to, and the presence of dead heroes in its streets. That is the town which should keep the spirit of its forefathers alive; which should cherish in its ghosts, and plant trees for other centuries," said Baker.

Let's go plant some trees.



File Photo
SFA's iconic, tree-lined Vista entrance leading to the Austin Building, circa 1930.

‘Let every responsible person put his shoulder to the wheel’

This editorial appeared in Nacogdoches' Daily Sentinel when SFA first opened its doors in September 1923.

The Stephen F. Austin State Teachers' College is going to open on September 18, 1923. With the dash of youth it is going to set up shop and start the process of education. The Board of Regents has decreed that it shall be so. The president of the college has been on the job a year. His task has been multifarious, but he has had twenty-four hours a day in which to accomplish it. There are, it is true, many obstacles in the way, but the obstacles are now fewer than they once were. There has been assembled a faculty of men and women in the prime of life. It is a fighting faculty, and they are on the field looking for trouble. Furthermore, while the college building is being completed, temporary accommodations for classes are to be had on the high school grounds. Books and equipment are here, and still coming. Stated simply the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers' College has an organization, a president and a faculty; it has a place to operate; it has equipment; and it is going to have a student body. Nacogdoches is ready to go. In other words, the college is going to open on September 18, 1923.

The college invites students who are high-minded ladies and gentlemen ... Students who enter the Stephen F. Austin Teachers' College this year have an opportunity that no other body of its students will ever have. The traditions of the college are largely in their hands. What they accomplish in the way of constructive organizations, varied student activities, will set the precedent for the years to come. This opportunity and responsibility will challenge the best thought, the firmest courage, the noblest sentiment of the student body, the faculty, and the community.

Nacogdoches is noted for her hospitable citizenship. Nacogdoches will do what it can to provide comfortable living quarters for college students. ... [SFA] is a full-grown organization. It will be seasoned with age and experience, but it today has a man's task and responsibility. It came into being by the same process as its sister institution in the state of Texas; by legislative action. It has its destined field of service. It has its mission to fulfill. So far as it is given vision and wisdom, it will start right, for it has a long way to go. The machinery is set. A few more days, and it will be put in motion. Let every responsible person put his shoulder to the wheel.



Dr. Jere Jackson
SFA Historian / Guest Columnist

Consider an ancient Greek's wisdom while celebrating SFA's first century of existence: "From a small seed a mighty trunk may grow." The phrase "may grow" adds the conditionality that both nature and human affairs demand for things to work out: conditions and people matter. An institution of education, for instance, is a human creation, not a product of nature. The Greeks well understood that. The purpose of this article is to assess some of the conditions and human contributions that allowed SFA to survive and prosper for 100 years.

Nacogdoches. First, Nacogdoches provided the right soil. A university tradition existed here. The early leaders, from Spanish friars to townsmen like Sam Houston and Thomas J. Rusk, fought to have education a major part of their plans. They secured a charter for Nacogdoches University in 1945 from the Republic of Texas. They underwrote the effort with their own money, materials, land and labor. To offer their children the best education possible, the citizens constructed a handsome Greek Revival building on Washington Square in 1858 to house their dream; the college was really a preparatory school, which offered some college subjects. Timing and national events compromised their efforts. Neither Nacogdoches nor the new school could overcome the hard times initiated by the Civil War. Several entities in the late 19th century (the Catholic church, local Masons and Keachi College of Louisiana) tried to sustain their efforts, but in 1900, Nacogdoches had to close its university. The trustees transferred their assets to the newly created NISD.

Businessmen tried to argue for a replacement, but it took a newcomer, Karle Wilson Baker, to inspire the birth of a movement to make this happen. In her letter to the Daily Sentinel, Baker supplied the emotional will to undertake risks:

"Nacogdoches has a soul, a spirit, an atmosphere. She is no raw product of today or yesterday ... Nobody need to be told what a college can do for the spirit and atmosphere of a town. The spirit of Nacogdoches today is a gift from the men of the past; the spirit of the future will be the gift of the men of today ..."

