

Two separate occurrences connected to Penn State's School of Forest Resources (SFR) Centennial Celebration in 2007 led to this documentation of the history of the Penn State Forest School patch.

In preparation for the 50th anniversary of the class of 1957, which coincided with the SFR Centennial Celebration, **Bob Baldwin '57**, using an original patch donated by classmate **Paul DeBald '57**, tracked down the manufacturer and had replica Forest School patches made for their classmates to purchase. Then, in response to a call for items for the Centennial Silent Auction, **Earl Reinsel '56**, donated his Forest School patch on behalf of Tau Phi Delta.

The patches piqued interest and raised questions: who designed the patch, when was it first sold, when were sales terminated? An introductory article about the Forest School patch published in the Summer 2007 issue of our RESOURCES newsletter prompted a trip down memory lane for several alumni.

Joe McNaney '55 wrote, "My original patch is still on the Levi jacket I wore while working at the sawmill with Orville Schmidt The patch was purchased at Mont Alto in 1951 and has been on the Levi jacket ever since The jacket no longer fits . . . and was given to my grandson Colton who helps me plant seedlings on my Greene County Tree Farm." After writing, Mr. McNaney donated his patch to our collection.

Rex McHail '50 reported on the origin of the Forest School patch: "I have the prototype of the original patch since I designed it and had it produced while a first-year forestry student at the Penn State Mont Alto Forestry school. Our class was the first class after World War II and the majority took our freshman year at the Mont Alto campus. We began the fall of 1946 We started an Acers Club where I believe the idea of a decal or patch was generated. I volunteered to create one with the help of **Swede Lindahl, Norm Martin, Jack Lavin, Pat Mussmano**, and probably had input from many others. I no longer have my original design sketches nor copies that were sent to the Standard Pennant Company, Big Run, Pennsylvania, not far from my hometown of Bolivar, PA. They made a prototype . . . and from that a run was ordered." Mr. McHail also donated his patch to our collection.

The class of 1950's inaugural issue of *The Seedling*, a student newsletter at Mont Alto, dated November 11, 1946, reports on the organization of the Acers Club. That issue featured an Acers emblem on the front cover, and this emblem also appeared on the first page of the 1947 *Forest Echoes* Mont Alto yearbook. Thanks to Diane Peterson Ritchey, wife of the late William A. Ritchey '50, we know the class of 1950 also had an Acers patch that consisted of a bright red chenille wool leaf, and red and white chenille wool lettering, on yellow felt. The Acers patch has a Standard Pennant Company label on back, and Mrs. Ritchey donated it to our collection.

Neither **Jack Lavin** nor **Bob Lindahl** had any further details to add to Rex McHail's story about the Forest School patch, and **Pat Mussmano** is deceased, but **Norm Martin '50** recalls "all of the fellas that Rex mentioned were housed on the second floor at the only housing at the time at Mont Alto. The married men were housed off campus. We did meet frequently in one of our rooms to relax and go over the happenings of the day, so I presume Rex would have started the design of the patch in this manner. . . . My recollection . . . is a little fuzzy, but I do recall Big Run, PA, as the patch producer. I had one of the first patches, but I did not have a decent jacket to have it sewed on so the patch was put aside . . .".

Additional questions about the origins of the patch arose when **Harold Birch '51** provided this information from the 1951 *Sylvan*: "Then came February 1950 when our class of 1951 took control of the [Forestry] Society with the election of the following officers The first big innovation of this semester was the adoption of an emblem for our organization. The new emblem was designed by a committee composed of '**Sunshine' Shogren, Bob Zarr, Hal Birch, Al Steinle, and John Kalafus**. The design chosen was a green fir tree in the center of a white keystone with an ax and oak leaves superimposed upon the tree."

The "emblem" appeared on the cover of the May 1951 Penn State Forestry Society Annual Banquet program, and in the 1951 *Sylvan* yearbook, also published in May by the Society.

