

THE FLORIDA ENTOMOLOGICAL CLUB

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In case you have been wondering who is President of the Florida Entomological Society, for the past year, it has been me. The significance of this metamorphosis from not so mild-mannered scientist to courageous executive became apparent shortly after my election. Actually, it was during a Ph.D. qualifying examination for one of my more accomplished and informed students. When asked by another member of the examining committee to name the President of the Florida Entomological Society, he hesitated momentarily before confidently responding, "A woman, I think. Yes, I am sure it is a woman, somewhere on campus." Well, having recovered from this initial shock, I recalled a similar experience that occurred 5 or 6 years ago. An administrator, who was in the process of approving payment of my travel expenses for the annual FES meeting, casually asked, "Who's the President this year?" He seemed surprised when I answered, "I honestly don't know." These 2 anecdotes do not indicate apathy or disrespect for our officers but, rather, I believe they express the membership's confidence and trust. Preservation of this sacrosanct confidence and trust is the subject of my address.

Before discussing the future, let us recall some major events of the immediate past. After a tumultuous year in which the Society's stature was questioned and our publishing system restructured, President John Taylor was deluged with change. Consequently, his 1978 address, "Through the Looking Glass," advised us to reflect on past accomplishments, accept necessary changes, and reunify our organization. Subsequently, President Bob Brooks, viewing the situation as part of a normal evolutionary process of perpetual improvement, encouraged development of a series of questionnaires intended to ascertain the Society's present condition and future direction. He also proposed establishment of a long-range planning committee, under the chairmanship of Howard Weems, to foster orderly change. However, his address actually concentrated on the bonds of comradeship that form the spirit of our Society. Thus, the legacy of these past presidents is this salient message: "Develop a structure for incorporation of managerial improvements but preserve the informality necessary to function on a personal level."

With these goals in mind, our current leadership zealously re-evaluated the Society's resources, organizational structure, and constitutional Purpose and Objectives. Indeed, my first activity in this regard came sooner than expected. Bill Peters, Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, arranged for a television appearance immediately after our last annual meeting in Tallahassee—the day I was elected President. As the interviewer fired the first question, the camera zoomed in. "What is the purpose of the Florida Entomological Society?" she asked. "To represent entomology—I mean, that is, well, we've been around a long time and, well, we have lots of members and, well, . . ." I answered with all the grace of the proverbial maladroit country bumpkin on his first trip to the big city. Fortuitously,

Carol Musgrave, our articulate Editor, took over and masterfully fielded a new question. I was left with the realization that, after serving the Society for more than 5 years, I still did not know the official reason for its existence. But then, how many of you could have answered the question? The Object and Purpose of the Florida Entomological Society is as follows:

1. To promote entomology as a science and as a profession;
2. To encourage research relative to insects and related arthropods in Florida;
3. To distribute and publicize knowledge pertaining to insects; and
4. To publish the *Florida Entomologist*.

How can we simultaneously uphold all of these areas of responsibility, and generate and allocate the necessary resources, without becoming embroiled in excessive regulation? The answer is suggested by the title of this address, "The Florida Entomological Club." Admittedly, there is only a subtle distinction between the connotations of society and club; the former implying structural organization and the latter, informal gathering of persons for social, literary, religious, scientific, etc., purposes. If you can accept the existence of this binary system, why not arrange for the "society" to manage itself and encourage the "club" to focus on predominantly social and philosophical issues? Why allow most of our precious creative time and effort to be spent on rules for conducting business while we essentially ignore the principles for which we have become affiliated?

To accomplish these ideals, I envision the following 3 fundamental steps. First, we should maintain 3 approximately self-supporting components; the journal, annual meeting, and general business. This is why page charges have been increased to pay the actual cost of printing. In addition, our new printer has avoided excessive cost increases and personally handled the reprint orders. The meeting not only supports itself but also does so with additional benefits that include funding for speakers, awards, student participation, and the banquet. Finally, we have financed a Florida 4-H program; a new "Handbook of Florida Entomologists," compiled under the direction of Strat Kerr; and initiated interaction with Spanish-speaking countries in the Americas. In the near future, I hope we can implement a mini-grants program and increase funding to our standing committees. Second, due to the Society's increased size and complexity and to the concomitant availability of capable and dedicated members, we can establish self-perpetuating committees to organize recurrent activities, handle routine business, and incubate new ideas. The Public Relations, Membership, Student Activities, Long-range Planning, and Auditing Committees, for example, should be structured to provide continuity from year-to-year. Currently, the incoming President is preoccupied by a paradoxical dilemma; new committeemen lack the experience necessary to sustain ongoing activities and re-appointment of tried-and-true members causes unwanted inbreeding. A proposed 3-year rotational system should alleviate this problem by providing a mechanism for continuously incorporating new talent. Third, we should encourage greater participation by the membership in the governing process. This would benefit the Society by fostering new leadership, and the contributing individuals would become more active and informed. This is particularly applicable for students. Another advantage is increased exposure

to new technology, such as the computerized membership list recently developed by Dan Wojcik, the Business Manager. To facilitate this increased participation, each of you has been supplied with a service volunteer form. It is axiomatic that the strength of any group lies in its involved membership.

In conclusion, since we deal primarily with each other rather than with the membership, it is understandable that many of you do not know your committeemen and officers. Moreover, you have deliberately or through acquiescence placed your confidence in us and entrusted us with your Society's management. Even though it is important to separate this business as much as possible from the overriding philosophical framework in which we operate, every one of us should understand our formal objectives and strive for their achievement. This kind of personal involvement is implicit in our underlying fraternity, the *Florida Entomological Club*.