Her challenge transformed Nacogdoches: "keep the spirit of its forefathers alive, ... cherish its ghosts, and plant trees for other centuries." Later, promotional language styled Nacogdoches as the "Oldest Town in Texas," but one must reflect what really distinguishes a town is not age. It is the importance of the people who lived there, the history that was made there and the continuation of vitality there. Nacogdoches is a distinguished town – in fact, one of the best kept tourist secrets in the state.

Without state and national support, few college experiments can work in recent centuries. Not until the State of Texas in 1909 joined the national movement to create Normal colleges to train new teachers did Nacogdoches have an opening to replace its lost dream. In 1915, when Texas announced a new "East Texas Normal" Nacogdoches lined up first, but the law as passed was soon declared unconstitutional; it was also politically unviable. In the 1917 rewrite, the bill included three new colleges—west, south, and east Texas. To honor Stephen Fuller Austin, the Father of Texas, the "East Texas Normal" was given a name: SFA. But, no site was specified, only the phrase "east of the 96th meridian."

Under the cry, "We Want It," Nacogdoches formed a Citizen's Committee, put together an impressive brochure extolling the advantages of town, planned an elaborate reception for the Location Committee from Austin, and let everyone know their intentions. The pamphlet "Twenty-three Reasons Why" provides a unique snapshot of an East Texas town for the time. Specifically, the citizens pledged 208 acres of land, guaranteed 250 students, the bricking of their streets and free electricity to the institution. In the summer of 1917, the State chose Nacogdoches as the site for SFASTC. The local newspaper declared: "A new era has been born in the industrial, commercial, and social life of Nacogdoches."

Other city contenders graciously bowed to Nacogdoches – the mother county to most of the applicant counties. The Silsbee Signal in 1917 wrote:

"While there were many towns and cities asking for the school,

one thing can be said: no other town would appreciate it more than Nacogdoches. The town is most beautifully located ... The historic interests of the city are unsurpassed in the state; the town is truly a town of beautiful homes—her streets are shaded and cool and inviting; her citizenship is made up of people who stand for high ideals of character. But, the fact that every man, woman and child in Nacogdoches County wanted the normal, talked the normal, wrote normal, connected with the very best school and school spirit in the town and country, had more to do with the selecting than her beauty or historic lore. Now that Nacogdoches has the school, she will do just like she does with all things; she'll make it go and make it go good."

The seed was planted! A new era begun! Or was it? As happened over and over in SFA's history, outside events made the journey hard. By the summer of 1917, when Nacogdoches was literally "dancing in the streets," the storm clouds of World War I forced Texas to defund the colleges. The Father of Texas, according to his biographer, once remarked: "The journey is always hard, don't give up." Nacogdoches and later SFA have always had to practice Austin's adage. The leaders salvaged the Charter, but the revocation of funds made the victory hollow. They had to wait until 1921 for the state to restore even part of the funding; the SFA library was defunded. Even after building started, the whole project stopped in December 1922, when the contractor of the Austin Building skipped town and declared bankruptcy. Nacogdoches and her new ally President Alton Birdwell had to postpone the opening twice, but the town refused to give up. Nacogdoches lent their Old University campus, built a small temporary wooden building for the administration, arranged to billet students and faculty in private homes, and supplied nine months of service and promotional funds to attract students.

No single date, therefore, suffices to cite for SFA's founding year – the charter dates to 1917, the funding to 1921, the opening on a borrowed campus in 1923, and finally the move to its own campus in May 1924. Circumstances dictated everything. As a personal choice, Birdwell decided to welcome students for the first time on Sept. 18, 1923 – his birthday. The continuity was symbolic and fitting. SFA turned these awkward moments into traditions. Even today, SFA serves birthday cake to all visitors on the day the doors opened. The yearbook staff, forced to use the remnants of the Old Stone Fort for their work, decided to name their annuals after the experience.

Leadership. Alton Birdwell exemplified the importance of leadership to SFA's survival. Elected in 1917, Birdwell nurtured SFA before it was SFASTC. He served 25 years through wars, depressions and tight purse strings, and he established a powerful legacy. As an historian, he had perspective, of the past and the future. He knew how to anticipate trends and still to treasure ghosts. He understood hardships and usually turned them into unifying memories. He demonstrated his modesty by selecting and remodeling an existing farmhouse on the property as his home; he personally hired all the faculty, laid out the Vista and campus, and creatively used the New Deal programs to keep SFA viable during the Depression. After retiring in 1942, he served as SFA's cheerleader-in-chief until his death in 1954. He held the devotion of the students, the respect of the faculty and the gratitude of the town.