Paul "Sunshine" Shogren confirmed, "As noted in the minutes of the Forestry Society, a patch committee was organized. . . . I did indeed prevail upon my younger sister [Sandra], about 13 years old at the time, who was taking art classes at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon), to help us design the patch." Shogren sent a photo of the patch that his sister still has at the bottom of her sewing box!

Al Steinle and **John Kalafus** are both deceased, and **Bob Zarr** did not have any further details to add to the patch history.

Hal Birch '51 hypothesizes that the pieces of the story fit together this way: "Paul's sister translated McHail's patch into black and white and the committee and the Forestry Society immediately accepted it. I could never explain why the double-bitted ax handle in the black-and-white version was swollen below the head. Was it a mistake by an inexperienced young artist? The original patch, by a forestry student at Mont Alto, did not have that minor distortion. The ax, pinecone, and oak leaf on the original patch, however, are poorly placed, and the young artist did a better job of positioning them on the pine tree."

Boyd Witherow '43, '48g and **Glenn Haney '51** donated patches that are like McNaney's and Reinsel's: felt-on-felt with tree, axe, leaf, and cone appliqués and hand-embroidered lettering. Trying to recall where he got the patch, **Boyd Witherow** said, "I must have purchased it in my grad school years, 1946-48, and not at Mont Alto in 1939. After grad school I stayed on a few years and taught at the School."

Charles Abbey '59 recalled that he purchased his patch "at Mont Alto around October 1955 and probably wore it through graduation in 1959." Abbey's patch is the same as the other felt-on-felt patches with one key exception: it is embroidered with the words *Forestry School* instead of *Forest School*.

Abbey's classmate **Charles Engle** '59 also has a patch with the words *Forestry School* on it. But Engle's patch, which he "probably purchased at Mont Alto in 1955," is cotton canvas, and both the lettering and design are machine-embroidered.

Dan Schmidt '67 wrote, "While a member of the Forestry Club in 1963-66, we ran out of patches to sell and wear. I purchased 150 patches (with *Forestry School* on them) with my own money and once enough patches were sold to pay me back, the rest were given to the club for future sales. . . . For those who might recognize the last name, yes, my Dad was Orvel Schmidt, professor and operator of the sawmill for many years before it moved to Stone Valley."

The Forest School patch design had some longevity. **Karl Lutz** '78 sent an e-mail indicating that he bought one around 1977 at University Park—that's 30 years after the patch was first produced. Lutz's patch had been sewn on his denim jacket, but in more recent years it was tacked to his bulletin board. This sole patch of cotton twill, with automated lettering and design, also includes the text *Forestry School*.

A phone call from **Bob Frank** '54 and follow-up with classmate **Rod Cobi** '54 confirmed that Cobi designed a circular patch for the class of 1954 that was also produced by The Standard Pennant Company. **Temp Reynolds** '54 describes the class patch as follows: "A circular patch, 6 inches in diameter. Like the Forest School patch, it is chenille. Around the edge, white letters set in a circular blue background one-inch high say 'PENNSYLVANIA STATE FOREST SCHOOL.' In the center (about 4 inches in diameter) is a green maple leaf with a double bit axe and a peevie crossed and a red keystone about 1.75 inches high with a white '54 centered. A black-on-white banner at the bottom and centered includes *Mont Alto* in cursive writing."

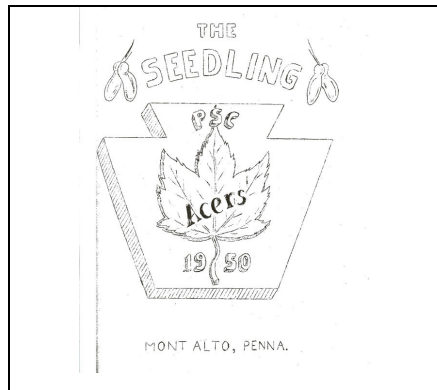
All but Engle's and Lutz's patch have a "The Standard Pennant Co." label on the back, so there is no question about where they were produced. Unfortunately, two floods in Big Run—one in 1977 and another in 1996—wiped out all the company's historical files, including old stock samples.