Stability. This is another hallmark of SFA. The SFA presidents have served long tenures. Five presidents make up 75% of SFA's existence. In addition to scholars, they were well-intentioned educators, personable, good natured, and practical. Longevity of this type guided SFA through many outside crises and held internal crises to a minimum. They consistently used available options to solve immediate problems until they could locate relief. Birdwell, Paul Boynton, Ralph Steen, William R. Johnson and Baker Pattillo were particularly masterful in their improvisations. Recently, as interim president, Dr. Steve Westbrook used his status as an alumnus to demand all elements to focus their attention on what was good for SFA. Birdwell himself could not have negotiated a smoother transition for SFA into The University of Texas System. Earlier this year, the Regents by vote and the faculty and town by sentiment honored him with the last presidential title of the first 100 years.

Westbrook offered the kind leadership the university needed to cope with the remnants of the COVID pandemic and guided SFA in a very transparent way throughout the affiliation process with The University of Texas System. In some ways, it's a miracle he agreed to come back to help us through this time, and I think that speaks to his devotion to SFA.

Fall 2023 Editorial Board



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Read between the lines: Student journalists document University’s story through century-old publications

[Reprinted with permission from Sawdust, SFA’s University and alumni magazine]

By Meaghan Morton
Former Editor-in-Chief
and
Nathan Wicker
Former Sports Editor

Since SFA’s inception, students staffing The Pine Log newspaper and Stone Fort yearbook have documented the university’s history. The department of student publications at SFA houses The Pine Log and the Stone Fort — both award-winning, independent, student-run publications. The department has trained hundreds of student journalists who have moved on to successful careers in journalism and photography. The publications have history of their own, covering local and localizing national news while being crucial resources for students in need of campus information. “Student media give a college a sense of community. It’s how readers learn about what’s happening now, how they learn about their history, how they celebrate big occasions and how they mourn when there’s tragedy,” said Chris Whitley, College Media Association president. “College media bind all the parts of the college together. That’s why college media need to be supported and why they should be celebrated when they reach milestone anniversaries.”

To honor the 100 years of history the newspaper and yearbook have both shared with their university, we here recall some of the major moments that shaped the trajectory of both publications over the past century.

1924-29 THE BEGINNING

Among a number of changes taking place in East Texas in 1924 was the addition of SFA’s Stone Fort yearbook and The Pine Log newspaper. For its first issue printed May 31, 1924 (see Page 20), The Pine Log staff consisted of two: Editor-in-Chief Mary Edwards of Troup — whose father was the editor of The Troup Banner and The Tyler Journal — and Business Manager Greer Orton Jr. of Nacogdoches. The two, under the supervision of faculty member Dr. Thomas E. Ferguson, disseminated the news of the graduating class and encouraged students to pick up the inaugural Stone Fort yearbook (see Page 20).

In the newspaper’s first editorial, Edwards set the intent for every future Pine Log: “Its purpose, as is indicated by the name, is to be an organ of expression for the College community — the Stephen F. Austin State Teachers College community. Its purpose is to give the news pertaining to this particular community.”

Luther J. Garner, editor, and Grady Thompson, manager, captured the brief history of the school in the yearbook with portraits, illustrations, text detailing events and organizations, and a dedication to the first president, Dr. A.W. Birdwell. In the first issue of The Pine Log, staffers wrote about the first book and a letter the engravers (now referred to as printers) sent to the staff. It read, “We have just received a copy of the 1924 Stone Fort, and wish to commend you, your staff, and your student body on the excellent annual that you have edited for your first year. It is quite out of the ordinary and far beyond the books put out by the average young college.

1930-39 THE GREAT DEPRESSION

Student publications have always been a safe space

for journalists to learn and practice their craft. In the Sept. 18, 1939, issue of The Pine Log, an advertisement calls on interested students to join the staff: “No experience is required — only a willingness to work.”

However, a willingness to work couldn’t save the Stone Fort yearbook from the effects of the Great Depression. Lack of funds made printing a full-scale yearbook out of the question. In its place, Madge Stallings, former director of the SFA printing operation, collected information from friends and families of the 1933 senior class to create a 28-page publication for the class’s 1958 Homecoming. The pages were dotted with illustrated doodles and gave information about the students 25 years prior and their then-current professions. Among the class were “housewives,” teachers and Louise Spies, a former Stone Fort editor and Pine logger who was co-owner of Patterson Publishing Company.

1940-49 “TOTAL WAR”

No doubt following the lead of their professional counterparts engaging in the era’s yellow journalism practices, Pine Log staffers weren’t reporting only hard news in the paper’s columns. A section recurring since the 1920s, “The Campus Rambler,” dished out nondescript gossip. An entry from the June 30, 1947, edition read, “It certainly must be love when a girl gets up at 7:00 on Sunday morning and catches a bus.”

As idle gossip spread, the students also began to endure the effects of World War II. “Students Prepare to Face Total War; Dr. Birdwell Tells Students What They Can Do in National Emergency” was emblazoned across the top of the first page of the Dec. 13, 1941, edition of The Pine Log. Birdwell gave three points of advice for students as they prepared, not knowing they would face four more years of war:

Be calm and keep poised. Do not believe everything you hear until you know it is from an official source. Do not discuss unconfirmed war rumors.

Continue with recreational entertainments and schoolwork as in normal times. This will relieve tension and make life more enjoyable in these critical times. Also, you should accept any opportunity to help in any kind of patriotic work. Use your talents for rallies, bond drives and to assist the Red Cross.

Prepare for a 10-year struggle with the Axis. Furthermore, students should not enter the Army with the idea that your future is blasted. There have been several instances where young men have found exactly what they wanted to do while serving in the Armed Forces of America.

1950-59 COMMUNITY LOSS

Not only was The Pine Log a way for students to get the latest on clubs and organizations, but it was also a way to build community, keep up with peers and publish opinions that would influence campus politics. Pine loggers reported on events like the ballot box stuffing that took place during the student body president race in April 1953.

“Local or student papers report on the issues that affect the community and also help you better understand the community you live in,” said Chris Cotton ’21, SFA’s current university archives and research coordinator.



File photo

Past members of The Pine Log student staff review a recent issue with their advisor in this undated photo. SFA’s student newspaper began publishing in 1924 and, along with the Stone Fort yearbook, has been documenting the University’s history for more than 99 years.

“Yearbooks are much the same except it is an entire year’s worth of important events condensed into a few hundred pages. The Stone Fort often has features written by students that tell me pieces of SFA history that I only knew a little about, but those pieces can really fill in the gaps.”

On Oct. 25, 1954, SFA took one of its biggest blows with the death of its first president, Dr. Alton W. Birdwell. Five days later, papers hit the stands making the community aware of his death. Included in the issue were a previously run poem about Birdwell by a student, memories from associates of Birdwell recalling the first days of SFA, and an article honoring his most outstanding speeches. He was president emeritus at the time of his death. Four years later, SFA’s second president Dr. Paul L. Boynton died in his office on campus. Dr. Ralph W. Steen was then chosen as the college’s third president.

1960-69 FAMILY MATTERS

Bettye (Herrington) Craddock ’70 & ’72, found her heart in student publications and would later dedicate her days writing her master’s thesis, “The Golden Years: The First Half Century of Stephen F. Austin State University,” detailing the university’s history.

She and her then-future husband, Van Craddock ’70, both worked for the publications and met in the class of Ben Hobbs, communications professor and student publications supporter. Bettye held many positions within student publications, and Van was the sports editor for The Pine Log. It was in Hobbs’ class that Van leaned on a chalkboard rail and asked Bettye on a date. After the two Pine loggers were married, Hobbs gifted the chalkboard rail to the Craddocks. Bettye still has the rail in her home as a fond memory and reminder of her late husband, who died in 2022.

SFA enrolled its first Black student in 1964. However, it wasn’t until the late ’60s that The Pine Log had its first Black editor, Wilbert Love Jr. ’69 of Grapeland. In 1969, Bettye traveled with Love and other editors to San Antonio to attend the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association convention — the oldest state collegiate press association in the nation.