According to James Casady, current president of The Standard Pennant Company, the older patches were "pieces of art"—each made individually, sewn by hand with a sewing machine. Each patch had two penciled numbers or initials on the back—one marking indicated who did the actual embroidery and the other marking indicated who finished the patch (that is, who stitched together the embroidered piece and the felt and the buckram backing, and then trimmed the patch). The older patches were of wool yarn that was looped (chenille). The company advanced to a more automated production process in the early 1990s, and today, Orlon, an acrylic yarn is used.

"A mystery maze of memories of many old men" is how **Rex McHail** '50 described our efforts to piece together the history of the Penn State Forest School Patch.

Ellen Manno
Executive Director, SFR Alumni Group

In March 2009, Glenn Haney '51 framed the Forest School patch collection, which now hangs in the Edwards Student Center on the first floor of the Forest Resources Building at Penn State University Park.



The class of 1950's inaugural issue of *The Seedling*, a student newsletter at Mont Alto, featured an Acers emblem on the cover page.



Thanks to Diane Peterson Ritchey, wife of the late William A. Ritchey '50, we know the Class of 1950 had an Acers patch produced by The Standard Pennant Company in Big Run, PA—chenille wool leaf and lettering on a felt keystone.



Rex McHail '50 donated this Forest School patch that he designed in the fall of his freshman year (1946) at Mont Alto. It is chenille wool on a felt keystone and was produced by The Standard Pennant Company in Big Run, PA.



Diane Peterson Ritchey, wife of the late William A. Ritchey '50, also donated this patch. Note the slight differences from the McHail patch, such as the lettering and tree outline. The patches were hand-sewn and therefore had variations.



The hand-sewn wool patches (like this one donated by Glenn Haney '51) have two penciled numbers or initials on back. One marking indicates who did the embroidery and the other indicates who finished the patch (that is, stitched the embroidered piece, the felt, and the buckram backing together).



Temp Reynolds '54 donated this wool patch that he purchased in his freshman year (1950-51) at Mont Alto.



Boyd Witherow '43, '48g donated this felt-on-felt patch with tree, axe, leaf, and cone appliqué and hand-embroidered lettering. He thinks he may have purchased this patch during his grad school years, 1946-48, at University Park.



Glenn Haney '51 donated this felt-on-felt patch that is similar to Witherow's. It, too, was produced at The Standard Pennant Co. but the year is unknown.



The first page of the 1951 *Sylvan* includes this artwork prepared by the sister of Paul Shogren '51. Presumably she used the Forest School patch as a model.



Joe McNaney '55 put his patch on his work jacket in 1951—a jacket worn most recently by his grandson—and did not remove it until donating it to this collection.



This class of '54 patch was designed by Rod Cobi '54 and donated by Temp Reynolds '54. It is wool chenille and was also produced by The Standard Pennant Company.



Earl Reinsel '56 donated this felt patch to the Centennial Silent Auction on behalf of Tau Phi Delta. The School successfully bid on the patch, acquiring it for this collection. Also made at The Standard Pennant Co., this patch, like McNaney's, has a ragged trim.



Charles Abbey '59 donated this patch made by The Standard Pennant Co. and purchased "at Mont Alto around October 1955 and probably worn through graduation in 1959." It is similar to the patches donated by Witherow and Haney with one key exception: the embroidered words are *Forestry School* instead of *Forest School*.



Charles Engle '59 donated this patch that he "probably purchased at Mont Alto in 1955." It has the words *Forestry School*, as does classmate Abbey's patch. But Engle's patch is cotton canvas and there is no manufacturer's label on back.



Karl Lutz '78 donated this patch of cotton twill with automated embroidered lettering and design. The wording here is also *Forestry School*. Where this patch was produced is also unknown as there is no manufacturer label on back.



Bob Baldwin '57, using an original patch donated by Paul DeBald '57, tracked down the original manufacturer (The Standard Pennant Co.) and had replica felt patches made (like the one shown here) for their 50th reunion in 2007.