The group searched for a place to eat along the riverwalk. As they began to walk into a restaurant, the group was stopped.

“We were stopped at the door and the waiter said, ‘You all can come in,’ but he pointed at Wilbert and said, ‘He cannot. No Blacks allowed.’ We said, ‘No, thank you,’ walked out of that place and found somewhere else. We were insulted. He was our friend,” Bettye said.

Bettye found herself having to say goodbye to Van in 1969 when he was conscripted into the Vietnam War through a lottery-style draft.

“Van said it was the only lottery he ever won,” Bettye said. “Winning that is ensuring you a one-way ticket to Vietnam. We were listening to the radio waiting to hear the numbers. July 1 was number 93, and that assured he would be sent to Vietnam. We went into the dorm where I lived, and everybody was just sitting gathered around this one TV in the corner. It was either people cheering or people crying. Vietnam was breathing down a lot of people’s necks.”

1970-79 ‘CAN YA DIG IT?’

Facing the end of the Vietnam War, national integration issues and an increasingly diverse student body, student journalists at SFA had ample opportunities to practice their craft.

Wanda (Peterson) Mouton ’74, a spry reporter for

See PUBLICATIONS on Page 9

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY

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Dr. Alton W. Birdwell
SFA President 1923—1936

A Word of Welcome and Advice

Perhaps this is your first year in college. The whole atmosphere is different. There will be new privileges, new obligations, new duties. Your happiness will depend upon complete adjustment to the college environment.

We are glad you have chosen this as your college home. You are entirely welcome to Nacogdoches and to our beautiful campus. You will find a good place to work, and, therefore, a good place to grow. The equipment, the faculty, administrative machinery, exist for your benefit.

Hard study is your main business here, but you will make a mistake if you do nothing else. Try to remember that college is an important part of life. YOU MUST LIVE. In addition to your study, therefore, you should take an active part in one or more college activities. Try for the thing you enjoy doing. If you like sports, by all means go out for the college teams. Similarly the Band, the Choral Club, the Dramatic Club, the Debating League will make their appeals. Consider them. Make your choice of one or more of them.

Try to live joyously and abundantly.

Get your schedule of studies arranged quickly and wisely. Waste no time trying to find easy courses or easy professors. Neither exists. Disappointments lurk for those who hunt “snap” courses and easy work. Get under a grown person’s load and begin to do it from the first day. Remember you cannot make up for lost time.

Again, LIVE WORK, AND GROW — profit and happiness are sure to follow.

Sincerely,

A. W. Birdwell
1931

This advice was offered to students who entered SFA in the fall semester of 1931 by the University’s first president, A. W. Birdwell. We believe it is as valid today as it was then.

Our Student Engagement Team is here to help you have fun and be successful. Axe 'em, Jacks!

Spirited lyrics added to University’s fight song

SFA’s fight song—the longtime mantra of the University’s athletic triumphs known for its vigorous brass melodies and drumline cadences —is now be accompanied by expanded university-sanctioned lyrics.

After a nearly yearlong development and approval period, the lyrics passed legislation by the Student Government Association in April 2022 and were approved by interim president Dr. Steve Westbrook soon after.

The new lyrics were rolled out to students during summer Lumberjack Orientation and Jack Camp sessions.

The idea to implement fight song lyrics came from T.J. Maple, coordinator of SFA’s Cheer and Dance Teams. Maple, who has guided SFA spirit teams to numerous national championships in the past 17 years, said it was hearing competitors from other schools sing along to their fight songs that spurred the idea.

“After years of attending numerous sporting events and cheer and dance nationals where other schools were singing to their fight songs, I felt that this could help to

unite us as Lumberjacks,” Maple said.

Maple wrote the first draft with his assistant coaches while on a break during the 2021 national competition in Daytona Beach, Florida.

SFA’s fight song was originally developed by a faculty member in the 1940s who adapted the song from a trio to the march, “Pride of the Illini.” Before the newly implemented lyrics, the only spoken words were a chorus — or more aptly, a battle cry — that echoed across packed coliseums and stadiums during a drum cadence:

“Go! Jacks! Go!
Fight! Jacks! Fight!
Win! Jacks! Win!
S-F-A-S-U!”

Following a meticulous writing process, Maple suggested revitalized and refreshed lyrics to a few university administrators, and an SFA Fight Song Lyrics Committee was established.

The committee reviewed the background of the proposed lyrics and the process for adopting them. Music faculty members

and AXExperience student leaders further refined the words.

Members of the committee included chair Dr. Hollie Smith, executive director of Student Life; Maple; Graham Garner, SFA chief marketing communications officer; Brandi Bryant, associate athletic director of student athlete services; Craig Turnage, Alumni Association executive director; and Chris Kaatz, assistant director of the Lumberjack Marching Band.

The proposed lyrics were presented to many student organizations and groups, including student-athletes, SGA, the student leader advisory board, AXExperience, the Student Activities Association, the Alumni Association Board of Directors, Office of Multicultural Affairs ambassadors, and the marching band. The lyrics were met with overwhelming approval.

According to Smith and Maple, much like the poetic nature of the SFA school song, the lyrics are intended to convey the Lumberjack spirit, the school colors, the beloved mascot, the alma mater and historic Nacogdoches:

“From the oldest town in Texas
Where the Lumberjacks chop

through the pines
From the oldest town in Texas
Where we fight for the purple
and white
From the oldest town in Texas
Where the purple lights shine
bright for vict’ry
We fight for our honor and
praise our alma mater
Hail dear ol’ S-F-A!
Go! Jacks! Go!
Fight! Jacks! Fight!
Win! Jacks! Win!
S-F-A-S-U!
From the oldest town in Texas
Where the purple lights shine
bright for vict’ry
We fight for our honor and
praise our alma mater
J-A-C-K-S,
Gooooooooo Jacks!”

“Each line in the fight song embodies something about SFA — our colors, mascot, town, purple lights and victory — which all showcase our already rich traditions,” Maple said.

“My favorite line, ‘From the oldest town in Texas, where the Lumberjacks chop through the pines,’ embodies who we are and where we come from no matter what we do for SFA.”

SERVICE:

From Page 2

Day of Service by racking up 10,000 total hours of service in one single day. Updates on the progress of the initiative will be posted to social media to keep the public informed. According to Smith, if the goal is not met by Sept. 18, the end date will be pushed back.

“I know a lot of hours just aren’t logged yet,” Smith said. “We have so many people doing so many things around the world and in our community.”

Smith has been involved with SFA for 25 years as a student, alumna, staff member and adjunct faculty member. She said that she’s seen a lot of changes at SFA over the years and is excited about all of the upcoming centennial events.

“This is a really cool moment in history to be here,” she said.

“We’re moving to The University of Texas system, and this is our 100th year; there’s just so much history here!”

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY



UMC sponsors logo coloring competition

By Abigail Barnard
News Editor

The Division of University Marketing Communications team was discussing ways to tie in SFA’s centennial to National Coloring Book Day and came up with an idea: Centennial-themed coloring pages.

“Our initial idea was to simply invite Lumberjacks to make their own creations using our centennial coloring pages and share them on social media,” said Kerry Whitsett, digital marketing coordinator. “That quickly evolved into a conversation about pitching a full SFA community design competition to members of the Centennial Celebration Committee. The committee loved the idea and approved it immediately.”

UMC created a website to provide competition details and deadlines, then started sharing on social media and with the campus community. UMC received eleven design submissions for

the children category, four entries for the teen category and 48 for the adult category.

“Each submission used the SFA centennial logo coloring page, and each age category’s winning design will be displayed on different types of items, including a T-shirt, mug and poster, to commemorate the momentous occasion,” said Whitsett.

The purpose of the design contest was to promote the upcoming centennial celebration and offer a fun way for SFA community members to participate in a centennial activity, she said. Another plus is that anyone can now purchase the authentic Lumberjack winning designs on the official centennial merchandise and keep a piece of SFA’s 100th year with them.

Editor’s note: Get into the centennial spirit by designing your own logo using the outline to the left.

Congratulations
**STEPHEN F. AUSTIN
STATE UNIVERSITY**
on your
**100TH
ANNIVERSARY!**

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PUBLICATIONS: Pine Log alumni recall gaining on-the-job experience covering global events

From Page 6

The Pine Log at the beginning of the decade, recalled those times fondly.

“The 1970s were an exciting time on campus, and we on the newspaper did not lack for stories to cover on a weekly basis,” she said.

As Mouton recalls, one of the biggest series of stories at the time was the streaking incidents of 1973-74, which concluded with the Streak Party Night at SFA that was approved by then-President Steen. Stories were published about students streaking in classes, the student center, on the football field and anywhere student groups gathered regularly.

Local stories of the decade ranged from alcohol consumption at campus organization functions, anti-war protests, bra-burnings and former SFA mascot Keith Wyborny ’74 — a male who ran and lost the race for Homecoming queen in 1973. The decade was also The Pine Log’s introduction to running editorials on national issues, such as the Vietnam War, racial tensions and the Watergate scandal, to name a few.

1980-89

A TUBULAR TIME FOR STUDENT JOURNALISM

Student journalists learn to adapt to reporting on a smorgasbord of stories as they happen. In the 1980s, for example, stories involving Greek life and successes in softball and football filled SFA newspapers and yearbooks.

Rhonda Minton ’90 & ’99, Pine Log editor in 1989, covered then-President Dr. William R. Johnson’s unexpected retirement in October 1989. On the day of the announcement, after seeing Johnson enter the crowded auditorium through an inconspicuous side door, Minton had a journalistic hunch he’d make a swift exit the same way.

After the announcement, Minton quickly walked to the side door where Johnson greeted her with a smile.

“I asked if I could walk back with him toward the Austin Building,” Minton recalled. “We talked, and I asked if it was possible to meet again later in the day for a story on him for The Pine Log.”

Minton was the only reporter to get an exclusive interview that day.

In 1986, student publications also gained a new leader, Pat Spence, who is revered by many past students as the matriarch of SFA’s student publications department. Spence led the publications to tremendous heights for 28 years.

“My initial hope and goals were that we could bring the paper up to a level where it could compete statewide with other college newspapers, and I believe we achieved that and even surpassed that goal in some cases,” Spence said.

1990-99

A NEW LOOK

In 1991, a desire to breathe fresh life into the Stone Fort yearbook’s design topped the staff’s priorities.

Backed by Spence, Robert Seale ’92, chief photographer from 1988 to 1992 and co-editor of the 1991 yearbook, and his staff wanted to take a fresh and sophisticated approach to an otherwise outdated design.

“We wanted to include things that everyone experienced,” Seale said.



File photos

(Left) The first student staff of the Stone Fort as pictured in the 1924 yearbook. (Above) The Pine Log newspaper staff as pictured in the 1925 Stone Fort yearbook. Both publications began printing in 1924, within months of SFA’s opening on Sept. 18, 1923.

By cutting out mundane photo captions that were prevalent in past issues, opting for a slick black cover with a small SFA silhouette and styling it similar to a coffee table book, the 1991 yearbook paved a path for future editions.

For Rachel Stallard ’95 & ’99, newspaper executive editor at the time, the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, 1995, stood out as one of the decade’s most notable events. She recalled contacting alumni living in Oklahoma City at the time of the bombing.

“A few people answered the phones and told me they had felt the blast,” Stallard said. “I did not find any of our students who had been in the building at the time.”

2000-09

IF IT BLEEDS, IT LEADS

The turn of the millennium brought with it a change to the scale of news on which staffers were reporting.

The Pine Log reported on many notable events throughout the decade. However, it was the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, and the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster Feb. 1, 2003, that dominated the decade’s headlines.

“It was a numb, surreal time,” recalled Chris Anderson ’03 and Kathryn Morton ’02 & ’04, editor and feature editor, respectively, during 9/11.

As the campus community was catapulted into a state of sorrow and fear, Pine Log staff members reacted. The publication enlisted the help of Clare Williams ’09, a Pine Log alumna who was interning in New York City during the attacks, to provide eye-witness accounts.

In the Sept. 13, 2001, issue of The Pine Log, Williams’ haunting accounts were printed on the front page, and many staffers and students wrote about the events from a local perspective, including commentary from Anderson.

“1,520 miles. The daunting distance separating Nacogdoches and New York City seems to have just gotten closer,” Anderson wrote.

Less than two years later, the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster hit a little closer to home.

Anderson, who was in Denton when news broke of the disaster, dashed back to Nacogdoches. With the help of Sam Craft ’04, former photo editor, and Jamie (Fussell)

Bouldin ’05, former editorial editor, they immediately gathered staff members to begin coverage.

“I knew instantly this was a massive story and a life-changing event for us Pine loggers,” Anderson said. “At that point, our paper was known for pushing news, and we really prided ourselves on doing everything as best as we could to tell stories that related to SFA. I’m forever proud of that.”

While some staffers covered the events, others led NASA officials around Nacogdoches County to find shuttle parts. Staffers worked alongside national and international reporters from prominent publications, who also used the student publications’ office for internet.

2010-19

LOGOS TELL STORIES

The decade brought with it a lot of excitement for student publications. SFA was hurled into the national spotlight as a basketball powerhouse, the university turned 90 years old, and campus was revitalized with new structures, such as Lumberjack Landing and the Cole STEM Building.

One event, however, stands out to Kasi (Dickerson) Key ’13 & ’15 as excitement for perhaps the wrong reasons.

Key served as editor-in-chief from 2013 to 2014 and remembers outrage over a proposed change to the university logo, sparked from a leaked photo on Twitter the day before the big reveal.

“It was an all-hands-on-deck situation as we worked to cover all the different angles of the story,” Key said.

The Pine Log staff members covered every step of the logo saga, from reporting on meetings and online petitions to interviewing SFA administrators and representatives from Richards/Carlberg, now Carlberg Branding & Advertising — the firm responsible for the proposed logo and rebranding campaign. The saga was covered until then-President Dr. Baker Pattillo axed the new logo in late March 2014.

On Dec. 30, 2018, tragedy struck the university as Pattillo, SFA’s eighth president who was appointed in 2006, passed away after nearly 13 years as the university’s top administrator. The Pine Log ran a full-page tribute in

the Jan. 30, 2019, edition.

2020-PRESENT

THE END OF (WEEKLY) PRINT

The Pine Log, along with media outlets around the world, could not evade the devastating blow that the COVID-19 pandemic had on print media.

Following media trends, a decline in print advertising revenue and changes in how society consumed news, The Pine Log ended print editions and went fully online in March 2020. Originally slated to go fully online in summer 2020, the university shutdown pushed the transition forward several months.

“I think we were all a little heartbroken,” said Meredith Janning ’21 & ’23, former Pine Log editor-in-chief. “There technically wouldn’t be any more worknights, no more page review sessions. I’m sure there was maybe a little bit of fear, too, because with such a big change, nobody could say what the next semester would look like.”

But students again rose to the challenge, taking advantage of opportunities to break news any day of the week rather than being tied down to print deadlines. The newspaper continues to win state awards each year for its online content.

The Stone Fort yearbook, however, remains a printed publication and continues to be a shining example of excellence in print media.

In September 2022, the yearbook earned national recognition as a finalist in two categories of the prestigious College Media Association Pinnacle Awards. As of spring 2022, only eight universities in Texas were producing traditional, printed yearbooks.

As the university’s story is well-documented through the worn, yellowed editions of The Pine Log newspaper and Stone Fort yearbook, so, too, are the memories — good and bad — of the gutsy staff members who sought to tell those stories. Though not all memories may be documented in print or online, they endure between the special bonds forged from late production nights, sudden news breaks and early morning ice cream excursions. For the next 100 years as they have in the last, may SFA’s student publications live on as an unwavering service documenting the university’s history and success.

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PICTURED FROM LEFT: Alicia Roland Chatman, Coordinator of Gifts & Records ('16); Amber Lindsay, Assistant to the Executive Director; Travis Turner, Coordinator of Communications & Sponsorships ('05 & '11); Craig Turnage, Executive Director ('00 & '05); Derek Snyder, Director of Alumni Relations ('01); Amie Ford, Coordinator of Alumni Events & Engagement ('09 & '11); Samantha Mora, Director of Alumni Events & Engagement ('08)



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